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**SETTING PARADISE ON FIRE:
MEN, WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF DEVOTION IN THE GRAND SIECLE**



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ABSTRACT

SETTING PARADISE ON FIRE: MEN, WOMEN AND THE POLITICS OF DEVOTION IN THE *GRAND SIÈCLE*

by Lise Legault

This is a study of the politics of devotion in the *Grand siècle*. It concentrates on the activities of a small group of devout Catholics in Paris, who from the beginning to the end of the century exercised an influence on public life out of proportion to their numbers. This group came to be known to historians as the *parti dévot*. The men and women of the *parti dévot* were celebrated both for their profound spirituality and their political activism in the Catholic cause.

*Dévo*t women were visible everywhere, teaching the young, healing the sick and proselytizing their families. They were so much at the centre of French devotional life that at times they appeared to steal the initiative from men. Yet many in the Church continued to fear their influence, and to regard them as dangerously vulnerable to heresy. How, then, were they able to rise above their limitations and take a central place in the devotional life of the period?

The answer lies in the political position of *dévo*t clerics. France in the seventeenth century was a nation haunted by fear of religious war and external attack. As a result, Catholic clergy were under scrutiny as they had seldom been before, forced to choose between God and Caesar. Their divided loyalties rendered them less effective as reformers.

It was against this background that women came to be so important to the reform of French Catholicism. *Dévo*t clerics encouraged women to do what they could not do, say what they could not say, knowing that women were not taken seriously as either theologians or political leaders. Thus women were valuable to the Church precisely because they were marginal in society. They, in turn, were able to exploit the situation for their own benefit, discovering a world of devotion and religious activism which had previously been closed to them.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	i
Chronology.....	xi
1/ The Parti Dévot and the State, 1590-1610.....	1
2/ Dévot Theology and the Dévotes, 1600-1620.....	30
3/ The Creation of the Dévote, 1595-1620.....	57
4/ Bérulle and the Competition for Dévotes, 1615-1629.....	97
5/ Port-Royal: The Old Order and the New, 1600-1638.....	137
6/ Pur Amour: François de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal.....	191
7/ Vincent's Daughters, Vincent's Sons, 1625-1640.....	223
8/ The Sacred Heart Beats 'France', 1642-1672.....	257
9/ Enemies of the State, 1650-1682.....	303
10/ Jeanne Guyon: The Last Dévote, 1648-1717.....	342
CONCLUSION.....	390
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	397

INTRODUCTION

In a devotional treatise by the seventeenth-century cleric, Jean-Pierre Camus, there is a particularly striking passage: it personifies the spirit of Divine Charity as a woman holding a pitcher of water in one hand, and a torch in the other. 'With this torch', she proclaims, 'I will set Paradise on fire and reduce it to ashes, that it may never be spoken of again; and with this pitcher, I will pour water upon the flames of Hell, so that there will be no further torments or torture in this unhappy place. And from that time on, God will at last be loved for himself alone, with neither servility nor the desire for gain.'¹

The passage alludes to one of the most important devotional trends of the seventeenth century: the idea that human beings should be entirely disinterested, that any form of self-seeking, even the quest for salvation itself, corrupted the purity of human motives. This form of religious indifference haunted the faith of many devout Christians of both sexes, Protestant and Catholic, in the *Grand siècle*, but it was especially attractive, it seems, to women. Camus's trope did not, of course, refer to an actual woman, but it summarized much of what male clerics most feared in women: their ineluctable attraction to the most extreme forms of affective spirituality, those in which the worshipper was expected to submerge any taint of merely human affections, so that no trace of earthly motives remained. This characteristic, however, was also what the authorities most admired in women.

The persistence of misogyny

We are almost too familiar with the misogyny of Christian theology and custom. 'Girl, why do you follow me/When I come to the threshold of this holy place?', writes the poet Clifford Dyment in a poem entitled 'St Augustine at 32'. That men did not welcome women as fellow-travellers on the path to salvation is a well-known truism. Women were marginal to the history of institutional

Christianity: they could not become priests; could not therefore say mass; could not preach; could not write theology; could not, in short, exercise religious leadership within the confines of the Church. Although mitigated by the circumstances in which a particular cult might operate - by the social position of its members, by the presence or absence of enemies, by the attitudes of other authorities - the rejection or 'marginalisation' of women to secondary roles has until recently been taken for granted by historians and sociologists of religion.²

Many reasons have been postulated to explain this persistent rejection and fear of women. Their exclusion from the priesthood, for example, has been explained by the biological determinism which characterized the Mediterranean milieu in which Christianity developed. Early Christians would have explained the subordination of women by pointing to their physical unsuitability for a priestly role. Thus, women were barred from the altar for menstruation and childbirth, as men were for ejaculation³; [fn] but the latter was a function which was to some degree within conscious control. Female biology, on the other hand, was such that at least one of the sexual functions of a woman's nature could not be controlled by an act of the will.

Other factors in the subordination of women remained important. Women's vulnerability to sexual predators, inherent in the fact that they were physically weaker than men, meant that they could not readily live the life of male ascetics. They could not isolate themselves in the desert, nor adopt the life of wandering mendicants, without putting themselves at risk of rape. This was the fear that lay behind the injunctions to women to remain in the safety of the home, protected by the family, out of the sight of male eyes. It also effectively excluded women from leading the apostolic life, which demanded some degree of mobility and necessitated preaching before mixed audiences.

'In many world-renouncing religions', writes Peter Brown,

the growth of forms of heroic asceticism, associated with...physical danger, with mobility, with the loss of conventional social identity, tended to drain prestige away from pious women. Only men were considered able to practice such asceticism appropriately.⁴

Thus in the second century Saint Genevieve was reproached by her detractors for preaching before audiences which often contained men.⁵

If the altar and the apostolic life were historically denied to women by Christian institutions, there was one devotional path which was sometimes open to them. Prophecy and charismatic inspiration were the avenues by which women achieved fame or notoriety in the Christian tradition, and became, after a fashion, religious leaders. But this was a risky option for them. It often ended by drawing the attention of male clerics who were jealous of their power to command the attention of the faithful and accused them of every kind of moral outrage, particularly sexual vice. There was also a widespread conviction that such women, even when virtuous, even when devout, were drawn to dangerous forms of piety which were in themselves a threat to the social order and to religious orthodoxy. Male clerics believed that women were attracted, by nature or by nurture, to affective forms of religious expression, especially to mysticism. The definition of mysticism is a vexed issue, but it is generally understood that mysticism often threatens to reject, even if it does not actually reject, the structured piety imposed by religious institutions and sanctioned by the laws of the state. The very means by which pious women attracted followers, the direct relationship with God which gave them prophetic insight, was itself suspect.

Was there, then, no opportunity for women to influence the course of Christianity? This view is clearly too extreme. Max Weber was the first student of religion to suggest that women's prophetic ability was valued only in the early stages of the establishment of a cult; once a religion was institutionalized, women were no longer welcome to exercise even this limited function:

only in very rare cases does this practice continue beyond the first stage of a religious community, when the pneumatic manifestations of charisma are valued as hallmarks of specifically religious exaltation. Thereafter, as routinization and regimentation of community relationships set in, a reaction takes place against pneumatic manifestations among women, which come to be regarded as irregular and sick. In Christianity this appears already with Paul.

Historians have since modified this position to suggest that women, in fact, were able to exercise this and other forms of religious leadership during periods of religious revival or renewal. By the mid 1970s, when social historians took to the study of the history of religion from a more historically nuanced point of view than Weber's, they discovered that even before the Reformation, during the religious revivals which preceded it, women were able to acquire considerable prestige and exercise, to a limited degree, a kind of quasi-apostolic function. They agreed with Weber, however, that this right tended to erode once the various 'mainstream' Protestant churches were well-established. There remained a general consensus that female piety was almost invariably regarded with suspicion by orthodox and institutional Christianity, and that it was only during moments of crisis that this situation altered.⁶

Historical background

The seventeenth century was just such a time of crisis for the Catholic Church in France. The rise of Protestantism had threatened its status as the one religion of France's people since the early years of the sixteenth century. No longer able to take its position for granted, it was an institution on the defensive. Following the conclusion of the Wars of Religion (1562-1598), the movement known as the Catholic 'restoration', or Counter-Reformation, fought back against the incursions of Protestantism by insisting on the validity of every ceremony, every ritual, every theological position called into question by Luther and Calvin. The saints were to be revered; the cult of the Virgin was

reinforced; the priesthood was to be reinforced as an office sanctioned by God and reserved only for those who had been anointed by the authority of the Church. The Bible was not to be translated; nor was it to be read to or by the laity without the express permission of a priest. The Church, it has been said, was in the midst of a process of centralization which removed authority from local ecclesiastical bodies and placed it in Rome's hands.

The French state was in the process of a similar movement towards centralization at the dawn of the seventeenth century. The crown, although not so powerful as it would become, was attempting to regain control over its subjects: control over its quasi-independent provinces; control over the military aristocracy; control over the rebellious cities whose people had led both the Protestant and Catholic drive against crown authority during the Wars. Throughout the century, the kings of France struggled to ensure that the anarchy of the Wars of Religion would not be repeated, and in order to do so they forever abandoned medieval conceptions of constitutional monarchy. If they did not become 'absolute' monarchs (a term which some historians find deeply misleading⁷), they transformed the monarchy into a new kind of institution, with a more centralized administrative apparatus and greater powers than it had ever held before.

If this was a time of crisis, however, other necessary conditions for the development of female religious leadership appear to have been absent. For the seventeenth-century Church, this was not, on the surface, a time for the establishment of new institutions or modes of thought, but for the reinforcement of old customs and habits of behaviour. With the assistance of the State, goes one argument, the Church consolidated its control over the people of France, crushing resistance and abolishing the various modes of devotion which had held so much appeal for the uneducated masses and for women. The process of centralization and the increasing power of the clergy at the expense

of the laity destroyed the diffuse sense of the sacred which had been a part of popular medieval religion.⁸ It does not seem possible that women, who shared the devotional tastes and the disadvantages of the popular classes as a whole, could have successfully carved out a new path for their sex amid the conservative tendencies of the times.

In spite of their age's conservatism, the women of France were able to exercise an astonishing degree of influence upon the seventeenth-century Church. This fact has long been recognised by historians. The publication of Lucien Febvre's influential article, 'Quelques aspects meconnus d'un renouveau religieux en France entre 1590 et 1620' (1958) was perhaps the first to introduce the idea to a broad audience: he wrote that the religious life of the sixteenth century had been 'animée par les femmes', and that their value had been clearly discerned by the reformers and 'counter-reformers', though often ignored or missed altogether by later commentators.⁹ But it should be noted that Febvre's article covered only the early years of the Catholic restoration; he did not extend his analysis beyond 1620, at which time the restoration had only begun to take control of the Church in France. It would seem that Febvre, like Weber and other students of religion, associated female religious activism with the open conditions which prevail before a movement has become fully established. The fact remains, however, that the rise of women in the Church did not stop in 1620. Women continued to take up religious activism and remained at the centre of theological debate throughout the century. It is true that at times the attention they drew was critical or condemnatory, as with the women of Port-Royal, yet even here it must be acknowledged that the women of suspect religious movements had often basked in a warm glow of appreciation for many years before they were finally condemned by the authorities. The importance of women to the Church of the period is incontrovertible, but it remains a mystery.

The mysterious aspect of women's rise in the seventeenth-century Church depends to a large extent upon the way in which we interpret the position of the Church itself during the *grand siècle*. If we insist on retaining the standard political historian's view of a Church and State in league with one another from the turn of the century to increase each other's power and authority, without modification, then women's growing influence cannot readily be explained as a result of the openness of a transitional moment in Church history, especially in view of the fact that in other areas of public life, their power was in some respects on the wane.

But there is another way to consider Church-State relations, one which has never been as popular but which has always attracted some adherents. Let us suppose that Church and State in seventeenth-century France had a symbiotic relationship, mutually dependent upon one another and at the same time mutually hostile. In their struggle to re-define the relationship in the wake of the Reformation, each sought to influence and if possible to control the other. At the end of the Wars of Religion, the two bodies were to some degree equal, as the French crown struggled to re-establish its control over Paris and the nation. By the century's end, under the management of Louis XIV, the French crown had definitively seized control of the Gallican church, and was thus able to exercise considerable influence upon Rome as well, in the absence of any European power able to counter-balance its authority. In this situation, the Gallican Church became increasingly the instrument of state policy as the century progressed, until the two bodies ended at last by achieving a kind of harmony, at the expense of the more demanding forms of spiritual exploration so admired by the *dévots*.

Some clerics welcomed this change and others were very little affected by it, but there remained a hard core of French clergy resistant to the incursions of the crown and the accommodations to its demands which many of their superiors were willing to accept. They were, in

essence, asked to serve both God and Caesar, and it was more apparent than it had been for many centuries that the aims of these two masters did not always agree. Church custom had once accommodated this kind of problem by tacitly allowing that bishops and other high officials should be chosen for their leadership qualities rather than their devotion; and that the common clergy need not be especially holy, so long as they avoided scandal. Only the *spirituels*, only saints (in the usage of the term which prevailed until the seventeenth century, meaning holy man or woman, but not necessarily implying formal canonization) needed to be concerned with the far reaches of holiness, and they were not to be taken seriously as leaders of men. But the Council of Trent had re-emphasized the traditional Catholic teaching that all men (and women) are called to be saints. For the sake of ecclesiastical discipline, it was all the more important that priests should be saintly, particularly under the watchful eyes of Protestant critics.¹⁰ The clergy were under scrutiny as they had seldom been before. The conflict between God and Caesar was not a new problem, but it was far more acute for them than for their immediate ancestors.

Looked at from this perspective, it is clear that the seventeenth-century Church of France was neither a wholly reactionary nor a self-complacent body, but one torn by dissent and self-doubt, having discovered, while still reeling from the first shock of the Reformation, that the rise of Protestantism and the crown's need to accommodate religious dissent had permanently altered its relations with the State. It was against this background that women rose to new heights of prestige in the French Church.

Argument

This study proposes to re-examine the question of women's religious leadership in the seventeenth century against the background of the Church-State battles of the era. It will argue that Church and State were locked in a power struggle in which the French crown emerged as victor, to the detriment of the Church's autonomy even in doctrinal matters. Many devout clerics opposed this development but were able to do little to prevent it. They found themselves uncomprehending rebels, frequently at odds with both institutions but unable or unwilling to speak out for fear of threatening national stability and, no doubt, their own careers. In this situation, women were profoundly important to the development of a kind of resistance to the crown's growing control over the Church. Male clerics turned increasingly to the other sex to be the standard bearers of a purer and more disinterested devotion than they were themselves able to uphold.

What male clerics valued in women during this period were the very qualities which had so often rendered them a liability to the Church in previous generations. In times of trial, women's very marginality was useful because it made them less threatening to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities than were men. The fact that they were not expected to write or even to understand theology, for example, set them free from the tedious theological debates of the period and allowed them to write devotional treatises free of much of the scrutiny that male theologians were forced to endure. The fact that they were not taken seriously as religious or temporal leaders meant that they could start no wars, and were thus not the object of the anxiety that male clerics, especially those belonging to secular and mendicant orders, awakened in the minds of the civil authorities. Most importantly, perhaps, the fact that they could not become priests meant that they were not called upon to assume the duties of servants of the State.

These advantages were valuable to women in another way as well. Women's peculiar position during this period of controversy encouraged the recognition and development of their capacity for intimacy with the divine. Their apparent spiritual certainty, as men saw it, their attraction to the religious indifference so well described by Camus, were extremely attractive to men, even the most orthodox clerics, and to a Church eager to exploit women's religious zeal. Let us suppose, then, that in the seventeenth century the Church, perhaps society itself, displaced or projected the more inconvenient aspects of Christian doctrine onto the lives and into the speech of devout women. In doing so, they could preserve the integrity of the original Christian vision of society while avoiding any threat to the existing social and religious order. It was women's marginality, in short, that made them central.

This hypothesis helps to explain some aspects of the response to female spirituality during our period that are otherwise puzzling or mutually contradictory. The stubborn orthodoxy of male clerics, for example, contrasts strangely with their apparent willingness to encourage women to embrace the more exotic - eccentric - forms of speculative mysticism, which the Church traditionally regarded with some reserve and had tried to confine to the monasteries. The 'indifferentism' praised by Camus was the subject of much theological controversy, yet it was often recommended to women by their spiritual directors with little regard for their safety, as this study will show. What if male clerics, unable to practise such detachment themselves, suggested it to women because they longed for some demonstration of the purity of heart which eluded them?

The idea that women were valued for their marginality would also help to explain the intense need many clerics of the period appeared to have had for women's approval and support. It would help to explain the way that even powerful statesmen like Henri IV found it necessary to seek, or to

pretend to seek, the advice of holy women like Marie de Valence (1575-1648).¹¹ It would help to explain why nuns like the women of Port-Royal, in the midst of the fierce theological controversy which surrounded them, could attract dozens of patrons and supporters from the highest ranks of society. In short, it could explain the paradox of the strange insider-outsider status that the devout women of the seventeenth century achieved, or had thrust upon them.

The difficulties of proving such a hypothesis are vast. This study will attempt to examine its operation in microcosm, through the examination of a network of Catholic reformers in Paris whose members exercised an influence on public life out of proportion to their numbers. It concentrates primarily upon a small group of friends, relations, patrons, and clients who began to meet regularly in the late sixteenth century to discuss the works of mystical devotion then being published in Paris. Sometimes referred to as the '*milieu Acarie*', or more broadly as the *dévots*, this circle of associates was closely linked by their interest in mystical religion, as well as by propinquity. Most came from the upper ranks of the Paris bourgeoisie. They were not, as has sometimes been suggested, actively hostile to the crown, but they were suspicious of its activities and feared the effect it might have upon the devotional life and upon the status of the Church as the one faith of the people of France.

The Acarie circle formed the nucleus of what came to be known as the *parti dévot* in the seventeenth century. Two of its associates, in particular, are often cited by political historians: the theologian Pierre de Berulle, and the courtier and crown official Michel de Marillac. The expression '*parti dévot*' suggests a political party or faction and most histories which make reference to it (there are surprisingly few) are interested only its overtly political activities; its influence, for example, upon crown policy; its attempts to manipulate the Gallican Church into accepting the decrees of the Council of Trent; its rejection of the Edict of Nantes. This is not, however, a study of politics. Those people

looking for a detailed account of the political activities of the *dévots* in the formation of either Church or State policy will be disappointed. It is, rather, an examination of the effects of policy upon devotion. It falls into a shadowy category halfway between religious and political history.

Taken together, the individual histories of the members of this network are meant to form a coherent narrative in spite of the frequent shifts from one group or player to another. The narrative recounts a single story: the story of the growing importance of women in the seventeenth-century Gallican Church until the 1660s, and their subsequent troubles at the hands of the State. Female zeal was no longer so valued or needed by the Church once it had reached an accommodation with Louis XIV. Many male clerics were content with this *status quo*. Women were reluctant to give up the voice which they had acquired with such difficulty, so that the last decades of the century saw constant clashes with women on one side and the combined powers of Church and State marshalled against them on the other. The disinterestedness for which they had once been valued had become a weapon to be used against them. A handful of male clerics stood by and tried to help, sometimes paying a terrible price for their loyalty.

Structure and research strategy

The account is divided into two sections. The first section is analytical in emphasis, exploring the themes of the Introduction in greater detail, but remaining general in its scope. The opening chapter describes the political situation in Paris at the dawn of the seventeenth century: the status of the king, the development of the Gallican and ultramontane factions of the Church of France, and the rise of the members of the Acarie circle to a position of prominence under the patronage of Henri IV. The second chapter discusses the development of *dévo*t theology, with a particular emphasis upon the growth of the religious indifferentism alluded to above, and its importance to *dévo*t resistance to

the crown and its authority. The third chapter looks at the status of women in France at the beginning of our period, and shows how *dévot* clerics sought to create new models for women to follow that would help them to circumvent the restrictions placed upon them by the Church and by civil society.

The second section is primarily narrative, and focusses upon the activities of the various members and associates of the Acarie circle. It consists of seven chapters whose purpose is to illustrate the themes of the previous section with concrete examples, examined at length. They are arranged more or less chronologically, from the start of the century with its high hopes for Catholic reform, until its end in the defeat of the *dévot* movement. Over the course of this section, the reader should get a sense of the way *dévot* clerics were forced to struggle to retain the integrity of their spirituality, and of the importance of women to their efforts. It should also emerge that women *dévots* were often in the vanguard of the Catholic reform movement, pushed their sometimes by men, and that they formed its rearguard as well. As the State's control over the Church increased, male clerics either retreated from public life, or accepted the role the State had assigned to them. It was *dévot* women who soldiered on, still carrying the standard of the *dévot* movement. Their enduring resistance finally led them to be perceived, in the last quarter of the century, as heretics and social revolutionaries.

The narrative's coherence derives from the fact that its leading characters were not selected at random (though the story repeated itself often enough that they might well have been); rather, their appearance was conditioned, first, by the nature of the sources used and second, by the connections imposed by blood, social milieu, friendship, and a common role in the public life of the times. In fact, these two elements worked together. The primary sources used here are the letters, the contemporary biographers, and the devotional treatises of the key figures who appear. Over and over again, the

study of a particular member of the Acarie circle led to the discovery that he or she was connected by friendship to another: thus, the study of Pierre de Berulle led to the discovery of his connections with Marillac, Charles de Condren, Saint-Cyran, François de Sales, Vincent de Paul, and Jean Eudes, taking us from the beginning of the century to 1680, the year Eudes died. Exploring these relationships led also to the discovery of the public activities in which these men were involved, and so to a deeper understanding of the crises in *dévo*t history from the beginning to the end of the century. The connections linking *dévo*t women were more difficult to determine. They wrote fewer letters (and more of them have been lost), but here too the links that bound them gradually emerged through the study of their letters, biographies, and devotional writings. Most importantly for the purposes of this study, they shared the spiritual direction of the male clerics cited above, but there were other factors that connected them as well: they sometimes became friends, they exchanged letters of spiritual guidance, and they had an interest in devotion which sometimes ignored the factional lines which divided male clerics. Thus some of the connections between them may surprise the reader: it is not widely known, for example, that the Carmelite Barbe Acarie, close friend of Berulle's for many years, corresponded with Angélique Arnauld of Port-Royal, who in turn wrote to François de Sales and became a close friend of Jeanne de Chantal, foundress of the order of the Visitation.

The method employed here was chosen for three reasons. First, it shows how the same themes worked themselves out repeatedly in the conflicts between the Church and the State throughout the century, even as the players changed. Second, it shifts the focus of attention away from the intricate theological debates of the period and towards the larger issues which lay beneath them. Many historians have led readers to believe that, for example, the ferocity of opposition to Jansenism was

the result of some quality peculiar to Jansenist theology, when in fact other *dévot* sub-factions experienced similar problems. Finally, it serves to show that the difficulties experienced by women in their dealings with the post-Tridentine Church were paralleled by those of men, and perhaps shared a common cause.

The approach has its limitations, of course. The chronological sweep of the story has made it necessary to sacrifice geographical breadth. The provinces are neglected: the men and women who appear here either came from Paris, or ended up there at some point in their lives. This means that one important element of the political mix of the seventeenth century, the battle between the capital and the provinces, does not receive due attention. Nor are the class conflicts of the period, which often found religious expression and which should figure in any large-scale study of the politics of early modern devotion, emphasized here. This study deals for the most part with men and women of the upper bourgeoisie, a few nobles, and the kings of France and their ministers. This is regrettable, yet one valuable insight that does emerge from the approach used here is that the 'centre' was much less compact and united than historians once supposed. Divisions of religious affiliation existed even at the centre, with separate groups forming around personal and family interest, sex, and political allegiance.

Readers should bear in mind the possibility that the recurrence, in the seventeenth century, of a 'radical' element in female spirituality was not so much the result of women's own temperamental inclinations, nor even a rebellious response to the limitations under which they lived, as the result of a complex series of social and political factors: their social status and social roles; their relations with men; and above all the policy decisions and power struggles taking place far above them and showering them with sparks. It is difficult to determine whether this hypothesis is

universally valid. What this study hopes instead to show is that many influential male clerics, indeed the Church itself, both valued and needed women, and that their value was, in part, the direct result of men's own political situation and the peculiar status society imposed on women. Women, in turn, were often able to exploit these elements for their own benefit, opening up a world of theological speculation and religious activism which had previously been closed to them.

Sources

As noted earlier, primary sources for this work were largely drawn from the vast body of the lives and devotional works of the *dévot* network whose parameters are sketched above. The letters and lives of well-known political figures, as well as some treatises by the major political theorists of the day, also played a minor but essential role. All of these were printed sources, some of them first published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some of them first issued or reissued in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Archival materials might have permitted a more detailed examination of the issues raised here, but their use would have imposed an impossible practical burden, scattered as the necessary materials are throughout France. The decision to omit them seemed acceptable in view of the fact that while there are many excellent monographs based upon archival sources of most of the people and events introduced in this work, there are perhaps none which attempt to consider *dévot* women and men from a broad perspective covering the whole of the century.

NOTES

1. Jean-Pierre Camus, *La Carité ou le portrait de la vraie charité, histoire dévote tirée de la vie de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1641), p. 621.
2. See for example Max Weber's *The Sociology of Religion*, which postulates that women might be equal in principle in Judaism or Christianity - equal, that is, before God - this theoretical equality might 'coexist with men's complete monopolization of the priesthood and of the right to active participation in community affairs; only men are admitted to special professional training or assumed to possess the necessary qualifications.'
3. Peter Brown. *The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 434.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
5. Emmanuel Bourassin, *Sainte Genevieve*. (Paris, 1997), p. 42.
6. See Natalie Zeman Davis, 'City Women and Religious Change', which provides a good summary of the major historiographical trends of the 1970s; in Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975, Chapter 3.
7. Sarah Hanley.
8. Robert Muchembled. *Culture populaire et culture des élites dans la France moderne (Xve-XVIIIe siècles)*. Paris: Flammarion, 1978, p. 127.
9. Lucien Febvre, 'Quelques aspects méconnus d'un renouveau religieux en France entre 1590 et 1620', *Annales*, t. 13, no 1 (1958), p. 645.
10. See *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, translated by H.J. Schroeder. Rockford: TAN books, 1978, pp. 232-33, for Tridentine comments on the need for all bishops to live lives that were a 'perpetual sermon'.
11. Henri Bremond. *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*. (Paris, 1967), Vol. 1: *La conquête mystique*, p. 384.

CHRONOLOGY FRANCE AND THE DÉVOTS

- 1088 Foundation of the order of Citeaux by Robert de Molesmes, with the goal of bringing back strict observance, inspired by the Fathers and the Rule of Benedict
- 1115 Foundation by Bernard de Fontaine of the Cistercian branch of the Order of Citeaux, whose profession of faith is found in the *Constitutions de Port Royal*.
- 1204 Foundation of Port-Royal-des-Champs, which was under the jurisdiction of the order of Citeaux
- 1515 Birth of Teresa of Avila (d. 1577)
- 1521 April 15 Sorbonne condemns theses of Luther
- 1523 Simon de Colines publishes Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples' translation of the New Testament (translations forbidden by Sorbonne in 1525); Aug 8 first martyr of the Reform, Augustinian monk Jean Vallière, burnt at stake; he had argued Jesus was conceived like any human being
- 1528 François I announces decision to make Paris his main residence
- 1529 April 17 stake for Louis de Berquin, protégé of the king and his sister Marguerite de Valois; Sorbonne seized him in king's absence; Aug 19 the stake for Miles Regnault, a Lutheran condemned for blasphemy
- 1534 Aug. 13 Vow of Ignatius Loyola at the foot of Montmartre; Oct 17-18th Affair of the Placards: Calvinists fix text of pastor Marcourt on the king's chamber door (he was away); 200 arrested by Parlement and 6 burnt 18th Oct; many others suffered same fate at end of year; Nov. 17 first burning of a printer for heresy, Antoine Augereau
- 1535 Jan 23 first burning of female heretic, Marie La Catelle, school-mistress, who read the Gospel in French to her students; Feb 15 stake for Etienne de La Forge who printed the gospel at his own expense to distribute to the poor
- 1538 Foundation of the Jesuits in Rome by Ignatius Loyola to work for the conversion of idolators and heretics, for the instruction of the faithful, and the education of youth; besides the 3 vows of obedience, they made a 4th, that of special obedience to the Pope; they are introduced to France in 1550
- 1544 Sorbonne publishes first *Index* of forbidden books; Nov 7 creation of the Grand Bureau des Pauvres; François I demands from Parlement assistance for indigents, mendicants, vagabonds, to confide them to the Bureau de la Ville; Aug 3 the stake for printer Michel Vincent; Sept. 13 Pierre Gresteau, another printer, to the stake

- 1547 Edict of Blois creating in Parlement a commission charged with pursuit of protestants, called the *Chambre ardente*
- 1553 Feb first classical French tragedy, *Cléopâtre captive* by Étienne Jodelle, plays before the king
- 1554 Feb 7 clandestine schools, known as *buissonnières*, banned by Parlement
- 1555 Sept implantation of the Reformed Church by the pastor Jean le Maçon de Launay, sieur de La Rivière, who proceeds to baptize first children according to the Calvinist rite
- 1557 Aug 11 exodus of Parisians hearing of the approach of the victorious Spanish army after Saint-Quentin battle; Catherine de Medicis obtains 300 000 livres from the Ville and restores confidence; Sept 4-5 discovery of a protestant assembly during the night, rue Saint-Jacques; Catholics riot against the reformers.
- 1558 May 13 assembly of thousands of reformers at Pré-aux-Clercs to celebrate openly in this period of Rogations; continues in spite of threats from authorities
- 1559 May 25 first Calvinist synod; concludes May 29 with the constitution of the *Eglise réformée de France*; June 21 moderate Catholic *conseillers* having criticized the edict of Écouen setting protestants outside the law, Henri II comes to sit in person to silence opponents; Séguier and Harlay, irreproachable Catholics, defend liberty of Parlement; Anne du Bourg makes bold speech; the king has him arrested and Louis du Faur too; June 30 celebration of marriage of the king's sister to duc de Savoie and his daughter to the king of Spain; there the king mortally injured in a tournament by Montgomery; Dec 23 Anne du Bourg hanged then burnt
- 1560 Order in Parlement for surveillance of population: its members spread through the *quartiers* to assure the policing of consciences and supervise the actions of the *commissars* of Châtelet
- 1561 Oct 12 confrontation between Catholics and Protestants at instigation of a preacher drawing a crowd of 6000 reformers near Saint-Antoine-des-Champs. Dec 27 tumult at Saint-Médard; Catholics attack protestants celebrating in the house of the patriarch, near the church of Saint-Médard; Dec 28 the house burnt by Catholics
- 1562 April 4 chairs and benches in protestant temples of Popincourt and Jérusalem burnt. Massacre of Carmes in France (Serouet); Aug 24 foundation of monastery of Saint John of Avila, cradle of Carmelite reform

- 1563 The Council of Trent decrees, for women's religious orders, the return to strict enclosure, the renunciation of all personal property, an age limit of 16 at least for profession of vows and of 40 for the nomination of an abbess. July 2 the Collège de Clermont is opened
- 1567 Birth of François de Sales at Thorens, near Annecy in the Duchy of Geneva; spends first 6 years with his family; Dec 12 the orientalist Guillaume Postel condemned for heresy; in recognition of his learning he is not burnt but confined to convent of Saint-Martin-des-Champs
- 1568 First monastery of Discalced Carmelites founded at Durvuelo by John of the Cross and Antonio de Jesu
- 1569 June 30 many members of rich protestant family Gastine condemned to death; their house on rue Saint-Denis is torn down and an expiatory cross replaces it
- 1571 Dec 16-19 riot of Catholics against the demolition of the pyramid of the cross of the Gastines demanded by protestants; cross brought to the cemetery of the Innocents
- 1572 Jan 23 Jeanne Frémyot (de Chantal) born; Aug 18 marriage of Henri de Bourbon, king of Navarre, to Marguerite de Valois, sister of Charles IX; the city is filled with protestants, arrived with their leader, and with the ultra-Catholic Guises; Aug 22 assassination attempted on Coligny at Catherine's orders and fails; maddened by this failure she convinces the king to order the massacre of protestants; begins Aug 24 around 4 am; lasts until Aug 30; 2000 protestants killed; France in full War of Religion; death of Pius V; Gregory XIII elected
- 1573-78
F de Sales does his first studies at College of La Roche, then at the college of Annecy, founded 1551 by canon Eustache Chapuys
- 1574 July Capuchins installed in rue Saint-Honoré
- 1575 Birth of Pierre de Bérulle; Henri III succeeds his brother Charles IX; Wars continue; foundation of Neri's Oratorio in Rome
- 1576 June 8 formation of the Ligue Catholique at Péronne: reps at Paris are the président à mortier Pierre Hennequin; the apothecary and grocer Jean de La Bruyère and his son Mathieu, lieutenant at the Châtelet
- 1577 Death of Teresa of Avila

- 1578-88
F de Sales begins 10 years of study at Paris, first at Clermont, then at Sorbonne; studies Latin, Greek, Hebrew; learns theology from Genebrard; also from Maldonat
- 1579 Claude de Grenier appointed bishop of Genève-Annecy
- 1581 birth of Vincent de Paul; birth of Saint-Cyran (Jean du Vergier de Hauranne)
- 1585 Sept. 2 birth of Armand Jean du Plessis (Richelieu); alliance between England and United Provinces (Netherlands); birth of Jansenius (d. 1638)
- 1586-87
F de Sales in spiritual crisis
- 1587 Francis Drake pillages Cadiz; Raleigh founds Virginia colony
- 1588 birth of Charles de Condren; 1588-91 F de Sales in Italy at Padua for studies in civil and canon law; encounters T. Scupoli's *Combat spirituel*, important to him; tormented by predestination issue, he is not satisfied by Augustine and Thomas; turns to Jesuit Molina; Day of the Barricades in Paris; assassination of duc de Guise; Charles-Emmanuel, duc de Savoie, decides to reconquer Geneva; the Armada defeated; 3rd book of Montaigne's *Essais* published
- 1589 Jan death of Catherine de Medicis; Aug. 1 assassination of Henri III; Henri de Navarre becomes by law Henri IV
- 1590 Death of Sixtus V
- 1591 Death of John of the Cross; death of Gregory XIV and Innocent IX; birth of Angélique Arnauld; Henri IV excommunicated; Ligue terror in Paris
- 1592 Siege of Paris by Henri IV; Bérulle begins studies at college of Clermont; F de Sales returns to his family; Benoît de Canfeld publishes *Exercice de la volonté de Dieu*; election of Clement VIII; definitive ed. of Clement's Vulgate
- 1593 F de Sales is named provost of chapel of St Peter at Geneva in exile at Annecy; Henri IV abjures at Saint-Denis
- 1594 March 22 Henri IV enters Paris; Sept. Richelieu enters college of Navarre; Dec. 29 Jesuits expelled from France by Parlement after Jean Châtel's assassination attempt on the king; Poussin the painter born

- 1594-98 F de Sales on mission to Chablais on border of lacLéman
- 1595 Submission of the last ligueurs; Jan. 16 war with Spain begins; Sept. 17 Henri IV is absolved
- 1596 René Descartes born (dies 1650)
- 1597 Bérulle publishes *Bref discours de l'abnégation intérieure*; Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac born (dies 1654)
- 1598 Edict of Nantes signed by Henri IV: religious peace at last; Madame Acarie's *Vrays exercices* published; treaty of Vervins May 2 puts end to war with Spain; death of Philip II of Spain
- 1599 Birth of the "Ligue du Pape"; Bérulle ordained priest; publishes *Traité des énerguènes*; Henri IV bestows the coadjutor's brief of Port-Royal, with rights of succession, on Angélique Arnauld; Oliver Cromwell born (dies 1658)
- 1600 Feb 9 birth of Jean-Joseph Surin; Bérulle assists at the 'conférence contradictoire' that pitches Du Perron against Du Plessis-Mornay; war breaks out between France and Savoie; marriage of Henri IV and Marie de Medici; East India Co. created; Sept 18 edict of reform of University of Paris
- 1601 Jan 17 Paix de Lyon between Henri IV and the duc de Savoie; birth of Louis XIII; Birth of Jean Eudes Nov. 14, in the pays d'Argentan, in Normandy, village of Ri; first French translation of Teresa of Avila by Jean de Brétigny
- 1602 Richelieu begins theological studies; alliance between France and Swiss cantons renewed; Mazarin born; Bérulle in retreat at Verdun; Mère Angélique named abbess for life at Port-Royal; F de Sales's second stay in Paris (9 months); preaches before Henri IV; encounters Bérulle and Mme Acarie; on his return he learns of the death of Mgr Grenier, bishop of Annecy-Geneva; Dec 14 is made bishop in his place; Laurent de Paris's *Palais de l'amour divin* published; French translation of *La perle évangélique*
- 1603 Jan 24 Elizabeth I of England dies; first voyage of Champlain to Canada; Bérulle travels to Spain to fetch Spanish Carmelites
- 1604 Jan 2 Parlement authorizes Jesuits to come back to Paris; institution of the Paulette (tax which ensures right to inherit offices); Sept. 18 Carmelite house opens in Paris; F de Sales encounters J de Chantal first time while preaching Lent at Dijon and becomes her director

- 1605 After brief reign of Leo XI, Paul V made pope; Carmelites founded at Dijon; Cervantes publishes Part I of *Don Quixote*
- 1606 Sept. 14 baptism of Louis XIII; by letters patent, Henri IV names Armand Jean du Plessis bishop of Luçon; Corneille and Rembrandt born
- 1607 Richelieu obtains dispensation from Rome re his age to obtain his bishopric; Navarre made part of France again; Jesuits obtain gov't of Paraguay; Madeleine de Scudéry, proto-feminist, born (dies 1701); Oct. 29 Richelieu 'soutient les actes de théologie en Sorbonne'
- 1608 Birth of Jean-Jacques Olier; F de Sales publishes at Lyon, with the editor Rigaud, rue Mercière, *Introduction à la vie dévote*; Richelieu begins exercise of his episcopal functions; May 12 foundation of the Union évangélique in the Holy Roman Empire; Champlain founds Quebec
- 1609 Bérulle publishes *Discours de controverse*; Canfeld's *Règle de perfection*; Sept. 25: Journée du Guichet, in the course of which Mère Angélique denies her father admission to the Port-Royal enclosure; reform of Fontévrault abbey begins; Kepler publishes *Astronomia nova de motibus stellae martis*; Grotius *Mare liberum*. Creation of Bank of Amsterdam; Foundation of the Sainte Ligue catholique in Europe; start of 12-year respite between Spain and United Provinces; Sorcery trials in the Labord
- 1610 May 14 assassination of Henri IV; foundation of first Carmel of Bordeaux; rise of the Concinis begins; Mme de Chantal becomes Mère de Chantal; as first superior of the Visitation at Annecy is installed in the Maison de la Galerie; in a few years Visitation convents number in the dozens; Galileo invents the telescope; death of Caravaggio
- 1611 Birth of Gaston de Renty; Establishment of the French Oratory; Vincent de Paul makes a retreat under Bérulle's direction; Edmond Richer publishes *De ecclesiastica et politica potestate*; Sully resigns post as surintendant des finances; reign of George-William I, elector of Saxony, begins; war between Denmark and Sweden; at Aix, Peiresc diffuses Galileo's ideas
- 1612 Agitation of the Grands; marriage contracts between Louis XIII and Anne of Austria signed; also those of Elizabeth of France and future Philip IV of Spain; condemnation of Richer's *Libellus*; he is deposed from his office as syndic of Sorbonne
- 1613 Bull of institution of the Oratoire by Pope: does not retain possibility of reforming parish clergy; Concini named Maréchal of France; Mantua crisis; ascent of Russian Romanovs; birth of La Rochefoucauld

- 1614 Oct 26 majority of Louis XIII; Oct 27 Estates General open; Bérulle made "perpetual visitor" of the Carmelites; Teresa of Avila is beatified
- 1615 Feb 17 the Clergy demand the reception of Trent by the Estates General; Feb 23 Estates General close; Oratoire makes a vow of servitude to Christ; Jean Eudes to collège du Mont, at Caen, a Jesuit school; Nov 28 Anne and Louis marry; July 2 J.-J. Surin enters noviciate among Jesuits of Bordeaux
- 1616 Marie de Medici concludes Peace of Loudon; Nov 24 Richelieu enters king's Council; Discalced Carmelites installed at Caen; at around this time, a widow of Ri, Mme de Sacy, chose Bérulle as her spiritual guide; publication at Lyon of *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*; Paul V condemns the system of Copernicus and demands that Galileo recant; Shakespeare and Cervantes die
- 1617 24 April assassination of Concini by Louis XIII; Luynes becomes his favourite; Marie de Medici is exiled at Blois, then Angoulême; Richelieu accompanies her, then voluntarily exiles himself to his diocese June 11; the king assigns this as punishment four days later; June 25 the goods of the Church are restored in Béarn; July 8 Leonora Galigai executed; revolt in the Valteline begins; Père Joseph crosses Europe to try to organize a crusade; he founds the congregation of the Filles du Calvaire
- 1618 Jean Eudes at the Congrégation de Notre-Dame; death of Madame Acarie; Mère Angélique is sent to the abbey of Maubuisson to reform it; beginning of 30 years war; F de Sales' last stay in Paris, until 1619; he accompanies the cardinal of Savoie to ask the hand of the young Christine of France for the prince of Piedmont, youngest son of the duke; a group in Paris wants him to stay as coadjutor and future archbishop, but he refuses; the king exiles Richelieu to Avignon; defenestration of Prague
- 1619 Bérulle on mission to Marie de Medici; opposition of the Carmelites of Bordeaux to vow of servitude on the grounds that it was designed for another order; François de Sales passes through Maubuisson; Richelieu recalled from Avignon to help with conclusion of treaty of Angoulême; Frederic elected king of Bohemia; Aug 28 Ferdinand II is elected Emperor; Dec. Louis XIII promises to help him with Protestants of Bohemia; Italian philosopher Luciolio Vanini condemned to stake for impiety; works of mystic Henri Herp published in French
- 1620 Paul V confirms the powers of Bérulle as Carmelite superior; Bérulle meets Saint-Cyran; beginning of relations between Mère Angélique and Jeanne de Chantal; July-August new war between mother and son; August treaty of Angers concluded with Richelieu's help; Oct. expedition of Louis XIII against protestants of Béarn; Dec. 24 illegal assembly of protestants of La Rochelle and military organization; Valteline occupied by Spanish; Bacon begins *Novum Organum*; Mayflower pilgrims reach America

- 1621 Bérulle finishes the first 6 discourses of *Grandeurs de Jésus*; Jean Eudes receives the tonsure and minor orders; Teresa of Avila is canonized; Dec. 14 Death of Luynes; death of Philip III of Spain; Franco-Spanish treaty at Madrid re the Valteline concluded but not enforced; war between Spain and UP; Rubens begins series on Marie's life for Luxembourg; expedition of Louis XIII in south west France
- 1622 June François de Sales goes to Italy; later to France, where, in Avignon, the Duke of Savoie contracts an alliance with Louis XIII against Spain; goes to join Christine de France at Lyon, where she has made him her almoner; death of François de Sales after a last interview with J de Chantal (beatified in 1661; sainted in 1665; universal dr of Church, 1877); Richelieu elected to the Sorbonne and made a Cardinal; Oct 18 peace of Montpellier; Edict of Nantes renewed and strongholds of La Rochelle and Montauban confirmed; Paris made an archbishopric with Jean-François Gondi first archbishop; the Lignes Grises of the Protestants renounces suzerainty over the Catholic Valteline and protestantism there is banished; Spanish protection of Valteline; Molière born; Gregory XV founds *Sacra Congregatio de propaganda fide*
- 1623 Bérulle publishes *Grandeurs de Jésus*; Jean Eudes at the Oratoire in Paris; Return of Mère Angélique to Port-Royal; collaborates in reform of many monasteries; construction of Port-Royal of Paris begins; Schomberg replaced by La Vieuville as sup. of finances; Ligue of Avignon between France, Savoy, Venice for the Valteline and Grisons; birth of Blaise Pascal; Alumbrados of Spain condemned for heresy of illuminism, alarming French clergy
- 1624 April 28 Richelieu enters the Conseil as Cardinal and in August becomes nominal head after arrest of La Vieuville; Bérulle negotiates marriage of Henrietta of France because the Pope trusts him but dislikes the marriage; beginning of M. Angélique's relations with Mgr Zamet, Bishop of Langres; the Valteline seized for Spain again; P. Marsène writes *L'Impiété des déistes* against libertines; first ed. of *Lettres* of Guez de Balzac
- 1625 The Assembly of the Clergy: 2 libellous works censored; Bishop of Chartres (Léonor d'Estampes) drafts proposition which states that Kings were ordained by God and were gods; that Louis XIII was the greatest of monarches, Richelieu the greatest of ministers; Schomberg greatest of soldiers; Bérulle finds himself under attack for objecting to this, partly thanks to the work of the Carme fathers; the Carmelites of Morlais refuse to submit to the orders of Pope and are excommunicated; Sorbonne censures the *summa* of P. Garrasse; rebellion in Rohan begins; death of James I; marriage of Charles I and Henrietta; Bérulle is Henrietta's confessor; publishes *l'Élévation sur sainte Madeleine*; M. Vincent founds the Congrégation de la mission; Dec 20 Jean Eudes ordained; transfer of 15 religious of Port-Royal des Champs to Paris; Richelieu begins France's intervention in the 30 years war

- 1626 Feb 5 peace of La Rochelle and renewal of Peace of Montpellier; March 5 negotiation with Spain; treaty of Monçon (re the Valteline) with Spain; the Santarelli affair disrupts royal relations with Jesuits; Mgr Spada (papal nuncio) much preoccupied with the rights of pontifical and royal authority; Execution of Chalais; Aug 19 Gaston marries Mlle de Montpensier; Oct Richelieu made grand maître and surintendant de navigation et commerce in France; Dec meeting of the Assembly of Notables in the Tuileries; death of Francis Bacon; Jeanne de Chantal goes to Lorraine
- 1627 Breakdown of relations between England and France; April 30 Bérulle made a Cardinal at last (thanks to Louis XIII's support); July 29 English disembark at Ile de Ré; alliance of Spain and France against England; siege of La Rochelle begins Sept as La Rochelle relieved by Rohan; Pope entrusts Bérulle with religious missions; Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet born; plague at Argentan; Jean Eudes goes home to help; Port-Royal passes from the jurisdiction of the Citeaux Order to that of the archbishop of Paris; foundation of the Company of the Holy Sacrament; Philippe-Emmanuel Gondi (former général of the Galleys) enters the Oratoire; succession of Mantua opened and duc de Nevers designated heir; Kepler's tables written
- 1628 Committee of royal censors formed to give imprimatur to books before they could be published in France; Oct 28 La Rochelle capitulates; Aug 23 Buckingham assassinated; Harvey publishes *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animabilis*
- 1629 Jan 13 Richelieu advises king to intervene in Mantua and garrison installed there in March; publication of Bérulle's *Vie de Jésus*; Louis signs defensive treaty against Spain April 19; and one with England April 24; Bérulle opposed and this completes his disgrace. Oct 20 death of Pierre de Bérulle; Condren becomes the head of the Oratoire; office of abbess of Port-Royal made elective at the request of M. Angélique; Richer made to recant his radical Gallican conciliarism shortly before he dies; Marillac's Code in June; Nov 21 Richelieu becomes one of principal ministers of state and named duke and peer Nov 26; Borromini begins Barberini palace; English take Quebec; end of protestant wars in France
- 1630 P. Gibieuf publishes *Libertate*, in support of Augustinian view of free will; Mère Marie Geneviève Le Tardif is elected abbess of Port Royal (until 1636); July 18 fall of Mantua; Victor-Amadeus, first husband of Christine of France, succeeds as duke of Savoie; Nevers succeeds as duke of Mantua; Nov 11 Day of Dupes ending in exile of Marie de Medici and reinforcement of absolute character of monarchy by Louis XIII and Richelieu; French take Pignerol, then Savoie; papal envoy Mazarin brings about peace treaty between Spain and France under walls of Casal; colony of Maine created; Dutch take Pernambouc, Surinam, Caracas

- 1631 Gaston breaks with Richelieu; plague at Caen; Marie de Medici prisoner at Compiègne, then flees to Spanish Netherlands in July where Gaston joins her before going to Lorraine; Italian question and succession of Mantua settled in June; Franco-Swedish alliance; Renaudot founds *La Gazette de France*; Balzac writes *Le Prince* defending sovereignty of kings
- 1632 First missions of Jean Eudes; Jan 3 second marriage of Gaston to Marguerite de Vaudémont; May 11 Louis de Marillac executed for his part in Day of Dupes; Gaston's expedition to Languedoc; Oct 30 Montmorency executed at Toulouse; Gaston flees to Sp. Neth; Christina succeeds father as queen of Sweden (aged 6); Vincent's Prêtres de la mission move to priory of Saint-Lazare; Saint-Cyran's thesis exalting diocesan sacerdotal function at expense of Regulars published; P. Annat attacks P. Gibieuf's Augustinianism in a refutation of his book printed in Cahors; Capuchin Arcange Ripault publishes an attack upon 'illumination' of Parisian confessors
- 1633 Foundation of Institute of Holy Sacrament at instigation of Mgr Zamet; M. Angélique's relations with Saint-Cyran deepen; Godeau publishes *Oeuvres chrétiennes*; Callot publishes *Les Misères de la guerre*; trial of Galileo: he retracts; Sept 20 treaty of Charme between Charles IV and Louis XIII; Sept 26 Louis enters Nancy
- 1634 Trial of Urbain Grandin at Loudon: he is burnt; Dec Surin sent as exorcist to Loudun; Foundation of the Filles de la charité by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac
- 1635 Richelieu's nephew Fs de Vignerot général des galères; foundation of Co française des Iles d'Amérique; French occupy Guadeloupe; May 19 Fr declares war on Spain; May 30 peace of Prague between Emperor and Lutheran electors; Saint-Cyran becomes director at Port-Royal
- 1636 June, Révolte des Croquants; Corneille publishes *Le Cid*; return of M. Angélique to Port-Royal, the Institute of Holy Sacrament not proving viable; becomes novice mistress and takes M. Singlin as confessor on advice of Saint-Cyran; Mère Agnès Arnauld is elected abbess (until 1642); complot d'Amiens against Richelieu; Boileau born (d. 1711); Harvard founded; Surin composes *Triomphe de l'amour*
- 1637 Eudes writes *La vie et le royaume de Jésus dans les âmes chrétiennes*; Descartes writes *Discours de la méthode*; first solitaries installed near Port-Royal; birth of Ann-Marie Martinozzi, Mazarin's niece and Port-Royal sympathizer; defeat of the Croquants; Aug Anne of Austria's conspiracy; Dec 9 P. Caussin tries to persuade Louis to get rid of Richelieu; Louis consecrates realm to the Virgin Dec. 10; French reversals in the Valteline

- 1638 Feb 10 renewal of Louis XIII's vow; May 14 arrest and imprisonment of Saint-Cyran, detained until 1643; death of Jansenius; chair to debate theological controversy founded at Collège de Navarre by Richelieu; siege war in Picardy; Sept 5 birth of Louis XIV; Cinq-mars plot begins; birth of Malebranche (d. 1715); petites écoles at Port-Royal; Vincent founds the Enfants Trouvés; duc de La Valette flees to England; Japan closes its doors to west; Dec 18 death of P. Joseph
- 1639 July revolt of the Va-nu-pieds in Normandy (a peasant revolt against a high salt tax); crushed in Nov; Savoy-Piedmont in open revolt against duchess (Christine de France); revolt of Scots against Charles; Arras taken by French Aug 10; Dutch fleet defeats Sp fleet before Dover; birth of Racine (d. 1699)
- 1641 Dec 29 foundation of seminary of Vaugirard by Olier, future curé of Saint-Sulpice
- 1640 Jean Eudes superior of the Oratoire of Caen; publication of Jansenius's *Augustinus*, which Urban VIII later condemns; Richelieu founds academy at Richelieu; Catalonia-France alliance; start of English Revolution; duc of Anjou (Monsieur) born Sept
- 1641 Death of Condren; Bourgoing elected head of the Oratory; Jean Eudes meets Marie des Vallées: founds Notre-Dame de Refuge at Caen; Olier establishes a settlement at Vaugirard; Treaty of Paris between Louis XIII and Charles IV of Lorraine; Richelieu publishes *Mirame*, with help of Desmarets; Descartes' *Méditations*
- 1642 Mère Angélique is elected abbess again (until 1654); Revolt of London; Richelieu, *Europe*, with Desmarets; Isaac Newton born; Hobbes writes *De Cive*; Galileo dies; *Augustinus* condemned by Pope; Feb 15 M. Vincent establishes a seminary at Collège des Bons-Enfants; March 13 Treaty between Cinq-Mars and Spain; July 3 death of Marie de Medici in exile at Cologne; Olier's Vaugirard becomes seminary and Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice; Antoine Arnauld publishes *Théologie morale des jésuites*; May 23 Richelieu dictates his will; dies Dec 4; Dec 5 Mazarin enters the King's Council; conspiracy of Cinq-Mars and De Thou
- 1643 March 19 Jean Eudes leaves the Oratory to found Congrégation de Jésus et Marie at Caen; May 14 death of Louis XIII; Anne of Austria regent until 1651; May publication of Antoine Arnauld's *De la fréquente communion*; death of Saint-Cyran; Oct riot drives Queen Anne from Louvre to the Palais-Royal; Dec duel for dsse de Longueville and the duc de Guise mortally wounds Maurice de Coligny; 1643-51 François Eudes de Mézeray, brother of Jean, publishes his *Histoire de France*
- 1644 Pope Innocent X elected; Dec 13 death of Jeanne de Chantal at Moulins; opening in the tennis court of Mesayers of the Illustrious Théâtre of Madeleine Béjart et Jean-Baptiste Poquelin dit Molière, protégés of the duc d'Orléans

- 1647 Port-Royal becomes officially Port-Royal du Saint-Sacrament; Marguerite-Marie Alacoque born
- 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, bringing an end to the 30 Years War; but France's war with Spain continues; Jan 15 lit de justice: forced registration by parlement of a series of fiscal edicts; avocat général Omer Talon criticizes gov't; Jan 16 the lit terminated by Parlement with support of Grand Conseil, Chambre des comptes, and Cour des aides; Jan 27 establishment of the Académie de peinture et sculpture by Le Brun and Le Sueur; May 13 four sovereign courts meet and opposition to crown increases; first public celebration of the feast of the Heart of Mary; some religious are returned to the Port-Royal des Champs house, thanks to the work of the solitaries, to relieve the house in Paris; Aug 26 new Day of the Barricades and beginning of the Fronde: lasts until 1652-53; Bossuet's first public speech entitled *Soumission au Roi*; Jeanne Guyon born in Montargis (J. Bouvier de la Mothe, of Claude Bouvier and Marie Ozon)
- 1649 Flight of court to Saint-Germain-en-Laye; Mazarin's opponents meet; Conti at head of Paris's army; Condé's royal troops blockade the capital; Sept bankruptcy of hôtel de Ville in Paris, bringing riots; death of M. de Renty; beginning of publication of *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus*, by Mlle Scudéry; Charles I of England decapitated
- 1650 Jan 18 arrest of Condé, Conti, Longueville on Mazarin's orders; Mazarin refuses Gondi a cardinal's hat; Gondi intrigues and brings together Fronde of princes and parlementaires; foundation of the seminary at Coutances by J. Eudes; Jeanne Bouvier spends brief time with the Ursulines
- 1651 Notre-Dame du Refuge becomes the order of Notre-Dame de Charité; Jean Eudes preaches at Paris (Saint-Sulpice)
- 1652 Eudes redraws the *Constitutions* of his congregation; Jeanne Bouvier with the Benedictines of Notre-Dame des Anges, at request of duchesse de Montbazon
- 1653 Eudes founds seminary and college of Lisieux; end of the Frondes for good
- 1654 Eudes' *Contrat de l'homme avec Dieu par le saint baptême*; June 16 consecration of Louis XIV at Rome; Mère Marie Suireau elected abbess Port Royal until 1658; De Préville, s.j. writes *La naissance du jansénisme*, 1654
- 1655 Jeanne Bouvier with Ursulines again watched over by her half-sister; April 13 Louis tells parlementaires they must obey him; 'flagellation' session
- 1656 Foundation of Hôpital général to combat mendicancy; death of Marie des Vallées; *Provinciales* begin publication, and continue until 1657; Antoine Arnauld's defense

of Jansenius condemned in Paris by the Faculty of Theology; Jan 31 Arnauld stricken from the list of doctors at Sorbonne; Claude Bouvier receives Henrietta of France, Q of England, passing through Montargis

- 1657 Foundation by Eudes of the seminary of Rouen; death of M. Olier
- 1658 Molière goes to Paris; M. Agnès abbess again, until 1661
- 1660 June 3-9 marriage of Louis XIV and Marie-Thérèse of Spain; July 19 Molière performs *Les précieuses ridicules* before the King; death of Vincent de Paul; dissolution of the Company of the Holy Sacrament; Jean Eudes preaches at Paris (Quinze-Vingts; Saint-Germain-des Près)
- 1661 March 8-9 death of Mazarin; March 10 Louis XIV announces his personal government; July Assembly of the clergy demands that all ecclesiastics, including female religious, should sign a "formulary" condemning the 5 propositions drawn from Jansenius; Aug 6 death of Mère Angélique; Sept 5 Louis XIV arrests Fouquet; Mère Madeleine de Ligny is elected abbess of Port-Royal until 1709; new claims made for papal infallibility at Sorbonne; Dec Pierre de Marca intercedes for Gallican position; Jeanne Bouvier's cousin visits and introduces her to works of François de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal
- 1662 Jan ultramontane theses at Jesuit college of Clermont; Crown policy to ultramontanists reversed thanks to Marca's suggestions (does not bring peace for the Jansenists); the Créquy affair; the king begins to threaten armed attack against Rome in August
- 1663 Jeanne Bouvier stays in Paris briefly
- 1664 Aug twenty-eight religious of Port-Royal are transferred to various convents; Jeanne Bouvier marries Jacques Guyon, sgr of Chesnoy and Champoulet, son of a builder of the canal of Briare, 22 years her elder; Colbert's fiscal measures reduce her husband's income
- 1665 Birth of J Guyon's first child, Armand-Jacques; Jacques Guyon goes to stay w. duchesse de Longueville to straighten out his finances
- 1666 Jan 2 approval of Notre-Dame de Charité (Eudes' home for repentant women) by Pope Alexander VII; Eudes' *Le bon confesseur* published; sharing of goods between the houses of Port-Royal at Paris and the Champs; from then on their destinies diverge; at Paris, they submit, at the Champs they resist; Mme Guyon goes to join her husband in Paris and falls ill

- 1667 Eudes' foundation of the seminary of Évreux; J Guyon and husband back to Montargis; her mother dies in July; her father shelters Fouquet's mother and his daughter, wife of Armand de Béthune, duc de Charost, exiled since 1664; the duchess, mystically inclined, grows close to J Guyon
- 1668 Sept 16 signature of the Paix de l'Église; birth of Mme Guyon's 2nd son, Armand-Claude; she gets to know a Récollet, Archange Enguerrand, and M. Geneviève Granger; she turns to "oraison de foi" and salesian abandon, but takes up excessive mortification
- 1669 Mère Marie du Fargis is elected abbess at Port-Royal (Champs) until 1678; birth of Mme Guyon's daughter Marie-Anne; travels to Paris with husband
- 1670 First ed. of Pascale's *Pensées*; Eudes' Foundation of the seminary of Rennes; Guyons travel to Orléans; she makes pilgrimage to Ardillières; in Sept. her 3 children get smallpox, then she does; younger son dies 20 october; Bossuet made tutor to the Grand Dauphin
- 1671 Jean Eudes preaches at Versailles; Mme Guyon meets P. La Combe, Barnabite; Jacques Bertot, M. Granger's friend, arrives at Montargis; he becomes Mme Guyon's director
- 1672 Colbert proclaims that in future no charges of sorcery to be accepted by parlement; first liturgical feast of the Heart of Jesus celebrated; J Guyon in Paris to consult Bertot; retreat at Ben. abbey of Malnoue where she sees Bertot again; her father dies June 1 before she can see him; her daughter dies 4 June; on advice of M. Granger she mystically marries the Enfant Jésus
- 1673 Monastery of Notre-Dame de Charité founded by Eudes at Rennes; Eudes preaches at Saint-Germain-en-Laye; J Guyon pilgrimage to Ste Reine de Bourgogne (near Semur-en-Auxois), to bear children; Marguerite-Marie Alacoque has first revelations of the Sacred Heart
- 1674-79
Eudes falls into disgrace; J Guyon bears 4th child, Jean-Baptiste-Denys; death of M. Granger; J Guyon's husband in financial scandal
- 1675 J Guyon's period of secheresse begins (7 years long); she begins relations with a Jansenist but later breaks with him.
- 1676 Eudes founds Monastery of Notre-Dame de Charité at Hennebont, at Vannes; last mission of Jean Eudes (at Saint-Lô); J Guyon's 5th child, a girl, born; her husband dies shortly after

- 1677 J Guyon in Paris to see Bertot and make a retreat
- 1678 Mère Angélique Arnauld d'Andilly elected abbess at the Champs until 1684; Publication of the *Princesse des Clèves*; April 15 death of the Dsse de Longueville; J Guyon moves away from in-law's house
- 1679 End of the Paix de l'Église: persecutions of the Champs begin again; new order to remove postulants and pensionnaires; are forbidden to receive new professed sisters; there were then 72 professed choir nuns and 20 converse sisters; P. La Combe made superior of Barnabite house 1678 at Thonon; Mme Guyon corresponds with him
- 1680 Aug 19 death of Jean Eudes; J Guyon's aridity ends; is haunted by idea of a mission at Geneva; dreams of it and suggests it to Bishop (Jean d'Arenthon d'Alex); he sees in her a means of realising project in his heart, a house of "Nouvelles Catholiques" at Gex; Affair of Poisons begins with arrests
- 1681 Death of J Guyon's confessor Berthot; she leaves Montargis for Paris and confides to Denis Huguet, conseiller au Parlement and her husband's cousin, the care of her children; reserves for herself and daughter 15 000 livres p.a; leaves for Savoie; July arrives at Gex and has difficult relations with the Soeurs de la Propagation de la Foi; Bishop of Geneva sends La Combe to reassure her and she makes him her director
- 1682 Gallican Articles proclaimed in Assembly of the Clergy; J Guyon leaves her sons in m-in-law's custody; she refuses to settle in Gex; her daughter contracts small pox and is cured by La Combe; writes *Torrents spirituels* under inner dictation; becomes ill herself and enters new phase of mysticism, 'état d'enfance et communication en silence'
- 1683 M-M Alacoque's director, P. François-Ignace Rolin, stays at Paray for the first time (until 1684); then does his third year of probation; J Guyon takes up the apostolate for 'saint abandon', which worries the authorities; goes to Turin under pressure, where she spreads her teachings
- 1684 Marie du Fargis is elected abbess of Port-Royal until 1689; La Combe asks J Guyon back to Paris; she stops at Grenoble first and takes up her teaching again; reaches numerous communities; has differences with the général of the Chartreux; writes *Moyen court et très facile de faire oraison*
- 1685 Rolin returns to Paray and urges Marguerite-Marie to write her life; Oct 17 Louis XIV signs revocation of the Edict of Nantes; J Guyon goes to Marseilles, driven away, and to Nice; April 18 to Gênes; April 20, Verceil; June 3 is forbidden to go to Gex by Bp of Geneva

- 1686 Rolin leaves Paray in the autumn before learning of Marguerite-Marie's memoir; she ceases to write after he leaves; J Guyon leaves for Turin, Chambéry, and Grenoble; returns to Paris in July; rents house at the cloister of Notre-Dame and sees her relations, dsse de Béthune, Beauvillier, Chevreuse, Colbert's daughters and their husbands (who were Beauvilliers and Chevreuse)
- 1687 An anti-mystical movement develops following Molinos's trial at Rome; colleagues of La Combe, jealous of his success as preacher, use this against him; J Guyon's half-brother involves himself at head of this plot; La Combe is said to be in contact w. Molinos, is forbidden to preach; Sept 15 he preaches sermon to the Augustines and is arrested by letter of cachet, interned at Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne, then at the Bastille, Orléans, Lourdes; J Guyon refuses to marry her daughter to marquis de Champvallon, nephew of abp of Paris; she is the object of a letter of cachet at the abp's request, for quietism
- 1688 Jan 29 J Guyon interned with the Visitandines; in July her family presses her to consent to the marriage but she refuses; begins to write her autobiography; her friends intervene on her behalf with Mme de Maintenon and she is set free Sept 13.; Oct. J Guyon meets Fénelon at dsse de Béthune's; they correspond
- 1689 Mère Racine is elected abbess of Port-Royal; Aug 16 Fénelon named précepteur of Bourgogne, grandson of Louis XIV; J Guyon marries her daughter to comte de Vaux, dsse de Béthune's younger brother, and lives with them 2 years in the country
- 1691 J Guyon back in Paris exercising apostolate in small group of friends and at St-Cyr, where Mme de Maintenon has brought her
- 1692 Mme de Maintenon feels spied upon by court enemies; becomes uneasy w. J Guyon's teachings
- 1693 March Mme de Maintenon asks J Guyon not to return to Saint-Cyr and distances herself from Fénelon; the affair becomes public; J Guyon's orthodoxy called into question; her writings submitted to Bossuet; he is first favourable, then with Mme de Maintenon's influence he hesitates and becomes hostile
- 1694 Jan 30 Bossuet questions Mme Guyon; March 4 definitive judgment condemning the principle of *pur amour* and the *état passif* as incompatible with virtues of morality and theology; June 10 Mme Guyon asks to be examined on faith and morals, carried out at 'Entretiens d'Issy' by a number of theologians and eminent priests; Fénelon writes numerous memoirs to support her; in autumn J Guyon writes her *Justifications*, in which she assembles mystical texts in her own support; Oct 16 Archbishop of Paris condemns *Moyen court* and *Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, although approved at first; meanwhile she takes up a mystical alliance

- with St Michael and establishes the order of 'Associés de l'Enfant Jésus', divided into 'Christofflets' and 'Michelins', the latter practicing spirit of childhood and abandon
- 1695 Feb Fénelon named archbishop of Cambrai and leaves the court; March 10 34 articles of Issy signed, published in 3 pastoral instructions of April 16, 25, and Nov 21, condemning writings of J Guyon and a work of P. La Combe; April 12, 14, 15 Bossuet tries to get J Guyon to say that her writings heretical, but she refuses; July 2 Bossuet attests to her orthodoxy in a document, then attempts to take it back and replace with a vaguer one; J Guyon attempts to flee to England or Lourdes to be near P. La Combe but takes refuge in Paris at fbg Saint-Antoine, then near St-Germain-l'Auxerrois; Nov 30 buys a house at Popincourt; Dec 27 is sought by police, arrested, and interned at Vincennes; all her papers taken and Bossuet makes her captivity rigorous as possible
- 1696 Dec 31 1695 to April 5 1696, La Reynie puts J Guyon through 9 interrogations; Noailles, named Archbishop of Paris, intervenes in her favour; April 18, 20, 27 is interrogated by Pirot; June 9 her doctrine and relations with La Combe attacked; Aug 28 Noailles makes her sign an act of submission and obtains her transfer; Oct 9 order to transfer her to Sisters of St-Thomas-de-Villeneuve, where she arrives Oct 16
- 1697 J Guyon manages to correspond w. Chevreuse; follows development of the *Maximes des saints* affair; this the book in which Fénelon assembles theses opposing pur amour to the "quietism" condemned by the Holy See; his work too is condemned at Rome
- 1698 March 20 Bossuet sends copies of La Combe's letters to Rome, saying they show moral faults; April La Combe is sent from Lourdes to Vincennes; May 14 Noailles gives J Guyon a compromising letter of La Combe's; she questions its authenticity, saying it was written in prison under constraint or that he has gone mad; she requests a confrontation which is not granted; June 4 she is transferred to the Bastille; June 26 Bossuet distributes *Relation sur le Quiétisme*, in which she is presented as a near-lunatic and her relations w. Fénelon ridiculed; he exploits her autobiographical confidences given under seal of the confessional; she becomes gravely ill
- 1699 J Guyon's death announced in Jan, but she survives; March 12 papal brief *Cum alias* condemns Fénelon's *Maximes des Saints* in nuanced terms; the pope is resigned to this for political reasons under pressure from Louis XIV; Fénelon submits; moved by Fénelon's attitude, the Pope considers making him a cardinal, but decides against it not to distress Louis XIV
- 1700 Mère Racine dies; Mère Élisabeth Boulart de Ninvilliers elected abbess of Port-Royal; Bossuet's official declaration to the Assembly of the Clergy marking the end of the quietist affair, but Mme Guyon still secretly imprisoned

- 1701 May: Consider freeing J Guyon, as no reason to keep her in prison; Bossuet is opposed, according to Mme de Maintenon
- 1703 Jan her children allowed to see J Guyon; she is weak and becomes ill; Bossuet, near his end, no longer opposes her liberation; March 24 she leaves the Bastille with her son who has obtained permission to take charge of her for six months, on condition that she has "aucune communication de vive voix ou par écrit avec qui que soit"; she goes to her son Armand-Jacques at St-Martin-de-Suèvres near Blois under surv. of Bp of Blois; her term is renewed indefinitely
- 1704 Bossuet dies
- 1706 At death of superior at Port-Royal the religious are prevented from carrying out a new election; J Guyon spends 3 months at Forges near Suèvres, then buys house at Blois where she remains till her death, grouping around her friends who admire her pur amour doctrine; Fénelon still admires her and sends her choice disciples, including his nephew Gabriel-Jacques, mqs de Fénelon. J Guyon's community consists of Fr Caths, German, English, Dutch prots, and pietists and Scottish Jacobites; has abundant correspondance (until 1712)
- 1709 Oct 27 expulsion of the last religious from Port-Royal-des-Champs
- 1710 Destruction of the Port-Royal-des-Champs buildings
- 1713 Arrival at Blois of Andrew-Michael Ramsay, convert to Catholicism (in 1711) in Fénelon's entourage; he becomes J Guyon's secretary; plays part in establishment of French Free-Masons
- 1714 Death of Beauvilliers
- 1715 Jan 6 death of Fénelon; Oct 1 death of Louis XIV
- 1717 March: J Guyon ill but survives 3 months; at her side are mqs de Fénelon and Ramsay, and 3 Scots friends; in June makes will in which she swears to her orthodoxy; dies in peace June 9 at 11:30 pm; buried in the cloister of Récollets at Blois; Mqs de Fénelon receives mission to take her heart to Paris

1/ THE PARTI DÉVOT AND THE STATE, 1590-1610

'[J]'essayois (selon le peu que Dieu a mis en moi) de servir au Royaume de *JÉSUS-CHRIST* dans le Royaume de Vostre Majesté.'

'Qu'on ne procuroit point l'avancement de la Religion Catholique en aigrissant l'esprit des Princes & des Magistrats...Que la France s'en souviendroit plus d'un siècle.'**

The Struggle for Control

After many years of battling to establish his right to succeed to the French throne, Henri IV (1553-1610) finally rode triumphantly into Paris in 1594. He arrived to the sound of an enthusiastic welcome, one which many of his former enemies were eager to join. The city had once been a hotbed of Catholic reaction and anti-Bourbon dissent. Now, even the city fathers were delighted to receive him:

Messieurs les Prevost des Marchans et eschevins de ceste ville de Paris, desirans faire conoigstre au Roy Nostre souverain Seigneur l'obéissance que son peuple desiroit luy porter et continuer, luy feirent ouverture des portes de ceste Ville pour le recevoir en cestedicte Ville...Et par toutes les rues où Sa Majesté passa, tant en allait à ladicte église de Nostre-Dame (en laquelle fut chanté le canticque de *Te Deum laudamus*), tout le peuple ne fait que acclamations et applaudissement de joye.¹

The king's welcome was, however, conditional. In order to secure the loyalty of his subjects, he was forced to make a number of concessions to the Catholic Church. He had to promise to abjure Protestantism and to be received back into the Catholic faith, and to accept the decrees of the Council of Trent as French law, a promise included in his coronation oath:

* Pierre de Bérulle, Dédication to Louis XIII, in *Grandeurs de Jésus*, in *Oeuvres complètes du Cardinal de Bérulle* (Montsoul: Maison d'Institution de l'Oratoire, 1960; facsimile of the 1644 edition) T. 1, p. 429-30.

**J.-A. de Thou, *L'Histoire universelle de J.-A. de Thou. Depuis 1543 jusqu'en 1607*, p. 405.

CHAPTER 1

Moy Henry, par la grâce de Dieu Roy de France...reconnoissant l'Eglise Catholique...prometz à bien et jure garder, observer et entretenir tout ce qui a esté arresté et déterminé par les saints Conciles, Canons et Constitutions²

This was the most important of the conditions imposed upon him. The French would not have consented to his accession unless he had agreed to abjure. But there were other concerns that were of nearly equal importance.

First among his potential opponents were the popes. Rome might yet take action against him if he failed to observe the terms of his reception. The popes still possessed certain indirect powers over the Catholic kings of Europe, including the right to release Catholic subjects from their obedience to a 'tyrannical' king.³ Thoughts of this possibility were, no doubt, uppermost in Henri's mind. The knowledge that Clement VII had released the English from obedience to Henry VIII had acted as a restraint upon Catholic princes ever since. The popes also had the right to excommunicate the king for any defiance in matters of doctrine, equally important to Henri IV as he knew his Catholic subjects would not endure his excommunication. They would have regarded an excommunicated king in the same light as a Protestant one. All his subjects took his religious views with great seriousness because under the conditions in force since the Peace of Augsburg, a king's religion was thought to determine that of his people.

But it was not only Rome that the king must placate. He was forced to walk a fine line between a number of interest groups in his own country, in order to ensure his safety and his control of the throne. He knew that among the most important issues before him in the early days of his reign were the proclamation of the Edict of Nantes, and the ratification of the decrees of the Council of Trent. The former would please his Protestant subjects while outraging Catholics. The latter was

THE PARTI DÉVOT

regarded by informed Catholics as essential. Meanwhile, the king knew that his predecessor had been assassinated over his attempts to find a middle ground between Protestant and Catholic demands.

Some among his subjects were more vocally concerned with the protection of Catholic interests, and others were more interested in the integrity of France as a nation. The former, known collectively as the *bons catholiques*, were themselves a mixed group, comprising some nobles, some of the clergy, a portion of the middle and artisanal classes, and much of the peasantry, who had no voice but who could not be wholly disregarded. Thus Henri must not anger his nobles, who had so recently demonstrated their readiness to revolt against royal domination. He must convince his Catholic subjects of the sincerity of his conversion: they had mounted a determined opposition to his rule, especially in Paris, where the spirit of the Ligue Catholique had been especially strong under the leadership of the Council of Sixteen. Among the potential opponents of the Bourbon king, perhaps more dangerous than any others, were the people of Paris. French kings traditionally depended upon the good will of Parisians for their very existence. Still excited by the emotions of the Wars of Religion, angry at their exclusion from power, they were a wild card in Paris's volatile political mixture, and both the clergy and rebellious nobles were aware of it. Anyone who was able to exploit their restlessness would in effect control the city and so, perhaps, the nation. They were outraged by the Edict of Nantes, and proclaimed their feelings in a series of loud demonstrations toward the end of 1599. Henri began to suspect that his hold upon the city was more tenuous than he had thought.⁴ In this situation, the king's great difficulty was that while the acceptance of the Tridentine decrees might have mollified some of the king's opponents, it would have outraged some of his staunchest supporters. The king must also deal cautiously with the Catholic Church as a French institution.

CHAPTER 1

Nearly bankrupt when his reign began, he depended upon the fund-raising powers of the Assembly of the Clergy.⁵ They supported the Tridentine decrees and feared the Edict of Nantes. The Parlement of Paris, on the other hand, was generally opposed to the reception of Trent, but like the clergy bitterly resented the king's support for the Huguenots and for a time refused to approve the Edict of Nantes. He was able to secure the loyalty of the magistrates only by telling them that the Edict would be the best method of ensuring peace.⁶

The religious divisions among the people of France were by no means the king's only problem, but they were at the centre of his difficulties because they could be so readily exploited by his opponents to gather supporters to their side. Fortunately for the king, his most severe critics in the Catholic party were weakened by their divergent interests and their need for the king's support. Some *bons catholiques* were indifferent to religious matters and others were interested only in personal advantage. For the truly devout, the reception of the Tridentine decrees was the critical issue. But both Catholic reformers and the Pope knew that no successful reform of the Church in France would be possible without royal assistance. Experience elsewhere had shown the Holy See the truth of this.⁷ This increased Henri's bargaining power. Thus although he professed his willingness to ratify the decrees when he first ascended the throne, he was later to declare that as long as Parlement withheld its approval of the decrees, he would be unable to act.⁸ This was just as well. The Tridentine decrees demanded the elimination of heresy throughout the realm. In accepting them the king would have been forced to nullify the Edict of Nantes (1598), which had granted the Huguenots civil status in France.

THE PARTI DÉVOT

Henri IV was not without other advantages where religion was concerned. Many of his most powerful subjects were fearful of war and resentful of Rome's power. Although his supporters, among whom were much of the Parlement of Paris, a portion of the upper bourgeoisie, and the Huguenots, were at first a disparate group, they were eager to see the end of the troubles of the past. Their common cause was their fear of foreign domination, above all domination by the united powers of Spain and Rome. It was for this reason that they came to be known as the *bons français*. The *bons français* believed themselves to be inspired by concern for the good of France alone.⁹ They were not necessarily less devout than their opponents, but they were not willing to sacrifice prudence to their religious commitments. They were to become powerful allies on the king's side. The Huguenots too remained a force to be reckoned with, even after the Wars of Religion, although their friendship was dangerous to the king. The protestant population was still 904,000 at the start of the seventeenth century, and remained as high as 830,000 in 1630.¹⁰ They resented the king's conversion to Catholicism, but they needed him.

Finally, also in the king's favour, in a period where Church and state were each so dependent upon the other's authority, was the fact that there was no solution to the religious problem which would not have an impact upon the very structure of society. It is difficult to grasp, at the end of the twentieth century, how closely connected were the functions of civil and ecclesiastical authority in early modern Europe. Neither could function without the legal authority and practical support of the other. The king must be anointed by the Church. Many of the Church's senior clergy were appointed by the king. The law, economic life, and of course marriage, birth, and death, all required some form of sanction or blessing by the religious as well as the temporal powers.¹¹ The two parties inevitably

CHAPTER 1

often found themselves in competition.¹² Their convoluted relationship, with all the concomitant problems of confused jurisdiction, still retained a practical value, making it more difficult to bring to an end. Thus Church and state struggled to escape a mutually destructive embrace through much of the seventeenth century, neither side quite willing, at critical moments, to let the other go.

The emergence of the dévots

Henri IV was noted for his ability to strike compromises with his opponents and potential enemies, to balance and manipulate power groups, but he was faced with a delicate problem.¹³ It was essential that he placate his more ardently Catholic subjects - especially the people of Paris - without alienating his supporters. His intercessors must fulfil certain conditions. They must be trusted by Rome. They must not offend the more vocal critics of the Tridentine decrees, who generally came from Parlementaire circles. In order to fulfil this last condition, they must be French, French by birth, French by language, and French in style.

This was where a new kind of Catholic reformer came into the picture, the 'dévots' as they came to be called by their political opponents. The term dévot refers both to an attitude and a party, writes Geoffrey Treasure,¹⁴ but the attitudes shared by the dévots are difficult to define and the term seems to suggest a unity of purpose which the dévots did not have - unless by attitude we refer only to the dévots' shared desire for religious transformation. It might be truer to say that the term refers both to a party and a movement. The dévots in the broader sense of the term formed a large, socially heterogenous movement, ill-defined, inspired by the same currents of piety, the same longing for an inward conversion so profound that the struggle to transform external behaviour would cease to be problematic, which had led to the Reformation.¹⁵ All dévots, in France, had been touched by this

THE PARTI DÉVOT

longing: it was the defining element of devotion in the critical years between 1590 and 1625.¹⁶ What distinguished the devotional movement in France from its counterparts elsewhere was the fact that in France it was much less likely to be led either by the Jesuits or by the great bishops of the Church.¹⁷ The Jesuits were too deeply distrusted by powerful factions within France, while the hands of the bishops were tied by the persistent refusal of the king, the magistrates, and the Estates to ratify the Tridentine decrees. As a result, the Catholic Reformation in France fell into the hands of a spiritual elite, the *spirituels*.¹⁸ The *spirituels* should be distinguished from the larger group of reform-minded dévots, and from those whose dévot allegiances were purely political.

Paris in the late sixteenth century was a place of religious ferment, a place where high-ranking people of both sexes enthusiastically joined lay confraternities and religious orders,¹⁹ read devotional books, and took part in religious ceremonies. The French dévots as a party or faction emerged from a group of such *spirituels*. The genesis of the parti dévot was a small group of reform-minded Catholics who first began to meet regularly at the main Capuchin house in Paris during the Wars of Religion.²⁰ They were brought together by their interest in the devotional literature then being published by the Carthusian printing press in the city. More important still was their friendship with Barbe Acarie, the group's emotional centre, so that they have sometimes been referred to as the Acarie circle. Among their number were Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629), Barbe Acarie (1566-1618), André Du Val (1564-1642), Benet de Canfeld (1562-1610), Dom Beaucousin, Père Pacifique, and Ange de Joyeuse, of the famous Joyeuse family, known for its support of the Ligue cause in the south of France. Most of these people, as their names suggest, were Capuchins; Beaucousin was a Carthusian. Other well-known members of the circle were not a part of it until later. Michel de

CHAPTER 1

Marillac (1563-1635) did not meet the others until 1602; Pierre Coton (1564-1625), who was to become Henri IV's confessor in 1608,²¹ did not arrive in Paris until 1604. They differed from other leading Catholic reformers of the day in that none of them was a prince of the Church and only Du Val was a professional theologian (that is, one with a doctorate in theology who made his living by teaching). This meant that they were less inclined to view the issues of Catholic reform from either a pragmatic or intellectual point of view.

They first began to meet when Mlle Acarie, who was deeply troubled by her experience of visions, ecstasies, and levitation - what were then known as 'voies extraordinaires',²² went to the Capuchins to seek their advice because they were reputed to have a special affinity for problems like hers. Fearful and yearning for reassurance, she found it in the Capuchin Benet de Canfeld (William Fitch), an Englishman who had 'sucked heresy with his mother's milk'.²³ He was the author of the *Règle de la perfection*, one of the most influential works of devotion of the times, and became for a time the group's presiding spirit, the one whom the rest consulted for spiritual guidance. They read books, prayed, and attended church together. They formed neither a salon nor a political conspiracy; they most resembled a study group.

The Acarie circle could not fairly be referred to as a party in its early years. It was only Henri's notice, and the controversies that followed, that politicized its members and began their transformation into a party, of a kind. It is true that from the beginning they had connections in the world of politics, not always fortunate ones. Madame Acarie was married to Pierre Acarie, whose zealous Catholicism had led him to involve himself with the Ligue Catholique and its offshoot, the Council of Sixteen, which had governed Paris during the years of upheaval. He was forced into exile

THE PARTI DÉVOT

for a time after Henri IV arrived in Paris. The Capuchin order, around whom she and her friends gathered, was also known for its involvement in Ligue activities.²⁴ Yet it is not clear that these were as important to the loyalties of the dévots as some commentators have made out. Madame Acarie had been born an Avrillot; her father also joined the Ligue,²⁵ but her husband's family was also connected to the Séguiers, and she was to become a close friend of Pierre de Bérulle's mother, her husband's cousin Louise Séguier.²⁶ The Séguiers were a Parlementaire family who were threatened with arrest and exile by ligue adherents for their support for the universally hated Henri III during the Wars.²⁷ Pierre Coton was from a strongly pro-Bourbon family;²⁸ and Michel de Marillac, who had once supported the Ligue, turned away from its violence even before Henri IV's conversion and, with other like-minded men, vigorously protested the violation of salic law implicit in the move to crown the Infanta Isabella of Spain, grand-daughter of Henri II, as queen of France.²⁹ In short, their connections with the ligue and the old aristocracy, sometimes cited to explain their religious loyalties, were no more remarkable than those to be found among any similarly high-ranking selection of bourgeois families. It was not this that made the dévots a 'party', in spite of the sobriquet *parti dévot*.

Shortly after he ascended the throne, the king began to cultivate leading dévots, many of whom belonged to this circle, and dévot causes. He patronized reformed religious orders; gave money to dévot charitable causes, and displayed his devotion on every possible occasion.³⁰ Why Henri made the dévots of the Acarie circle the special objects of his patronage is not altogether clear, for most of them were neither especially powerful nor rich. But between 1594 and 1610, the year he was murdered, several of his associates received favours at his hands. Perhaps the fact that they were not a part of the circles of either the high-ranking clergy or Sorbonne doctors made them seem more

CHAPTER 1

likely to be flexible enough to suit his purposes. Some were also becoming influential as leaders of Catholic opinion, and the king's attitude may have had something to do with the fact that André Du Val, an Acarie associate, was making a name for himself as one of the great theologians of the Sorbonne in the 1590s and could therefore be expected to command the loyalty of a number of scholars there. The king appointed him to a new royal chair of theology in 1597,³¹ perhaps in the hope of cultivating him and winning his allegiance and that of his followers.

The king found the Acarie dévots valuable in the controversies that were awakened by a case of exorcism in Paris in 1599, when a dispute broke out between theologians and medical doctors over who had the right to treat the 'patient', a young woman named Marthe Brossier.³² A mob of Catholics, aroused by proselytizers, threatened to become unruly and the woman was spirited out of the city by the king's people, to the anger of Catholic authorities.³³ Some of the more recalcitrant Capuchins initially refused to appear before Parlement to defend their actions on the grounds that they were members of a religious order and so not subject to civil authority.³⁴ But André Du Val obediently consented to do so immediately; and for his part, Pierre de Bérulle wrote a defence of the exorcisms which, although it conceded nothing to the crown's cause, did not attempt to justify the actions of the mob or the anti-royal preachers.³⁵ This seems to have pleased the king, or at least led him to regard Bérulle as a possible ally, for he appointed the young man to the post of royal almoner. While the king hoped to use the Acarie dévots to placate Rome and other Catholic zealots, they, for their part, knew quite well that they must depend upon him both for the ratification of the decrees of Trent and for their implementation.

THE PARTI DÉVOT

The incident shows the extent to which France in the early seventeenth century was not yet a modern society. In modern terms, the Capuchins' initial refusal to appear before Parlement was an outrageous challenge to the rule of law and to national sovereignty. Many of the later actions of the kings of France towards the Catholic Church and, especially, the religious orders, were intended to control and suppress this kind of challenge. By the end of the century, it would be almost unthinkable, especially striking when we see that the punishments meted out on this occasion were rather mild by later standards. Meanwhile, the Capuchins' alliance with the Acarie circle was regarded with suspicion, arousing the enmity of those Parlementaires who feared Rome. They began to refer to the dévots as 'monstres de sédition'.³⁶ Thus the king's dévot allies were tainted from the beginning in the eyes of the *bons français*. But the king does not appear to have minded. It suited his purposes to rule subjects who were loyal to him but hostile to each other.

The Dévots and the State

Dévots, in the broad sense of the term, were everywhere in Europe in the seventeenth century, as Louis Châtellier has written. Those who were active in politics and public life were inspired by the desire to establish a Christian state, a desire '[which] had been revived with stronger arguments since Erasmus and Christian humanism.'³⁷ They attempted to facilitate a new marriage of throne and altar, to assist in the construction of a Christian state along Tridentine lines, to reconcile the two bodies. If this makes them sound like mere pious civil servants, it should also be noted that their position within the state was complicated: they were at once political insiders and outsiders. They were insiders in that many were well-connected, from high-ranking families, with important positions in Church government and in the temporal government as well. They were outsiders to the degree that

CHAPTER 1

their political goal, the Christian state, was not universally welcomed by either the Church or the state. Their role in public life remains difficult to define. This was particularly true of the relationship of the Acarie circle, and its successors, with the royal authorities.

The Ligue connections of some dévots have led many historians of both liberal and left-wing sympathies to portray them as `héritiers spirituels de la Ligue, militants d'une contre-Réforme française de long souffle,'³⁸ anti-modernizers who would turn the clock back to a period when France's nobles were more powerful and the crown less so. Even those historians who do not go so far have suggested that the dévots were pro-Spanish, opposed to toleration of the Huguenots, and hostile to royal policy.³⁹

The dévot movement was generally less militant and more amenable than is often supposed. Using the term dévot in its broadest sense, to mean devout Catholics who supported the reform of the Church, it must be acknowledged that some dévots were strong royalists as well, in the most conventional fashion. The abbé de Saint-Cyran, who was to become famous for his opposition to both Rome and the French crown, was in his youth an ardent supporter of the rights of kings. In 1608, he wrote a book entitled *La question royale*, which argued that the subjects of a king had a moral right to commit suicide if this could be of service to the king.⁴⁰ As William Church has pointed out, `the dévots and the "bons français" were essentially agreed concerning the need to strengthen the French state as it stood.'⁴¹

Nevertheless, as the century progressed, some dévots found themselves increasingly at odds with royal policy. In the years following Henri IV's assassination in 1610, they were occasionally to be accused of having been involved in the conspiracy to murder him.⁴² In 1624, when Louis XIII's

THE PARTI DÉVOT

prime minister, Armand du Plessis, soon to be made the Cardinal de Richelieu (1585-1642), took control of France's foreign policy, Bérulle and Marillac found themselves increasingly at odds with the government. Both were by this time senior civil servants themselves, but they were unable to accept what they saw as Richelieu's political cynicism. Bérulle was to die in disgrace in 1629 after challenging the Cardinal's foreign policy; Marillac, after leading a failed coup against Richelieu in 1630, died in prison in 1632. After this, the dévots did not again attempt to exercise influence upon policy, especially foreign policy, in so direct a fashion. But they did form a semi-secret society, the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, whose activities were confined to social activism rather than foreign affairs. But the Compagnie too was to provoke much anger, among *bons français* who regarded it as a trouble-making body, and in the king's ministers. It was to be put down between 1660 and 1667, and from that time on dévot influence upon French society was in decline, although never wholly extinguished.

New Ideologies

The dévots and the *bons français* shared a number of attitudes characteristic of the seventeenth century. Both parties wished for France's glory in Europe. They both believed themselves to be loyal servants of the crown, and did not wish to see a new outbreak of civil war. Neither party was fully reconciled to the Huguenot presence in their midst, and they wished to revoke the Huguenots' legal privileges in France. Yet the dévots were to find themselves increasingly at odds with the society in which they lived. In order to understand their discomfort, it is necessary to look beyond the incidental similarities (and differences) they shared with other interest groups of the time, and look instead to the ideological trends emerging in French society.

CHAPTER 1

• Absolutism

Although the roots of royal 'absolutism' stretched back to the days of the Roman empire, its modern development into a set of principles of government began in the sixteenth century. It first gathered strength among intellectuals in continental Europe as the collapse of political power in many European nations created a pressing need for a new conception of rulership. By the early seventeenth century, the defence of royal absolutism had grown especially strong among the members of the Paris Parlement.⁴³ Its proponents argued that power was 'indivisible', a term that first appeared in this context in the work of the political philosopher Jean Bodin in the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ The idea that all power must finally rest in the king came to be especially attractive in France. After the Wars of Religion, a widespread sense that the old unity of Christian Europe was lost forever contributed to a sense of pessimism among French political philosophers, causing them to look to the state as a remedy for the disorders of the times. Cardin Le Bret, Balzac, and other like-minded men contributed to a change in the understanding of the king's role in the French body politic. 'Fears of the pre-absolutist period consumed all the great intellectual figures of the early seventeenth century,' writes Ellery Schalk.⁴⁵ In response to the upheavals of the previous half-century, France began the process of transforming itself from a 'traditional constitutional monarchy' into an absolutist regime, a transformation that would take years to complete but which had already begun in the first years of the century.⁴⁶ French ideas of monarchy, if not France's mode of government, would undergo a great change between the opening years of the century and its end.

Partly in response to the rise of absolutist ideology, concepts of citizenship were beginning to change, and the revival of the political theories of the stoics in the fifteenth century affected ideas

THE PARTI DÉVOT

of what a good citizen was among educated men of the ruling classes.⁴⁷ '[N]eostoic thinkers like Justus Lipsius, emphasizing personal discipline and need to obey princely authority, found a newly receptive audience among Europe's political classes,' as a recent commentary has stated.⁴⁸ Stoic political philosophy encouraged acceptance of, and obedience to, the demands of the state upon the individual. Others who did not go so far still regarded interference in the social and political system as dangerous, and praised conformity as a virtue.⁴⁹ Interest in the stoics first awakened with the renewed interest in classical texts fostered by humanism, although the humanists themselves had disliked stoic *apatheia*.⁵⁰ Indeed, the rise of absolutism and the revival of stoicism might be said to be signs of the death of humanism, particularly Christian humanism. Under the influence of stoicism, men began to argue that the duties of citizenship superseded those of the Christian.

• Raison d'État

The new conception of the duties of a royal subject or a citizen helps to account for the hostility to the religious claims made by Catholic reformers in certain circles, especially among the magistrates of the Paris Parlement. The Catholic zealots' reforming crusades interfered with many areas of authority in which law-makers believed they should have the last word: with family strategies,⁵¹ with the Crown's independence, and with obedience to the civil state.⁵² Could Christian principles be expected to govern public life (if indeed they ever had) when Christians disagreed over fundamental issues of rightful authority? Were Christians of different kinds condemned to a life of perpetual warfare to resolve their differences by force? Eventually a sense of the impossibility of leading a Christian life in a state whose leaders must accept 'heresy' as a political reality led to the development of a distinction between personal and political morality, a political morality which was

CHAPTER 1

called upon under the label of 'raison d'état.'⁵³ Richelieu was the main architect of this concept in France. He declared in his memoirs that he was prepared 'à faire connoître à tout le monde qu'obéissant religieusement à un pape ès-choses spirituelles, il pouvoit s'opposer justement ès-desseins temporels.'⁵⁴ In effect, 'raison d'état' would be invoked when the state was forced to justify actions that might by ordinary standards be intolerable. This might occur when the king's council was forced to over-ride the privileges of Parlement or the nobles; it might occur when the Holy See objected to the crown's interference in some matter of Church doctrine; it might also be invoked when the king wished to reassure the mass of his subjects that a costly war was essential to France's stability:

And although all that is done to these purposes is said to be done for Reasons of State, yet this is said rather of such actions as cannot be considered in the light of ordinary reason.⁵⁵

• Gallicanism

An important consequence of the fear of Rome and the civil powers' desire for independence was the rise of a new kind of 'Gallicanism'. Originally, the phrase 'Église gallicane' referred to the church of France and its long tradition of independence from certain aspects of papal control. Although the 'libertés de l'Église gallicane' had a very long tradition they were first articulated only in 1407.⁵⁶ The French clergy, at the Council of Paris, proclaimed in that year that '...l'Église de France et du Dauphiné, en général et en particulier, en elle-même et en ses membres, doit être ramenée à sa liberté et observance anciennes, et à l'avenir tenue et régie suivant icelle'. Thereafter all new initiatives on Rome's part would be accepted only 'avec les modifications et réserves des Libertez de l'Eglise gallicane'.⁵⁷ The Council's demands were concerned with asserting the clergy's independence from Rome but not yet directed towards the protection or affirmation of the rights of the French crown.

THE PARTI DÉVOT

'Gallicanism' among French bishops was at one time more a call to episcopal independence than a demand for the recognition of the rights of kings. It was related to and supported by 'conciliarism', the medieval idea that it was elected bishops in a body who represented the continuity of Catholic tradition, not the pope, at church councils regarding doctrine, and that the councils of the Church, therefore, should have a final say in papal decisions regarding doctrine. Conciliarism rooted in episcopal Gallicanism was of special importance in France. The bishops' position was formulated and supported by the theologians of the Sorbonne, who were traditionally strong proponents of Gallican liberties.

Efforts to connect early modern Gallicanism to the medieval Gallican tradition of the Sorbonne, especially as exemplified in the works of the theologian Jean Gerson, were common in the seventeenth century, but these efforts show how men of the time misinterpreted the nature of conciliarism. Medieval conciliarists sought to protect both church and state against the power of tyrannical popes and that of tyrannical kings as well. The councils of the Church of Rome, they argued, had a right to depose *all* tyrants. In fact, Jean Gerson and his cohorts were among the earliest defenders of the notion of 'tyrannicide' (often unfairly attributed, by seventeenth-century Gallicans, to the Jesuits alone), arguing that a tyrant's subjects had the right to assassinate him because he had forfeited the right to rule.⁵⁸ But the Gallican liberties of the bishops were from the first protected by Rome's dependence upon the kings of France. From the eleventh century, French kings were the only monarchs powerful enough to protect the papacy from its enemies.⁵⁹ They were able, as a result, to demand a share in the liberties of their bishops, and their share increased with the passage of time.

CHAPTER 1

Eventually, a more consciously nationalistic form of Gallicanism would develop in Europe, especially in France, reaching a high point during the 1680s under Louis XIV.

Gallican nationalism would begin to manifest itself as early as 1614, in the Third Estate's response to the request that they accept the Tridentine decrees at the meeting of the Estates General held in that year. The Third Estate, which was comprised of all non-noble, non-clerical French subjects (but was represented at the 1614 meeting largely by well-to-do members of the bourgeoisie) was resolutely Gallican, demanding that the ancient liberties of the Gallican Church be recognised as law:

to arrest the course of the pernicious doctrine which was introduced several years ago by seditious powers...the King shall be asked to declare in the assembly of his Estates *as a Fundamental Law of the Kingdom, which shall be inviolable and known to all*; that since he is known to be sovereign in his state, holding his crown from God alone, that there is no power on earth whatever, spiritual or temporal, which has any authority over his kingdom, to take away the sacred nature of our kings, to dispense [or absolve] their subjects of the fidelity and obedience which they owe them for any cause or pretext whatsoever.⁶⁰

Nor was the Third Estate the only member of the French body politic to support a Gallican interpretation of the state's rights over the Church. Gallican members of the clerical class, the First Estate, soon began their own defence of royal absolutism. At the Assembly of the Clergy in 1615, they would ask whether a subject had the right even to question royal orders:

S'il était loisible aux sujets d'examiner ce que les princes ordonnent, quelle serait l'autorité des magistrats? S'ils n'approuvent que ce qu'ils trouvent bon, quelle sera leur puissance?...Les maisons particulières remplies de discorde, les villes de sédition, les provinces de brigandages et tout périrait enfin par tumulte et confusion et tout retomberait dans le chaos primitif.⁶¹

The Gallican clergy's aim in making such statements was, in theory, to protect the king of France from the indirect powers of the pope, but it is likely that their desire to flatter the king, and their

THE PARTI DÉVOT

recognition that their futures were now in his hands, also played a part in their receptivity to the new 'royal' Gallicanism. At first they were only concerned with protecting the crown's jurisdiction in temporal affairs. The precise limits of temporal and spiritual jurisdiction, however, were too thoroughly confused to make this a practical distinction. By mid-century many Gallican clerics grew more willing to defend the king's right to intervene in issues which were clearly 'spiritual'. Gallican clergy were in the vanguard of those who protested papal infallibility in both the temporal and spiritual realm. By the late seventeenth century, Gallican tradition required 'that only with the Crown's permission could papal bulls enter France; that Rome's judicial decisions had no force in France; that French subjects could not be cited before a Roman tribunal; and that the civil courts of France could legitimately deal with church affairs wherever these impinged upon civil law.'⁶²

• Ultramontanism

The rise of theories of royal absolutism in the sixteenth century were countered by a new theory of papal power that came to be known as ultramontanism. It is not clear, now, whether ultramontanism was an answer to the claims of the absolutists, or vice versa. The word 'ultramontane' was not yet in widespread use in France in the early seventeenth century, an indication of the relative novelty of the concept.⁶³ Properly, it refers only to the belief in the infallibility of the pope regarding questions of doctrine. It was extremely rare among French clerics and theologians at the turn of the century. Canonically, papal infallibility was still an open question and would remain so for centuries. In early seventeenth-century France, it was a subject of fierce opposition and debate, not only among those who supported Gallican liberties, but among conciliarists in general, who believed that essential doctrinal issues could be determined only by the councils of the Church. Even

CHAPTER 1

the strictest ultramontanes acknowledged that the question was still officially open. André Du Val, so closely identified with his defence of infallibility that later ultramontanes were sometimes known in Paris as 'Du Vallistes',⁶⁴ nevertheless always insisted that because the limits of papal authority were not canonically defined, those who were not ultramontanes could not legitimately be labelled as disobedient or heretical by controversialists.⁶⁵ It is difficult to determine who, among the larger group of French Catholic reformers, was an ultramontane in the strict sense of the term (i.e. a believer in papal infallibility). Those *dévots* who were inclined to some form of ultramontanism in this sense were also likely to have been aware that the Church had not yet settled the question of the division of powers between the councils and the popes. Few *dévots* were willing, as a result, to label themselves as ultramontanes; all the more so because they were aware of its association with regicide.⁶⁶

In more general usage, however, the term ultramontane referred to those who supported papal authority and accepted ecclesiastical direction from Rome. Although some *dévots*, including Bérulle and Marillac, favoured policies which Rome also supported, like the destruction of the Huguenots' legal privileges in France, and a pro-Spanish foreign policy, none of this necessarily implied support for Rome's temporal authority in France. Many non-*dévots* shared these views. The *dévots*' support for the supremacy of the pope's spiritual authority is a more complex issue. Some *dévots* were wholly committed to it. Other undoubted *dévots*, like Jean-Pierre Camus, bishop of Belley,⁶⁷ were episcopal Gallicans who also supported Tridentine reforms. Mixed loyalties of this kind would become increasingly difficult for *dévots* to sustain as the century passed.

Ultramontanism came to be associated with disloyalty. It was tainted for the *bons français* by its association with the Company of Jesus. The Jesuits were early and vocal supporters of the

THE PARTI DÉVOT

ultramontane thesis, in both its canonical and its popular formulation. In the pamphlet wars that raged periodically between 1600-1630 between ultramontanes and Gallicans, the king's supporters (particularly during the ministry of Richelieu) accused ultramontanes of every kind of treachery, while any cleric suspected of ultramontanism had to be prepared to defend himself. In 1626, a Jesuit named Santarelli published a short book in Rome in which he defended the rights of popes to intervene in temporal affairs (the most extreme form of the ultramontane thesis).⁶⁸ It created instant consternation among Gallican Parlementaires and led to demands among some Parlementaires for the Jesuits' ejection from France, although there was no evidence that they had connived at the book's publication in any case.⁶⁹ Louis XIII (1601-1643), although reluctant (he said) to injure France's Jesuits, was forced to respond to the demands of the magistrates. France's Jesuits were made to sign an apology rejecting Santarelli's propositions and proclaiming their loyalty to the king of France.⁷⁰ The history of ultramontanism in the seventeenth century was a long process of accommodation and, finally, defeat. In 1663, the mere defence of an ultramontane thesis on the spiritual infallibility of the pope (without mention of regicide) at the Sorbonne's Faculty of Theology was enough to bring out the magistrates and the king's soldiers.⁷¹

Some dévots capitulated to the new dispensation. Others found themselves increasingly at odds with the state. Was this because they were really ligueurs in disguise, hostile to royal power? This idea is too facile and does not account for the willingness of many of even the most intransigent dévots to cooperate with the crown. Their connections to the Ligue were no greater than those of other factions within French society. They were not necessarily opposed to royal authority as such.

CHAPTER 1

Nor were all *dévots* ultramontanes who supported a strong papacy. Those who were not, like the Gallican Jansenists, suffered as much or more as their ultramontane colleagues from the attacks of the state. Among those who were, their ultramontanism was moderated at first by uncertainty about the direction in which French policy would develop, and later by fear of provoking a direct confrontation with the state. None of these explanations, therefore, is wholly satisfactory. They either overstate the degree of *dévo*t opposition to the crown or they misrepresent its cause. Perhaps they lay too much emphasis upon *dévo*t political ideology as such, while ignoring the content of *dévo*t spirituality. Although the *dévots* were not the radical reactionaries sometimes portrayed by their opponents and by subsequent historians with a nationalist bent, their quarrel with the state did go beyond mere criticism of either foreign or internal policy. For the most *spirituel* of the *dévots*, the critical issue was not at bottom a political one. One historian has observed of the *dévots* of the Acarie circle that 'C'est un des traits du milieu Acarie que dans les dernières années du XVII^e siècle, la fidélité à Dieu y compte beaucoup plus que la fidélité au Roi de France.'⁷² It is the *dévo*t conception of 'fidélité à Dieu' and its encounter with 'fidélité au Roi de France' that form the burden, the underlying refrain, of this story.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. *The Registres de Bureau de la Ville de Paris (Registres commençant le 22 Mars 1594 & finissant le 19 Août 1598)*, 22 mars 1594 (Fol. 1 r°).
2. See P. Féret, *Henri IV et l'Église* (Paris: V. Palmé, 1875), 'Notes et Documents', p. 468.
3. P. Blet, s.j., *Le clergé en France et la monarchie. Étude sur les assemblées générales du clergé de 1615 à 1666*, 2 vols. (Rome: U. Grégorienne, 1959), T. 1, p. 40.
4. See Jean Dagens, Introduction, *Correspondence de Bérulle*, 3 vols. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937-39), I, p. xv.
5. J. Russell Major, *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French kings, Nobles & Estates* (Baltimore and London: Johns-Hopkins, 1994), p. 164.
6. Mack Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 167-68.
7. R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 54: '...a Tridentine bishop needed the support of secular authorities in overcoming obstacles to reform.' Po-Chia Hsia is speaking specifically of the Italian case here; see also Louis Châtellier, *Le Catholicisme en France, 1500-1650*, 2 vols. (Paris: Sedes, 1995), I, p. 25: 'to implement [the Counter-Reformation], and especially to maintain the order which had become its champion - the Company of Jesus - it was essential to possess means and authority; the latter, in the epoch of nascent absolutism, could come only from the prince.' [My translation.]
8. Jacques Le Goff and René Rémond, editors, *Histoire de la France religieuse. Tome II: Du christianisme flamboyant à l'aube des Lumières*. Volume directed by François Lebrun (Paris: Seuil, 1988), p. 300.
9. G. Treasure, *Mazarin. The Crisis of Absolutism in France* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 318, note 95.
10. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *L'Ancien Régime de Louis XIII à Louis XV (1610-1770) I: L'Absolutisme en vraie grandeur (1610-1715)* (Paris: Hachette, 1993), p. 88.
11. Cf. B. Plongeron et al, *Paris. Une histoire religieuse de l'origine à la Révolution*. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1987) p. 179: 'Les fêtes religieuses rythment les saisons et les jours, les affaires publiques et privées. Quand il faut encaisser une rente, payer son loyer ou arrêter ses comptes, on le fait aux "quatre termes à Paris accoutumés" qui sont Noël, Pâques, la Saint-Jean et la Saint-Rémi. Les cloches des églises sonnent les heures, donnant le signal du travail et du repos.' See also Louis Châtellier, *Le Catholicisme en France. Tome I: le XVIIe siècle*. (Paris: Sedes, 1995), Ch. II, 'Les Pouvoirs de l'Église', esp. pp. 19-24.

12. Plongeron, *Paris*, p. 179: 'Mais ici, pour la jalonnement de l'espace et du temps, Dieu est concurrencé par le roi.'
13. R. Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV's France*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 44.
14. G. Treasure, *Mazarin*, p. 318, note 2.
15. See Jean Delumeau, *Naissance et affirmation de la Réforme* (Paris, 1968), 'Incertitude théologique et civilisation commune', p. 356.
16. This attitude found many different modes of expression across the country. In the south, devotion was more extroverted and ceremonial, touched by flamboyant Spanish and Italian mysticism. In the north, devotion was more introverted and pietistic, under the influence of Cologne-school mysticism. The distinction between 'northern' and 'southern' piety has been discussed frequently by historians; see especially Pierre Chaunu, *L'Église, Culture et Société, 1517-1620* (Paris: Seder, 1984), p. 426, for an explanation of the geographical and religious boundaries of the two. For the influence of the Cologne school upon northern French piety, see Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines la restauration de l'Église catholique en France, 1575-1611* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), pp. 79-87. During the reign of Louis XIV, many commentators began to suggest that the piety of the 'baroque' south was not truly French; although their interpretation misrepresented the intellectual and geographical origins of French piety, historians have repeated the error ever since. See for example the comments on Spanish versus French piety in Victor Tapié, *France in the Age of Louis XIII and Richelieu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 435.
17. For an account of the importance of the Jesuits in implementing Catholic reforms in Europe, see Louis Châtellier, *The Europe of the Devout: The Catholic Reformation and the Formation of a New Society*. Trans. Jean Birrell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
18. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 102-3.
19. See Yves Chaussy, *Les Bénédictines et la réforme catholique en France*, (Editions de la Source, 1975), p. 20-22, and Godefroy de Paris, *Les frères mineurs capucins en France*, 2 vols. (Paris, n.p., 1937), II, *L'Expulsion projetée à l'approbation Enregistrée (1597-1601)*, p. 32. Godefroy says here that in the late sixteenth century the Capuchins were known as the 'religion des nobles' because the sons of so many great families joined the order, partly, no doubt, thanks to the influence of Henri III, who had been a lay member of the order. See also Pierre de l'Estoile, *Mémoires-Journaux* (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1875-1896), Oct. 1606, 'En ce temps, il n'estoit nouvelle, à Paris et partout, que de fils et de filles de bonnes maison, hommes et femmes de qualité, qui s'alloient rendre à ces nouvelles religions.'
20. The main primary source used here for information on the Acarie circle is André Du Val's *La vie admirable... de Mlle Acarie* (Paris, 1893), p. 24, 25. Du Val was Mme Acarie's first biographer and this work was first published in 1621. Important secondary sources include Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration*; and Godefroy de Paris, *Les frères mineurs capucins en France*, II, throughout.

21. David Buisseret, *Henry IV, King of France* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 94.
22. André Du Val, *La vie admirable... de Mlle Acarie*, p. 24, 25.
23. See Jacques Brousse's *The Lives of Ange de Joyeuse and Benet Canfield* [sic] (Paris, 1621), edited from Robert Rockwood's translation of 1623 by T.A. Birrell (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1959), p. 87.
24. Although the Dominicans were the most vocal and active preachers among the religious orders, the Capuchins were more widely influential. See Denis Richet, 'Aspects socio-culturels des conflits religieux à Paris dans la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle', in *Annales: Économie, société, civilisation*, 1977: p. 782. Also see Godefroy de Paris, *Frères Mineurs*, II, Chapter 1, for an account of the Capuchins' position in Paris at the turn of the seventeenth century.
25. Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Boucher (1771-1827), *Vie de la bienheureuse soeur Mare de l'Incarnation, dite dans le monde Mademoiselle Acarie* (Paris: H. Barbou, 1800), p. 5.
26. Emmanuel de Broglie, *La Bienheureuse Marie de l'Incarnation, Madame Acarie (1566-1618)* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1921), p. 36.
27. M. Houssaye, *Le P. de Bérulle et les Carmélites de France*, vol. 1 of a 3 vol. life of Bérulle, (Paris: E. Plon, 1872), p. 97.
28. J.M. Prat, *La Compagnie de Jésus en France du temps du Père Coton, 1564-1626*, 5 vols. (Lyon: Briday, 1876), I, pp. 1-5.
29. Edouard Everat, *Michel de Marillac: Sa vie, ses oeuvres* (Riom: Ulysse Jouvot, 1894), p. 12; still Marillac is consistently identified by such terms as 'avocat ligueur'; see Georges Mongrédien, *La journée des dupes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 29. Note that some other dévots, not a part of the original Acarie circle, also came from strongly pro-Bourbon families. Jeanne de Fremyot, who became the celebrated and canonized Jeanne de Chantal (1572-1644), was from an anti-ligue family; her father fled Dijon to establish an alternative *parlement* when the city's parlementaires went over to the ligue; see *Sainte Jeanne de Chantal. Correspondance*, critical edition established and annotated by Soeur Marie-Patricia Burns, 5 vols. (Paris, 1986), I, Introduction. Charles de Condren, second head of the Oratoire after Bérulle, came from a pro-Bourbon military family and his father supported Henri de Navarre, future Henri IV, in his campaigns before he became king; see Louis Batterel (1679-1752), *Mémoires domestiques pour servir à l'histoire de l'Oratoire: les pères de l'Oratoire recommandables par piété ou par les lettres* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), II, p. 1.
30. For an account of Henri's patronage of Catholic works, see Buisseret, *Henry IV*, pp. 121-125.
31. Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration*, p. 112.
32. References to Marthe Brossier are contained in Pierre de l'Estoile in his *Mémoires-Journaux*, II, p. 182 (dealing with the reign of Henri IV for the years 1595-1601) and in J.-A. de Thou's *Histoire*

- universelle de Jacques-Auguste de Thou, depuis 1543 jusqu'en 1607* (London, 1734), v. 13, pp. 392-408. The most comprehensive contemporary account of the Brossier affair is in a pamphlet by one of the medical doctors present at her exorcism, the *Discours véritable sur le fait de Marthe Brossier de Romorantin, prétendue démoniaque*, by N. Marescot. It convincingly argues that Marthe was not possessed. See Godefroy de Paris, *Les frères mineurs capucins en France* (Paris, 1937), vol. II, p. 287-88. Godefroy's work also contains a thorough account of the case, pp. 213-312.
33. Exorcisms were spectacular ceremonies which stirred the faithful and might even create converts. The exorcisms at Loudun in 1633-34 were powerful enough to convert at least one Protestant English nobleman, Gautier de Montagu. See Raoul Allier, *La Cabale des dévots, 1627-1666* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970, Reimpression of the ed. of Paris, 1902), p. 258, note 1.
34. The papal bull, *In coena domini*, had decreed that the clergy were not permitted to appear before royal judges. The Paris magistrates were outraged because they had not authorised the publication of the bull in France; its mention by the Capuchins was tantamount to citing another nation's laws. See Godefroy, *Ibid.*, p. 281-86.
35. Pierre de Bérulle's *Traité des énergumènes* (1599) is a defence, not of Marthe Brossier's exorcism, but of the possibility of demoniac possession and the Church's right to define and treat such cases. See Bérulle, *Oeuvres complètes*, I, pp. 1-35.
36. The phrase appears in Marescot's work cited Godefroy, *Ibid.*, p. 287. For other Gallican reactions, see the accounts of Pierre de l'Estoile and de Thou, and accounts in archival sources, including *Discours sur les impostures de Marthe Brossier*, fds français, ms 18453, f. 21-38, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the *Arrêt du Parlement contre Marthe Brossier*, Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarin.
37. Louis Châtellier, *The Europe of the Devout*, p. 113-14.
38. Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *L'Ancien Régime*, p. 40.
39. Cf. Perle Bugnon-Secretan, *Mère Angélique Arnauld* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1991), Glossaire, p. 255:
 Dévots, nom donné dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle à un parti qui poursuivait une politique catholique à l'intérieur (lutte contre le protestantisme) comme à l'extérieur (alliance avec les Habsbourgs), et qui s'opposa au développement de l'absolutisme centralisateur.
40. Henri Bremond describes this book and other curious works by Saint-Cyran in a similar vein in his *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*, 12 vols. (Paris: Armand Collin, 1968), IV, p. 50-1.
41. William Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 10.

42. See Godefroi Hermant, *Mémoires de Godefroi Hermant sur l'histoire ecclésiastique du XVIIe siècle (1630-1663)*. Edited and with an Introduction by A. Gazier. Paris: Plon, 1903. First published 1717. T. I (1630-1652), p. 5. Among modern historians, see Louis Châtellier, *Le catholicisme en France*, II, p. 12.
43. Aimé-Georges Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1953), p. 85.
44. Nannerl Keohane, *Philosophy and the State in France: The Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 9.
45. Ellery Schalk. "The Shadow of the Sixteenth Century" in *Society and Institutions in Early Modern France*, edited by Mack Holt (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), p. 155.
46. Nannerl Keohane, *Philosophy and the State*, p. 3.
47. Ladurie, *L'ancien régime*, p. 66.
48. Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit. Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996) pp. 93, 94
49. Schalk, 'Shadow', p. 155.
50. William J. Bouwsma, 'The Spirituality of Renaissance Humanism', from *Christian Spirituality. The High Middle Ages and Reformation*, II, edited by Jill Raitt, John Meyendorff, and Bernard McGinn (New York: Crossroad, 1987), p. 245.
51. See Barbara Diefendorf, *Paris City Councillors in the Sixteenth Century: The Politics of Patrimony*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), Chapter 5.
52. See for instance Orest Ranum's *Paris in the Age of Absolutism: An Essay* (New York: Wiley, 1968), p. 229-30.
53. Keohane, *Philosophy and the State*, pp. 24, 119.
54. M. Petitot, *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France* (Paris: Foucault, 1823) *Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu*. Richelieu [and associates], III, 4.
55. Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*. Translated by P.J. Waley and D.P. Waley. Translated by Robert Peterson, 1606 (London, 1956), p. 3.
56. See Norman Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1993), p. 414, for comments on the origins of the French clergy's rights; also see Louis Châtellier, *op. cit.*, I, p. 19-24; Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, Introduction, p. 13-16; and J. Michael Hayden, *France and the Estates General of 1614* (Cambridge: CUP, 1974), p. 135.
57. Martimort, *Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 80.

58. Martimort, *Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, pp. 44-45.
59. Cantor, *Civilization*, p. 414.
60. See Hayden, *France and the Estates General of 1614*, pp. 130-133, for a discussion of the Gallicanism of the Third Estate.
61. Roland Mousnier, citing Léonor d'Estampes, bishop of Chartres, in *L'homme rouge, ou la vie du Cardinal de Richelieu, 1585-1642*, (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1992), p. 274-275. The comment was written for the 1625 gathering of the Assembly of the Clergy.
62. Gerald R. Cragg, "The Church Life of France under Louis XIV, 1648-1715", from *The Church and the Age of Reason*, (Penguin, 1960), p. 21.
63. See the discussion in Martimort, *Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, Chapter 1, p. 6.
64. Cf. M. de Baloché, *L'Église de Saint Merry de Paris. Histoire de la Paroisse et de la Collégial, 700-1910*, Vol. I, p. 337-338: In a letter written July 1657 or 1658 M. Henri du Hamel [a curé of Saint Merry suspected of Jansenism], wrote: 'J'ai été nourri dans la créance commune des théologiens que l'on appelle Du Vallistes qui tennant que le souverain pontiff est infallible, lorsqu'il prononce ex cathedra, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'il a fait examiner la question, qu'il a assemblé son conseil et qu'il juge avec connaissance de cause'. Emphasis added.
65. See Martimort, Introduction, 'L'Antique sentiment de la Faculté de Théologie ou les «Maximes de l'École de Paris»', section 2, for a detailed comparison of the positions of Aquinas, Gerson, Almain, Jean Mair, and Du Val.
66. Ultramontanism was tainted by its association with the Jesuits in the first years of the century. Some commentators believe it was nevertheless strong among the French clergy; see Legoff *et al*, *La France religieuse*, 301-2; J. Bergin, *Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld: Leadership and Reform in the French Church (1587-1685)*, (New Haven and London, 1987), p. 267. But the Sorbonne was given over to Gallicanism; see Jacques Grès-Grayer, 'The Magisterium of the Faculty of Theology of Paris in the Seventeenth Century' in *Theological Studies*, Sept. 1992, v. 53, n3, pp. 424-27; the Assembly of the Clergy in 1615 was already deeply Gallican; see Hayden, *Estates General*, throughout. Gallican pamphlets might be published even if controversial (Edmond Richer's various attacks on the Jesuits); ultramontane ones were likely to be banned.
67. See for example Camus's *Homélie des États-Généraux, 1614-1615. Texte établi et commenté avec une introduction et des notes par Jean Descrains* (Geneva: Droz, 1970).
68. See Prat, *Recherches historiques et critiques*, V, p. 466-83, for letters and other documents dealing with this affair. Also see P. Garrasse (a contemporary), *Histoire des Jésuites de Paris pendant trois années, 1624-1626* (Paris: L'Écureux, 1864). The latter is biased, but provides an insight into how the 17th C. Jesuits reacted to the affair, and shows how angry many were with Bérulle.

69. It is not certain who was, in fact, responsible for the publication of Santarelli's book. Santarelli was a shadowy figure (perhaps inspired by Spanish agents?) who disappeared after his work came out. Although it was published in Rome, it appeared without the *imprimatur* of the Holy Office, and Urban VIII swore he would never have authorised it. Letters exchanged by Louis XIII and Urban VIII suggest both were exasperated by the affair. See J.M. Prat. *Recherches historiques*, IV, pp. 787-96, and V, Pièces justificatifs, pp. 466-70.

70. The first version of the apology as drafted by Parlement was Gallican in the extreme; Pierre Coton, senior French Jesuit and once Henri IV's confessor, agreed to sign only if the Assembly of the Clergy and bishops were made to sign it too, as in 1614, 'les états généraux et tout le clergé n'avaient pas osé toucher cette matière'.

The Jesuits had to proclaim i) the king's authority over his state came from God and his sword; ii) the pope had no power, direct or indirect, over sovereigns; iii) the king could not be personally excommunicated; iv) the pope could not release the king's subjects from their obedience nor place the realm under an interdiction for any reason whatever. In the end the Jesuits signed a less Gallican version of the original testament. See Houssaye, *Le Cardinal de Bérulle*, pp. 135-136.

71. Martimort, *Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 220-222.

72. Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique*, p. 114.

2/ DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES, 1600-1620

'Lord God, what knowledge is this that an old woman understands better than a learned man?'

Dévoť uneasiness in the World grew out of something older and more atavistic than political conflict. It originated in the difficulty of reconciling the demands of life in the world with being a good Christian. While seventeenth-century theologians retained much of their medieval predecessors' fear of sensuality and distrust of pleasure, they were also becoming aware, in the early years of the century, of the threat posed by another kind of worldliness, the kind feared by late Roman Christians like Saint Augustine.¹ The demands of personal ambition and interest, the desire to 'get ahead', the necessity of pleasing powerful patrons, and the duties such patrons might impose upon their clients, duties that might make the pursuit of a Christian life very difficult, were ever-present dangers for the dévots of the seventeenth century, dangers that might overwhelm even the most committed ascetic, because they worked upon the human soul not through the medium of the body, but through the medium of the innermost self, through human pride. This form of worldliness was insidious; unlike bodily lust, there were few ways to guard against it; it could not be forestalled by starving, scourging, or sleeping on the floor. The conflict has recurred repeatedly since late antiquity, generally to be settled by some form of compromise. The Catholic Church, after all, had long since reached a kind of accommodation with the world. It had grudgingly tolerated radical Christians' flight to the deserts, and later to the monasteries. Those Christians who needed marriage and property in order to survive, or who were needed to support the Church and social order, remained behind to be governed by the

¹ Lamprecht of Rebensburg, @ 1250, cited in Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 136.

CHAPTER 2

temporal powers and by a secular clergy whose members were also allowed to own property and, sometimes, to marry. But this accommodation had been, not shattered, but questioned, by the Reformation. It had come under attack, and would never again be as unthinkingly self-confident as it had in the days when the Church was still undivided.

Although not unique to France, the problem of divided allegiance was peculiarly acute there after the Reformation. France had its large Protestant population; its uncomfortable relationship with the papacy; its legacy of fear from the years of the Ligue; and its kings determined to maintain and increase their power with a mixture of bribery and intimidation. The dévots were, as a result, painfully conscious of an incipient conflict between the demands of Christianity and those of citizenship. In the early seventeenth century, dévot clerics still believed in the possibility of accommodation, so much so that, far from being a radically conservative body, they were rather acquiescent. Eventually, however, those who attempted to exercise an influence upon policy-making found that this demanded compromises of a kind they had not expected to make. In any case, whether they accepted or refused the challenges of public life, they found that under pressure from external interests, they were pulled this way and that: their theological debates were turned into political squabbles, their devotional works subject to royal scrutiny, their pastoral decisions determined in part by strategy and in part by self-preservation. They were not blameless in this situation, for it was they who had unthinkingly expected to be able to enjoy the support of the state without having to pay for it. Over the course of the seventeenth century, many chose to capitulate, and reached their own accommodation with the world of affairs. Others, a minority perhaps but a significant minority, were to develop an increasingly radical answer of their own to the call of policy and worldliness.

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

If dévot men found themselves under intense pressure to conform to a new ideology of citizenship, dévot women were still bound by old rules of action in which they were mere pawns in games of family strategy. This fact, however, was to prove to be an advantage in some respects. Aside from its practical consequences, to be discussed in the next chapter, the peculiar position of women in French society ensured that some of them, at least, were drawn to forms of radical religious expression. The more educated and sensitive among them longed, it appears, for a theology that would vindicate the disinterested love that was inaccessible to them in family life.

The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent inadvertently deepened the problem of accommodation with the world for the Church's pastors and flocks. This was not because post-Tridentine Catholicism was deliberately progressive in any modern sense, attacking the existing power structures of the world overtly; rather the reverse. It refused to give in to pressure to permit communion under both species; it would not encourage wider reading of the Bible among the laity by permitting its publication in vernacular languages; and it vindicated ceremony, the cult of the Virgin and the saints, and the mystique of the Eucharist.² The historian R. Po-Chia Hsia has suggested that the reason why only one martyr saint of the Counter-Reformation was canonized more or less contemporaneously, as opposed to the hundreds or even thousands who graced the early Christian Church, was that the Tridentine Church was too invested in existing power structures to wish to justify martyrdom too openly; 'the image of martyrdom, well-suited to the identity of an apostolic church persecuted by pagan rulers, was not the self-image of the papal monarchy, heir to the theocratic imperium of late antiquity'.³ In short, the Council of Trent did not intentionally set Catholicism in opposition to the spirit of the age

CHAPTER 2

or the world, the 'siècle', as it was known in French. Nevertheless, the Council of Trent had made certain policy decisions which were more radical in their implications than they might appear at first glance, and which had lasting repercussions for Catholic theologians and clerics throughout Europe. It was also unintentionally responsible for creating the conditions, both in the realm of theology and in the realm of practical affairs, which drew women into France's Catholic renewal.

• The status of clerics in the Counter-Reformation

Under the influence of the same currents of reform which had led to the Reformation, the ecclesiastics of Trent had given a new significance to the sacred office of the priesthood. They were determined to ensure that priests took up their duties with a greater sense of their majesty:

Je dis donc que les personnes dédiées au service divin, ces hommes sanctifiés, ces anges humanisés, ces déités terrestres ne doivent respirer que dévotion, n'affectionner que la vertu et se reculer de cent lieues des choses séculières et embarrasements du monde...Quoi qu'il en soit, Messieurs, il faut être dévot⁴

Secular priests had once been permitted a certain latitude in their behaviour; it was monks who were expected to live the devout life to its fullest. Now priests too must follow the path of perfection, modelling themselves not upon the princes of the Church but upon Christ himself. This meant, among other things, that they should not retire from the world to live as contemplatives, once the highest of human ideals, but should learn to live in it as Christ and his apostles had done.⁵ Not all priests, or even most, were to perceive themselves in this light, but those who did were also the men who defined what it meant to be a dévot cleric. With so exalted a sense of their mission, it was more difficult for them than it had once been to adapt to the demands of life in the world, at a time when they were also being asked to learn to live a genuinely apostolic life, a life, that is, that did not shrink from contact with the world. It has often been said that dévot writers like François de Sales attempted to reconcile

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

the practise of devotion with the duties of temporal life: 'une âme vigoureuse et constante' could 'vivre au monde sans recevoir aucune humeur mondaine'.⁶ But it should be noted that in the end it was the world that was supposed to change to accommodate devotion; devotion must not make too many concessions to the world.

• Confession and communion

In addition to its glorification of the mission of the secular priest, the Council of Trent had decided to encourage the Catholic faithful to confess and communicate far more frequently than they had hitherto been accustomed to doing. This too was a more revolutionary change than it might appear to be at first glance. Through most of Catholic history, outside religious houses only the priest at a Mass had communicated much more often than once a year, at Easter.⁷ Now, the demand that the faithful receive the Eucharist more often made it necessary for them to examine their consciences more closely and more often in order to prepare for it. '[T]hat so great a sacrament [the Eucharist] may not be unworthily received...this holy Council ordains and declares that sacramental confession must necessarily be made beforehand by those whose conscience is burdened by mortal sin...'⁸ But what was 'worthy' reception? The Council of Trent did not rule upon this crucial issue, which was to be of the greatest importance in the near-fratricidal doctrinal battles in later seventeenth-century France. What the idea of communicating worthily did accomplish, however, was to lay the emphasis, 'however inadvertently, on the emotional state of the recipient and not the efficacy of the sacraments'.⁹ Cumulatively, these innovations each reinforced and strengthened the others, encouraging a new emphasis upon the inner life of the spirit but also demanding that this life must be lived outside the sheltering walls of the monastery. For the most conscientious Catholics, especially

CHAPTER 2

priests, living in a period of increased (or more obvious) state intrusiveness into the realm of the spirit, the changes would almost inevitably provoke a confrontation with the state.

• The Roots of Dévot Theology

Dévot theology developed rapidly in the early years of the seventeenth century. By 1625, the year in which Pierre de Bérulle's *Grandeurs de Jésus* was published, it had already acquired a distinctive character of its own, setting it apart from post-Tridentine theology elsewhere in Europe and to some extent from earlier Catholic theology as well. It was to be remarkable for two reasons. It was penetrated by a spirit of indifferentism so extreme that it must necessarily come into conflict with the existing order of the world at some point; and it seems to have been designed specifically to appeal to women. The development of dévot theology coincided, more or less, with the literary invention of the dévote, so that the ideal dévote was encouraged to take up devotional practices whose value was being theoretically worked out in dévot theology. The era also saw the dawn of an affective revolution in religious writing, one which was to be of the greatest importance in winning women to the cause of the Catholic reformation. One faction of the dévots developed the combination of Tridentine Catholic ideals with the affective theology of Northern Europe, and, to a lesser degree, the influence of southern European traditions, that was to be labelled the 'École française'.

Since the beginning of the great age of Catholic humanism in the late fifteenth century, Catholic devotional writers (and eventually their Protestant counterparts) had been in reaction against what they saw as the excessive rationalism, the obsessive scholastic emphasis upon enumerating, categorizing, and explaining the denizens of heaven. 'This prattling of the dialecticians', wrote the humanist poet Petrarch, 'will never come to an end; it throws up summaries and definitions like

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

bubbles...but for the most part they will know nothing of the real truth of the things they talk about'.¹⁰ The humanists rebelled, too, against the perceived scholastic tendency to reduce the devout life to a matter of simple morality, and to reduce morality to a calculus of good and bad effects. The moral life could not be reduced to a struggle between reason and the animal urges: the human personality was a 'complex and mysterious unity', whose allegiance was to be won by persuasion and eloquence rather than dialectic.¹¹ It was a profoundly political view of human beings, but it also contained another element of great importance to dévot theology. Under the influence of the humanist view of the human personality, both Protestant and Catholic theologians began to suggest that perhaps it was not the intellect, after all, that brought about inner conversion and the dedication of the self to God: perhaps it was the heart that determined the will and so determined the human capacity for virtue and devotion. A reconsideration of human psychology, perhaps partly directed by a closer study of Scripture (François de Sales and Bérulle could read Greek and Hebrew) had brought theologians to a new understanding of the significance of the 'heart' in Jewish and patristic writings.¹²

The theologians of the Sorbonne were soon to follow the humanists and take up the criticism of the scholastic approach to theology. Jacques Maldonat, one of the most important theologians of the Sorbonne in the sixteenth-century, complained of how

la théologie pure et sincère a été tellement mêlée à une certaine dialectique scholastique, que l'on n'entendait plus dans les écoles que suppositions, appellations, exponible, contradictions, insolubles syllogismes, discussions infinies, clameurs puériles et cliquetis d'arguments, si bien que lorsque l'hérésie s'est montrée, elle nous a trouvés impuissants, et cette théologie épineuse et inculte n'a été qu'un objet de mépris et de raillerie, comme si on avait prétendu se défendre contre une armée avec un morceau de bois.¹³

CHAPTER 2

The earliest humanists had maintained a certain optimism about human nature, even in the midst of the horrors of the mid-fourteenth century; or perhaps it would be truer to say that their solution to the problems of their times had not yet been tested and found wanting. By the early sixteenth century, of course, the hope for a reforming consensus was to fail before Luther's theses. In the face of the splintering of Christendom by the Reformation, and the violence that followed it, humanist optimism deteriorated:

La conception néoplatonicienne classique accordait beaucoup à l'effort libre de l'homme en marche vers Dieu. Le sac de Rome de 1527, la domination espagnole sur l'Italie, l'Empire de Charles Quint et l'essor des grands royaumes à tendance unitaire et absolue, écrasants pour l'individu, contribuèrent sans doute à faire sentir les limites de cet idéal et à porter l'attention plus que précédemment vers la faiblesse et la servitude de l'homme, misérable pêcheur, racheté seulement par le sacrifice de Jésus sur la croix.¹⁴

Later in the sixteenth century, Montaigne, who was an important influence upon the dévots, shared the humanists' view that reason was not at the center of faith, but there was a new kind of skepticism in his comments about human nature that earlier humanists would not have shared:

We must... accompany our faith with all the reason that is in us, but always with this reservation, not to think that it is on us that that faith depends, or that our efforts and arguments can attain a knowledge so supernatural and extraordinary.¹⁵

It was not only reason which he and his generation called into question. European thought in the sixteenth century was also to move away from the humanists' belief that devotion could be harmonized with the needs and demands of the world. Montaigne was among the first great French thinkers to suggest, as Jean Dagens points out, 'une laïcisation totale de la littérature et de la science profane'; inversely, 'la théologie ne doit s'embarrasser d'aucun élément humain'. This position had profound implications for the status of religion in human affairs:

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

nous trouvons préfigurée chez Montaigne, non seulement cette séparation de la religion et de la littérature qui sera codifiée par le siècle classique, mais aussi la séparation de la religion et de tous les grands intérêts humains qui est vraiment l'essence de la philosophie des lumières.¹⁶

Bérulle, the Jansenists, and the great spiritual writers of the seventeenth century spoke in much the same way as Montaigne did about God and devotion, Dagens informs us, but did not recognise the dangers of his position to themselves. His influence was, in part, responsible for their gradual rejection of reason as an important element of faith.

On the other hand, Montaigne's separation of religion and other 'great human concerns' was important to the dévots only in the sense that battling it was their *raison d'être*. The dévots did not intend to make piety irrelevant to daily life, or to permit its concerns to be excluded from public policy; they hoped to achieve the exact opposite. If their religion had been entirely contemplative and internalized, they would not have been such a thorn in the flesh of the governing bodies of France. They were, in fact, a transitional group, aware that their world had changed but not yet aware that the changes would ultimately exclude men like themselves from influence in public affairs. The most devout among them may have suspected that 'true devotion' of the apostolic and internal kind was inimical to modern life, but they were determined that it should be made known to all Christians. The more practical dévots hoped merely to persuade the people of France to adhere to the outward forms of devotion. The tension between their wish to bring about a real revolution in devotion that should affect both the moral life and the life of the spirit, and their wish to restore and promote public worship among Catholics by whatever means possible, was the essential dévot dilemma.

CHAPTER 2

The *École française*

Historians of religion conventionally divide French piety into several different 'schools', the most important of which are the '*École française*', first appearing between 1608 and 1615, and the Jansenists or Augustinians, who emerged later, between 1635 and 1640. The exact composition of the *École française*, and its theological position, remain somewhat controversial. Dagens has said that its defining characteristics were 'adhérence à Dieu'; the ideal of apostolic action; and the creation of an ideal clerical culture,¹⁷ an adequate if vague description. But who were its members? Henri Bremond applied the label to a whole range of French theological writing of the seventeenth century, encompassing many theological styles, from Bérulle, whom he regarded as the founder of the school, to Bossuet, whom he regarded as Bérulle's true disciple.¹⁸ He excluded the Jansenists from the *École française* and regarded the Company of Jesus as a distinct school with a French tradition of its own, but apart from these exceptions saw virtually every theologian of the period as marked by the French School influence. His critics suggest, on the other hand, that the label can really be applied only to Bérulle himself and his immediate disciples - Charles de Condren (1588-1642), Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-1657), and Jean Eudes (1601-1680).¹⁹ Neither approach is an altogether satisfactory way to categorize French theology. It had a distinctive form and certain characteristics in common across the century. They shared the same severity, the same refusal to compromise with the world; above all, the same indifferentism. Bérulle and Saint-Cyran (1681-1643), respectively the founders of the *École française* and Augustinian 'Jansenism' in France, were close friends who worked together for years. Both knew and admired François de Sales. Together the three men were perhaps the most influential theologians of seventeenth-century France. The effect of their ideas appears in almost

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

every major theological trend between 1630 (after de Sales and Bérulle were both dead) and the end of the century, including the two great dissenting movements of the period, quietism and Jansenism. Marks of Bérulle's influence are most apparent in devotional work directed towards priests and religious, and in a certain kind of writing that might be described as 'devotional theology' since it is at once a form of prayer and argument. The Salesian influence is evident in much writing on moral theology, particularly the theology of divine love, directed towards the laity and to women. Bérulle, however, was more 'Augustinian' in his view of predestination than François de Sales; while the latter was more influenced by sixteenth-century Jesuit liberality on the subject.²⁰ The disagreement over predestination was the basis of the eventual split between the Jansenists, who took a strict position, and the more orthodox descendants of Bérulle's *École française* who took a more 'lax' stance, following de Sales rather than their 'founder' Bérulle. It would divide Saint-Cyran, at one pole of the dévot theological influence, and Vincent de Paul (1581-1660), at another. The two men would eventually become enemies, leading to an irreparable division in French Catholicism. While their enmity would be very important to France, the differences between the two 'schools' should not be projected backwards into the early years of the dévot movement.

The theology of the *École française* was marked, according to Bremond, by certain characteristics which appeared consistently in all the work, albeit in a number of different guises. It was, first of all, theocentric. What this meant, in effect, was that dévot theology as it was manifested by writers of the French School was supposedly more oriented towards God and less towards merely human need than its predecessors. Even Saint Augustine, according to Bremond, was anthropocentric in comparison to Bérulle and his followers. Augustine emphasized God's utility

CHAPTER 2

soul's happiness; it was not concentrated upon simple worship.²² Bérulle, in contrast, argued that theology, like physics, must undergo a Copernican revolution; men and women must learn that they, like the earth, revolved around God, the sun, and not the other way around.²³

Another characteristic of the *École française* was its Christocentricity, closely linked to its theocentricity. Bérulle's biographer wrote of him that '[i]l ne concevait le salut éternel que comme liaison avec Jésus-Christ, et si l'on eût pu faire une anatomie spirituelle de son coeur, au lieu du désir de se sauver, on y eût vu une forte passion d'appartenir parfaitement et inséparablement à Jésus.'²⁴ It is surprising to see how little of the devotional literature, and how few of the devotional practises, of men and women before the end of the fifteenth century, were directed towards Jesus. For centuries, the second person of the Trinity had received less attention from ordinary Christians than did the saints and the Virgin, who seem to have been regarded as more approachable intercessors. Part of the 'mandate' of the Council of Trent was to change this, to ensure that Christ became the focus of Christian prayer and devotional life. Like Protestant theologians, and in response to the same devotional impulse, Catholic doctors were eager to promote a more intimate relationship with Jesus.²⁵ Bérulle and his imitators were to take this to new heights.²⁶ Bérulle was anxious to insist that it was not Christ's humanity, but his condescension in submitting to the Incarnation, that must be remembered. His power and majesty, and his condescension in coming to earth to die, demanded nothing less than complete self-annihilation, 'anéantissement', from those who worshipped him:

Nous devons tous désirer non pas d'être, mais ou de n'être point ou d'être en relation vers Dieu et son Fils unique, voire n'être que relation vers lui. Tout notre être devant être anéanti par grâce: *Vivo ego, jam non ego* (Galat. II, 20).²⁷

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

It has often been said that Bérulle displayed an Augustinian pessimism with regard to the nothingness of human creatures, but this is too modern a view of a man who was neither a pessimist nor an optimist as we would understand the terms. '[A]s close to nothing as man may be by nature, he has a divine destiny; as close to sin as he may be by the Fall, he is ransomed':²⁸

L'homme doit être considéré dans le dessein de Dieu qu'il a ruiné, en soi et dans son état présent auquel il s'est réduit, et dans la réparation que Dieu veut faire de sa ruine en son Fils unique, Jésus-Christ Notre-Seigneur....²⁹

Jesus's willingness to die for the sins of his father's creatures should be regarded as both a source of honour and shame, in Bérulle's view.

Most of all, the École française and its heirs were notable for the affectivity of their theology. Jean Dagens regards him and his heirs as the intellectual descendants of the great affective theologians of the Middle Ages, with their emphasis upon the affections as the sole motivator in human life. To be an affective theologian was to maintain that the soul could 'rise to God by affection alone, by the path of desire and aspiration, without forethought.'³⁰ In other words, affective theologians believed that, the affections being at the core of human nature, the love of God was the essence of virtue and that it was only by the experience of such love, as both donors and recipients, that human beings might hope to become virtuous. The general tendency of affective theology was anti-intellectual: like humanism, it encouraged a distaste for the use of reason in the devotional life. The soul achieves virtue, said Bérulle, 'non tant par une intelligence pénétrative comme il vous est arrivé d'autre fois, que par une expérience réelle et véritable que vous avez de votre néantise'.³¹ The belief that reason and righteousness were closely linked had a long history in western Europe. Now, having read both the humanists and the mystics, the dévot theologians began to suggest that the will and the

CHAPTER 2

intelligence were not necessarily related, that love was what moved the will to action and that therefore the affections were the seat of virtue. This led them to a new kind of asceticism which emphasized both the need for absolute obedience to God and indifference to all motives other than perfect love of God. No motive other than love, no self-seeking, no 'concupiscence', must be permitted to come between the created being and his Creator, the proper object of his adoration:

Il faut premièrement regarder Dieu et non pas soi-même, et ne point opérer par ce regard et recherche de soi-même, mais par le regard pur de Dieu.³²

Self-love was the great corrupter of human nature, and it was to defeat it that human beings must learn to annihilate the self:

de son venin, soit la corrompant du tout, soit en diminuant sa force et sa vertu... Il n'y a chose si sainte... qu'il ne convertisse en son goût et en ses propres délices, il n'y a grâce de Dieu, tant pure et efficace, qu'il ne s'en serve comme d'un moyen et empêchement pour nous divertir et éloigner d'icelui... il n'y a état de l'âme si élevé, où il n'entre et ne dispose l'âme par ses artifices et propriétés à une chute fort préjudiciable...³³

Mysticism

Affective theology was historically related to mystical theology, although the two are not identical. The rise of the affective school in theology was closely associated with the growth of the mystical traditions of the monasteries of northern Europe, especially the Cistercian monasteries, where the pursuit of both affective and emotionally intense religious experience dated back to the thirteenth century.³⁴ The two main patristic sources for later European mysticism and the affective tradition were Saint Augustine's christianization of neo-Platonic mysticism, and the works of pseudo-Dionysus, also a Platonist whose work was devoted to christianizing the philosophy of the neo-Platonists.³⁵ Their influence worked its way down to the Cologne school, out of which emerged the

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

so-called 'Rhino-flemish' mystics. Among the most important of these to French mysticism was Harphius (@1400-1477), the Dutch Franciscan whose real name was Hendrik van Erp; he had been influenced by Saint Bonaventure, who drew upon Augustine. The northern mystics had a powerful impact upon the dévots of the Acarie circle, partly because their works were being translated from Latin into French for the first time. This made them accessible, as Dagens points out, to an audience of women (and men) who had never before been able to read them. The works of Harphius were translated sixteen times between 1549 and 1617;³⁶ the works of pseudo-Dionysus were also translated into French.³⁷ Many such books were first published in French by the Carthusians of Paris, the same order to which Dom Beaucousin, Madame Acarie's confidant, belonged.

Although the influence of the Cologne mystics is commonly associated with Bérulle and François de Sales, while that of Augustine is linked with Saint-Cyran and the Jansenists, the complex pattern of influences sketched above suggests how artificial is the distinction between Jansenist and École française theology. The classical writers of Louis XIV's time were to refer to dévot mysticism as a foreign import, baroque and Spanish in origin, that had ruined the École française, while some of them - Pascal in particular - regarded Jansenism as more truly French. This too was an error. First, John of Avila and Teresa, decidedly Spanish, were both to be important to the men and women of Port-Royal, the foyer of Jansenism.³⁸ Nor was dévot mysticism necessarily Spanish in origin: although the works of Italian and Spanish mystical writers like Teresa of Avila were an important influence on dévot theology, the publication of the works of the northern mystics greatly outnumbered those of southern Europe, suggesting that their influence may have been even greater.³⁹ In any case, so

CHAPTER 2

overwhelming was the encounter with mysticism among the French that Bremond was to refer to its entry as a 'mystical invasion'.⁴⁰

Mystical theology is difficult to define, but for the purposes of this study it may be described as 'the science of spiritual life insofar as this is dependent on divine grace' (*Dictionary of Christian Theology*). Grace, that is, rather than human effort. As a sixteenth-century French translation of Saint John of the Cross states,

on nomme la contemplation par laquelle l'entendement est illustré de Dieu, Theologie mystique, c'est à dire sagesse secrette de Dieu, puis que elle est cachee à l'entendement mesme qui la reçoit.⁴¹

A mystic is one who encounters God directly through some manifestation of God's grace rather than through moral and devotional 'works' (i.e., external acts like alms-giving, prayer, or attendance at mass) or the pursuit of knowledge about God. Affective and mystical theology are linked by their common perception that God's love, and the worshipper's pursuit of God's love, might occasionally lead, for some gifted souls, to such direct encounters with the divine. Again, the words of John of the Cross to Anne de Jésus upon the subject help to illuminate the connection:

Sans doute, Votre Reverence n'est pas habituée aux exercices de la théologie scolastique qui nous aide à comprendre les verités divines, mais vous possédez la pratique de la théologie mystique qui s'acquiert par l'amour; or, non seulement l'amour nous enseigne les verités, mais il nous les fait savourer.⁴²

Knowledge and theological science were were not necessary for the 'pratique de la théologie mystique'; love was.

Still, the distinction between mystical theology and mysticism as such is a controversial one. Some students of the subject, including the influential Evelyn Underhill, have argued that mystics are the true travellers in the realms of the spirit, while mystical doctors are mere mapmakers who furnish

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

guides to the terrain without necessarily having visited it.⁴³ Those who take this view to extremes argue that the true *spirituels* are the mystics whose practise of contemplation leads them to jettison much of the 'baggage' thought to be important by those less blessed than themselves: works, ceremonies, spoken prayers, pilgrimages, and all the external apparatus of religion. Others have argued that the distinction is a false one, a modern dichotomy born out of the desire to link mystical experience to a radical tradition. Bernard McGinn, whose support for this idea has provoked much irritation among scholars, cites the French historian Michel Certeau on the subject:

Since the sixteenth or seventeenth century one no longer designates as mystical the kind of "wisdom" elevated to the recognition of a mystery already lived and proclaimed in common beliefs, but an experimental knowledge which has slowly detached itself from traditional theology or Church institutions and which characterizes itself through the consciousness, acquired or received, of a gratified passivity where the self is lost in God.

The consequences of this transformation of the meaning of mysticism, McGinn goes on, were, 'the creation of a mystical "tradition", that is, the reinterpretation of past thinkers as belonging to something that they never really knew in explicit fashion, and, second, the "psychologization" of the object study of the new science.'⁴⁴

It is clear that both sides in this dispute agree that there are different kinds of mysticism, one grounded in exegetical reading and study, the other in direct experience, although perhaps the significance of the difference has been exaggerated. It is also clear that, historically, doctors of mysticism have most commonly been male theologians, pursuing a greater understanding of God through the medium of intellectual speculation upon the divine mysteries.⁴⁵ Mystics, on the other hand, are as likely to have been women as men, perhaps more likely to be women than men. This is a truth that has been recognised since medieval times. Barbara Newman writes of a male mystic of

CHAPTER 2

the Middle Ages that he saw how women, 'because of their soft hearts and simple senses, could be "kindled more brightly" than men by desire for God. They were wiser mystics because they were better lovers.' But such women, writes Newman, were so artful in their accounts of their experience that they belied the naïveté foisted upon them.⁴⁶ The 'private illumination' and 'unusual psychosomatic experiences' which McGinn and Certeau associate with the mystics of the sixteenth century in fact had a precedent in what German theologians came to call 'Nonnenmystik', the kind of mysticism prevalent among nuns of the Rhineland in the Middle Ages.⁴⁷

In the seventeenth century, women's capacity for love was much admired by male *dévots*. The devotional writer Du Boscq believed that devotion and charity were the natural strength of women; charity in the sense of the love of God, to which women were brought by the tenderness of their natures.⁴⁸ This made them the natural targets of the 'affective' writings of male theologians. It would be a mistake to sexualize the difference between the two kinds of mysticism too much. learned mysticism, like that of Hildegarde of Bingen, was by no means unknown among women, while the wilder shores of mystical experience were sometimes reached by men, like John of the Cross or the tragic Jesuit Jean-Joseph Surin (1600-1665). As in so many other aspects of the spiritual life, however, the sexual differentiation appears to have grown sharper in the seventeenth century: direct mystical experience of the more exotic kind grew rarer among men even while it continued to flourish among women.

• Women and Mysticism

Historians have long speculated about the connection between women and mysticism. Jacques Maître's 'Entre femmes' (1983) proposed that 'la multiplication des extases, visions et révélations

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

privées chez les mystiques fut surtout un phénomène féminin'.⁴⁹ Caroline Bynum has pointed to certain 'basic themes' appearing in female religiosity, among them a concern for affective religious response; extreme forms of penitential asceticism; an emphasis both on Christ's humanity and on the inspiration of the spirit; and the bypassing of clerical authority.⁵⁰ Although Bynum avoids the use of the term, these are essentially mystical qualities. Bremond, too, speaks of women's power in this realm of spiritual experience: 'Dans la plupart des entreprises qui, de près ou de loin, tendent ou s'ordonnent à la conquête mystique...se découvre l'inspiration d'une femme.'⁵¹ If it is accurate to say that women's spirituality has or had a strong mystical component, it follows that certain aspects of dévot theology would exercise a special fascination for women. The point has often been made by students of seventeenth-century theology. The historian Autel goes so far as to suggest that the dévot clerics of the seventeenth century, especially François de Sales, designed their doctrine to appeal to women's natures, in that it was dominated by imagination, sentiment, affectivity, and a taste for the concrete.⁵² He implies that the nature of dévot theology was such that it promoted characteristics which had long been associated with feminine patterns of behaviour, above all the long-standing conviction that women were more moved by their affections than men, and less rational. Autel overstates his case, in more ways than one. It is not certain that women, even in the seventeenth century, were uniquely attracted to the qualities listed by Autel. Jansenism was also to prove very attractive to women, and it was for the most part rigorously unsentimental, its male and female adherents practising a form of controlled, text-based and exegetical contemplation closer in spirit to the 'mystical theology' - with the emphasis upon theology - more commonly associated with the male doctors of the Church than with women.

CHAPTER 2

Besides, there were certain elements in all *dévo*t theology, including that of François de Sales, that were unlikely to appeal to women, if we accept the stereotype of the qualities likely to attract them. *Dévo*t theologians certainly did not encourage their female charges to bypass clerical authority. They did not approve of extreme forms of penitential asceticism, and they were less concerned with Christ's humanity than with his universal lordship. The affectivity of the *École française* was not emotionally expressive nor especially concrete, in spite of Autel's suggestion to the contrary. Bérulle was disturbed by women's tendency to humanize Christ and he disapproved of excessive emotionalism in worship. It is hard not to read his comments on Mary Magdalen as a criticism of the female sex for their approach to Christ as an object of worship. 'Les délices de la Madeleine,' he wrote, 'en la présence de Jésus, ne sont en rien semblables aux sentiments humains, que naissent de la présence des choses bien-aimés.' Jesus was 'un objet tout divin, tout céleste, et sa présence ne produit dans les coeurs que les effets divins, dignes de sa sainteté, dignes de sa qualité toute spirituelle et céleste.'⁵³ Bérulle's closest disciples, Condren and Amélotte, were to express similar sentiments; while Bourdaloue in his sermons refused to speak of Christ's sufferings on the cross because this was so medieval and Ignatian (read: Spanish).⁵⁴ The tendency grew sharper as the century progressed. If we look to the *dévo*t theologians for the secret of their appeal to women, expecting to find that they vindicate sentiment and emotionalism, we will be disappointed.

Before going on to consider what women's attraction to *dévo*t theology was based upon, one practical - and political - point should be considered: in the seventeenth century, with its obsession with discipline, women mystics were encouraged to write far more than their male counterparts

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

because it was thought they needed to be watched. A seventeenth-century spiritual director wrote of women mystics that

On doit faire attention que les femmes favorisées de Dieu, étant absolument soumises à leurs Supérieurs et Directeurs, ont été ordinairement contraintes par l'obéissance à mettre par écrit ce qui se passait dans leur intérieur, afin qu'on pût l'examiner plus sûrement...Les hommes, au contraire, exempts, pour l'ordinaire, de cette grande sujétion à leurs Directeurs, tiennent secrètes les grâces qu'il reçoivent; ils ne les écrivent pas, ni les mettent point en d'autres mains.¹⁵⁵

This was written in the nature of an excuse, to explain why men appeared to experience fewer mystical revelations than women; but it may be a valid explanation of why women mystics wrote so much and men's mysticism seems to have left fewer traces.

• Perfect Love

Dévoth theologians did share the traditional feminine enthusiasm for affective theology and for the inspiration of the spirit, and for 'internalized' piety, and did what they could to encourage it among the women in their care. But the most effective tool they were to discover in their efforts to win women's hearts and minds was the 'indifferentism' which was one of the few characteristics shared seemingly by all French theologians of the seventeenth century, the indifferentism with which they hoped to defeat the 'vénin' of concupiscent self-love. The quality of this indifferentism is difficult to explain: it consisted in regarding any kind of self-interested motive in the pursuit of God, even when the self-interest concerned one's own salvation, to be unworthy and even sinful. Camus, it should be remembered, would describe the spirit of Divine Charity as a woman with a torch in one hand and a bucket of water in the other:

'Avec ce flambeau allumé,' dit elle, 'je désire mettre le feu au paradis et le réduire tellement en cendres et qu'il n'en soit plus parlé: et, répandant cette eau sur les flammes de l'enfer, je prétends les éteindre et qu'il n'y ait plus de tourments ni de

CHAPTER 2

supplices en ce lieux malheureux; afin que désormais Dieu soit aimé et servi pour l'amour de lui - même, sans servilité et sans mercenairété.⁵⁶

Camus's words in this passage encapsulate *dévo*t indifferentism in a peculiarly dramatic way. It is of special interest that he personifies Divine Charity as a woman, connecting him to a long-standing tradition and one that was in its turn connected to a movement known for 'validating' female devotion.⁵⁷

To be overly concerned with the fate of one's soul, according to the principles of *dévo*t indifferentism, was a form of spiritual venality, and it must be eliminated from the consciousness of the true devout Christian. This aspect of *dévo*t thought is often associated exclusively with the '*pur amourists*' and the quietists of the later seventeenth century, but in fact it was common in some form to nearly all French theologians throughout the era. Augustinian theologians, using different language and working from a different perspective, also condemned spiritual self-interest. Under the influence of Saint-Cyran and Jansenius, they would argue that to confess one's sins with any taint of self-seeking was to be unworthy to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist. Perfect contrition, which alone rendered the penitent worthy to communicate, must not be infected by the fear of hell or the hope of heaven. Motive, in the practise of the devout life, was the all-important determinant of virtue among *dévo*t theologians of every stripe, Jansenist, Gallican, École française, and ultramontane in every combination. Above all, it was to be important to the quietist movement, with its unyielding defense of *pur amour*. It was this indifferentism that distinguished the *dévo*t theologians of France from those elsewhere in Europe (until the latter began to be influenced by them); it was this that was ultimately to make them so ill at ease in the world of mixed motives and divided allegiances so well understood by Richelieu. It was also this that made it so attractive to women. Historians who are puzzled by the

DÉVOT THEOLOGY AND THE DÉVOTES

range of female religious dissent in the seventeenth century, who cannot comprehend how women could be equally attracted to the language of Jansenist austerity and quietist extravagance, should look to *dévot* indifferentism in all its forms for a possible explanation. That is, indifferentism was the common theme that underlay otherwise hostile schools of French theology and was also perhaps the secret of *dévot* theology's appeal to the female sex. It incorporated the mystic's yearning for direct experience of God, the ascetic's drive to achieve a state of perfection that was more than human, and a subtle criticism of existing social and religious arrangements.

It was thus that *dévot* clerics and women, both laywomen and religious, found a common cause in their attraction to a form of spirituality that developed unexpectedly under the direction of the Council of Trent, which concealed the possibility of a quietly subversive activism within its acquiescence to accepted forms of religious expression. And their piety achieved this 'subversive' quality not through any revolutionary intent, conscious or otherwise, but through their desire to ensure that professed ideals were really lived. In so doing, the two allies - *dévot* clerics and the *dévotes* - helped to set free a powerful force whose energy they could not easily contain, and which culminated in the near-absolute estrangement of many of them from the society in which they lived.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Augustine attributed the fall of Rome to the desire of some of its rulers for power:
...the lust for power, which of all human vices was found in its most concentrated form in the Roman people...first established its victory in a few powerful individuals, and then crushed the rest of an exhausted country beneath the yoke of slavery.
Augustine, *The City of God* (London: Penguin, 1984) Bk I, Ch. 30, p. 42.
2. Jean Delumeau, *La Réforme* p. 168-169.
3. Po-Chia Hsia, *Catholic Renewal*, p. 125-6.
4. Pierre de Besse, *La royale prêtrise*, (Paris, 1610), p. 20.
5. See Ross Fuller. *The Brotherhood of the Common Life and Its Influence* (Albany: SUNY, 1995), Chapter 1, for his comments on the resurgence of the apostolic ideal among the men of the Brotherhood of the Common Life. The order was the spiritual home of both Thomas à Kempis and Erasmus, and the cradle of *devotio moderna*, a very important influence upon *dévo*t piety
6. François de Sales, *Introduction à la vie dév*ote, cited by Michel Dupuy, *Bérulle et le Sacerdoce. Étude historique et doctrinale. Textes inédits*, (Paris, 1969), p. 77.
7. Châtellier, *Catholicisme en France*, I, p. 38.
8. H. Denzinger, *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, (13th ed.), translated by Roy J. Deferrari, (B. Herder Book Co., London, 1957); from 'Canons on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist'. (Session XIII, Nov. 10, 1551), Canon 11, p. 271.
9. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 95-96.
10. Petrarch, quoted in Bouwsma, 'Spirituality of Renaissance Humanism', p. 238.
11. Bouwsma, 'Spirituality of Renaissance Humanism', p. 237.
12. 'The pain of the pious [in Jewish theology]', Peter Brown has written in his study of late antique Christianity, 'was a war between good and evil inclinations in the heart, not a war between body and soul or body and mind.' Brown, *The Body and Society*, p. 35.
13. J.M. Prat, *Maldonat et l'université de Paris aux XVIe siècle* (Paris: Julien, Lanier, 1856), p. 555-556.
14. Roland Mousnier, *Les XVI et XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993), p. 52-53.
15. Donald M. Frame, editor and translator. *Selections from the Essays of Montaigne*. (Arlington, IL: 1973). From "Apology for Raymond Sebond", p. 55.

16. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 58.
17. Broutin too hints at this idea, suggesting that the Council of Trent was trying to achieve an inward reform of morals and devotion that was sometimes at odds with the outward reform of structures, institutions, and lay piety; *La réforme pastorale en France*, I, p. 94.
18. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 95.
19. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, Vol. III, Book I, p. 26.
20. Broutin, *La réforme pastorale*, II, p. 413. Broutin applies the name 'École française' only to the 'Quatre Grands', i.e. Bérulle, Condren, Olier, and Jean Eudes, and states that it is a 'catégorie brémondienne' now regarded (in 1956) as out-dated.
21. See René Bady, *François de Sales* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1970), p. 11, for a discussion of Sales' attitude to predestination; also see Ch. 6 of this study. Bérulle's 'Augustinianism' has sometimes been exaggerated; he was not a pessimist to the degree that some later Jansenists would be. See the introduction to Bérulle's *Opuscules de piété*, Introduction de Gaston Restureau (Paris: Aubier, Éditions Montaigne, c1944), p. 37.
22. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, Vol. III, Book I, p. 28.
23. Bérulle, *Oeuvres complètes du Cardinal de Bérulle*, (Paris: Maison d'Institution de l'Oratoire, 1960; facsimile of an edition published in 1644), p. 161.
24. G. Habert, *La vie du Cardinal de Bérulle, Instituteur et premier Supérieur de l'Oratoire de Jésus* (Paris: chez la veuve Jean Camusat, 1646), p. 622-623.
25. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 73.
26. Urban VIII was to refer to Bérulle as the 'apostle of the Word', that is of the Word made Flesh, Jesus. See Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, III, i, p. 45-46.
27. Bérulle, *Opuscules de Piété*, CLX, 'De la grâce chrétienne', p. 454.
28. *Ibid.*, from the Introduction, p. 37-8.
29. *Ibid.*, XXLL, 'De la création de l'homme', p. 118.
30. Dagens, citing Hugues de Balma's *Théologie mystique* as an influence upon Bérulle. *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 106-7.
31. Letter 928, *Correspondance de Bérulle*; cited P. Dupuy, *Pierre de Bérulle* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1964), p. 74-76.
32. Bérulle, *Oeuvres complètes*, II, *Oeuvres de piété*, CLXXXI, p. 1078 (p. 1245 in 1644 edition).

33. Bérulle, *Oeuvres complètes*, II, *Bref discours de l'abnégation intérieure*, p. 646.
34. See *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, 'Cisterciens', article by Simon Roisin, p. 715, from *L'hagiographie cistercienne dans le diocèse de Liège au 13e siècle*, (Louvain, 1947).
35. Louis Cognet, *Introduction aux mystiques rhéno-flamands* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1968), p. 12.
36. Cognet, *Introduction aux mystiques*, Ch. 7, 'Harpius', pp. 286-87; Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 106.
37. Louis Cognet. *Crépuscule des mystiques. Bossuet - Fénelon* (Paris: Desclée, 1991, 1st published 1957), p. 21: in 1608 a French edition of pseudo-Dionysus's work by Dom Goulu appeared and remained a classic for a long time.
38. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 108.
39. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 105. He cites Dom Huybens, note 3, who said that of 280 French translations of foreign works published between 1550 and 1610, 164 were of either Dutch or German authors (respectively 136 and 28). Their influence, though decisive, was limited to a very short period of time, says Dagens, p. 108.
40. Volume II of Bremond's *Histoire littéraire* is subtitled *La conquête mystique*.
41. Jean de la Croix, *Le degré du mont Carmel*, II, 8; quoted in Pierre Serouet, *De la vie dévote à la vie mystique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1958), p. 274.
42. From the preface to *Cantique spirituel* (addressed to Anne de Jésus), in *Oeuvres spirituelles du Bienheureux Père Jean de la Croix*, trans. by Cyprien de la Vierge, new edition by P. L.-M. de Saint-Joseph (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949) p. 675.
43. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*. Foreword by Ira Progoff. (New York etc.: Doubleday Image Books, 1990; first published 1930), p. 124.
44. Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*. Vol 1, *The Growth of Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. 310-312.
45. But note that the only two women to have been named 'doctors' of the Catholic Church, Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena, were both recognised as such because of their mystical experience and their analysis of it.
46. Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 136.
47. Cf. Louis Cognet, *Mystiques rhéno-flammands*, Chapter 5. See especially p. 197: 'Dans cette abondante littérature spirituelle, les écrits qui prolongent les tendances de la mystique des cloîtres ou

Nonnenmystik sont légion.'

48. Du Boscq, *Honneste Femme* (Paris, 1658), III, p. 524, p. 526-7; cited Linda Timmermans, *L'accès des femmes à la culture (1598-1715): Un débat d'idées de Saint François de Sales à la Marquise de Lambert* (Paris: Honore Champion Editeur, 1993), p. 503.

49. Jacques Maître, 'Entre femmes. Notes sur une filière du mysticisme catholique', *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, n. 55, 1 (1983), p. 127.

50. Caroline Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 17.

51. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, II, p. 36.

52. G. Arnaud Autel, *Les femmes d'après Saint François de Sales*, cited in Timmermans, p. 409.

53. Bérulle, *Oeuvres complètes*, cited Bremond III, i, p. 58.

54. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, X, p. 320.

55. Père Gallifet, cited in C. Lebrun, *Saint Jean Eudes et la Dévotion au Sacré Coeur* (Paris: Librairie P. Lethielleux, 1929), p. 23-24.

56. Jean-Pierre Camus, *La caritée ou le portrait de la vraie charité, histoire dévote tirée de la vie de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1641) p. 103.

57. Cf. Newman, *Virile Woman*, p. 12: 'Divine Love personified as a goddess--Caritas, Fine Amour, or Frau Minne--is an important figure in twelfth- and thirteenth-century mystical texts, especially those of women.'

3/ THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE, 1595-1620

[I]l faut cependant savoir descendre de la contemplation la plus haute à l'action même la plus basse, et, comme on dit, quitter Dieu pour Dieu.*

Women's participation in the Tridentine restoration was not limited to reading devotional literature. They became, like their male confrères, apostles who wandered the country to bear witness to Catholic truth by feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and even, sometimes, preaching the Word. This extraordinary development was made possible by the mutual need of dévot clerics and the dévotes. Men needed the qualities they believed to be unique to women, and women needed the possibilities that were opened to them by religious activism. Dévot clerics were quick to note and to exploit this situation, so that it is difficult to say whether the figure of the dévotte which emerged in the seventeenth century as a distinct social type was in fact created or merely described by them. No doubt the dévotte as she appeared in the devotional literature written by both men and women, with her almsgiving and other good works, her unworldliness, and her distinctive mystical piety, was a composite figure, based upon existing models; but there is also little doubt that her appearance as a literary figure further encouraged other women to follow in her footsteps. Thus the dévotte may be regarded as the cooperative creation of dévot men, or more specifically the dévot clerics who wrote books for and about her, and the dévot women who both modelled for her and modelled themselves upon her. After a time the dévotte evaded her putative creators altogether - the common story of would-be Pygmalions - and took off in directions that no one had anticipated.

Some of the practical reasons for the need for dévot women's involvement in the cause of the Tridentine reformation are clear enough. The sense of urgency created by the lack of trained priests,

* Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Boucher, *Vie de la bienheureuse soeur Marie de l'Incarnation*, p. 44.

CHAPTER 3

the Protestant threat, and pressure from Rome led reforming priests to wonder why they should not make use of the talents of the women who offered their services so readily to the cause. But none of this can fully explain why men like François de Sales, the Jesuit Jean de Bordès, Pierre Fourier and Vincent de Paul quietly defied custom and the Church to encourage women to engage in activities which had, in many cases, been specifically prohibited by Rome. This is why it is essential that we consider the issue of women's promotion in the light of the political situation of *dévot* clerics. Because of the men's position, women, this chapter will show, enjoyed certain advantages as religious activists in the years following the Wars of Religion, advantages which might not be obvious and might, indeed, appear to be liabilities at first encounters.

The status of women

Historians have long acknowledged women's prominence in France's Catholic Reformation. The importance of women's contribution, writes Robert Mandrou, cannot be underestimated, especially in contrast with the period which preceded it, in the Catholic world at least, *et en particulier avec la période des guerres où elles ont dû en assister, and que participer, aux débats et combats du temps.*¹ While precise statistics are hard to come by, it is certain that in several key areas, women went from strength to strength. Of the sixty new religious houses built in Paris in the first half of the seventeenth century, forty were intended for women.² Women led the drive to educate Catholic children, especially girls. Thousands participated directly in the new teaching and nursing congregations, and hundreds of thousands, it is said, had some kind of encounter with such organizations.³ They began to write devotional treatises and spiritual autobiographies of their own in greater numbers,⁴ rather than having these written on their behalf by men, and to found religious

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

orders,⁵ also in marked departure from the customs of the past.⁶ Most impressive of all is the fact that throughout the seventeenth century female religious first came to equal and then to surpass their male counterparts in numbers,⁷ an unprecedented situation. Historically, monks had always previously outnumbered nuns.

It is difficult to find an explanation for women's remarkable accomplishments during this period. The times were not receptive either to new ideas or to practical innovations. Superficially, there seems to have been little incentive for women to become involved in the Tridentine reform movement in France. Their legal status in the temporal world was in decline,⁸ and this might perhaps have inspired, or forced, some of them to seek out the compensations of religious life. But their status in the Catholic Church was scarcely better than their status in the outside world. Indeed, it has often been said that Tridentine Catholicism was fundamentally hostile to women. The tendency of the Tridentine Church toward discipline, centralization, and regimentation of the faithful is said to have fallen with special severity upon the second sex.⁹ There is clearly some truth in this. Of the people living between 1540 and 1770 and canonized by the Church during the same period, twenty-seven were men and five were women - in spite of women's greatly increased activism.¹⁰ Yet it is clear that women's position in France's Tridentine reformation, from its inception, was qualitatively different from their role in most earlier Catholic reform movements. The fact that *dévot* clerics had sought women out to assist in the drive toward catechising the Catholic populace was a true departure from earlier precedents. Most previous 'great waves' of religious reform had been directed toward monastics, and almost exclusively toward male monastics.¹¹ More, since the early fourteenth century, as Caroline Bynum has said, the forms and themes of female spirituality began to come under

CHAPTER 3

sustained attack by the official Church, in the wake of women's evident attraction to heretical sects.¹² The perception that women were drawn to heresy had scarcely altered since;¹³ it was to some degree increased by the large numbers of women who had eagerly taken up the Protestant banner. The suspicions still directed against women, and the conservative tendencies of seventeenth-century society and the Church, were to be neutralized by the demand for their services, a demand which itself arose in response to the difficult situation in which male *dévot* reformers found themselves.

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Perhaps the most important of women's initial advantages was their central position in the family, which gave them great potential as proselytizers. The Reformation had made it obvious that women could preach; one of the first efforts of the Reformers as their situation stabilized was to try to get them to shut up again.¹⁴ Women of the Counter-Reformation were the carriers of its message; it was recognised that to convert women, says Linda Timmermans, was to stimulate female proselytism.¹⁵ Belief in this purported female capacity was very strong throughout the seventeenth century, even toward its end when discipline and regularity had begun to triumph over ardour and inspiration. As late as 1690, the Jesuit Bourdaloue was to address women in terms that show he still saw them as an essential element in the reform of Christianity, all the more remarkable in that Bourdaloue was generally a man who favoured, at least on paper, a hardheaded, non-mystical form of worship:¹⁶

C'est de vous, mesdames...c'est de vous que dépend la sainteté et la réformation du Christianisme; et si vous étiez aussi chrétiennes que vous devez l'être, le monde, par une bienheureuse nécessité, deviendront chrétien.¹⁷

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

Preachers were in short supply. Church leaders in France were very conscious of the need for good priests, as we have seen, and still more for good preaching, to win back souls lost to Protestantism and to kindle religious zeal in lukewarm Catholics. Even Church administrators must accept that this was part of their office. 'Le très saint Concile de Trente,' wrote François de Sales, himself the exiled bishop of Geneva, 'a déterminé que "le premier et principal office de l'évêque est de prêcher"' .¹⁸ But from where were good preachers to come? The mendicant orders whose vocation was preaching were no longer trusted by the French. France's secular clergy was in disarray after the long years of war, or at least so many people believed. 'On peut dire avec vérité et avec horreur que tout ce qui se fait de plus mal dans le monde est ce qui se fait par les ecclésiastiques', wrote Adrien Bourdoise, a friend of Bérulle's.¹⁹ Many priests, it was thought, were ill-educated and under-trained, or otherwise unfit to instruct the people in Tridentine Catholicism.²⁰ On the other hand, most educated priests were city men who had little in common with their parishioners.²¹ They were not trained in the art of making an appeal to simple people. This meant that they could do little to reach out to the masses, the half-pagan peasants of the countryside and semi-literate artisans of the towns, the latter of whom had proven to be so susceptible to Protestant preaching. What was needed was simplicity, said François de Sales, '[les] sermons doivent être des choses nécessaires et utiles, non recherchées ni curieuses; ses paroles simples, non affectées'.²² Such simplicity, however, appeared to be beyond the grasp of many of the best dévot clerics. Their training concentrated upon theology and languages; they were only just beginning to learn the arts of controversy and religious polemics at the start of the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER 3

Dévoth ecclesiastics in the cities and towns where Tridentine Catholicism had begun to make its impact - this was especially true in the south, according to Bremond, where the Counter-Reformation made its impact earlier²³ - soon understood that the women who clustered around them could build an effective bridge between themselves and the masses of illiterate people whom they did not know how to reach. Women had shown themselves to be adepts in this field of endeavour before the end of the sixteenth century, at a time when the great push toward reforming the Church was still in its infancy. Even peasant women were affected by it; Bremond cites the story of one who was moved by the rise of Protestantism to take up the cause herself:

Le zèle qui la transportait lui faisait dire souvent qu'elle eût traversé les épées nues...pour exécuter les ordres de Dieu. Cette ardeur l'excita à réprimer énergiquement les vices dans toute sorte de personnes et à se rendre à Orange pour encourager les catholiques et affermir...ceux qui déjà chancelaient dans la foi. Elle y harangua les protestants dans un synode et dit hardiment...avec un esprit prophétique, que la sainte messe serait rétablie dans la ville²⁴

Few of these women were nearly as well-educated as the priests and confessors from whom they sought guidance, but this was an asset, part of the reason why their help was desirable. Surely they could instruct the female children of the lower orders in terms that such people could understand; and once they did, surely these girls would instruct their brothers, their parents, and perhaps, some day, their own husbands and children? Between 1590-1610, dévot clerics began to address themselves to the spiritual formation and instruction of these women, in the hope that the women in their turn would go on to instruct others:

le Prince des Apôtres saint Pierre faisait tant de cas de la bonne instruction des femmes qu'il disait que les infidèles qui ne croient pas en l'Évangile pouvaient être gagnés à la foi sans l'Évangile par la bonne conversation des dames chrétiennes.²⁵

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

The perception on the part of dévot clerics that 'les infidèles' could be won back the efforts of Christian women, led to the very early experiments in female education which occurred in provincial France even before the turn of the century. Elizabeth Rapley has described the pedagogical enterprises led by Père Bordès in Bordeaux, and by Pierre Fourier in Lorraine, under the inspiration of women founders.²⁶ Henri Bremond has also described similar enterprises undertaken in the south of France.²⁷ Such efforts were always directed by priests but often enough the initial steps were taken almost spontaneously by women themselves. Small groups of women would present themselves to their parish priests and announce that they wished to live in common; and the priest, if he was reform-minded, might well encourage them to take up some useful work, particularly the instruction of young girls. This was how the Filles de Notre Dame, the first teaching congregation in France, came to be established in Bordeaux in 1606.²⁸ Dévot clerics were delighted to discover women's abilities as teachers and wrote of them encouragingly:

Vous êtes appelées à la sainteté et au ministère des Apôtres. Il est vrai que St Paul deffend aux femmes de parler dans l'Église de Dieu, mais la divine grâce qui forme les coeurs comme il lui plaît vous dispense de cette loi, et vous met au rang de ces premiers Vierges, et de ces femmes illustres que annoncèrent la foy, et la deffendirent, dans les premiers siècles de l'Eglise.²⁹

But such experiments were doomed to fail, at least at first. They ran into an old stumbling-block, or rather, two: the Church's refusal to permit female religious to live outside the cloister, and its vehement objections to women's preaching or in any way taking on the role of apostles, which should be reserved for men. Also a problem, and perhaps more serious than any objections raised by Rome, were the attitudes of French officials to the innovation that teaching nuns represented, especially as it was often difficult for them to avoid touching upon matters of doctrine, forbidden to

CHAPTER 3

women because it usurped men's apostolic function. Although Anne de Xainctonge had previously received the approval of the bishop of Lausanne to establish a congregation of Ursulines at Dôle, a magistrate of the city said that there was 'rien de plus dangereux que de permettre aux femmes l'explication des lettres sacrées et qu'elles prétendent enseigner aux filles la grande doctrine chrétienne...', lesdits sieurs suppliés désirent qu'il soit de plus clairement qu'elles leur feront seulement apprendre le catéchisme par coeur, sans leur faire aucune interpretation'.³⁰

Such reactions to teaching nuns, of course, were occasioned in part by simple anti-female prejudice, but there was more to the matter than that. Enclosed nuns were legally 'dead' and could not inherit property. This was an advantage to families eager not to divide their patrimony among too many heirs. But enclosed nuns could not easily teach, and the first teaching orders did not observe strict enclosure. Would it be possible to disinherit these unenclosed nuns in the same way, or would they be, like Jesuits, legally entitled to a portion of the family estate? Fear of the disorder that such an amphibious creature might bring in her wake led to great pressure upon bishops to refuse permission to devout priests and the nuns in their charge to establish uncloistered nuns in their parishes, even when the credentials of the parties involved were impeccable. Thus François de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal, for example, were ultimately refused permission by Denis de Marquemont, archbishop of Lyon, to establish the Visitation there under its original format, as a retreat for women who could mingle freely with the order's uncloistered nuns. Within a decade or two after the first teaching orders in France had been established at the end of the sixteenth century, their nuns had been forced to adopt clausura, their pupils allowed only into the outer rooms of their houses, and this only where space permitted.³¹

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

It did not seem that much could change the role of women in devotional life in the face of such opposition. The Council of Trent was a conservative body, and Tridentine Catholicism a conservative movement.³² The difficulties of promoting female evangelism were not insurmountable and might perhaps have found some legally evasive solution; a discreet one that was acceptable to both society and to the Church. This, in fact, was eventually to happen. But the problem of cloistering was more difficult to overcome. The Council had ruled that it would permit no breach in the walls of the cloister, and that now, more than ever, female religious must be kept strictly sheltered.³³ Behind this was an age-old conviction that women required special protection from temptation. It was thought that nuns, unlike monks, were incapable of exercising the self-restraint necessary to surmount worldly temptation, especially of the sexual kind. The records of the Visitor at the Benedictine convent of Montmartre show that the disagreeable habit of examining women for their physical integrity remained customary in the early seventeenth century.³⁴ Virginité was the greatest achievement of the nun; nothing must be allowed to imperil it.³⁵ Along with the inheritance problem, the near-mystical significance given to the virginité of nuns would prove to be one of the biggest obstacles to making use of them as proselytizers: how could they teach girls or women if they were not permitted to stir outside the walls of their convents?

The Status of Men

At this juncture, women's purported advantages in the Tridentine reform movement must seem elusive to the reader. The fact that they were well-placed to act as proselytizers within the family could scarcely make up for the fact that they were not, in theory, permitted to preach at all, and, if gently bred, were discouraged from showing their faces outside their homes. But Tridentine

CHAPTER 3

activists often found it equally difficult to encourage priests to become reformers. The priesthood was still, for many of its practitioners, the route to a good career. Why should men who had educated themselves at considerable effort and expense then wish to spend their lives instructing children and peasants, or preaching to a parish of artisans? This was a constant, although infrequently acknowledged, reason for the chronic shortage of trained priests in the countryside and in poorer parishes.³⁶ It was not until rather later in the century, under the leadership of Vincent de Paul and still more of Jean Eudes, that there was a great push to persuade priests to reach out to the poor, and it required special 'missionary' organizations, whose members did not live among their audiences but encountered them only on missions. Aside from noblewomen, women could not readily exploit their religious activities for worldly advantage: their temptations were therefore fewer than those of men.

Another important and little-understood reason why women's contribution to the evangelical effort of France's Tridentine Reformation was so desirable was that ordinary secular priests, who came under the jurisdiction of the secular hierarchy, were rooted in local power structures in a way that made it difficult and sometimes risky to preach and teach; they were somewhat less willing and able to involve themselves in the work of reform.³⁷ Even so powerful a secular priest as Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld was able to make little headway in his attempt to reform men's monastic orders because of their entrenched privileges,³⁸ a fact which highlights both the limited powers of the secular clergy and the great power of the nobles who usually controlled the monasteries. Secular priests were also hampered in their duties by the fact that the abbeys had often managed to acquire all the tithing rights of a particular region, so that there was no money to pay for the support of a parish priest.³⁹

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

Companies of regular priests who were not monastics, like the Jesuits, had been established especially for the purpose of instructing the faithful, but their freedoms angered both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.⁴⁰ The peculiar status of the priestly companies - part regular, because they lived under a Rule, and part secular, because they were not obliged to live in community like monastics, nor to make vows of poverty - was a threat to ecclesiastical discipline. The local and national hierarchy resented the exemptions they enjoyed: 'La mousse des exemptions', wrote François de Sales, 'a fait tant de mal a l'arbre de l'église'.⁴¹ Jealousy, too, had a part in their attitudes to non-monastic regulars. They resented the success of the regular companies in attracting people to their sermons. The secular priests of Rouen, wrote one irritable curé, 'ont expérimenté depuis quelques années combien l'établissement de nouvelles religions apporte de troubles et préjudices, ayant aux fêtes solennelles vu les églises désertes et une grande partie de leurs paroissiens qui n'assistent une seule fois l'année à leur messe paroissale'.⁴² ('Religions' meant 'religious orders', in the usage of the seventeenth-century.)

The status accorded to the Jesuits by Rome in 1540 was exceptional, although not unique (the Théatins, founded in 1524, preceded the Jesuits and had similar privileges⁴³) permitted because of the crisis provoked by the rise of Lutheranism. The authorities there were extremely reluctant to repeat the experiment, although they made occasional exceptions. Rome's granting of such exceptions, however, always depended upon the willingness of the local hierarchy and civil government to tolerate them, which could not be counted upon in France. In France and elsewhere, dévot reformers like Bérulle tried to get around the prohibition by creating a different kind of priestly company which was supposed to fall under the jurisdiction of the secular hierarchy rather than that of Rome, but

CHAPTER 3

whose members in fact seem to have behaved, at times, more as Jesuits were said to do, ignoring the wishes of their bishops if they could.⁴⁴ 'Companies' of male clerics sometimes moved between regular and secular status,⁴⁵ just as congregations of nuns did, attempting to hold on to the privileges of the former while escaping their opprobrium. When Rome set its face against unenclosed women on the grounds that it would not tolerate 'Jesuitesses', more was implicit in the contemptuous sobriquet than simple misogyny.⁴⁶ Jesuitesses, like Jesuits, might cause disciplinary problems for national hierarchies, and such problems created much ill-feeling which invariably rebounded back upon Rome. The objections to the new kind of nun, then, were not directed at them merely because they were women: it was their religious status that was the more serious issue for both the Church and society at large. The fact that they were women afforded the authorities a convenient excuse for rejecting their pleas.

The crown and other temporal bodies were also sporadically hostile to companies of regular priests, in a way that was symptomatic of the seventeenth-century conflict between citizenship and devotion. All of the occupations of the priest, even the simple administration of the sacraments, would become politically 'loaded', potentially compromising and even dangerous, or at least a threat to a man's career and prospects. The writing of books of devotion or theology, the instruction of the young, and above all, preaching were regarded with suspicion by the French state. This was one of the reasons why, in spite of many recommendations from on high, it proved to be so difficult to establish seminaries for the training of priests in France.⁴⁷ It lay behind the common hostility among the magistrates of Parlement towards the Jesuits and Capuchins, still thought to have manipulated the crowds into frenzy during the Wars of Religion. When the pamphleteer Fancan addressed the issue in *Le miroir du temps passé à l'usage du présent* (1625), he went so far as to say that the Jesuits were

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

responsible for the creation of the Ligue.⁴⁸ Male dévot reformers were thwarted at every turn by either the fears of the state or by entrenched custom and privilege. In the circumstances, it was natural that dévot clerics should continue to seek out women's support for the Catholic reform movement, even after the initial discouragement they encountered. Women were valued not merely for their affective capacities, or even the money and administrative talents they could bring to the Counter-Reformation, but because they might, after all, be able to move more freely than men.

The strange history of the Carmelites' entry into France illustrates the peculiar freedom women sometimes enjoyed, and suggests that this freedom was the product of the political atmosphere at the turn of the century. In 1592, a young part-Spanish Norman named Jean de Brétigny attempted to bring the Discalced Carmes,* the order reformed in Spain under the guidance of Teresa of Avila, to France.⁴⁹ All agreed that this was then impossible because the Wars of Religion were still ongoing and relations between France and Spain poisonous. The enterprise was dropped for a time, but in 1602 it was revived, in Paris, under the efforts of Madame Acarie, of the Acarie circle. This time the king, Henri IV, consented to the plan, and it appears that one of the reasons he did so was because the would-be founders decided to bring the women Carmelites without their male counterparts. But when a French party went out to Spain to bring some of Teresa's nuns back to Paris (for it was thought that only they could provide the necessary guidance), they were met by strong resistance, as it was not customary to permit foundations of nuns without their brother-orders to supervise them. The Carmes and Carmelites were both on the point of refusing the invitation, in spite of a papal bull authorizing

*In English, it is customary to refer to both male and female members of the order of Mount Carmel as Carmelites, but the French term 'Carme' is used here for the men, to avoid confusion.

CHAPTER 3

the move. Bérulle, who was one of the party, told the French ambassador that 'cet accompagnement et fondation des religieux était impossible',⁵⁰ impossible, that is, because they were men, and regulars.⁵¹ To the Carmes, he said 'en Espagne même les monastères de filles avaient été longtemps réformés avant la réformation des religieux...les Pères de cet ordre ne devaient trouver étrange, s'il plaisait à Dieu d'observer en France cet ordre en la fondation de ces monastères'.⁵² His arguments were apparently enough to convince the Carmes, for five Spanish Carmelites eventually left with him for Paris in 1603 after further delays and prevarications on the part of their superiors.

The king's refusal to admit the Carmes into France suggests that women, especially female religious, were perceived by the civil authorities as less threatening than men. The reasons for this are complicated and not altogether flattering to women. In theory, nuns were strictly controlled not only by their abbesses but by male superiors who were supposed to visit regularly, and by external Visitors, also men, greatly inhibiting their ability to speak or act independently. In fact, women's orders were sometimes less than closely governed; 'l'archevêque de Paris n'exerce qu'une autorité très limitée sur les abbayes de femmes de son diocèse', says Jeanne Ferté in her study of religion in the Paris region. 'Certaines d'entre elles sont même totalement soustraites à sa juridiction.'⁵³ In theory, however, nuns were strictly controlled, and the perception that if they were not, it did not much matter, seems to have been strong. Women in general, although still thought to be 'unruly' and in need of male guidance,⁵⁴ were also perceived by many educated men as too wrapped up in their families and in personal concerns to take any great interest in politics and public issues. Some men, of course, were conscious that women might have political power of a kind, especially in matters of religion, as Pierre L'Estoile's sarcastic references to 'bigotes de la Ligue' suggest.⁵⁵ But he and his

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

like-minded colleagues did not fear them to the same degree as they feared the Jesuits, or as they would come to fear Bérulle. Dévot women were not as dangerous to the social order as dévot men. Women - lay or religious - were discouraged from speaking in public. Even if they tried to do so, they lacked the organizational structure possessed by the Jesuits or Capuchins, the kind that made broad campaigns against the state possible. Although the first teaching nuns were the object of much derision and some alarm, they did not evoke the same kind of fear as the sight of Capuchin preachers leading a parade of penitents through a city street, shouting, perhaps, for Spanish rule. Dévot women, finally, had little direct influence over foreign or domestic policy, unlike that which certain male dévots would acquire. What harm could they do, beyond annoying their families and misogynistic clerics? For many years, dévot opponents regarded their activities with no more than mildly hostile amusement.⁵⁶

In the face of men's own failures to establish enduring seminaries, to reach the poor, and to overcome the many obstacles that lay in the path to reform, leading dévot clerics turned to women for assistance, and were not disappointed. It is true that their first efforts to use women's talents as teachers and proselytizers for the faith failed, but this was only a momentary discouragement. By 1635, Vincent de Paul was successfully attempting the same kind of experiment with unenclosed nuns, careful this time not to allow the women of the new 'confréries' he established to claim any of the privileges of religious. Meanwhile, frustrated by their own limitations and by their repeated failure to establish teaching orders for women, dévot clerics were attempting another route in the hope of making use of women's abilities. Between 1600 and 1610, the literary invention of the new dévot, and the adaptation of a theology to suit her, began.

CHAPTER 3

The New Dévote

Dévot clerics saw that women were least threatening to society precisely in so far as they continued to behave like women, and to fulfill the customary obligations of their sex. On the other hand, they could scarcely be effective mouthpieces for reform if confined to their conventional role as cloistered nuns. How to resolve this dilemma? The answer had the simplicity of the obvious: if nuns must be cloistered, surely the reformers need not use nuns? Thus was born the dévote. The special quality of the dévote was that she did not have to be a nun; she might be a married lay-woman, a widow, or even a single woman.⁵⁷ This last was a defiance of custom, in that the Church had always recommended that women must choose between a husband or the cloister, and French society concurred. But the need for women's participation in the Counter-Reformation was so great that the unconventional aspect of the occasional unmarried, uncloistered dévote does not at first seem to have troubled consciences much - as long as she did not call herself a religious.

• Literary Models

Early in the seventeenth century new books addressed to the dévote began to appear. The most famous of these was, of course, François de Sales' *Introduction à la vie dévote* (1608), but many others were to be published throughout the rest of the century. Many of these devotional works were openly addressed to women, unnamed or given imaginary names; the *Introduction* was addressed to the figure of 'Philothée'. Although the message, and the quality, of such books varied, the kind of piety they recommended, and the virtues they praised, were those thought most suitable to women and most likely to appeal to them. The dévote, as she emerged in the new literature of devotion, was a curious composite figure, Janus-faced, turned toward both the past and the future. Of course, the

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

prejudices of their authors, and the demands of the times, ensured that the prescriptions in such works were sometimes patronizing, but this was inevitable in the circumstances. Dévot clerics could not risk inciting women to unwomanly behaviour too openly.

The dévotte had several important literary avatars. Among these, the women of the New Testament were the most unimpeachable models, but early Christian female martyrs and the women saints of the Middle Ages were also cited occasionally as worthy models. Especially significant was Mary Magdalen,⁵⁸ a figure whose appeal to seventeenth-century theologians (and painters) was great.⁵⁹ In the seventeenth century, the fact that Mary Magdalen had been a champion of the *voie intérieure* was especially appealing. Mary Magdalen was also in effect the first apostle, bringing the good news of the risen Christ to the disciples. Though few clerics made this point openly, perhaps references to her were a subtle reminder that women had not always been excluded from the apostolic function. For women, Mary Magdalen's sexual glamour, and her history as a penitent sinner who had belonged first to the world, made her attractive to those who might otherwise have thought themselves unsuited for the devout life. For dévot men, she was the embodiment of their mixed feelings about women.

An important literary inspiration for the new dévotte was the *Life* of Teresa of Avila.⁶⁰ The first publication of Teresa's autobiography in French in 1601 was a seminal event, furnishing thousands of men and women with a model of female devotion to emulate and to propagate. The Spanish Carmelite Anne de Jésus was to say that the Benedictines of Montmartre had clearly modelled themselves upon Teresa, with no other guidance than her books. 'Elles sont saintes car grâce aux livres de notre sainte Mère, elles se sont réformées,

CHAPTER 3

il y deux ans, en sorte qu'en bien des choses elles semblent déchaussées.⁶¹ Teresa's work also had a secondary life as a major influence upon the development of François de Sales' ideal of female piety.⁶² The reasons for its success are for once apparent to the modern reader. Her *Life* was both a high and a vulgar romance, an adventure and a love story, the story of a woman who had had love affairs, defied her father and male superiors, found herself in serious trouble with the authorities, and in the end been triumphantly vindicated. Although she was not to be canonized until 1621, she was beatified in 1614 and her 'candidacy' as a saint had been bruited since her death in the odour of sanctity in 1582. Her book was therefore an obvious source for dévot writers eager to find models of piety and evangelical activism to offer to women. It was also of a kind to be particularly appealing to young women upon the brink of adolescence, in a way that was perhaps not obvious to the men who recommended it to their female charges. This element of what it is tempting to call subversion in her appeal to women should not, however, be exaggerated. Teresa was careful to cover herself by frequent allusions to her own ignorance: 'If I should say anything that is not in conformity with what is held by the Holy Roman Catholic Church, it will be through ignorance and not through malice', and to her feminine incapacity: 'It should be remembered', she wrote, 'that the weakness of our nature is very great, especially in women...'⁶³

Teresa's example suggests that even cloistered nuns, whose ability to evangelize was limited, were caught by the new missionary fervour. Like Mary Magdalen, she was a contemplative who had also lived an active, even an apostolic life. Her sense of mission was very strong:

At about this time there came to my notice the harm and havoc that were being wrought in France by these Lutherans and the way in which their unhappy sect was increasing. This troubled me very much, and, as though I could do anything, or be of any help in the matter, I wept before the Lord and entreated Him to remedy this great

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

evil. I felt that I would have laid down a thousand lives to save a single one of all the souls that were being lost there.⁶⁴

In the orders for women established in France around the beginning of the century, the Carmelites and the Capucines, the missionary spirit was also strong. The Carmelites had been invited to France in the hope that they would act as a kind of leaven of faith upon the unreformed and impenitent Catholics among whom they lived, even if the nuns had little contact with the world outside their walls. André Du Val wrote that Paris had been chosen as the city for the first Carmelite establishment because

étant la capitale du royaume et l'abord de toutes personnes de qualité l'ordre se dilaterait aisément de la par toutes les provinces, tout ainsi que quand l'étandard de la religion fut arboré par saint Pierre en la ville de Rome, le bruit en vola incontinent par tout le monde⁶⁵

Bérulle was even more specific about his hopes for the Carmelites as a center of the Catholic reformation. `Il y a sujet de grande édification, particulièrement en ce monastère des filles où il se pratique une très grande perfection.'⁶⁶

Of even greater importance to dévot men as a model for the new dévote was Mary the mother of Jesus. Once cherishing her mainly for her more passively maternal qualities, her male admirers now began to point out that she too had lived an active life. She had bravely gone to stand by Jesus at the foot of the cross when the male apostles had fled; she had visited and comforted Saint Elizabeth; she too had been a missionary.⁶⁷ The order of the Visitation was named by François de Sales for this aspect of her life. Bérulle too wrote about Mary in her role as Visitor:

Jésus n'a ni lieu ni mouvement qu'en la Vierge et par la Vierge. La parole de la Vierge saluant Élisabeth procède de Jésus et d'elle, et c'est pourquoi elle tire à l'un et à l'autre.⁶⁸

CHAPTER 3

The change in the image of the Virgin, from the somewhat passive recipient of God's favour to the more energetic woman who could inspire members of her sex to more active forms of charity, suggests how the need for a new kind of female activism could lead *dévot* men to alter long-established attitudes by subtle shifts in emphasis, without appearing to have made any significant change in their view of women. In reading the works of devotion aimed at women, and in reading the history of women's relationship to men of the Church throughout the seventeenth century, it is always necessary to look for changes of this kind. The changing tone of *dévot* men's allusions to the two Marys, in addressing to both women and to society at large, bore the message that women possessed missionary and evangelical ability. This was an essential part of their effort to prepare the way for new forms of devotion for women, outside the cloister and outside religious life altogether if need be.

• *Dévote* Devotions

From these devotional models, guides written for *dévot* women drew a number of precepts for women to follow regarding the regulation of their everyday lives, including their dress and the instruction of their children, prayer, and the means of mortifying the will. A common thread in all such works, essential to the creation of the new *dévote*, was the effort on the part of her creators to show that the virtues of the cloister, of prayer, self-denial and austerity, could, within limits, be practised outside the cloister as well. Here there was a two-fold effort: to remind women that they could practise the virtues of nuns, and to remind nuns that they need not be excessive. Thus François de Sales' writings launched a campaign to discourage excesses in fasting:

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

il faut avant toutes choses savoir que le jeûne, de soi-même, n'est pas une vertu, quoique souvente fois il en soit un acte; car les justes et les pêcheurs, les Chrétiens et les payens jeûnent⁶⁹

Real mortification, for him, consisted not in such external works, but in the mortification of the will.

It was the will as much as the flesh that must be mortified; we love our own will so much, he wrote, that we would rather fast more or less than we are told, than do so in the manner ordained for us.⁷⁰

Fasting was most valuable as a tool for subduing the will:

Or le jeûne bien pratique a cette propriété de fortifier l'esprit, et l'élever à Dieu; de mortifier la chair et la sensualité, et l'assujétir à la raison; de donner force pour vaincre et amortir les passions, et surmonter les tentations; et par le jeûne le coeur est mieux disposer pour servir Dieu plus purement, et s'occuper ès choses spirituelles.⁷¹

In her inner life the dévôte might also modify conventual usage. Prayers need not be sung, as in the cloister; but might be uttered in silence. On the other hand, if lay women wished to take up the practice of contemplative prayer, as practised by some nuns, there was no reason why they should not do so. Indeed, the practise of the special form of contemplation known as 'mental prayer' or 'oraison', in French, was commended to the dévôte by her guides. 'I specially recommend mental prayer, and the prayer of the heart, in particular meditation on the life and passion of our Lord, by often looking upon him, your soul will be filled with him, you will understand the dispositions of his heart and model your actions on his.'⁷² This was a real innovation, for unstructured prayer was associated with radical Protestantism.⁷³ Among Catholics, mental prayer had once been encouraged only for monastics. Only they could practise it with the attention it deserved, and only they could be carefully guided through the pitfalls of what was thought to be a potentially dangerous practise.⁷⁴ But by the seventeenth century mental prayer was regarded as greatly superior to prayer in words

CHAPTER 3

(whether silent or spoken aloud).⁷⁵ Dévot clerics could not bring themselves, it seems, to deny it to the women whom they advised.

The general trend of post-Tridentine Catholicism was to affirm the importance of ceremony and of external 'works' in Christian life.⁷⁶ In France, however, the creators of the dévot were to be more doubtful than Catholic reformers elsewhere about the value of works like fasting, vigils, and above all spoken prayer, for both nuns and laywomen, especially when these were taken to excess.⁷⁷ Interiority was the mark of the dévot.⁷⁸ This did not mean that the new dévot should be a pure contemplative; indeed, she could not be, if she were to do the work expected of her. Even nuns should not be purely contemplative. 'Instead of retreat, the new monasticism must idealize involvement', as Elizabeth Rapley has pointed out, and, "'As for raptures and ecstasies", wrote Mère de Pommereu, 'Ursulines do not need them'".⁷⁹ The dévot's inwardness was to be of another kind: it should transform her so completely that the fussiness of scruples, incessantly repeated rosaries, and fasts were less necessary for her than for less advanced souls.

The dévot clerics' efforts to change society's assumptions about what constituted a devout life for women was very successful, but credit must also be given to the dévotes themselves, some of whom had provided the earliest models for the new dévot. There had been no new devotional texts addressed especially to women when Alix Le Clerc, Anne de Beauvais, and Barbe Acarie took up the devout life: they had had to create a niche for themselves, with little official help. After the publication of *Introduction à la vie dévote*, the new spirit slowly penetrated everywhere. From 1608 until the death of Anne of Austria in 1660, when élite tastes shifted again, devotion was fashionable among both high-level bourgeois women and court ladies, although the first twenty-five years were perhaps

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

the most fervent.⁸⁰ Active and contemplative dévotes had a reciprocal influence upon each other, and upon society. The new Carmelite monasteries, for example, attracted many ladies of the court, who caused much commotion by their comings and goings and sometimes threatened the very peace which they had gone there to absorb.⁸¹ The Carmelites, in fact, were successful enough that as early as 1604, Marillac wrote of them that '...tout le monde les voudra venir voir'.⁸² There were forty Carmelite houses in France in 1629, at the time of Bérulle's death⁸³. Meanwhile, the masses said in the churches of the new women's orders (by men, of course) also attracted many people away from their parishes, to the annoyance of parish priests.⁸⁴ The initial success of the new dévote model helped to draw more women, the daughters of dévote mothers, into the dévote and even the monastic life. Its success, however, was a mixed blessing.

Conservative Trends?

It was inevitable that conservative tendencies should be apparent in the barrage of devotional literature directed at women in the early decades of the seventeenth century. Its conservatism, indeed, is an object of much comment. Po-Chia Hsia discerns in the spiritual-literary relationship between the two sexes, 'a dialogue of male control, patronage and repression and of female subversion, cooperation, submission'.⁸⁵ This dialogue, however, demands careful reading. Clerical misogyny certainly did not disappear, and even dévot clerics who were sympathetic to women clearly retained some of the prejudices and assumptions of their predecessors. But their misogyny was not always what it seemed. At times, it appeared as a kind of sop or concession to the prejudices of the era, rather than as an expression of the convictions of its proponents. Men who are seeking to introduce practical innovations are well advised to continue to pay lip service to convention.⁸⁶ This is

CHAPTER 3

particularly apparent in the case of Vincent de Paul (see chapter 7), whose letters and conference records make it clear that he quite consciously set out to deceive the world about whether the women of his congregations were actually 'religious' (he told them that they were, but that they should always evade the issue if asked), but it occurs in other *dévot* clerics as well. Aside from their wish to protect themselves and the women in their charge, *dévot* clerics, consciously or not, often exploited current stereotypical prejudices about women in a way that allowed them to make veiled criticisms of the world and its ways.

This form of double entendre was especially apparent in *dévot* clerics' attitude to marriage. They were swift to perceive women's dissatisfaction with this aspect of their lives and to exploit it in their attempt to win over women's allegiance. Whether in conscious propaganda or not, they were among the most severe critics of the custom of marrying off the young into loveless marriages; they were also critical of the custom of placing the young in secular or monastic religious life with no regard for their own preferences. Although it has been pointed out that in early modern Europe, neither women nor men were permitted the luxury of basing their choice of marriage partners upon their natural affections,⁸⁷ there was at least one practical reason why the denial of feeling demanded by family strategy fell more severely upon women than men, especially among the well-to-do. In the French dowry system it was women, or rather their families, who paid money for marriage; thus it was wives who had to accept that their husbands' motives for marriage were mainly mercenary. Some *dévots* and *dévot*es were openly critical of this custom.⁸⁸ Nicolas Caussin, author of a book, *La cour sainte* (1624) which criticized modern marriage customs, was well aware of this:

Saint Jerome tells the beautiful story of Martha, daughter of the great Cato, who said that, among so many Lords who sought her, there was no husband. Say the same,

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

girls, away with these mercenary husbands, who are in love with money; they should marry the mines of Peru, not honourable girls...⁸⁹

He compared such marriages with the ideal relationships of the Holy Family, where love and not family strategy was the dominant theme. His comments also contained some propaganda for religious life; he wrote, in the same passage, 'seeing the avarice of the men, [girls] resolve rather to choose God in a state of virginity than give their bodies and their riches to a husband who has no interest in them.'⁹⁰ Discussing family pressure upon children, the dévot cleric Jean Cordier, not otherwise especially sympathetic to the female sex, 'sprang less strongly to the defense of sons than daughters,' says Louis Châtellier, on the grounds that 'the former have as a rule more opportunity to show their displeasure; but the latter, who are trained in acquiescence, agree to anything.'⁹¹

The dévots' pronouncements on the subject of married love and religious vocation were less severe than that of their medieval predecessors, and if not yet modern in their support for the institution, they could sometimes get into trouble with the civil authorities for their views.⁹² Upon the related subject of religious life, France's dévot clerics, under the influence of Tridentine ideals, attempted sporadically to impose Tridentine notions of free choice upon conventual government, and failed egregiously before the opposition of family strategy and custom. A true story of the period that highlights the twin problems of personal freedom in love and religion is recounted by Pierre Blet: a young woman who, having been placed in a convent by her parents against her will, petitions to be allowed to leave after they died. The ecclesiastical authorities permit her to leave, and she marries a young man with whom she has fallen in love. Her relations, however, worried about the implications of her release for her right to claim her inheritance, press the civil authorities to annul her marriage and force her back to a convent - not the same one, for it was clearly too lax - and are successful in

CHAPTER 3

their suit, against *dévot* protests.⁹³ In short, neither true religious vocation nor affection in marriage might count for much in the face of family honour. The story is an illustration of the kind of opposition that *dévot* ideals of purity encountered in the real world of family obligation and inheritance - only one of the many obstacles they faced. It shows, too, how even the more recondite aspects of Tridentine and *dévot* theology had implications for women's lives that were not always conservative.

Dévot clerics' social conservatism was still strongly apparent in the way that they clung to the old allegiance to the glories of virginity. The virgin woman still haunted their consciousness, in spite of the fact that admiration for virginity was for *dévot* clerics a self-defeating position that tended to make it more difficult to convince lay women that they had a right to participate in the *dévot* life. François de Sales' comments on virginity to Madame de Chantal, below, reflect attitudes typical of the times and suggest how difficult it was for *dévot* spiritual writers to break free of the past. He suggested that humility was the virtue most appropriate to the widow; 'aux veuves appartient surtout l'humilité,' because, 'qui peut enfler la veuve d'orgueil?' The widow lacked her integrity; nor did she have what would increase her stature in the eyes of the world, a husband. 'Que lui reste-il pour se glorifier, sinon Dieu?' Yet in the garden of the Church, he wrote, widows were like violets, small and low flowers, but marvelously sweet.⁹⁴ Geneviève Reynes has written of the seventeenth-century attitude to virginity and innocence that 'Chez l'homme, la vertu est un combat dans lequel les défaites peuvent être suivies de victoires. Chez la femme, au contraire, elle est un état d'innocence que la moindre altération viendrait souiller irrémédiablement.'⁹⁵

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

The dévots' admiration of virginity in women, however, was also less purely reactionary than it may now seem. In Christian history virginity has often been a form of social criticism. Peter Brown has suggested that female virginity had acquired its special aura of holiness in early Christianity in the first place precisely because the virgin *female* body was so unnatural and maintained with such difficulty. The hymen, although it rendered a virgin woman vulnerable, also marked a sharp barrier between herself and the world, a barrier of a kind which the virgin male did not possess:

Here was a well-shaft of deep certainty for which [the virgin's clerical admirers] thirsted. She was the one human being who could convincingly be spoken of as having remained as she had first been created. Her physical integrity came to carry an exceptionally high charge of meaning....When consecrated by its virgin state, [the female body] could appear like an untouched desert in itself: it was the furthest reach of human flesh turned into something peculiarly precious by the coming of Christ upon it.⁹⁶

Brown adds, significantly, that "[the virgin's] sheltered, undisrupted life was prized by the members of a storm-tossed urban clergy."⁹⁷ The storm-tossed urban clergy of the seventeenth century, struggling to maintain their own physical and spiritual integrity at a time when their ability to negotiate and strike compromises with both temporal and ecclesiastical authority was essential, looked with a kind of longing admiration upon female virginity and what it stood for: the ability to reject the world and all that was most desirable within it.

Distrust of the virtues recommended by the world is everywhere apparent in the instructions written for the dévotes. Books and letters directed at dévotes harped rather repetitively upon the virtues of naïveté, childishness, and humility. The glorification of childish virtues in the adult was one of the semi-original contributions of dévot moral theology to Catholic thought. We take it so much for granted now that it is difficult to remember that most Christian moralists from Augustine until

CHAPTER 3

modern times (with the exception, perhaps, of Francis of Assisi) looked at the child as the very image of unrepentant, unformed, selfish humanity. Many *dévot* clerics did not, and indeed they may have been the harbingers of changing attitudes to the child, at least in Catholic Europe.

One of the most popular devotional tropes introduced by *dévot* theologians was devotion to the infancy of Jesus.⁹⁸ Although it had a particular appeal for women and was in fact propagated mostly by them, it was first officially sponsored by men. The cult of the *Enfance de Jésus* became a celebration the virtues of naïveté, sweetness, and childishness. François de Sales, whose efforts on women's behalf were the prototype for nearly all later models, was to set a pattern here too. He defined moral freedom as the kind of freedom possessed by children. 'La liberté de laquelle je parle c'est *la liberté des enfants* bien aimés. Et qu'est-ce? C'est un désengagement du coeur chrétien de toutes choses, pour suivre la volonté de Dieu reconnue.'⁹⁹ As her spiritual director, he was to tell Jeanne Françoise de Chantal that 'il ne faut point trop pointiller en l'exercice des vertus, mais qu'il y faut aller rondement, franchement, naïvement...' He did not admire prudence as a virtue, either:

Je ne suis guère prudent, et si, c'est une vertu que je n'aime pas trop. Ce n'est que par force que je la chéris, parce qu'elle est nécessaire, je dis très nécessaire...¹⁰⁰

From admiring the naïveté of the child it was a short step to valuing the naïveté of women (or perhaps it was the other way around?) It suited *dévot* purposes to portray women as naïve because this made them less threatening to society than their male counterparts, but perhaps there was more to the matter than this. It is not unlikely that the inventors of the *dévote* knew that her qualities were precisely those which would pose a challenge to the values of the 'siècle'. This is especially so of the *dévot* emphasis upon the virtue of innocence prescribed for women and assumed to be especially appropriate for them. Because the qualities the *dévots* perceived as feminine were so highly

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

conventional, it would be difficult to argue that they were intentionally subversive in promoting them in works of devotion intended for women. Yet in the repeated dévot assertion that prudence was not among the more admirable virtues it is not fanciful to read an implicit criticism of worldly values.

Dévot men knew the practical dangers they faced and they may have hoped women could evade them. What seems certain is that they believed women, who in the simplicity of the household or cloister could afford to be childlike, imprudent, and naïve, could rise above the spiritual dangers which so threatened male devotion. This is perhaps the real message behind their exhortations. It was an unrealistic view of women's lives, but it had great emotional importance for men. Their attitude was not historically unique. Caroline Bynum has reported that the male biographers of women saints in the Middle Ages created their images of female holiness as 'critique of, reproach to, and solution for male pride, ambition, and irreligiosity'.¹⁰¹ The image of the medieval holy woman, in short, implicitly condemned male worldliness. It seems as if dévot writers, in glorifying female naïveté, were reverting to this old and never quite extinguished tradition. They saw women, or were beginning to see women, as less worldly than men.

We have come back to worldliness. Worldliness - concupiscence - was the vice most feared by dévot theologians. The usage of the term appears to have undergone a gradual shift since the early Middle Ages. Where once it had been used primarily to refer to bodily appetites, especially sexual appetites, among dévot moralists it was more commonly used to refer to all forms of disordered desire, 'quelle que soit d'ailleurs la matière sur laquelle porte ce désir'.¹⁰² The world the dévots feared most was not so much the one which offered the promise of wealth and pleasure, but the one which offered power, influence, and advancement as its greatest seductions. The sacerdotal ideal which the

CHAPTER 3

Tridentine Church expected them to uphold was an extremely demanding one, as we have seen, and meanwhile, *dévot* clerics who took any part in public life were subjected to a number of conflicting claims upon their obedience. As a result, *dévot* clerics suffered from a constant temptation to ambition and with it to factionalism, from reiterated demands that they should support this or that party interest.

Fear of the disorder brought by unregulated desire, emanating from unregulated self-love, the ultimate manifestation of concupiscence, made obedience the greatest of virtues to *dévot* clerics in the seventeenth century. True mortification, said François de Sales, (quoted above) consists in learning to mortify self-will, because self-will is the vice which leads to concupiscence and so to worldliness. Although obedience is to us a conservative virtue, *dévot* obedience was more a challenge to worldliness than an acquiescence to it. Women had certain advantages, said *dévot* clerics, in the struggle to learn obedience, for they were the sex born to obey. *Dévot* spiritual writers decidedly believed that women needed to obey male leadership. 'Votre sexe veut être conduit,' wrote François de Sales, 'et, jamais, en aucune entreprise, il ne réussit que par la soumission; non que, bien souvent, il n'ait autant de lumière que l'autre, mais parce que Dieu l'a ainsi établi.'¹⁰³ If obedience, as this implies, was natural to women, then might they not find it easier than men to conquer the impulse towards concupiscent self-love, and thus the temptations of worldliness? Madame Acarie found that her ecstasies could be stopped if someone whispered the word 'obéissance' in her ear.¹⁰⁴

Women were also commanded by fewer masters, or so men supposed, especially if they were nuns. Bérulle reminded aspirants to the order of Mount Carmel that they ought to remember 'deux mots en espagnol qui est que en ces monastères on fait profession, *obediencia en todo, pobreza en*

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

todo.' A Carmelite's obedience to God was not so threatened by external pressures as was that of a secular priest. Dévot clerics expected that the dévotes would have fewer claims upon their obedience than they did themselves. Living within the bosom of her family, a dévotte laywoman would have to obey the commands of her male relatives, but the demands of worldly compromise would be almost unknown to her. Living in the cloister, a dévotte nun would ideally not be exposed to the temptations of the world at all. It is, of course, impossible to find a single definitive proof that dévot clerics saw women in this light, yet it is implicit everywhere in their treatment of the women in their charge. Where a dévotte went to extremes of self-annihilation, in defiance of accepted wisdom, there was always a dévot cleric at her elbow, pushing her forward to greater spiritual feats.

Most dévot writers continued to believe in women's weakness - their intellectual and physical weakness above all. But they also began to believe that women's weakness and irrationality were perhaps a kind of strength, or at any rate, a matter of indifference in God's eyes. The pressures upon dévot men changed their perception, not of women's capacities or standing in the world, but of the value of their capacities and the significance of their second-rank status.¹⁰⁵ The following passage by Jean-Pierre Camus, bishop of Belley, shows how the image of woman might be transformed by the reinterpretation of the most traditional sacred texts:

Sçachez qu'Adam ne fut Faict que de boue, matière molle et lasche; mais Eve d'une...matière plus noble et plus ferme que la terre détrempée; que si les hommes sont plus robustes de corps, ils sont beaucoup plus fragiles aux pêchés.¹⁰⁶

Once the fact that Adam had been created before Eve had led exegetical students of the Bible to the conviction that he was both physically and morally her superior. Now Eve's status as the second human being was converted by Camus into a mark of her superiority to Adam.

CHAPTER 3

Dévot clerics gradually came to believe that women, if not morally superior to men, might be better able to love God than they did themselves, to love him more single-mindedly. Their belief in women had curious results: they held women rigidly to their ideas of orthodoxy, sometimes in defiance of women's own wishes, sometimes in defiance of orders from the crown, and sometimes even in defiance of orders from Rome itself. Behind every extreme manifestation of dévot spirituality in the seventeenth century, from the women of Port-Royal to the women of the quietist movement, there were always dévot clerics, urging them on to greater heights of extravagant devotion. Under the inspiration of their dévot mentors and at times in defiance of them, they were to set Paradise on fire.

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. R. Mandrou, *Des humanistes aux hommes de science* (Paris: Seuil, 1973), p. 139.
2. B. Plongeron, *Paris*, p. 230-231.
3. Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), p. 9.
4. Jacques LeBrun, 'L'institution et le corps, lieux de la mémoire', p. 112.
5. See Bremond's Index to *Histoire littéraire* for the numerous citations of women who founded religious orders or congregations, either with the help of male supporters or independently.
6. Caroline Bynum, 'Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality,' in *Anthropology and the Study of Religion*, ed. by Robert L. Moore and Frank E. Reynolds (Chicago: Centre for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1984), pp. 105-125. Bynum states that medieval women seldom founded religious orders, perhaps as a result of male oppression, p. 111.
7. Chaunu, *L'Église, Culture et Société, 1517-1620*, p. 400.
8. See Jean Portemer, 'Réflexion sur les pouvoirs de la femme selon le droit français au xvii^e siècle', *XVII^e siècle* 144 (July-Sept. 1984): 189-99. Penelope Johnson, in *Equal in Monastic Profession* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) states that women in medieval times had more control over their property than those in early modern Europe, p. 28.
9. R. Muchembled, *Culture populaire et culture des élites dans la France moderne (XV^e-XVIII^e siècles)* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), pp. 127-135.
10. Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal*, p. 122.
11. Bruce L. Venarde. *Women's Monasticism and Medieval Society*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell U. Press, 1997), p. 13.
12. Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 22.
13. See for example J. Kagan, *Lucrezia's Dreams. Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
14. *La religion de ma mère. Le rôle des femmes dans la transmission de la foi*, ed. by Jean Delumeau (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1992), M. Carbonnier-Burkhard, 'La Réforme en langue de femmes', p. 183.
15. Linda Timmermans, *L'accès des femmes*, p. 400-401.

CHAPTER 3

16. Cf. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, X, p. 320.
17. P. Bourdaloue, in *L'accès des femmes*, p. 400-401.
18. François de Sales, *Oeuvres, Lettres*, 21 vols. (Annecy: Niérat, 1892), XII, no. CLXXXIV, A M. Antoine de Revol, Évêque nommé de Dol, p. 193.
19. Cited M. Houssaye, *Le Père de Bérulle et l'Oratoire de France, 1611-1625* (Paris: Plon, 1874), p. 5.
20. This, at least, was the assumption of most reforming clergy of the Catholic Church in the early seventeenth century. But Louis Châtellier has suggested that the unsuitability of priests may have been exaggerated for effect. See Châtellier, *Le Catholicisme en France*, I, p. 33.
21. See Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal*, p. 220: he suggests that one of most striking changes in new Tridentine clergyman was his urban background; the 17th C. clergyman was more likely to be urban-born, university-educated, alien to the world and ways of his parishioners; the habit of maintaining a respectful and distrustful distance between clergy and laity was reinforced by urban disdain for country customs.
22. François de Sales, *Oeuvres* (Annecy: Niérat, 1892-1919), 20 vols., XII, *Lettres*, p. 83-84.
23. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, II, Chapter 1.
24. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, Vol. II, p. 13-14, from the *Vie du vénérable César de Bus*, by M. l'abbé Chamoux, Paris, 1864, pp. 36-38.
25. François de Sales, cited Timmermans, *L'accès des femmes*, p. 401.
26. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 43-44 for Bordès's establishment in Bordeaux with Jeanne de l'Estonnac; pp. 63-72 for Fourier in Lorraine with Alix Le Clerc. Also see *Pierre Fourier: Sa Correspondance* (1565-1640), 3 vols., edited by H. Derréal et M. Cord'homme (Nancy: Presses Universitaire, 1986-88).
27. Jeanne de Jésus (1583-1636) of Provence founded six houses of Ursulines, the original 'unenclosed' order first established in Italy, apparently without any initial objections from the authorities. See Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, II, p. 33-34.
28. See Rapley, *Dévotes*, p. 43-44; also Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, II, pp. 7-9.
29. Jean de Bordès, sj, cited in M. Bouzonnie, I, p. 61, in Loury Lavergne, p. 92.
30. Cited in Marcel Bernos, 'La catéchèse des filles par les femmes aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', in *La religion de ma mère*, p. 270-271.

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

31. See Rapley, Chapter 2, 'The Defense of the Status Quo', pp. 23-41; and Chapter 3, 'The Teaching Congregations', pp. 42-73, in *The Dévotes*.
32. Many historians have made this point; it is regarded as almost axiomatic, as the name 'Counter-Reformation' implies. See Jean Delumeau, *La Réforme*, p. 168-169.
33. See Elizabeth Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and its Commentators, 1298-1545* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic U. of America, 1997), for a history of clausura and its impact upon female religious.
34. Chaussy, *Les Bénédictines et la réforme catholique*, p. 21.
35. Makowski, *Periculoso*, p. 125-126.
36. See for example Jeanne Ferté, *La vie religieuse dans les campagnes parisiennes, 1622-1695* (Paris, 1962), pp. 230-232.
37. Louis Châtellier, in *Le Catholicisme*, I, p. 42, makes the point that the regulars, because they were more independent, were perceived by the Council of Trent's reformers as the only clerics ready and able to confront the essential test of the council which was to condemn and to define.
38. Bergin, *Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld*, pp. 151-7, 271-2.
39. François de Sales, *Oeuvres*, XXIII, 311-34.
40. See for example Mettam, *Power and Faction*, p. 118.
41. Cited Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 9.
42. Quoted in Jean Orcibal's preface to Michel Dupuy, *Bérulle et le Sacerdoce. Étude historique et doctrinale. Textes inédits* (Paris, 1969), p. 43, n. 55, from Ms F 19214, Bibliothèque Nationale, p. 237-8.
43. Chaunu, *L'Église, culture et société*, p. 31.
44. See Alain Tallon's comments on the quasi-regular status of the Oratorians, in *La Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* (Paris: Cerf, 1990), p. 44-45.
45. Germain Lesage gives numerous examples in his *L'Accession des congrégations à l'état religieux canonique* (Ottawa: Les Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1952), p. 139.
46. See Rapley, *The Dévotes*, pp. 31, 33, 41, for the use of this term by the authorities. Also Lesage, *L'Accession des congrégations*, p. 158-59, re Mary Ward's English Ladies, who were unenclosed religious, the Bull of Urban VII (Const. *Pastoralis*, Jan. 13 1631) makes it clear that the real problem

CHAPTER 3

with the English Ladies was not so much their lack of enclosure, but that, unenclosed, they claimed the status of religious and did not swear obedience to the Ordinary but to their own superiors who supposedly owed *their* obedience only to the Pope.

47. Broutin, *La réforme pastorale en France*, I, p. 367-68; also see Le Goff *et al*, *Histoire de la France religieuse*, p. 304-5.

48. Cited Mousnier, *L'Homme rouge*, p. 267.

49. See *Quintanadueñas. Lettres de Jean de Brétigny*, présentées par Pierre Serouet (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1971), Letter VIII, July 31, 1592.

50. *Correspondence de Bérulle*, Letter to Mlle Acarie, March 4, 1604, pp. 39-42.

51. Pierre Sérouet notes that the French Carmes had believed themselves permitted, perhaps authorized, to take a large part in the political battles of their time; see Sérouet, *De la vie dévote à la vie mystique*, p. 66.

52. Bérulle, *Correspondance*, Letter, *Ibid.*, p. 42.

53. Ferté, *La vie religieuse*, p. 120.

54. J. Farr, 'The Pure and Disciplined Body: Hierarchy, Morality, and Symbolism in France During the Catholic Reformation,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XXI: 3 (Winter 1991), p. 397.

55. See L'Estoile, *Mémoires-Journaux*, I, p. 74, entry for Sept. 11, 1590.

56. The anti-Jesuit Pierre de l'Estoile wrote of the arrival of the Carmelites with a note of amused condescension: '[Les Carmélites] marchoient en moult bel et bon ordre, estant conduites par le docteur du Val qui leur servoit de bedeau, aiant le baston à la main et qui avait du tout la ressemblance d'un loup-garou. Mais comme le malheur voulut, ce beau et saint mistère fut troublé et interrompu par deux violons qui commencèrent à sonner une bergamasque, ce qui escarta ces pauvres oyes, et les fist retirer à grand pas, tout esfarouchées, avec le Loup-garou leur conducteur dans leur esglise, où estant parvenues, comme en lieu de franchise et seureté, commencèrent à chanter Te Deum laudamus', L'Estoile, August 1605, *Mémoires-Journaux*, II, 182.

57. Plongeron, *Paris*, suggests that the choice of consecrated celibacy in the world was regarded as 'très nouveau et "moderne"', p. 250.

58. Mary Magdalen was often confused with Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha. See Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 294, note 13: the conflation of Mary Magdalen and Mary of Bethany has been traced to Gregory the Great, *Homily* 33, PL 76: 1239; see Michel Lauwers, "'Noli me tangere': Marie Madeleine, Marie d'Oignies et les pénitentes du XIIIe siècle',

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome: Moyen Age 104 (1992): 221-22.

59. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, I, p. 383. François de Sales wrote about her and Bérulle addressed long, descriptive-devotional passages to her in his *Grandeurs de Jésus*.

60. See Cognet, *Crépuscule des mystiques*, pp. 26-34, for accounts of the importance of Carmelite spirituality in France.

61. *Mémoires sur la fondation des Carmélites en France*, II, p. 21.

62. See Sérouet, *De la vie dévote à la vie mystique*, Chapter 11, which recounts François de Sales' discovery of the writings of Teresa of Avila in 1602, and their initial effect upon him.

63. Teresa of Jesus, *The Complete Works of St. Teresa of Jesus*, translated by E. Allison Peers (London, 1978), 3:343.

64. *The Way of Perfection* (first ed. 1583), in Teresa, *Complete Works*, 1:3.

65. Du Val, *La vie admirable*, p. 169.

66. *Correspondance de Bérulle*, I, 47.

67. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 171-173.

68. Bérulle, *Opuscules de Piété*, LVII 'De la visitation', p. 212-224.

69. François de Sales, in *Lectures spirituelles* (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1902), p. 231.

70. Sales, *Lectures spirituelles*, p. 236-7.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

72. François de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, translated by Michael Day, (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1956), p. 51.

73. Radical Protestants like Milton complained that any formal prayer imprisoned the soul, and John Bunyan railed against the *Book of Common Prayer* for similar reasons. For reference to Milton, see Bremond, X, p. 341. Bunyan and Milton rejected the Book of Common Prayer on the grounds of its "popery", but Bunyan's suggestion in *I Will Pray with the Spirit* (from *Miscellaneous Works*, OUP, ii, 285) that "a good sense of sin, and the wrath of God, with some encouragement from God to come unto him, is a better Common Prayer Book than that which is taken out of the papistical Mass-Book", expresses an emotion that a Catholic mystic might recognise, although laying less stress upon God's wrath.

CHAPTER 3

74. See for example Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, the most popular prayer guide in early modern Europe, which reserves the higher stages of mental prayer only for the most spiritually advanced; Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, (Wheathampstead, 1973), translated T. Corbishley, pp. 1-10.
75. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, Vol. 10, p. 3-4. Bremond says that in the 17th C. people argued about whether prayer of silence was not so vastly superior to vocal prayer that the latter should be abandoned; he suggests that perhaps the humanism of the Renaissance was responsible for this attitude, with its campaign against the superstition of the Middle Ages.
76. On the importance of ceremony, see the Council of Trent, session xxii, c. 5, no. 943, in H. Denzinger, *Sources of Catholic Dogma*:
And since such is the nature of man that he cannot easily without external means be raised to meditation on divine things, on that account holy mother Church has instituted certain rites...she has likewise made use of ceremonies such as mystical blessings, lights, incense, vestments, and many other things of this kind in accordance with apostolic teaching and tradition, whereby both the majesty of so great a sacrifice might be commended, and the minds of the faithful excited by these visible signs of religion and piety to the contemplation of the most sublime matters which lie hidden in this sacrifice.
77. See Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration*, p. 97.
78. Writing of his association with the Carmelites, Bérulle was to pin his hopes upon the interiority of their piety: 'Je vous dirai que je reçois une consolation particulière d'être employé en cet affaire, et grande espérance en l'intérieur, en l'oraison, que Dieu rompra toutes les difficultés.' *Correspondance de Bérulle*, I, p. 47.
79. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 143.
80. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, Introduction.
81. Houssaye, *Bérulle et les Carmélites*, p. 513.
82. Houssaye, *Ibid.*, citing Marillac, letter of Feb. 22, 1604, Arch. nat., M. 216, p. 72.
83. M. Dupuy, *Pierre de Bérulle* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1964), p. 33.
84. J. Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate, 1589-1661* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 76.
85. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal*, p. 138.

THE CREATION OF THE DÉVOTE

86. To suggest how widespread this tendency is, consider that early advocates of contraception usually justified themselves by pointing to the benefits of birth control within marriage, and as a way to control the fertility of the poor. They rarely recommended it on grounds of personal freedom; still less did they speak publicly of its advantages for the unmarried. See Angus MacLaren and Arlene Tiggar MacLaren, *The Bedroom and the State* (Victoria, 1986).
87. See Lucia Ferrante, "Marriage and Women's Subjectivity in a Patrilineal System" in *Gender, Kinship, Power: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary History*, edited by Mary Jo Maynes, Anne Waltner, Birgitte Soland, and Ulrike Strasser (NY: Routledge, 1996): "[there is] no lack of evidence suggesting how strong family influence was even on males, even if less frequently documented [than coercive family influence regarding marriage for women]", p. 123.
88. Mlle Acarie said on this subject, "Si je n'avais qu'un enfant et que je fusse la reine de tout l'univers, qu'il en dût être l'unique héritier et que Dieu l'appelât en religion, je ne voudrais en aucune manière l'en empêcher: mais si j'en avais cet et que je n'eusse rien pour les pourvoir, je n'en voudrais pas mettre un en religion par moi-même, parce qu'il faut que la vocation soit purement de Dieu." Du Val, *La vie admirable... de Mlle Acarie*, p. 211.
89. Nicolas Caussin (1583-1651), *La Cour sainte*, I, p. 156-7 (Paris: chez D. Bechet, 1664; cited in Châtellier, *The Europe of the Devout*, p. 142-3. Châtellier goes on to point out that such works were regarded with some suspicion by non-dévots, Chapter 9, "The Anti-Baroque Reaction". Caussin's book was nevertheless immensely popular and went through 14 editions in his lifetime; it was also translated into English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Polish, among other languages. See Camille de Rochemonteix, *Nicolas Caussin, confesseur de Louis XIII, et le cardinal de Richelieu: Documents inédits* (Paris: Picard, 1911), p. 18. Even Richelieu was "ébloui" by it, *Ibid.*, p. 29.
90. Caussin, *Ibid.*
91. Cordier, *La famille sainte*, n.p., cited by Louis Châtellier. *The Europe of the Devout*, p. 147.
92. This was to become especially apparent in the 1620s when Louis XIII's brother Gaston contracted a *mésalliance* and several dévot clerics fell out of favour for refusing to encourage him to annul it. See Chapters 4 and 5 of this study.
93. P. Blet, *Le Clergé de France et la monarchie*, II, p. 37, 38, citing example of Louise Dantail, in 1642.
94. François de Sales, *Lettres Intimes: Amitié et direction spirituelle*, Ed. by André Ravier (Annecy: Le Fayard, 1991), letter 43, Nov. 1, 1604, p. 156-157.
95. Geneviève Reynes, *Couvents des femmes. La vie des religieuses cloîtrées dans la France des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, (Paris, Fayard, 1987), p. 124.

CHAPTER 3

96. Brown, *The Body and Society*, p. 271.
97. *Ibid.*
98. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, III, i, pp. 202-04.
99. *François de Sales: Lettres intimes*, p. 147.
100. Cited René Bady, *François de Sales*, p. 99-100.
101. C. Bynum, 'Women's Stories, Women's Symbols', p. 110-111.
102. See article 'Concupiscence', by C. Baumgartner, *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, vol. 2: pp. 1334-1373.
103. François de Sales, in Bremond, *Histoire littéraire* I, p. 103.
104. Boucher, *Vie de soeur Marie de l'Incarnation*, p. 43.
105. This reversal has something in common with that which is described by Caroline Bynum, in which women learned to value themselves through the Church's glorification of Christ's humanity. If women were inferior to men because they were more human, then were they not, in Christ, superior to men for the same reason? (See *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, Introduction.) This perception did not, however, affect women materially because its effects were confined largely to the realm of the imagination and the spirit. In the seventeenth century, dévot clerics' material need of women made them aware that feminine 'weakness' could be useful, as well as admirable.
106. Jean-Pierre Camus, *Premières homélies quadrégismales*, (Paris, 1615) pp. 525-26

4/ THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES: BÉRULLE AND THE ORDER OF MOUNT CARMEL, 1615-1629

'L'affaire des Carmélites est un orage que quelque archidémon a excité en vengeance des victoires que tant de bonnes âmes ont rapportées sur luy et contre l'enfer.'

Pierre de Bérulle was to be described as 'chef du parti dévot et de l'opposition à Richelieu', along with his friend Michel de Marillac.¹ He rose to a higher position in government than any other dévot cleric of the seventeenth century, and he would also to set the pattern for dévot ejection from the circles of power. His public role remains an enigma to historians. He was to be charged with some important diplomatic missions by Louis XIII as his star rose, yet he was clearly not a born courtier-cleric like Richelieu, Cardinal Mazarin (Anne of Austria's first minister, who was never ordained), and the many lesser lights who followed their example. Nor was he a behind-the-scenes manipulator like Père Joseph, Richelieu's so-called *éminence grise*. It would be an anachronism to dismiss Bérulle as either a visionary fanatic or a hypocritically pious opportunist. It was not impossible for sincere (as opposed to *convenable*) devotion to coexist with a certain worldliness in the seventeenth century, but it demanded a rare degree of political skill and ambition to exploit the combination successfully, from a worldly point of view.² Bérulle lacked the temperament of his rivals, but he resembled them more closely than we might think. His contemporary Richelieu regarded him with a strange mixture of admiration, fear, and annoyance, which can perhaps be explained by supposing that he was jealous of Bérulle's aura of piety. In revenge, he propagated the view that Bérulle was an unthinking religious zealot, always turning to God for assistance in making decisions:

* Pierre Coton, letter to Marillac, March 26, 1622.

CHAPTER 4

[Bérulle] avoit cru que La Rochelle ne se prendroit pas par la digue, mais que Dieu la vouloit châtier et confondre par une surprise, et qu'elle devoit être emportée six mois devant qu'elle tombât ès mains du Roi.³

Was Richelieu's assessment of Bérulle accurate?⁴

Many of Bérulle's activities went against the grain of his religious convictions. He agreed to negotiate the marriage of the king's sister with an English prince. He helped the king to bring the Jesuits to heel. Yet he was not altogether pliable either. He reluctantly agreed to manage the affairs of the episcopal candidate Henri de Lorraine, scion of the Guise family, who was still a child, but then wrote to Claude Bertin of the Oratoire to tell him he was resigning the task:

Ne faites s'il vous plaît aucune ouverture de voies particulières de pourvoir aux dites Abbayes ni de dispenser le petit. Car je ne désire point entrer là dedans, ni qu'aucun des nôtres y entre. Car nous ne devons point être auteurs d'une relaxation en l'Église. C'est assez de tolérer celles que le temps y a faites qui dispense à ce que l'on dit pour les princes à sept ans...Je n'ai point de besoin de mêler de tout cela.⁵

On many occasions he had, figuratively, to hold his nose as he carried out his orders. The fact remains that he usually did carry them out, until just before the end of his life. If he was more fastidious in such matters than some of his contemporaries, he was not fanatic; whether this makes him more or less admirable by today's standards is another matter.

From 1614, Bérulle's association with the Carmelites would determine the direction of the rest of his life: it involved him in scandal, destroyed several friendships, and even determined the kinds of books he would publish. The *affaire Carmélite*, neglected by most students of Bérulle's work until recently,⁶ is of interest in part because it shows that, like many later dévot clerics, Bérulle looked to women to help him to resolve his uncertainties, yet was unable to refrain from attempting to mold them to conform more closely to his vision of the ideal dévot even when this risked involving him

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

in serious controversy. He came to see the Carmelites as an essential element in his efforts to establish a uniquely French vision of Tridentine piety, blinding him to the fact that the order had a corporate purpose that was not his own. The affair shows how a seemingly minor religious controversy could become entangled in the affairs of the nation, raising questions of royal authority, and the nature of civil obedience. It shows how vulnerable was the apparent unity of the dévots to the pressures of factionalism, to competition for both rich patrons and holy *dirigées*. Female religious orders were a desirable prize, especially if their foundress had been beatified, as Teresa would be in 1614. The competition over the Carmelites was a new and surprising development. Prior to the early modern period, priests had generally sought to avoid the direction of women's orders, and that they now fought for the privilege is a sign of how important dévot women had become in the post-Tridentine world.⁷ Who would reap the rewards, both temporal and spiritual, of holiness by association?

Bérulle's Appointment

Originally, Bérulle was supposed to share the duties of the visitation of the Carmel of the Incarnation with his friends and associates André Du Val and Jacques Gallemant, the latter a secular priest and curé of Aumale. Clement VIII's 'Bull of Erection' in 1603 stated that the three men were to be the order's Visitors in France simultaneously. Now, a 'visitor' is not the same thing as a superior: the superior of a religious house is responsible for its day-to-day management, 'au temporel et au spirituel', while the visitor is supposed to fulfil the duties of a senior executive, in modern usage, maintaining discipline and order, and establishing and maintaining the order's direction.* All women's

* In men's houses, the superior and the head of the house were one and the same person; in women's houses, this had once been the custom as well, but during the seventeenth century it was customary, in France at least, to insist that the female head of a convent could not assume the

CHAPTER 4

orders in the early modern period were obliged to have, besides a female abbess or prioress to govern them, a male superior. If the order was, like the Carmel, one where which included both men and women, the men's branch customarily provided that of the women with a superior. Teresa had specifically written this into the Constitutions of her order.⁸ But France's Carmelites, unlike those of Spain, were in theory supposed to be governed directly by Rome rather than by the men of their order, a special arrangement to avoid trouble with the French clergy and king.⁹

From the first, the Discalced Carmes regarded the usurpation of their rights of visitation and superiority as an insult, although until they were permitted to found a house of their own in France, there was little they could do about it.¹⁰ Rome, of course, could exercise its right to govern the French Carmelites only by proxy. The pope gave responsibility for the discipline of Carmelite monasteries in France first to the Carthusians, whose Rule was thought to resemble that of the Carmelites, and who had been selected for this reason, but the Carthusians declined the office. In 1606, however, Paul V stated in a brief that the Carmelites' visitor should be selected through a rotational system by the papal nuncio in France, adding a rider to saying that the new arrangement was to be permanent, *`même au cas où les Frères Carmes déchaussés établiraient aujourd'hui ou à l'avenir d'autres couvents, soit à Paris, soit dans les autres cités ou lieux du royaume de France'*.¹¹ The rotation soon proved to be impractical,¹² and in 1614 a new Bull gave Bérulle alone the right of visitation, an unusual measure in that he also remained one of the order's superiors, and the two positions were clearly in a conflict of interest.

functions of a true superior on account of her sex.

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

The selection of Bérulle was not a random decision on Paul V's part. Bérulle had actively solicited the appointment at the time when he was making arrangements for the establishment of the French Oratory.¹³ The political situation in France had changed since the arrival of the Carmelites. Marie de Medici had been appointed as regent of France following Henri IV's death in 1610, and Bérulle soon became one of her most trusted advisers, as the Holy See knew well. The authorities in Rome may well have decided that to cede control of the Carmelites back to the Carmes would be to waste an opportunity to exploit the association between the queen and Bérulle. The official reason for the change was that rotating Visitors so often led to confusing shifts in policy, but it seems likely that the pope chose Bérulle for the unusual honour because he had high hopes of Bérulle, and of the Carmelites. So successful had they been in attracting the patronage of the great that they would be a powerful evangelical (and political) tool in the hands of whoever controlled them. It is to this fact, perhaps, that we should look for an understanding of the strange events that would follow.

The Spanish mothers in France were angered by the snub to the Carmes, for which there was no longer any excuse in their eyes. Anne de Jésus in particular had always resented the fact that the French Carmelites were not allowed their rightful superiors, especially after the Discalced Carmes were permitted to enter France in 1610.¹⁴ The situation was complicated by the fact that the Discalced Carmelites, in Spain, had been involved in a dispute about their constitutions since 1581.¹⁵ Following Teresa's death in 1577, the Carmes had imposed a new constitution upon them, formalized in 1581 by a new Carme general. It took away some of the liberties permitted by Teresa, including the nuns' freedom to choose their confessors according to conscience, rather than only from among the Carmes.¹⁶ In 1588 the nuns had won back, from Sixtus V, the right to be governed by their Primitive

CHAPTER 4

Constitutions, but there was some question about whether the Carmes, in Spain, would permit their use. In consequence, one reason why some houses of Spanish Carmelites were eager to 'found' in France was that they hoped to be permitted to return to their Primitive Constitutions once there.¹⁷ A deep division was simmering among the Carmelites.

• The Faubourg Saint-Jacques

Many Carmelites were uneasy about their status in France, especially those who had come from Spain. Anne de Jésus, friend of Teresa and upholder of her traditions, was an implacable foe of luxury and laxity. She did not approve of the way that the Paris Carmel had become the first house in France, believing only a Spanish convent should have this honour, and clashed with the three superiors over the requirement that the Paris Carmel house forty-eight nuns rather than the twenty or so that Teresa believed the optimum number.¹⁸ She was quick to defend her August mentor and imposed stern discipline upon the convent. She had refused to accept Bérulle's own dirigée, the converted Protestant Clare d'Abra de Raconis, as a postulant in the Carmel without the formal consent of the Carme fathers and Rome, but was overruled. Angry, she left France for Flanders in 1606. It was a Spanish province and she would there be able to seek the direction of the Carmes. The depth of her anger may be gauged in the letter she wrote to Bérulle himself:

*Je ne sais si Sa Majesté désire [que j'accomplisse mon devoir en France] puisque votre Seigneurie et Monsieur le Docteur Du Val me trouvent si inutile pour elle, je pense donc qu'il y a pour moi obligation de faire ce que nous ordonne Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ qui est de demeurer là où on nous reçoit, et là où on ne nous reçoit pas, non...*¹⁹

Even Anne de Jesus was unable to withstand all the pressures brought to bear upon this most visible and prominent of monasteries. Not only had she been forced to give in over the Huguenot novice, and the Carmes' right to leadership, but she found that even in small matters of government

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

her authority was often questioned. She greatly disapproved of the custom of permitting women who had contributed substantial sums of money to the convent to enter the cloister and board among the nuns for extended periods of time, disrupting monastic routine and setting the nuns a bad example by their worldliness.²⁰ To take a stand against the practice, however, would have been foolish, for the convent depended upon their patronage. The Carmelites had been forbidden to live upon chance-given alms by the terms imposed by the Paris Parlement in ratifying their letters-patent in 1602.²¹ The French authorities did not approve of mendicancy for women, even from behind the walls of the cloister. Onlookers were sometimes puzzled by the contradictions in the position of cloistered women: 'Il faut être riche pour être pauvre', observed Jean-Pierre Camus * Yet the nuns lived in great austerity, and their very success was, literally, costly for them. They were obliged to keep themselves, of course, and they were also morally obliged to give alms to the poor, (a duty carried out by converse sisters), and this was often a considerable expense.²² They were regularly asked to have masses said for the dead in perpetuity, with contributions from the dead person's estate to pay for the requests (but these were never quite adequate).²³ To fulfil such bequests they had to retain (and pay stipends to) far more priests than were needed for the convent itself.²⁴

Its dependency upon the charity of the rich meant that the Paris Carmel remained the focus of attention among the highest ranks of Parisian society. Well-to-do women retreated to the Carmel from the tragedies or petty humiliations of life 'dans le siècle'²⁵, while the fame and spiritual glamour of Teresa of Avila made for some spectacular conversions among society women.²⁶ This, inevitably, increased their prestige and made the nuns yet more visible. For the inhabitants, the attention they received was at once flattering and bewildering, given their supposed withdrawal from the world. It

CHAPTER 4

was also potentially dangerous, as their success threatened the poverty and worldly detachment that was the source of their attraction - and their safety from external interference.

• Bérulle's Visit

Bérulle's appointment as Visitor-superior was thus almost certain to provoke further anxiety among the Carmelites, and to increase their sense that they were being scrutinized on all sides. He was a rising man, high in the circles of the great, and he had his own ideas about what he wanted from the nuns. In 1614, on his first visit to the convent in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques after his appointment, he insisted on interviewing each of the nuns in turn. He was surprised by them: the house in Paris had developed in a way that he seems not to have expected, for he had been occupied too long with diplomacy and the founding of the Oratory to see the direction they had taken. There is no letter in Bérulle's correspondence or that of his associates stating that he was displeased with what he found in Paris, but there is one hint that the convent and its nuns fell short of his expectations: before he left, he prepared an ordinance to be given to the nuns. Without suggesting that the nuns had committed any dereliction of their duties, he reminded them that they should be careful always to have Jesus and his holy mother in their thoughts the first thing in the morning, and as they went to bed at night. He recommended them to turn for intercession to saint Joseph, John the Baptist, and Mary Magdalene, especially the latter, as a model of the interior life and of dependence upon Jesus. Did Bérulle's memoir to the Carmelites signify some disapproval? His advice to them seems rather obvious, indeed superfluous, for professed religious in a contemplative order, whom one might assume to be thinking of Jesus and Mary in any case. On this occasion, the tone of the ordinance was mild and its suggestions were not of a kind likely to raise objections.²⁷

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

What might have been the cause of Bérulle's reproach? The most likely explanation is that a 'Spanish' style of devotion was apparent in many details of the monastery's devotional life. It showed in the way the novice mistress encouraged her charges to adopt what some French people might have found to be rather baroque and perhaps distasteful habits. On the eve of major saints' days and feast days, the young nuns were led through the convent, their feet of course bare, and out into the gardens, making pilgrimages there to the shrines of various saints. The novice mistress had also introduced the custom of re-enacting the events of Palm Sunday every year, the novices singing a liturgy of the Passion while one of them carried a large crucifix.²⁸ Many Carmelites of the Incarnation house (and some others elsewhere) retained their taste for what were known to the French by the rather disapproving label 'états extraordinaires', seeking out visions and ecstasies, especially those centering upon the person of Christ, and circulating accounts of these phenomena amongst themselves. They were also attracted by feats of physical asceticism. More, although Bérulle and the other superiors had tried to persuade them to restrain their emotional expressiveness with some success, the nuns could not or would not wholly accept French views regarding piety. Bérulle had discovered that the nuns in the Paris convent were devoted to ceremony, to emotional display, and to external mortifications of an ancient kind. These characteristics were a part of Carmelite tradition; and the common currency of female devotion in much of Catholic Europe. Although self-punishing austerities were formally discouraged in the post-Tridentine Church, they seem to have remained commonplace through the end of the seventeenth century and beyond, at least in women's orders.²⁹ But Bérulle had admired Teresa's reforms in the first place for their 'interiority'. Her nuns were not quite interior enough for him.

CHAPTER 4

• Bérulle's Vow

Bérulle's ordinance for the nuns of Paris was one of a series of similar suggestions he made to other convents. Although Bérulle's first ordinances making the suggestion appear to have appeared in 1610-11 (when he was also negotiating to establish the Oratory in France, and was not yet the Carmelites' visitor), he began to press them with greater insistence in 1614, the first time that he actually left a written statement to this effect.³⁰ By 1615, at the monastery of Châlon, the suggestion that the Carmelites should commit themselves formally to Jesus and Mary had become a demand that they make an actual 'vow' of servitude to the Mother and Son. The oldest available text of the formula begins, 'Je fais voeu à Dieu de servitude perpétuelle à Jésus-Christ; à son humanité déifiée et à sa divinité humanisée; et ce, selon l'intention de notre R.P. Supérieur'. The last clause of this opening statement was the cause of particular outrage, and was later removed. The formula is several pages in length; it goes on to say 'O grand et admirable Jésus! Je me rends à perpetuité votre esclave et de votre humanité adorable,' and concludes with the words, 'Je supplie aussi la très sainte Mère de Jésus de me tenir et considerer désormais comme esclave de son Fils, et en cette qualité m'obtenir part à ses voies et miséricordes éternelles.'³¹

The vow of servitude provoked immediate objections among the Carmelites. They did not welcome the imposition and began to organise opposition to it. Bérulle's formula and his insistence that it be adopted, his eventual demand that it be included among the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity that the nuns made upon making their profession, were unacceptable to them. Bérulle's justification for demanding such a promise of the Carmelites was simple: he believed that it would help to confirm them in a devotion that Teresa of Avila had in any case sought to implant

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

among them. Why should they object? It did not contravene the customs of the order, and there was no doctrinal reason to object to the formula; and there was surely no canonical reason to object to something so close to the Carmelite spirit. But these were explanations offered long after the formula's initial presentation in 1614. By 1622, when Bérulle was forced to justify himself publicly, the formula had become a matter of intense controversy. In 1614, when Bérulle first began to promote the vow of servitude actively, he may have been more troubled by the convent's customs than he was later willing to admit. If it had truly implied no criticism of the order's existing customs, would the nuns have objected to it so strenuously? Would Bérulle have continued to press for its adoption for at least three years, in the face of great opposition from them?

Bérulle was by 1614 a well-known figure both at court and in Rome. He was also about to discover that his hopes, and those of other dévots, for the long-postponed acceptance of the Tridentine decrees, were to be disappointed once and for all by the refusal of the Third Estate to ratify them at the meeting of the Estates General the same year. Worse, the Third Estate, anxious to assert its authority and to prevent the outbreak of further religious dissent in France, would compose an article for its *cahier* that it regarded as a 'loi fondamentale':

Que le Roi de France, tenant sa couronne de Dieu seul, il n'y a puissance sur terre, quelle qu'elle soit, spirituelle ou temporelle, qui ait aucun droit sur son royaume pour en priver les personnes sacrées des Rois, ni dispenser ou absoudre leurs sujets de la fidélité ou obéissance qu'ils lui doivent, pour quelque cause ou prétexte que ce soit...³²

Although Bérulle's vow predated this proclamation, perhaps Bérulle's fear for the independence of the Church was responsible for his insistence that the vow be accepted. The heavy hand of the civil authorities must not be allowed to penetrate the Carmels of France. In promulgating the vow, Bérulle was both responding to the challenge of the Third Estate and, in a manner of speaking, following its

CHAPTER 4

example. The claims of kings upon the loyalty of their subjects, in civil life, were increasing; why should the claims of God not follow suit? Indeed, they must follow suit, if kings were not to become the arbiters of all morality. Bérulle wanted the nuns over whom he exercised authority to demonstrate to the world that there were other obligations than those of citizenship, higher demands than those of the state. His Oratorians were fully committed to life in the world and must learn to acknowledge obedience to several masters: to their general, to their bishops, and ultimately to the king, whose appointees the bishops were. 'His' Carmelites, safe in their cloister, would acknowledge no earthly authority. He failed to recognise that the Carmelites were not his daughters in the same sense as the Oratorians were his sons.³³ They had their own history and their own obligations to the past, and they were highly resistant to change.

In 1617-18 the issue of the vow began to take on a life of its own as it became entangled with other unresolved problems in the spiritual direction and temporal government of the Carmelites. The other two French superiors of the order were in a weak position to defend it. Gallebant was rarely in Paris and du Val was hampered both by his duties at the Sorbonne and by his deafness.³⁴ Bérulle, with his double role as superior and visitor, was in a better position to suggest and supervise changes in the Carmels of France. Complicating matters, relations between Du Val and Bérulle had cooled since the days of the hôtel Acarie. In 1618 Du Val tried to introduce a resolution at the Sorbonne that no members of the Faculty of Theology should be allowed to join the Oratory upon pain of expulsion. Du Val (strangely, like his arch-enemy Edmond Richer, with whom he formed an alliance over the matter) had greatly resented the departure of some of his more promising Sorbonne colleagues to join

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

the Oratoire.³⁵ The dispute was a serious one; though they eventually settled into a kind of distant friendship, they were never afterwards as close as they had once been.

Du Val was not disposed to look at Bérulle's innovative vow with any great enthusiasm. Officially, both Du Val and Gallemant were opposed to it on the grounds that it was contrary to the customs and to the spirit of the Discalced Carmelites.³⁶ Du Val was to say in 1622 that he had never objected to the formula on doctrinal grounds: 'si mes lettres sont bien considérées et entendues de bonne foy', he wrote in a letter to the bishop of Nantes (Philippe Cospeau, bishop 1621-36), 'on verra que tout ce que j'en ay dict se rapporte à la validité comme veu solemnel et obligatoire et qu'il ne pouvoit estre ceste qualité que par l'autorité de nostre Saint Père.'³⁷ Worse even than their opposition was that of Madame Acarie, who was then in the Carmelite convent at Pontoise. Her prioress had strong objections to Bérulle's formula.³⁸ Whether under Du Val's influence, or that of the prioress of Pontoise, or simply because she herself disapproved of the vow, Madame Acarie too began to turn away from her old friend. When Bérulle went to Pontoise in 1618, he found her in a state of some agitation over his recent activities as visitor. A record of their meeting has been left by Angélique Arnauld, who had known Madame Acarie briefly and would in 1619 enter into correspondence with various Carmelite nuns. Her report of their meeting suggests that it was bitter:

Les Mères de Pontoise me dirent que M. de Bérulle était venu la trouver et lui avait fait de grandes réprimandes au parloir. Car son esprit était changé et il n'était plus dans la pensée, comme autrefois, de la rendre fondatrice en France, comme il disait en avoir eu quelque vision. Il s'était plus lié avec les filles de Paris et avec celles qui avaient relégué cette sainte femme à Pontoise, qu'avec elle, quoique ce fût son ancienne amie. Elle allait avec des potences et, revenant du parloir, elle dit: «Quel changement! Ce n'est plus le Père de Bérulle que j'ai connue depuis si longtemps. Il me tient un langage tout différent de celui qu'il m'a tenu depuis tant d'années. Dieu nous jugera tous!»³⁹

CHAPTER 4

Bérulle is also reported to have described Madame Acarie as 'un petit esprit trompé', a phrase that casts some doubt upon the story since it is quite untypical of the language he used in any of his recorded conversations or letters.⁴⁰ Their conversation was reported to Angélique Arnauld by the prioress of Pontoise, and it is possible that the latter might have misunderstood some of what she overheard.⁴¹ In 1618 Madame Acarie's health was failing and she would die on April 18, shortly after their last encounter, never having reconciled with her old friend.

Madame Acarie believed the vow to be unacceptable because it was not a part of the Order's original constitutions. She had earlier refused to give in to pressure from the Carmes to support their leadership of the Carmel, showing that she was capable of accepting innovations in mere temporal matters. But in the matter of the Carmel's spiritual orientation, she could not be persuaded to accept any change. The reference in Angélique Arnauld's account of the quarrel with Bérulle, that the Oratorian 'n'était plus dans la pensée, comme autrefois, de la rendre fondatrice en France, comme il disait en avoir eu quelque vision', was significant because in repudiating Madame Acarie as foundress, her opinions regarding the order's future might be disregarded. As foundress she must of necessity have been consulted. Whether Bérulle really went as far as to reject her, the fact remains that the second Paris Carmel, under the leadership of his friend and disciple Madeleine de Saint-Joseph, was eventually to depart in a new direction that owed much to Bérulle's greater emotional austerity and differed markedly from that of the original in the spirit if not the letter of its Rule.⁴²

Carmes and Carmelites: the affaire carmélite

The Carmelites' situation was soon to be aggravated still further by the intrusion of the old issue of the Carmes' claim to rights of direction over the order. The resentment of the Carmes at the

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

denial of their rights of visitation had not abated; inevitably, it also led to a serious quarrel over the rights of regulars and Gallican traditions. The affair of the Carmelite visitation, which at its height would involve five monasteries of rebel nuns, stirred up the vocal Gallicans who still distrusted Bérulle and the dévots. So intense was the reaction of both parties that it seemed to reverse the usual political alignments of such quarrels. Bérulle, a secular, found himself the target of much criticism from the Assembly of the Clergy and the Parlement of Paris, normally staunch supporters of secular rights, while the Carme fathers, his opponents, unexpectedly won the support of the magistrates.

The new round of hostilities between Bérulle and the Carmelites was instigated, in part, by a French Discalced Carme who had spent several years in Rome. Arriving in Paris in 1610, Père Denis was well-connected and could expect to find support at court.⁴³ The news of his arrival had been of some concern to Bérulle, and Marillac approached P. Denis asking that the Discalced Carmes sign a paper promising that they would not attempt to wrest authority over the Carmelites from their present superiors.⁴⁴ In 1610, the French superiors' authority was perhaps less firm than it had once been because a new bull of 1610 gave the Carme fathers the right to the superiority of the Carmelites of Flanders, and the French and Flemish branches of the Carme fathers belonged to this group, based in Italy and under the control of the Italian Carmes. Would the French Carmelites be handed over now to the Carmes? After the bull of 1614, which fixed the visitation rights of the Carmels upon Bérulle, this was no longer a likely possibility. Still, the wishes of the Spanish mothers, the persistence of the Discalced Carmes, and the weight of custom, were not negligible factors in any battle over jurisdiction.

CHAPTER 4

Meanwhile, other events in the great world demanded much of Bérulle's attention. For some time he had been forced to take up the role of peacemaker, in the troubled relationship between the King and his mother. Between 1617 and 1619, France was several times on the brink of civil war, as the Queen-mother sought to re-establish herself as a power at Court in the aftermath of the assassination of Concini, one of her chief advisers, by her son Louis XIII. Bérulle was frequently employed as a go-between in the negotiations that followed because he was trusted by the king's party, the Queen's, and by the papal nuncio Bentivoglio, who was greatly worried by the deteriorating relationships within the French royal family. The problem was not really resolved until Marie was permanently exiled not merely from the court but from France, which did not happen until the Day of the Dupes in 1630, after Bérulle was already dead. Perhaps his preoccupation with the royal family and its quarrels explains why Bérulle failed to realize the depth of discontent among Carmelites in several of their convents and continued to press the nuns under his authority to accept his formula. It is also possible that he believed that such vows were all the more necessary to set an example to the external world of true commitment and undivided allegiance. It is otherwise difficult to explain his conduct towards the Carmelites over the next five years. If he was strictly within his rights from a legal perspective, his inflexibility over the question of Carmelite government was yet a cause of great tension in the Church of France.

In 1618, P. Denis succeeded in persuading the bishop of Tréguier to allow the erection of a new house of Carmelites at Morlais under the direction of the Discalced Carmes.⁴⁵ Louis XIII refused to permit this, and said that the new convent must conform to the other Carmelite monasteries of France. Angry at this check to Carme authority, P. Denis approached the nuns of the monasteries of

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

Bordeaux and of Saintes and persuaded them to sign a deposition against the three French superiors, on the grounds that the papal bull of 1606 had left them with no legal obligations to the trio, and implying that vows made since then to the three men might be irregular or not legally binding. He also began to petition the king's council to give the Carmes of France the rights of superiority and visitation over all French Carmels, a petition which was refused him. His recourse to the civil authorities was a sign of the seriousness of his efforts: perhaps he realised that the Holy See's wishes would mean little without the king's support.⁴⁶

Unfortunately for Bérulle, François de Sourdis, the cardinal-archbishop of Bordeaux, who was 'violent and temperamental',⁴⁷ although a dedicated reformer in the Church, decided to support Père Denis's actions. He believed the Carmelites were within their rights:

*il lui semblait conforme à la raison et même nécessaire que les Carmélites restassent sous l'autorité des religieux réformés de leur Ordre, puisque tous deux découlaient de la même source.*⁴⁸

Sourdis was to veer from one position to another over the next four years, causing Bérulle and his supporters great confusion as the archbishop backed first the Carmes and then Bérulle.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Bérulle found that he had the nuns themselves to contend with. From 1620 on, a group of nuns in both Carmelite convents at Bordeaux (a second Carmel opened there in 1620) was to repeatedly petition Sourdis, Gallemant and Du Val, and eventually the Pope himself, in an attempt to break Bérulle's hold over the Carmels of France, or, failing that, to petition to be allowed to secede from Bérulle's visitation independently, and to be placed under the direct authority of the archbishop himself.

CHAPTER 4

Between 1619 and 1624, Bérulle and the Carme fathers were caught up in a near-constant battle in which neither seemed able to hold on to a victory for longer than it took either party to disregard a letter from the Pope upholding the opposing side and compose a new petition demanding further clarification.⁵⁰ Part of the trouble was caused by the fact that neither side trusted the other to deal fairly when presenting the case to higher authorities, a problem complicated by the slow channels of communication, and by the death of two Popes. For example, when the issue was referred to Rome in 1620, supposedly for final arbitration, Paul V decided once again in favour of the three French superiors (he had responded similarly in three previous briefs). But the Carmes were convinced that the decision had been obtained by some form of trickery or pressure. Had Bérulle managed to imply to the Pope that this was the only arrangement the king of France would accept? This was to be their habitual assumption in all subsequent negotiations: Bérulle was manipulating the Pope into supporting him on the grounds of his close relations with the king, and manipulating the king himself into believing that the existing arrangement was the only one acceptable to Rome. As neither the Pope nor the king wished to offend each other (especially in a matter which was not, in all likelihood, of great importance to either) such hints were an effective delaying tactic. In any event, Paul V died in January 1621, and this meant that the whole matter could be referred once more to his successor, Gregory XV.

No fewer than five French Carmels were involved in the mutiny: those at Saintes, Bourges, Limoges, and two at Bordeaux. So serious did the situation become that in December 1621, Cardinal de Retz was forced to call upon the Bordeaux militia to break in to the Carmel in the town, to force the rebel nuns to accept the introduction of a new prioress of Bérulle's choosing. Finding that the nuns

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

refused to give in until they received clear instructions from Rome, Retz sensibly separated the loyalist and the rebel nuns and placed them in the two different houses. But once again, at Saintes in 1622, Louis XIII found it necessary to send a company of his archers to impose obedience upon the recalcitrant nuns there. They were found bound together by silver chains in the parlour, and as they refused to accept Bérulle's authority even now, they too were sent to join their sisters at Bordeaux.⁵¹

Why were some Carmelites so resistant to Bérulle's authority? At Saintes, Bordeaux, and Bourges, the troubles had been awakened by the Carme fathers, but stirred to boiling point by the resistance of particularly stubborn prioresses. Mère Isabelle de Jésus-Christ of Bourges was especially reluctant to accept Bérulle as the convent's rightful visitor.⁵² Part of their reluctance seems to have stemmed from the fact that they had been misled by libellous pamphlets and slanderous gossip suggesting that Bérulle's authority as visitor and superior was not recognized by Rome and that they were not, therefore, real nuns at all, because they had made their vows before an unlawful superior: 'Ces bons Pères, pour venir à bout des desirs qu'ils ont d'avoir la supériorité de l'Ordre, se servent de diverses calomnies, en usant sans considérer ny la vérité ny les personnes.'⁵³ The nuns had been left in ignorance of the bulls of 1608 and 1614, which had confirmed Bérulle in his post.

• The Vow (Reprise)

The refusal of either side to accept any abrogation of its rights over the visitation question was a major factor in the affair, but it was further complicated by the issue of Bérulle's 'vow', as the rebel Carmelites interpreted it, and by the intervention of other groups hostile to Bérulle himself. The Carme fathers had managed to obtain (by stealth, Bérulle said in his account of the matter) a copy of the devotional formula he had promulgated among the Carmelite houses he visited. First written in

CHAPTER 4

1612 or 1613, the formula or a version of it had been sent, according to Bérulle, to a handful of persons far advanced in prayer, but never to those unready to receive it. The Carmes saw the matter in another light. Insisting, as Du Val had done, that it was contrary to the spirit of the Carmel, they added it to their array of charges against Bérulle. But they went still further. They accused Bérulle of attempting to impose a 'quatrième voeu de religion' upon the Carmelites, a serious charge, and they suggested or implied that something in the 'voeu' was doctrinally unsound, perhaps heretical. P. Denis and his allies had copies of the formula made and presented to the Sorbonne for judgment. When the doctors there found nothing to object to, it was sent on to Louvain, where it was condemned as heretical and censured in January 1621; a third application, to the University of Douai this time, produced the same results. The theologians of Douai also censured Bérulle's *Élevations* in July 1621. Bérulle claimed that inaccuracies in the formula's transcription were the source of the problem. Archbishop Cospeau of Nantes, an ally of Bérulle's, wrote to the Jesuit theologian Lessius of Louvain and demanded to know how he could have believed Cospeau guilty of approving a heretical prayer (i.e., the vow); Lessius informed Cospeau that he would not have done so had he not been misled about the contents of the vow.⁵⁴ But however theologically innocent Bérulle's intentions in formulating and sending out his prayer, even his supporters (then and now) must acknowledge that the prayer itself met with much displeasure among the nuns in his charge, and that many Carmelites did in fact wish to be governed by the Carmes.⁵⁵

With the support of some of his allies in Rome,⁵⁶ and that of the king of France, Bérulle's persistence eventually triumphed. The rebel nuns, those who refused to accept his government and his theological writings, were allowed to go to other Carmels outside France.⁵⁷ The victory, however,

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

was a hollow one, costing him more than it was worth and damaging dévot unity. The tension between Bérulle and France's regulars was never to be dispersed. He, once a friend to the Jesuits, was confirmed as their enemy. A man who had done so much to undermine the authority of a group of regulars, they believed, could scarcely be regarded as an ally.⁵⁸ Both his insistence upon his right to govern the Carmelites, and his creation of the Oratoire, were a clear indication to leading Jesuits that French prelates would accept Tridentine directives only upon their own terms. The unexpected hostility of the Jesuit-ultramontane faction to Bérulle did not mitigate the hostility with which he was regarded by *bons français* throughout France. One of the stranger aspects of the whole affair was that it brought together many people who would, in ordinary circumstances, have regarded each other as enemies. The Jesuits formed an alliance with the Parlementaires as together they examined Bérulle's activities in the hope of finding some error in thought or action. And the rebel Carmelites, members of a notoriously austere order, sworn to 'obediencia in todo', defied their Visitor, their king, and their pope, in order to adhere to the tradition of government by the Carme fathers, while their loyalist sisters obediently supported a devotional mode that was in some respects outside their traditions, all with the eyes of the world upon them, even as they remained shut up in the seclusion of the cloister.

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Bérulle and Women

Bérulle was to be mocked by Michelet for his relations with his female dirigées, and no doubt in his own time there were many who explained the eruption of the Carmelites by pointing to female excitability and the ways some directors made use of it for their own purposes. Michelet's comment that Bérulle's malady was to be an ardent, violent, passionate converter and director of women,

CHAPTER 4

implies that Bérulle excited the women in his charge to excessive devotion to himself, 'with a weight of zeal that might be misinterpreted'.⁵⁹ This is somewhat misleading. Bérulle had few dirigées from outside the ranks of the Carmelites, and few of his worst enemies hinted at any impropriety in his relations with them. That he aroused strong feelings in them is undeniable, but they were often highly critical of his direction. But there is some truth to Michelet's suggestion that Bérulle's attitude to the Carmelites was not quite detached. It was complicated by the fact that he saw them as a source of personal spiritual comfort. Since the end of his association with Madame Acarie and the house of the Capuchins in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, he had found few confidantes. His isolation was not uncommon for public figures in the seventeenth century. Yet men like him usually had relatives, especially female relatives, to turn to in times of stress: Richelieu depended upon his niece Madame Aiguillon; Mazarin would look to his sisters and nieces, as well as to Anne of Austria herself, for consolation. Bérulle, however, seems not to have sought out his female relations for companionship, apart from Madame Acarie. He did, however, turn to Carmelite nuns. In the first years of his involvement with the order, he was for a time (1604-1611) a close friend of Anne de Saint-Barthélemy's, one of the five original Carmelites from Spain. They exchanged many letters and the surviving fragments of their correspondence suggest the level of his need for such companionship.⁶⁰ Not only did he regard the order to which she belonged as admirable in itself, but as an enclosed nun she had, from his point of view, no stake in the world of public affairs in which he lived and worked. She was neither an educated nor an exceptionally perceptive woman, but she was a much more gentle person than Anne de Jésus, and like her she was named in Teresa's first biography. Bérulle referred to her as 'cet âme si douce, d'une douceur et humilité non pareil', and it was perhaps her gentleness

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

that was the source of her appeal for him, besides the fact that she was a Carmelite.⁶¹ The other women to whom he might have turned, his mother or Madame Acarie, also Carmelites, were both stern and formidable characters, who may not have invited confidences. None of his letters to her survive, but she wrote thirty-seven letters to him whose confiding tone suggests a reciprocal spiritual exchange. The important point here is not that their friendship was equal (with her lack of education it could not have been) but that it was mutual, based upon Bérulle's need as much as hers. Nor was this his only experience of the kind; he was also to enjoy a lasting bond with Madeleine de Saint-Joseph and was a close friend of Marie de la Trinité (the prioress at Rouen and then Pontoise).⁶² Given his need of such friendships, and his reliance upon the Carmelites' remoteness from the world of affairs, it seems likely that part of his reason for imposing the new formula was his desire to mold them in his own image of the ideal religious, born out of his need for a particular type of feminine support and inspiration.

His complex attitude to female spirituality was evident in his reaction to the Carmelites' devotional lives. Bérulle was not a liturgical reactionary; his was not the kind of late-medieval multiplication of ceremonies conventionally associated with the Middle Ages. His Christocentricity led him to emphasize Jesus and his closest associates as the proper objects of Christian prayer, while it seems possible that his preference for 'anéantissement' would have led him to find the idea of intercessory prayer distasteful. It is traditional that Christians petitioning the saints reserve for them the expression of their most personal, most purely human desires. It was perhaps this that led him to try to remodel the Carmelites. He seems to have thought the nuns too preoccupied with self rather than God. He certainly found them disconcertingly expressive in their emotional desire for contact

CHAPTER 4

with God. Typical of their style were the words of the Spanish mother Béatrix de la Conception, who arrived in France in 1604 with Anne de Jésus:

Ah! si vous saviez et réussissiez à croire la mollesse avec laquelle je me trouvais devant la divine présence, vous lui demanderiez pardon pour moi. Que ce soit maintenant le fruit de votre prochaine communion: demandez-lui ce que j'ai perdu en recevant mal Sa divine Majesté, et demandez à toutes les Soeurs une communion à cette intention.⁶³

There was a political subtext to his attitude as well as a religious one, for Spanish-style devotional practices were still out of favour among the upper classes of northern France. (The attitude of peasants and of the people of the south may well have been different.) Early in his association with the Carmel of Paris, he had put a stop to the Spanish mothers' habit of talking to God out loud while they spun, a practice which had much amused their French novices.⁶⁴

Of interest because it furnishes an example of the devotional styles of Bérulle and the Carmelites is their differing attitudes to the *Enfance de Jésus*, devotion to the Christ child and to the infancy narratives in the Bible which make reference to him. Certain Carmelite houses across the country came to be known for this devotional trope, which had virtually died out in France after the high Middle Ages. The first inspiration for this new devotion (beyond its antecedents in early Franciscan ritual) was a set of carved figures of the infant Jesus brought by Anne de Jésus from Spain to France. She kept them scattered about the Carmel of Dijon after she went to that city to found a new house in 1606, and one of them was in her cell. From the original devotions of Anne de Jésus there would develop the Dijon and Beaune Carmels' devotion to the *Enfance de Jésus*, after a series of dreams and revelations were experienced by various nuns at both houses. The new devotion did not greatly please Bérulle. So much did he dislike Anne de Jésus' infant Jesuses that one day on a visit

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

he persuaded her to pass one of them out to him through the cloister's turn-gate, and took it away with him. He did not return it to her until just before she left France for good in 1611.⁶⁵

Although Bérulle was himself fascinated by accounts of the Incarnation, and by those infancy stories which emphasize the mystery of Christ's birth, he was always very insistent that God must be treated with due reverence. Bremond has suggested that it was Bérulle who fostered and encouraged the cult of the 'Enfant Jésus' in French Carmels, but this seems unlikely.⁶⁶ Bérulle, as Bremond shows, displayed no tenderness in his attachment to the Child; he asks if infancy were not 'l'état le plus vil et le plus abject de la nature humaine, après celui de la mort?'⁶⁷, a view which does not suggest the sentimental attitude of the Carmelites. What Bremond seems unwilling to acknowledge is that Carmelite devotion to the Enfant Jésus was of precisely the kind Bérulle disliked.⁶⁸ Bérulle's support for this kind of devotion was tempered by his taste for more measured and more exalted forms of worship. Bérulle was not impressed by the 'Baby Jesus' of popular imagery and he may have hoped to control this devotion by accepting and directing it, rather than by outright suppression. When Anne de Jesus first arrived in France, she had written that French Catholics concentrated too much upon God and not enough upon Christ and the imitation of Christ, and that their spirituality was in effect too abstract to suit her notions of human nature and its needs:

J'ai soin [she wrote of French Carmelites] qu'elles considèrent et imitent Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ, car ici on se souvient peu de lui. Tout se passe en une simple vue de Dieu; je ne sais comment cela peut se faire. Depuis le séjour du glorieux Saint Denis qui écrivit la théologie mystique, tout le monde a continué à s'appliquer à Dieu par suspension plus que par imitation. C'est là une étrange manière de procéder. Je ne l'entends pas, non plus que leur façon de parler.⁶⁹

But although educated men in France may have objected to the sentimentality of *Enfance* piety, women do not seem to have experienced the same reservations. Devotion to the infant Jesus rapidly

CHAPTER 4

spread throughout French convents and from there became a popular form of worship, and has remained so until modern times. It is possible to see this disagreement as yet another instance of the difference between Spanish and French piety, but is it not also possible to see it as an example of the growing gap between male and female modes of worship? More, the fact that educated clerics were uneasy with such forms of piety as the *Enfance* even when these were eagerly embraced by women and the masses - the very people whom they hoped to reach - suggests that the old division between intellectual and popular devotion was growing sharper. The problem was at the heart of many of the later factional divisions among French dévots, as some factions pursued popular support at the expense of intellectual and moral rigour, while the Augustinians rejected popularity in favour of more austere forms of worship. Bérulle's own

views of female piety, of Carmelite piety, were fraught with uncertainty that grew out of his inability to decide the relative value of the intellect and the heart in devotional life: he admired their certainty and closeness to God, longed to be able to share in it, and was yet unable to wholly accept or understand it.

The battle over the Carmelites aggravated existing rivalries in the Church and in its course also brought the nuns to the attention of civil society. That the cause of the rebel Carmelites should have been embraced by men of a *politique* bent shows how important were purely factional interests, as opposed to ideological ones, in the dispute. After all, the Carme fathers had originally been excluded from France because they were feared as potential subversives. The fact that many civic-minded men supported them in their quest for control of the Carmelites suggests several possibilities. One is that by this time Bérulle's status in French public life had aroused such animosity that any

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

change that might reduce his influence seemed desirable to his adversaries. Another is that they and the increasingly 'Gallican' (that is, monarchist) members of the Assembly of the Clergy⁷⁰ resented the way that the nuns were really governed more or less directly by Rome, through the agency of Bérulle, Gallemant, and Du Val. Perhaps people were also taken aback by the surprising influence the Carmelites themselves had acquired, while under the leadership of the three superiors. Communities of nuns had not enjoyed such a degree of social prominence since the Middle Ages, and even then their influence had usually been confined within a small circle. A widespread desire for religious guidance had given the Carmelites an unexpected national visibility. Perhaps Bérulle's enemies hoped that if they were governed by a less controversial figure they would fade from view. The final oddity of the situation was that the nuns, first invited to France in order to represent to all Catholics the virtues of disinterestedness and detachment from the world, were ultimately caught in a political crossfire of warring interests, partly because of the very prominence that their new role gave them.

Bérulle's last years

Bérulle's behaviour to the Carmelites must be seen in the light of his political involvements and his equivocal attitude towards them. He suffered from a divided conscience, and in this he was more like Richelieu than is commonly supposed. At one time in European history, it seems to have been easy for priests to justify their more dubious political activities with little sense of conflict of conscience. The rise of protestantism, the need to set a good example, and the Tridentine reform movement, had brought the days of easy accommodation to an end. The last years of Bérulle's life, between 1623 and 1629, were marked by his inability to decide whether he was first a priest or a civil servant, as he tried to make sense of his position. The *affaire Carmélite* was not among the more

CHAPTER 4

important events of his career, on the level of national politics, yet it was of great personal importance. It left him in debt to Richelieu and the king, both of whom had supported him throughout the difficult denouement, and perhaps this coloured his attitude to public affairs. Over some issues, he appears to have been willing to make concessions to them. It may have been for this reason that he was willing to negotiate for the marriage of Henriette-Marie to Charles I of England in 1624, in defiance of the rumoured dévot distaste for protestant alliances. But it would be a mistake to push this interpretation too far. Bérulle seems to have hoped that the English alliance would be of material help to English Catholics, that Henriette's marriage treaties would be able to protect them.⁷¹ It was an unwise assumption on his part. The new queen was too young and inexperienced to have the kind of influence he hoped for, and her marriage to Charles I was regarded with great suspicion by the English. She could do nothing to help her co-religionists without damaging her own position. Bérulle nevertheless encouraged her to extravagant displays of Catholic piety, instructing her to perform her Easter duties with an elaborate show of humility, going to church on foot in defiance of English royal custom, and in full public view.⁷² His attitude to her was, in fact, rather similar to his attitude to the Carmelites, in that he expected her to be a living example of the kind of piety that he was temperamentally and politically unable to express.

The Santarelli affair erupted in 1625. A pro-tyrannicide pamphlet written by the Jesuit Santarelli caused a scandal that required Bérulle's intervention to settle it. He was forced to negotiate with the French Jesuits to persuade them to sign the humiliating apology that the Paris Parlement drafted. Although Bérulle was rewarded with a Cardinalate by the king for his services in the affair,⁷³ it is probable that this did not make up for the fact that it further embittered his relations with the

THE COMPETITION FOR DÉVOTES

Jesuits and perhaps caused the death of his friend Pierre Coton.⁷⁴ From 1625, he was involved in the endless negotiations between Rome, Spain, and the king of France over France's occupation of the Valtelline pass, an affair that inevitably left him caught between the demands of the king of France and the pope.⁷⁵ It was at around the same time that the king at last decided to lay siege to the Huguenot colony at La Rochelle, and Bérulle found himself pressed to advise Richelieu about the conduct of the attack.⁷⁶

An address he wrote for the Oratorians in 1627 strikes a note of disgust at what was happening, although it makes no overt reference to politics: '...si nous consultations les règles de la foi, elles nous obligent à croire que nous n'avons rien en propre que mensonge et pêché...'⁷⁷ Seventeenth-century priests were rather apt to make severe statements about human fallibility, but Bérulle's letters to Richelieu show a new weariness with the demands of diplomacy at this time.⁷⁸ His relations with both Richelieu and the king deteriorated. Part of the reason for this was purely personal, on Richelieu's side: the queen-mother was once more showing hostility to the Minister and he distrusted all her friends and associates. But it seems that an important reason for the decline in Bérulle's fortunes was the king's anger at his 'timidity' and credulity in dealing with his brother Gaston (Monsieur, as the brother of the reigning monarch was conventionally known).⁷⁹ When further protestant alliances were mooted by Richelieu and the king, Bérulle refused to be a part of them. In September he openly criticized Louis XIII's new treaty with England. Some historians attribute his downfall to this, but he was in failing health and although he had been increasingly shut out of negotiations since the middle of the year, he was never actually excluded from them altogether. He died October 2, 1629.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

Bérulle's dilemma, in governing the Carmelites and in determining his part in public affairs, grew out of the inability - his and others' - to understand that the call to obedience was no longer sufficient to restore order among battling factions, if in fact it ever had been. There were too many competing claims to obedience; and the nature of their claims was such that compromise was virtually impossible. Both Church and state demanded nothing less than absolute obedience from their adherents. The later history of seventeenth-century Church-state relations was nothing less than an attempt to find a workable compromise between these claims. The Carmelites had found their way out of the dilemma of obedience imposed by their battling superiors by choosing, so to speak, God's side. When even the Church itself could not give them a clear chain of command to follow, what else could they have done? In the end, Bérulle may be said to have followed their example. His defiance of royal policy and his resignation from public life was a gesture to enemies, internal and external, that he would put righteousness ahead of self-interest. But while it may have been a moral victory, it was a tactical defeat, an acknowledgment that *dévo*t hopes for a new kind of alliance between Church and state were doomed to disappointment.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Georges Mongrédien, *La journée des Dupes* (Paris: Gaillimard, 1961), p. 29.
2. A number of Richelieu's more recent biographers, along with other historians, have affirmed that he was in a way a devout Catholic. Ladurie calls him a good Catholic but a mediocre papist; see *L'Ancien Régime*, p. 63. Mousnier in Chapter VII of his *L'Homme Rouge* states that Richelieu wrote his *Traité de la perfection du chrétien* (1636) and *Déclaration pour la protection de la Vierge* (1637) in an attempt to set down his ideas about God and the place of devotion in public life. Perfection, he said, was for rare souls, see pp. 607-610. Ironically, it seems that Richelieu's ideas about penitence and divine love were at bottom closer to those of the Italian Jesuits than to those of the French School and the Augustinians.
3. Alexandre Pétitot, editor, *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*. Paris: Foucault, 1823; *Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu*, Tome XXV [1629], p. 59.
4. So far as La Rochelle was concerned, Richelieu distorted the record somewhat. Bérulle did in fact write to him of God's mysterious ways of achieving his ends, and later wrote to say that he believed an unexpected blow would be more effective than a blockade; but he wrote also 'Je suis sans lumières, mais non sans pensées, et puis que vous me le commandez, ie dois vous les représenter', (11 December, 1627). See *Correspondance de Bérulle*, ed. by Jean Dagens, III. Bérulle did not suggest, however, that the siege should be abandoned to let God take the city by some miracle. Richelieu pressed Bérulle repeatedly to tell him when he should strike and Bérulle always responded, 'le jour m'est incognu'. This suggests both that Richelieu had a naïf faith in Bérulle's powers of foresight, and that Bérulle himself had no such faith. See also Richelieu, *Les Papiers de Richelieu. Section politique intérieure: Correspondance et papiers d'état*, (Paris: A. Pedone, 1980), ed. Pierre Grillon (Paris: Éditions A. Pedone, 1980), papers referring to La Rochelle (See Index).
5. Bérulle, *Correspondance*, I, Letter of October 10, 1618, # 177, p. 304.
6. It was neglected by his partisans; his nineteenth-century critics, mostly Carmes themselves, were vocal about their distaste for his behaviour in the *affaire Carmélite*, as were the Jesuits. A Carme father named Stéphane-Marie Morgain recently published a thesis, entitled *Pierre de Bérulle et les Carmélites de France: la querelle de gouvernement, 1583-1629* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1995), generally finding that the evidence was in Bérulle's favour; see esp. p. 482-83.
7. The Cistercians, the most important, innovative and widespread of high medieval orders, flatly refused to direct female Cistercians. See Martha G. Newman, *The Boundaries of Charity. Cistercian Culture and Ecclesiastical Reform, 1098-1180* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 225: The author cites Saint Bernard, founder of the Cistercian movement, as writing, 'If you do not wish to disrupt the Church...send the women away.' This does not mean that they would not direct women at all, but that the relationships between priests/monks and nuns was regarded as especially dangerous.

8. Morgain, *Les Carmélites*, p. 9: 'Sainte Thérèse avait fait inscrire une dépendance juridique des Carmélites par rapport à leurs frères déchaux dans le premier article des constitutions d'Alcalá, éditées en 1581-1588, qui va devenir une des clefs de la dispute.'
9. The Carmes 'seraient suspects pour être étrangers, et par la même raison haïs du peuple', wrote Jean de Brétigny when he was attempting to establish the order in France, see *Mémoires sur la fondation, le gouvernement et l'observance des Carmélites déchaussées* (2 vols); Publié par les soins des Carmélites du premier monastère à Paris (Reims: Dubois-Popliment, 1894), I, 523. But the issue remains murky. On the one hand, Morgain, *Les Carmélites*, suggests that Henri IV was willing to consider the petitions of the Carmes to enter France, but were left in ignorance of this by the French superiors, p. 160. On the other, the *Mémoires Carmélites* describe the hostile reaction to three enclosed Carmelites in the town of Dijon and suggest that the Carmes were better kept out, II, p. 200.
- The *Mémoires Carmélites* gather together many documents, including manuscripts, with comments and annotations; along with the *Chroniques des Carmélites de l'ordre de Sainte Thérèse depuis leur introduction en France* (5 vols, Troyes, 1846), it is the major source of information for students of the early Carmelite troubles. Also see references to France's fear of the Carmes in Chapter 3 of this study.
10. See *Correspondence de Bérulle*, 5 Sept. 1604, I, 74: in this letter to Madame Acarie, written from Spain, Bérulle said even at the last the only way he was able to secure the Carmelites for France was to give their General a letter from the Nuncio ordering him to obey the request for nuns upon pain of major excommunication and deposition from office; the General was shocked but decided it was safer to obey.
11. Houssaye's *P. de Bérulle et les Carmélites de France* contains a full-length translation of both the bull of 1603 and the brief of 1606 in his Pièces justificatifs. The relevant passage is on p. 547; a copy of the document is in the Archives nationales, M. 216, no. 1.
12. See Marillac's *De l'érection et institution de l'Ordre des Religieuses du Mont-Carmel...*(Paris: Edme Martin, 1622), p. 42.
13. Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 91.
14. Apparently it was Anne de Jésus who invited the Italian Carmes to take over the government of the French Carmelites, in the belief that Henri IV would not permit the Spanish Carmes to do so. See *Mémoires Carmélites*, II, p. 200.
15. See *Mémoires Carmélites*, vol I, Ch. XIII.
16. *Mémoires Carmélites*, I, p. 520.
17. *Mémoires Carmélites*, I, p. 517-18. This motive was supposed to be a secret; a ms at Troyes thought to have been written by Mère Marie de la Trinité, the first Discalced Carmelite to be professed in France. The Troyes ms reads that the nuns were eager to go to France 'comme les Constitutions de sainte Thérèse furent altérées en Espagne après sa mort et que ses filles tâchèrent

de les soutenir par une Bulle de Sixte-Quint.' It is possible that Mère Marie, writing after the controversy and eager to support her side of it, was exaggerating, for her interpretation, if accurate, would support the French superiors and call into question the authority of the Carmes.

18. Letter by Anne de Jésus, 8 May 1605, *Mémoires Carmélites*, II, p. 21.

19. Cited *Correspondance de Bérulle*, I, p. 79.

20. See letter of Anne de Jésus, 8 May 1605, refusing to allow the princesse de Longueville the right of visitation at the Convent of the Incarnation in Paris, *Mémoires Carmélites*, II, p. 22.

21. The document is to be found in the **Archives Nationales**, S.4655, cote D, Ire liasse, pièce 1; the reference is from Jacques Eriau's *L'Ancien Carmel du Faubourg Saint-Jacques, 1604-1792* (Paris: Gigord-Picard, 1929), p. 214.

22. Madeleine de Saint-Joseph, Bérulle's great friend and the prioress of the Paris Carmel from 1608-1615, and again from 1624-1635, regularly sent a converse sister to the poor quarters of Paris to distribute alms. In the famine of 1631 she fed 400 needy at the monastery's expense. P. Senault refers to this incident in his *Vie de M. Madeleine de Saint-Joseph*, (Paris, 1670) p. 486-88.

23. Penelope Johnson has suggested that the movement from prayers to masses for the dead adversely affected the status of women, in *Equal in Monastic Profession*, p. 252. This is probably true, yet the fact that the churches attached to certain (female) convents might be preferred as venues for masses of this kind suggests that the shift in custom may have had less impact on female religious than we might suppose.

24. There is a detailed discussion of the Carmelites' financial status, including the burden of supporting priests, in Jacques Eriau, *L'Ancien Carmel*, Ch. XIII.

25. Most famous among such cases was Marie-Thérèse, wife of Louis XIV, who confided the story of her husband's infidelities to the nuns, according to Mme de Motteville:

Le jour que la Reine partit de Vincennes, elle vint doucement dans sa machine diner aux petites Carmélites ses favorites, et elle leur fit part de ses chagrins...[La reine-mère] nous fit l'honneur de nous faire part, à la mere de la Fayette, supérieure de ce couvent, à ma soeur et à moi, des peines qu'elle y avoit eues, par l'humeur chagrine et jalouse de la Reine, qui n'avoit pas autant d'experiences des choses du monde et de force d'esprit pour s'y soutenir, qu'elle lui en auroit souhaite.

See *Memoires de Mme de Motteville sur Anne d'Autriche et sa cour*, vol. IV, p. 361.

26. It is well-known that Louise de la Vallière joined a Carmelite convent when Louis XIV's affection for her was finally extinguished; a more spectacular conversion could scarcely be imagined. But this was not until April 1674. Well-known in its time were the examples of the Marquise de Bréauté, who was among the first such women to join the order, in 1604; and the example of Anne Louise Christine de Foix de la Vallette d'Épernon (1624-1701), who entered the Carmel of Bourges in 1648. They and other (socially) prominent Carmelites are to be found in Bremond's Index.

27. The text of the ordinance issued at the Carmel de l'Incarnation is labelled, 'Ordonnance de la première visite que j'ai faite en ce monastère de Paris, dit de l'Incarnation de Jésus-Christ Notre-Seigneur qui fut le 18 août 1614.' It appears in a manuscript entitled, *Les Eslections et les Visites de ce monastère de l'Incarnation, scis au fauxbourg Saint-Jacques à Paris*, and part of the text is printed in Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 102-103. There is a similar text printed in Bérulle, *Opuscules de Piété*, 'Ordonnance portée dans une visite à un monastère de Carmélites, en l'année 1615', pp. 504-507, and at its end appear the words, 'Fait et ordonné le 14 novembre 1615, par nous, Pierre de Bérulle, supérieur général de l'Oratoire de Jésus, et visiteur des religieuses Carmélites, en France.' Both texts differ radically from that which appears in Dupuy, cited below.
28. Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 101-2. Houssaye's account is based upon the collection of Carmelite accounts contained in the *Chronique de l'Ordre des Carmélites*, op. cit., IV, p. 158-9.
29. See LeBrun, 'L'Institution et le corps', p. 119, declaring that examples of what he calls 'baroque mortification' were very common in [women's] biographies in the 17th C., born out of a desperate search for certainty.
30. There is some uncertainty about precisely when Bérulle first began to suggest the new formula, and when he first began to press for it. Houssaye mentions no suggestion of the vow (which he does not call a vow) until 1614 at the Paris Carmel. On the other hand, Louis Cognet's *La Mère Angélique et Saint François de Sales, 1618-1628* (Paris: Sulliver, 1951) says (p. 49) that it was in 1611 that Bérulle first began to spread his formulae of vow of servitude to the Virgin, but that he did not begin to impose it until 1615, some months after his visit to the Paris Carmel, during his visit to the Carmel at Chalons-sur-Saône. More recent students of Bérulle's archives do not seem to have shed light on this question.
31. M. Dupuy's *Pierre de Bérulle* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1964) contains this formulation of Bérulle's vow of servitude, from the Archives de l'Oratoire at Moutsault, carton II, p. 111-115. On p. 111 Dupuy notes that this is the 'rédaction la plus ancienne'.
32. P. Blet, s.j., *Le clergé en France et la monarchie*, I, p. 40.
33. The Oratoire, although it originated in Italy in the order founded by Saint Philip Néri, was in France a very different order. In Italy and in Provence (where it had been established by César de Bus in the 1590s) it was quite uncentralized; its member-houses, no doubt to ensure their obedience to the Ordinary, were allowed no reciprocal subordination. See Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 301-2. Bérulle was able to evade this fate for the Oratoire he founded, which justifies regarding it as 'his' order.
34. Eriau, *L'ancien Carmel*, p. 232-33.
35. See Louis Batterel (1679-1752), *Mémoires domestiques pour servir à l'histoire de l'Oratoire* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), I, p. 233-34. When two promising men entered the Oratory at same time, Richer raised loud cries [Batterel, n. 3: *Merc. de France*, 1612], wanting to strip the privileges and prerogatives of the doctorate from those Oratorians who had received them; but in

spite of his efforts, the faculty of theology did not act. Also Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 210-11, for comments on Duval's similar reaction, and his alliance with Richer and Filesac, both ardent Gallicans.

36. But Louis Cognet states that they were not, without quoting any letter of Du Val's, in *La Mère Angélique et Saint François de Sales, 1618-1628*, p. 49. It is possible that he saw an unpublished letter this author is not aware of, or perhaps simply that he was mistaken.

37. Letter, André Du Val to M. Cospeau, June 16, 1622. Archives nationales, M. 234. Autographe. Cited in full in Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, Pièces Justificatives, p. 585.

38. Louis Cognet, *La Mère Angélique et Saint François de Sales*, p. 49.

39. Angélique Arnauld, *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal et à la vie de la Révérende Mère Angélique de Sainte-Magdeleine Arnauld, Réformatrice de ce Monastère* (Utrecht, 1742), T. II, p. 318.

40. The incident is reported in Boucher, *Vie de la Bienheureuse Soeur Marie de l'Incarnation*, II, p. 380, but not by Mme Acarie's contemporary biographer André Du Val.

41. Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 217-218. It is Houssaye who remarks that the phrase 'esprit trompé' may have been the mother superior's projection.

42. Mère Madeleine de Saint-Joseph was to be made the prioress not of the Monastery of the Incarnation, but of the second Carmel in Paris, that of rue Chapon, founded Sept. 7, 1617. Its relationship with the Incarnation was troubled. See *Lettres spirituelles de Madeleine de Saint-Joseph* (Paris: Desclée, 1965), ed. by Pierre Sérouet.

43. His friend and fellow-Carme Père Bernard was the nephew of the duc d'Uzès. Houssaye, *Bérulle et les Carmélites de France*, p. 501.

44. Houssaye, *Ibid.*, p. 503.

45. The status of this convent and the Discalced Carmes' right to jurisdiction were legally complex issues. Only the Spanish Discalced Carmes had been given such rights in the bull establishing the Carmelites in France in 1604. The French branch of the order was ruled not from Spain but from Flanders by an independent Carme offshoot, 'les Carmes Déchaussés de Saint-Élie'. The bull of 1606 had revoked the Discalced Carmes' authority over the Carmelites of France altogether, placing it in the hands of the nuncio, so far as selecting a visitor was concerned, and of the three French superiors, so far as government was concerned. It was, of course, superceded once more by the bull of 1614 that gave visitation rights to Bérulle. The crux of all later difficulties lay in the Carmes' refusal to accept the authority of these two bulls as final. They maintained that the French superiors had only administrative authority over French Carmelites, and that visitation rights were theirs. Such quarrels were not unprecedented, nor a sign of unique disobedience on the Carmes' part, as Houssaye's account of the matter implies. But the Discalced Carmes did go to remarkable lengths to try to wrest

control of the Carmelites away from Bérulle. There seems to be little doubt that they had no legal right to do so. The Carmes did attempt, at first, to follow the standard procedure for winning back control of the order, although they made the mistake of applying first to the king for permission to establish the convent at Morlais, rather than to Rome, which would have been essential in order to over-ride the bull of 1606.

46. The Carmes' point of view at this time is summarized in the *Annales des Carmes déchaussés de France et des Carmélites qui sont sous le gouvernement de l'Ordre*, by Louis de Saint-Thérèse, D. Carme, visiteur-général (Paris: C. Angot, 1666), I, Ch. LVIII, p. 148; see also *Mémoires Carmélites*, II, pp. 199-230, which contains a close analytical discussion of the charges against Bérulle, and dismisses them. Also see *Les fleurs du Carmel cueillies du parterre des Carmes déchaussés de France*, by R.P. Pierre de la Mère de Dieu, (Anvers: Marcelin Parys, 1670), p. 64.

47. The phrase is from Joseph Bergin's biographical notes in *The Making of the French Episcopate*, p. 704. The Sourdis family was widely perceived as temperamental and quarrelsome.

48. L.-W. Ravenez, *Histoire du Cardinal François de Sourdis* (Bordeaux and Paris: Gounouilhou, 1867), p. 423. Ravenez' account relies entirely on Carme sources and so cannot be considered objective. He was clearly unaware, for example, that Bérulle had begun the visitorship of the Carmels with the authority of the Pope on his side. In fairness to Sourdis, it should be noted that he was, according to Ravenez' account, painfully familiar with the problem of rebellious nuns in his diocese. Like Bérulle, he was forced, on one occasion, to break down the doors of a convent whose prioress refused to permit two nuns to go to another house (for which they had a dispensation from Rome), p. 419. So angry were the other nuns at the insult to their prioress that they were found, just inside the cloister, armed with sharpened sticks. It is possible that Sourdis hoped to avoid a similar confrontation with the Carmelites.

49. See *Mémoires Carmélites*, II, throughout, for an indication of Sourdis' reversals.

50. At this point, the accounts by either side begin to vary so widely that no reconciliation of the two is possible: one or the other must actually have been lying about its opponent's activities. The Carme fathers, or a coterie among them, were certainly transcribing and sending out inaccurate copies of Bérulle's *Élevation*, but whether this was deliberate is open to doubt. Contemporary or near-contemporary accounts by the Carme fathers omit much of Bérulle's case and so make the modern reader suspicious. Houssaye's secondary account is replete with letters, dates and names. Although Houssaye was accused by at least two (friendly) critics, Bremond and Ériau, of inaccuracies of fact, Ériau's account of these amounts to no more than two minor errors regarding the date of an important meeting (p. 8) and the purchase of a house (p. 27). Any reader examining Houssaye's narrative regarding the Carmelite affair, and its sources, will come away convinced by his overwhelming thoroughness in tracking the evidence (minor errors notwithstanding).

51. P. Louis de Sainte-Thérèse, *Annales*, p. 233; cited Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 388.

52. One of Mère Isabelle's defenders went so far as to tell an Oratorian of Bourges that the Pope was not infallible; strikingly, M. Isabelle's champion was a Jesuit. The incident is referred to in a letter by P. Gibieuf written April 3, 1623, (Arch. nat., M. 216). Mère Isabelle was originally from Flanders; this may explain her attitude to Bérulle; see *Mémoire Carmélites*, II, p. 682-83.
53. See Madeleine de Saint-Joseph, *Lettres*, on p. 317 to Cardinal de Retz, and p. 318 to M. de Coeuvres, French amb. to Rome, both in 1620-21. Even if she was a partial witness, we know the Carmes were at least occasionally capable of spreading 'disinformation'. Louis de Sainte-Thérèse, Carme and author of an indictment of Bérulle as superior, would insist that the Carmes had made their own establishment in France a condition of permitting the Carmelites to go there, although Brétigny, the man who started the project to bring the order there, said otherwise; see *Mémoires Carmélites*, I, p. 513-514.
54. Batterel, *Vie Manuscrite de Bérulle*, Book III, no. 107; cited Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 405. For Lessius' reaction, see Bérulle, *Correspondance*, II, 26 Sept. 1621.
55. Bérulle's friendship with Anne de Saint-Barthélemy came to an end over this issue. After leaving France for Belgium in 1611, where the Spanish Carmes were permitted to exercise their superiority, she was severely critical of Bérulle; see Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 214. Her attitude would be used by later Carmes to support their claims to authority over the Carmelites; see *Mémoires Carmélites*, II, p. 229.
56. This support is evident in a letter from Cardinal Corsini to Cardinal de Retz, June 1621, expressing sympathy for Bérulle in his troubles, provoked by his adversaries. See Bérulle, *Correspondance*, II, p. 226-27.
57. The nuns of Morlais were to rise again and defy their superiors in 1624-25. The Carme fathers had advised them to refuse to submit to the Pope's and the bishop's orders. They were excommunicated by P. de Louytre, on the advice of the commissar cardinals, but the bishop of Saint-Pol gave them refuge in his household. He wrote a deposition for the Assembly of the Clergy of 1625 and it supported him to the extent of declaring the excommunication null. It was upheld later by the Sorbonne. See Houssaye, *Le Cardinal de Bérulle et le Cardinal de Richelieu, 1625-1629* (Paris: Plon, 1875), p. 72-78. The case was unusual, writes Houssaye, in that for once the Sorbonne doctors and the magistrates supported Bérulle against the Assembly.
58. See Batterel, I, p. 236. Bérulle says here of the Jesuits, 'Outre les calomnies atroces contre moi et les conseils violents et pernicious qu'ils ont suivis dans l'affaire des Carmélites, ils ont fait encore à Bourges ce qu'ils ont pu pour empêcher notre établissement...' (They were trying to stop him from establishing an Oratoire in Bourges, he believed.)
59. Jules Michelet. *Histoire de France au dix-septième siècle, XI: Henri IV et Richelieu* (Paris: Chamerot, 1857), Ch. XXI, p. 369.
60. See Anne de Saint-Barthélemy (Ana de San Bartolomé, 1549-1626), *Autobiographie, d'après l'édition critique*, (Publié en 1981 par le P. Julian Urkiza. Trad. française par le P. Sérouet, Gent

- Carmelitano, 1989), and the *Lettres* of Anne de Saint-Barthélemy, pub. 1964.
61. *Correspondance de Bérulle.*, I, 73, 5 Sept. 1604. Part of her appeal may have lain in the fact that she was a living relic of the great past: Anne de Saint-Barthélemy was mentioned in the first life of Teresa of Avila, written by Ribera (1601). See Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 215.
62. Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire*, p. 372. See the six letters to her in Bérulle, *Correspondance*, I.
63. Béatrix de la Conception. *Lettres choisies de Béatrix de la Conception*, ed. Pierre Séroutet (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1967), Letter XIII, p. 72.
64. *Mémoires Carmélites*, II, p. 14.
65. The anecdote was preserved by P. Louis de Saint-Thérèse, a Carme father, who is unreliable (by omission) in his accounts of Bérulle's troubles with the Carmelites. It is therefore possible (though not likely) that the story is inaccurate. It appears in P. Louis de Sainte Thérèse, *Annales des Carmes déchaussés*, I, ch. VII, p. 44.
66. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, Volume III, i, p. 206.
67. Bremond, *Ibid.*, citing Bérulle, *Oeuvres*, p. 1007.
68. The nuns of Beaune did not officially begin this devotion until 1636, some years after Bérulle's death, but it seems to have appeared first at Dijon in a vision of the young Anne du Saint Sacrement (Anne Calon, in civil life); see Roland-Gosselin, *Le Carmel de Beaune*, p. 143-44. Roland-Gosselin has included a photograph of the nuns' Jesus doll, of the same type as the one that was taken away from Anne de Jésus, dressed in the clothes of a king but with the features of a toddler. It was the object of the Beaune nuns' devotions in the seventeenth century and differs little from similar dolls to be found in southern Italy, where the cult of the Christ child and the Nativity was and remains strong.
69. *Mémoires Carmélites*, II, p. 23. Note that the word 'suspension' in a devotional context meant the suspension of the faculties that was supposed to occur in prayer, according to the Saint Denis referred to here, who is clearly pseudo-Dionysus the neo-Platonist, rather than the early French bishop.
70. The Assembly of the Clergy, who decided the Louytre case against the Oratory, in 1625 accepted a declaration from Léonor d'Estampes, then the bishop of Chartres, saying that kings were not only ordained by God, but were Gods, as Houssaye puts it: *non tantum a Deo, sed etiam deos*, *Bérulle et Richelieu*, p. 72-3.
71. He was nevertheless nervous about the negotiations; in a letter to Richelieu in 1624 he wrote that the English were being deliberately ambiguous in the composition of the agreement, and that he distrusted them. Bérulle, *Correspondance*, II, no. 513, p. 528.

72. The queen had walked to Mass at the London chapel of the Oratorians to celebrate Holy Thursday in 1626 and faced a storm of criticism for it. She wrote to Bérulle to ask whether she had been in the right, and he wrote back to tell her 'Si on vous dit qu'on n'a pas accoustumé cela en Angleterre, on n'y a pas aussi accoustumé d'y professer la vraye religion...Mais dans Paris, qui vaut bien Londres, on y vois choses semblables.' Bérulle, *Oeuvres*, II, p. 1318. Henriette-Marie then proceeded to carry out the rest of her Easter duties; she went so far as to walk in a kind of pilgrimage to Hyde Park, near Tyburn, where many Catholic martyrs had been put to death by the English. Houssaye, *Le cardinal de Berulle*, p. 121. Once more, she caused a public scandal.

73. This, at least, is the interpretation of one of Bérulle's biographers. See Dupuy, *Pierre de Bérulle*, p. 30-31. But Georges Mongrédien, in *La journée des dupes*, p. 43, says that it was Richelieu who obtained it for him. This is supported by a letter from the papal nuncio Spada to Cardinal Barberini, August 25, 1626, regarding Bérulle's nomination as cardinal, stating that Marillac proposed it to him upon Richelieu's suggestion, cited in full *Correspondance de Bérulle*, III, p. 216-219. Richelieu's letters on the subject are in Georges d'Avenel, *Lettres de Richelieu*, II, p. 590-91, congratulating Bérulle on his appointment; and his letters to Barberini and Spada are to be found pp. 623-25

74. So at least says François Garrasse, *Histoire des Jésuites*.

75. In a letter of 1 March, 1629, he would tell Richelieu that there would be war between France and Spain if the king insisted on passing through the mountains to Italy; Bérulle, *Correspondance*, III, no. 764.

76. Bérulle had once hoped to be able to win the battle against the Reformers through 'controversy', i.e., argumentation, but he abandoned this hope after 1611, according to Dupuy, *Bérulle et le sacerdoce*, p. 62. In 1627 he told Cardinal Barberini that too many works of controversy had been written; all said the same thing and no one listened any more. The only response now was to take La Rochelle by force; see Bérulle, *Correspondance*, III, no. 693, 3 Dec. 1627, p. 342-43.

77. *Correspondance*, Letter 684, Oct. [?] 1627, to the 'Pères et confrères de l'Oratoire de Jésus, qui sont employés dans ces collèges.'

78. See letters by Bérulle, and the comments upon them, in Pierre Grillon's edition of the *Papiers de Richelieu*, IV. A curious letter dated July 19, 1629 (no. 463, p. 486) shows how detached Bérulle was becoming from affairs of state: 'Comme je continue en la conduitee que je vous ay mandée de m'ingérer à rien, de m'informer de rien, je ne vais point chez la Reine [mère] ...' Whether this was in response to what he believed Richelieu wanted from him, or the result of some moral crisis, or even, perhaps, because he was already mortally ill, is not certain. But it was a curious reaction from a man who was, at this time, the head of the Queen-mother's council in the absence of the king.

79. The young man had been embroiled in a plot to marry him off to an unsuitable princess, and Bérulle had not, in the king's eyes, done enough to stop it. The king to Richelieu [in code], Aug. 11, 1629: 'Sur ce que le card. de Bérulle luy a dit qu'il faudroit empescher que Monsr, qui esta desjà à Joinville, ne sortist du royaume. Le Roy trouve le card. de Bérulle timide et crédule.' Richelieu,

Papiers, IV, p. 524.

**5/ THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW:
MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE AND PORT-ROYAL, 1600-1638**

'[Mère Angélique] nous disait même qu'il lui prend quelquefois envie d'écrire ce Livre de la Providence, de peur que nous ne vinssions à oublier ce que Dieu a fait pour nous, et que, de cet oubli, nous ne passassions à l'infidélité de chercher des appuis humains, comme il arrive à tant de Religieuses.'

In the first years of the seventeenth century, while the Carmelites were establishing themselves in France, another kind of monastic reform was taking place under the guidance of a very young abbess. Her name was Jacqueline Arnauld, but she is known to history as Mère Angélique.¹ Her small community of Port-Royal-des-Champs was outside Paris, 'at the gates of Versailles, in the depths of a marshy glen' where malaria was endemic.² Mère Angélique's modest reform movement was to become the mother of French Jansenism, and to culminate in the arrest, imprisonment, or exile of the many hundreds of French citizens accused of Jansenism later in the century. It may seem to those familiar with French religious history that the two movements, Carmelite and Jansenist, could have little in common. Yet the experiences of the Carmelites and that of the Cistercian nuns of Port-Royal show many parallels. They were to become rivals, with different spiritual perspectives, but both groups represented the new order of piety.³

Port-Royal has remained a metaphorical swamp, a trap for generations of historians, so much so that it is tempting to avoid it altogether. In France, however, all roads (in matters of religion) lead through Port-Royal.⁴ The little abbey (it originally contained cells for only twelve nuns) and its denizens have come to stand for a particular kind of anti-Tridentine spirituality to many admirers,

¹ *Relation écrite par la Mère Angélique sur Port-Royal* (Paris: Grasset, 1949), from the Foreword to the first edition (1742) by an anonymous religious, p. 24.

CHAPTER 5

both in its own time and through the eyes of later historians. Its spirituality was and is thought to be more indigenously French, less tainted by Jesuit influences, and more openly defiant in its challenge to the social order, than was that of the dévots and their *École française*.⁵ As Catherine Maire has written, it was Sainte-Beuve who in the nineteenth century consecrated the idea of Port-Royal as the epicentre of the French classical mode; he portrayed Port-Royal as a rosette of classicism, with Pascal, Saint-Cyran, Champaigne, Arnauld, Nicole, Duguet, Sévigné, and Descartes as its petals. Moreover, as Maire notes, Sainte-Beuve (the Jansenists' most famous apologist) also taught France that Jansenism meant resistance to absolutism: on the right the Jansenists are suspected of starting the French Revolution; while on the Left they are associated with the development of republican ideas and sometimes even regarded as precursors of that 'heightened awareness of the rights of the person, and above all of personal thought, in the face of the absolutisms of authority', which is the hallmark of modernity.⁶

The nuns of Port-Royal came to be associated with Gallicanism and French nationalism, with Jansenism itself, by a series of accidents, rather than by any wish to establish an alternative to existing institutions. The reform of Port-Royal was consistent in almost every way with other reforms taking place in France during the period 1600-1615. It was inspired by Capuchin preaching; influenced by news of the Teresian reform; strongly marked by Salesian piety; deeply affected by the movement toward the internalization and spiritualization of piety then taking place throughout the Catholic world. Its history is important to this study because it illustrates how dévotes, especially female religious, carried much of the symbolic weight of religious reform in France, and how this fact made women inadvertent 'players' in a power struggle over which they would otherwise have had little

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

influence. French Jansenism found its first foothold at Port-Royal, without which it might have remained a purely theological movement with little impact upon the laity.⁷ The questions debated by Saint-Cyran, Jansenius, and Antoine Arnauld in their immense theological tomes were for the most part obscure. Understanding the issues required vast scholarship in both history and languages, since they were about biblical exegesis, the meaning of Saint Augustine's debates with the Pelagians, and similar analytical problems. But the nuns of Port-Royal were living testaments to the virtue of strict monastic principles,⁸ and they would have Pascal and Racine, and other great writers of the *grand siècle*, to plead their cause. Mère Angélique, who began her career as an obscure and wholly Tridentine reformer, came to represent a form of spirituality that would eventually do battle with both Church and Crown.

Mère Angélique: A dévote

Mère Angélique was a typical dévote: she professed her willingness to conform to established usages at every opportunity, while often acting in a way contrary to her stated intentions. A letter she wrote to Anne of Austria after the troubles of Port-Royal had begun in earnest, during the 1650s, to defend herself and her abbey from the attacks launched against them by a hostile government illustrates this quality and shows how well she understood the demands society made of women like her. 'Nos directeurs' she wrote, 'ont eu un soin si particulier de ne nous entretenir jamais et de ne permettre point qu'on nous entretint de ces matières contestées.'⁹ This was not true: her directors had not been nearly careful enough; but it was essential that she not appear to know too much. Such matters, she added, were far beyond her sex and her profession. These were the standard protestations of the dévote, caught between the demands placed upon her by radical religious

CHAPTER 5

reformers on one side, and an unsympathetic society on the other. For a time, such evasions were effective.

• **An unreformed monastery**

The convent of Port-Royal-des-Champs was first established in 1204 as a monastery under the supervision of the Cistercian abbey at Cîteaux and under the control of the Cistercian Rule. The Cistercian Rule was among the strictest of all monastic rules: it imposed not only poverty, chastity, and obedience upon its monastics, but also silence, speech being discouraged except in moments of necessity. Like other forms of monasticism, the Cistercian movement established its houses in the countryside, both to remove them from the corrupting influence of towns and to ensure that they were self-supporting. Aside from singing the Divine Office, the purpose of such abbeys was twofold: to pray for the souls of the dead, and to perfect the souls of those who chose to withdraw there. But Cistercian abbeys, like Benedictine abbeys before them, were soon integrated into the network of patronage that supported and controlled religious life in Europe.¹⁰ Thanks to this local support they retained a degree of independence from both Rome and the Crown that sometimes made them exceedingly difficult to reform. Even the most determined abbess might fail in a reform initiative if she lacked the capacity to inspire others with her views, a fact that makes Angélique Arnauld's achievements at Port-Royal more remarkable.

Port-Royal may have belonged to the Cistercian family of religious, but under Mere Angélique its devotional customs came to resemble more closely the older traditions of the Benedictine Rule. This could be easily explained by the fact that Cistercian monastics originally established their first independent abbey (in 1098) with the purpose of following the Benedictine Rule to the letter. The

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

Cistercians' spirituality soon began to develop in a way that bore little resemblance to Benedictine modes, however closely they may have adhered to the Benedictine Rule in external matters. The Benedictine Rule was much older (Benedict lived from 480 to 550); its adherents did not, in the modern sense, form an Order, not being controlled by a central governing body or superior with a uniform discipline. (One of the Cistercians' innovations was to introduce this kind of government.) Historically, they were contemplative but not, in the modern sense of the word, 'mystical'. They kept their personal prayers short: 'let us be sure that we shall not be heard for our much speaking, but for purity of heart and tears of compunction. Our prayer, therefore, ought to be short and pure . . .'¹¹ They were (before decadence set in) austere but not inclined to the more severe mortifications; their piety was largely expressed in saying the Office, in ritual observation, and not in the pursuit of internal transcendence.¹² The Cistercians departed from this tradition—they were greatly attracted by what Simon Roisin calls 'felt devotion', by 'visions and ecstasies', by 'extraordinary paramystical graces'; they held felt bodily experiences in high esteem.¹³

Port-Royal-des-Champs was like other abbeys of its time. By the later sixteenth century, it contained only twelve religious. Its buildings had suffered damages during the wars of the Ligue years. Its nuns, according to Angélique Arnauld, who was by no means indulgent toward the flesh, were half-starved, assigned only two eggs and a little butter each on the convent's "lean" days, four times a week.¹⁴ Nor were they richer in spiritual terms. They scarcely knew their offices, the singing of which was supposed to be their primary occupation, they did no work for Church or community, and they were ignorant of the elements of the Catholic faith. The abbey had become a kind of prison for the unwanted daughters of well-to-do families, its inmates and buildings equally neglected and

CHAPTER 5

forlorn. It must not be thought, however, that the abbey was one of the kinds that featured in so many Protestant criticisms of the day. The nuns were too poor to live in luxury and too far from Paris to indulge in debauchery. In her memoirs, Angélique Arnauld was to say that of the twelve professed religious, only one (probably the prioress, Élisabeth de Mauterne¹⁵) had any part in the "desordres criminels" that were taking place there.¹⁶ Who, then, was responsible, and what were they guilty of? This is never altogether clear in the available documents, but servants, priests, and visiting family members all figure in Mère Angélique's accounts at various times as the promoters of disorder and disunity in the House. Apart from their poverty, the greatest hardship and simultaneously the greatest sin suffered by the nuns of Port-Royal at this time was their lack of a sense of purpose. Yet they were deeply frightened by change, which they seem to have believed would only bring them more severe hardship and isolation.

Mère Angélique and the Arnauld family

She was born Jacqueline Marie Arnauld in 1591. Her fate ought to have been the same as that of the other religious who drifted their days away at the old monastery of Port-Royal-des-Champs, but she was to become famous as Mère Angélique, the leader of the reform movement at Port-Royal and a central figure in the history of French Jansenism, almost against her will. For the devout, especially women, the family was usually either an impediment to the pursuit of a religious vocation or an over-eager propellant. The Arnauld family was both. The Arnaulds belonged to the haute bourgeoisie of Paris, but by a rather slender margin: it seems that their ancestry was obscure before the mid-sixteenth century. The men of the family had quickly risen in the ranks of royal service. This was the Parlementaire milieu, influential and comfortable but not necessarily rich. The Arnaulds were

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

not rich, and the financial difficulties of Mère Angélique's parents were increased by the fact that they had twenty children.¹⁷ Because in Paris the position of such families depended very much upon royal favour, they tended to be strongly royalist in sympathy, and anti-Rome in the Gallican-ultramontane controversy that was beginning to stir in the late sixteenth century. For Angélique Arnauld's father, his anti-Roman feelings were complicated by the fact that he had been (probably) a Protestant, who converted after the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre.¹⁸ He was instrumental in the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1594, upon Henri IV's ascension to the throne, arguing that their presence threatened the stability of the civil government and the independence of the Church in France.¹⁹ Her family history has led some scholars to suppose that Mère Angélique was intuitively drawn to the anti-Jesuitical attitudes of Saint-Cyran, as Parlementaire families of the Arnaulds' kind were once thought to be hostile both to the old nobility and to the Church's ultramontane pretensions. But this side of Mère Angélique's background need not have been a determining factor in her later struggles. Her loyalty to her family was mitigated by their attitude toward her monastic commitment. Families like hers sometimes sought to imitate noble custom by reserving the bulk of their patrimony for certain children and placing unmarried daughters in monasteries.²⁰ The young Jacqueline was destined, with most of her sisters, for the convent; while her elder sister, Catherine, was the only daughter provided with a dowry for marriage.²¹ Paradoxically (or perhaps it was only the perversity of human nature), Catherine would have preferred the convent.

With her grandfather's patronage, Jacqueline was made coadjutant of Port-Royal-des-Champs by a "brevet royale" in 1599, when she was only five years old.²² The Council of Trent had expressly forbidden such appointments, of course, but the Arnauld family did not take this seriously. The new

CHAPTER 5

strictness of post-Tridentine Rome asserted itself, however: the bulls that would have allowed the child to take up her position (if in name only) were refused by the Pope. Her family was determined to succeed, and decided to try a ruse. She was confirmed and clothed in 1600 at the Cistercian abbey of Maubuisson, under the name of Marie-Angélique.²³ The change of name made it possible for her family to again request a bull of approval for her to assume her position as coadjutant at Port-Royal, claiming that her age was seventeen, although she was as yet all of ten years old. This time, the bull was issued, and she became coadjutrice and then (in name only) abbess in short order, upon the death of her predecessor. In later years she complained frequently in her *Relation* that her family had cared too much for the world's honour, and too little for God's. She was to write later that she had been made abbess 'par un très grand désordre, ordinaire en ce temps-là, où il ne se pratiquait plus aucune discipline pour la promotion aux bénéfices, ni dans notre ordre presque aucune régularité.'²⁴ In fact, her parents aspired to a position of respectability for their daughter, a perfectly acceptable goal for their times, but the religious environment in France after the conversion of Henri IV and the implementation of Tridentine ideals was changing rapidly, in a manner they had not foreseen

Angélique Arnauld was not happy in her new position. She was conscious of missing her family, and as she grew into adolescence of longing for the world. She found herself responsible for the government of a rundown abbey and for the moral and physical welfare of a small number of timid women, who had been received into religion very young and had lived in some fear of the previous abbess. Fortunately for her, they were ready to love the new one, as 'La divine Providence se servit de tous ces mauvais traitements pour faire que ces filles m'aimassent, en recevant un meilleur sous ma conduite'.²⁵ She was also fortunate that her parents, although not inclined to re-institute the Rule

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

at the abbey, were at least anxious to ensure that it was well-run and did not employ 'disorderly' domestics. With one of her devastating, almost disingenuous jabs at father and mother, Mère Angélique was to write of them at this time that 'ils avaient une extrême appréhension, non seulement pour moi, mais aussi pour les autres, de peur que cela donnât sujet de blâme leur conduite plus que la mienne . . .'²⁶ They had the acting prioress removed and replaced with a prioress from another convent (Catherine Dupont), and Angélique was given a companion until she was old enough to take on the responsibility of governing the abbey herself.

For a time she tried to content herself with the affection of her sister-religious, but by 1607 her discontent reasserted itself. She was by then sixteen years old, 'avançant en âge j'avançais en malice', and she had never seen her vows 'que comme un joug insupportable'. She began to consider withdrawing them. She had been told, perhaps by her Calvinist aunts, that they were not legally binding because she had made them so young, but she seems to have continued to believe that she could not renounce them 'sans me perdre'.²⁷ In any case, her father refused to permit her to take such a step. When she fell ill in 1607 and was forced to return home for a time, he tricked her into renewing them. Nevertheless, the care her parents showed her in her illness led her to resolve to be a good religious: she had never before been very eager to do so.²⁸ The resolution was a turning point in her life.

A Tridentine Reformation

Mère Angélique knew little of any models of reform when she first promised herself that she would begin to be a good religious. It is difficult to see why she felt the need for reform with such urgency, at so young an age. Her parents had restored order to the old abbey and the Cistercian

CHAPTER 5

General, after a visit in 1605, left them a Carte de Visite recommending no new discipline and suggesting only that the number of nuns might be increased.²⁹ Mère Angélique might have been content to permit her sisters to carry on as they had done from the beginning of her tenure. They were not debauched or licentious. Her parents approved, the nuns were happy, the General was content. What worried her? One possibility has been suggested by a recent historian³⁰: Angélique, in the months she was recuperating at her parents' home in Paris, was likely to have heard news of the growing reach of the Catholic restoration in France. As a child in the cloister of Port-Royal or Maubuisson, she would have known little of it, but at the age of thirteen, in a household as closely connected with the court as her father's, she must have been made aware of the religious excitement in the city. The Carmelites arrived in Paris in the summer of her illness. News of the reform of the Benedictine convent of Montmartre by Marie de Beauvillier (1574-1657) was in the air.³¹ Tridentine regulations regarding both religious vocation and the frame of mind in which one entered religion were extremely strict, and she was deeply troubled to remember the way her parents had staged a deliberate deception in order to arrange for her entry into the abbey. Would she go to hell? The fact that the situation was not of her making was irrelevant. If she lived as a religious, she must fulfil the obligations she had undertaken when she made her vows, or face certain damnation.

Whatever her reasons, Angélique began to study the Benedictine Rule more closely after her illness, and its adaptation by the Cistercians. What she discovered there disturbed her, for it became apparent that neither she nor her nuns were living according to the terms of their Rule. Under the old régime the nuns were allowed to retain personal property; clausura was not observed (but strict clausura was relatively rare in French abbeys at the time);³² and all were perfunctory in the

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

performance of their Offices. A good religious would permit herself none of these luxuries. She would, it seemed to Mère Angélique, embrace real poverty and give up all claims to ownership, even of items like linens and habits; she would mortify the flesh by giving up all sensual pleasure, and she would master obedience as the highest form of mortification. Then, and then only, would she be able to give her religious duties in the performance of the daily Offices her full attention, and learn to praise God as he merited.

Shortly after her momentous resolution, Mère Angélique began to read a book left by a Capuchin priest about meditation, and liked it enough to ask that the Capuchins be allowed to come and preach at Port-Royal. She and her fellow-religious, strange though it may seem, had heard little preaching of any kind except during professions (of religious), and were eager to hear more. The Capuchins were the fathers of spiritual reform in Europe. Their importance to the rise of the dévots in Paris has been described in chapter I of this study. Long before the Jesuits, long before the Council of Trent or the rise of the protestant movement, the Franciscan order, out of which the Capuchins emerged, had spread the call to internalized piety and spiritual self-improvement throughout the continent. Mère Angélique, still very young but already strong-willed, was impressed by their preaching ability, which was far superior to that of the Cistercian fathers who had preached at the convent before and who were as yet untouched by the movement toward good preaching that was a part of the Tridentine reformation.³³ It was an elderly Capuchin who told Mère Angélique of Rome's call to reform for religious houses, and he who pointed out to her the irregularity of her convent's mode of life and organization. He began to meet with her frequently to press her to return to a strict Benedictine rule, particularly in the matter of communal property and strict enclosure. She admired

CHAPTER 5

his holiness and was struck by the case he made for reform, and agreed to follow his advice. But she knew that it might be difficult to persuade the nuns, who feared even greater hardships than those they already endured, and above all to persuade her father. She pleaded for time, and said that she wished only to save her own soul; might she not simply move to a stricter convent? But he had his own ideas: 'il voulut absolument faire de règlements, bons à la vérité, mais qui n'étaient point proportionés à la disposition des filles'.³⁴

At this point, the friar made the mistake of informing an abbot of the Cistercian order that Mère Angélique was considering leaving the abbey. The abbot passed this on to her father, along with the news that his daughter was losing weight and low in spirits because of the austerities she practised. M. Arnauld was very angry. He was worried about his daughter, naturally, but his anger went beyond concern for her health. Mère Angélique was not well-educated in either religious or worldly matters. She knew something of the political conditions in the capital, having heard these discussed by her parents and their friends, but she was unaware of the fault lines then developing between the magistrate class and the dévots, and of the fact that the Capuchins belonged decidedly to the latter camp. In her ignorance she had accepted the advice of a Capuchin, not realising that the French, particularly in her parents' circle, distrusted them both because they were regulars and because they were mendicants. The Cistercian General of Port-Royal had told her, with the fraternal malice typical of regular orders at that time, that Capuchin preachers were unreliable, that

...ce n'étaient que des hypocrites qui, sous ce prétexte de réforme, se voulaient introduire à la Maison, pour y faire de bonnes quêtes qui leur tiendraient lieu d'une bonne ferme.³⁵

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

Such charges against both Capuchins and Jesuits were common among members of orders with a longer history in France. Mère Angélique's father, an avowed enemy to the Jesuits, had no difficulty believing them. He became ill and swore that if he died, it would be his daughter's fault.

Constrained by both official opposition and emotional blackmail, Mère Angélique might have been expected to abandon her project. But she had been separated from her family at too early an age for her father's threats to have an absolute hold on her, and in any case the Tridentine movement was growing stronger, and could not easily be shut out of a monastery so close to Paris, in the path of so many wandering zealots. When another preacher appeared, this time a Cistercian (or Bernardin, as Mère Angélique often referred to male members of her order) God willed that 'il eût affection pour la réforme.' More important, perhaps, was the subject-matter of his sermon: he preached on the beatitudes, and the lines that remained with Mère Angélique were 'blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven' ³⁶ To such a spirit as hers, the words were a clarion call. She gathered her nuns together at Advent and all made a general confession, a serious step at a time when mixed motives during confession were a threat to the penitent's immortal soul. All resolved to make the reform happen and at the next chapter, they agreed to ensure that property was truly held in common. In Port-Royal, this step was a relatively easy one: the convent was not rich, neither were its nuns; they had few possessions of the kind they were reluctant to share. But achieving enclosure, the next step in the reformation, was another matter. The nuns themselves do not appear to have had much freedom of movement, but their relatives and friends were free to visit the convent and to wander through those areas which in an enclosed convent would have been forbidden to them.

CHAPTER 5

The manner in which enclosure was finally imposed is instructive. Mère Angélique's parents wrote to announce that they intended to visit her, in the usual manner. She hastily informed her Bernardin adviser of their plans, and asked for his advice, and he told her that on no account could she permit them to visit, on pain of mortal sin. She informed her parents, but her father did not believe that she would not receive him and arrived as planned. He was refused entry. Furious, he threatened to have no further contact with her, telling her that her spirit had been perverted and begging her at least to be wise. Finally, perhaps perceiving that she was as stubborn as himself, or that the laws of the Church were on his daughter's side, he relented and allowed his daughter to do her duty as she saw fit. It was the twenty-fifth of September, 1609, a day that has since come to be known as the *Journée du Guichet*.³⁷ She was, it must be stressed, still only eighteen years old, having successfully resisted parents, male directors, and the reluctance of her fellow nuns, and imposed her will upon them. She had achieved a feat that more seasoned and more powerful abbesses found difficult, and done so in the name of following her conscience. It is not surprising that from this time on, her definition of obedience began to differ from that of her superiors.

The motives and goals of Mère Angélique's reform were tangled together in a web of conflicting needs so that it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other. Personal motives are likely to have played a large part in her decision. Her father's worldliness, his apparent willingness to sacrifice his daughter's happiness in order to see her established in a position of rank, weighed heavily upon her. There is an unmistakable note of bitterness in her famous words about the convent's enclosure, that her parents had not consulted her when they placed her in religious life, and she saw no reason to consult them in making reforms which were necessary to save her soul. Mère

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

Angélique's lifelong opposition to what she and the Church referred to as 'simony', or the use of Church benefices for personal profit, was intensely personal and for its time unusual: 'Dieu me donna dès le commencement une grande aversion de marchander les filles'.³⁸ Nor would she accept any novice who clearly had no vocation, which was also rare for this time. It seems likely that her reforms were guided in part by a real pity for women forced unwillingly into religious life, and in part by a desire to punish her parents. (One of the consequences of the imposition of clausura was that they could no longer visit her so easily as before, and this may well have been part of her motive)

Added to the residual anger against her parents was the pressure exerted by the reform-minded male religious who were, in the first decades of the seventeenth century, beginning to preach and teach the truths of internal spirituality. They insisted that true religious must have a vocation, and that vocations could not be bought. Such men were still rare in the ranks of monastic clergy, and infrequent among seculars. Nevertheless, it was the Archbishop of Auch who informed her of the concept of simony, 'que c'était simonie que d'exiger de l'argent pour recevoir des filles Religieuses' ³⁹ She was undoubtedly alarmed, as always, to discover sins whose existence she had not previously suspected, but in this case knowledge of the 'sin' of simony dovetailed so closely with her own feelings on the subject of 'merchandising girls' that it was probably a relief for her to discover that it was a sin. The convents she reformed, including Port-Royal and Maubuisson, came to be known for their refusal to admit girls whose parents wished merely to place them in a convent of good reputation or to get rid of them to preserve their patrimony for other children. She also saw that convents organized under her regime would accept girls without dowries, thus attempting to ensure a religious purity that she believed to be otherwise lacking in French women's convents. She remained convinced

CHAPTER 5

that Carmelite convents, for example, were hotbeds of simony⁴⁰, although they too were known, upon occasion, to accept women without dowries, or to refuse dowries or donations which seemed to carry too heavy a burden of expectation.⁴¹

Another motive that must be considered was her sense of guilt that she was not a real religious because of the dishonesty of her initial entry into religion, and her conviction that to have taken vows, even under pressure, that she did not mean, was to risk damnation. She remained discontented with her lot for many years, telling François de Sales in 1619 about her frequent wish to go to some other convent or order where she was not known, and live like 'une simple religieuse'.⁴² It was not until 1626 that she began under the guidance of Sébastien Zamet (1588-1655), bishop of Langres, to experience a sense of peace. Zamet was able to persuade her to repeat her vows, after which she experienced no further trouble. But at the time the effort did her 'une aussi grande violence que si on m'eût forcée à être religieuse'.⁴³ It seems clear that her conscience and her nature were always in acute conflict, and this no doubt urged her forward as she embarked upon her career as a reformer.

Mère Angélique's own history affected her drive to reform the convent in other ways as well. It gave her a uniquely personal understanding of the quest for "interiority" that was so important a part of the message of the Counter-Reformation. To dévots of Berulle's type, the concept of interiority in religion had a very particular meaning: the pursuit of spiritual purity and oneness with God through a life of contemplation and adherence to Christ. Mère Angélique came to inwardness by a rather different path. Her quest was for what might loosely be called "inner truth" rather than for the 'vie intérieure': she wished to ensure that the usages of day-to-day life at Port-Royal corresponded to the spirit of the vows she and her nuns had made. It was in order to achieve this that she had

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

fought for the observation of enclosure and poverty at the abbey. But she was already aware, in 1609, that there was more to the life of the true religious than poverty, obedience, chastity, and enclosure. What was it, and where was it to be found?

The quest for a director

Mère Angélique's most critical difficulty, all her life, was in finding suitable spiritual directors to assist her in her efforts to understand her duties and to advise her in the spiritual life. She was in great need of some form of guidance that would satisfy her critical and legalistic mind, while at the same time providing her with the spiritual nourishment that she craved. She was ill-adapted to be cast in the role of the loving nun who, by the depth of her 'dévotion sensible' was able to inspire men with a greater faith than they had previously possessed. She was herself too much in need of reassurance, and this seems to have weakened her judgment, making her a magnet for men who were seeking to work out their own spiritual anxieties upon communities of women. 'On me donnait tous ceux que je demandais et j'étais toujours trompée', she wrote.⁴⁴ Her problems with spiritual guidance really began when her father withdrew (or had withdrawn) the confessor who had counselled her to reform the abbey.⁴⁵ She was obliged by the order's Rule to choose her confessors from the Cistercians, and many of these were not inclined to favour reform; she could no longer turn to the Capuchins for spiritual advice, either, for her father had ordered her not to see them anymore.⁴⁶ Shortly after the *journée des guichets* in 1609, she began to go through a whole series of confessors, and this habit was to endure for many years. One was a wolf disguised as a shepherd; another immoral, others were merely inadequate for reasons never made clear. But it was not merely a matter of confessors she wished to find a spiritual adviser, and for this, she needed a man who shared her own views

CHAPTER 5

For a time, she thought she had found such a man in François de Sales. They met in 1619, during the years (from 1618 until 1623) when she was attempting with great difficulty to reform the (Cistercian) royal abbey of Maubuisson, where the former abbess, Angélique d'Estrées, fiercely resisted her rival. He was to tell her, 'il n'y avait point de mal à chercher sur plusieurs fleurs le miel qu'on ne pouvait trouver sur une seule', which undoubtedly pleased her. He pleased her still more by adding that it was permissible to seek 'des juges favorables à nos inclinations', provided that she examine her inclinations for their soundness.⁴⁷ She made a general confession to him, and, as suggested, thought seriously of joining the Visitandines so as to be able to seek out his advice more conveniently.⁴⁸ But she had obligations that made such a decision difficult. François de Sales died in 1622, so that the temptation was in any case removed from her. Meanwhile, she was much preoccupied with the problems of Maubuisson, but after an arduous tenure there, she returned at last in 1623 to her own abbey and all its problems. Port-Royal des Champs was greatly overcrowded in the spring of 1623. As many as eighty nuns were crammed into its small spaces, thanks to an influx of novices from Maubuisson,⁴⁹ and this, with Port-Royal's unhealthy situation, led to recurring outbreaks of fever in which many nuns died; fifteen were to die in that spring of 1623 and another twelve in 1625.⁵⁰ This made the task of obtaining another and larger house, preferably in Paris, urgent, although a suitable property proved difficult to find. The nuns' need for a new house, and their difficulty finding one, precipitated a kind of crisis among the nuns, but worse was to come. Mère Angélique's mother found the nuns a suitable house, the hôtel Clagny, in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques in Paris in May 1625; but they were not able to complete the move for some time. In the same month, Dom Boucherat, the Cistercian General, died. He had been stern but an avid reformer; he was

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

replaced by Dom Nivelles who was not, and was eager, thought Mère Angélique, to undo her good work at the abbey.⁵¹ She greatly feared the consequences of this for her nuns, and her fears seemed to be confirmed when Nivelles removed the abbey's long-standing superior, M. Maugier (the abbé de la Charmoye), one of her most loyal supporters. The projected move to Paris, still not achieved when Boucherat died, had required delicate negotiations with the Paris Ordinary, the archbishop Jean-François de Gondi, who resented the presence in his diocese of female religious over whom he had no jurisdiction. (His predecessor - Pierre de Gondi - had opposed the establishment of the Carmelites in Paris for the same reason.⁵²) He would not accept the nuns of Port-Royal unless they placed themselves under his authority. Boucherat's imminent death and his replacement by a less sympathetic General made this seem more desirable to Mère Angélique than it would otherwise have done. She accepted Gondi's conditions, and the nuns of Port-Royal were formally made over to his control at last by Louis XIII in December 1624; but even now Gondi made difficulties. He gave his formal consent in August 1625, when Angélique agreed that the whole abbey should be transferred to Paris, closing down the house at Champs. A further change: Marie de Medici was to be regarded as its foundress - a sign and perhaps a warning of how far the fame of Mère Angélique's reforming zeal had spread.

Paris proved to be a difficult experience for the nuns of Port-Royal. Mère Angélique had apparently failed to anticipate the expenses of such a move; the house she had found was not large enough to contain all the nuns and they were forced to add to it immediately to accommodate everyone. Nor had she expected that the expense of providing for the convent in the city would be so much greater than it had been in the countryside. Port-Royal was forced to go into debt to finance

CHAPTER 5

its relocation. Moreover, their difficulties were not merely financial. Life in the city exposed them to public view in a way few of them had experienced before. The nuns' reputation as reformed Cistercians belonging to an especially austere House had already begun to spread through the city before they arrived, and they attracted attention, although not so much as they would later receive. News of the colourful events at Maubuisson in 1619, where the king had finally sent archers to help Mère Angélique impose order, had probably made their impression too.⁵³ Rich men's daughters began to press to join them; widows came offering large dowries for the privilege of becoming nuns of Port-Royal. Mère Angélique turned away the rich girls for fear their parents would try to exercise an influence over the management of the abbey, but widows were another matter, and she accepted at least one whose presence she would later regret.⁵⁴

It was under these conditions, busy, worried, and inwardly restless, that she met Sébastien Zamet (1588-1655), bishop of Langres, in Paris in 1625. François de Sales had died three years before. Zamet seemed to her an oasis of comfort. Like her, he was greatly interested in the reform of France's monastic orders; like her, he was fearful for the Cistercian nuns under Dom Nivelles' leadership, for several years previously he had reformed the Cistercian women's abbey at Tart and wished the reforms to be maintained. Under a new general, there was no guarantee they would be. Zamet was in Paris for the meeting of the Assembly of the Clergy while she was in the process of establishing the new Port-Royal de Paris there: the two met and discussed their mutual concerns. Although they had first met several years previously, and had occasionally exchanged letters, they now found themselves struck by mutual admiration and began a close friendship that was to endure

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

for some years. From 1630 until 1636, he was Mère Angélique's spiritual director, with all of that phrase's well-merited ambiguity.

Mère Angélique's meeting with Zamet was a momentous episode in her life: she thought for a time that she had found in him her ideal director, seeming 'plein de zèle, de mortification et de vraie dévotion'; and as she had no other confidante, 'il me fut aisé de prendre créance en lui'.⁵⁵ By the time she began to write her *Relation* in 1652, her feelings for him had long since soured. She saw him as the man who had destroyed the original simplicity of Port-Royal's reform, aided and abetted by her blindness. All the same, he had been, she acknowledged, of some help to her at the start of their relationship. Born in 1588, he began his career as a worldly cleric, a duke as well as a bishop. He experienced a conversion after a serious illness, however, which led him to seek out a truer form of spirituality. He was able to calm her fears about her vocation as a nun and he seemed to share her views regarding the future of her abbey, welcoming the nuns' move to Paris and praying with them that their reforms should not be adversely affected by Dom Nivelles' leadership of the Cistercian order. As their friendship developed, he confided, in 1626, that for many years he had wished to 'faire une Religion' entirely devoted to the adoration of the Holy Sacrament in Paris. Coincidentally, she told him, the Cistercian general before his death had given his permission for the nuns of Port-Royal to keep the sacrament exposed all day in their chapel, which was not then customary and was perceived as a great privilege.⁵⁶ Delighted to find that Zamet shared her wishes, she urged him to write to Rome to obtain permission for the projected abbey, which was to be known as the 'Institut du Saint-Sacrement'.

CHAPTER 5

• **Zamet and the founding of the Institut du Saint-Sacrement**

Mère Angélique soon began to be aware of a subtle change in her director, or perhaps began to realise that she had not known him as well as she thought. His initial conversion was probably genuine enough insofar as personal morality was concerned, or he could not have won the friendship of such men as Bérulle or Condren, the Oratory's second superior. He appears, however, to have had little understanding of the monastic spirit. Nor had he reined in his ambition in the process of his religious conversion, or so his actions have led subsequent commentators to suspect.⁵⁷ He was a product of the Counter-Reformation at its most glittering, an admirer of devout noblewomen, of decorative chapels, of ceremony: under his direction, 'A l'église, force parfums, plissures de linge et bouquets. On priait tout le monde de venir dire la messe et prêcher, faire tous les jours des connaissances nouvelles.'⁵⁸ None of this could be faulted from a doctrinal point of view. Mère Angélique's approach, too, was well within the limits of Catholic tradition. Why then was Zamet determined to involve himself with the nuns of Port-Royal, and having done so, to change them?

One of his first actions, after the nuns' move to Paris, was to insist, when the convent received a dowry of 24,000 livres from one widowed postulant, that they build the new dormitory they needed so badly, although the funds were not quite sufficient for this purpose.⁵⁹ This was a kind of declaration: he wished the abbey to be larger, more visible, more accessible to the public. He departed further still from Mère Angélique's original vision in the establishment of the Institut du Saint-Sacrement. When a house for the new Institute was purchased in 1630, '[O]n avait voulu le voisinage de la Cour' wrote Mère Angélique, 'pour y attirer des filles de condition et de la Cour.' She had not expected this turn of events; 'ayant d'abord désiré cette Maison toute retirée et séparée du monde,

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

[M. Zamet] crut après qu'elle ne pourrait s'accroître sans faire beaucoup d'amis, et avoir des filles de condition et riches.⁶⁰

The nuns of Port-Royal of Paris, a few of whom would be selected to be the nucleus of the new house, were not an obvious choice for such a project. They belonged to an old order with established traditions. But the renown of Port-Royal was spreading. Already in 1609, shortly after the *Journée des Guichets*, the Cistercian General was writing to other abbesses that they should follow the example of Port-Royal in reforming themselves. Society was small, devout circles were smaller still; and news of this kind spread quickly among the literate classes of Paris. Her reform of the abbey at Maubuisson between 1618 and 1623 had especially impressed reformers, for it had necessitated calling in a company of 250 archers, as Bérulle's supporters had had to do at Bordeaux and Saintes for the Carmelites. Her reforms impressed the Jesuit preacher Suffren so much that several nuns of the Cistercian convent of the Paraclete, hearing him praise them, wished to go to Port-Royal.⁶¹ Racine was to write that the Port-Royal vision of monastic reform proved very popular not only among female monastics, but among male ones as well:

Il y eut aussi un grand nombre d'abbayes d'hommes qui se réformèrent sur ce modèle. Ainsi, on peut dire avec vérité que la maison de Port-Royal fut une source de bénédictions pour tout l'ordre de Cîteaux.⁶²

This was something of a coup for Mère Angélique, and a sign that her views of the religious life differed, in some respect, from that embraced by other women's convents, most of which seemed to have little to offer to men in monastic life. We may assume that the growing renown of the women of Port-Royal, in devout circles, was immensely attractive to a man like Zamet who wanted, however unconsciously, to advertise his spiritual metamorphosis and perhaps to ingratiate himself in devout

CHAPTER 5

circles, still a powerful influence at Court until 1629-30. Like Bérulle, he wished to transform the women who were under his government to suit his Platonic ideal of the nun, but he lacked sufficient knowledge of the different modes of devotion to perceive how ill-adapted to his designs was the established life of Port-Royal. It seems possible, then, that he seized upon the House out of a form of opportunism; because Mère Angélique offered to submit to his direction, and because its reputation in high places was excellent. That she shared his hopes for a special house to be devoted to the Eucharist was an additional part of her appeal.

Zamet wished everything at the new Port-Royal to be magnificent: he imposed new and more elegant habits on the nuns; he insisted upon a certain standard of cleanliness so that the abbey 'ne fit point peur aux filles de la Cour.'⁶³ His control over Port-Royal was incomplete, however, until 1629, in that year, Mère Angélique was able to re-introduce the ancient custom of abbatial elections to the house, a reform she had long worked for. In this first election, Mère Geneviève Le Tardif was selected by her fellow-nuns as abbess. Shortly afterwards, Zamet twinned the abbey of Port-Royal with the Cistercian abbey of Tart, long under his direction. This made it possible for him to send her to Tart, where she was at last the 'simple religieuse' she had wanted to be. The experience was a painful one, in the event: she was forbidden to write to her friend and confidante Jeanne de Chantal, with whom she had been corresponding since 1619. The nuns of Tart even destroyed her letters from François de Sales: '[elles] qui croyaient que leur spiritualité était bien au-dessus de celle de Mgr de Genève,' she wrote, 'me les ôtèrent...Et, ce qui fut pitoyable...elles les employèrent à couvrir quelques pots de confiture'.⁶⁴ She regarded these and other petty humiliations as a means of destroying her judgment, which for her was, in theory at least, an occasion to be welcomed. In her account,

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

however, she was careful to add that Zamet continued to require her help with the arrangements for the Institut du Saint-Sacrement, a comment that tends to confirm the possibility that he saw her spiritual authority as a route to temporal power.⁶⁵ In 1630, when the plans for the Institut were finally complete, her brief period of obscurity was over, for Zamet sent her to the new house as its superior

The spirituality of Port-Royal

Of all Zamet's innovations as director of Port-Royal, the most disturbing, as far as Mère Angélique was concerned, were those connected with the devotional life of the abbey. Initially, Mère Angélique had sought only to reintroduce a strict, Benedictine way of life at Port-Royal, to end abuses which seemed to her inimical to 'Religion'. She had little conception of reform beyond this; and she saw the role of her order as, in the conventional sense, penitential. When she sought spiritual guidance from male directors, it was in the hope that they would help her to understand the nature of the Benedictine Rule and to dedicate her thoughts to God, while helping her to learn the obedience and suspension of her own judgment she found so difficult. Zamet, on the other hand, had learned his ideas of devotion in a different school. He had been much influenced by the Capuchin school of spirituality best represented, in France, by Benet de Canfeld. Zamet shared Canfeld's abstract mysticism. His letters to Angélique Arnauld are replete with a mysticism so passive that Louis Cagnet refers to them as 'pre-Quietist':

Vous devez si absolument être morte à toute opération, pour soudaine, petite, subtile et spirituelle qu'elle soit, que vous ne devez donner aucune liberté d'agir et de courir par actes aux effets de votre sanctification...il vous suffit que votre âme reçoive les vérités divines...⁶⁶

Mère Angélique was to find much of his teaching difficult, although to her this was always a challenge rather than an immediate disqualification. Zamet introduced new physical austerities, 'des

CHAPTER 5

jeûnes au pain et à l'eau, des disciplines terribles' together with psychological mortifications that were strange to her: 'A la récréation, il fallait se moquer les unes des autres, s'entre-contrefaire, et on appelait cela se déniaiser. J'avais souvent de la peine de tout cela...'.⁶⁷ Mortifications of this kind, however, were typical of early modern piety, not merely in France, but throughout Catholic Europe. Although physical mortifications of the extreme type (self-mutilation, self-flagellation and so forth) were falling into disfavour in official teaching, what replaced them was scarcely less terrible from a modern point of view. Teresa of Avila is known to have used even more elaborate methods than Zamet of what we might call psychological torture to teach nuns humility and obedience. She often disciplined Anne de Jésus in this way. Having asked her to preach at recreation, Teresa would pretend not to know what she was doing when she obeyed, and would reprimand her severely for her presumption.⁶⁸ That Mère Angélique found such disciplinary methods distasteful might be an indication of her modernity, or, on the other hand, of her religious conservatism.

Her piety was rooted in monastic observance of an old-fashioned kind.⁶⁹ Indeed it was almost pre-medieval in its rejection of abstract speculation and what has come to be known as mystical usages. The only trait she appears to have shared with medieval Cistercian piety at its high point was an intense devotion to the humanity of Christ (that is, to his suffering flesh on the earth, not his triumphant reign at God's right hand) and to the Eucharist⁷⁰; thus she was determined to have the sacraments exposed on the altar of Port-Royal's chapel, a great privilege for a women's religious order. Mère Angélique was not a typical Cistercian. Like the early Benedictines, she preferred prayers to be short. She had no taste for 'états d'oraison', the various stages of prayer that at their end were expected to lead the soul to union with God. As for mortification, abstinence and seasonal fasts,

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

together with the renunciation of all luxuries, were enough for her. She and Zamet, then, differed in fundamental ways over the duties of a religious.

She was soon to have graver problems with Zamet. The Institute of the Holy Sacrament, for whose foundation she had worked so hard, proved to be more a liability than a spiritual or temporal asset, and it may be that her experiences there further hardened her heart against 'voies extraordinaires'. Zamet was a close friend of Bérulle's successor Condren, and introduced the latter to Mère Agnès, one of Angélique's younger sisters. Mère Agnès's temperament differed from that of her elder sister. She had never (according to her sister) rebelled against religious life but embraced it eagerly from the beginning. She was a true 'bride of Christ', rather than a devotee of the virago model admired by the Fathers and unconsciously adopted by Mère Angélique, a model which the seventeenth century disowned in theory but not practice.⁷¹ Mère Agnès developed a close friendship of her own with Condren, who was himself a devotee of Bérullian 'anéantissement'. Under his influence, she began to write a pamphlet entitled, *Le Chapelet secret du Saint-Sacrement*, in which she gave expression to a kind of piety which was not in sympathy with that of her sister, abstract and mystical. Racine described it as 'comme des élans d'une âme toute pénétrée de l'amour de Dieu, dans la contemplation de sa charité infinie pour les hommes dans ce mystère'.⁷² Mère Agnès's *Chapelet* was said to be secret both to distinguish it from an earlier *Chapelet* written by Zamet himself, and because it was not actually 'donné au public' until 1633, some years after its composition in 1627, by which time it had been read by no more than seven or eight people.⁷³

Mère Agnès's pamphlet precipitated a political catfight, which led to accusations of heresy against the author of the *Chapelet*. To understand the origins of the dispute, it is necessary to go back

CHAPTER 5

a few pages to describe the mode of government of the Institut du Saint-Sacrement. It was directed by three superiors: Octave de Bellegarde, archbishop of Sens; Sébastien Zamet, ducal bishop of Langres; and Jean-François de Gondi (1584-1654), archbishop of Paris. Such multiple divisions of authority were always awkward and liable to cause trouble, as Bérulle's experience with the shared superiority of the Carmelites suggests. The division was imposed, in the case of the Institut, by Gondi's determination not to permit a female religious order independent of his authority to be established in his diocese. It led, inevitably, to much ill-feeling between Bellegarde, Zamet, and Gondi. In 1633 Bellegarde had the pamphlet censured by eight Sorbonne doctors, as a way of extinguishing his rivals.⁷⁴ The *Chapelet* was publicly condemned in a pamphlet written up by a Jesuit, P. Binet, leading to a typical seventeenth-century pamphlet war directed against both Zamet and the Institut du Saint-Sacrement.⁷⁵ As the dispute grew more heated, the nuns were called witches and heretics by some at court, according to Mère Angélique, although it is possible that she exaggerated.⁷⁶ In response to these rumours, the *Chapelet secret* was eventually sent to Rome to be examined for its orthodoxy. Officials there found no doctrinal errors in the work, but in order to put a stop to further disputes in the French Church, they decided to suppress it, for being, said Claude Lancelot's editor said 'l'expression des mystiques, et rien d'autre chose'.⁷⁷ Later writers were to say that Mère Agnès had 'prétendu établir cette pureté d'amour qui va rendre l'homme indifférent pour son salut', a criticism which was also directed at the underlying mysticism of her work.⁷⁸

For a work of perhaps four pages, the *Chapelet* had caused a remarkable stir. It would be easy to suppose that it was vulnerable because it was a work of mysticism, and written by a woman, for works of mystical devotion have always been especially exposed to such treatment. Supporting this

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

hypothesis is the fact that the 1630s saw the emergence of the first 'anti-mystical reaction' since before the turn of the century. French ecclesiastics had, for a time, embraced the mystical currents of the new spirituality without hesitation, but now some began to question whether the movement had not gone too far.⁷⁹ Was their response to the pamphlet the result of this shift in the atmosphere? Nothing is more difficult for the historian who is not a theologian than to attempt to understand the reasons why a particular work is accused of heresy when others, apparently similar in their ideas and manner of expression, are passed over. In the case of Mère Agnès's pamphlet, it would almost certainly have been passed over had it not been at the centre of a political storm. Over and over again throughout the century, quarrels over theology would turn out to have an underlying political motivation. The *Chapelet's* most vocal critics were pre-existing enemies eager to find fault with Zamet and his works if they could. Bellegarde, the chief culprit in the affair, was not even especially hostile to the Institut itself; he wished to injure his co-directors. The little book's mystical content is relevant mostly because, where works of devotion were concerned, as opposed to works of pure theology, it was always easy to find grounds for condemnation. Poetic expressions intended to suggest the elusive quality of the soul's relations with God, never meant to be taken literally, might be interpreted by a doctor of theology with all the philosophical rigour of an Aquinas reading Aristotle. Something of the kind appears to have happened to Mère Agnès's *Chapelet*. Aside from the issue of Bellegarde's jealousy, Zamet and Condren bore some responsibility for this turn of events. For a time, Zamet had made the Institut the object of attention and of the jealousy of less successful priests; 'le tout Paris' came to the Institut's parlour to speak to the nuns. He had approved Mère Agnès's pamphlet when he first saw it (as had Bellegarde), even suggesting that her thoughts were

CHAPTER 5

inspired by Jesus himself. As for Condren, he had encouraged Mère Agnès to write down her thoughts on the subject in the first place, to help her to express herself. While this was scarcely a fault, a spiritual director who knew the religious and political climate of the times might have been expected to warn her not to allow her work to circulate.

Saint-Cyran

Zamet needed someone to shelter him from the storm occasioned by Mère Agnès's pamphlet. At this point in the chronicles of Port-Royal, it was the directors rather than the nuns themselves who bore a heavier part of the blame for the fall into heterodoxy, so far as official opinion was concerned Zamet called for Saint-Cyran, a man whom he admired and liked. The abbé wrote a *défense* of the work, entitled *Apologie pour le Chapelet du Saint-Sacrement*, and in return Zamet invited him to direct the women of Port-Royal and the Institut, while he went home to his diocese.⁴⁰ From 1633, Saint-Cyran was in effect the director and superior of both houses. To Mère Angélique, his arrival was a blessing, a relief from the tensions of her years under Zamet's guidance. Saint-Cyran and Mère Angélique had met occasionally before he became the director of the two convents. Now she began to discover how similar were their views regarding both devotion and the religious life.⁴¹

Mère Angélique's feelings for Saint-Cyran, as expressed in her *Relation* of 1654, were coloured by later events. At the same time, his actual behaviour as a director, as she recounts it, makes the exact nature of his appeal difficult to determine. He was a reluctant administrator, an unenthusiastic spiritual director. A letter of 1635 written either to Mère Angélique or to Geneviève Le Tardif (her successor as abbess of Port-Royal) suggests that he did not altogether welcome the responsibility he had assumed: '[J'ai été surpris de ce que] sans autre cérémonie vous [ayez voulu me]

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

mêler dans les affaires de votre maison ne sachant pas mes occupations et combien je suis obligé à garder la solitude et le silence en ce temps'.⁸² But besides his distaste for personal involvement in the affairs of religious orders, he was also, for different reasons, a reluctant confessor.

The issues raised by confession were for a century and a half the most urgent and persistent pastoral problem in Catholic Europe. When a sinner confessed to a priest, it had once been assumed that it was the priest's pronouncement of absolution, and not the sinner's degree of penitence, that obtained the remission of sin.⁸³ The Council of Trent cautiously suggested that the attitude of the sinner was also important; he must sincerely repent of his sins. But in practice it was extremely difficult for a confessor to determine who repented and who did not. Strict contritionists insisted that the sinner's hatred of his sin, his desolation at having offended God, must be complete. Attritionists proclaimed that it was enough that the sinner should repent because he feared God or long for heaven.⁸⁴ The issue caused trouble in the confessional and led many 'scrupulous' sinners to fear that they were not truly contrite and so not absolved of their sins. To receive communion without absolution, after a mortal sin, was to condemn oneself to Hell.

Mère Angélique was, for her part, scrupulous to an extreme degree about confession and communion. Long before she came to know Saint-Cyran, she had found it difficult to forgive herself for trivial faults. Flattered and alarmed by Jean-Pierre Camus's admiration for her, she wrote in 1620, 'il me brouille encore l'esprit avec ses si très vaines et extravagantes louanges', in a letter to Jeanne de Chantal full of similar self-reproaches.⁸⁵ Many years later, Saint-Cyran wrote to her after a dangerous illness that she should not 'vous mettre tant en peine...si vos larmes en ces occasions sont de l'amour-propre ou du vrai amour',⁸⁶ implying that to her even the wish to live was an occasion of

CHAPTER 5

sin. All her life, the abbess showed herself to be reluctant to make general confessions: 'j'avais une peine extrême et qui m'était naturelle, à me confesser'.⁸⁷ When Saint-Cyran first became director and confessor of the two abbeys, he refused to hear the nuns' confessions at all for the first eighteen months of his tenure, until April 1635, and Mère Angélique was the last of them to confess to him, in August of that year. Scrupulous persons like Mère Angélique were often reluctant to confess; their attitude to confession, which they did not necessarily articulate or consciously attempt to justify in doctrinal terms, bore some resemblance to that of strict contritionists - like Saint-Cyran. He took the sacraments of confession and communion as seriously, it seemed to her, as she did.⁸⁸ Unable to confess, scrupulous people were also often unable to communicate, if they believed themselves to have some mortal sin on their conscience.⁸⁹ No doubt unknowingly, Mère Angélique had blundered into a kind of rejection of Tridentine instructions to the faithful. Frequent communion was mandated by the Council of Trent, but it was not, in 1635, widely practiced, even in convents. It was not until Fénelon's time that frequent communion became common.⁹⁰ The mass of Catholic faithful might regard as frequent anything more than once a year.⁹¹ Those who did not communicate often might not consider themselves to be exceptional, or be aware that they were flouting a doctrine. Saint-Cyran, however, was better-informed than Mère Angélique and did little to try to temper her attitude, as he himself shared it.⁹²

Apart from their attitude to the sacraments, Mère Angélique and Saint-Cyran held similar views of the world and its temptations. It was a curious fact of her nature that while she believed that true vocations were rare, and that girls and women must be free to decide for themselves whether to enter monastic life, she did all she could to persuade her sister Anne-Eugénie into entering Port-Royal

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

as a postulant, and was later so eager to receive her mother that she almost bullied her into taking the veil.⁹³ Such incidents suggest that she believed salvation outside monastic life nearly, although not entirely, impossible, an impression that tends to be confirmed by her letters and other writings. Her sister Agnès held similar sentiments; she is famous for having instructed her Le Maître nephew not to marry, implying that marriage was an occasion of sin, although it is possible that there was some element of teasing in the remark.⁹⁴ Mère Angélique's distrust of the world was a consequence of her attitude to monastic discipline. If strict cloistering were necessary to protect nuns from the moral perils of 'le siècle', then these perils must be terrible. She had feared and disliked Zamet's introduction of luxuries into Port-Royal; she thought that the French Carmelites were placing their souls at risk by mingling too freely with the great families of Paris. Perhaps such views were inevitable for any cloistered religious, especially one who had entered religious life against her will

Saint-Cyran, who had once believed that it was possible to serve God and mammon without conflict of interest, had gradually come to the conclusion that it was not. Less afflicted with scruples of the kind that tormented his dirigée, and less inclined to severity in his judgments of people, his letters suggest that he was increasingly troubled by the problem of worldliness. 'La foi est un renversement de la raison mondaine,' he wrote in 1632, 'et ceux qui passent pour sages en ce monde, passeront pour fous dans le ciel...'⁹⁵ He was especially worried by the threat it posed to priests. He seems to have experienced some crisis of conscience in 1629-30 that to some degree altered his attitude to the world and made him less certain than he had been that a good priest was capable of living the apostolic life. He wrote to one priest who had asked for his advice, 'Si votre retraite vous a fait former dans le coeur cette résolution que vous exprimez dans votre lettre touchant le monde,

CHAPTER 5

elle a produit l'effet que je désirais, et sans lequel on ne saurait être bon Prêtre ⁹⁶ This was a reversal for a man who had always defended the calling of the secular priest as against that of monastics and other regulars; he was also moving away from the general trend of post-Tridentine Catholicism, so eager to encourage priests to learn to live in the world. But his reversal was incomplete. While remaining true to his original perception of the superiority of the secular calling, he came to believe that the moral life could flourish best in solitude and withdrawal from society. Mère Angélique's adherence to monastic poverty, her rejection of anything that resembled simony, which he too greatly disliked, her refusal to accept postulants who lacked a true vocation for religious life, and her distrust of worldly motives would have appealed to him very much, in the frame of mind he was in when he first began to know her.

• Saint-Cyran, Port-Royal and the Public

1630 was a decisive year in French ecclesiastical life. After Bérulle's death in 1629, some people suggested that his health had been broken by the strain of his public commitments; it was also rumoured in some quarters that he had been poisoned by Richelieu's agents.⁹⁷ For some years, Saint-Cyran's early friendship with Richelieu had been cooling, and his first break with the minister occurred in 1630.⁹⁸ A number of events coincided to set off a serious crisis in relations between devots and the state. Richelieu had many opponents at this time and was growing noticeably more anxious about his position. Bérulle's example had alarmed him. Other dévot clerics also protested the Minister's actions. Marillac was opposed to Richelieu's aggressiveness in matters of foreign policy on the grounds that it injured the welfare of the French people:

...le maniement des affaires m'oblige à vous représenter que nous faisons grand nombre de choses dont le peuple reçoit de grandes afflictions. La justice des armes

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

du Roy et le progrez de ses desseins fait patienter dans ces miseres, et il me semble qu'il est principalement deub et de la gloire d'un bon gouvernement de pense au soulagement des suites et aux bons réglemens de l'Estat qui ne se peuvent faire que par la paix. Et je ne sçay pas si, par une autre guerre que plus[ieu]rs n'estimeront pas si nécessaire, l'on souffriroit avec autant de patience...⁹⁹

In 1630, Marillac and several of Marie de Medici's other allies attempted to stage a kind of palace coup, hoping to remove him from office altogether. They were unsuccessful.^{100*} The affair, known to historians as the Day of the Dupes, ended in the disgrace of the Marillac brothers and several other prominent men, and Marie de Medici was at last driven from court. Marillac ended his days in prison, and his brother was put to death. It has been said that on this occasion the influence of the dévot party on French public life was broken for good.¹⁰¹ If this is an overstatement, the aftermath of the Day of the Dupes did cast a chill over many dévots. It was an early warning that the fragile concord between the dévots and the statesmen could not survive

Saint-Cyran was implicated in the Dupes' conspiracy to the extent that it was rumoured that he had been promised a bishopric if it were successful.¹⁰² Mère Angélique was scarcely aware of the affair; she did not regard Marillac as a friend to the abbey, for he had refused to ratify the king's letters-patent for its transfer to the archbishop of Paris's jurisdiction.¹⁰³ Richelieu had once regarded Saint-Cyran as an ally and the most learned man in Europe,¹⁰⁴ but his admiring attitude toward the abbé was gradually tempered by the aftermath Day of the Dupes. The change was not immediate, for Richelieu was grateful to Saint-Cyran for his support for Zamet in the affair of the *C'hupelet*.¹⁰⁵ Saint-Cyran had once seemed unthreatening, an intellectual without Bérulle's supernatural connections, a champion of the French crown, a Gallican supporter of episcopal rights who saw the king as the 'Roi très-Chrétien'. Saint-Cyran's early published writings had won him acclaim for precisely this reason.

CHAPTER 5

One was a book defending the subject's right to risk certain death for his Prince, entitled *La question royale* (1608); the other was a peculiar treatise (1617) arguing for the right of bishops to bear arms.¹⁰⁶ For years, he had defended the rights of the secular hierarchy against those of regulars, always a popular position in both Court and Parlementaire circles. Now, as the 1630s progressed, he began to criticize Richelieu's regime openly. What occasioned the change in his attitude is difficult to say, it coincided with the change in his attitude to the priesthood, and it may be that knowledge of Bérulle's disgrace and mortal illness inspired a spirit of resistance in the once pliable and passive abbot. It is also possible that if he supported Marillac's coup, it was out of pure ambition.

But the latter possibility is unlikely. Saint-Cyran's history suggests that he enjoyed his fame as a learned and holy man, but he had little wish to exercise influence upon policy in the broad sense.¹⁰⁷ That is, he was content to act the part of the prophet, crying out against society's decadence, without intervening directly in public affairs in the manner of a Bérulle or a Marillac. From time to time he might point out the moral implications of a particular policy but he did not wish to be one of the men who made policy. Still less did he seek the life of the courtier or diplomat, his only position of the kind involved accompanying Henriette-Marie to England, with Bérulle. His behaviour in the years following the Day of the Dupes supports the thesis that he was not ambitious enough to curry favour with either the civil or the ecclesiastical authorities, and shows too a kind of wilful blindness regarding the demands of the world. In 1635, the king's unruly brother Gaston contracted a dynastically undesirable marriage with Marguerite de Lorraine. The king consulted the Assembly of the Clergy, hoping that the members would declare the marriage null, but they in turn looked to the Sorbonne and to the leaders of the most important religious communities of Paris. Condren, Gaston's

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

confessor, ruled for nullity, arguing that princes of the blood could not marry as they pleased. Saint-Cyran, on the other hand, insisted that a legally valid marriage was valid irrespective of the station in life of its participants.¹⁰⁸ The matter of Gaston's marriage was serious because he was in 1635 a likely heir to the throne and Saint-Cyran must have known that intervening in the affair would be risky. The only explanation for his behaviour is that he did not care.¹⁰⁹

The issue was critical to Saint-Cyran. Gaston d'Orléans' marriage was a matter of basic principle. Was marriage a sacramental union between man and woman in which the state had no right to intervene? Or could a marriage sanctioned by the Church be annulled by the Church in the interests of state policy? Those who supported the latter view in effect conceded not simply the victory of the state's interests over those of the Church, but the victory of *raison d'état* over moral law. This, at least, was how Saint-Cyran interpreted the affair. Richelieu, always more alarmed by the spiritual than the temporal power of the *dévo*t party, was more able to forgive outright sedition than *dévo*t moralizing. In his eyes, Saint-Cyran was guilty of both.

In 1635, relations between France and the Habsburg powers, long a cloud on the horizon, at last burst into open warfare. Saint-Cyran's close friend Jansenius was moved to write a pamphlet entitled *Mars Gallicus*, attacking French foreign policy. Jansenius had the advantage of not living in France; he need not fear Richelieu's anger. Bérulle and Marillac had sometimes presented Richelieu with similar arguments in earlier years, and Jansenius's work must have sounded unpleasantly familiar to Richelieu. His friendship with Saint-Cyran was well-known, and from then on Richelieu had the abbé watched with a suspicious eye. In 1638, Saint-Cyran published a short *Vie d'Abraham*, which aroused suspicion because it seemed to contain veiled criticism of Richelieu's war policies.¹¹⁰ It also

CHAPTER 5

explained Saint-Cyran's views on leadership and majesty, showing how both were bound up in righteousness, and subtly attacking the notion of *raison d'état*: 'Puisque Dieu punit les peuples à cause des fautes des rois, les peuples on grand intérêt d'avoir de bons princes.'¹¹¹

As Mère Angélique told the story, Zamet's resentment of her friend would be instrumental in his impending downfall. Zamet's direction had divided the nuns of Port-Royal into two camps. Mère Agnès and many others had been won over by Zamet's direction, while another group of nuns preferred Saint-Cyran. After Mère Angélique had placed herself under his guidance, Zamet's loyalists were filled with resentment, and Zamet himself was angry. For a time, the two factions lived at different convents, one group at Port-Royal de Paris, the other at the Institut. After they were at last reunited at Port-Royal in 1636, it was essential for the peace of the abbey that all should accept Saint-Cyran's choice, M. Singlin, as their director. Zamet's supporters were unwilling to accept this turn of events, and their ringleader, Madame Pontcarré, sent an account of the proceedings to Zamet, as Mère Angélique was to explain:

Elle en rendit un compte fort fidèle à l'Évêque, qui s'en fâcha aussi. et il fit ce memoire dont il a tant été parlé, qu'il donna à un autre Évêque [Harlay de Sancy of Saint-Malo] pour le donner au Cardinal de Richelieu.¹¹²

The situation deteriorated. Mère Angélique wrote to Zamet asking him to give up his control of the convent, writing also to the bishop of Paris to ask for Port-Royal's release from Zamet's direction. Zamet went to Richelieu and complained that Saint-Cyran was sowing dissent at Port-Royal. He appears to have acted on little more than personal pique. His reputation had suffered under the complaints of the nuns of Port-Royal and the affair of the *Chapelet*, and it is possible that he wished to draw attention to his own orthodoxy. In denouncing Saint-Cyran to Richelieu, he was careful to

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

point out all the abbot's departures from strict orthodoxy, his support for the contritionist thesis in matters of penitence, and his misdirection of the women of Port-Royal, leading them into heresy as well.

On May 14, 1638, Richelieu had Saint-Cyran arrested. The official reason he gave for this action was not political but theological. He accused Saint-Cyran of having taught a penitential theology contrary to the decrees of the Council of Trent.¹¹³ Saint-Cyran's attitude to the issue of confession and absolution was both divisive and the complete reverse of Richelieu's own.¹¹⁴ Richelieu's late work, *Traité de la perfection chrétienne* (completed in 1636 but only published posthumously in 1646) was far closer in spirit to the teaching of the more *relâché* among the Jesuits, than to the Augustinian traditions of the French school *dévots* and the even more profoundly Augustinian Port-Royalists. The Jesuits' probabilist approach (see note 84) was both more humane and more readily amenable to institutional control, as Richelieu no doubt recognised. Saint-Cyran's penitential extremism would put too much power into the hands of individual confessors, allowing them to decide, case by case, who was truly penitent and who was not. On the other hand, Saint-Cyran, like Bérulle before him, had questioned Richelieu's system of protestant alliances and his aggressive foreign policy. Also underlying the accusation were Richelieu's fears of Saint-Cyran's growing influence over the *dévots*, and years of accumulated grudges on the part of his enemies. It remains, as always, difficult to disentangle political and religious motives when looking at charges of heresy in the seventeenth century. The Cardinal had always believed that, if the Emperor Charles V had acted more swiftly to arrest Martin Luther, the Reformation might have been prevented altogether. And the Reformation, of course, had threatened not only the spiritual order of western

CHAPTER 5

Christendom but its political order as well. 'It is one of my maxims,' he wrote on the day of Saint-Cyran's arrest, 'that religious controversy is harmful to the state.'¹¹⁵

Two dévot factions

The arrest of Saint-Cyran in 1638 was a watershed for French devotion and for the dévots, more important than the Day of the Dupes: it was finally responsible for splitting the dévots into two factions. It is possible that Richelieu hoped for this outcome and was furthering some form of 'divide and rule' policy with regard to French Catholicism, in the hope of sowing division and mistrust among the more impassioned advocates of ecclesiastical independence. If this was his intention, he was successful in implementing it. Paris's dévots, already divided over the issue of seculars versus regulars, found in the later years of Richelieu's ascendancy that they must face directly the issue that they had hitherto avoided: to whom, ultimately, did the power of veto belong in clashes between the Pope and the king over political or ecclesiastical issues?

If Saint-Cyran had been confounded and outraged by Bérulle's fate, and by that of Marillac the following year, his own friends - soon to be former friends - were appalled by the abbé's increasing tendency after 1629 to attack both government policy and ecclesiastical politics. The Day of the Dupes had made them cautious. Would Saint-Cyran's behaviour, his radicalism, reflect badly upon them? Both Condren, general of the Oratory from Bérulle's death in 1629 until his own in 1641, and Vincent de Paul, by this time established in the circles of power, feared it might be so. Vincent, who had earlier heard him refer to the Catholic Church as an adulteress and a prostitute,¹¹⁶ at first refused to condemn him. In later life, however, he was severely critical of his friend's errors.¹¹⁷ Condren had for some time been troubled by Saint-Cyran's increasingly daring letters; he now reacted

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

by wholeheartedly rejecting Saint-Cyran, the old friend of his own spiritual master, Bérulle. In 1636 he wrote, 'Il faut que je vous rende compte d'un accident qui est arrivé ici, qui regarde la personne qui vous mit entre les mains un écrit, pour se justifier de quelques opinions qu'il avait enseignées touchant la pénitence.'¹¹⁸ As for Saint-Cyran, he had shown a changed attitude towards Vincent before his own arrest; he wrote a book describing the dangers to which those clerics 'ayant plus de réputation que de fonds' exposed themselves and the Church. This barb is said by Saint-Cyran's biographer Lancelot to have been directed at Vincent.¹¹⁹

Some historians have even suggested that it was Condren and M Vincent, rather than Zamet, who were responsible for denouncing him to Richelieu. Raoul Allier, who wrote a study of the *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* (1902) in which he identifies the *Compagnie* with the *dévots*, based his own conviction of the truth of this accusation upon the fact that Richelieu, warning his niece the duchess of Aiguillon away from the abbot and his teachings, told her to consult either Condren or M Vincent for further information.¹²⁰ It is unlikely, assuming either of the two men denounced Saint-Cyran, that they actually prompted the Cardinal to take a course he might not otherwise have considered. Richelieu had sufficient reason to distrust Saint-Cyran and to consider him the leader of a potentially dangerous faction. Saint-Cyran and his supporters, however, always blamed their trials on Jesuit connivance, above all, and from this time on the Augustinians and the Company of Jesus were mortal enemies.

It was not theology which divided the two factions. Condren, for example, was not opposed to Saint-Cyran's nascent 'Jansenism' (still an anachronism at this stage of the controversy) on theological grounds. Indeed, it was to be suggested by subsequent critics - or admirers - that

CHAPTER 5

Condren's own theological writings showed Jansenist tendencies. Any careful comparison of the works of *dévot* Jansenists to those of French-school *dévots* suggests that in the most controversial matters of moral theology (when and how to confess; when to receive absolution; predestination; the gap between the elect and all others) the two groups were surprisingly close. Most *École française* *dévots* did not echo Italian and Spanish Jesuits in their attitudes to the vexed issues of the confessional, preferring a stricter approach, though their views were milder than those of the Augustinians. The difference between the two was initially more one of style than of theological substance. Often, however, both sides were guilty of imputing to the other extreme theological opinions that were not in fact part of its general teachings.

A more serious division between the two factions was their disagreement over church versus state authority. This is an issue that has often been misunderstood. The *École française* *dévots* accused Saint-Cyran of being a Calvinist,¹²¹ so complete was his rejection of Rome's authority. The Augustinians conflated the *dévots* with the Jesuits, and accused them of being ultramontanes in the matter of Rome's authority, like their Jesuit masters. But how true was this? The first *dévot* reformers, the generation of Bérulle, had established themselves at court and in positions of power by their willingness to compromise, to act as 'brokers' who, in exchange for royal assistance in reforming the Church, would mediate between Rome and the crown in a period of tense relations between the two. Saint-Cyran had initially been one of them. But his growing revulsion against the idea of compromise had led him to attack both the abuses of the Church and those of the state. He did not in any way resemble the Gallicans who would emerge later in the century, who attacked Rome's authority and supported that of the king of France. He made the original *dévot* compromise

THE OLDER ORDER AND THE NEW

unsustainable, insisting that true Bérullian *adhérence à Dieu* did not admit collusion with the purposes of the state. This was the real reason why he lost both the support of Richelieu and that of the French School dévots.

Conclusion

Saint-Cyran had shown dévot clerics what would happen if they attempted to oppose the power of the state with that of the Church. From now on, the *École française* would be, on the surface at all events, increasingly acquiescent to the demands of the state. Dévots who wished to resist the regime under which they lived did so in the traditional way, by retreating into monastic life. It was at this time that dévot women began to symbolize, for men on both sides of the rapidly widening rift between the French School and the Augustinians, not only piety, but resistance.

The battle over Port-Royal cannot be reduced to a struggle between women and the establishment. In many ways, it resembled the battle over the Carmelites, a more obviously Tridentine order. In both instances, the nuns were themselves embedded in the establishment, brought there by their male superiors' spiritual and political ambition. In the end, it was this that would be responsible for their later collision with the religious and secular authorities. They had become too important, too visible, to be allowed to run their own affairs. Once they had come to be identified in the eyes of the literate public with the beliefs of their spiritual director, their position grew even more delicate. He was determined that they too should follow the course he had set out for himself, rejecting the compromises that governed the Church and society. Port-Royal would become the focus of attention again after his death, for reasons which will be discussed in Chapter 9. The nuns would find themselves under a spot-light more intense than any they had yet endured, the subject of a near-

CHAPTER 5

continual inquiry whose repercussions still sound in French historiography By their attentions the convent's male directors inadvertently destroyed what they most admired, the purity of a reform conducted far from the public eye and with no other motive than obedience to a Rule.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Our knowledge of the reform of Port-Royal is derived largely from Angélique Arnauld's *Relation écrite par la Mère Angélique Arnauld sur Port-Royal*, edited and with an introduction by Louis Cognet (Paris: Grasset, 1949). She was persuaded to write it by friends in 1655, when the reform she had established was increasingly persecuted by both the Crown and by Rome. Written by Mère Angélique herself, it was closer to the events it describes than other works written later. Her letters, those of her sister Mère Agnès, and a memoir written by her niece, also known as Mère Angélique (Arnauld d'Andilly) and also a religious of Port-Royal, are also of value. Other important accounts are listed in Louis Cognet's Introduction to his edition of the *Relation* (Paris, 1949). They include the *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Port-Royal et à la vie de la Révèrende Mère Angélique de Sainte-Magdeleine Arnauld, Réformatrice de ce Monastère* (Utrecht, 1742), 3 vols. in-12. This edition, in addition to the biography of Mère Angélique, comprehends all the *Relations* of Port-Royal extant. A list of primary sources, and the means by which they came to be preserved, is in Louis Cognet's edition of the *Relation*, above, Introduction, p. 5-17.
2. Catherine Maire, 'Port-Royal: The Jansenist Schism', from *The Realms of Memory*, Vol. I, by Pierre Nora (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 301.
3. When Mère Angélique's younger sister, Anne-Eugénie, contemplated entering religious life, she was attracted to the Carmelites. Angélique thought God wanted her at Port-Royal, while many devote ladies of Paris brought her around to their own favourite houses of religion to persuade her to enter there instead. See Angélique Arnauld's *Relation*, p. 70.
4. The historian may be inclined to wish it were otherwise, as Port-Royal has been defended, analysed, and attacked at such length that further comment seems superfluous. Yet for the purposes of this study Port-Royal is the exception which proves the rule. Many victims of the persecution against the abbey and its supporters were men; its spirituality was not especially 'feminine' or mystical. In short, it illustrates the predominant impact of politics, rather than sex or theology, upon the anti-heresy battles of the seventeenth century. There is an excellent discussion of the role of Port-Royal in French historiography in Maire's essay, cited above.
5. See Victor Tapié's influential *France in the Age of Louis XIII and Richelieu*. Tapié's work identifies the Jansenism of Port-Royal with the jurist bourgeoisie, so prominent in French intellectual life, and sets it against the 'anti-intellectual' piety of the dévots, p. 435.
6. Catherine Maire, 'Port-Royal', p. 302-3; the comments on Sainte-Beuve and the Jansenists here are a translation and paraphrase of her essay.
7. Catherine Maire also makes this argument, 'Port-Royal', p. 40.
8. In *Jansenism in Seventeenth-Century France: Voices from the Wilderness* (Charlottesville University Press of Virginia, 1977), p. 14, Alexander Sedgwick declares that Angélique Arnauld and Saint-Cyran were the two most important influences upon the French Jansenist movement, an opinion

undoubtedly shared by many scholars.

9. Angélique Arnauld, 'Lettre à la reine-mère Anne d'Autriche', B.N. Ld4-298.
10. See Bruce L. Venarde, *Women's Monasticism and Medieval Society*, p. 12-13.
11. See *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, in Latin and English, edited and translated by Abbott Justin McCann, Monk of Ampleforth (London: Burns and Oates, 1969). For particular reference to Benedictine theories of prayer, see p. 69 (ch. 20), and p. 115 (ch. 49).
12. See *The Benedictine Rule*, above.
13. *Dictionnaire de la spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, 'Cisterciens', p. 715.
14. *Relation*, p. 33.
15. *Relation*, p. 178, n. 6.
16. *Relation*, p. 30-31.
17. Only ten of the Arnauld children survived. For information on the background of the Arnauld family, see Louis Cognet, *La Réforme de Port-Royal, 1591-1618*. (Paris: Éditions Sulliver, 1950), ch. 1.
18. *Relation*, Introduction, p. 20.
19. See Antoine Arnauld, *Le franc et véritable discours au roi sur le rétablissement qui luy est demandé pour les Jésuites* (Paris, 1602). Antoine Arnauld (1560-1619) was Mère Angélique's father; he is not to be confused with his youngest son, also Antoine and the more famous of the two.
20. See Chapter 3 of this study; also see T. Notter, 'Les contrats de dot des religieuses à Blois (1580-1670)', in *Revue Mabillon*, 2 (t. 63) 1991: 241-266.
21. Catherine Arnauld's wish to become a religious is noted in Cognet, *La réforme de Port-Royale*, p. 49; instead, she married Isaac Le Maitre and was separated from him some years later, p. 216.
22. *Relation*, Introduction, p. 21.
23. That Mère Angélique regarded this as a conscious deception on her family's part, and not merely an acceptance of the convention of changing names upon entry into religious life, is made clear in her *Relation*, p. 59-60, which states 'on me fit confirmer et changer le nom de Jacqueline en celui d'Angélique, afin de redemander des Bulles sous un autre nom.'
24. *Relation*, p. 29.
25. *Relation*, p. 32.

26. *Relation*, p. 31.
27. *Relation*, p. 35. Cognet suggests that the aunts were responsible for imparting this piece of information in his notes, p. 179, n. 15.
28. The account of Mère Angélique's illness and subsequent resolution is in *Relation*, p. 37-38
29. *Relation*, p. 34.
30. Bugnon-Secretan, *Mère Angélique Arnauld*, p. 25.
31. Marie de Beauvillier's reform of Montmartre was the first such reform in a women's abbey in Paris. See Godefroy de Paris, *Frères mineurs capucins*, p. 565-568.
32. This is a contentious point for which the historian has only anecdotal evidence, often from reformers who had an interest in exaggerating the decadence of French monastic life in order to underline the importance of their own work. Even if the majority of French convents were not licentious, however, it is quite possible that claustration was lax in the sense that nuns were allowed home for visits, and to receive visits from relatives. See Reynes, *Couvents des femmes*, Ch. 1, Yves Chaussy, *Les Bénédictines et la réforme catholique en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Editions de la Source, 1975), Ch. 1. Independent abbeys were probably especially prone to this disorder. Michel Germain's 1675 account of one, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Notre Dame de Soissons de l'ordre de Saint-Benoit* (Paris, 1675), shows that the abbey at Soissons permitted its nuns fine coquettish habits and family visits. It did not undertake serious reforms until 1646, under the abbess Henriette de Lorraine-Elbeuf. Even then, the abbey's authority was often threatened by outside interests; p. 277-279.
33. Preaching was not one of the usual functions of male monastics, who were not expected to evangelize the laity as part of their duties.
34. *Relation*, p. 44.
35. *Relation*, p. 46.
36. *Relation*, p. 47.
37. This 'journée de guichet' was not the only such incident to take place in French convents in the post-Tridentine reform era. Claude de Choiseul-Praslin, the abbess of Notre-Dame de Troyes, was 4 years old when she was placed in a convent. In the reform of her abbey she refused her father the maréchal de Choiseul right to enter cloister. See Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, II, 395, 406, 429, 430. Also see the account of her life in (Anon.) *Oraison funèbre de Mme Claude de Choiseul-Praslin*, written by an unknown Oratorian.
38. *Relation*, p. 65.

39. *Relation*, p. 66.
40. This seems apparent in her account of her sister's desire to enter the Carmelite convent in Paris, which made her afraid, p. 70, and in other references to other religious orders.
41. Eriau, *L'ancien Carmel*, p. 224-25.
42. *Relation*, p. 98.
43. *Relation*, p. 117.
44. *Relation*, p. 55.
45. *Relation*, p. 51.
46. *Relation*, p. 46. She was also angry that the Capuchin in whom she had confided her wish to reform had told the Cistercian general when she had asked him not to do so, fearing that he would merely tell her father and put a stop to any further action. This was, in effect, what happened, although her plans for reform went forward.
47. *Relation*, p. 98.
48. She also thought, she wrote, of joining the Capucines or the Carmelites in Flanders, *Relation*, p. 115.
49. The nuns from Maubuisson were invited to Port-Royal after Mère Angélique's tenure there between 1618-1623. The royal abbey's directors thought that she had permitted too many unendowed girls to enter as novices and insisted that they should be removed. Mère Angélique brought them to Port-Royal des Champs in 1623, after receiving the agreement of the women there, because there was no where else for them to go. See *Relation*, p. 103-104.
50. See *Relation*, p. 107, 111, for nuns' deaths. There were cells for only twelve nuns in the dormitories (see above). Moreover, the convent's annual revenues were 6,000 livres, enough to support no more than twenty nuns, p. 107. Also see Geneviève Reynes, *Couvents des femmes*, p. 99-102, for references to the unhealthy conditions common in 'reformed' convents, where warmth, adequate food, and above all personal cleanliness were sometimes perceived as luxuries unsuitable for women whose lives were given over to penitence.
51. *Relation*, p. 118.
52. Eriau, *L'Ancien Carmel*, p. 33.
53. The story of Maubuisson is recounted in Mère Angélique's *Relation*, p. 73-75, and in greater detail in Louis Cognet's *Mère Angélique et Saint François de Sales, 1618-1626*, (Paris: Sulliver, 1951) p. 91-97. It was Mère Angélique's brother, Henry Arnauld, then in good standing with the Court and king, who obtained this favour from the king.

54. *Relation*, p. 112, 117.
55. *Relation*, p. 114.
56. *Relation*, p. 119-120.
57. Later historians have been divided upon the subject of Zamet. In *Sébastien Zamet, évêque-duc de Langres, pair de France (1588-1655): Sa vie et ses oeuvres. Les origines du jansénisme* (Paris 1912), L.N. Prunel made a concerted effort to 'rehabilitate' him after many years of Jansenist-inspired attacks. Bremond shared Prunel's views: 'De Zamet nous parlerons longuement plus tard', he wrote in *Histoire littéraire* (IV, p. 90-91), 'et nous n'en dirons que de bien.' But his behaviour to Mère Angélique was undoubtedly, by modern standards, questionable: his refusal to allow her to write to Jeanne de Chantal makes little sense from either a humane or disciplinary perspective. Like Bérulle with the Carmelites, however, he seems to have acted within his rights from a canonical point of view. See Augustin Gazier's *Jeanne de Chantal et Angélique Arnauld d'après leur correspondance (1620-1641): Etude historique et critique suivie des Lettres de ces deux Mères et d'une lettre de Saint-Cyran à Mme de Chantal*, (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1915), p. 33-38, for a more severe judgment of Zamet, well-supported by documentary evidence.
58. *Relation*, p. 125, 126.
59. *Relation*, p. 117-118.
60. *Relation*, p. 129.
61. *Relation*, p. 106.
62. Jean Racine, *Abrégé de l'histoire de Port-Royal*, ed. by A. Gazier, (Paris: Societe Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie, 1908) p. 5-6.
63. *Relation*, p. 129-130.
64. Cognet, *Mère Angélique et Saint François de Sales*, p. 102. Cognet for once gives no source for this citation.
65. *Relation*, p. 127.
66. Cited in Cognet, *Mère Angélique et Saint François*, p. 246, from L.-N. Prunel, *Lettres spirituelles de Sébastien Zamet* (Paris, 1912), p. 167
67. *Relation*, p. 126, 127.
68. Eriau, *L'Ancien Carmel*, p. 256, from Montis, *La vie de la vénérable Mère Anne de Jésus*, (Paris, 1788), p. 49-50.
69. Bugnon-Secretan, *La Mère Angélique*, makes this point, p. 52.

70. The Cistercians are thought to have introduced the practice of 'elevating' the Host at Mass before the year 1210, an innovation that implied a special devotion and called attention to its importance; see Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 326, n. 93. Bynum also says that the cult of the Host 'grew in the later Middle Ages' (p. 75); it was not initially, then, a part of Benedictine monasticism.

71. Barbara Newman makes a distinction between the patristic 'virago' model of the holy woman, admired for embracing supposedly masculine virtues, and the medieval 'bride of Christ', admired for what were then thought to be feminine qualities. See Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, p. 2-3.

72. Racine, *Abrégé*, p. 18.

73. Louis Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 161. An account of the events from the Oratoire's point of view occurs in Batterel's life of P. Claude Séguenot, an Oratorian who wrote a defense of M. Agnès's work entitled *Élévations à Jésus-Christ Notre-Seigneur au Très Saint Sacrement, contenant divers usages de grâce sur ses perfections* (1635). It appeared in the form of a brochure at the end of a book by Saint-Cyran, *Discussion sommaire d'un livre intitulé: Le Chapelet secret du Saint-Sacrement*. Séguenot had been one of the few people to read M. Agnès's book before it was printed.

74. There is some disagreement about whether it was Bellegarde or Gondi who began the assault on the *Chapelet*. Mère Angélique clearly states, *Relation*, p. 138, that it was Bellegarde who set off the dispute. She was probably partial to Gondi; but as Gondi was likely to suffer most if a serious religious quarrel broke out in his diocese, especially since he was also the nominal superior of Port-Royal de Paris, it seems unlikely that he would have done something so counter to his interests and reputation as to denounce the *Chapelet*, unless afflicted by some passion. As far as passions were concerned, it was Bellegarde who was most likely to have suffered from jealousy of Gondi, he had been embroiled since 1622 in a dispute with Gondi because he had not wished to see Paris made into an archdiocese, and he had not prevailed. For an outline of this quarrel, see Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate*, p. 41.

75. Jesuit theologians were not usually hostile to works of mystical devotion *per se*, but they did tend to distrust any of the more pessimistic and demanding forms of devotion which implied that the desire for salvation was an unworthy motive for human beings. See previous chapters. Étienne Binet's authorship of the counter-pamphlet, *Rémarques*, is disputed, for it was published anonymously. Batterel accepted it, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 161, but Bremond is not certain. *Histoire littéraire*, IV, p. 211. Binet was certainly not anti-mystical; he translated the strongly mystical *Breve compendio*, by Achille Gagliardi and Isabelle Bellinzaga; see Bremond, XI, p. 25, 26.

76. *Relation*, p. 139.

77. See Claude Lancelot, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Port-Royal* (Utrecht, 1740), I, p. 397, 398; also see Prunel, *Zamet*, p. 242-248, and Angélique de Saint-Jean Arnauld, *La relation de l'origine et de la querelle du Chapelet secret* in the comprehensive 'mémoire' of the series, *Mémoires pour*

servir à l'histoire de Port-Royal et la vie de la révérende Mère Angélique... (Utrecht, 1742; 3 vols.), vol. I, p. 456. Bremond points out in his *Histoire littéraire*, IV, p. 211-212, note 2, that the pamphlet was in fact condemned for being too mystical. But in the nineteenth century, he says, the work was occasionally accused of being Jansenist (i.e. anti-frequent communion), see *ibid.*, p. 208

78. Dupin, *Histoire ecclésiastique du XVIIe siècle*, [n.p.; n.d.]; cited Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 160.

79. See Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, XI, p. 8.

80. *Relation*, p. 136.

81. *Relation*, p. 140-141: she wrote that she feared his strictness, 'quoique je le révérasse extrêmement, et que Dieu m'avait donné la même de la véritable dévotion et de la vie religieuse.'

82. *Lettres inédites de Jean Duvergier de Haurane, Abbé de Saint-Cyran*, edited by Annie Barnes (Paris: J. Vrin, 1962), no. 33, p. 108. Brackets here indicate portions where the exact text is in dispute.

83. This did not prevent early Christians, for example, from taking the rite so seriously that they deferred confession until the moment of death, for they were allowed absolution and the penance that followed only once in their lives; this did not prevent them from communicating in the meantime. See L. Braeckmans, *Confession et communion au moyen âge et au Concile de Trente* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1971), p. 3. The *Dictionnaire de la spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, 'Penitence', says that the Council, in stating that the sacrament was the 'cause efficace' of the remission of sins had changed the declarative character of absolution taught by the first scholastic masters

84. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, points out that the Council of Trent did not pronounce upon the sufficiency of attrition, leaving pastors at a loss. The 'probabilist' solution developed by the Jesuit Barthélemy of Medina temporarily solved the problem; it stated that the priest could give absolution if he thought the sinner had probably repented. See Dagens, p. 95-96.

85. Gazier, *Jeanne de Chantal et Angélique Arnauld*, Appendice, 'Lettres et billets de Sainte Chantal, de la Mère Angélique, et de l'abbé de Saint-Cyran', No. 1, August 1620, p. 131

86. Saint-Cyran, *Lettres inédites*, #44, p. 127.

87. *Relation*, p. 142.

88. Some 'calomniateurs' have suggested that Saint-Cyran was the 'ennemi des confessions et communions', but this is too strong. He did, however, regard them with a particular scrupulousness that was questioned by his opponents. See Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, IV, p. 213-214, n. 1. There is no doubt, however, that he did not encourage Mère Angélique to confess or communicate as often as she should have done by conventual custom.

89. Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 'Canons on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist', (Session XIII, Nov. 10, 1551): 'that so great a sacrament [the Eucharist] may not be unworthily received..this holy Council ordains and declares that sacramental confession must necessarily be made beforehand by those whose conscience is burdened by mortal sin..'. p. 271
90. See Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, IX, pp. 119, 124 for comments regarding the spread of the practice of frequent communion. Jean Eudes, born in 1601, was to say that few people in his native parish of Ri in Normandy communicated more than once a year. See J. Eudes, *Oeuvres complètes*, (published by PP. J. Dauphin and Charles Lebrun, Vannes, Lafolye, 1905-1911, 12 vol), *Journal de P. Eudes*, T. XII.
91. With the increasing exaltation of the Host in the Middle Ages, 'il s'ensuit que personne n'ose plus l'approcher sans crainte et tremblement, que la manducation de l'hostie devient en pratique le privilège du prêtre et que la masse du peuple qui communi très rarement en dépit des canons se contente d'adorer à distance face contre terre ce symbole vivant de la présence éternelle du Transcendant Incarné...'; Chaunu, *Église, Culture et Société*, p. 32.
92. He was not always consistent in his attitudes or words on this subject. He told a correspondent who may have been Jeanne de Chantal, 'C'est assez que votre coeur parmi tant de peines d'esprit soit exempt de criminelle et de tout mauvais consentement; c'est de quoi je vous assure, et que vous pouvez continuer comme de coutume à communier avec confiance et [avec] humilité.' Saint-Cyran, *Lettres inédites*, Letter no. 6, p. 39, Oct. 1637. The letter was not previously known and its provenance is still uncertain. Until it was found, Saint-Cyran was believed to have written only one letter to Jeanne de Chantal. See Chapter 7 of this study.
93. *Relation*, p. 68; p. 60-61.
94. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, IV, p. 195.
95. Saint-Cyran, *Lettres inédites*, Letter no. 128, August 4, 1632, p. 355.
96. Saint-Cyran, *Lettres inédites*, Letter no. 3, [October?] 1640: A un Ecclésiastique, de la séparation du monde, p. 33. The editor speculates that this letter was addressed to Antoine de Rebours.
97. Richelieu (or his secretaries) recorded this suspicion in his *Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu*, T. XXV (1629), p. 58-60.
98. For a summary of Saint-Cyran's relations with Richelieu, see Mousnier, *L'Homme rouge*, Chapter VII: Le recours à Dieu (1636-1642).
99. Marillac to Richelieu, no. 72, Feb. 15, 1629, *Les papiers de Richelieu*, IV (1629), p. 104.
100. Richelieu's *Mémoires* (Michaud et Poujoulat, 2nd Series), T. VIII, p. 308, give an account of his own view of the events of the Day of the Dupes: 'Sa Majesté...se résolut de le défendre [Richelieu] contre la maile de ceux qui la portaient à ce mauvais dessein. commande au Cardinal de le suivre.

quelque instance qu'il lui fit de lui permettre de se retirer pour ne point déplaire à la Reine sa mère, et mande au garde des sceaux de Marillac de le venir trouver. Le garde des sceaux qui, sur le bruit du grand éclat qu'avait fait la Reine, et la créance qu'il avait que le Cardinal eût obtenu conge et s'en allait coucher à Pontoise, pensait avoir gagné la partie, s'en alla, dès le jour même, à Glatigny, proche de Versailles; le soir, à son coucher, il reçut la désagréable nouvelle que le Cardinal était auprès du Roi, qui non seulement lui avait fait bonne chère, mais l'avait logé en une chambre au-dessous de la sienne, et le matin en son réveil en reçut une qui lui fut d'autant plus fâcheuse qu'elle était plus éloignée de son espérance, qui fut que Sa Majesté lui envoya faire commandement de lui renvoyer les sceaux, et lui donna des gardes pour s'assurer de sa personne.

101. The details of this event are recounted in Mongrédien's *Journée des dupes*.
102. Sedgwick, *Jansenism in Seventeenth-Century France*, p. 26.
103. *Relation écrite*, p. 128.
104. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, IV, p. 210-211.
105. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, IV, p. 210-211.
106. The complete title of this work is *Apologie pour H.L. Ch. de la Rocheposay, évêque de Poitiers, contre ceux qui disent qu'il n'est pas permis aux ecclésiastiques d'avoir recours aux armes en cas de nécessité*; see Bremond, IV, p. 51, who calls it a 'livre absurde'.
107. Bremond, who clearly dislikes Saint-Cyran, is not the most reliable commentator upon the abbé's activities, but his account furnishes rare anecdotes about the director of Port-Royal in his more foolish moods. See *Histoire littéraire*, T. 4; the entire volume is an extended discussion of the abbé and his influence at Port-Royal.
108. The account of Gaston's marriage and its results is taken from Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, pp. 33-36. See also Blet, *Le clergé du Grand Siècle en ses assemblées, 1615-1715* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1995), Chapter 3, 'Le mariage de Gaston d'Orléans.'
109. Richelieu would punish the king's confessor Nicolas Caussin for similar interference by having him exiled. See Camille Rochemonteix, *Nicolas Caussin, Confesseur de Louis XIII* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1911). Caussin's only other crime was to have too much influence over the king, and to disagree with Richelieu over the role of a king's confessor, which the minister saw as largely ceremonial, p. 281.
110. Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, p. 27.
111. Saint-Cyran, *Lettres inédites*, text of 'Vie d'Abraham', Ch. XII, p. 385.
112. *Relation*, p. 173-175.

113. Sedgwick, *Jansenism in Seventeenth-Century France*, p. 30.
114. Geoffrey Treasure makes this point in *Mazarin*, p. 379, n. 11.
115. Sedgwick, *Jansenism*, p. 30.
116. Pierre Coste, *Rapports de Saint-Vincent de Paul avec l'abbé de Saint-Cyran*, (Toulouse: Imprimerie Saint-Cyprien, 1914), pp. 10-11.
117. Pierre Coste, *Rapports*, p. 15. A deposition signed by a bishop and missionary named M. Palu at the time of M. Vincent's beatification in 1668 declared, 'M. Vincent de Paul...me parla fort longuement des pernicieuses doctrines de l'abbé de Saint-Cyran en matière de foi', an incident which had occurred in 1660. This may, however, have been an example of seventeenth-century revisionism in the interests of 'political correctness', to protect the reputation of a candidate for sainthood.
118. Condren, *Lettres*, no. 54, June [?] 1636, p. 169.
119. Pierre Coste. *Rapports de saint Vincent de Paul avec l'abbé de Saint-Cyran*, p. 19. See also Lancelot, *Mémoires touchant la vie de M. de S. Cyran* (Cologne, 1738), t. II, p. 301.
120. Raoul Allier. *La cabale*, p. 165-66. Allier bases his suggestion on a passage cited in Sainte-Beuve's work, *Port-Royal*, t. 1, p. 494, itself drawn from P. Rapin, the 17th-century Jesuit and author of a memoir in which he attacked the rise of Jansenism, *Mémoires du P. René Rapin, sur l'église et la société*, (Lyon and Paris: Librairie Catholique Emmanuel Vitte, 1972), II, p. 267
121. Coste, *Rapports*, pp. 9, 16-17.

6/ SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

'Tant il y a, que voyant une Religieuse par le monde et dans les affayres, il s'an scandalisera...tant y a, que les protestans et les libertins aurons dequoy censurer les clostures de nos Monasteres'

Jeanne de Chantal founded an important order and is acknowledged to have been of critical importance to the development of Salesian and *dévote* piety, but she has seldom attracted more than passing attention from women's historians. Her letters are mostly notes, business letters about times, places, small events, not concerned with her emotional or spiritual life. Her devotional life seems too harmonious, too free from dispute or darkness to appeal to modern taste, and the fact that she was widely praised for her obedience by her hagiographers is also a mark against her. Although she is often portrayed as a woman who represented French piety at its most orthodox, this is a distortion of the reality of her life and her spirituality. Both she and François de Sales were to be associated with the *pur amour* controversies of the 1630s and then with the quietist controversies of the 1680s. Besides her relationship with François de Sales, she also had an important friendship with Mère Angélique of Port-Royal, through whom she came to know Saint-Cyran. She thus encountered his Augustinian theology in its earliest form. Partly through her interest in the French Carmelites, and partly as a result of François de Sales's friendship with Pierre de Bérulle, she was also touched by the piety of the *École française*. Finally, François de Sales, anticipating his death, was to place her and her order under the protection of Vincent de Paul, whose populist adaptation of a mixture of Bérullian and Salesian themes was to spread throughout France.¹ She was thus a point of contact

* Mgr Denis Marquemont, *Mémoire concernant la Congrégation de la Visitation*, in *Oeuvres de Saint François de Sales*, XXV, Dec. 20, 1616, p. 362-367.

CHAPTER 6

between most of the major *foyers* of French piety in the seventeenth century, and this is why she is important to this study.

Jeanne was in fact a more complex and indeed a more troubled woman than her admirers liked to admit, plagued by religious doubts in her lifetime and touched by a major controversy after her death. In her relations with François de Sales, she was not the victim of male ambition, but after his death she suffered because of her value as an emblem of spiritual integrity, as she too came to be caught up in the battles between Saint-Cyran and the bishop of Langres. Thanks to François' reputation for saintly orthodoxy, her order was transformed after her death from a haven for devout women who wished to retreat from the world temporarily, into a prison for those women who failed to conform to the capricious expectations of the state.

Early Life and First Meeting

The most famous of all dévotes was not a ligueur. Jeanne de Chantal was born in 1572 to a Parlementaire family of Dijon. Her parents and her husband all came from families loyal to the crown in a city and province which were violently pro-Ligue. The Parlement of Dijon was split into two factions as a result, with those who were loyal to the crown fleeing the city, while the Ligueur faction remained. Her father founded an alternative Parlement of loyalists at Flavigny, having sent his younger daughter away to Poitou for her protection. Her mother died young and she was raised by her father and an aunt, until she married at the age of twenty.

Jeanne and François (as both were to be canonized, this is a correct if somewhat casual way to refer to them) first met in 1604 when Sales went to preach in Dijon for Lent. It is said that they recognised each other from their visions, without ever having met before.² In 1604, Jeanne de Chantal

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

was a widow attempting to extricate herself from the control of a too-demanding spiritual director. She was emerging from a spiritual crisis. Her husband's death in 1601 had driven her into a state of despair and she had sought the advice of a monk who became her spiritual director. He made her promise to obey him, never to change her director, to keep his advice to her a secret, and never to consult anyone but him. He gave her a number of pious exercises to perform, prayers, rituals, and observances that weighed heavily upon her. Her situation at that time, in the first years of her widowhood, was further complicated by the fact that her husband had once extracted a promise from her that whichever of them outlived the other should dedicate his life to God. Moreover, she was for some years involved in a curious family melodrama: after her husband's death, her father-in-law blackmailed her into keeping house for himself and his mistress by threatening to re-marry and so disinherit her children if she refused. Torn by the conflicting religious, emotional, and domestic demands upon her time, she was in need of advice and reassurance. She told the nuns of the Visitation many years later, 'Hélas!...je désirais un directeur, et demandais ce que je ne savais pas... Mon Dieu, je vous conjure...de me donner un homme pour me guider spirituellement.'³

It seemed to her that François de Sales might be able to help her: '[elle] connut, au premier regard qu'elle jeta sur lui que c'était celui-là même que Dieu lui avait montré pour directeur'⁴ But she was afraid to break her promises to her director. She confided her dilemma to her confessor (a confessor and a director were not necessarily the same thing) who told her that it was God's will that she should place herself under the guidance of the bishop of Geneva.⁵ When she finally brought herself to speak to him, he told her that the vows she had made to her director were not binding and that they were of a kind that served only to increase scruples and anxiety, rather than to lead one on

CHAPTER 6

the path to perfection. He agreed to become her adviser in words that seem rather self-conceited today:

Dieu, ce me semble, m'a donné à vous; je m'en assure toutes les heures plus fort. C'est tout ce que je vous puis dire: recommandez-moi à votre bon Ange.⁶

He did not, in general, believe that promises to spiritual directors need be binding when the relationship became impossible, as a letter he wrote to Mère Angélique on the subject indicates.⁷ He was eventually to tell her that she should consider herself free to seek out spiritual directors whose intentions agreed with hers, provided she had first examined her intentions to be certain they were good. His flexibility over matters of this kind were part of the reason for his success as a director. In some circles, they were to win him a reputation for being too tolerant.

François de Sales

In spite of his gentleness, however, François de Sales was a man with a long experience of religious controversy. A Savoyard, he was to spend the better part of his career in a region where the Reformed religion had won many converts:

on n'eût pas trouvé une centaine de fidèles sur une population de plusieurs milliers d'âmes. Des temples la plupart détruits ou dépouillés; plus, absolument plus de croix, plus d'autels... Partout des ministres, comme on les appelle, c'est-à-dire des maîtres d'hérésie, pervertissant les familles, insinuant leur doctrine, envahissant les chaires.⁸

He was made bishop of Geneva in 1602, but the title was purely a formal one, as Geneva was by this time entirely Protestant. From both a religious and political perspective, as Broutin informs us, his diocese lacked unity. Control of temporal affairs in part of the territory belonged to the French crown; another part was controlled by Savoy.⁹ The sectarian peace Henri IV was able to impose on his Protestant and Catholic subjects was not to be achieved by the duke of Savoy. The larger part of his

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

diocese was dominated by Calvinism.¹⁰ The duke had only been able to win back parts of his territory from the Bernese on condition that there would be no return to Catholic worship there, although the condition was soon to be overridden.¹¹ Between 1594 and 1598, during a mission to Chablais, some historians have said that he relied in part on the assistance of the temporal authorities to win back the allegiance of the Calvinists in his diocese, although this is disputed. In the end, his 'charity and theological science' were to persuade three thousand people to abjure during Lent.¹² François de Sales was, in fact, what many critics have suggested the dévots were: a priest employed by his sovereign to impose Catholicism upon a somewhat reluctant populace, by whatever means possible. As a result he was perhaps less a divided man than so many of them were. The restoration of church structure mattered more in Savoy than a strict legalism regarding canon law (a characteristic of French canonists¹³). The ambivalence of the relationship with the French crown was not a problem from which he suffered in his relations with the duke of Savoy. For him, Calvinism was the enemy, at least in his own diocese, and not the civil authorities. This may have been one reason why he was unable to foresee the problems that awaited him when he turned his attentions to France

Profoundly important, both for its later impact upon the Visitation's role in French life and for an understanding of François's early attitudes, was the fact that his theological views had developed under the tutelage of the Jesuits. Early in his career as a scholar, he had experienced a crisis of faith over the problem that has occupied the attention of so many theologians and troubled Christians in general, the problem of predestination. He was unable to accept the Augustinian and Thomistic exposition of the issue. Augustine is well-known for his view that human souls are predestined for either heaven or hell; that human beings cannot, by their own efforts, achieve their salvation, and that

CHAPTER 6

divine grace is essential for it. Rome, however, had never formally ruled in favour of the Augustinian view, and there was, as a result, some room for disagreement among theologians. While studying law in Padua in 1588, François de Sales discovered the work of the Jesuit Molina (d. 1600, not to be confused with Molinos, a later writer) on the subject of predestination and grace. Molina had suggested that men were saved not *sine meritis praevisis*, but *post praevisa merita*, that is, not without God's foreknowledge of their merits, but after their merits had been foreseen¹⁴ The importance of this distinction, difficult for moderns to grasp, was that it preserved the possibility of earned salvation and thus the possibility of the free choice of virtue.

It was a position that came to be generally accepted by Jesuit theologians¹⁵, but it was never popular among strict Augustinians, who believed that Molina's views diminished the importance of God's grace in salvation. Molinism was against the general tendencies of seventeenth-century theology in France among both protestants and Catholics: it was too anthropocentric. It was the presence of Molinist views in some Jesuit theologians, especially in Italy and Spain, that was to bring so much criticism upon Jesuit theology later in the century. Molinism was thought to encourage 'laxism' among the faithful, perhaps because it might lead people to think too much of heaven and hell, and not enough of God. A further difficulty was that, although from a twentieth-century standpoint it might seem optimistic, Molinism could not appeal to those people, like Martin Luther, who had a strong sense of their own sinfulness and a belief that their own efforts could never be sufficient to win them a place in heaven. François never changed his mind: in a letter to the Jesuit theologian Lessius in 1618, he continued to support the Molinist view of predestination¹⁶ His

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

adherence to Molinism, however, set him apart from the main currents of French theological writing and might not have been possible for a French student of theology.

• Salesian Piety

Besides his experience with converting Protestants, François de Sales was also experienced in that other great project of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, reforming monasteries. The monastery of the Filles-Dieu, once a refuge for 'femmes de mauvaise vie' and later to decline to a population of twelve women, was brought back to life by him so successfully that it would contain as many as sixty women. A letter written to them in 1602 shows that he had not yet then discovered the new piety, the *vie intérieure*. His exhortations here concern not their prayers nor the state of their innermost souls, but the outward habits of themselves and the boarders they took in for money

Mes chères Seurs, on m'a dit qu'il y a en vostre mayson des pensionnettes particulieres et des propriétés, dont les malades ne sont pas esgalement secourues, et les saines ont des particularités aux viandes et habits sans nécessité, et que les entretiens et recreations n'y sont pas fort devotes.¹⁷

The remedy, he said, was to remember that they had left 'l'Egypte mondaine', that they were in the 'desert de la Religion', and they should not 'recherchés plus les moyens mondains. esperes fermement en Dieu; *il vous nourrira* sans doute, quand il devoit faire pleuvoir la manne.'¹⁸

The change in his thought was to come swiftly, although its results were not to be fully evident for many years. It has been said that François' discovery of Jeanne coincided with his discovery of Teresa and brought him to a new understanding of inward piety.¹⁹ Upon going to Paris on a mission for the Duc de Savoie in 1602, he had his first encounter with the writings of Teresa of Avila. Her works were not yet well-known in France, and they made a great impression upon him. He was to meet Jeanne de Chantal less than two years later. He was not yet fully formed as a writer

CHAPTER 6

and his own work underwent a change in the aftermath of this dual encounter. His two most famous works of devotion, *L'Introduction à la vie dévote* (1608) and *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* (1612), so important to the development of the archetypal dévoté, were both written in the light of his experience as Jeanne de Chantal's director, although the former was in fact written for another of his dirigées. It could thus be said that Jeanne de Chantal's presence in his life made his reputation. Without these two books, he would almost certainly have sunk into obscurity upon his death, unknown except to specialists.

He was, according to some commentators, more a 'doctor',²⁰ learned and accomplished in theology, than a mystic with direct experience of the *voie intérieure*. But at least one of his biographers has suggested that in his friendship with Jeanne de Chantal, he became not merely a doctor of mysticism, but a practising mystic himself, a man who passed through the various stages of the *voie intérieure* until he was absorbed by the presence of God.²¹ Until their meeting, he had been preoccupied mostly with religious controversy, a natural enough concern for a Catholic bishop in a protestant region. His writings reflected this, for at that time (in 1604) they consisted of a mixture of controversial pieces (often printed versions of his sermons) intended to win converts, with occasional excursions into the elucidation of doctrine. He had at that time, by his own admission, little knowledge of mysticism, of the intense personal relationship with God that some people claimed to experience.

• Spiritual direction

The relationship between male spiritual directors and their female dirigées has been the object of much attention in recent years. Some historians believe it was inherently unequal, the dirigée in a

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

position of spiritual or at least emotional dependency upon her director. Others have suggested that in such relationships, a kind of reversal sometimes occurred in which the woman became a 'spiritual mother' who might inspire and in a sense direct the man who was ostensibly guiding her.²² This is not even a particularly recent perception; Bremond, in the 1920s, pointed out the phenomenon as one which he had come upon repeatedly in his readings of directors and the women whom they directed.²³ The relations between François de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal cannot be satisfactorily assigned to either category. She found in him a refuge from her previous, eccentric director, whose name is unknown to history and who had kept her in a state of 'anxiété perpetuelle'.²⁴ Yet she was in many respects very dependent upon François and his advice: before they met she was in great emotional trouble, and after his death she was seldom to find spiritual peace. He too depended upon her friendship; he was inspired by the depth of her piety, and his life and work would have been very different without her.

His first long letter to Jeanne de Chantal, written in May 1604 shortly after their first meeting, is noteworthy for several reasons. He was very anxious that she not become obsessed by 'scruples'; he wished to give her 'sainte liberté'; he wished to help guide her devotional life. It is its language that comes as most as a surprise, in the midst of the other letters of the years in which it was written. It is allusive and poetic; writing of her wish to achieve Christian perfection, he told her, 'Madame, ce desir doit estre en vous comme les orangers de la coste marine de Genes, qui sont presque toute l'année chargés de fruitz, de fleurs, et de feuilles tout ensemble...'²⁵ It is, in one sense at least, a kind of love letter, and it is difficult not to think that this transforming friendship was, for him, an affair of the heart. His letters to men, his letters to other women, are seldom as lyrical. A letter to Madame

CHAPTER 6

Brulart, written the same day, is of interest because its tone is so different. Here, however, the influence of Teresa, or rather of the *vie intérieure*, is suddenly apparent: he tells her that she must take up the practise of meditation, advice that was absent from his letter to the Filles-Dieu monastery. He mentions Luis de Granada and several other 'spirituel' writers whose work was mainly concerned with the inner life; allusions to Granada appeared in earlier letters, but not with such detailed advice about the importance of meditation. The *dévote* was beginning to make her appearance: 'Les moyens de parvenir a la perfection sont divers selon la diversité des vocations; car les Religieux, les vefves et mariés doivent tous rechercher cette perfection, mais non pas par mesme moyen'.²⁶ She must remember, he tells her, to render her devotion in such a way as to make it pleasing to others. 'Les malades aymeront vostre devotion silz en sont charitablement consolés'.²⁷

When Jeanne and François de Sales began their correspondance in 1604, the bishop of Geneva was already an experienced director of souls, but had little knowledge of Teresan spirituality. He did not immediately attempt to lead Jeanne de Chantal to the 'vie intérieure' that was to become such a part of her life and his. He began by reassuring her that Teresa of Avila had had one 'director' but many advisers, his first mention of Teresa in any of his work.²⁸ It was to be one of many, perhaps suggesting that he saw a connection of sorts between the two women. He gave Jeanne a surprisingly elaborate prayer-plan, with prayers suited to the time of day and the season. He told her that she might consider the application of the "discipline", the tool for self-flagellation that raises eyebrows today, but warned her that this must be done with moderation. He seems to have sensed that she required not great sternness, but confidence in God, and treated her accordingly. He told her to take no heed of the voices of temptation to sin and despair that might press upon her from time. Instead,

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

she should understand that these were a sign of the devil's (le malin) displeasure, a recognition that she was beginning to advance. In terms that were characteristic of the new piety of the dévots, he told her that she should not attempt to do battle with either her reason or her will as weapons. *Faites qu'en lieu de disputer avec l'ennemi par le discours, votre partie affective s'élançe de vive force sur lui...il faut se revancher avec des affections et non pas avec des raysons, avec des passions et non pas avec des considerations.*²⁹ Even in the first of his letters to her the rarefied theology of the period began to develop a definitive moral character as he came to understand how to apply it to specific human situations.

François de Sales' direction of Jeanne de Chantal was a new departure in the history of French spiritual life, intended to encourage a woman to understand and aspire to a particular kind of relationship with God. His direction therefore was not exclusively moral. Many spiritual directors were content to guide the reading of their charges and to insist upon the kind of "scrupulosity" which Jeanne had found so painful, with a number of pious practices, strict examination of conscience, and constant exhortations to be wary of occasions of sin. It was unusual, in 1604, for a woman not yet vowed to any form of monastic life to be encouraged to consider the devout life as something that extended well beyond the moral realm. But François wished to encourage in his dirigée the kind of piety that he had just begun to study in Teresa of Avila, and as they became more familiar with each other, his letters to her were increasingly concerned with the pursuit of God and not merely the pursuit of goodness.

From the beginning he frequently reminded his charge of her freedom, that she had the liberty of one of God's children, as her biographer put it. Early in their correspondance he wrote to her.

CHAPTER 6

Je vous laisse l'esprit de liberté, non pas celui qui forclôt l'obéissance, car c'est la liberté de la chair; mais celui qui forclôt la contrainte et le scrupule ou empressement.³⁰

Scruples of this kind were also to afflict Mère Angélique. They were, as François himself believed, particularly common among women.³¹ Jeanne de Chantal suffered from a haunting sense that she was not fulfilling all her religious duties, and her new adviser made a special point of reassuring her. In 1604, he wrote her a letter saying that the obligations of pious practise were less important than those of righteousness and charity. She should not be so anxious to carry out all the tasks he had set out for her that she forgot more important considerations:

Si vous aymes bien fort l'obeissance et soumission, je veux que s'il vous vient occasion juste ou charitable de laisser vos exercices, ce vous soit une espèce d'obeissance, et que ce manquement soit suppléé par l'amour.³²

This was an important moment in their of their friendship and perhaps also in the history of Catholic piety, at least in France. After François, and in imitation of him, spiritual directors were much more likely to tell their (female) charges not to be excessively concerned with the minutiae of religious obligation. Vincent de Paul was to give Louise de Marillac similar advice.³³ It was instructions like this that were to win François the reputation of being an easy, or 'lâche' director of souls. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. He wanted his charges to be free to live the apostolic life, and this they could achieve only by freedom from the encumbrance of multiple devotions, from the endless small observances that made scrupulous souls nervous and distracted easy-going ones from their real duties.

The Visitation

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

The Visitation was originally conceived as a way to contain and develop the kind of devotion that François saw in Jeanne de Chantal. The Visitation de Marie, the order that they founded together, represented, in some respects, a distillation of some of the more striking features of Carmelite practice. François, like Bérulle, admired the 'interiority' of the Teresan reform, the way it concentrated on the duty of self-abnegation rather than mere observation. But when the Visitation was first established, he understood little of Carmelite spirituality apart from this point. He added instead a curiously original quality that reflected the originality of its founders. The Carmelite Rule was too strict, and the nuns' style too foreign, to appeal to a broad segment of society. What he appears to have wanted, to judge by the order's Rule, was a house of religion whose devotions were Gallicized in the manner of Port-Royal (it must be remembered that Mère Angélique too was an admirer of Teresa of Avila). Rosaries, set prayers for a particular time of day, ceremony, would be kept to a minimum. It would dispense with the clausura and singing of offices typical of enclosed convents. The primitive Visitation's unusual flexibility regarding enclosure and the day-to-day practice of religion was in part practical, intended to accommodate the family obligations and the health of women like Jeanne, who could not have joined a stricter order like the Carmelites. But the Visitation's conception as a house of prayer in which clausura was to be mitigated was not a purely practical matter; it was a spiritual one as well. Carmelite spirituality was bound by many rules, and in defiance of Teresa's intentions, its public face was very ceremonial and elaborate. In spite of Teresa's mixed feelings about physical mortifications (as distinct from simple austerity), the order's nuns tended to punish themselves enthusiastically.³⁴

CHAPTER 6

The Visitation was supposed to be different, its piety more in keeping with Teresian spirituality, more truly inward, and, an important point, more French. In the primitive Rule of the Visitation women would not be expected to take solemn vows and would be free to come and go from their religious houses with the permission of their superiors. They would be encouraged both to pray and to perform works of charity among the poor, while regarding prayer as their principal function. Nor would they be encouraged to take up the practice of severe physical mortification or austerity, a truly novel innovation for such houses.³⁵ Convents for women tended to fall into two categories in the early seventeenth century: they were either lax in their regimens, or severe to the point of threatening the health and well-being of their inmates.³⁶ The Visitation would encourage neither extreme.

The flexibility of the Visitation's primitive constitutions was not wholly new. François de Sales cited Scripture and the early Fathers - and Mothers - of the Church when he was called upon to defend his new congregation. He also cited examples drawn from contemporary and near-contemporary Italian congregations of women which were permitted a more open mode of life, both by the tacit permission of diocesan clergy and flexible interpretation of canon law. But experiments of this kind, it must always be remembered, had been accepted on sufferance: they had never received full canonical approval, although many had been given what was known as 'pontifical' approval.³⁷ In such cases the presiding Pope would give his approval to an order, company, or congregation, while existing canon law remained unaffected by the concession.³⁸

More important than the attitudes of Rome, for the fate of the Visitation and similar orders, were the attitudes of the French. The first house of the new congregation was established at Annecy

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

in 1610, under the constitutions and rules first drawn up by the bishop of Geneva and by Jeanne de Chantal. There, in Savoy, the order was safe from the perpetual battles waged between the Crown, the French hierarchy, and Rome. Once the order attempted to move into France, the situation was quite different. It was unfortunate that they attempted this second foundation in Lyon, a city that still had a strong Protestant presence. The city's archbishop, Denis Simon de Marquemont had once had ultramontane inclinations, having briefly supported the claims of the Cardinal de Bourbon to the throne as Charles X, although he became a loyal servant to Henri IV.³⁹ Perhaps more significant was the fact that Marquemont over time was increasingly involved in national debates regarding the French clergy and was eventually to proclaim himself a Gallican. Like all French bishops he was both anxious, on the one hand, to protect his own powers and on the other, to avoid offending Rome⁴⁰

François had not experienced serious difficulties with Rome before. Perhaps he imagined that it would be possible to establish an uncloistered order for women without trouble. Even in France, it might have been possible, if Marquemont had not objected. But once the archbishop began to raise questions, the project became impossible. As Marquemont said, it would offend against Rome's new strictness regarding enclosure for women's religious houses and it would encourage the derision of Protestants, already convinced that enclosure was an absurd anachronism⁴¹ But it is possible that Marquemont foresaw other potential problems, not encompassed in the explanation that his attitude was simply a result of anti-feminism or fear of Rome. He may equally have feared the opinion of the French public.

Was Marquemont's attitude inspired by simple distrust of unenclosed women? Although, in such cases, an anti-feminine justification was always a sufficient excuse, the real motives behind the

CHAPTER 6

opposition were often more complex. First, there was the opposition to 'regularity' itself. As explained in Chapter 3 of this study, Rome was no more eager to grant the status of unenclosed regular to men than to women. It was merely more difficult to justify its opposition in the case of men's congregations, for the popes had no wish to appear to bow under the pressure of public opinion. As for the reasons behind public hostility, these were old issues, almost as old as the Church itself, and again had little to do with opposition to unenclosed female religious *per se*. Apart from objections to women's preaching and teaching, or to unenclosed women in general, municipal authorities disliked the way that capital and real estate tended to accumulate under the control of religious orders which did little to benefit the community at large, and absorbed funds that might have gone to the support of parish churches. Popular opinion among the lower classes tolerated religious only on the condition that they behave as religious should. Wandering monks and nuns who had all the privileges of religious must earn them by demonstrating ascetic self-denial, thereby perhaps also winning divine protection for the community at large.⁴² Only among the aristocracy was the motive for opposition to orders like the original Visitation based strictly upon a distaste for unenclosed female orders. Although their dislike of the uncertain legal status of simple vows applied to both men and women, they also feared that women who made simple vows lacked the respectability and stability of cloistered religious. When they placed their daughters in convents, they wished to be certain the girls did not decline into objects of mockery, a common fate for the first teaching nuns in France.⁴³ The Visitation's founders would have to accept the alteration of its original purpose, or abandon the effort altogether. With some reluctance, both François and Jeanne consented to Marquemont's pressures, and from 1616 the Visitation became a conventional enclosed order for

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

women in France and elsewhere. As Jeanne wrote of the affair, "il se faut sacrifier pour Dieu et pour sa gloire, à laquelle très assurément toute cette affaire réussira grandement et n'en faut point douter."⁴⁴

Indifferentism in Salesian piety

A number of historians have pointed out that François de Sales appears to have designed his religious approach to appeal to women.⁴⁵ If affectivity is taken as a measure of femininity, then it can be said that Jeanne de Chantal helped to complete the 'feminization' of François' spirituality; that is, his relationship with her brought him to a greater appreciation for affective piety than he had previously felt, and this became an important element in his devotional works. Few theologians of his time were so willing to state openly the unspoken, widespread assumption that women had special gifts which enabled them to reach a level of devotion unattainable by men. For women, who were still regarded (and professed to regard themselves) as less intellectually capable than men, less rational, the implication of Salesian affectivity was that women were better able to love God than men, were in fact better Christians than men, because of their limitations. François did not attempt to define the difference between the two sexes in religious matters in any great detail, but that he was aware of it is quite clear, as the following passage in the *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* suggests.

Mais afin que l'on sût que cette sorte d'écrite se font plus heureusement par la dévotion des amants que par la doctrine des savants, le Saint-Esprit a voulu que plusieurs femmes aient fait des merveilles en cela. Qui a jamais mieux exprimé les célestes passions de l'amour sacré que sainte Catherine de Gênes, sainte Angèle de Foligni, sainte Catherine de Sienne, sainte Mathilde?⁴⁶

CHAPTER 6

The theologians of Paris, including Bérulle, whom he very much admired,⁴⁷ had also distinguished sharply between the knowledge of God and the love of God, but none went so far as to identify men with knowledge and women with love in so many words.

Over the years, reading Teresa of Avila and in constant correspondance with Jeanne de Chantal, François came to believe, as we have seen, that the path to God was through love above all things. 'Tout est a l'amour, en l'amour, pour l'amour et d'amour en la sainte Église', he wrote in the second of his two works of devotion addressed to the public, *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* (1618). Thus the will was subject only to the control of the affections, of which love was the most important

Bref, Théotime, la volonté n'est émue que par ses affections. entre lesquelles l'amour. comme le premier mobile et la première affection. donne le branle a tout le reste. et fait tous les autres mouvements de l'âme.⁴⁸

The training of the will was still the object of devotion, at least in its early stages, for the will had power over both understanding and memory:

...la volonté a du pouvoir sur l'entendement et sur la mémoire, car de plusieurs choses que l'entendement peut entendre, ou desquelles la mémoire se peut ressouvenir. la volonté détermine celles auxquelles elle veut que ses facultes s'appliquent. ou desquelles elle veut qu'elles se divertissent.⁴⁹

The training of both the affections and the will was to be accomplished by prayer. For those just beginning on the path to God, prayers might be simple and word-based, arising out of the contemplation of some image or some phrase in a book of devotion. But for the more advanced, for the heart already disciplined, to whom the *Traité* was directed, prayer need be none of these things. It might be wordless, without image, an exercise of pure love in which the worshipper might, with the assistance of divine Grace, experience God directly and without the intervention of human signs. Mental prayer, or *oraison* in French, was 'un entretien et conversation de l'âme avec Dieu'.⁵⁰ To

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

François de Sales, this form of prayer was none other than the 'théologie mystique', the study of God's holy mysteries, as defined by pseudo-Dionysus. But *oraison* was study only in the sense that it engaged or rather overwhelmed the whole of the self, including the intellect. If a prayer's purpose was to seek understanding, rather than to love God, it was mere meditation, a lower form of prayer than *oraison*.⁵¹ The logical consequence of stressing the affective element of devotion was that any motive tainted, on the part of the worshipper, by anything less than complete indifference to one's own fate, was unworthy. François's most radical statement of this view, one that continues to provoke commentary to this day, was on the subject of perfect indifference, appearing in *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* in 1618.⁵² To please God was the goal of every truly indifferent soul, for this reason, il aimerait mieux l'enfer avec la volonté de Dieu, que le paradis sans la volonté de Dieu.⁵³

• Controversies

Salesian affectivity found many supporters among French theologians, but it was also to attract much criticism after his death in 1622, and was soon to be at the center of a great controversy. It was in 1624, two years after his death, that the Catholic Church of Spain issued an edict condemning the Alumbrados of Seville, a sect whose members were supposedly guilty of the heresy of supposing that true innocence could only be achieved by returning to the state of nature in which Adam and Eve had lived, including living naked and unashamed. Its publication, reported in the *Mercure françois*, occasioned much alarm in France, where some *dévoit* clerics were already worried about the proliferation of illuminism and other modes of devotion they believed to be theologically dangerous. That God sometimes did communicate with certain souls in a special way no Christian could deny, and the Catholic church did not attempt to do so. The belief that he communicated arcane

CHAPTER 6

mysteries in contradiction to Christian thought and experience could not be allowed to flourish. From the point of view of the guardians of Christian orthodoxy, the trouble was that the distinction was not always easy to make; or at least, so they at times seem to have believed.⁵⁴ Illuminism was thought to be especially common among women, and theologians and spiritual directors in Paris began to speak much about 'les fausse dévotes', who, led astray by their spiritual directors, took up eccentric beliefs and practices in the conviction that these would please God:

Et encore depuis peu de temps, j'eus un pourparler avec une jeune demoiselle des plus modestes et des plus spirituelles en apparence, qui disputa fort et ferme contre moi, soutenant hardiment et sans rougir, tant elle était éhontée et bien instruite en cette école! qu'il n'y avait point de mal en toutes ces choses-là, m'alléguant que toute notre perfection était de retourner dans l'état de notre création et que nous ne pouvions nous rendre plus parfaits que Dieu nous avait faits...⁵⁵

The comment came from the pen of a Capuchin named Archange Ripault. Written in 1632, it was perhaps a delayed reaction to the Edict of Seville. Ripault was by no means innately hostile to mysticism; and the Capuchin order was, in any case, known for its tolerant attitude towards mystical phenomena. He feared that these women and their directors would taint real mystical experience by their follies.

Illuminism was always a delicate subject so far as orthodox theologians were concerned. Although Bremond dates the beginning of the first anti-mystical reaction of the century to the publication of the Edict of Seville in 1623, it actually seems to have predated this event. André Du Val, who as censor had once permitted and indeed encouraged the publication of mystical works in Paris, was eventually to discourage it, and the appearance of works by Tauler and Harphius in translation began to diminish before the 1620s began.⁵⁶ In 1617, a canonist named Jacques Oliver had published a book entitled *L'alphabet de l'imperfection et malice des femmes*; it set off a wave of

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

attacks on female spirituality in which mysticism (or illuminism) and the directors who promoted it among women were also impugned. The wit La Bruyère, in his *Réplique à l'anti-malice, ou défense des femmes du sieur Vigoureux, autrement dict Bnye-Comte-Robert* (1617), was to win this round of the argument, as the title of his book suggests, on behalf of Oliver and against women.⁵⁷ But attacks and counter-attacks continued to appear sporadically for decades, perhaps until the Fronde distracted the attention of clerics from such matters. One especially egregious example, published anonymously, was entitled *Le tableau des piperies des femmes mondaines* (1632). Its flavour can be gathered in a single passage:

Vos deux mammelles, elles sont symboles de vostre entendement, et de vostre volonté, qui sont vraiment deux mammelles;...ces deux mammelles doivent tirer le suc sanguin du sens commun, l'espurer et le changer en un laict de celestes pensées, et de saintes affections; qui feront vos appetits volontaires ne voudront gouter le venimeux de sensualité⁵⁸

In this atmosphere, *Salesian pur amour* came under attack as well from orthodox theologians. Jean-Pierre Camus was forced to defend his old friend and mentor in a series of what were often immensely long works, written in French so as to remain accessible to the less learned. He wrote that it was not enough to practise virtue 'par des motifs simplement humains & moraux, inferieurs à celui de la Charité, qui regarde la fin dernière, puis que c'est pour celui qui attaindra ce dernier but, qu'est préparée la couronne de lustice.'⁵⁹ Camus, like François years before, was prepared to suggest that 'pur amour' was an essential element of love itself:

Faire de bonnes oeuvres pour les motifs de ces amours mauvais ou inutiles, c'est plustost dissiper que semer, c'est amasser des richesses et les jeter dans un sac percé; c'est puiser de l'eau avec un crible.⁶⁰

CHAPTER 6

It was during his controversies with the anti-mystics, in 1641, that he wrote the passage cited here previously about divine charity and her torch. It seems that while the anti-mystics had been inspired by their hostility to illuminism to attack women, the defenders of *pur amour* were led to affirm women's virtues by the same process of reasoning. If women were really more adept at *pur amour* than men, were they not also more virtuous?

Camus's controversy lasted for some time, but it was never brought before Rome to be settled. By a series of fine distinctions he had been careful to avoid the suggestion that the fear of God's justice, or the desire for his mercy, were actually wrong. The affair suggests, however, that the climate of French theology had changed in the years since François's death in 1622, that theologians had grown more suspicious of extreme statements of devotion. It is especially remarkable that those who led many of the attacks upon women and *pur amour* were the Capuchins and the Jesuits. It is possible that they were inspired by jealousy of their colleagues' success, but they had worthier motives as well. *Pur amour* was an extremely difficult concept for the most devout believer to grasp, and still more difficult to adhere to. It was for this reason that many Jesuit theologians, those of Spain and Italy certainly (French Jesuits were less predictable: Surin the Jesuit was an ardent *pur amourist*), who were committed to evangelization on a large scale, rejected it. It was also unpopular among civil authorities, for the idea that reward and punishment were incentives to virtue was an important part of seventeenth-century justice. Richelieu, who came to dislike the theological views of Saint-Cyran as these grew more extreme, disliked Salesian mysticism for much the same reason. In an interesting discussion of Richelieu's *Traité de la perfection du chrétien*, Roland Mousnier describes Richelieu's theological position in opposition to that of the *pur amourists*:

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

Richelieu affirms...insistently, that Christian perfection is for all human beings. All may know God, all may obtain faith through two main paths: through revelation and through nature⁶¹

This was as much a challenge to the more extreme Salesians as to the Jansenists. Richelieu was anxious to encourage believers to goodness, not to laxity. But if his theological views were more lenient than those of his opponents, they were also more expedient, more worldly, and more adaptable to the needs of the state. Salesian affectivity was open to misunderstanding, for it could lead believers to think that the moral struggle was a pointless battle in which the hope of heaven was not to be considered as a legitimate reward, thus tempting the self-confident to carelessness and the pessimistic to despair.

Camus's vigorous defense of Salesian doctrines, and the support it attracted, suggests that this kind of indifferentism had a special appeal to French theologians. Although Saint-Cyran was not a friend to the *pur amour* thesis, his own views of attrition were not dissimilar to the indifferentism that was so great a part of it. He disliked what he perceived to be the Jesuit laxity over confession (although he believed that François shared it⁶²) on the grounds that it promoted interested motives for penitence, and in that case was not true penitence at all. So pervasive was this fear of 'interest', so strong the tendency among French theologians to favour some form of indifferentism, that it is difficult not to suspect it was a reaction to the intense external pressure they suffered, pressure from both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and which they feared would pollute the wells of Catholic truth.

The Last Days of Jeanne de Chantal

Jeanne de Chantal was to suffer an acute spiritual crisis after her friend's death. She experienced it as a loss of all feeling for the presence of God, a state of mind (or soul) known as

CHAPTER 6

'sécheresse' to contemporary commentators on the life of the spirit. That it was in some way connected to François's death is at least possible. It was Jeanne who persuaded Mère Angélique that Sébastien Zamet would be a good director, and then cooled towards him after his involvement in the problems at the Institut du Saint-Sacrement. Still lost without a good director and disillusioned by her experience with Zamet, she tried to approach Saint-Cyran, repeatedly asking Mère Angélique to persuade him to write to her in her distress, all of which suggests that she found herself in great need of some form of spiritual direction. Saint-Cyran, for reasons that are not clear, was slow to respond to her distress. In the early 1620s, Angélique Arnauld had confided in her in such a way as to suggest that she saw her as a source of consolation (Jeanne's own side of the correspondance from this period is lost). For some years Mère Angélique was forbidden to write to her, and when the correspondance began again in the 1630s, it was Mère Angélique who provided comfort to her friend. In February 1637, Jeanne wrote to her, 'Notre bon Dieu...m'a envoyé un exercice de peine intérieure, sous laquelle je sécherais, si sa bonté ne me tenait de sa main.'⁶³ The crisis was to grow worse. In August of the same year she wrote, 'Je m'oublais [sic], ma très bonne et chère Mère, de vous dire, que parce que je ne puis faire des actes,' meaning acts of devotion, 'j'ai écrit ma protestation de foi...j'en porte le papier sur moi, que je touche pour signe de confirmation en ce regard simple de Dieu'⁶⁴

It may be that the extremes of Salesian piety she had absorbed under his direction were too difficult for her to sustain without his guidance. Although well-read in the great spiritual writers of the early modern era, she was not, of course, a trained theologian, and Salesian theories of affectivity were complex and subtle. Her terror of Hell, and a corresponding fear that such a lack of confidence in God's love would itself make her unworthy of heaven, was a kind of distortion of François's

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

theories and perhaps point out how dangerous they could be for those whose confidence was low. Saint-Cyran avoided writing to her, perhaps reluctant to take on further dirigées when his correspondance was already so large. Shortly before her death, however, when he was himself in prison and seeking reassurance, he at last wrote. Much of the letter was about general matters; only towards the end did he attempt to address her fears. 'Je ne me souviens pas des particularités de vôtres [peines]', he wrote in October 1641, 'mais j'ose dire qu'il n'y a rien de dangereux pour vous. et qu'au contraire elles me semblent être si precieuses que vous ne pouvez désirer d'en être ni déchargée, ni soulagée, que par quelque intérêt propre'.⁶⁵ Even in their mutual extremity, he could not refrain from referring to the moral problems of self-interest. When she died in December, according to one source, it was with 'une dernière épreuve à sa vertu.

[Dieu] permit que son imagination fût vivement frappée à ce moment de la pensée de l'éternité et des jugements de Dieu. Elle eut à combattre une soudaine terreur qui semblait devoir ébranler sa confiance.⁶⁶

She died soon after, at last reassured that she would not go to hell.

Her reputation, and that of François too, was touched by the great debates over heresy that took up so much of the attention of French theologians until at least the end of the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ François de Sales was canonized in 1661, less than forty years after his death, but, as the pro-Jansenist historian Augustin Gazier pointed out in 1915, Jeanne de Chantal, who died in 1641, was not beatified until 1751 and subsequently not canonized until 1767. When her case was first presented to the Holy Office for verification in 1715, the 'devil's advocate', whose job it was to discover the weaknesses, moral or theological, of candidates for canonization, made out a successful case against her, and it was many years before this cloud was removed (she was not canonized until

CHAPTER 6

1761). It appears that the greatest mark against her was her close relationship with both Mère Angélique and with Saint-Cyran, well-known because their three-way correspondance had been published by the friends of Port-Royal, presumably in order to shelter under Jeanne's reputation for doctrinal soundness, but in the event injuring it without helping their case. François de Sales' friendship with Mère Angélique was not widely known at the time of his canonization in 1661, and in any case the minute picking-over of every aspect of Port-Royal's history had then only just begun.⁶⁸ But he escaped the scandal associated with one group of women only to be tarnished, if only slightly, by another. When the anti-quietist disputes broke out towards the end of the century, Fénelon and his dirigée Madame Guyon, and some of the theologians suspected of quietism, were quick to point out that they had derived many of their ideas from the writings of François de Sales.⁶⁹ The importance of these accusations of heresy for this discussion is manifold. First, it suggests the anachronism of attempting to attach the label of quietist or Jansenist to anyone who lived before the reign of Louis XIV. Second, it suggests that the labels themselves are artificial, for if both Jansenist and quietist tendencies are discernible in the work of such close friends, it seems likely that these two opposed streams of French Catholicism may not be as far removed from each other as some analyses suggest. Finally, it confirms the importance of politics, not merely ecclesiastical but national politics, in determining the fate of saints and sinners of either sex.

Conclusion

The history of this friendship, and of the fate of the Visitation, is remarkable for the way it exemplifies the contradictory expectations placed upon dévot women. Established by François in order to offer female religious some alternative to the cloistered life, it was transformed under the

SALESIAN PUR AMOUR AND JEANNE DE CHANTAL

pressure of social custom into yet another cloistered order, its Rule differing very little from that of the Carmelites, though it was less physically austere. In the end it came to be known as one of the most disciplined of the modern religious orders in France. Visitation convents were the appointed prisons of both Port-Royal nuns reluctant to sign the Formulary, and of Madame Guyon. By the end of the century, the order was dominated by Jesuit directors and had been transformed into something quite different from what its two founders had envisioned: an order whose purpose was not so much to set women an example of devotion, but to set them an example of regularity and discipline, a counter-balance to the extremes of pur-amourism on one side and Port-Royalism on the other.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. André Dodin, *François de Sales, Vincent de Paul: Les deux amis* (Paris: O.E.I.L., 1984), p. 11.
2. F.M. de Chaugy, *Mémoires sur la vie et les vertus de sainte Jeanne Françoise Frémyot de Chantal* (Paris: Plon, 1874), I, p. 40. Mère de Chaugy was Jeanne's secretary and a Visitandine herself. Her *Vie* of Jeanne was first published in 1745.
3. The preceding facts regarding Jeanne de Chantal's life are all from Mère de Chaugy's *Jeanne de Chantal*; the citation appears p. 39.
4. Chaugy, *Jeanne de Chantal*, p. 50-51.
5. Chantal, *Correspondance. Tome I: 1605-1621*, "Chronologie biographique", p. 23.
6. François de Sales, *Oeuvres*, XII, A la Baronne de Chantal, 26 April 1604, p. 262. There is a note of condescension in the letter (God has given me to you) that would slowly diminish as the two came to know each other better, perhaps because his respect for her increased, perhaps simply because he began to see it for what it was and worked to conquer it.
7. See previous chapter; from Angélique Arnauld, *Relation écrite*, p. 98.
8. Sales, *Oeuvres*, XII, A sa sainteté Clément VIII, Annecy, 15 Nov. 1603, p. 232.
9. Sales, *Ibid.*, p. 257-260.
10. Broutin, I, p. 74.
11. Sales, *Ibid.*, p. 230-1.
12. Bady, *François de Sales*, p. 9, and note 2, p. 89.
13. Rapley, *The dévotes*, p. 34-35.
14. Bady, *François de Sales*, p. 8.
15. *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 'Pénitence'.
16. Sales, *Oeuvres*, T. XVIII, Aug. 26, 1618, p. 271-74.
17. Sales, *Lettres*, vol. 12, no. CLXVIII, 22 Nov. 1602, p. 139.
18. Sales, *Ibid.*, p. 148.
19. Pierre Serouet, DC, *De la vie dévote à la vie mystique* (Paris, 1958), p. 138.

20. Broutin, I, p. 73-4.
21. See Pierre Serouet, *La Vie dévote*, Ch. XV, p. 183-197, defending François de Sales' mysticism against his critics.
22. See Jodi Bilinkoff, 'Confessors, Penitents, and the Construction of Identities in Early Modern Avila', in *Culture and Identity in Early Modern Europe, (1500-1800): Essays in Honor of Natalie Zemon Davis*, edited by Barbara Diefendorf and Carla Hesse (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 83-100.
23. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, II, pp. 36-39.
24. Chaugy, *Mémoires*, I, ch. 11.
25. Sales, *Oeuvres*, A la baronne de Chantal, 3 May 1604, p. 264-5.
26. Sales, *Oeuvres*, XII, A Mme de Brûlart, 3 May, 1604, p. 268.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
28. The reference to Teresa occurs in his fourth letter to Jeanne de Chantal, *Ibid.*, no CCXXIII, p 283; the existence of the reference was made known to this writer by Serouet, *De la vie dévote*, p 140.
29. Sales, *Oeuvres*, T. XII, A la baronne de Chantal, 14 Oct. 1604, p 356
30. François de Sales, *Lettres Intimes: Amitié et direction spirituelle*, Ed. by André Ravier (Annecy: Le Fayard, 1991), p. 143.
31. Sales, *Oeuvres*, XII, Letter CCXXIII, p. 287.
32. Sales, XII, Letter CCXXXIV, p. 359.
33. Hugh O'Donnell, editor, *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: Rules, Conferences, Conferences and Writings*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), Louise Sullivan, 'Louise de Marillac: A Spiritual Portrait', p. 42-44.
34. Louise de la Vallière, once the mistress of Louis XIV, was to become a Carmelite in 1674, at a time when the first ardours of the Teresan reformation had diminished. Even then, she was to practise extreme physical mortifications, once going for three weeks at Lent without drinking water. See Louise de La Vallière, *Reflexions sur la misericorde de Dieu de Dieu, par Mme de la Valliere; suivies de prieres tirees de l'écriture sainte, et d'une priere de l'abbe Gerard; precedees de Lettres adressees au marechal de Bellefonds, des sermons pour la veture et la Profession, de la Vie penitente*, et d'une Notice historique par M. Henrion, (J.-J. Blaise, Librairie-editeur, rue Ferou, 1828), p. 25.

35. In 'L'Institution et le corps, lieux de mémoire', J. Lebrun argues that 'baroque' mortifications remained very common in biographies of dévotes in the seventeenth century.
36. See Reynes, *Couvents de femmes*, Chapter VI, in which the regimes of both lax and austere convents are described.
37. See Lesage's discussion of the concept of *L'Accession des congrégations*, p. 141-42.
38. See Elizabeth Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and its Commentators, 1298-1545* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic U. of America, 1997).
39. J. Bergin, *Making of the French Episcopate*, p. 605.
40. This was an especially acute problem for Marquemont (@1572-1626) because he was to be a very important diplomat who spent most of his career from 1604 on in Rome, and would later represent Louis XIII's government there. See Bergin, *Making of the French Episcopate*, p. 287; also the 'Biographical Dictionary' in this work, p. 665.
41. See citation of Marquemont's words to this effect, *The Dévotes*, p. 38.
42. Weinstein and Bell, in *Saints and Society*, p. 154, point out that this was one of the unofficial functions of the saint in society, and all religious were expected to attempt sainthood of this kind.
43. Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 39.
44. *Jeanne de Chantal. Correspondance*, Lettre 62, A Mère Marie-Jacqueline Favre, à Lyon [Annecy, 2 février, 1616], p. 138.
45. Cited in Timmermans, *L'accès des femmes*, p. 409.
46. *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* (Paris, 1924; first published 1616), p. viii. The "sainte Mathilde" referred to here was the disciple of the medieval saint Gertrude.
47. François de Sales, *Oeuvres*, T. XII, A M. Antoine de Revol, évêque nommé de Dol, Annecy, 3 juin, 1603, p. 189:
 Je vous en nomme un troisième, homme a qui Dieu a beaucoup donné et qu'il est impossible d'approcher sans beaucoup profiter, c'est M. de Bérulle; il est tout tel que je scaurois desirer d'estre moy mesme.
48. François de Sales. *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, I, p. 14.
49. *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu*. Vol 1, book 1. (Paris: Gabalda, 1924) p. 6-7.
50. *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, VI, I.

51. This analysis of salesian prayer theory owes much to Pierre Serouet's study of the influence of Teresa of Avila upon François de Sales, *De la vie dévote à la vie mystique*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1958), especially to Chapter XXII, pp. 73-80. Any misapprehensions of his meaning are, of course, this writer's sole responsibility.
52. See the discussion in the article 'Charité', in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, from which some of the comments here have been drawn.
53. *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, vol. 2, T. 9, ch. 4, p. 141.
54. See Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, vol. XI, *Le Procès des mystiques*.
55. Quoted in Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, XI, p. 8.
56. Dagens, *Bérulle et la restauration*, p. 113. Dagens does not give a date for Du Val's actions on this page, but his other comments about the decline in the publication of such works as those of Harphius and Eckhart suggest 1617 or thereabouts.
57. Anonymous. *Le tableau des piperies des femmes mondaines...* (1632). Original text with notice by P.-L. Jacob, 'bibliophile'. (Paris: Léon Willem, 1879). See the notice, p. ix, for a description of La Bruyère's work.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
59. Jean Pierre Camus, *La Defense du Pur Amour Contre les Attaques de l'Amour Propre* (Paris Chez Gervais Alliot, 1640), p. 607.
60. Jean-Pierre Camus, *La defense du pur amour contre l'amour propre* (Paris, 1640), p. 4.
61. Roland Mousnier. *L'Homme rouge, ou la vie du Cardinal de Richelieu (1585-1642)* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1992), p. 610.
62. Saint-Cyran, *Lettres inédites*, Letter no. 1, p. 21: 'Monsieur de Genève selon les principes qu'il a établis dans sa vie dévote...était plus obligé de différer la confession, que nous de différer l'absolution apres la confession.'
63. Gazier, *Jeanne de Chantal et Angélique Arnauld*, pièces justificatives, Letter IV, 3 février, 1637, p. 139.
64. *Ibid.*, VIII, 3 août 1637, p. 149.
65. *Ibid.*, XXIII, 25 octobre 1641, p. 191.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 102-103, from an account written in 1751 by a Jesuit, P. Beauvils. The source of his account is uncertain.

67. The following account of the canonization of both François de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal is from Augustin Gazier, *Jeanne de Chantal et Angélique Arnauld* (Paris, 1915), 'Avant-Propos', p. 1-4.

68. See Catherine Maire, 'Port-Royal: The Jansenist Schism', p. 313, for the statement that the commemoration of Port-Royal's history was not yet fully under way at the end of the 17th century.

69. See Louis Cognet, *Crépuscule des mystiques*, p. 18-19; also Bremond, *Le querelle de pur amour*, p. 4: Fénelon wrote 'on sait qu'en 1639...le disciple bien aimé de saint François de Sales [Camus] fut attaqué sur les mêmes raisons qu'on allègue contre moi et qu'après une longue controverse sa doctrine prévalait' [cf. *Oeuvres de Fénelon*, III, p. 292].

7/ VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS; VINCENT'S SONS, 1625-1640

'No one in God's army gets involved in secular affairs.'*

While Bérulle, François de Sales, and Saint-Cyran were trying to find a solution to the problems of the apostolic life for men, Vincent de Paul bided his time. Although the same age as Saint-Cyran, he was the longest-lived of the four founding fathers of French devotion in the seventeenth century and often seems to belong to a later age than they did. The other men exerted a great influence upon his own career, but it was largely negative. He learned from them how not to live the devout life in the world, how not to found an unenclosed women's order, and, perhaps the most valuable lesson, how not to confront the temporal authorities too directly. If this description suggests that he was in some way less politically inclined than his predecessors, less willing to involve himself in public life, nothing could be further from the truth. He was the ablest politician of all seventeenth-century *dévots*, fully a match for both Richelieu and Mazarin (no mean feat). Mazarin was to say of him that he could neither be bought, nor eliminated.¹ It was this that enabled him to succeed where François de Sales, Bérulle, and Saint-Cyran had failed, organising, with the help of Louise de Marillac and other women, two important women's foundations, which were never seriously touched by scandal or hindered in their operations by interference from above.

* Vincent de Paul, Constitutions of the *Congrégation de la Mission*, 1658.

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

Early life

Vincent de Paul was one of the few *spirituel* reformers alive at the time of Henri IV's coronation to survive until 1660, just before the start of Louis XIV's personal reign, giving him an unusually long career. He was a Gascon, the son of a peasant, and in his later years, like a modern politician, he liked to remind people of this: when a woman told him that she had been his mother's maid, he informed her that his mother had never employed servants, having been one herself.² He was educated at school in Dax and then at the University of Toulouse, with financial help of his relations.³ They hoped to recoup their costs if and when he received a good benefice, but in the event they received a lesser return than they had expected. In later life he refused to act as a patron to his family.⁴ He took a baccalaureate in theology and was ordained in 1600. It is interesting that he was the only well-known *dévo*t cleric *not* to have received any part of his early education from the Jesuits, and indeed one of the few great figures of seventeenth century France not to be so educated. The faculty of theology at the University of Toulouse did not have a Jesuit college, being divided between the Carmes, the Dominicans, the Augustines, and the Cistercians (Bernardins).⁵ He was not sufficiently well-funded to take the exams to become 'licencié' in theology, meaning that he had no teaching credentials and could not earn his living in that fashion. His poverty⁶ forced him to learn to live by his wits, a skill that served him well in later life.

M. Vincent, as he has long been known to biographers, was not at first greatly committed to the sacerdotal life, in the new fashion promoted by the Council of Trent. (The ideas of Trent had not yet been widely disseminated in provincial universities at the turn of the century, especially where there were no Jesuits.) He sought what he referred to as an 'honnête retraite', but this proved to be

CHAPTER 7

difficult.⁷ It may be that his family was not sufficiently well-connected to obtain a preference for him. In the midst of the religious ferment of the early seventeenth century, if an aspiring priest were not very able nor well-connected, he must show himself to be exceptionally devout. Vincent was none of these things as yet. In 1610, he wrote regretfully to his mother of '[m]es infortunes et le peu de service que j'ai encore pu faire à la maison'.⁸ His desire for advancement may explain an odd episode in his life, much disputed by historians, which we only know through one letter. He had been kidnapped in 1605 by three 'brigantins turcs', he wrote, while sailing from Marseilles to Narbonne, and sold into slavery in Tunis. He was able to escape back to France two years later, in 1607.⁹ Did he invent the escapade as a means of drawing attention to himself, or to secure some form of compensation from his patron? There is no obvious answer.¹⁰

Theological Development

• Dévot milieu

Still seeking a benefice, he went to Paris in 1608, and met both Bérulle and André Du Val. The former became his spiritual director, while the latter introduced him to the work of Benet de Canfeld and his *Règle de la perfection*, the bible of the dévots of the faubourg Saint-Honoré circle of *spirituels*. This appears to have been his first introduction to the interior piety of the Catholic Reformation. He found himself in the heart of the dévot milieu, and it began to work a transformation in his attitude to matters of religion. When he finally obtained his first parish, in 1612, at Saint-Medard in Clichy, an impoverished region north of Paris, he appears to have been content to make the best of it. Meanwhile, however, in 1610 he was appointed by Marguerite de Valois, repudiated wife of Henri IV, to the post of almoner, one among many she employed.¹¹

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

Shortly after the appointment to Clichy, he was invited by Philippe-Emanuel de Gondi to be his children's précepteur, a post which combined the duties of a teacher with those of a priest, after a recommendation from Pierre de Bérulle. Gondi belonged to a well-known dévot family; the Gondis had been associated with the cause of the Medicis, and thus with Spain and Italy, since the first of them appeared in Paris in the sixteenth century and were honoured for their services to Catherine de Medici, a fellow-Florentine. Philippe-Emanuel was also the father of the second cardinal de Retz, archbishop of Paris, who would cause the crown so much trouble during the Fronde. The new appointment seemed to Vincent to be something of a trap; Madame de Gondi made Vincent her confessor in 1614 and was very demanding.¹² Yet it was profitable too, as it brought him many valuable contacts. Above all, it brought him money. Madame de Gondi, eager to promote Catholic reform, encouraged Vincent to preach missions and often accompanied him on these occasions. When she discovered the low level of religious knowledge of both the priests and parishioners who inhabited her lands, she offered a gift of 16,000 livres to whatever religious community was willing to work to remedy the situation. Only Vincent was willing to do so; others turned down her offer.¹³ Although the money was not, of course, for his personal use, it effectively made a name for him, for it was this donation that permitted him to establish the Congregation of the Mission.

• Theocentricity

Bérulle and Canfeld had been Vincent's early spiritual masters, but neither was able to address all his questions. He had come to understand, through Bérulle, that God rather than salvation should be the goal of every human soul, but this was not enough for a man of his more dynamic temperament. He said later of Bérullian theocentricity, 'Ce théocentrisme théorique était aussi

CHAPTER 7

indispensable qu'insuffisant."¹⁴ In 1618, however, he met François de Sales. Sales was, of course, a man of interior piety, acquainted with Bérulle and other French dévots. Vincent had previously read both the *Introduction à la vie dévote* and the *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, Sales' two famous treatises upon the life of the spirit, and been much impressed by them, particularly by Sales' doctrine of *pur amour*. His piety, from Vincent's point of view, had the advantage of being more extroverted than that of Bérulle, more concerned with the dynamism of charity in human hearts; more concerned, that is, with the way in which the ideal of perfect love might move human beings to act with charity towards their fellow-creatures. 'Les vertus méditées et non pratiquées enflent quelquefois l'esprit et le courage...mais elles ne sont pas telles, vaines et dangereuses, si elles ne sont pratiquées', François de Sales had declared in the *Introduction*.¹⁵ Vincent may have held similar ideas from the beginning, but, unsure of himself, he perhaps needed an 'authority figure' to give him permission to make similar statements. At all events, he began to assert his own views more after he had actually met the bishop of Geneva. It would, of course, be unfair to suggest that Bérulle's theocentric vision excluded charity towards fellow-sinners and sufferers, but his works and his life emphasized this virtue less than it did the contemplation of the 'eternal fountain' that was God Himself. Vincent needed a more active vision of human duty and divine charity.

• **Pur amour as love of the poor**

Vincent, however, with his early experience of poverty, had a far less abstract notion of the demands of 'love thy neighbour', than did either Bérulle or François. Historians of religion, it has been said, do not regard him as an original theologian, but as a disciple of François de Sales.¹⁶ But he differed from both François and the École française in that his understanding of the "Verbe incarné"

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

was profoundly physical. Bérulle, as previously noted, was more impressed by the humility of the incarnation than conscious of Jesus's fleshly reality. M. Vincent began to consider the possibility of serving God in the flesh through the flesh of the suffering poor, a perception of the relationship between body and spirit that was closer in some ways to the medieval mind-set than to that of early modern thought. Although the early seventeenth-century conception of charity was in some ways remote from action and from human life, it was Vincent de Paul's special contribution to the religious development of the *École française* that he re-emphasized the care of the poor as a Christian duty.

From Bérulle and François, he also learned to admire and to emphasize the importance of child-like innocence and simplicity in the pursuit of God. This was also an important element of the success of his missionary efforts. But if the devotional emphasis of the *spirituels* upon naivete was calculated to attract women of the upper classes, it was Vincent de Paul who took this approach one step further and developed a theology that was attractive to the poor and the semi-literate. Neither Bérulle nor de Sales were masters of a devotional vocabulary that could appeal to the poor, and much of their work in the reform of the Church actually helped to strip away many of the religious practices that had been a comfort to the poor; their insistence, for example, that confession and communion be both frequent and, in the case of confession, exhaustive. M. Vincent struggled with considerable success to make Tridentine piety accessible to the uneducated.

Vincent was also, it seems, impressed by Sales' account of his struggles to establish the Visitation as an unenclosed order for women. This was something he was anxious to do himself, as he wished to direct women's spiritual energy towards the kind of active enterprises he favoured. He heard the reasons why Sales' attempt had failed, after the intervention of Denis de Marquemont, and

CHAPTER 7

perhaps suspected that his friend had allowed himself to be out-maneuvered by his opponents. This, however, is speculation. What we do know is that when the time came for him to establish an unenclosed women's congregation, he took a lesson from François de Sales' mistakes and succeeded where the latter had failed.

Pur Amour in Action

• The problems of the religious estate

Within a very brief period Vincent had been exposed to four of the main trends of French spirituality in the early seventeenth century: the theocentric, inward-looking variety of Bérulle's circle; the worldly, ceremonial type to be found in the queen's household; the outgoing kind demanded of the parish priest; and the political side of worldly piety in his work with the Gondi family. He understood, however, that none of these was adequate for the kind of work he wanted to do. In fact, no existing institution, in the early decades of the seventeenth century, was capable of doing what Vincent wished to do. In medieval times many monasteries had done the work of tending the poor, but they could no longer do so now. In the cities, newer monastic orders like the reformed Carmelites cared for the poor as far as they were able, distributing food and warm clothes, but the enclosed women's orders could not meet the growing needs of the poor in the old hospitals. The new, non-monastic men's orders established after the Council of Trent had not been founded to tend to the sick and the poor. As for evangelizing among the poor, the new orders like the Jesuits and Capuchins tended to serve the cities rather than the countryside, and in any case the Jesuits were by now too much involved in teaching to preach missions as they had once done. A new approach was needed. A new order of missionaries must attend to both the bodily needs of the poor and the sick, if possible,

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

and tend to their spiritual needs in language which they could understand. But was it possible to combine these two functions in a single order? Vincent was to find it extremely difficult: in the end, he was forced to divide the two main tasks of mission work between men and women.

• Louise de Marillac

In 1625, two of the most important events of Vincent's life occurred. He was at last able, with Madame de Gondi's donation, to establish his long-meditated confraternity of mission priests and laymen, the Congrégation de la Mission. He also met Louise de Marillac for the first time, and she became the means by which his original inspiration for a women's institution at last bore fruit.¹⁷ Louise's husband had died recently (in 1625) and she was searching for a way to occupy her days and give her a sense of purpose that extended beyond caring for her son. He was ten years her senior, eager to establish a career independently of the patronage of the Gondi family. Together, they would be responsible for institutionalizing the administration of alms-giving in France in their organization of the Dames de la Charité and the Filles de la Charité, the latter the work-horses of the *spirituel* reformation in France.

It was common for *dévote* women to enter their lives as religious or religious lay-women after suffering a prolonged period of emotional and spiritual crisis. Louise de Marillac was no exception, and perhaps the crisis for her went deeper than for most. Her feelings of alienation and abandonment were largely the result of the peculiar circumstances of her birth. She was a daughter of the Marillac family, but not a legitimate one. Her father recognised her, raised her, and supported her, but his recognition, as in all such cases, required that she be reared apart from her mother, whose rank was probably too low for her to be publicly acknowledged. Although she received a good education and

CHAPTER 7

financial support, upon her father's death she was sent to board with a "poor woman" who may have been her natural mother.¹⁸ The neglect of the Marillacs left its mark upon her: she was fearful of offending God, and she could scarcely understand the idea of God's love.¹⁹ Upon her marriage, she had suffered a spiritual crisis, fearful because she had broken an earlier promise to God never to marry and to become a nun instead. When her husband died, she began to feel intense guilt because she had longed to be free of him, a belief which her then-adviser, Jean-Pierre Camus, did his best to persuade her was foolish and inconsistent. She eventually transferred her anxieties to her son, who became the focus of his mother's constant worry. Meanwhile, she had developed a prayer-life so rigidly dependent upon timetables that all peace eluded her and she found it difficult to make decisions or to act at all, for fear of sinning. Vincent de Paul seems to have been precisely the kind of spiritual director Louise needed. His Salesian conception of charity and the devout life were to be of great help in setting her free from the timetables of piety she had drawn up for herself. Because he was preoccupied with his mission work, he could not allow her to depend upon him excessively, a dependence that would certainly have been problematic for both. He advised her to learn to worry less about her son. He had already decided that he could no longer be so emotionally involved with his family and its struggles:

J'eus tant de douceur que je ne fis que pleurer tout le long du chemin, et quasi pleurer sans cesse..., mon esprit attendri leur partageait ainsi ce que j'avais et ce que je n'avais pas...Je fus trois mois dans cette passion importune d'avancer mes frères et mes soeurs; c'était le poids continuel de mon pauvre esprit. À la fin, Dieu m'ôta ces tendresses pour mes parents.²⁰

When they first began to correspond, shortly after her husband's death, he suggested that she too learn detachment, and advised her also to be less morbidly scrupulous in her devotions. In keeping

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

with his own theology of service, he suggested that she turn away from herself and her family concerns, and turn towards the Christ as personified by the poor instead.²¹

In 1628, she wrote to tell him that she had decided that her calling, like his, was the service of the poor. "Oui, enfin, ma chère demoiselle, je le veux bien, pourquoi non?" he wrote back. "Oh! Quel arbre vous avez paru aujourd'hui aux yeux de Dieu, puisque vous avez produit un tel fruit."²² It is not certain that his example in organizing charity, missions, and poor relief was the most important factor in her decision. Her unusual education in the house of the woman who may have been her mother, where she and the other *pensionnaires* learned to live by doing piece-work, had perhaps given her a special understanding of financial management and organization. She moved to a house near the Lazarist house, where Vincent de Paul was training his priests to be missionaries, and it became the mother house for her new congregation, the Filles de la Charité.

• Dames de la Charité

She began her new career by visiting the various parishes in which Vincent de Paul had previously established his Confraternities of Charity, to inspect their functioning and to report to him on possible improvements in their organization. Together, they concluded that the existing system, of having the sick poor tended by well-to-do daughters of the bourgeoisie and nobility, run by women collectively known as the Dames de la Charité, was ineffective.²³ Vincent had had some experience with organizations of this kind already, before he met Louise de Marillac, while he was a parish priest at Châtillon-des-Dombes. In 1617, he had mentioned the neediness of one family of invalids during Mass and asked that someone help them. Women came forward in numbers to bring them food and

CHAPTER 7

clothes, and the experiment was so successful that it occurred to him that he could make use of this enthusiasm to attempt a more organized form of poor relief.

This was the genesis of the Dames de la Charité, which Vincent organized with the assistance of Madame de Gondi. Earlier confraternities had been of a more modest type; this was the first confraternity to try to mobilize women's money and energy on a large scale. Louise de Marillac was not a part of this group at its inception, or its early history might have been different. The company gathered a select group of well-to-do women:

Elle sera composée de la personne sacrée de la Royne et dun petit nombre certain et limité des dames quil luy plaira choisir à cest effect, lesquelles seront députées trois à trois, pour avoir soing de chascune desdictes Compagnies, et en rapporteront lestat et les besoins à ladicte Compagnie pour résoudre les besoins quelles auront trouvez, à la pluralité des voix, qui seront colligées et résolues par Sa Majesté, et auront ces départemens un an durant, au bout duquel elles en changeront au sort, et la Royne aura la direction perpétuelle de ladicte Compagnie.²⁴

Vincent hoped that its members would continue to feed, clothe, and nurse the sick, as the women of the confraternity founded in the countryside. Unfortunately, the new company proved to be incapable of fulfilling its original purpose. The ladies were inclined to turn the work over to their servants, and had no taste for the more demanding side of nursing. The company gradually evolved into a charity of a more modern kind, providing advice, protection, organization and financial aid to relief efforts, without actually calling upon its members to give manual service, 'en protégeant et assistant les Compagnies de la Charité de l'hostel dieu, des enfans trouvez, des forçatz, des petites filles de Mad Poulailion et de lestang, des pauvres filles servantes de la Charité des paroisses, des filles de la Magdelaine, et tous les bons oeuvres instituez par des femmes en ce siècle.'²⁵

- **Filles de la Charité**

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

It would be necessary to find unmarried girls or women of the poorer classes who were prepared to do such work and who knew themselves to have a vocation for it. This was an important point: these women could not be paid for their services in the modern fashion, as the resources of their patrons were limited. Charity would thus be an essential part of the makeup of the new "servants" of the sick poor. But where were such women to be found? When the need arose, one woman presented herself. She was Marguerite Naseau, a young woman who had educated herself with much trouble; she was a cowherd who bought an alphabet book, took it to her parish priest, and slowly memorized the letters, four at a time, until she taught herself to read.²⁶ She then went from one village to another, teaching the children of the poor. But she had heard that nurses for the sick poor were being sought, and so went to offer her services at the household of Louise de Marillac in Paris. Other young women soon joined her, and the house became a training centre for a new kind of service company, one that was devoted to caring for the sick poor on a parish by parish basis. Vincent is said to have always referred to Marguerite Naseau as the first Fille de la Charité, although she died of plague in 1633 before the company was founded.²⁷

Eventually, in the Paris regions, the two groups, Dames and Filles, came to function as a unit, with the Dames as the executives, providing money and making arrangements, and the Filles as the staff: the Filles went out into the provinces, to plague-stricken villages or war-torn regions, without the support of the Dames. Together, they achieved remarkable projects, the most impressive of which was their emergency work during the Fronde in 1650. In Paris, the Filles fed up to 8,000 people a day immediately after the war in 1652. During the same period, medical teams consisting of one doctor

CHAPTER 7

and two Filles went out into the countryside, funded by money raised by the Dames, and were said to have saved 193 villages.²⁸

Congregations, companies, confraternities

• Women

The achievements of the Filles seem all the more remarkable when it is understood that their structure and indeed their very nature was irregular, contrary to canon law, and very much against French custom. It is true that attempting to combine the discipline of a Rule with freedom of action was a standard feature of seventeenth-century piety among both men and women:

Many were the founders of orders who wished to unite - both men and women - the obligations of a Rule with apostolic action. They speak then of companies of priests, of "filles" of Charity or saint Joseph...The imprecision of their vocabulary reveals a quest for a new form of consecrated life.²⁹

Many alms-giving confraternities, associations, and congregations of both men and women were established in the seventeenth century.³⁰ But experiments of this kind involving women often failed, especially in the countryside where they were more likely to feel the absence of powerful protectors. Those which survived were likely to have been established by the bishop of the diocese in which they were founded; as objections to these congregations was often led by bishops, this was one way of circumventing opposition. Without the support of men or women with money and connections, informal charitable companies could scarcely survive.³¹

The status of Vincent's new congregation was both legally and politically complex. The Holy See unofficially tolerated unenclosed women's orders as long as they made no solemn vows, which (for women) necessitated an enclosure that was supposed to be irrevocable. Simple vows to the order's superior, or alternatively vows made directly to the Ordinary of the diocese, were acceptable,

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

although not canonically recognised, as long as the local bishop accepted the order and made no objections to its establishment in his diocese. The Holy See did not tolerate unenclosed female congregations if they claimed for themselves the privileges of religious.³² Vincent understood that the greatest danger for the Filles would be to pretend to religious status: this would bring the instant disapproval of the temporal authorities, who feared unenclosed religious orders; the Holy See, which was officially opposed to them for women; and the general public, which objected both for legal reasons and because people did not care to see women or men claiming the privileges of religious status while suffering none of its liabilities.

How, then, would M. Vincent solve the potential legal and social problems of unenclosed female congregations? In fact, his solution was surprisingly straightforward: he insisted that they never claim the status of religious, even when pressed or taunted by hostile clergy. His instructions to the Filles when they were sent off to a new diocese, and in the general Conferences he held for them regularly, suggest how often this situation arose, and how cunning was necessary to deflect their interrogators. In instructing the young women, M. Vincent always told them that they must always inform the bishops that they were under his obedience:

Vous irez donc, mes chères soeurs, trouver telles et telles, personnes, et, si l'on vous mène voir Monsieur l'évêque de ce pays, vous lui demanderez sa bénédiction; vous lui témoignerez que vous voulez vivre entièrement sous son obéissance et que vous vous donnez tout à lui pour le service des pauvres, que vous êtes envoyées pour cela.³³

They should also say that they had no wish to be religious because then they could not carry out their work; and that true religious were, in any case, enclosed:

Il y a encore Monseigneur l'évêque de Nantes. Il dit que vous êtes religieuses, parce qu'on lui a dit que vous faites des vœux. S'il vous en parle, répondez-lui que

CHAPTER 7

vous n'êtes pas religieuses. Ma soeur Jeanne, qui est la soeur servante, lui a dit, «Monseigneur, les voeux que nous faisons ne nous font point religieuses, parce que ce sont voeux simples, qui se peuvent faire partout et dans le monde même.»

En effet l'on ne peut dire que les Filles de la Charité soient religieuses, parce qu'elles ne pourraient pas être Filles de la Charité, si elles l'étaient, puisque pour être religieuse il faut être cloîtrée. Les Filles de la Charité ne pourront jamais être religieuses, et malheur à celui qui parlera de les faire religieuses!³⁴

The status of religious orders in solemn vows was still vastly greater than that of secular companies or congregations in solemn vows.³⁵ The work that the new Congregation was expected to do was demanding, dirty, and sometimes not welcomed by those who were on the receiving end of its charitable activities: there were cases of male prisoners, for example, throwing soup at the women who came to tend them.^{36*} This was why the work could not be done by the Dames de la Charité: not only were they unwilling to risk their dignity in such tasks, but they would have received no special status by way of compensation. Undoubtedly part of the reason Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac insisted that the girls should come from simple country backgrounds was that they would be much less likely to demand to be publicly recognised as religious. All the same, it is quite clear that M. Vincent thought of them as religious, wrote of them in that fashion, and even seems to have encouraged them to believe that the status of their simple vows was equal to that of the solemn vows of professed religious:

Ainsi, bien que nous ne fassions pas les voeux solennellement, nous recevons les mêmes grâces que reçoivent les religieux profès, ou de semblables.³⁷

The simple vows which his Filles made were acceptable. Given that they had provoked no serious controversy, Rome was then willing to tolerate a discreet profession of simple vows.³⁸ There was more than a slight note of conscious cunning in the ingenuous, or disingenuous, responses advised by Vincent. The cunning he recommended to them allowed the Filles considerable freedom of

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

movement at a period when the antagonism between regulars, seculars, and the Crown was steadily increasing. They were carefully schooled in the art of prudent obedience while learning to stress prudence as much as obedience. Indeed, the word recurs with surprising frequency in the records of the many *entretiens* that Vincent and Louise both gave to the Filles. The advice appears to have accomplished its purpose, for there were few complaints about these very unusual religious.

Like so many of the new institutions established to contain and channel women's piety in seventeenth-century France, the Filles de la Charité as a congregation were both at the heart of public and official life and on its fringes. They were important because of the power and influence of Vincent de Paul, the social standing and connections of Louise de Marillac, and the promotion of the Dames de la Charité. As a result they found themselves occasionally feared and distrusted by figures far more powerful than they, who saw in them the hand of Rome, the hand of the Jesuits, or, in a variation, the hand of the Crown. At the same time, their femaleness and their obscure social origins made them much less threatening than they would have been had they been men, and ultimately brought them great success, at the price of submitting to the administrative control of the Crown.

• Men: The Congrégation de Mission

Men as well as women could expect to encounter opposition in attempting the new form of religious life Vincent propagated. After he had established the Congregation in 1625, he found he had to respond to a number of angry or suspicious comments about their exact status:

Ô Monsieur, me direz-vous, nous qui avons fait les voeux de pauvreté, chasteté et obéissance, et qui, dites-vous, ne sommes pas religieux, aurons-nous la récompense de nos voeux, comme les religieux -- Qui en doute?³⁹

CHAPTER 7

Part of this doubt about their status may have developed because the Congregation of the Mission permitted lay-members to join. These, of course, could not fulfil the same functions as priests; their work was, according to the Rule, to 'help in these ministries like Martha in whatever way the superior wants them to. This help includes "prayers and tears", mortification, and good example."⁴⁰ The combination of lay and clerical membership was a daring departure from custom, but it was a first step toward the Tridentine ideal of encouraging a closer communion between priests and the laity. The problems of organizing such a congregation for men were rather different, however, than those of organizing an unenclosed congregation for women. The Filles might expect to encounter social disapproval, and perhaps questions from Rome. It must be remembered, however, that all male regulars were suspect during the seventeenth century. Non-monastic male regulars were likely to encounter more serious opposition than unenclosed female 'regulars', who merely offended social custom. Unlike monastics, such men were not embedded in local patronage networks, and unlike seculars they did not owe obedience to local bishops who were, in France, appointed by the King. This meant that though they might have full papal support, their members often had the greatest possible difficulty carrying out their functions. This was the problem at the heart of all the difficulties of the Jesuits in France. The Jesuits, who vowed obedience only to their superiors and to the Pope, had been granted their privileges as an unusual concession in response to the upheavals of the Reformation. Rome, and France's spiritual reformers, were aware that too many exceptions would lead to trouble, as Vincent wrote: 'Messieurs les prélates ne désirant pas que nous soyons religieux, et les religieux nous conseillant le contraire.'⁴¹ The challenge, then, was to ensure that the priests of the Mission in no way resembled regulars, as the Filles had to be careful not to resemble religious.

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

Bérulle's Oratory had offered Vincent a model for this kind of institution, but it did not altogether suit his purposes. Bérulle had hoped that his company would 'reach out' to the poor of the countryside by founding seminaries that would instruct parish priests; this was forbidden by the pope when Bérulle applied for the canonical erection of his order, perhaps because such seminaries would have competed with those of the Jesuits.⁴² Although the Oratorians were given schools to run by various patrons in different cities, the resulting conflict with the Jesuits brought them much trouble, as suggested previously. The foundation of seminaries, it should be repeated, which was one of the main goals of the Council of Trent, proved to be extremely difficult, and in spite of many efforts the attempt had to be begun anew at the start of the eighteenth century.⁴³ Historians do not know why, but one possible reason is that a priest with a high level of education was bound to seek out more honourable or profitable positions than that of curé in a poor country parish, as suggested earlier. It was mainly ill-educated, half-trained men, who were not always fully consecrated priests, who were willing to do such work. Seminaries tended to defeat their own purpose by educating men in such a way that they were able to seek out more interesting and lucrative careers than that of a parish priest.⁴⁴

Vincent must have been able to see that efforts to serve the poor better through seminaries were doomed to be ineffective. He decided that if priests were unwilling to live full-time in parishes, they might at least be willing to serve them in missions, on temporary excursions into the countryside where they could remain for weeks or months at a time and then return to the less isolated conditions of Paris or the provincial capitals. But they must accept that they were not to aspire to the status of intellectuals: 'None of our brothers', he wrote, 'should want to study Latin or wish to become clerks.'

CHAPTER 7

Their role is that of Martha.⁴⁵ He wished to ensure that Mission priests would understand the terms of their engagement:

La médiocrité suffit et celle que l'on veut avoir au delà est plutôt à craindre qu'à souhaiter par les ouvriers de l'évangile, parce qu'elle est dangereuse: elle enfle, elle porte à paraître, à s'en faire accroire, et enfin à éviter les actions humbles, simples et familières, qui pourtant sont les plus utiles.⁴⁶

There was probably more to Vincent's rejection of theologians for his new society than a wish to ensure the commitment of its members. Theological writing inevitably drew the attention of both the temporal and the religious authorities to those reckless enough to engage in it. Vincent wished to ensure that his priests would be free to carry out their work free of the pressure from suspicious minds that had complicated the work of the Oratorians. He wrote, 'il faut de la science, et malheur à ceux qui n'emploient bien leur temps! Mais craignons, craignons, et si j'ose dire, tremblons et tremblons mille fois plus que je ne saurais dire'.⁴⁷

Vincent, in fact, was in some ways more careful with his Mission priests than he was with his Filles de la Charité. The same exhortations to prudence run through the Rule of the Mission, but with a sharper note. Although 'Jesus expects us to have the simplicity of a dove,' reads the Rule, 'he tells us to have the prudence of a serpent as well.'⁴⁸ This was a real departure from the conventions of dévot advice to priests, which usually instructed Christians, especially women, to adopt a child-like naïveté towards worldly affairs. It suggests that Vincent was well aware of the difficulties his missionaries were likely to encounter and hoped to keep them out of the more dangerous dispute not by the exercise of simplicity but of worldly wisdom. Examples of his own worldly wisdom in the handling of the Mission are frequent. He took care not to have the Rule for the Mission priests formally drawn up and published until 1658, thirty-three years after their foundation, ostensibly to

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

ensure that they did not prove to be too difficult, or irrelevant. The Filles, although officially founded some years later than the Mission, were given their rules and constitutions immediately. It seems likely that in the men's case Vincent was nervous about possible disapproval from Rome or the crown and wished to avoid it by leaving the matter of constitutions vague; in fact, they were frequently altered before they were finally printed, and even then they were not submitted for approval to Rome until the twentieth century.⁴⁹ Another sign of his eagerness to protect the Congregation's mission was his refusal to allow its priests to preach to anyone but the country poor, even turning down a request from Anne of Austria to send them to Metz to preach a mission to the city's ecclesiastics and *gens de bien*.⁵⁰ He did not wish the Mission priests to become fashionable, and so to be tempted away from their vocation by the prospect of benefices or political influence.

The World

• Dévot politicization

Vincent in the end found the temptations of exercising public influence nearly irresistible, perhaps because he had realised its value for even the most disinterested priest in his years with the Gondi family. His connection with the Gondis and his charitable activities ensured that he soon came to be well-known in the highest circles in France. Perhaps hoping to capitalize on his fame, he began in 1633 to hold regular conferences on Tuesdays at his headquarters at Saint-Lazare, an old priory that had been given to him to house the 'Lazarists', the name by which the Mission priests came to be known, by its few remaining religious. He was not alone in this endeavour: a number of similar, informal groups had begun to meet at around the same time. Their purpose was to discuss both the nature of devotion and the sacerdotal life.⁵¹ A mark of Vincent's renown is that in 1631 the archbishop

CHAPTER 7

of Paris ordered that all priests preparing for ordination in the diocese should make a retreat at Saint-Lazare among the priests of the Mission. In 1638, he was apparently expecting as many as seventy of these men.⁵²

The dévot landscape in Paris was by the 1630s a very different one from that of 1608, when Vincent first arrived in Paris. Many of the outstanding figures of the movement were dead. Bérulle was dead; Marillac was dead; Barbe Acarie was dead; and François de Sales. And the dévots' political situation had changed too. Bérulle, of course, had resigned or been forced to retire in disgrace from his position on the king's council in 1629. Marillac and many other members of the Marie de Medici's party had been disgraced and exiled or imprisoned for their part in the Day of the Dupes in 1630. On the other hand, the Acarie circle had been a small and informal group whose members, at the peak of the group's enthusiasm, had been generally obscure, young, or in disgrace of some kind. It was from this number, they had all believed, that reformation must come, for it seemed unlikely to come from anyone else. Vincent, meeting some of these people in 1608, would not have seen them at the low point of their fortunes, but he would certainly have glimpsed the weakness of the Catholic reform movement in France in its early stages. By the mid-1630s, in contrast, it appeared to be thriving. Vincent's Tuesday conferences drew many of the most able and intelligent young ecclesiastics together. Many of them were from the highest ranks of society, young noblemen who had at last heard the message of the Catholic reformation and consented to pursue the training and education necessary for assuming the duties of the ecclesiastical benefices which they continued to obtain by right of birth.⁵³ In the parish of Saint-Sulpice, another of Bérulle's former protégés, Jean-Jacques Olier, would soon establish his own centre for the formation of parish priests, priests who must be

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

willing to serve the urban poor. There were many other foyers of this kind, where priests in their early years lived in community and met regularly with lay people to arrange relief for the poor, as well as to carry out devotional exercises, reading and meditation. It remains difficult to determine whether the *dévo*t movement was actually in decline, however. Much depends upon how we define the idea of decline. In spite of its many undoubted successes, the *dévo*t movement was losing its intensity and its spontaneity, growing more factional, and, in one way or another, more politicized.

In response to a growing need for discretion in matters of religion, a new and secret confraternity, the *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*, was established in March 1630. The *Compagnie* seems to have taken its inspiration from Vincent's Mission fathers and perhaps also from the Jesuit Aas, Marian confraternities common elsewhere in Europe but rare in France. It was to have a mixed lay and clerical membership, was to have no association with similar confraternities for women,⁵⁴ and was to accept no regulars among its members. This shows, writes one historian, that the lessons of Camus, and the 'enigmatic' Petrus Aurelius had born fruit: in other words, the *Compagnie* hoped to dissociate itself from the disapproval that inevitably fell upon regulars by excluding them altogether.⁵⁵ The *Compagnie's* existence, its membership, and its activities were also supposed to be kept entirely secret. Why its founding members, one of whom was Condren, since 1629 the superior of the Oratory, decided to keep it a secret is difficult to know. It is possible that they merely wished to carry out their charitable activities in a truly evangelical manner, remaining anonymous. Perhaps they feared the government's reaction to such an organization, after the Day of the Dupes. If so, they did themselves more harm by their secrecy, once the secret was finally uncovered, than they would have done had they acted openly, for they were regarded by Mazarin and Louis XIV as political

CHAPTER 7

conspirators. Historians, too, subsequently regarded them as a peculiarly sinister resurrection of the *parti dévot*, spreading from Paris to the provinces and, along with their good works, imposing a rigid, mean-spirited, control-oriented piety upon the cities and villages of provincial France.⁵⁶

The Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement was important to Vincent's story for several reasons. Not only was it modelled upon his Congrégation, it was also to become entwined with the latter group in some way that is not altogether clear, thanks to the secrecy which shrouded the Compagnie's activities. The reputation of his own foundations was somewhat damaged by the association. Yet Vincent did not at first know of the Compagnie; nor, when he learned of its existence, was he especially pleased by it. That he eventually became involved in it to the extent of occasionally attending its meetings we know because his name appears in the Compagnie's minutes, starting in 1635. (The minutes survive because they were kept from the authorities and then handed over by one of the Compagnie's leaders in 1696, who hoped to obtain permission to revive it.) Vincent's name does not appear there often, however, and the extent of his involvement in its activities is not clear.⁵⁷

It is not easy to understand why Vincent would have chosen to become involved with the Compagnie, apart from a desire to keep his eye on a possible rival. With his Tuesday meetings, his benefices, the Dames, the Filles, and the Mission priests, not to mention his dirigés and his own mission work, he had little time to spare. His own companies functioned effectively and he was sufficiently well-known, by the time of the Compagnie's foundation, not to need to seek new patrons for his charitable work. There is, however, one possible explanation for his involvement. The Compagnie, although some of its members were themselves Augustinian in theology (its Oratorian members, for example; and the Prince de Conti; and Lamoignon, to name a few), from its origins

CHAPTER 7

contained a strongly anti-Augustinian contingent, and the fight against what was soon to be labelled 'Jansenism' was a motivating force in Vincent's life.

Division

There were strong counter-currents that worked against the forward flow of Catholic reform. These usually had some connection to the controversies occasioned by the growing importance of the Augustinian revival, led by Saint-Cyran and his friend Jansenius. Saint-Cyran, (see Chapter 6), had apparently responded to Bérulle's demission by growing bolder, more or less openly challenging the king in his published writings. In 1635, he was made director of Port-Royal. His friend Jansenius published *Mars Gallicus* in the same year, attacking France for making war on Spain. He was eventually arrested, in 1638. Had someone denounced him to the authorities as well? Many people suspected, or claimed to suspect, that Vincent and Condren had been responsible for his arrest.⁵⁸ Perhaps Vincent had hoped that Saint-Cyran's arrest would forestall a serious division among Catholics in France. Whether the rumour regarding Vincent's denunciation of his former friend and colleague was accurate, and there is some reason to believe that it was, it served to create, or at any rate to deepen, the division between the friends of Saint-Cyran and his opponents. Vincent and for a short time Condren (who died in 1641) found themselves the leading exponents of French orthodoxy. Their theology (like Vincent's own) blended Bérullian and Salesian themes, combined with Vincent's missionary activism. This synthesis was to become the dominant mode of French piety, coexisting with the Augustinian Port-Royallists with increasing hostility and finally descending into a dirty war of competitive mud-slinging and denunciation.

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

• Ultramontanism and Anti-Jansenism

In the two *dévo*t camps developing in Paris in the 1640s, theological affinities and political interests were closely linked.⁵⁹ Vincent's Lazarists, his other companies for men and women, Jean-Jacques Olier's Sulpicians, and indeed nearly all the new mission companies founded in recent years were in general more inclined to subscribe to the tenets of the *École française* than of the Augustinians (who cannot properly be called Jansenists until the publication of Jansenius's *De Augustinus* in 1640). Augustinian theology was too difficult, too morally severe and, in spite of its self-conscious anti-intellectualism, too learned to appeal to men whose work required them to be able to move large audiences to a swift response. Mission priests - Lazarists and other - were therefore generally more attracted to Salesian *pur amour* than to Augustinian doctrine. Although the former was a profoundly difficult doctrine to grasp in its entirety, and could not be called 'laxist', it was easier to turn to their purposes because it could be cast in simple, emotionally appealing (i.e., affective) terms. Another reason why the new congregations and missionary companies were less likely to be drawn to the Jansenists than the *École française* was purely political. The bishops, who tended to be Gallican themselves, did not like the new, unstructured companies, no matter how often these proclaimed their willingness to obey their diocesan superiors. The fact remained that the companies were less vulnerable to episcopal control than the secular clergy. Their informality made it difficult to mount a concerted response to their enterprises. As a result, and also partly because of its own inclinations, the whole of the mission movement tended to be ultramontane rather than Gallican in its attitude to matters of Church-state policy. Vincent was careful not to make any overt proclamation of his ultramontane tendencies, but he made them clear in his attacks upon Jansenism.

VINCENT'S DAUGHTERS, VINCENT'S SONS

On the other hand, because the Jansenists had established themselves in public opinion as the defenders of bishops' rights, some senior members of the Catholic hierarchy in France found them more appealing.⁶⁰ Conscious of this, many Jansenists grew more overtly Gallican through the 1640s.⁶¹ This was especially true after the death of Saint-Cyran, who was never a genuine Gallican himself, in spite of his hostility to contemporary popes. The movement began to attract people, especially from *Parlementaire* circles, who might not have been drawn to Augustinian theology but who were attracted by its Gallican tendencies. Still, although the nuns of Port-Royal-de-Paris had already begun to make a deep impression upon public consciousness, there were, in the 1630s, far fewer people who were likely to identify themselves with Augustinian theology than there would be twenty years later. The apogee of Parisian Jansenism was yet to come. The main centres of support for Augustinianism, for episcopal Gallicanism, and for the conciliar thesis, were Port-Royal itself, and, after Condren's death in 1641, the Oratory. Although the division between the two camps was never absolute, it was persistent, bitter, and the cause of many unworthy minor conspiracies, either side seizing every possible opportunity to discredit the other.

Watching over the deepening theological split with eager interest was the crown. Both Richelieu before his death in 1642, and Mazarin, Anne of Austria's first minister, were anxious to see where the division would lead. Richelieu's own theological allegiances (see the previous chapter) were more Jesuitical than those of either of the two major *dévo*t factions, while Mazarin had little interest in theology, but both men could see that the split might be useful to them. It is possible (see Chapter 6) that Richelieu actually wanted to promote a break between the two. He was skilled in the art of political manipulation, and no doubt well aware of the value of 'divide and rule' as a maxim of

CHAPTER 7

government.⁶² The Gallican tendencies of Jansenism do not appear to have impressed him, perhaps because he did not regard these as likely to make Jansenists more loyal to the crown.

Vincent's influence, meanwhile, continued to increase through the 1630s and 1640s, especially after Louis XIII's death in 1643. It was at this time that he was chosen by the *dévôte* queen-mother, Anne of Austria, to be part of a new council she referred to as her '*conseil de conscience*', whose purpose was to advise her regarding matters of religion. Vincent's own role in the council was to give her advice about the distribution of benefices, and he seems to have been an important influence upon episcopal appointments as well. He did his best to discourage her from appointing anyone whom he suspected of '*new doctrines*', i.e., Jansenism, although it is clear that either she sometimes ignored his advice, or his insight sometimes failed him, as some of her episcopal appointees eventually developed Jansenist tendencies.⁶³ Vincent's desire to crush Jansenism cannot be doubted. In 1646, he denounced Antoine Arnauld's books in a letter to Cardinal Grimaldi, also enclosing a refutation of Arnauld's doctrines.⁶⁴ Later, in 1651, he pushed French bishops to draft and send out a circular letter condemning the new doctrines and demanding the signatures of their parish clergy. When this attempt failed, he decided that it would again be necessary to persuade Rome to intervene in the matter. It was partly thanks to his efforts that the issue reached Rome at all, and that Innocent X issued his condemnation of the '*Five Propositions*' (see Chapter 10) in 1653.

Vincent was not alone in his distaste for Jansenism, but he was certainly important in securing its condemnation in France. It should be pointed out once again, however, that while he was engaged in the battle, Jansenists themselves were also plotting against those whom they suspected of showing excessively '*Jesuitical*' tendencies. The use of that label for their enemies was probably a calculated

political move. They were aware that the people of France did not trust the Jesuits, and also that to undertake a direct attack upon Vincent, or his companies, or other major figures in the mission movement, all widely popular, would have cost them sympathy. Vincent's involvement in these affairs even had some effect upon the Filles de la Charité, in spite of his advice about prudence. Some of the not infrequent protests about the activities of the Filles look superficially anti-female, but there is often a political animus just beneath the surface of these protests. In one instance, a local bishop with Jansenist sympathies who had heard rumours about their morals went so far as to excommunicate them until they were exonerated by their accusers.^{65*} But they were usually still able to continue their activities with little interruption. It was mission priests, those of Vincent's Congrégation and others, particularly those associated with Jean Eudes' missionary activities, who were to find themselves so entangled in religious and temporal politics that they found it difficult to carry out their duties. They ended by spending as much time on doctrinal and factional disputes as on their mission work.

Conclusion

The difference between the experiences of the men's and women's congregations under Vincent's direction show how much more men were invested in public life. Women, on the other hand, might receive little notice if they stayed out of public affairs, or gave the appearance of doing so, even when they broke all rules of conduct for female religious. Whether they were really as guileless as they seemed to be is another matter. A cunning innocence was part of their cloak of convention, one which they were forced to wear if they wished to avoid being stopped altogether. As burdensome and indeed insulting as it may have been, to deny that they were religious, to proclaim their ignorance, the denial gave them a freedom of action they would not otherwise have had. More, perhaps, than their male counterparts possessed, perpetually engaged as they were in

theological battles, constantly seeking benefices and advancement, and, finally, forced to proclaim themselves as Gallicans or ultramontanes if they wished to avoid taking sides by default. More than ever, as a result, in order to fulfill their religious ideals these men needed to see women as living outside and above the narrow confines of politics and theology. Vincent's successor, Jean Eudes, would discover how difficult the *dévo*t life had become for men.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Raoul Allier, *La Cabale*, p. 341.
2. Louis Abelly, *La Vie du vénérable serviteur de Dieu, Vincent de Paul* (Paris, 1664), T. III, p. 204. Vincent also told his mission priests, *Correspondance, Entretiens, Documents*, (Paris, 1920-1925), 14 vols., T. XII, p. 432, that he had been too ashamed to be seen publicly with his father when a school-boy at college in Dax, because his father was 'mal habillé et un peu boiteux'.
3. The chronology of Vincent's early life is not well-established; see Pierre Coste, *Le grand saint du grand siècle* (Paris, 1931), 2 vols., p. 31, for an explanation of the reasons for this.
4. See Abelly, III, p. 291; Pierre Coste, *Le grand saint*, Chapter 1, pp. 29-30; André Dodin, *François de Sales, Vincent de Paul: Les deux amis*, p. 8.
5. Coste, *Le grand saint*, p. 33.
6. He left for Toulouse with no more money to support himself than what his father had been able to realise by selling two steers. Coste, *Le grand saint*, p. 33.
7. Vincent de Paul, *Correspondance, entretiens, documents* (hereafter *CED*). Published and annotated by Pierre Coste (Paris: Lecoffre, 1920); Vol. I, Letter 3, 17 Feb. 1610, p. 19.
8. Vincent de Paul, *CED*, I, letter 3, p. 18.
9. The earliest of Vincent de Paul's letters to have survived, this was written to M. de Comet and dated Avignon, July 24, 1607, *CED*, pp. 1-13. It reappeared suddenly near the end of his life, causing him much embarrassment, but he never denied its authenticity. It was this that has made historians question its veracity; see *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.
10. See 'Vincent de Paul, His Life and Way', p. 16, in Frances Ryan and John Rybolt, eds. *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: Rules, Conferences and Writings*. New York: Paulist Press, 1995.
11. Vincent de Paul, *CED*, t. XIII, p. 8.
12. Vincent de Paul, *CED*, letter 6, p. 21, August or September 1617.
13. Coste, *Le grand saint*, p. 90.
14. Dodin, *Ibid.*, p. 12.
15. Sales, *Introduction à la vie dévote*, p.
16. André Dodin makes this observation, *Les deux amis*, p. 24.
17. In fact, the exact year in which they met is not certain; most biographers place it at 1624 or 1625.

18. For a description of Louise's adolescence, see Jean Calvet, *Saint Louise de Marillac par elle-même* (Paris: Téqui, 1988), pp. 18-24.
19. Calvet, *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 19, 26.
20. Quoted Dodin, p. 54.
21. Louise Sullivan, D.C. 'Louise de Marillac: A Spiritual Portrait,' p. 43, from *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: Rules, Conferences, Conferences and Writings*.
22. Vincent de Paul, *CED*, Vol. I, no. 27, pp. 51-52.
23. See Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 76-78, for a more extensive discussion of the establishment of the Filles de la Charité and its connection with the Dames de la Charité
24. Pierre Coste, *Vincent de Paul et les Dames de la Charité*, (Paris, 1918), Règlements de la Compagnie des Dames de la Charité: Projet de Règlement, pp. 97-98.
25. Coste, *Le grand saint*, p. 97.
26. Vincent de Paul, *CED*, Conference 12, July 1642.
27. See Coste, *CED*, I, Letter 132, p. 187-88. Louise de Marillac's biographers give the date of Marguerite Naseau's death as 1631, but Coste offers convincing reasons for preferring 1633, *Ibid.*, note 11, p. 189.
28. Rybolt and Ryan, *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac*, p. 54
29. Louis Châtellier, *Le catholicisme en France 1500-1650*, II, p. 33.
30. See for example M. Vacher, *Des 'régulières' dans le siècle. Les soeurs de Saint-Joseph du Père Médaille aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Clermont-Ferrand, Adosa, 1991); Louis Châtellier, *Ibid.*, pp. 40-43, also names several: the Sisters of Saint-Charles du Puy founded in 1624; Jeanne de Juliard of Toulouse who went to care for the sick in hospital and to lay out women's bodies for burial; she was the foundress after 1640 of the Filles de l'Enfance de Toulouse. There were also the Filles du Refuge d'Elisabeth de Ranfaing of Nancy and of Metz; the Filles de la Providence de Mme de Pollalion in Paris; the sisters of Saint-Joseph established in Auvergne between 1645 and 1650 by the Jesuit father Jean-Pierre Médaille, grand Missionaire of the Compagnie de Jésus, who had spent his life in mission-work, not only in the diocese of Puy but also in that of Clermont, Saint-Flour, Rodés, and Vienne. Many of these women's companies appear to have been connected either to the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement (see below) or to the Jesuits, and some appear to have been semi-secret in nature.
31. Châtellier, *Le catholicisme*, II, p. 37-38: The 'soeurs grises' themselves, in spite of their nursing vocation, did not escape the rule; with the exception of those of Lorraine, they were all forced to accept cloistered life between 1620 and 1650; it was the same for the related orders of the Clarisses

and Annonciades; consequently the care of the sick was abandoned.

32. The canonical significance of simple and solemn vows is a complicated issue. In effect, solemn vows were regarded as legally and morally binding, because they were contracted between their 'professors' and God, like a marriage vow, and so indissoluble. They were therefore also more permanent and prestigious than simple vows. These were contracted between their professors and some institutional body, and although breaking them was a serious matter, they were not irrevocable. There is much more that could be said of the matter.

New seventeenth-century French religious foundations may be divided into three groups: 'those that adopted solemn vows; those that evolved into the condition of secular societies with the status of regular orders; and those that kept simple vows, private or public.' See G. Lesage, *L'Accession des congrégations*, pp. 139-155.

33. *CED*, t. IX, p. 533.

34. *Ibid.*, *Entretien* of Nov. 12 1653, pp. 661-662.

35. Lesage, *L'accession des congrégations*, p. 139.

36. O'Donnell, *Rules, Conferences, Writings*, p.

37. Lesage, *Ibid.*, p. 375.

38. Lesage, in *L'Accession des congrégations*, p. 151, says that such bodies were tolerated for their admirable works of charity; 'and we will see the appearance of congregations organized like monastic orders go uncondemned as long as they showed themselves respectful towards the ordinaries, did not make a parade of the title of religious, and were not suspected of doctrinal irregularity.'

39. Vincent de Paul, *Des Voeux*. Conférence du 7 novembre 1659, in *CED*. t. XII, p. 371.

40. O'Donnell, *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: Rules, Conferences, Writings* (New York, 1995), 'Common Rules or Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission', Chapter 2, 'Purpose and Nature of the Congregation', Rule #2, p. 87.

41. Vincent de Paul. *CED*, t. III, p. 246-248. Letter to A. Portail, Oct. 4 1647.

42. Houssaye, *Le père de Bérulle et l'Oratoire de France*, p. 210

43. Broutin, *La réforme pastorale en France*, I, p. 367-8.

44. For example, in Lorraine several decades earlier, Pierre Fourier had attempted to gather a group of young men to teach village boys from his rectory. One after another they abandoned the project. See Rapley, *The Dévotes*, p. 64.

45. Rules and Constitutions of the Congrégation, Chapter 5, 'Obedience', n. 16.

46. *CED*, T. 8, p. 33.
47. *CED*, T. 11, p. 128.
48. *Ibid.*, 'Common Rules or Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission', Chapter 2, 'Gospel Teaching', Rule No. 5, p. 89.
49. O'Donnell, pp. 83-84. The constitutions were not officially sanctioned by Rome until 1954; and, say the authors, their publication had been called for by the appearance of the Code of Canon Law of 1917.
50. See Rybolt and Ryan, p. 128. The citation is from the records of a conference which took place May 17, 1658.
51. Rybolt and Ryan, p. 25. For further information regarding the Tuesday conferences and their role in the dévot life of Paris, see Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, Part I, Chapter 5, especially p. 187.
52. Vincent de Paul, *CED*, I, p. 525 and n. 3, December 13, 1639.
53. Bergin, *Making of the French Episcopate*, p. 543.
54. René II de Voyer d' Argenson, *Annales de la Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*, from Chapter XI, Résolutions de la Compagnie, p. 257: 'La Compagnie n'aura aucune liaison, communication ni correspondance avec aucune Compagnie de femmes sous quelque titre que ce soit.'
55. Martimort, *Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 188. In fact, however, the Compagnie seems to have defined the term 'regular' in an eccentric fashion, for at one point it admitted Jesuits, who were indeed 'regulars', and later (in 1649) excluded Oratorians, who were not regulars in the canonical sense of the term. It is possible that the Oratorians were officially excluded for reasons of religious politics (they were by then suspected of Jansenism) rather than because of their purported regular status. (See Chapter 9 of this study.)
56. Alain Tallon, *La Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*. Préface de Marc Venard. Paris: Cerf, 1990. See especially pp. 11-13, for a discussion of the 'black legend' surrounding the Compagnie and its activities.
57. See the Index to Argenson's *Annales*.
58. Raoul Allier, *La cabale*, p. 165.
59. See Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, I, ch. 5. 'La dévotion au Saint-Siège et les foyers de la réformation spirituelle,' for a fuller discussion. Also see Vol. I of G. Hermant's *Mémoires de Godefroi Hermant sur l'histoire ecclésiastique du XVIIe siècle (1630-1663)*.

60. See Chapters 9 and 10 of this study for some of the names associated with the ultramontane trend in the French hierarchy, and the reasons for it.

61. Broutin (Vol. II, p. 535) states that Jansenists did not begin to be associated with 'Richerisme' (i.e. radical Gallicanism) until the Fronde, when it began to be entangled with dissident movements. But Gallicanism was not a dissident movement in the France of the 1640s; partly because it was not yet associated, in the minds of those in authority, with Jansenism. Meanwhile, the increasing popularity of Gallican ideas at this time is attested by the warm welcome given to Antoine Arnauld's *Théologie morale des Jésuites* (1642) and his *De la fréquente communion* (1643). The process of acceptance was hastened by the great popularity of Pascal's *Provinciales* in 1656; see Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 205-6.

62. Neither Richelieu's letters nor his memoirs make any use of this phrase. His ostensible reason for arresting Saint-Cyran, it will be remembered, was his belief that theological discord was bad for the state. But Saint-Cyran's offenses were relatively minor, by the standards of Paris's pamphlet wars. He had not, after all, recommended tyrannicide as a solution to political problems, nor proclaimed himself an ultramontane. He was arrested after the publication of his *Vie d'Abraham*, which contained a rather muted criticism of government policy, and he was known to be in some disagreement with other dévot theologians. It is not unreasonable, then, to suppose that Richelieu arrested him - perhaps with the prompting of Vincent or Condren - in the hope that this would divide dévot allegiances still further.

63. René Rapin, *Mémoires*, I, p. 47-49.

64. Rapin, *Ibid.*, I, p. 115-116.

65. O'Donnell, *Rules, Conferences, Writings*, p. 110.

8/ THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE': 1642-1672

'Save Rome and France in the name of the Sacred heart.'

Jean Eudes (1601-1680) was, like Vincent de Paul, involved in the mid-century reaction against the lingering humanistic and theological concerns of earlier *dévot* piety. More significantly, he was also, like Vincent, a missionary, a true apostle to the poor in that way that had always just eluded older *dévots* like François de Sales and Bérulle. After a long apprenticeship in the Oratory, living mostly at Paris and preaching missions in the neighbouring countryside, he left Bérulle's old company to establish his own seminary at Caen in his native province of Normandy, the Congrégation de Jésus et Marie, in 1642. Determined, like any good *dévot* cleric, not to found a 'regular' order, he was equally determined that the priests he trained should not be learned men but humble servants of the poor. It was not, however, for his activities as a missionary or the founder of the Eudist fathers (as the members of his congregation were informally known) that he would be remembered in later years. He was the first to institutionalize the Feasts of the Sacred Heart of Mary in 1648, and of Jesus in 1672.¹ And his inspiration for this most enduring emblem of seventeenth-century affective spirituality was, as we might expect, a woman: Marie des Vallées (1590-1656). Her revelations of the sacred hearts of Mary and Jesus, and her visions of the role of the *dévote* as a model of *expiatory* piety, were perfectly in harmony with Eudes' view of the role of the *dévot* priest as martyr to the poor.

¹Cited André Vauchez, 'The Cathedral', in Pierre Nora, *The Realms of Memory*, Vol. I, *Conflicts and Divisions*, p. 60.

CHAPTER 8

The Sacred Heart had by the nineteenth century become the universally acknowledged symbol of orthodox Catholicity.² In the twentieth century, the Catholic Women's League went so far as to suggest that it ought to be placed in some form upon the wall of all Catholic households, as a proclamation of their faith and their rejection of liberalism, modernism, and, in the United States, Communism. To be a true Catholic was to acknowledge the power of the Sacred Heart. The origins of this highly fraught symbol were and remain a subject of controversy, although this is not widely known outside the field of religious history. To begin with, Eudes' role in the promotion of the two liturgical festivals is now largely forgotten outside specialists' circles. Even professional historians are sometimes unaware of it: the Sacred Heart is widely assumed to have been an image of obscurantist ultramontane orthodoxy promoted by French Jesuits with the inspiration of Saint Marguerite-Marie Alacoque (1647-1690).³ Thus at the centre of the story are not one but two women, one of whom had once been accused of sorcery, the other living out a mysticism thought so extreme, even by the liberal standards of the seventeenth century, that she provoked rumours of heresy in Jansenist circles. Both women claimed, or rather had claimed for them, the honour of being the founding mother of the feast day of the Sacred Heart, and to this day Jesuits and Eudists have remained at odds over which of the two made a more important contribution to the liturgical celebration of this symbol. The use of the visions and prayers of a pious woman or women to express a broad national or ecclesiastical purpose was not unknown, of course. Catherine of Siena had exploited her own relationship with God to convince a pope to go to war, to name just one such case, while more recently Richelieu had requested that French Carmelites pray for his victory over the English.⁴ But it was once rare for such a woman to be openly displayed as a 'front' for the more covert activities

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

of men. How the Sacred Heart came to be the focus of such attention in the seventeenth century goes to the heart of the era's controversies over the role of devotion in public life and over women's public role. No other illuminates so well the way in which men's religious controversies drew women to the centre of the public stage, or the reasons why *dévot* obscurity might be so attractive to *dévot* men that they inadvertently destroyed it. And, as with so many aspects of seventeenth-century devotion, it also reveals the way in which 'marginality' and centrality were, for women, always closely connected.

Origins of the Sacred Heart

The Sacred Heart first appeared as a devotional symbol in 'the intense devotion to the heart of Jesus found among the Saxon nuns and Flemish holy women of the thirteenth century.'⁵ Medieval scholars believe that it originated in devotion to the body of Christ, either as that body was made accessible in the host itself (devotion to the sacred heart was closely connected to devotion to the Eucharist), or in the idea or vision or in some cases picture (actual or imaginary) of Christ's body. It began, in short, as a highly material image of Christ's love for human beings and his willingness to die for them, and also, and primarily, an image of Christ's fleshly humanity. Affective; material; concerned with Christ's humanity: it was a woman's symbol, according to widely accepted ideas of what femininity was. Why this widely popular image did not acquire its own liturgical celebration in the Middle Ages is not clear, but in fact in spite of its popularity no official celebration of the Sacred Heart was instituted until the seventeenth century. The Feast of the Heart of Mary was first celebrated in 1648. The adoration of the Sacred Heart (of Jesus), however, did not receive an official feast day until 1672. By this time, the original image had undergone certain changes and would perhaps no

CHAPTER 8

longer have been recognised by its early adherents. The Sacred Heart of the Eudists and Jesuits was still a heart, but not a medieval heart, dripping blood and gore. It was transformed by its seventeenth-century adherents into a heart-abstract, in the conventional shape, sometimes surrounded by stars, sometimes by flames, and sometimes by a portrait of a fully-clothed (not naked and crucified) Christ, opening his bosom as one might open a cupboard to reveal a burning heart resting there.

One of the first seventeenth-century allusions (so far as we know) to the sacred heart image occurred in an unexpected place. In the papers of Mère Angélique, relative to the establishment of the Institut du Saint-Sacrement in 1627, there appears a 'a heart pierced with two arrows upon which are to be read the monograms of Jesus and Mary,' reports Prunel in his biography of Sébastien Zamet. There is also, he goes on to say, the initial salutation of her letters, 'Vive Jésus et sa sainte Mère', an opening which was to be adopted by adherents of the Sacred Heart. Similar visual and written tropes occur in the letters of Jeanne de Chantal to Mère Angélique.⁶ There might perhaps be little importance to this early appearance of the image, for it led to no special observances at either Port-Royal or among the Visitandines. Its significance lies in the fact that in later years the friends of Port-Royal would be inimically opposed to the sacred heart devotions established first by Jean Eudes and later by the Jesuits associated with Paray-le-Monial. Port-Royal's disciples and those of Antoine Arnauld came to regard it as emblematic of anti-episcopal, ultramontane allegiance; the Eudists and the Jesuits saw it as a sign of God's blessings upon France. Its appearance in the letters of Angélique Arnauld suggests that it was, initially, a natural outgrowth of the affective preoccupations of seventeenth-century faith (among women, at least), rather than a self-conscious ideological coinage brought out by party interests.

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

Marie des Vallées

Marie des Vallées was born in 1590; she was, therefore, a late member of the first generation of *dévot/dévotes*, a year older than Angélique Arnauld herself. But whereas other *dévotes* who have appeared in this history were located, for the most part, in the geographical and metaphorical centre of French life, Marie was decidedly marginal, and this was to have no small impact upon the outcome of her story. She came from a village belonging to the diocese of Coutances, an ancient episcopal town in Normandy. She was a daughter of the 'noblesse ruinée', according to one of her biographers. But her family was very poor: her father Julien des Vallées was a labourer, apparently without land of his own. Eudes was also a Norman, born at Ri, and also the son of a peasant family, albeit one which was rather better off, and perhaps this gave them a fellow feeling.

Marie's father died when she was twelve, and her mother remarried, to a man who was a butcher by trade but apparently unable to support his new family.⁷ The young girl went out into service, but her new masters were 'pires que des démons': she told people in later years that she was able to convert them to a more Christian life.⁸ In spite of her early piety and devotion to the Virgin, similar to that of other *dévots* as children, she began to suffer from a series of 'attacks', perhaps neurotic in origin, perhaps not, in her late adolescence.⁹ In May 1609 when she was about twenty, emerging from church after mass on the feast day of Saint Marcouf, a young man approached her and invited her to dance; she found the experience so disturbing that she experienced some kind of breakdown afterwards, one that lasted for several years. The exact events of this encounter are the subject of controversy among her biographers: the friendly ones state or imply that the young man was an agent of the Devil, while her critics suggest that she must have had something on her

CHAPTER 8

conscience to have reacted in so extreme a fashion; that perhaps, having chosen to dance with the man, or worse, she was then assailed by guilt over what she had done. Modern minds might consider other explanations for her breakdown: was she, perhaps, the victim of a sexual assault, and unwilling to admit this or to accuse her attacker? Her later symptoms seem to suggest this possibility.¹⁰ That she was not actually raped in the vernacular sense of the term we know because she was later examined by doctors and found to be a virgin, but it seems possible that she experienced some form of sexual attack, although the records do not actually say so. What she told her inquisitors and biographers in later years was that her would-be dancing partner had bewitched her, with a charm acquired from a local witch. As a result of this assault, she was unable to sleep; she experienced bouts of howling rage, followed by fainting fits.¹¹

Marie's sense of persecution by the powers of evil both in human form (via sorcerers) and in diabolical form was not what made her case remarkable, for the witch-craze phenomenon was more pronounced in Normandy than elsewhere in France. According to her biographer Dermenghem, hundreds of people were said, by a converted (male) sorcerer, to frequent the sabbats of the Étencin wood. Many people were burnt for practising sorcery; and as late as 1669, 525 were accused of it, although such trials were dying out elsewhere in France. In 1672 Colbert was to order the Paris Parlement to hear no more cases of sorcery.¹² Whether their prevalence in Normandy meant that the province contained more people who really engaged in occult practises (as innocent as fortune-telling or as guilty as satanism), or merely that fear of sorcery was a widespread phenomenon there, is unclear. Many people shared the fear; Jean Eudes was convinced, moreover, that superstitious

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

practises, including spells, were common among Norman peasants, who believed that it was better to conceive children 'de quelque façon que ce fût' rather than remaining virgin or sterile.¹³

The political implications of accusations of sorcery, or of being the cause of another's possession, must be considered. In this context, one element of Marie's social and cultural milieu must be noted from the outset. Normandy, of all French provinces, was among the most resistant to the authority of Paris. Perhaps for this reason, many of its inhabitants had been drawn to the Reformed faith during the sixteenth century, and the protestant population in its capital city of Rouen was, for a time, very large.¹⁴ There was a correspondingly powerful Catholic reaction, so that Norman Catholics were among the most fiercely anti-protestant in the country. Even among them, however, resistance to the centralization of France was strong. After Henri IV ascended the throne, Normans accepted his rule, but with a bad grace, and the magistrates of its Parlement remained reluctant to follow the precedents set by the Coutûme de Paris, while they were gradually accepted by the rest of the country. Perhaps because of their lingering religious divisions, Normans after the ascension of Henri IV were greatly affected by the so-called 'witch craze'. Between 1548 and 1576, the Parlement of Rouen had heard few witchcraft cases, but by 1585-88 3 per cent of its business was with witch trials, and by 1604-06 the figure was as high as 10 per cent.¹⁵ These dates suggest although they cannot confirm, some resentment among Normans of the authorities in Paris, and some desire to express their fears of heresy in the courts. The Normans' reluctance to turn to the Paris Parlement as an appellate court meant that they were more likely to convict and burn witches than other regions.¹⁶ It followed that to accuse someone of sorcery was, in Normandy, an even more provocative and dangerous gesture for all concerned than it might have been elsewhere. Marie, in doing so, may have

CHAPTER 8

been making a political gesture, of a sort, or simply acceding to the fears and obsessions of her environment. She was not, at this stage of her life, likely to have been a pawn manipulated by others for purely political reasons, like Marthe Brossier in Paris, or a semi-conscious fraud, like Nicole Tavernier, Madame Acarie's servant, for her case was not sufficiently publicised to be used in this manner. The targets of her accusations were not protestants, but 'sorcerers' pure and simple. Her message, although not without political implications, was largely religious.

Whatever the origin of Marie's state (trauma, congenital illness, politics, or - for it is unscientific to exclude the possibility - actual possession) making accusations of witchcraft was always very likely to backfire upon the accuser. In her case, it did. According to seventeenth-century theologians, to be possessed was not necessarily to be guilty of any sin. He or she who was the cause of the possession was the guilty party. Possession could exist in the innocent; in fact, some considered it one of the signs of sainthood. A man or woman might be so good as to attract the attentions of the forces of evil, and be permitted to suffer them by God as a test of virtue. In claiming that the young man had been the cause of her possession, therefore, Marie was making no admission of her own wrongdoing.¹⁷ But in pointing to someone as a sorcerer and blaming him for her own sufferings, the supposed victim of sorcery had indicated a well-connected man. He denounced her to the Parlement of Rouen, and the magistrates decided it was necessary to examine her and had her arrested.

For a period of several months, Marie was imprisoned and examined regularly by a commission of clerics and prelates including the bishop, Nicolas de Briroy, of Coutances, her native diocese. They did not, in fact, torture her, although the forms of examination to which she was subjected were emotionally disturbing and, on one occasion (when they stuck her with pins to see if

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

she was insensible anywhere as witches were thought to be) physically painful. The point of the investigation was to discover whether she were actually a witch, or merely an innocent in the grip of an infernal power through no fault of her own. Towards this end, she was examined by a surgeon to find whether she were actually a virgin, for virginity was thought to be incompatible with the practise of satanism (which was their interpretation of sorcery).¹⁸ They found no sign that she was guilty of sorcery or wilful surrender to the devil and she was eventually set free after nearly five months of incarceration, first in the bishop's dungeons, and then in the Conciergerie of Rouen's Parlement

After her release, she did not become a nun. She continued to live in dread of the sorcerers whom she believed were in conspiracy against her. Before the end of the year (1614), this particular manifestation of evil ceased to trouble her, but she was, in effect possessed until the end of her life. Although she submitted repeatedly to various exorcists, their rites failed to effect any improvement in her condition. She followed a path similar to that of the beguine or the anchorite, (though she never had herself enclosed), choosing, it seems, to exclude herself from the dignity of vows. A nun, in any case, would not have been permitted to take up such novel ideas as hers, at least not a nun in a reformed convent. She lived for a time, presumably upon the charity of her protectors, in a room off the chapel in the episcopal palace of Coutances, then in the house of M. Le Rouge, cure of Jouganville, and then that of M. Pottier, vicar of the cathedral there.¹⁹ Gradually, her reputation began to reach the ears of a few dévots: missionaries, Compagnie members, and the ordinary people of the region.

Marie's beliefs

CHAPTER 8

Marie began to tell her chosen confidantes, of whom there were few, that she believed herself to be a chosen victim, an 'expiatrice' whose torments were God's way of demonstrating his power to work through every kind of obstacle. At other times she said that she herself had asked God to permit her to be tormented in this way in order to take upon herself the punishments that would otherwise be visited upon the sorcerers of the region who had caused her so much suffering:

Je demande mes frères qui se perdent. Je sais certainement et vois l'Amour divin qui cherche quelqu'un qui veuille souffrir les peines d'enfer et l'ire de Dieu dans le temps [i.e. as opposed to eternity], afin de les en délivrer pour l'éternité. Me voilà. Prenez-moi.²⁰

Marie's case was to inaugurate a series of similar (or vaguely similar) cases in seventeenth-century France. Long before Jean-Joseph Surin, who was to propose a similar exchange on behalf of Jeanne des Anges, she introduced to her small audience a novel idea in the complex history of religious 'substitution', in which a self-chosen victim offers herself to her persecutors in order to expiate their sins. The ascetics and mystics of patristic times and of the high Middle Ages had offered their physical pains, or their material hardships, as a ransom for their own salvation and that of others. Marie would offer her own soul. Or rather, not her own soul, for it does not seem that she expected to be damned, but her control over her own will, to the God-sent demons who troubled her, while saying that even if she had been in heaven, she would there choose to suffer the pains of hell in order to expiate the sins of those not permitted to share in Christ's salvation. Somewhat later, although still in the first years of her post-trial period, she refined upon this idea and asked that God replace her will with his, annihilating her own, using (according to her annalists) the term familiar to us from Bérulle's writings, 'anéantir'.

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

Marie promised herself entirely to God, and as a token of this promise, she thought that she must give up her greatest consolation, the right to receive the Eucharist, which she had always insisted upon even in the depths of her unhappiness. 'La sainte volonté est Dieu' she said; 'la sainte Communion est Dieu.

Quand je communierais tous les jours, je puis encore pêcher. Si ma propre volonté est anéantie, et que celle de Dieu soit mise en la place, je ne l'offenserai plus... C'est pourquoi je renonce de tout mon coeur à ma propre volonté.'²¹

But it seemed that she must give up communion in order to please God, to excommunicate herself in order to be at one with the excluded souls for whom she prayed.²² For some years (from sometime after 1614 until 1654) Marie avoided the Eucharist, the altar, and the practice of confession. Whatever the significance of her religious message, or her personal history, she must have possessed considerable powers of persuasion, for her next confrontation with authority did not occur until many years later. Giving up communion as a form of self-sacrifice was unprecedented, but it seems to have been tolerated by the ecclesiastical community of Coutances. Only near the end of her life was she finally bullied into communicating again by P. Abraham Bazire, vicar-general to the diocese. Apparently these new orders coincided with a change in God's designs for her, for he instructed her that she must now do as she was told by Bazire.²³

It must be stressed that Marie's refusal to confess and take communion had nothing in common with Augustinian rigorism, or with the extreme awe sometimes felt by medieval nuns in the presence of the sacrament, and their subsequent reluctance to communicate. The nuns of Port-Royal, and the later Jansenists, believed that confession should be treated with great seriousness; that absolution should not be given until the priest was certain of the penitent's sincerity; and that this

CHAPTER 8

sincere penitence depended upon an absolute indifference to the possibility of damnation, and must come from love alone. An Augustinian might refuse to communicate out of an over-scrupulous sense of sin, but never in order to offer his or her own soul (which was what such voluntary excommunication entailed) as a sacrifice to propitiate God's wrath against other sinners. It is significant, however, that both the mystic's and the moralist's different beliefs regarding communion should have produced such similar results. It is a reminder of the essential theological indifferentism that lay beneath their disagreements about prayer, communion, and the soul's relationship with God: that the human soul, in the face of the Divine, must learn to love God with no regard for its own salvation.

Jean and Marie

Marie des Vallées and Eudes met in 1641. She was by then a middle-aged woman of fifty-one, he was ten years her junior. He had at this time not yet left the Oratory, though he was to do so a year later. He had been a missionary priest since 1632, widely known for his success in attracting crowds of people to confess and communicate, and for his determination to serve the poor.²⁴ He had written one book, *Le royaume de Jésus* (1637). He arrived at Caen immediately after the Va-nu-pieds uprising in 1639 and it has been suggested that his success as a preacher in Normandy may be attributed to the fact that he offered some alternative to the failure of this 'revolution', the people still being in desperate straits, but with no hope for significant social change.²⁵ He had risked his own life in assisting the victims of plague at Caen, where he had been sent as superior of the Oratory there in 1632. By 1641 he had been the superior of a house of the Oratory for two years, and was anxious to begin to establish the seminaries that he had always hoped to found in France.

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

When they met, both appear to have recognised in each other, not the ideal directeur-dirigée relationship, for Marie was happy with her present director, but rather a kinship of interests. They were attracted by the same forms of piety, and shared many of the same fears and desires. The fact that Eudes was a fellow-Norman who took tales of sorcerers' conspiracies and possession seriously, rather than automatically suspecting fraud, as other ecclesiastics of the time might have done, was also helpful in speeding the progress of their friendship. He wrote of their first encounter,

En cette année 1641 au mois d'août, Dieu me fit une des plus grandes faveurs que j'aie jamais reçues de son infinie bonté; car ce fut en ce temps que j'eus le bonheur de commencer à connaître la soeur Marie des Vallées, par laquelle Sa Divine Majesté m'a fait un très grand nombre de grâces très signalées.²⁶

Little is known of the details of their relationship. Marie left no writings of her own, and Eudes' three-volume collection of notes regarding his relationship with her was never published, although parts of it were copied and preserved later by both friends and enemies of the pair.²⁷ But they seem to have shared a remarkably close view of the spiritual life. Both believed that true Christians must be willing martyrs, ready to offer up their lives and even their souls at God's demand, or to serve the needs of other souls. In his work, *Le Bon confesseur* (1666), Eudes was to describe the kind of person he envisioned in the ideal Christian penitent, in what is thought to be a reference to Marie²⁸.

N'avons-nous pas une personne tellement embrassée de ce divin zèle du salut des âmes que poussée d'une inspiration si forte qu'elle n'y pouvait résister, elle demanda à Dieu avec des prières très ardentes, et elle a obtenu de sa divine Majesté de souffrir pour un temps les peines des tourments de l'enfer, qui étaient préparés pour jamais à plusieurs âmes criminelles qui les avaient méritées, afin des les en garantir.²⁹

Eudes was greatly attracted, it seems, by the idea of (possibly) sacrificing one's own salvation, or at least one's own will-to-salvation, for the salvation of all sinners.

CHAPTER 8

It does not seem, for all the intensity of Eudes' response to her, that Marie could really have had a great impact upon the development of his theology; in the way, for example, that reading the works of Teresa affected that of François de Sales. It is possible that Eudes made Marie so prominent in his life partly because, as a woman, she was in the eyes of seventeenth-century men the more natural source of an obviously affective devotional symbol like the Sacred Heart of Mary; or because the kind of sacrifice he believed to be necessary to Christian salvation required a living exemplar rather than a merely literary exposition. Moreover, Marie's eagerness to embrace the attitudes and vocabulary of mysticism must have made her seem like the ideal answer to the moralising of the Augustinians, at least in Eudes' eyes. It seems probable that Marie acquired some of her ideas from him or from books that he or other men suggested to her. Pierre Coton was (it seems) the only one of the great apostles of the *vie intérieure* to whom Marie had had access as a young woman.³⁰ Even this seems strange enough, given that the men who examined her for sorcery found her to be nearly illiterate. From so poor a family, her education must have been minimal at best. She read more widely later, including some of the medieval mystics: Gertrude of Helfta (who no doubt suggested the idea of the sacred heart to her), Catherine of Genoa, and Angela Foligno, as well as the ubiquitous Benoit de Canfeld and François de Sales.³¹ It is curious that whoever advised her on her reading was willing to permit her to read such clearly mystical literature, rather than advising her to concentrate upon simpler and more concrete devotional writers. The spiritual directors of the seventeenth century were generally very cautious about encouraging any but the most 'advanced' women to read such potentially inflammatory material. It confirms at once both the confidence Marie's directors had in her and, perhaps, their disregard for her safety, for from one perspective, at least, she was not the ideal

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

candidate (sober, steady, and obedient, like Jeanne de Chantal) for instruction in the upper reaches of the *voie intérieure*.

Aside from what she acquired through her reading and her friendship with Eudes, Marie may also have absorbed some of the preoccupations and concerns of her time, for the themes of reparation, of expiation, were sweeping through certain *dévot* milieux. Gaston de Renty, founder of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement in Caen, knew Marie and admired her. Eudes' close friend, the Norman mystic Jean de Bernières, was much attracted by Marie's views and was to write a book, *Le chrétien intérieur* in which he developed similar themes, as Maurice Souriau has pointed out. 'Le Paradis sans cet ordre [i.e., God's will for the soul's just deserts] lui serait un enfer, et l'enfer avec cet ordre lui serait un Paradis'.³² Compare this to Marie's comments on Paradise: 'Je n'en veux pas du tout, si mon Époux ne le veut absolument. J'aimerais mieux dix mille Enfers avec sa divine volonté que cent mille Paradis sans elle.'³³ Bernières' book was eventually censored, in the midst of the anti-mystical reaction, in 1689. The question of who influenced whom is less interesting than the fact that these ideas obviously had a strong fascination at this period of French history. Still, the mysticism of Marie, of Bernières, of Eudes himself had its sources in earlier work, in some of the more recondite works of François de Sales, and of Camus, which have been discussed elsewhere in this study. Both in her notion of substituting her possession and her own pains for those of the damned, and in her belief that she must give up communicating in order to fulfil her promise to God, Marie resembled the woman in Camus's declaration, with her torch and pitcher (written in 1641, at around the same time Eudes met Marie).³⁴ Her ideal love, like that of Madame Guyon two generations later, would

CHAPTER 8

be 'l'amour pur de Dieu', removed from the interested love that was only concerned with its own salvation.

The idea of this ultimate form of martyrdom may also have been a logical extension of the spiritualisation of faith. Protestant theologians, in their desire to spiritualise the faith, had argued that internal conversion was essential to salvation and that the performance of 'works' was not sufficient for justification before God. Catholic theologians did not, of course, abandon the traditional belief that works were important, but they, like their protestant fellows, could no longer fully accept that works alone were sufficient to effect a transformation of the heart, a true conversion. This spiritualisation had progressed so far by the early seventeenth century that to offer one's physical sufferings to God, through fasting or flagellation, was no longer sufficient. If the soul were indeed a man or woman's most precious possession, then surely that was what they must offer to God, even at the price, perhaps, of being led into sin by the surrender of their own will? To those crowds who had listened, perhaps, to preachers (Catholic or Protestant) announcing that external ritual was insignificant, the traditional ascetic's form of 'holocaust', with its bodily or even moral mortifications, must have begun to seem pallid. Why not offer to trade one's own salvation for that of another?

National Politics

Marie's first meeting with Eudes took place against a backdrop of imminent and decisive change. In 1642-43 there occurred one of those crises in the transfer of power that were so much a feature of early modern French government. The nation's three most influential leaders died within a year of each other. Marie de Medici died in exile at Cologne in July 1642; Richelieu died in December of the same year, his immense fortune proving to be a great benefit in dévot circles,

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

including that of Port-Royal, through the activities of his niece, the duchess of Aiguillon.³⁵ Their deaths were soon followed by the death of the long ailing Louis XIII in May 1643. The minority of his heir, born just five years earlier in 1638, brought about a renewed outbreak of the uncertainty that had plagued the governing classes of France during the tense years of the Wars of Religion, and again during the years of Marie de Medici's regency. For a time, Anne of Austria, for so long relegated to a position of insignificance in national policy by her mother-in-law and then by her husband and Richelieu, was able to forestall active rebellion, with the assistance of her close friend and first minister Mazarin. Whereas Richelieu had possessed the supreme advantage of being French, Mazarin's Italian nationality was a mark against him from the beginning, doomed to provoke great suspicion and resentment among his adoptive countrymen. He often said that he did not understand France's system of government, perhaps as a way of excusing his mistakes.³⁶ Six short years after he entered the King's Council in 1642, the series of rebellions known as the Fronde broke out with another 'Day of the Barricades', on August 26, 1648. The Fronde was drawn out from 1648 until 1652-53, throughout which time Mazarin was to be the main focus of popular resentment towards the government.³⁷

The first years of the 1640s were significant not only for French government and policy, but for the Catholic Church in France. Jansenius' *De Augustinus* appeared at last in 1640. Condren, superior-general of the Oratory since 1629, died in 1641 and his place was taken by François Bourgoing, whose tenure as leader of the Oratory was to be extremely difficult. In 1642, Antoine Arnauld published *La théologie morale des Jésuites*, and in 1643, *De la fréquent communion*. Finally, in 1643, Saint-Cyran died, in the same year as Louis XIII. The Day of the Dupes, and Richelieu's

CHAPTER 8

arrest of Saint-Cyran in 1638, had created a sense of fear among France's *dévots*. These events early in the new decade were to confirm and deepen existing 'party' divisions between Augustinian and *École française* *dévots*. Condren as leader of the Oratory and in his role as the presiding spirit of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, had acted as a kind of bridge between the emerging factions of Augustinian and orthodox *dévots*, although this had grown increasingly difficult for him before his death. Some of his supporters (and critics) declared him to be an Augustinian in the special sense promoted by Saint-Cyran: 'le P. Condren n'avait jamais eu d'autres sentiments sur la grâce que ceux de M. de Saint-Cyran', in spite of the rupture between the two.³⁸ Others said he was too close to Rome and to the Jesuits, thanks to his abandonment of Saint-Cyran and his equivocal defense of Claude Séguenot, Saint-Cyran's apologist. When one person becomes the focus of such apparently contradictory accusations, it is a sign that compromise has become difficult.

Antoine Arnauld's two treatises further confirmed these divisions. They were a call to arms, rallying the Augustinian purists to his side and exploiting the old French distrust of Jesuits, although by now the Jesuits of France were far removed from the ultramontanes they had once been. It was not that the many factions within French Catholicism were suddenly reduced to two (this would not happen for many years), but rather that the factions had been decisively split and forced to regroup, as it were, around separate poles. They continued to have much in common and neither the theological or the ideological divisions between the two were as clear-cut as some commentators have suggested. The Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, replete with followers of both schools, continued to function effectively in spite of its theological divisions until it was disbanded by force in 1661. The French Oratory, however, was badly damaged by them, as its new general Bourgoing

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

attempted to tread a fine line between the Augustinian and Écolier members of his company. Bourgoing had established the Oratory in the Spanish Netherlands and had known Jansenius personally, neither of which recommended him to the latter group.³⁹ As early as 1627, he was writing to Calenius, archdeacon of Brussels and a close friend of Jansenius, in praise of episcopal powers (a cause by this time associated with royal Gallicanism):

*Je suis convaincu que notre vocation est de nous attacher totalement aux évêques et je voudrais bien que cet attachement réciproque fût tel en France que j'espère qu'il sera dans ces quartiers-ci.*⁴⁰

But when he wrote a treatise recommending frequent communion and easy standards in the confessional, cries of outrage exploded from the Augustinian Oratorians.⁴¹ All of this suggests that the Church of Rome, by the middle of the century, was no longer in a position to exert its former authority over the Church in France. It did not set the terms of religious debates, and it could not so readily compel the allegiance of kings or their subjects by political means.

The Oratory and the Congrégation

In 1641 Eudes was not greatly concerned by any of these developments, although they would soon have a decisive effect upon his career. He had been too long in the provinces on missions to be aware of the danger he was courting. His meeting with Marie, and her account of her expiatory self-abandonment, had affected him deeply and he wished to find some way to commemorate it. His immediate response to her was to begin the work for the foundation of an order, some say at her suggestion, to help 'penitent' women (i.e., prostitutes), to be known as Notre-Dame du Refuge (later Notre-Dame de Charité), at Caen in 1641.⁴² Marie was so pleased by this new foundation that she gave her small inheritance, 800 livres, towards its establishment.⁴³

CHAPTER 8

Eudes' other ambition was achieved in this period as well, in 1643. He had long wished to found a new company that would engage in mission-work among the poor of the countryside, in the founding of seminaries, and in charitable activity. The company (not order, for they made - it seems - no vows) of priests was to be known as the *Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*. Its constitutions, first published in 1662, show that in structure and administration the new congregation was very similar to that of the Oratory. Why, then, was it necessary to found a new institute so similar to the old? Several reasons have been advanced. First, the Oratory's bulls of 1613 had forbidden it to establish seminaries, although this had been part of its original purpose.⁴⁴ Oratorians were permitted to teach, and they did, taking over the teaching duties at many existing institutions, but this was not to be permitted on the scale Bérulle had once hoped. A second reason for Eudes' desire to found such an institute was, perhaps, that the Oratory discouraged him from undertaking as many missions as he wished. This was his own explanation for doing so, but the superiors-general of the Oratory during this period of transition (Condren and then Bourgoing) always denied it.⁴⁵ Instead, they suggested that Eudes' egotism would not allow him to be anything less than the founder of a new company. Batterel says that the success of his missions and the applause he received for them persuaded him that if he could become absolute master of his work and use his talents and his lights without depending on the Oratory, he might better serve the church.⁴⁶ In any case, his new superior at the Oratory was most reluctant to let him do so. It was in his attempts to extricate himself from the restrictions Bourgoing placed upon him that Eudes discovered that he could not remain at once an Oratorian and, so to speak, an Eudist (the informal name by which the priests of his Congregation were soon known). He could stay with the Oratory but, although he could preach as many missions

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

as he wished, he would not be permitted to found seminaries. On the other hand, if he left his old company and proceeded to found seminaries, he would be regarded, not as an ex-Oratorian, but as one 'in disobedience' to his superiors. It was an impossible position for a man with as strong a sense of his own vocation as Eudes. Although he continued to regard himself as an Oratorian for the rest of his life, his former colleagues saw him as a renegade and accused him of having intrigued against them (many worse accusations were to come) in a fashion altogether too worldly for a priest:

et [il] se donna pour avoir ce poste [as head of his own missionary order] tous les mouvements que les gens de bien ont accoutumé parmi nous de mettre en usage pour l'esquiver.⁴⁷

A century after Eudes' demission, Louis Batterel was to write of him in his history of the Oratory as if he were a criminal.⁴⁸ In his catalogue of Eudes' good works, Batterel includes only the ones he performed while still a member of the Oratory. Having left the company, he was lost. Batterel convicts him of outrageous vanity, double-dealing, and even theft (of a chasuble which once belonged to Bérulle, and which he subsequently returned).⁴⁹

At this juncture (that is, after Eudes' departure from the Oratory) the available texts reach a point at which it is difficult to determine who is telling the truth. The various accounts of Eudes' life declare that he was able to establish his new *Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*, otherwise known as the Eudist fathers, in 1643. The records of the Oratory, however, imply, by selective omission, that the new congregation never was established. There is a kind of justification for this view. Eudes' Congregation met with repeated checks, the most important of which was its failure to obtain formal recognition from Rome. This was largely the result of Eudes' former cohorts' opposition to his new activities. Every approach he made to try to regularize the status of the Congregation, either with the

CHAPTER 8

archbishop of Rouen, the Assembly of the Clergy, the king, or Rome itself, was met with some objection. He was, for example, accused by his enemies of having used the name of his patron the bishop of Bayeux to obtain letters-patent from the king, and promissory notes from other patrons, ostensibly for the foundation of a seminary at Bayeux, where the bishop Jacques d'Angennes (1582-1647, bishop 1606-47) passionately wished for such an establishment, but in reality for a new Congregation. Angennes, discovering the ruse, refused to allow him to make further use of the letters Eudes had obtained through him. In January 1644, however, Eudes accomplished so much by his flattery (according to Batterel) that Bayeux was once again won over, and allowed him to call the new establishment, not a seminary, but the *Congrégation de Jésus et Marie*.⁵⁰

Reasons for opposition

Why should the Oratory have set its face so implacably against the establishment of this new Congregation? The first and most obvious answer is that its superiors deeply resented the manner in which Eudes had left the order.⁵¹ Defections of this kind were bad for discipline, and it was impossible either to acknowledge or accept them for fear that others might follow their example. Thus defectors must become *personae non gratae*, neither members in good standing of their companies, nor truly ex-members. Perhaps this was especially the case in companies or congregations, like the Oratory, whose structure was relatively loose and fluid, for they were more fearful of losing their best people to outside influences. Another problem was that the Oratory was at this period extremely nervous of provoking accusations of Jansenism against its members. Ever since Claude Séguenot had publicly defended the strict contritionist position in 1637, the Oratory had feared that the Augustinian tendencies so common among its members would bring down upon them the wrath of either Rome

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

or the state. Eudes, it seems, did not scruple to refer to these tendencies, and indeed part of the reason the Oratorians wished to stop the transmission of his memoir to Rome was that it (allegedly) accused the Oratorians of unorthodox theology. It was not the first time they had suspected Eudes of making such accusations. In 1658 the bishop of Rouen, François de Harlay (i.e., the second François de Harlay; his uncle, the first by that name, had resigned⁵²) received from his chapter and his curés complaints which said of Eudes that he was 'un homme décrié et connu pour être entièrement opposé à la hiérarchie de l'Eglise' and that he had 'causé que du trouble partout où il a demeuré et qui leur donne par là grand sujet de crainte qu'il n'en fasse de même à Rouen'.⁵³ Harlay ignored them and re-established Eudes in his seminary. The Oratorians also suspected Eudes of conspiring against them with others hostile to their society. The fact that Eudes may have belonged to the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement⁵⁴ and was close to its leading member, Jean de Bernières, did not increase the esteem in which he was held by Oratorians. They regarded Eudes as responsible for damaging the Oratory's reputation in Normandy, and blamed the Compagnie for protecting him from the consequences. In his book on the confrérie, Allier cites an archival deposit which implies that the Compagnie had in some way offered him special protection. 'Sans le secours d'une société puissante qui la protégeait,' the document reads, 'cette nouvelle congrégation aurait été détruite dès sa naissance'.⁵⁵ But the importance of this factor should not be exaggerated. Eudes' most consistent protectors in Normandy were the various bishops with whom he was associated, and none of these appear to have been members of the brotherhood, although where a secret society is concerned it is difficult to be certain.⁵⁶

CHAPTER 8

Another possible explanation is that Eudes differed sharply from his fellow-Oratorians over what might be called 'stylistic' issues. The Oratory remained committed to a form of spiritual direction more suited to one-on-one relationships, and to a style of writing and preaching more appropriate to educated audiences than to the illiterate peasants whom Eudes hoped to reach. And so a partial, plausible explanation for the Oratory's hostility to Eudes emerges: he wished to 's'accommoder à la portée et à la capacité de la plus grande partie de l'auditoire', and was not concerned that he might injure God's dignity in doing so.⁵⁷ Among the other growing divisions between the various parties in the French church was that between learned and vulgar piety. Eudes, like Vincent before him, was impatient with the intellectualism and scholarship cherished by learned priests, even to the point of finding Sorbonne academicism distasteful. Eudes encouraged his priests not to finish their degrees and said in his order's *Constitutions*, 'Il ne sera point permis dans la Congrégation de prendre les degrés de docteur ni de bachelier, et personne n'y portera le nom de docteur...'⁵⁸ The Oratory stood firmly for learned piety (on the whole) and found Eudes' effusions embarrassingly vulgar. Batterel cites with distaste passages in Eudes' spiritual writings that refer to Mary as '[l]a boutique du Saint Esprit,' 'la cave du roi', 'l'armoire des Écritures', 'la cheminée du feu céleste', 'le four de la charité éternelle', all obvious references to Jesus's origins in Mary's womb.⁵⁹ Bérulle himself had referred to the holiness of the 'sein de la Mère de Dieu', but this no doubt struck contemporaries as more genteel language.

Also tainted by its vulgarity was Eudes' championship of Marie des Vallées. One of the more unpleasant charges against Eudes' enemies is their treatment of the unlucky woman, elderly by the time she became the object of their notice. Abraham Bazire was the vicar-general to the bishop of

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

Coutances, Claude Auvry. Auvry supported Eudes and Marie, but Bazire found Marie's case distasteful (though he seems to have generally supported Eudes) and in 1654, he asked two clerics of the diocese, canon Bertout and a secular priest named Ameline, to reopen her case. (Neither of the two men were associated with the Oratoire.) They questioned and tortured her for two days (September 12 and 13, 1654), trying to persuade her to admit that she was a 'fausse mystique', that her possession was either a form of malingering or that she had in fact been deceived by the devil.⁶⁰ Why the bishop of Coutances (then Claude Auvry) permitted this, in view of his support for Eudes, is not clear, but he was often in Paris and may not have known of it.⁶¹ Four years later the first of several defamatory attacks upon her and her relationship with Eudes appeared:

cette fille avait été possédée du diable dès l'âge de dix-neuf ans, comme telle exorcisée à Coutances, sans qu'il parût qu'elle eut été jamais délivrée de sa possession; item qu'elle avait passé trente-trois ans entiers sans communier, pas même aux fêtes de Pâques; trente-cinq ans sans se confesser, parce que ayant échangé, disait-elle, sa volonté avec la volonté divine, qui, depuis ce temps, agissait en elle au lieu de la sienne propre, elle était devenue absolument impeccable, et que cette même volonté divine lui interdisait absolument d'user d'un remède injurieux à la sainteté de sa nature divine.⁶²

The verdict appeared in a 'sentence' rendered by the vicar-general of the diocese, Abraham Bazire, December 2, 1658.

The Fronde and Hearts

Worse yet to Eudes' enemies than his (in their eyes) doubtful theology, his vulgarity, and the fact that he had left the Oratory, was that for a time he was able to attract the support of the most important patrons of all.⁶³ His ability in this respect was especially important after the end of the Fronde rebellions (1648-1653). At this time the governing classes of France looked around upon a devastated nation and some among them, at least, were stricken with a sense of remorse for the

CHAPTER 8

damage they had done. Several of the most prominent noble leaders among the rebels suffered a kind of crisis of conscience. The prince of Conti and his wife; the duchess of Longueville; the duke and duchess of Chevreuse; the duchess of Aiguillon, and other less well-known figures were soon to spend much time, money and effort in attempting to make reparations to the people of France. The Contis in particular were to give away large sums of money upon the urging of their confessors.⁶⁴ Conti was a member of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, but he and his wife were consistently to support both Port-Royal as well as the works of the Compagnie,⁶⁵ as was the duchess of Longueville.⁶⁶ Such shifts of allegiance probably did not please either camp, whose clerical members, at least, would certainly have preferred that their patrons choose one 'side' and remain with it. Competition over patronage was rendered more acute by the fact that the Fronde had, first of all, brought destitution to so many poor people that public charities were more necessary than ever, and second, that along with the ruination of the poor came the impoverishment of many among the well-to-do, so that the needs of the poor were more acute and there was less money than usual with which to address them.

What was at stake in this competition, in other words, was not theology but patronage, especially the patronage of the Crown and the nobles, without which neither Augustinians nor their rivals could function. Bearing this in mind, each side accused the other of introducing novelties into the Church; each accused the other of disloyalty to the Crown. Mazarin, Anne, and later Louis made use of *dévot* fears to strengthen their control of French ecclesiastics, allowing them to accuse each other of frightful abuses and reaping the benefits in the loyalty that both parties were so anxious to demonstrate to the Crown. Anne of Austria was neither as ruthless nor as determined to exploit the

THE SACRED HEART BEATS FRANCE

fruits of her own position as a dispenser of offices as her mother-in-law had been. Her main goal during her son's regency was to preserve the throne, and France, intact for him, and her great difficulty was that she lacked the instinct for politics. She and Mazarin both, up to a point, favoured the Jesuits, although they avoided commitments to *dévot* causes for fear of the effect this might have upon policy. Their support further confirmed the Jesuits' loyalty to the French crown.⁶⁷ Anne herself was not merely devout, but a *dévot*e, in the sense in which that label was used by seventeenth-century critics of the *dévots*. She was a Carmelite oblate, carrying out the duties of a Carmelite in as much as this was possible for one who lived in the world. She was, at bottom, closer to the orthodox *dévots* than to the more Augustinian school of French devotion. Her piety was essentially affective rather than moral and ascetic; besides, like her mother-in-law she was a Habsburg, and drawn to the more 'baroque' and 'Spanish' forms of piety, likely to find little sustenance in the more austere forms of Port-Royal.

Like other *dévot*e before and after her, including Marie des Vallées herself, Anne of Austria interpreted the nation's problems as the result of its failures in faith. Accordingly, the queen began to take an interest in Eudes from the start of his independent career in the early 1640s. After the Fronde came to an end in 1652-53, she seems to have sought with new urgency a kind of devotion that might appease God's anger and, perhaps, express and represent the emotional and physical travails of the people of France. As a seventeenth-century archivist was to write after her death, she was '*outrée d'une douleur mortelle sur la révolte de la plus considérable partie du royaume contre le roi son fils*'.⁶⁸ In response to her sorrow,

CHAPTER 8

[elle] forma alors la résolution de s'appliquer efficacement à apaiser la colère de Dieu par beaucoup de prières et de voeux; elle en fit elle-même, et en fit faire en son nom par plusieurs personnes de piété en qui elle se confiait.⁶⁹

She hoped that prayer and renewed devotion would bring about the peace and unity France needed.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Anne of Austria was deeply attracted by the devotion 'founded' by Eudes and Marie, the liturgical celebrations of the Sacred Heart of Mary and of Jesus. The affectivity of Eudist spirituality, the intensity of his preaching, even his populist style seem to have appealed to her even when his message itself might have been expected to alarm her. Eudes was known to fulminate against high taxes and the wars of the rich, and did not hesitate to do so in the Queen's presence, and more than once. Both her own natural taste for this form of piety and her conviction, after the Fronde, that the nation was in need of some form of special guidance, were likely to incline her in Eudes' direction. In the period after the civil wars, she began to look around for new ways to commit the French to Catholic piety. Anne vowed to bring about a renewal of devotion to the Eucharist, which, it was widely rumoured, had been the object of sacrilegious mistreatment and neglect during the wars.⁷⁰

In her pursuit of France's spiritual renewal, Anne sought the help of a man by the name of Charles Picoté, a Sulpician, who like her desired to honour the Sacrament and had made a vow promising to do so. A woman named Catherine de Bar (1614-1698), later to be known as Mère Mechtilde du Saint-Sacrement, was also attempting to renew Eucharistic devotion. In 1652, she had persuaded her Benedictine sisters at Montmartre to sign a letter agreeing to such a foundation. In the same year, Picoté heard of her activities and informed the queen of them, requesting her assistance.

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

When Mère Mechtilde heard of his vow, she took it on as her own. The queen was impressed by her, and wrote that she wished to

rendre honneur au très saint sacrement de l'autel, en réparation des sacrilèges qui ont été commis durant ces malheureuses guerres. Et comme on a trouvé que cela ne se pouvait mieux faire qu'en établissant une maison de religieuses dont le principal soin consisterait à le louer et adorer incessamment et à prier jour et nuit pour la paix du royaume et pour la conservation du Roy, j'ai jeté les yeux sur la Mère Mectilde du Saint-Sacrement.⁷¹

The new congregation had an important impact upon the spread of Eudes' new devotions. Mère Mectilde had spent two years in Rouen in 1642-43 where she had come into contact with the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement and Jean de Bernières.⁷² It was no doubt through her Norman connections (she was later to live there again, 1647-1651) that she encountered the devotion to the Sacred Heart, for which she would have had a natural inclination as it too was 'reparative' in nature. Her new congregation, the Bénédictines de l' Adoration perpétuelle du Très Saint-Sacrement, adopted Eudes' liturgical feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary. So too did a number of other houses in Normandy, Burgundy, and the Ile-de-France: Ursulines, Carmelites, and other Benedictine houses like that of Montmartre.⁷³ As important to the future of Eudes' and Marie's devotion was the fact that it was adopted by the nuns of the Visitation, Jeanne de Chantal's order. As a result, it was familiar to a young Visitandine, Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, who experienced her first revelations of the Sacred Heart of Jesus one day while attending a Mass in honour of the Sacred Heart of Mary.⁷⁴ Royal patronage was of great importance to such an institution and it helped the 'new' devotions (to both the sacred heart and the sacrament) to spread throughout Europe. The Benedictines of the Holy Sacrament were to be established in Warsaw in honour of the Christians' triumph over the Turks.

CHAPTER 8

through the agency of Queen Marie-Casimir, and they brought their devotion to the Sacred Heart with them.⁷⁵

The queens' Maries

Marie des Vallées died in 1656, less than ten years after Eudes first introduced the liturgical feast of the heart of Mary in 1648. Even in death she was the subject of controversy. Her admirers scrambled to seize her remains: she was exhumed from the parish church of Saint-Nicolas where she had been buried and taken to the chapel of the Eudist fathers. Her heirs and friends had managed to obtain permission for this, at her instigation, (she had anticipated that her will would be ignored) from the Parlement of Rouen. Unfortunately, Claude Auvry, bishop of Coutances, was away, and his vicar-general Bazire was not one of Marie's admirers. This necessitated secrecy for what was, in fact, a legal action on the part of her 'grave-robbers': they broke into Saint-Nicolas in the middle of the night, with a company of armed men for protection, and carried her back to the Eudists' church, not far away, accompanied (for by this time it was growing light) by a number of curious townspeople. It was, some might say, a fitting burial, or re-burial, for one who had believed herself to be possessed, all the more so because it took place on the Day of the Dead (All Souls' Day), November 3, 1656.⁷⁶

In spite of certain unusual features in Marie's case, the friendship between her and Eudes fits the pattern or 'paradigm' of the *dévo*t-*dév*ote relationship. She lived in relative obscurity until he found her; he brought her to prominence, while in the midst of a turf-battle with his order which rapidly developed into a theological quarrel. His notoriety reflected upon her and made his troubles her own. Nevertheless, the exact nature of Marie's influence upon Eudes is difficult to determine: did he 'invent' her, or did she perhaps summon him in one of her visions? She inspired him, but was not

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

his 'directrice', and it is possible that he might have been brought to establish the feasts of the Sacred Heart without her. What we do know is that Eudes' early biographers, anxious to defend him against the attacks of Augustinian-minded clergy, did their best to edit her story out of their accounts of his. She was too obviously an example of the kind of piety they mocked and distrusted. Charles Berthelot du Chesnay's account of Eudes' mission work shows how Pierre Hérainbourg, Pierre Costil, and Julien Martine excluded discussion of Marie or referred to her only in passing. Marie des Vallées, although she inspired a priest, a queen, and several religious orders, was too much an outsider to be wholly embraced by her contemporaries or their descendants.

Meanwhile, at the Visitandine monastery of Paray-le-Monial, another 'béate' was to experience her first revelations of the Sacred Heart of Mary in 1672, the year when Eudes first celebrated the liturgical office of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She was in her own way as much a 'pur amourist' as Marie des Vallées, but Marguerite-Marie was well-protected, unlike her predecessor. As an enclosed nun, she was somewhat less likely to become the victim of the random hostilities provoked by regional turf-battles between religious factions. Moreover, her director, P. François-Ignace Rolin, was a Jesuit, and the Jesuits were by the century's end so dependent upon royal favour that they were no longer perceived as a threat by the kings of France. Thus, when in later years devotion to the Sacred Heart began to spread throughout Europe, it was to be in her name, and not that of Marie des Vallées or Eudes, whose reputation was not to be revived among the French (outside his own foundations) until the nineteenth century. Although Marguerite-Marie remained obscure for some decades after her death in 1690, she was brought back to France, as it were, in the eighteenth century, by Louis XV's Polish queen, Marie Leczinska.⁷⁷ Her renown increased rapidly

CHAPTER 8

from then on, bolstered by royal patronage and by Jesuit support at Rome, her name and her devotion to the Sacred Heart firmly associated with Catholic orthodoxy. It is tempting to see this as the triumph of respectability over marginality, of a confirmed saint over a reputed witch. But like Marie des Vallées, Marguerite-Marie was also an apostle of *pur amour*, of the disinterested love that sought God and asked nothing in return. In June 1689, she composed a message to Louis instructing him that Christ 'qui voulait triompher du sien' also wished to rule 'par son entremise, de celui des grands de la terre. Il voulait régner dans son palais, être peint dans ses étendards et gravé dans ses armes.'⁷⁷ It is not certain that it ever reached the king, but it was bold advice in 1689. It is difficult to see her as a mere reactionary.

Jansenist-Eudist rivalry

The Queen-mother's patronage of Eudes and his new liturgies deepened the rivalry between orthodoxy and the Augustinians, especially in Normandy. This rivalry led to a series of verbal skirmishes and controversies during the years 1658-1674, a period when both groups were suffering the attacks of Mazarin, who had no love for dévots of either camp (see Chapter 10). The Augustinian dévots claimed to dislike the heretical tendencies of the Écolier dévots in general, but it was Eudes himself, and through him, Marie des Vallées, who was the special focus of many of their attacks, not only in Normandy but in Paris too. The events of 1658-1659 make this especially clear. In July 1658, a man named Charles Du Four, abbé of d'Aunay, treasurer of the Cathedral of Rouen, and an Augustinian in matters of theology, was asked to preach at the convent of the Ursulines at Caen.⁷⁸ Du Four was previously embroiled in controversy with the Jesuits, having launched an attack against their 'casuistry' during a sermon (July 9, 1656), inspired by Pascal's *Lettres à un provincial*, and had

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

incurred the enmity of both Jesuits and Compagnie members.⁸⁰ Now, Bernières' family were the main patrons of the convent; several of Bernières' female relatives were nuns there, and his Hermitage had been built just outside the convent's enclosure. Under Bernières' influence, they refused to allow Du Four to preach in their church. Du Four, who like many of Eudes' other opponents assumed that he and Bernières were 'joined at the hip' and did all in concert, was outraged.

The rivalry between the two main *dévot* factions was to grow especially bitter in the 1670s. The concerted efforts of Mazarin and of Louis XIV, between 1660 and 1667, had finally brought about the suppression of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement and it may have seemed to some that the 'cabale des dévots' was the target of special persecution. In spite of the presence of many Jansenists among its members, the Compagnie had been a target for some prominent figures in the Jansenist party: Pascal's *Provinciales* had alluded to it.⁸¹ On the other side, the Assembly of the Clergy was in the process of drawing up a 'formulary' condemning five propositions from Jansenius's *Augustinus*, and demanding that all ecclesiastics, including female religious, should sign it as proof of their doctrinal orthodoxy, a move which some Jansenists blamed on the 'dévots'. It was not clear who would win the battle for crown patronage. Under the circumstances, those who were frankly *intéressé* in their expressions of faith probably could not even determine which side was safest. But through this tumultuous period Eudes' star had continued to rise: he had received papal approval for the congregation of Notre Dame de Refuge at last in 1666; he had preached publicly at Saint-Germain-dès-Pres, at Paris, and at Versailles in 1671, where he had dared to direct pointed criticisms at the government, with impunity; his new offices had the support of the Queen (the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was first celebrated publicly in 1672); and in 1673 he was again preaching in

CHAPTER 8

the Paris region, at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. This appears to have been intolerable to his Jansenist enemies. In any case, it was at this period that they finally 'pounced'.

In 1673 Eudes had one unfulfilled desire. He was still anxious to obtain papal approval for his congregation but over the years his former Oratorian confrères, or their allies, were always at hand, ready to stop the process by whatever means possible. In 1673, he again went to Rome to attempt to obtain papal approval for his Congregation. Earlier, in 1662, on a similar errand, he had, according to his enemies, included among the papers he presented to the papal secretary of Congregations a memoir stating that his proposed congregation would make a vow of absolute obedience to the pope, before all other earthly authorities.⁸² Such a vow would have been, from the point of view of the king's court, contrary to the principles of royal Gallicanism. Eudes' earlier request for recognition of his order had failed, it was rumoured, for purely practical reasons.⁸³ His original memoir with its dubious vow, however, was presumably still in the hands of a papal secretary, Cardinal Pignatelli, and the Oratory was most anxious that its contents should reach the king in the hope of injuring Eudes' reputation. The Oratory's chroniclers would admit openly that they had tried to 'swindle' (escroquer)⁸⁴ the incriminating papers out of the desk of the papal secretary, with the assistance of the Cardinal d'Estrées, but without success. The papers were eventually obtained through d'Estrées' brother, the duke d'Estrées, France's ambassador in Rome, and sent back to Paris to the king's council, where they caused an entirely predictable uproar, in November 1673. Eudes always claimed that his enemies had forged the papers and signed his name to them, but later archival research has proven that this was not true.⁸⁵ Louis XIV sent a *lettre de cachet* to Eudes ordering him to leave Paris. He was to be in disgrace for the next five years.

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

Not content with his embarrassment, Eudes' long-time opponent in Rouen, Charles Du Four, published a *Lettre à un Docteur de Sorbonne sur le sujet de plusieurs écrits composés de la vie et de l'état de Marie des Vallées, du diocèse de Coutances* (1674). His pamphlet attacked Eudes' work, his doctrine, and above all his relations with Marie des Vallées. It was not the first such attack, but earlier criticisms written by Bazire (in 1658) had circulated only in Normandy and had not reached a wider public. More than anything else, it was Eudes' support for Marie, as revealed in the *Lettre à un docteur de Sorbonne*, that was to incriminate him in the eyes of France's intellectual classes in the years to come.

Du Four's attack on their relationship made three essential points. Eudes' support of the 'béate' was superstitious and dangerous to the faith, he said, because Marie was by her own admission possessed by the devil. This meant that she was either a fraud, or that she was speaking the truth; if the former, there was no reason to trust her; if the latter, then she was scarcely a woman whom Christians could hear without risk to their souls. As for her own claims that although possessed, she had transcended her possession by offering herself willingly to damnation as God's chosen victim, Du Four's *Lettre* said, with some truth, that by the terms of orthodox theology she was perilously close to claiming the status of co-redemptress, with Christ, of humankind. Had Christ not redeemed men for all time, or was Marie, the 'Messie-femelle', the 'sauveresse du genre humain', now to claim his status for herself?⁸⁶ She was not the first female mystic to be accused of taking too much upon herself.

Conclusion

CHAPTER 8

Marie was long dead and could not be injured by such accusations, nor hurt anyone. Why, then, did du Four attack her so vociferously? It does not seem likely that the attacks were born of misogyny alone, although misogyny clearly had some part in them. Du Four was Eudes' enemy, not Marie's, partly for doctrinal reasons, and in part through their mutual competition for royal favour. Marie had been permitted, in fact, a surprising latitude in her mystical speculations, her reading, and her curious devotional practises. Although Eudes always defended her sanity, insisting that she never claimed to have any external visions (that is, the kind that might be interpreted as the hallucinations of a disturbed mind)⁸⁷, he was also always careful to say that he did not necessarily regard her as a model to be followed, nor as one whose revelations should always be taken literally. It is possible that he used her as a 'cover' for some of his more unusual ideas (in spite of his real affection for her), as other *dévot* clerics had done before and would do again, with other women. The fact that his enemies nevertheless used her, in the end, as a weapon against him suggests that the taste for her form of mysticism was declining among educated men by the 1670s, even before the beginning of the anti-mystical reaction in the wake of Molinos's trial for heresy in 1687.⁸⁸ The 'quérable de pur amour' described by Bremond, dating back to the period 1639-42, the fulminations of various clerics in France at the dangers of illuminism following the Edict of Seville, and the declining (not yet extinct) belief in sorcery among educated people, all affected their attitudes to mystical effusions and to claims of special revelations from God. Marie was consistently referred to as a 'béate' by Eudes' enemies, and in Louis Batterel's account of Eudes' life.⁸⁹ The term had no negative connotations in the Spanish language but in France its use was largely ironical and pejorative, and those who referred to her as such intended no compliment.⁹⁰ Perhaps, in certain circles, the old alliance between *dévot* priests and

THE SACRED HEART BEATS 'FRANCE'

dévote mystics was weakening. On the other hand, it is also possible that Marie would have attracted no attention at all if Eudes had not broken with the Oratoire. In 1641, during the first year of their friendship, Eudes, still an Oratorian, attracted no criticism from Condren or Bourgoing for his interest in Marie.⁹¹ Like other dévot women, she was caught by the politico-ecclesiastical manoeuvres of the men in her spiritual life, while they in their turn suffered for their association with these weaker vessels.

The heart was, for Eudes, Marie, and Marguerite-Marie, a multifaceted symbol, so that it is difficult to assign it a single religious significance. The heart, wrote Eudes in one of his books, had several meanings in Scripture: the material heart in the breast of men; the memory; the understanding; the 'free will of the noble and reasonable part of the soul'; the highest part of the soul; the whole interior of man; the Holy Ghost who is the heart of the Father and Son; and the Son of God who is the Heart of the Eternal Father.⁹² That Jean Eudes and Marie both desired to teach men and women that love was the single most important element in human spirituality, and that this love must be disinterested, divorced from all thoughts of heaven or hell, seems clear. Did they also wish to suggest that love alone was enough? The accusation, a common one against visionaries and purveyors of a purely affective theology, is easy enough to refute, given the extreme austerity with which both Jean and Marie conducted their lives. It is harder to counter the opposite suggestion, that the Eudist version of François de Sales' *pur amour* was too difficult for ordinary men and women either to understand or to follow. It was open to misunderstanding: it would lead some of its later interpreters to excesses of zeal that bordered on madness. But from a historical perspective, the rise of Sacred Heart piety indicates the triumph of sensibility over intellectualism in the spiritual realm.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. Charles Lebrun, in his edition of Eudes' complete works, *Oeuvres complètes*, with introduction and notes by J. Dauphin and Charles Lebrun (Vannes, Fafolye, 1905-1911), 12 vols. Vol. XI, p. 147.
2. André Vauchez, 'The Cathedral', in Pierre Nora, *The Realms of Memory*, Vol. I, *Conflicts and Divisions*, p. 60. The citation that heads this chapter originated in an incident of 1873. On the first national pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de Chartres, Cardinal Pie proclaimed that 'France is awaiting a leader, a ruler', while the faithful chanted, 'Save Rome and France in the name of the Sacred Heart.'
3. Bremond, in *Histoire littéraire*, VI, p. 401, says that the story of Marguerite-Marie's influence upon this devotional symbol belongs more properly to the eighteenth than the seventeenth century, although Marguerite died in 1690. An article by Fulvi DeGeorgio, 'Forme Spirituali, Forme Simbolico, Forme Politiche. La Devozione al S. Cuore. 1689-1918,' *Rivista di Storia della chiesa in Italia* 1994 48(2): 365-459, says that originally devotion to the Sacred Heart was associated with the French monarchy, Jesuits, and counter-Revolution.
4. Houssaye, *Cardinal de Bérulle et Cardinal de Richelieu*, p. 267.
5. See Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 55-56, citing Baix and Lambot, *La Dévotion à l'eucharistie et le VII^e centenaire de la Fête-Dieu* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1964) pp. 113-23, devotion to the Heart of Jesus appears to have been especially marked in the work of the Flemish saint Lutgard of Aywières and the nuns of the Saxon monastery of Helfta. See also Goudaud, *Devotional and Ascetic Practices in the Middle Ages*, trans. G.C. Bateman (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1927) pp. 75-130; and Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 132-33, 173 n. 12, 191-93.
6. Prunel, *Zamet*, p. 30-31.
7. Marie des Vallées's story is recounted in several contemporary venues, but she has yet only one modern biographer, Émile Dermenghem, archivist and paleographer, author of *La Vie admirable et les révélations de Marie des Vallées* (Paris: Plon, 1926). A seventeenth-century account written by Jean Eudes, published in 3 volumes, was the principal source of its time, but it has been lost since the eighteenth century (Dermenghem, p. 318). Manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale include nos 11943 and 11944, a summary of Eudes' work by an unfriendly pen, a monk of Notre Dame de Barbery, written between 1661 and 1664. Other manuscripts include the B.N.'s no. 11950, entitled *la Vie admirable de Marie des Vallées et des choses prodigieuses qui se sont passées en elle*; it is an incomplete copy of Eudes' own biography of Marie by a friendly writer, in 162 pages. A copy of an ms by Renty, a fellow-Norman and founding member of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, is in the Bibliothèque Mazarine: *Mémoire d'une admirable conduite de Dieu sur une âme particulière appelée Marie de Coutances*, written by someone from the seminary of Saint-Sulpice. According to Dermenghem, the first part of the original was probably composed in 1642; the second is a summary of Eudes' work, perhaps by Renty himself, written long after Eudes' was published. Other works, obviously polemical and either violently for or against Marie, are listed in Dermenghem, p. 318-320. Also extant are a B.N. Ms, no 11949, 'Extraits des procès-verbaux, informations, etc., touchant ce

qui regarde Marie des Vallées, tirés sur les originaux de l'évêché de Coutances', in 87 pages.

8. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 12-13.

9. The issue of Marie's possible 'neurosis' is discussed in Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, III, p. 607, 608.

10. The modern case of Virginia Woolf, molested by a half-brother, is almost too well-known but worth repeating: during her periods of breakdown she showed symptoms at least superficially similar to those of Marie (without the occult implications): both were unable to eat or sleep, felt persecuted by strange men, and experienced bouts of screaming rage followed by insensibility. See Quentin Bell, *Virginia Stephen, 1882-1912* (1972), esp. Chapter 3; for Marie's symptoms, see Dermenghem, p. 10-15.

11. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 15.

12. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 28.

13. Dermenghem, *Marie*, p. 13.

14. N.Z. Davis. 'City Women and Religious Change,' in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*.

15. Joseph Klaitz, *Servants of Satan* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 137

16. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen. *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 180-81.

17. During her subsequent examination for sorcery, a Cordelier suggested that Marie was simulating possession in order to attract favour and receive alms; see Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 19. (He gives no source for this piece of information.) Similar cases from the early 17th century suggest that possession itself did not immediately provoke suspicion that its victims were in contact with the devil. Marthe Brossier's case (see Ch. 1 of this study) shows that charlatanism and possession by some external source were also commonly considered as explanations of possession. The case of the nuns of Loudon shows that those accused of being the cause of possession in others might well be the victims of subsequent prosecution and punishment. As for Jean-Joseph Surin, the man who attempted to exorcise the nuns of Loudon and later claimed to be possessed, he was widely believed by contemporaries who knew him to be the victim, in fact, of madness or melancholia. See Jean Joseph Surin, *Jean Joseph Surin. Correspondance*, text established, presented, and annotated by Michel Certeau, preface by Julien Green (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), which cites one of Surin's Jesuit confreres describing him as one who suffered 'fréquentes défaillances mentales (*animi deliquia*), dues à l'obscurcissement de l'imagination, aux vapeurs de la mélancolie ou au travail du démon dont il se croyait obsédé...', p. 451. The citation is from a Note from the Roman archives of the Jesuits, written in 1639, by a Jesuit named Léonard Champeils (1587-1669). But he was known to be opposed to 'grâces extraordinaires'. See Certeau, *Surin*, p. 444-445.

18. Such an examination would normally be carried out, it seems, by a 'matrone', but as there was none available, the commission asked instead for the examination to be performed by a 'chirurgien'. See Dermenghem, *Marie*, p. 20. No doubt this was a humiliating experience for someone as modest as Marie.
19. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 32.
20. The *abrégé* of her life contains this exhortation. Bibl. Nat., fonds français, 11950, fol. 18, cited Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 29.
21. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 43.
22. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 41-45.
23. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 58.
24. L. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, 'Jean Eudes', p. 235: Batterel describes 'a short man with a beautiful and strong voice, full of pathos, ease in speaking, with a lively imagination, able to make use of homely analogies, and who by his always popular instruction won followers everywhere...'
25. Jean Séguy, 'D'une jacquerie à une congrégation religieuse: autour des origines eudistes.' *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* [France] 1981 52 (1): 37-67. Such an explanation seems unconvincing because Eudes' success was not confined to a particular class; moreover, other men and women were to preach a similar message in different contexts.
26. Jean Eudes, *Mémorial, Oeuvres complètes*, III, p. 112.
27. See the bibliographical notes following Dermenghem's *Vie admirable*, which set out the extensive copying, revision, and counter-revision of the works of Marie and of Jean Eudes by various factions in the Gallican-ultramontane wars.
28. Batterel makes this claim, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 260.
29. Eudes, *Le bon confesseur* (Caen, 1666), p. 47.
30. In 1614 she read *Intérieure occupation d'une âme dévote*, then very popular among Paris dévots. See Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, III, p. 610, n. 2.
31. See Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, Part II, Chapter I, p. 107-152, for a full discussion of Marie's reading.
32. M. Souriau, *Deux mystiques normands au XVIIe siècle. M. de Renty et Jean de Bernières* (Paris: Parin, 1913) p. 294; citing *Le chrétien intérieur* (1672), p. 241.
33. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 27.

34. In one of her later revelations, Marie had a vision in which she was surrounded by the persons of the Trinity. The Father held a cup of sulphur and fire; the Son was surrounded by consolations. To choose the Son was to choose her own will; to choose the Father was to accomplish the Divine Will. She chose the latter. In *Ms Renty*, ch. X, p. 39, 40; cited Dermenghem, p. 71. Her 'vision' seems close in spirit to that of Camus's purely literary device, in its insistence upon denying 'easy' graces and self-interested motives.
35. Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 188.
36. Major, *Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy*, p. 295.
37. The Frondeurs used to taunt Mazarin that he never understood what was legitimate, as Richelieu had done. See *Treasure, Mazarin*, p. 94.
38. See the discussion in Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 56-58.
39. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 289-90.
40. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, p. 291. It was comments of this kind that led some to suspect him of 'Jansenism', especially as the competition between 'ultramontane' Écoliers and 'Gallican' Augustinians grew more pronounced.
41. See Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 311-313, for the Oratory's reaction to Bourgoing's treatise, *Déclaration présentée à la reine par le R.P. général de l'Oratoire au nom de la Congrégation, sur quelques points touchant le sacrement de pénitence*. No place; no date. Some of its comments regarding absolution were, 'Le Fils de Dieu doit être notre règle. Magdeleine n'a pas plutôt pleuré qu'il lui dit: *Remittuntur tibi*, etc. La femme adultère reçoit son absolution sur-le-champ...Le publicain ne fait que frapper sa poitrine et il se retourna justifié en sa maison...Le bon larron n'eut sitôt confessé ses crimes qu'il en reçut le pardon. Les apôtres ont suivi l'exemple de leur maître et il semble que nous devons jamais nous en éloigner.' Batterel follows this citation with the words 'Ce n'était pas là de quoi lui faire un beau renom. Plusieurs de nos pères se tinrent très offensés qu'il eut donné de pareils sentiments pur ceux de son corps.' (Citing Thyersault, *Mémoire manuscrit sur la 5e assemblée*.)
42. It was formally approved as an order by Alexander VII in 1666.
43. From R.P. Boulay, C.J.M. (Eudists), *Vie du vénérable Jean Eudes, instituteur du Sacré Coeur*, 4 vols. (Paris: R. Haton, 1903-1908), p. 93.
44. See Houssaye, *Bérulle et l'Oratoire de France*, Pièces justificatifs
45. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 247: Batterel writes that Bourgoing addressed Eudes' lies without difficulty. Eudes had been given all the missions he wanted; he had been encouraged to work for any and all bishops by Oratory's mandate. The Oratory was not opposed to creation of a seminary but to that of a new congregation which this seemed to be, of which Eudes seemed to wish to make

himself the head. The Oratory opposed the new Congregation because there were already two ecclesiastical congregations, that of the Oratory and that of the Mission [i.e., that of Vincent de Paul], which embraced the functions of seminaries and missions. To establish another would be to set 'autel contre autel', exposing the Church to scandal, especially at Caen where Oratorians were already established.

46. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 238.

47. He went so far as to throw himself at the feet of Oratorian fathers to beg them to ask the R.P. Général for his help in obtaining the post of head of the Oratory at Caen. See La Saudraie, *Livre historial de Caen*, cited Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 239, n. 1.

48. See Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, Eudes, p. 234-266. It is not necessary to name specific pages, as the whole of this biographical notice, apart from its account of Eudes' youth, is a judgment against the former Oratorian.

49. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 240-242; see esp. p. 241.

50. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 243-44.

51. Charles Berthelot du Chesnay (Eudist). *Les missions de Saint Jean Eudes. Contributions à l'histoire des missions en France aux XVIIe siècle*. Published with the assistance of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (Paris: Procure des Eudistes, 1967). Du Chesnay, p. x, attributes Eudes' subsequent troubles to two mistakes: i) to his having left the Oratory in 1643; ii) to having been at the point of being too successful in his enterprises in 1673.

52. The elder bishop was François de Harlay de Champvallon; he was taken by Cardinal Joyeuse as coadjutor in 1613 and succeeded to the title of archbishop of Rouen in 1615; he remained there until 1651 when he resigned. His nephew François II was archbishop at Rouen 1651-71, then went to Paris to be archbishop there 1671-95. See Bergin, *Making of the French Episcopate*, p.639-40.

53. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 250-51. Allier says, in reference to an incident of 1656, *La cabale*, p. 338, that the archbishop 'détestait la pieuse coterie,' meaning the Compagnie, to which Allier believed that Eudes belonged, and so disliked Eudes as well. But did the archbishop really dislike either? Harlay's generally consistent support for Eudes suggests either that he was unaware of Eudes' association with the Compagnie or did not really care.

54. It is not certain that Eudes did belong to the Compagnie. In 1913, after an apparently exhaustive search of the archives in Normandy, Maurice Souriau, in *Deux mystiques normands au XVIIe siècle*, stated that Eudes was probably never a part of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, nor of the Hermitage's inner circle, p. 162; the inner circle included only those who used actually to live there for periods of time on retreat. The Hermitage was a private house of retreat built by Eudes' friend Bernières, where the Compagnie used to meet p. 56, after the death of Gaston de Renty, the Compagnie's original founder in Normandy, p. 50-51. It seems that Eudes was never invited to stay there, p. 162. Eudes in any case eventually broke with Bernières, finding his doctrines doubtful, p.

158-159. On the other hand, du Chesnay's much more recent work, *Les missions de Saint Jean Eudes* (1967) claims that Eudes was a member; certainly the minutes of the Compagnie's meeting Thurs. March 3 1656 say that he assisted there, p. 54. Perhaps it depends what is meant by 'membership': Eudes was certainly closely involved with the Compagnie in Caen at various phases of its existence.

55. Allier, *La cabale*, p. 239-40; from the *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales du Calvados*, série D, t. II, p. 201-202, liasse 465, a collection of the many actions taken against the Eudists.

56. Among bishops who were well-disposed to Eudes or to Marie were Nicolas Briroy (bp 1587-1620), Léonor de Matignon (bp 1632-46), Claude Auvry (bp 1646-58), Eustache Le Clerc (1659-65), successively bishops of Coutances. The first Harlay de Champvallon, François I, also of Rouen (1613-51) was less enthusiastic; see Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 244-45. Jacques Angennes, Bayeux (bp 1606-47) also had reservations. Nicolas de Briroy protected Marie after his initial examination of the 'possessed' woman; see Dermenghem, p. 16, 32, though he died too soon to meet Eudes. None of them appears as a company member in Argenson's *Annales de la Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*, annotated and published by Dom H. Beauchet-Filleau (Marseille, 1900). Their support would certainly have been of value in Eudes' career, even without the backing of the Compagnie.

57. Cited P. Milcent, *Saint Jean Eudes*, (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1964), p. 53.

58. Martimort, *Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 194. See also Boulay, *Vie du vénérable Jean Eudes*, III, p. 368, from Eudes, *Oeuvres complètes*, IX, p. 249.

59. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 265. It is not clear, in Batterel's summary of Eudes' work, where these Marian designations are located.

60. The incident is recounted in Dermenghem, p. 55-56, citing a report now in the Bibliothèque nationale, *État des choses qui se sont passées en la conduite de Marie des Vallées, tant devant qu'après sa possession*, 11949, fol. 31-36; cf. the depositions concerning this matter (procédure Bazire), *ibid.*, fol. 1-31 et 37-70. As for Bazire, du Chesnay dates his hostility to Eudes and to Marie to 1658, at a time when the bishop was in the process of resigning the see of Coutances. Bazire and another vicar were not, at this time, elected to positions as capitulary vicars, and this, du Chesnay implies, was what turned Bazire against Eudes. See *Missions de Jean Eudes*, p. 107-108.

61. Bergin, *Making of the French Episcopate*, p. 566-567, 'Claude Auvry'

62. Cited Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 259-60.

63. One of the charges Batterel makes against Eudes, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 240: 'l'usage qu'il fit de sa nouvelle dignité fut de s'accréditer encore plus au dehors, de s'approprier les amis de la maison, de détourner adroitement ceux qui s'adressaient à lui et qui étaient dans la disposition de faire des dons ou de se donner eux mêmes à l'Oratoire...'

64. For the Contis' strange history, see E. Barthélemy, *Une niece de Mazarin: La princesse de Conti* (Paris, Librairie Firmin-Didot et cie, 1873). Barthélemy says that the bishop at Aleth, Mgr Pavillon, made Conti consent to make restitution for the damage his wars had caused to the poor of Berry and other provinces, 'en prenant toutes les précautions nécessaires pour connoître les familles qui avaient les plus souffert...'; p. 158.
65. In *La cabale*, Allier castigates Conti for his activities in the Compagnie from 1657 on, insisting that 'C'est une pure fable qui représente le prince de Conti comme l'homme de Port-Royal' (p. 388), on the grounds that he had become a member of the Compagnie at 'l'heure même où les jansénistes en étaient exclus'. But this is untrue. Barthélemy's work shows that Conti and his wife were in frequent contact with Port-Royal; it is known that the princess gave away her pearls (a part of her dowry and worth 80,000 livres) at the instigation of Mère Agnès; see *Lettres de la Mère Agnès Arnauld, Abbess de Port-Royal*, 2 vols. (Paris: Benjamin Dupratt, 1858), vol. II, May 14, 1662, p. 55. In her will Mme de Conti confided the care of their sons to the duchess of Longueville, well-known as a supporter of Port-Royal, and she chose Claude Lancelot, indisputably a Jansenist, to be their tutor; see Barthélemy, p. 319.
66. Not to be confused with the princesse de Longueville, patron of the Carmelites. Her first biographer was Gabriel de Roquette (1626-1707); his *Oraison funèbre* for the duchess is published in *Les orateurs sacrés à la cour de Louis XIV*, published by l'abbé Hurel (Paris, 1872). Her sympathy for the cause of Port-Royal is attested by her correspondance with Mère Angélique, *Relation*, p. 82-86, 129, and by other witnesses, but she was the dirigée of the Oratorian P. Desmarets and interceded with the bishop of Bayeux, M. Servien, for permission for the Eudist fathers to begin preaching and confessing there again. Her intervention was unsuccessful; the ban remained in place for ten years. See du Chesnay, *Missions de Jean Eudes*, p. 106-107.
67. R. Golden. *The Godly Rebellion. Parisian Curés and the Religious Fronde, 1652-1662* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), p. 7.
68. From a manuscript at the monastery of Rouen apparently written by Elisabeth-Catherine de Vienville (1660-1747), great-niece of Mère Mectilde du Saint-Sacrement, who died at the monastery of Rouen, cited in *Une amitié spirituelle au grand siècle: Lettres de Mère Mectilde de Bar à Marie de Châteaueux*, with preface by Charles de Molette (Paris: Tequi, 1989), p. 9.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
70. See *Une Amitié spirituelle*; Molette shows that others besides Mère Mectilde desired to make reparations for this sacrilege (cf. below), p. 10-11. The Sulpician named Charles Picoté seems to have independently conceived the idea of establishing a foundation of nuns vowed to 'l'adoration réparatrice'; the foundress of the order of the Verbe incarné and Saint-Sacrement, Jeanne de Matel, was moved by similar sentiments, and eventually the two worked together for this goal.
71. Anne of Austria, in the *Lettres inédites* of Catherine de Bar (Rouen, 1976), p. 147.
72. Molette, 'Introduction', *Amitié spirituelle*, p. 18.

73. See Milcent, *Saint Jean Eudes*, p. 21, and Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, III, p. 587, for the various names in this list.
74. The account of an apparition of the Sacred Heart to Marguerite-Marie is dated on the feast of the Heart of Mary; cf. Lebrun, *La dévotion au Coeur de Marie*, Paris, 1917, p. 186. See also Milcent, *Saint Jean Eudes*, p. 56: he says a recent study presented a manual published at Versailles in 1742 for a Confrérie du Sacré-Coeur created at the demand of Marie Leczinska. The manual contains elements borrowed from Eudes' offices, mingled with others owed to the Jesuits, who were disciples of Sainte Marguerite-Marie. The Benedictines of Saint-Sacrement diffused rapidly in Poland; they brought there, at the end of the 17th C., the devotion to the hearts of Jesus and Mary received from Eudes. It was brought back to France again by Marie Leczinska of Poland in the eighteenth century.
75. See n. 74, above; also see Molette, Introduction, p. 16. The queen's full name was Marie-Louise de Gonzague-Nevers; she had belonged to the Nevers family of France and married first king Wladyslaw IV in 1645; upon his death she married his brother, John II Casimir Vasa (1609-1672) in 1649; he was in turn elected king (1648-68). She had been a 'fille spirituelle de Port-Royal' but either through the intervention of anti-Jansenists, or through preference, became a loyal devotee of the Sacred Heart. For information about the latter issue, of around 1655, see Allier, p. 83-85, and *Lettres de Mère Angélique*, II, p. 577-578. The Jansenist-Écolier quarrel had a long reach.
76. Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 3-8. His account of Marie's exhumation is drawn from the minutes (Nov.- Dec. 1656) of the enquiry undertaken by the vicar-general Bazire, ordering the depositions of diverse witnesses, in B.N. Ms 11945, f^{ms} 18-27, and 11949, p. 1-31, cited Dermenghem, *Vie admirable*, p. 6, n. 1.
77. See notes 74 and 75, above.
78. Letter to Mère de Saumaise, June 1689, in Gauthey, *Vie et Oeuvres de Marguerite-Marie Alacoque*, II, Paris, p. 438.
79. Strangely enough, Du Four was also the nephew of Jean-Pierre Camus, bishop of Belley, who was a Gallican in matters of discipline but a strong Salesian 'pur amourist' in matters of theology. See Souriau, *Deux mystiques*, p. 162-63.
80. For further details regarding this imbroglio, see Allier, *Cabale des dévots*, p. 337-339. The incident also had the effect, according to Allier, of informing Mazarin of the Compagnie's existence, which he had long suspected without any proof.
81. Alain Tallon, *La Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*, p. 8-9.
82. Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 252: the alleged memorial to the pope (Alexander VII, in 1662) contained two incriminating points: that because new heresies were arising every day, 'y ayant des congrégations qui en étaient entièrement infectées' it was all the more important to confirm the new Congregation, which was thought to be an allusion to the Oratory's purported Jansenism. It also vowed to uphold the pope in all matters, 'même dans les points qui étaient douteux'.

83. There was at this time (1662) a rupture between Alexander VII and Louis XIV over M. de Créqui, then the French ambassador to the Holy See. See Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 252.
84. This is the word used by Batterel to describe the Oratorians' activities, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 253.
85. Du Chesnay, *Les missions de Saint Jean Eudes*, p. xiii, note 9.
86. See Ms 11947, from the Fonds français of the dept. of Mss of the Bibliothèque nationale; cited Dermenghem, *Marie*, p. 300.
87. Eudes, Ms de Cherbourg, fol. 26, in *Marie*, p. 118.
88. Miguel de Molinos (1628-1696) was a Spanish 'illuminé' who was convicted of heresy in 1687 and excommunicated. See Jean Orcibal, *Louis XIV contre Innocent XI. Les appels au futur concile de 1688 et l'opinion française* (Paris: Vrin, 1949), esp. p. 34; also see Chapters 9 and 10 of this study.
89. See Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, II, p. 242, 260, 261.
90. Cf. *Larousse*, 'Béat,e adj. (lat. beatus, heureux; 1265). *Iron. et pejor.* Se dit de quelqu'un (et de son comportement) qui manifeste un contentement de soi et une absence d'inquiétude proches de la sottie: *Un sourire d'une béate stupide relevait de temps en temps ses lèvres* (Barrès).' In Batterel, *Mémoires domestiques*, every context in which the word *béate* appears renders it pejorative; see esp. II, p. 241, 260, 261, in references to Marie des Vallées, whom Batterel clearly found absurd.
91. Du Chesnay, *Eudes*, p. ix.
92. The passage as summarized here is quoted from a work by Charles Lebrun, translated as *The Spiritual Teachings of St John Eudes* (London: Sands, 1934), p. 62; it is taken from Lebrun's edition of Eudes' *Oeuvres complètes*, VI, p. 33.

9/ ENEMIES OF THE STATE, 1650-1682

‘Tous ces prétendus serviteurs de Dieu sont en réalité des ennemis de l’État.’*

The personal reign of Louis XIV began in 1661, the year that Mazarin died. By this time it was already clear to the two main factions of the *dévots* that their ability to influence policy was in decline. Never as powerful as many people (including some *dévots* themselves) had believed, they now began to discover, as other Christians had before them, that the apostolic life, a life of Christian activism in the world united to the ‘*vie intérieure*’, was virtually impracticable - unless they were willing to accept abandoning all political ambition as the price for it. They had provoked the state against them too often. Between 1650 and 1682, organized opposition to royal policy among male *dévots*, Jansenist or *Ecole française*, was gradually extinguished or exiled. In 1681, Louis XIV was to procure from the Assembly of the Clergy, in defiance of Innocent XI's attempts to control him by threats of excommunication, a definition of Gallican doctrine and his own temporal powers over the Church in France, in the *Declaratio Cleri Gallicani*, a declaration which came to be known as the ‘*Quatre Articles*’ or Gallican Articles. Its first statement was ‘*Le Pape ne peut pas excommunier le Roi*’.¹ Louis' struggles with the popes, especially with Innocent XI who was the most vociferous advocate of papal independence to occupy the chair of Saint Peter in many years,² put intense political pressure upon the clergy throughout France. By mid-century most bishops had given up any attempt to assert themselves before the king; now, throughout this period, the lesser clergy and the regular clergy found themselves unable to avoid taking a stand in the Gallican-ultramontane debates. One after another, *dévo*t clerics were forced to capitulate or somehow come to terms with the

*Mazarin, cited Raoul Allier, *La Cabale*, p. 340.

CHAPTER 9

temporal authorities. Dévote women, on the other hand, found themselves almost the sole voice of resistance. The strange spiritual ideology they had developed over the years gave them both (temporary) immunity from the bitterness of doctrinal quarrels and, when they too began to suffer persecution, a capacity for resistance which eluded most of their confrères. In the end they would be forced to capitulate, but for a time their unique position gave them unprecedented visibility.

Attacks on devotion

• Antoine Arnauld

The most bitter and the most protracted of these battles over royal authority actually began several years before Mazarin died. Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694) was the brother of Mère Angélique and youngest child of the Arnauld family. He was noted for his learning in biblical and patristic history and in theology from an early age, with a particular admiration of the works of Saint Augustine. When, in 1642, Urban VIII condemned Jansenius' *De Augustinus*, he inevitably felt himself called to defend the work, not only because of his family's association with Jansenius (whom he had never met), but because of his learning in Augustinian theology. He was no doubt aware that to defend Jansenius was to bring danger upon himself: Saint-Cyran was still in prison for a similar offense when Arnauld began his work. *De la fréquente communion* was published August 25, 1643 and received an immediate and enthusiastic response.³ It was, among other things, a persuasive anti-Jesuit polemic, attacking Jesuit laxity with regard to confession.

De la fréquente communion was not so much a direct support of Jansenius' conception of grace, as a discussion of the practical application of his ideas in the confessional. It appeared with testimonials to its orthodoxy signed by fifteen bishops and archbishops and twenty doctors of the

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

Sorbonne; it had been approved by the Pope himself.⁴ Where works of controversy were concerned, however, such testaments were often futile, perceived as little more than a call to arms by opposing factions. But although Arnauld's work was indeed sent to Rome by hostile bishops after its appearance, it was not at this time condemned *in toto*. The holy office objected only to one of its propositions, that Peter and Paul were the two heads of the Church.⁵

Arnauld's work recommended, in the tradition of Saint-Cyran, that the sacraments of absolution and communion should be administered with greater caution by priests, and that sinners themselves should give more thought to the sincerity of their repentance before partaking of the Eucharist. To communicate without true penitence and for self-interested reasons was itself a mortal sin. *De la fréquente communion*, in effect, introduced no new idea to the French clergy or believers: its rigorism, as so many were to say, appears to have been 'naturally' appealing to French tastes. But it put its case with great eloquence, and, supported by so many learned and illustrious leaders of the church, it gave a new authority to the rigorists which they had previously lacked. Thus Arnauld's book had an impact not merely upon theologians; it affected priests and parishioners at the parish level, and led to angry battles, as rigorists denied communion to sinners and as 'laxists' (the word applied by Jansenists to their clerical opponents) denied communion to suspected Jansenists. The fact that the original condemnation of Arnauld's work had been rather ambiguous only added fuel to the fires of controversy already raging throughout France over attrition.

The bishops, too, wished to bring an end to the bitterness of these battles. In 1651, in a letter signed by eighty-five of them, they requested further clarification of the issue by Rome, the first step in securing a definitive condemnation of Jansenius's ideas (to settle the confessional issue). Although

CHAPTER 9

a small number (eleven) bishops wrote to protest the letter, and would later protest the publication of *Cum occasione*, Jansenist sympathizers appear to have been in a minority. In 1653, in the bull *Cum occasione*, Innocent X condemned what came to be known in French as the ‘cinq propositions’. They did not address the immediate issues raised by Arnauld's *Fréquente communion*, but aimed instead to counter Jansenius' more severe propositions regarding grace and predestination.⁶ Now the Faculty of Theology at the Sorbonne was clearly required to act, and was under intense pressure to do so.⁷ Arnauld, however, was of their number and one of their most respected members. The more ultramontane members were willing to purge the school of this pernicious influence, while Gallicans, and those with an eye to the Faculty's independence, resisted. On January 31, 1656, the doctors struck Arnauld's name from the list of the Faculty's doctors. This was an unusual step: never before had a doctor of theology been removed from the lists, except for those accused of apostacy or debauchery.⁸ Many of the doctors had initially resisted the decision,⁹ but at last an order came from the king's council that they must give in.¹⁰ Mazarin even sent the Chancellor and a number of bailiffs to attend the last debates, to ensure that the doctors obeyed their instructions and condemned Arnauld's work.

The bishops' action against Arnauld has been interpreted as a sign of their anti-Gallican tendencies, but the issues involved in their action were more complicated than this suggests. Although many French bishops were anti-Jansenists, this did not imply that they were ultramontane as well. The majority of French bishops had always been Gallican, although their Gallicanism grew of their desire to defend their own authority rather than loyalty to the crown.¹¹ Their situation now grew out of their wish for a decisive call from Rome on the penitential issue. Having themselves

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

called upon papal intervention to settle the matter, they were in an awkward position. Arnauld had insisted that general councils were superior in authority to the pope acting alone; the implication was that in matters of serious doctrinal controversy, popes must either call a general council or regard certain issues as undetermined. The practical difficulties of this position were obvious, as the bishops knew. But did the fact that they had called upon the pope, 'comme à celui qui possède la foi indéfectible de Pierre, qui est la voix même du Christ apaisant les tempêtes doctrinales sur l'océan de l'Église', to settle the Jansenist controversy imply that they had accepted the principle of papal infallibility? Had they inadvertently set a precedent?¹²

It was Pierre de Marca, bishop of Couserans in 1652 (soon to be made bishop of Toulouse, in 1654) who showed the bishops a way out of this situation. Although sometimes portrayed as a 'dévot' in the new sense by Jansenists eager to discredit him, he was in fact too much a Gallican to associate easily with dévots of Vincent de Paul's kind.¹³ Far more learned than most bishops, flexible, and ambitious, he was willing to make all necessary compromises to advance his career under Louis XIV. He pointed out to the bishops that in calling on the pope's intervention, they had not adopted an ultramontane attitude to papal authority: they merely sought confirmation for a position they had previously agreed upon. Although no general council had been held, the bishops had at least arrived at a consensus (of a sort) among themselves. They had acted, after a fashion, as conciliarists should. Marca also pointed out that if the logic of the ultramontane position were to be carried out to the full, then the bishops would be forced to write to Rome for approval every time they wished to pronounce upon any controversial matters in their dioceses. The extreme Gallican position would have denied them the right to decide independently of a general council, an

CHAPTER 9

impossible burden; the extreme ultramontane position would have forced bishops to write to Rome before pronouncing upon any matter in their dioceses. Marca's reasoning, a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* of ultramontanism, convinced and reassured the bishops that they could turn their backs on Rome with impunity. From 1651 on, Marca was invited to write all letters to the pope regarding matters of episcopal authority. His intervention also served to heal the breach between pro- and anti-Jansenist bishops. All French bishops, whatever their position in that controversy, were eager to uphold their authority before Rome, and made common cause over the issue.¹⁴

Meanwhile, Arnauld's fate after his ejection from the Sorbonne was a curious one. Of all his works and activities, it was only his attempted defense of Augustinian ideas as expressed by Jansenius that had really threatened his security. His *De la fréquente communion*, and his subsequent major works, might not have been condemned had he not injured himself by writing, with Pierre Nicole's assistance, two letters to a 'duc et pair', in the fashion of the times, in which he protested the refusal of absolution to the duke of Liancourt by a priest of Saint-Sulpice who suspected him of Jansenism. These letters were condemned by order of the Court, in February 1656. Perhaps the letters were more important than his other work in securing his condemnation, for the king's later attitude towards him does not suggest an implacable hostility on his part.¹⁵ Mazarin, however, had had enough of ecclesiastical disputes of the kind this threatened to become. Arnauld was at last forced to go into hiding. At first, he moved from one house to another in Paris, his asthma preventing him from removing himself to Port-Royal-des-Champs. He ended up at the house of the duchess of Longueville, from which he launched the campaign that led, in 1668-69, to the 'Paix de l'Église'.

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

This, the Peace of the Church, was the result of the intervention of numerous high officials, as well as Arnauld's own efforts. All were weary of the ceaseless theological arguments of the previous eight years, and the factionalism which was tearing apart French Catholicism. The Archbishop of Sens, friend to the so-called 'Four Bishops' who upheld their defense of episcopal rights,¹⁶ was able to satisfy the king that 'Jansenism' could be useful to him. Equally important, however, was the fact that Pope Alexander VII's death, and the election of Clement IX, led to a momentary decline in the tension between Rome and France.¹⁷ With an ally on the papal throne, the king was less inclined to go on the offensive in his dealings with the Holy See. It was during this interval that Arnauld was presented to Louis XIV and enjoyed a period of high favour in royal circles. For a time, French Jansenists were to enjoy a respite from persecution, while the Church enjoyed a respite from controversy.

Unfortunately, the Peace was short-lived. It endured for perhaps ten years, until 1679, and then broke down in a welter of new charges against Jansenist theologians. Its end has sometimes been blamed upon the death of the duchess of Longueville in April 1678, but other factors entered into its collapse as well and were perhaps more important.¹⁸ 1678 was the year in which Louis' conflicts over the *régale* began, and it may be that he was anxious once again to demonstrate his control over French ecclesiastics. 'Régale' was the name given to the king's right to use and distribute the benefices of vacant episcopal sees. It became important at this time because, with the acquisition of new territory through his wars, Louis was claiming the right of *régale* over sees in which France did not traditionally have such authority. It is significant, too, that at this time when Louis XIV was attempting to secure the support of French bishops and *Parlementaires* for his rights

CHAPTER 9

to the *régale*, it was denied to him by only two French prelates, Caulet, bishop of Alet, and Pavillon, (also at one time bishop of Alet), who had been part of the Four Bishops group,¹⁹ and had previously taken a stand against the signing of the Formulary.

The Formulary was a sort of oath of orthodoxy intended to control the proliferation of Jansenism among the French clergy: all clerics would be required to sign it.²⁰ The issue of the signing of the Formulary would prove to be the greatest of all the controversies to involve the Jansenists in the seventeenth century. All French Church personnel, including women, were compelled to sign it; many refused to do so on the grounds that it attacked the orthodoxy of Augustinian theology. The resistance of the bishops Caulet and Pavillon, which first became apparent in July 1677, no doubt surprised the king, who had perhaps become accustomed to thinking that the reputed 'Gallicanism' of Jansenist bishops must inevitably secure their cooperation with his policies. In any case, the resistance of the two bishops may well have reignited the king's hostility to any form of devotion that threatened his supremacy.

Arnauld was thus at last forced to leave France for the Spanish Netherlands in June 1679, where he met Pierre Nicole. Although he was never to return home, his exile was not an unpleasant one. He was given the right to say Mass in his home by Innocent XI, an unusual concession in the post-Tridentine era, and continued to write and to correspond with many of the major figures of the day.²¹ The Church, it seemed, bore no grudge against him.²² Nevertheless he resisted Pierre Nicole's suggestion that he return to France because he wished to retain his freedom to write. Nicole himself could not bear the prospect of permanent exile and went back to France, 'where his silence ensured his tranquillity'.²³ He was severely castigated for this capitulation, but he was not unusual in his

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

willingness to compromise. Arnauld, who refused to criticize him, suffered more than most Jansenists, although his fate too seems strangely anticlimactic, given the sheer volume of the response the condemnation of Jansenism was to excite in France.²⁴ Much of this literature assumes the truth of the thesis that it was the result of a Church-state conspiracy against the independence of Jansenist thought. Those who are inclined to accept this should recall, first, that Rome had in the end condemned him almost reluctantly and under considerable pressure from French bishops; that Louis XIV had been willing enough to receive him as long as his Gallicanism was to the fore; and that Arnauld always regarded himself as a loyal supporter of both the Church and the crown, even after he had gone into exile and need no longer proclaim his allegiance to royal authority. Most of all, those who would see Louis' attacks upon Jansenism as the result of some quality peculiar to Jansenist thought should recall that they were not, at this time, the only group to incur such condemnation.

• **The end of the Compagnie, 1656-1667**

Troubles with the bishops, the king, or the pope were not the sole province of the Jansenist faction during the last years of Mazarin's ministry and the first of Louis XIV's independent reign. The ultramontane contingent in the church of France, especially as represented by the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, suffered the consequences of Mazarin's hostility, in particular, during the same period as the Arnauld clique endured its trials. During the years between the end of the Fronde in 1653 and the end of the decade, Compagnie members were particularly active, as a number of penitent noblemen tried to make reparations for their part in France's disorders. With the dynamic

CHAPTER 9

leadership of such Compagnie members as the Marquis de la Mothe-Fénelon and the prince de Conti, the confrères offended many of the more powerful parties in French public life. They offended the *grands* by attacking the practise of duelling; they offended provincial townspeople by informing husbands and wives of each other's wrongdoing, and by interning suspicious-looking women in convents; and they offended bishops by being better-informed about their dioceses than were the bishops themselves.²⁵ The Compagnie had also sometimes offended the poor by distributing advice, admonitions, and sometimes coercion, along with its charity, but it is likely that no one else minded.²⁶ Its activities as an agency of 'social control', although indisputable, were not of a kind to anger the political authorities. Rather, the fact that the Compagnie, however authoritarian it was, retained a following among the dispossessed and downtrodden (if we may judge by the numbers of people who crowded to hear preachers like Eudes) was not a point in its favour in the eyes of its opponents.²⁷ It had alienated many of the people upon whom its survival depended; moreover, the Compagnie's growing ultramontanism had also won it many enemies, especially as the Jansenists themselves were then beginning to suffer the persecutions of both Rome and the French government.

For a long time Mazarin had been unaware (it seems) of the Compagnie's existence,²⁸ but he had nevertheless suspected that some form of organized *dévot* activity must be leagued against him. In this, he echoed what he had been told by other Compagnie enemies who had their own reasons for wishing to bring down the confrérie. 'Deux personnes différentes,' he had written in one of his 'Carnets' in 1655,

sont venues me dire que les couvents, les moines, les dévots et les dévotes, sous prétexte d'entretenir la ferveur de la reine, n'ont d'autre but que de lui faire consumer son temps en toutes ces choses, afin qu'elle n'en ait plus pour ses affaires et pour me parler; et ils espèrent venir à bout de leurs desseins en faisant donner le dernier coup,

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

quand tout sera prêt, à la Meignelay, à Dans, à la supérieure du Val-de-Grâce, et au P. Vincent.²⁹

He was equally suspicious of *dévot* women, as the above passage suggests; he believed that they too were guilty of unwarranted intervention in affairs of state, even those safely enclosed in nunneries. He suspected that religious activism was no more than a pretext for many *dévots*, and that they were in fact moved more by ambition than by devotion.³⁰

Mazarin was particularly alarmed by the sudden conversion of his once-libertine nephew by marriage, Armand de Conti, in 1656. Would Conti ally himself with his uncle's mysterious enemies? Mazarin had begun by this time to suspect the existence of a devout and organized opposition to his ministry: for years, he had been hounded not only by scurrilous Mazarinades in the streets but by a flood of notes appearing in his pockets, on his desk, in his bedchamber, attacking his policies and his morals in more genteel terms than those used in the Mazarinades.³¹ Such a campaign could only have been achieved by a group with extensive connections. While Mazarin was worrying about his nephew's possible ties to such a group, the *confrérie* itself worried about the dangers of accepting so compromising a member; when Conti was at last formally admitted to the *Compagnie* in July 1660, 'on prévient bien que ce seroit un écueil où la *Compagnie* pourroit se briser', wrote Argenson in his *Annales*. In spite of all he did for the *Compagnie*, 'il ne se trouva pas avoir assez de crédit auprès du cardinal Mazarin, l'oncle de la Princesse sa femme, pour la soutenir, quand ce ministre voulut la détruire.'³²

The existence of the *Compagnie* was finally revealed to the public in a definitive manner through the publication of Charles Du Four's *Mémoire* attacking the *Compagnie*'s actions after his attempt to preach at the church of the Ursulines of Caen, an incident which had placed Du Four (the

CHAPTER 9

same Du Four who was Eudes' enemy) at the center of a scandal. His *Mémoire* described the Norman branch of the organization and its works plainly, and implied that its tentacles reached throughout the nation, and into the highest circles of government, the court and the Parlement of Paris:

ces Messieurs croient avoir le droit de se mêler de toutes choses, de s'ingérer dans toutes les actions un peu éclatantes de la religion, de s'ériger en censeurs publics..., d'entrer et pénétrer dans les secrets des maisons et des familles particulières, comme aussi dans la conduite des communautés religieuses pour y gouverner toutes choses à leur gré.³³

Mazarin was now at last aware of the existence of the secret society. Du Four's pamphlet, or perhaps the solicitations of angry bishops,³⁴ had brought it to his attention. Now he began to attack it more directly: 'Le cardinal Mazarin s'était plaint à M. de Montaigu de quantité de Compagnies qui se faisaient sans ordre du roi', wrote Argenson in his account of the Compagnie's decline.³⁵ In the month of September, in 1660, Mazarin began to complain of the activities of 'cabales des dévots', although he still knew nothing certain about the Compagnie's name, activities, or membership.³⁶

Du Four's attack also terrified Compagnie members, who afterwards regarded it as the beginning of the end of the Compagnie's existence.³⁷ On September 27, 1660, the Paris branch held a meeting at which it was decided to call a halt to a number of Compagnie activities which risked attracting too much publicity. The Rouen branch was also warned that it should cease to hold meetings altogether, until a more propitious moment. So alarmed were the Paris members that they decided not to send the warning to Rouen by letter; better that this should be done in person, as there would be less risk of discovery that way.³⁸ On December 7, Compagnie members were warned at a meeting that the Court was resolved to forbid any kind of assembly, 'sous quelque prétexte que ce fût'.³⁹ This should, in theory, have been the end of the Compagnie. Members made many assertions

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

of their obedience and loyalty and their desire to obey the law; Argenson wrote of the immediate aftermath of the Court's decree, 'C'est donc ici proprement où a fini la Compagnie, parce qu'elle voulut obéir à la puissance souveraine tout aveugle qu'elle étoit en détruisant un grand bien qu'elle ne connoissoit pas'.⁴⁰ In fact, a core group of members, growing smaller all the time as recruitment declined and death took its toll, continued to hold meetings until approximately 1665. The last meeting mentioned in Argenson's *Annales* was held February 4, 1665. Members insisted that they might defy the law because all interdictions against their meetings were based upon 'un fondement très faux', which meant that they might meet 'sans scrupule', as 'jamais la Compagnie ne s'étoit mêlée d'affaires d'Etat.'⁴¹ In spite of these reservations, the Compagnie grew less active and effective from September 1660 onward. Mazarin's suspicions and the increasing sense of fear which surrounded its meetings effectively brought it to an end.

Louis and Devotion

What was the significance of the attacks upon Jansenism and upon the *Ecole française dévots*? The Compagnie's detractors have always argued that its own secrecy and its conspiratorial overtones were at fault. Its supporters, on the other hand, insisted that it was the Compagnie's enemies, the Jansenists, who were most to blame for their end. The Jansenists, for their part, were equally prepared to blame the Compagnie and its supporters, or better yet, the Jesuits, for Arnauld's exclusion from the Sorbonne and eventual exile, and for the persecution of the nuns of Port-Royal, still to come. Without denying the importance of this mutual hostility, with its accompanying intrigues, pamphlet wars, and betrayals, in bringing down the leaders of the two principal factions in the Gallican church, we must consider other, equally important contributing factors.

CHAPTER 9

Some members of the Compagnie regarded its suppression as an attack upon devotion itself.

As Argenson was to write,

Je sais que tous les statistes ont crié contre les correspondances que la Compagnie avoit de tous les côtés du Royaume par les mauvais effets, disoient-ils, que ces correspondances pouvoient produire; mais ce n'a pu être que l'entêtement contre la dévotion qui leur a persuadé ces suites funestes qu'ils craignoient.⁴²

Is it possible that Argenson was, after all, correct? There is some reason to believe that he was. Devotion had been fashionable, in some circles, since the turn of the century. Louis XIV himself had suffered for this, and his *dévo*t mother's criticisms of his sexual escapades, her habit of turning for support and guidance to *spirituel* advisers, had turned him away from devotion. It is possible that some of his subjects, too, shared his feelings. The Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement had not made itself popular, especially among the great families, with its objections to traditional noble privileges and pastimes, like duelling and gaming,⁴³ or its attempts to impose Tridentine regulations in the matter of marrying children and cloistering daughters as part of family strategy.⁴⁴ The change in the religious climate manifested itself in the comedy *Tartuffe* (1664), written by Molière, who was much favoured by the king since the appearance of *Les précieuses ridicules* (1659). It was an attack on the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, a counter-blast of irritation on behalf of a society that had grown weary of moral lectures. The play's villains conceal their agenda behind a wealth of soft words:

A! laissez-le parler; vous l'accusez à tort
Et vous ferez bien mieux de croire à son support
Pourquoi sur un tel fait m'être si favorable?
Savez-vous, après tout, de quoi je suis capable?⁴⁵

Molière's gesture in writing such a play was in no way revolutionary: it had the full if unspoken support of the king, as the beleaguered *dévots* of the Compagnie were to find when they attempted

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

to stop its performance.⁴⁶ With *Tartuffe* in mind, it has been suggested that it was the Compagnie's form of piety, rather than Jansenism, which now fell victim to public derision, but while there is some truth in this view, it is not altogether accurate.⁴⁷ There is reason to believe that devotion in general was falling out of favour and out of fashion in the 1660s, and not merely because of its political implications or the in-fighting of dévot factions. Other contemporary poets and satirists besides Molière were to launch attacks clearly aimed at Jansenism, and for the same reasons as Molière had attacked the Compagnie:

C'est à bon droit que l'on condamne à Rome
L'évêque d'Ypres, auteur de vains débats
Ses sectateurs nous défendent en somme
Tous les plaisirs qu l'on goûte ici-bas.⁴⁸

Behind this anti-devotional activity was the king himself. The policies of Louis XIV suggest a profound hostility to both religious dissent and to excesses of devotion, particularly in the first half of his reign, before reversals of fortune and his marriage to Madame de Maintenon perhaps made him more devout.⁴⁹ His reaction to the Compagnie was not based only upon his distaste for its reputed ultramontanism. It was not, after all, the ultramontane dévots alone who felt the weight of his disapproval; he or his ministers were also responsible for the continually renewed attacks upon Jansenism. (There were also, of course, the Huguenots, against whom Louis' persecutions grew more serious with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.) Louis' ideal Church appears to have been mainly ceremonial, hierarchical, well-organised, one in which God Himself was the king's only liege-lord and the source of his quasi-religious authority over his people. His *Mémoires* make his position clear: 'Les rois sont seigneurs absolus et ont naturellement la disposition pleine et libre de tous les biens, tant des séculiers que des ecclésiastiques, pour en user comme de sages économes, c'est-à-dire

CHAPTER 9

selon les besoins de leur État.⁵⁰ Louis XIII had had a similar view of his role in society,⁵¹ but he differed from his son in that for him the claims of conscience were equal to and sometimes at odds with the demands of citizenship and kingship.⁵² In later years, Louis XIV would find himself similarly divided; in his youth he admitted to no such conflicts of interest.

• The Sorbonne

The enemies of Jansenism in the Faculty of Theology were for a short time able to exploit Arnauld's exclusion, and that of his mainly Gallican supporters, to the detriment of the Faculty's Gallican traditions. Between 1656 and 1662, the theses presented at the Sorbonne for defense (from schools of theology around Paris) had shown a marked tendency to promote papal infallibility.⁵³ This was disturbing to the temporal authorities, but how to question it without risking the hard-won exclusion of Jansenists from the Faculty? In the first place, their exclusion had depended upon the presence of these ultramontane scholars; besides, any invocation of the rights of bishops, any attack upon the ultramontane thesis, would certainly open up the Jansenist debate all over again. Once more, Pierre de Marca intervened. In a memoir to the king written in December 1661 after the publication of yet another ultramontane thesis at the Collège de Clermont, Marca made the same argument that he had previously made to the bishops: that papal authority in matters of controversy rested upon the implied consent of the episcopal hierarchy in France; if they withheld their consent, the pope's authority was rendered null.⁵⁴ It was thus possible, he suggested, to attack ultramontanism without calling the pope's condemnation of Jansenism into question. From the king's point of view, the important consequence of this argument was that he might take aggressive action to stamp out ultramontane theses in the Faculty without reviving the Jansenist controversies.

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

The results of Marca's memoir of 1661 were not immediately apparent. It is not likely that the Sorbonne's doctrinal disputes were really of great concern to Louis. The king, however, was seeking an opportunity to assert his authority before the pope, and in the summer of 1662 he found the ideal opportunity. In Rome that year, outside the house of the French ambassador to the Holy See (the Marquis of Créqui), a young attendant waiting on the ambassador's wife was shot in a skirmish between Corsican and French soldiers; Madame de Créqui herself narrowly escaped being hit. Although the incident was not the fault of the Roman authorities, the king used it as a pretext to obtain what he wanted from the pope, including various concessions regarding the nomination of bishops to newly acquired French territories.⁵⁵ From August 1662 until well into the new year, he demanded more, even threatening to follow in Henry VIII of England's footsteps and withdraw himself and his subjects from obedience to the Church of Rome, establishing a Church of France in its stead. This was where Louis was able to transform the Faculty of Theology into a useful weapon in his diplomatic program.

At the height of the tension between the French and papal negotiators, in January 1663, a young French theology student named Gabriel Drouet de Villeneuve presented a thesis in which he made a series of statements with a distinctly ultramontane bias.⁵⁶ Villeneuve's thesis did not touch upon the pope's temporal authority over the kings of Europe, as earlier and more provocative theses by the Jesuits had done; it was concerned merely with his spiritual authority. The king nevertheless turned to Parlement to obtain an injunction against it, determined to make of this seemingly irrelevant affair a test-case and a show of his strength. On January 31, a deputation representing both magistrates and the Court appeared at the Salles des Actes at the Sorbonne and presented the king's

CHAPTER 9

command. Among them was a young man who was the son of Achille de Harlay, the procurer-general, and on this occasion was acting as his father's substitute. In delivering the king's interdiction against three of Villeneuve's propositions to the doctors of the Sorbonne, he made a speech presenting a Gallican position so extreme that it alarmed all the scholars present. He stated that the liberties of the Gallican church were sealed in the blood of Jesus Christ; that the council of Trent was not received in France; and that in order to pass any proposition of faith, royal authority must intervene to support that of the Pope and the Church. The speech provoked an instant uproar. The young Harlay's interpretation of Gallicanism was indefensible by either Gallican or Roman tradition. It is likely that it was not intended so much as a serious proposition, but as a threat of what the Faculty might expect if it failed to accept some form of direction from the king's government. Because the order had come from Parlement, and not directly from the king, it left open to the Faculty the possibility of seeking protection against the magistrates from the king himself, the traditional routine in such instances. In this case such a step might be dangerous, and Faculty members knew it. On the other hand, what choice did they have but to turn to the king, a step which he had no doubt foreseen from the beginning? After a round of meetings and speeches, in which the original order was somewhat softened and made more precise, so as not to threaten the pope's doctrinal authority too directly, the order was at last registered on February 15.⁵⁷ The incident had far-reaching consequences. Its timing suggests that Harlay's speech was intended to convey an implicit threat to Rome; that the king hoped to show through this agent that he had sufficient control over the church in France that he could, if necessary, force it to secede from Roman control. In

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

March that year (1663), he refused to hear Alexander VII's efforts at capitulation and waited a month to respond to them.

The incident and its dénouement had a lasting impact upon both doctors of theology and ecclesiastics. The king had succeeded in informing the Sorbonne, once a bastion of Gallican independence from both temporal and ecclesiastical authority, that he would tolerate no further intimations of ultramontane thought, even among intellectuals. And it was not only the bishops now who must hold to the Gallican line. The young Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704), arguing against the registration of Parlement's order, made a speech with ultramontane overtones before the Faculty; Godefroi Hermant, the seventeenth-century historian of the Gallican church, friend to Jansenism, reports that the king observed in response, 'qu'il voyait bien que cet abbé ne se souciait pas d'être du nombre de ses amis.'⁵⁸ The king's comment points to the inauguration of a new era in the Gallican church: it was now clear that ambitious clerics could not hope for advancement without adhering to a clearly Gallican line. The era had passed in which men like Bérulle and Du Val, willing to work with but not to bow down before royal authority, could exploit an incident like the Brossier affair to assert the Church's independence from the state, and subsequently find themselves promoted to positions of authority by the king. Bossuet himself, as a key figure in the era, would discover the full implications of the new reality.

Port-Royal

What was the fate of the women of Port-Royal as their friends and brothers faced or fled persecution? Although less vulnerable to considerations of ambition than their male counterparts, they were still in a delicate situation after Arnauld's condemnation by the Sorbonne. Moreover, they

CHAPTER 9

were bound by vows of stability to their house and could not easily go into hiding or exile at will.⁵⁹ Thanks in part to Arnauld, by 1661, Port-Royal's former obscurity, which had once protected it from royal notice, was a distant memory. But it was not Antoine Arnauld's activities alone that brought them to public notice. The convent in Paris, and the grounds at Champs, had long been the focus of Parisian piety among people of all ranks of society. The nuns had fed the hungry during the Fronde,⁶⁰ they had defied the authority of both the state (Mazarin) and of Rome, and they were thought to be the heart of the Catholic reformation by their friends and patrons in Paris. Angélique Arnauld's initial determination to keep her convent set apart from worldly concerns had, in the usual way of such efforts, helped to bring it a special popularity and prestige. Many noblewomen had been educated there or had some connection with the convent: Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon-Condé, the duchess of Longueville⁶¹; Marie d'Orléans, the duchess of Nemours; Marguerite de Lorraine, the duchess of Orléans⁶²; Anne-Marie Martinozzi, the princess of Conti⁶³; the duchess of Aiguillon (Richelieu's niece), and several other prominent noblewomen had close ties with the convent. René Rapin, sworn enemy of Port-Royal and one of its most thorough chroniclers, has suggested that it was merely from vanity and a desire for novelty that such women gravitated toward the new form of devotion, a typical dismissal and one that reinforces the impression that women's pious impulses were not perceived to be threatening.⁶⁴ In the early years of the public's enthusiasm for Jansenism, before it was condemned, the nuns of Port-Royal were an obvious outlet for the pious impulses of devout noblewomen, as fashion and devotion worked upon each other:

On ne parloit que de saint Augustin dans les ruelles. Il ny avoit point de femme d'esprit qui ne se piquât de dire ses sentiments sur la grâce et sur la prédestination. Les dames de qualité se rangèrent aisément de ce côté-là, parce qu'elles y étoient considérées et qu'on y avoit une grande déférence pour leurs sentimens. Celles

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

surtout qui, après une conduite peu régulière pendant leur jeunesse, cherchoient la réputation de prudes dans un âge plus avancé, faisoient paroître bien plus de zèle et d'ardeur pour la nouvelle doctrine que les autres.⁶⁵

It is possible to find political motives in the great ladies' attraction to Port-Royal.⁶⁶ The female patrons of the convent were often former leaders of the Fronde rebellions. The nuns themselves were often drawn from the Parlementaire class in Paris, like the Arnauld sisters; the magistrates of Parlement had also supported the cause of the Fronde, in part because they disliked Mazarin's policies and his raids on public finance. Both groups were drawn to Jansenist thought, supposedly, because it represented an alternative to 'dévot' piety; meaning, that is, the supposedly foreign, Hispanic piety represented by the *Ecole française* dévots.⁶⁷ Port-Royal, for non-theologians, was the most visible and accessible symbol of this truly French school. No doubt there is some truth in this explanation. The convent gradually came to be associated with the political and religious discontents of the age, becoming a leading exponent in Paris of Gallican sentiments. Yet the suggestion that there was some kind of natural affinity between Port-Royal, the Fronde, and radical Gallicanism must be accepted only with serious reservations. The nuns of Port-Royal took no part in the Fronde rebellions.⁶⁸ Their noble patrons were often prepared to support the works of Jesuits and *Ecole française* theologians, in addition to those of the supposedly inimical 'Jansenist' affiliation. The duchess of Longueville, as previously mentioned, is known to have defended Jean Eudes,⁶⁹ whom the loyalists of Port-Royal generally regarded as inimical to their cause, in his battles with the Oratoire, while she continued to protect both the nuns and Antoine Arnauld. Much the same could be said of Madame de Conti, who had Jesuit confessors and directors at the same time as she sought the advice of Mère Agnès of Port-Royal. None of the convent's more aristocratic patrons, in

CHAPTER 9

any case, appears to have been greatly interested in Port-Royal's Gallican tendencies. On the other hand, the Parlementaire families who took an interest in the convent were, in all likelihood, attracted in part by the Gallican, anti-Roman sentiments articulated both by Antoine Arnauld and by Blaise Pascal in their public defenses of Jansenius and of Saint-Cyran. But, more importantly, they were probably drawn to the austere element in Port-Royal's spirituality: it was plain, unadorned, in its way elegantly simple, its virtues practical ones which suited middle-class tastes. René Rapin, not sympathetic to Port-Royal or the Jansenists, nevertheless said that Jansenist spirituality seemed to him to be better-suited to French tastes and mores than that traditionally espoused by the Jesuits and by other groups affiliated with the *Ecole française dévots*.⁷⁰ He did not suggest a reason for this, but it is possible that he was alluding to the French taste for classicism which was described so well by Catherine Maire (see Chapter 5).

The original spirit of Port-Royal, however 'classical' it may have been, was not innately pro-Gallican; Angélique Arnauld's original purpose had been to implement Tridentine reforms at the convent, not to question papal authority or to uphold that of the bishops at the expense of the pope. More perplexing still is the suggestion from some commentators that Port-Royal was in some way a hotbed of anti-monarchical sentiment from the Fronde and on. Some commentators have ascribed the change to the Fronde and its aftermath: the Jansenists, says Paul Broutin, only became entangled with the cause of 'Richerisme' (that is, radical Gallicanism) after 1653. In reaction to the Fronde, the authoritarianism of church and state grew more severe, and this in turn propelled the adherents of Port-Royal to further extremities.⁷¹ Broutin's thesis, however, does not adequately account for why Port-Royal and its supporters should have embraced Richer-style Gallicanism in the first place.

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

Neither Saint-Cyran nor Jansenius was, strictly speaking, Gallicans in the style of French political thinkers. In fact, both the convent's denizens and its external supporters, Arnauld among them, always proclaimed their loyalty to the throne of France.⁷²

By the 1650s, the old ruse by which the nuns had maintained their lack of concern with theological disputes or political issues had grown threadbare. This was not initially the fault of the nuns themselves, or not, at any rate, the fault of Mère Angélique and Mère Agnès. The elder-stateswomen of Port-Royal were not necessarily perceived even by the convent's enemies as a threat to the established order of either the Church or the state. Rapin wrote a lengthy *apologia* of the two women in his study of the rise of Jansenism in which he was careful to distinguish them from their younger successors:

La mère Angélique et la mère Agnès, qui étoient de bonnes religieuses, qui avoient de l'amour pour la régularité et pour l'observance de leur institut, voyant que la plupart des filles de leur couvent s'emancipoient par les intrigues continuelles..et considerant combien cela étoit capable de dissiper l'esprit où l'on avoit vécue jusques alors, s'en plaignoient l'une à l'autre...disant que [Dieu] ne leur demandoit point compte de la doctrine de l'évêque d'Ipres ny de celle de Saint-Cyran, mais qu'il leur demanderoit un compte exacte et rigoureux de la conservation de l'esprit de leur institut, de l'observation des règles et de la fidélité à leur vocation.⁷³

Rapin's statement that the two older nuns were critical of the activities of their juniors is impossible to prove, but the fact that a contemporary (even an enemy) saw them in this light suggests both the esteem in which they were held and the general acceptance of their orthodoxy. But they were no longer relevant to the fate of the convent. The younger generation was about to take control.

The Paris convent of Port-Royal, and its sister-convent near Versailles (occupied by the Jansenist *solitaires* from 1637 until they were ejected in 1655, as well as by some nuns who moved back from the Paris convent to relieve overcrowding there), had long been a focus of popular

CHAPTER 9

admiration for its obvious austerity and had attracted many supporters, high and low. Port-Royal's most famous adherents, including the solitaires, had benefitted by the prestige of the nuns, as had Antoine Arnauld himself. Without them, the Jansenist disputes would have amounted to no more than another series of arcane theological arguments, incomprehensible and uninteresting to the general public. But the nuns remained very popular among the French, too popular, perhaps, for Mazarin to risk disturbing them, considering his own delicate position vis-à-vis the Parlementaires of Paris, who continued to detest him after the Fronde was over. Initially neither Arnauld's exclusion from the Sorbonne, nor Rome's successive condemnations of the works of Jansenius, had much impact upon the nuns and their immediate circumstances. They wrote no works of theology; they engaged in no disputes with Rome; they did not proclaim themselves ultramontanes or Gallicans. But after 1660, this began to change.

The Fall

Mère Angélique, so closely identified with the convent since the turn of the century, died August 6, 1661. In July, immediately before she died, she had the grief of seeing her nuns asked to sign a new Formulary swearing that they did not adhere to nor accept any of the five propositions in the works of Jansenius condemned by Innocent X. The formulary had been prepared by the Assembly of the Clergy in 1657. It clearly recognised, contrary to Antoine Arnauld's claim, that the five propositions condemned by the Pope were in fact contained in Jansenius's work. It was left to languish for a time, but in 1661, the issue again arose. This time, Louis XIV made it plain that he regarded the signing of the formulary as compulsory. The vicars who governed the diocese of Paris in the absence of Cardinal de Retz were tolerant of Jansenism and they composed a letter demanding

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

that the clergy sign but making a distinction between 'fact' and 'law'; it has been suggested that the letter was composed by Pascal himself.⁷⁴ In signing, the signatories acknowledged that, by law, the Pope had the authority to rule regarding the doctrines of Jansenius, that they accepted his condemnation of the 'cinq propositions', and that the propositions were, indeed, heretical. But they did not acknowledge that the propositions were to be found in *De Augustinus*.

Female religious, as well as male ecclesiastics, were expected to sign the formulary. This was a new departure: for all the regimentation to which women's convents were subject, their inmates were not expected to have opinions on matters of theology and were thus seldom asked what these were. Female religious (and other women) had indeed been accused of heresy and punished for it in the past, but they had always been considered, for legal purposes, as part of the laity, and as such their heresies were a matter not of clerical but of lay discipline. To treat women as a part of the ecclesiastical body of the Church, which in effect was what the Assembly of the Clergy had done in asking that the nuns of Port-Royal sign the formulary, was remarkable. It illustrates both the renown of the nuns and the fact that male clerics had begun to acknowledge that for better or worse women might have theological opinions and that these might be of some importance to ecclesiastical discipline, that it was not enough merely to ensure that their male superiors had accepted the papal decree.

Before she died, Angélique Arnauld made a last appeal to the custom in a letter to Anne of Austria. '[N]os directeurs', she wrote,

ont un soin si particulier de ne nous entretenir jamais et de ne permettre point qu'on nous entretint de ces matières contestées, qui sont si fort au-dessus de notre sexe et de notre profession, que, bien loin de nous en donner la moindre connaissance, il nous ont toujours éloignées de tout ce qui avait quelque apparence de contention...on

CHAPTER 9

ne nous à jamais fait lire aucun des livres, pas même dont le sujet est le plus édifiant, comme entre autres, celui de *La fréquente communion*.⁷⁵

The appeal to ignorance, the reminder that such matters were above 'notre sexe et notre profession', even the statement that the convent's directors had kept the nuns from controversial readings, were part of the conventional disguise of female religious, denying them much, but allowing them a degree of freedom within their enclosures. It had worked in the past, but in view of the publicity the nuns had attracted, it was no longer convincing.

The nuns of Port-Royal had great difficulty accepting the distinction between fact and law, 'n'ayant point la créance d'un fait, on ne le peut attester par une signature, parce que c'est mentir à l'Église,' wrote Angélique de Saint-Jean (1624-1684), Mère Angélique's niece, in her *Relation de captivité*. Pressed to explain her views by her 'jailer', a nun of the Annunciation order, she added, 'selon Saint Bernard, c'était mentir non seulement d'assurer une chose qu'on sait être fausse, mais même d'en assurer une qu'on doute qui soit vraie...c'est blesser la vérité de donner pour certaine une chose dont on n'a pas la certitude.'⁷⁶ It is in statements like this that the real difference between the male and female adherents of Jansenism makes itself most apparent. The men were prepared to sign the formulary without further comment. They regarded the distinction between fact and law as adequate to preserve their honour and the truth, while permitting them also to slip back into public and ecclesiastical life. The women, however, had grave doubts about its honesty. It is important to note that the women might have signed the formulary more honestly than their male supporters, because most of them had not, in fact, read *De Augustinus*, as Angélique Arnauld maintained in the summer of 1661. They could say, with some truth, that they had little knowledge of theology (although Angélique de Saint-Jean's writings, impregnated with an awareness of the major

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

theological issues involved, might lead us to doubt this) and they could certainly say that they did not know whether the 'five propositions' were to be found in Jansenius' work. But to them this was irrelevant. Saint-Cyran had been their revered director; they knew that he and Jansenius had been close friends. To accept any condemnation of Jansenius would be a tacit acknowledgment that Saint-Cyran was implicated in his theological errors, and this the nuns refused to admit.⁷⁷ At first, many of the women of Port-Royal refused to sign the formulary. Ultimately, however, they were forced to sign in June 1661 and again in November 1661, after they had persuaded the authorities to include an explanatory clause above their names.⁷⁸

These years were a time of harassment for them. In 1661, boarders and postulants were expelled from the convent and the convent's 'Petites Écoles' were closed, both thought to be necessary to bring an end to the nuns' influence and to Port-Royal's power as a centre of teaching and learning. Worse, however, was to befall them. In 1664, they were again pressed to sign a formulary; this time, the new archbishop of Paris, Hardouin de Péréfixe (b. 1606; archbishop of Paris 1662-1671), was stubbornly determined to make them sign a new formulary in which no reservations or distinctions were to be permitted. When this brought new refusals from some of the nuns, Péréfixe decided to have twelve of the more recalcitrant separated from the others and scattered throughout other convents, while the remainder were interned in a Visitation convent in the city. Angélique de Saint-Jean left a record of this occasion which shows the same sense of martyrdom that permeated the men of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement at the same period, as they too gathered in Paris and sadly decided that they must disband. One of the officials present asked her her name because, 'il voulait avoir le plaisir de me le faire dire'. She told him,

CHAPTER 9

bien haut sans rougir, car, dans une telle rencontre, c'est quasi confesser le nom de Dieu que de confesser le nôtre...De là, mon père me conduisit sur les marches du balustre de l'autel, où je ne doute point qu'il me sacrifiât à Dieu...Je fis aussi mon offrande de mon côté, et je crois que je pus dire: *Holocausta medullata offeram tibi* [Psalm 66, 15].⁷⁹

She and the other 'irréductibles', as the twelve nuns came to be known, were preparing themselves for martyrdom, as this and other passages suggest, but an unusual martyrdom for Catholic nuns because they were offering themselves as a holocaust to the Church itself.

In the event, the nuns of Port-Royal were not put to death, but they suffered many indignities as they continued to insist upon their right to dissent, including the deprivation of the sacraments. Their situation was made all the more curious because their male confrères had urged them to sign the formulary and were angry that they proved to be so resistant. Pierre Nicole, in particular, was to express his disapproval of Angélique de Saint-Jean's intransigence.⁸⁰ For the nuns, there is in many of their narratives and letters of this period, a new kind of pride in being female, even the suggestion that they scorned their brothers for being weaker than themselves. They had the courage of their convictions; the men, it seemed to them, did not. As Jacqueline Pascal wrote to Angélique de Saint-Jean in June 1661:

Je sais bien que ce n'est pas à des filles à défendre la vérité; quoique l'on peut dire, par une triste rencontre, que puisque les évêques ont des courages de filles, les filles doivent avoir des courages d'évêques. Mais si ce n'est pas à nous à défendre la vérité, c'est à nous à mourir pour la vérité et à souffrir plutôt toutes choses que de l'abandonner.⁸¹

The nuns, still refusing to acquiesce to the demands of Péréfixe, were sent back to Port-Royal-des-Champs (not to Paris) in 1665. There for a short time they were able to enjoy with their male colleagues the period known as the 'Paix de l'église', which endured from 1668 until 1679.

ENEMIES OF THE STATE

They were allowed during this time to receive novices and boarders; they enjoyed the adulation and patronage of a number of people from the great families of France. But in 1679, the persecutions began again: the novices and boarders were expelled once more; the convent was forbidden to take new postulants. There were then still seventy-two professed choir nuns and twenty converse sisters remaining in the old abbey, but it was clear that the end was in sight. In 1705 the remaining nuns were excommunicated, and finally, in 1709, they were dispersed for good. But by that time, many other men and women had felt the full force of Louis XIV's determination to retain control of his subjects' religious allegiances, and Port-Royal's old supporters were not guiltless in the matter.

Conclusion

The women's situation was, to a considerable degree, the fault of their male directors and advisers and of their position as women in a man's world (apart from the issue of the political atmosphere of the times). Angélique de Saint-Jean had been taught to question papal authority by her uncle Antoine Arnauld and his circle; she had learned from them that the authority of councils was superior to that of the Pope and that God's authority was superior to either. So much at least is obvious; but it applied equally to the male adherents of Jansenism, who apparently felt less compunction about giving in to pressure to sign the formulary. What made the women so different?

It has been said that the women of Port-Royal, having been impressed with the values of obedience, found in a time of conflicting claims of conscience that they could obey only God. References to the folly of blind obedience are scattered throughout Angélique de Saint-Jean's narration and through the other captivity narratives. In speaking of the nuns who interned her in 1664-65, she wrote that *'l'obéissance aveugle'* was *'leur grande maxime et l'erreur générale qui*

CHAPTER 9

domine à présent dans toutes ces bonnes religieuses.¹⁸² Angélique Arnauld, fifty years earlier, had shut the door on her own parents to obey a higher call of duty and had acted decisively to reject confessors she thought inadequate or immoral. But she had never seriously questioned the authority of the Church: her main concern had been to obey the Tridentine call to reform monastic life. Angélique de Saint-Jean was clearly a creature of another era. One of her interlocutors at the monastery where she was interned told her, 'Jésus-Christ n'excepte rien quand il promet que le Saint-Esprit enseignera tout à saint Pierre...' She responded with a remark whose splendid condescension echoes down the centuries, 'Hélas! ma Mère! le pouvez-vous croire, que le pape soit instruit de toutes les choses qui se passent par le monde?'¹⁸³ She was appealing to conscience as the higher law: 'quand je voulais...chercher de la consolation dans mes peines, je songeais à la paix qu'on aurait à la mort de n'avoir point été infidèle á sa conscience.'¹⁸⁴

This was not simply a matter of conflicting calls to obedience. The real difficulty was that neither Angélique de Saint-Jean nor the other *irréductibles* of Port-Royal had ever had any opportunity to learn to bow down before the demands of expedience. Male *dévots* (Augustinian or otherwise) were aware of the value of compromise, such as it was. Female religious had on the contrary been instructed repeatedly, since the turn of the century, that as nuns they must be completely isolated from the temptations of the world. While this restriction was undoubtedly imposed by men out of a conviction that women were weaker than themselves, it had probably also encouraged nuns to view themselves as morally superior to men because they were unsullied by any contact with the world outside their monasteries. It had certainly encouraged them to believe that moral compromise of any kind was unacceptable. The nuns of Port-Royal had been kept in an

exceptionally strict form of clausura; this, indeed, had been their pride. They were scornful, it must be remembered, of the Carmelite custom of permitting queens and noblewomen easy access to their cloisters. They made the old claims of feminine incapacity to understand theological argument, but they made them with pride. Thus we find Angélique de Saint-Jean, in the midst of a sophisticated discussion of the errors of Jansenius, proclaiming that even if he had admitted the possibility that he had erred, 'il me semblait qu'il ne s'ensuivait pas de là que nous eussions la même obligation d'être prêts de le condamner comme auteur d'une hérésie sans être capables de l'entendre.'⁸⁵ The last words have the ring of a boast. The ideology of female spirituality, if it may be so named, required that women be kept in ignorance of the world and that they learn to regard this ignorance as a virtue. How could men then complain if women insisted on following this precept to the letter? Strict truthfulness was especially admired in Jansenist circles, so contemptuous of Jesuit 'casuistry' or sophistry, which they saw as a worldly quality intended to serve worldly ends. The models of feminine devotion presented to them over the years dovetailed with the Jansenist refusal to compromise with the world and trapped them in an attitude of unyielding resistance. Some of the men of their circle watched with admiration; others, like Pierre Nicole, muttered angrily at their stubbornness, embarrassed by their own pliability. It was perhaps because of the women's refusal to make any concessions whatever to external pressure that it was they, and not their male mentors and would-be mentors, who in the end made the greatest impression upon popular memory in France. In any case, with two major centres of dévot resistance to royal authority (i.e., the Compagnie and the Arnauld faction) suppressed or exiled by 1665, who was left to carry the torch but the dévotes?

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

1. For further information see Jean Orcibal, *Louis XIV Contre Innocent XI*, p. 7-12.
2. Orcibal, *Ibid.*, p. 4-5.
3. Bernard Chédozeau, editor, *Chroniques de Port-Royal. Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694), Philosophe, Écrivain, Théologien* (Paris: Bibliothèque Mazarin, 1995), p. 48, states that *Fréquente communion* was Arnauld's first important publication, as it brought to the public's notice a debate which until then had been restricted to theologians.
4. Gazier. *Ces Messieurs de Port-Royal* (Paris: Perrin, 1932), p. 206.
5. Frances Hildesheimer, *Le Jansénisme: L'histoire et l'héritage*. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1992), p. 23.
6. The French text of the five propositions (translated from the original Latin), from Hildesheimer's *Le Jansénisme*, p. 28, runs as follows:
 - I. Quelques commandements de Dieu sont impossibles aux justes malgré leur volonté et leurs efforts, étant données les forces qu'ils ont présentement et aussi parce qu'il leur manque la grâce qui les rendrait possibles. (Proposition téméraire, impie, blasphématoire, digne d'anathème et hérétique.)
 - II. Dans l'état de nature déchue on ne résiste jamais à la grâce intérieure. (Proposition hérétique.)
 - III. Pour mériter et démeriter dans l'état de nature déchue, il n'est pas requis que l'homme possède une liberté exempte de nécessité (intérieure), il suffit que sa liberté soit exempte de contrainte. (Proposition hérétique.)
 - IV. Les semi-pélagiens admettaient la nécessité d'une grâce intérieure prévenante pour chaque acte en particulier, même pour le commencement de la foi; et ils étaient hérétiques en ce qu'ils voulaient que cette grâce fût telle que la volonté humaine pût lui résister ou lui obéir. (Proposition fausse et hérétique.)
 - V. Il est semi-pélagien de dire que Jésus-Christ est mort et a répandu son sang pour tous les hommes sans exception (Proposition fausse, téméraire, scandaleuse; et entendue dans ce sens que Jésus-Christ serait mort seulement pour le salut des prédestinés, cette proposition est déclarée impie, blasphématoire, calomnieuse, injurieuse à la bonté de Dieu et hérétique.)
7. See Gres-Grayer, 'The Magisterium' p. 434-35, for a discussion of the changing composition of the Faculty. Gres-Grayer shows that there were more and more bishops, Parisian curés, parish curés,

and priests, who exercised their ministry in a parish, a religious community, or a noble family, entering into Sorbonne debates; in other words, the composition of the Faculty was no longer mainly students, but often included priests. This meant that they were more vulnerable to shifts of opinion occurring in the world outside the Schools, partly because they were more exposed to them, and partly because the pressures upon them differed from those that affected mere students.

8. Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 204.

9. Martimort, *Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 204: More than 60 doctors refused to condemn Arnauld; an order from the King was brought to the assembly on March 1 forcing them to renege: among them were M. le Cdl de Retz, M. de Châlons, M. de Comminges, and great scholars like Jean de Launoy, Jacques de Sainte-Beuve, and Godefroy Hermant. Armand-Jean Le Bouthillier, the abbé de Rancé, refused to give in altogether.

10. In his history of the Sorbonne, Grès-Greyer asks why the School, which had a long history of Gallicanism interrupted by brief periods of 'ultramontanism' in the 17th C., preferred to risk the omnipresent intervention of the French state rather than the far more remote control of Rome; the same question might be asked of France's bishops at this period. No doubt the answer, in the case of the bishops, is that they needed royal authority to uphold their own. Rome's power was simply inadequate. See Grès-Grayer, 'The Magisterium of the Faculty of Theology, p. 434-35.

11. This is a contentious point. Richard Bonney, *Political Change in France under Richelieu and Mazarin*, p. 4-5, affirms the Gallicanism of French bishops at the 1615 Assembly of the Clergy; J. Michael Hayden, in *France and the Estates General of 1614*, p. 135, ('The sixteen reforming bishops who dominated the First Estate were loyal to the King; such loyalty was part of their heritage and essential to their careers. But the bishops could not allow laymen to involve themselves in what they considered a theological matter. Further, these men were ultramontanes. Their devotion to reform carried with it a devotion to the Pope') denies it. If by Gallican we mean the readiness to accept the rights of the kings of France to control both the doctrinal and the temporal affairs of French Catholicism, then the bishops cannot be said to have been Gallican then. Nor could they be described as ultramontane, as Hayden claims. They were aware that the issue of papal authority was 'undefined' in both matters of doctrine and with regard to Rome's right to the temporal control of national churches and there is no evidence that they wished to help broaden the scope of the papacy's claims. A series of ultramontane pronouncements issued by clerics and scholars from Rome between 1610 and 1650 (see Martimort, *passim*) had hardened the bishops of France against ultramontane claims for the pope, at least with regard to papal rights in the temporal realm.

12. From the letter from the 85 bishops, appearing in A. Duranthon, *Collection des procès-verbaux des assemblées générales du clergé de France*, t. 4, pieces just., p. 39-40). Martimort, *Ibid.*, p. 208, points out that as the procedures against Jansenius had been carried out with no general council, all doctrinal judgments regarding Jansenism had been clothed in authority of the Apostolic See. If the bishops were now to question the infallibility of the pope, would they not also call into question the condemnation of Jansenius? As they were reluctant to raise the spectre of Augustinianism again, they thought themselves, for a time, bound to support papal infallibility.

13. F. Gaquère, *Pierre de Marca, 1594-1661: Sa vie, ses Oeuvres, Son Gallicanisme*, (Paris, 1932), pp. 242-243. The comparison to Vincent de Paul is more than incidental; the two men were both southerners and both had attended the Université de Toulouse, some 15 years apart. But Vincent, as his biographer Abelly, their contemporary, pointed out, disapproved of Marca's ambition. See Abelly, *La Vie de ... Vincent de Paul*, II, ch. xlii, p. 448, cited Gaquère, p. 243.
14. Gaquère, *Pierre de Marca*, p. 261-276.
15. See Gazier, *Ces messieurs*, pp. 209, 213, for further information regarding the two letters and the king's attitude to Arnauld.
16. The events surrounding this affair are too complex to be summarized here. The four bishops in question were those of Beauvais, Angers, Pamiers, and Alet; they defended the rights of bishops. Henri de Pardaillan de Gondrin, archbishop of Sens (1646-74) and uncle of the king's mistress Mme de Montespan, worked with the duchess of Longueville to present their case to Louis XIV and show that they were not mere troublemakers and that their attitude to the Jansenist controversy was one that might be useful to the king. See Georges Dubois, *Henri de Pardaillan de Gondrin, archevêque de Sens (1646-1674)* (Alençon: Veuve Félix Guy et Cie., 1902), esp. pp. 198-201, and Chapter VII, 'L'Affaire des Quatre Évêques,' pp. 202-266.
17. The election to the papacy of Jules Rospigliosi as Clement IX in July 1667 was the work, it is thought, of Cardinal de Retz and the duke of Chaulnes, France's ambassador to Rome, acting under instruction from Hugues de Lionne. Rospigliosi was an old man with a conciliatory nature, and the supporters of the Four Bishops thought to make use of the moment to persuade him to rescind his condemnation of the Bishops and to moderate his attitude to Port-Royal. See *Henri de Gondrin*, p. 202-3.
18. The importance of the duchess of Longueville's death in April 1678, which Rapin, Bremond, and Cognet describe as a major cause of the sudden shift in Jansenist fortunes, seems to this writer to have been exaggerated. The king distrusted her as a one-time active participant in the Fronde, so that it is unlikely that the fear of offending her or her relatives would have kept him from moving against her. If he had been determined to crush Port-Royal or the Jansenists at this time he would undoubtedly have done so.
19. The story of the Four Bishops (Gondrin [Sens], Vialart [Avranches], Caulet [Alet], and Pavillon [Alet]) although bearing on this discussion, is too complex to be included here. All four men were involved in the negotiations for the *paix de l'Église* in 1667. For further information, see Georges Dubois, *Gondrin*, especially pp. 202-04.
20. Orcibal, *Louis XIV Contre Innocent XI*, p. 5.
21. Gazier, *Ces Messieurs*, p. 218.
22. Innocent XI was considered by both his critics and admirers to be a 'demi-Janseniste' because of the concessions he granted to Arnauld and others; see Orcibal, *Ibid.*, p. 35; later on, at the time

of Miguel de Molinos's condemnation, he was also said to be a 'quietist' (see Chapter 11, below). This curious fact again suggests the artificiality of the (political) divisions between Jansenism and quietism, or perhaps merely the pope's essential unwillingness to condemn doctrines he recognised to fall within traditional Catholic lines.

23. Gazier, *Ces messieurs*, p. 216-217.

24. See Maire, 'Port-Royal: The Jansenist Schism', p. 302. Maire states that there are more than 50,000 volumes recounting the Jansenist struggle assembled and preserved in the Bibliothèque de la Société de Port-Royal.

25. Argenson, *Annales*, p. 205: In telling the story of the Compagnie's downfall, Argenson wrote, 'On a dit que quelques prélats, auxquels on donnoit une libre entrée dans la Compagnie, avoient été choqués de ce qu'on y savoit plus de nouvelles qu'eux-mêmes.'

26. Souriau, in *Deux mystiques normands*, p. 236-38, points out that Du Four's list of the Compagnie's 'over-zealous' (i.e., coercive and authoritarian) activities ignores at least one instance of such behaviour which was of a kind to offend only the poor. For example, Compagnie member and priest M. de la Vigne used to go through his parish breaking up 'irregular' ménages and throwing their furnishings out of doors, causing a great scandal; Du Four makes no mention of this although it was well-publicized in Caen. Unmarried co-habiting couples would almost certainly belong to the poorer classes; their trials do not seem to have disturbed Du Four much. On the other hand, Du Four notes the fact that various Parlements objected to the Compagnie's habit of seizing stray women off the streets and interning them in convents, which might have been an issue that affected the poor rather than the rich. Still, it was the affront to the magistrates' legal authority that seems to have been of greater concern to him than the fate of the hapless women.

27. *Annales*, p. 204: On August 29, 1660, 'quelques personnes se plainirent dans l'Assemblée [meeting of the Compagnie] de ce qu'on avoit interrompu le catéchisme des laquais, quoique cela se fût avec beaucoup de prudence, vu que cette instruction publique manifestoit fort la Compagnie.' It may be that Argenson only meant that public instruction of this kind would reveal the Compagnie's existence, but the implication that the authorities disliked such activities appears on the same page, further down, 'la Cour commençoit à prendre jalousie des correspondances et des emplois de la Compagnie', in the rejection of a proposal to establish a new branch at Castres in Languedoc.

28. Allier, *Cabale*, p. 346, suggests that Mazarin was not aware of the Compagnie until some time in 1658-60, when his letters began to refer to a 'cabale des dévots'. But Richelieu had certainly known of its existence from its inception; Mazarin had been his agent and ally for some years before the Minister's death, and it would be strange if he had never been informed of its existence at all.

29. Cited Allier, *Cabale des dévots*, p. 340, n. 2: 5th carnet, p. 24 and following; cf. *Journal des Savants*, 1855, p. 41, 42.

30. *Annales*, p. 258: Mazarin is reported to have said to Montaigu, 'tous ces dévots étoient intéressés et ambitieux', in August 1660; see also Allier, *Cabale des dévots*, p. 363, for accounts of the

princesse de Conti's conversations with her uncle, in which he referred to la Motte Fénelon, a devout priest, as an 'ambitieux et il se faisait des amis pour se rendre puissant.'

31. Rapin, *Mémoires*, II, p. 331, for a description of this campaign of notes.

32. Argenson, *Annales*, p. 203.

33. Charles Du Four, *Mémoire pour faire connaître l'esprit et la conduite de la Compagnie établie en la ville de Caen et appelée l'Ermitage*, p. 4. Cited Allier, p. 354, n. 2.

34. Argenson, *Annales*, p. 259. Argenson refers to a deputation of three bishops who went to see Mazarin to complain of secret meetings held in their dioceses.

35. *Annales*, Chapter XII, 'Abrégé en journal de tout ce qui se passa dans l'anéantissement de la Compagnie', p. 259.

36. During a meeting of the Compagnie on Nov. 12, 1660, it was reported that some people had been asked to seek out information about the Compagnie on the Minister's behalf. *Annales*, p. 212.

37. Argenson's text, *Annales*, p. 206, reads 'Le désordre avoit commencé à Caen par un malheureux libelle qu'un ecclésiastique fort emporté avoit fait imprimer et distribuer de tous côtés. Ce libelle découvroit toutes les conduite de la Compagnie d'une manière satyrique, et quelque soin que l'on prit pour le supprimer, l'on n'en put jamais venir à bout.' It is the editor of his text, Dom Beauchet-Filleau who, in two footnotes (n. 2 and 3) identifies the author of the libel as Charles Du Four, and its title as *Mémoire pour faire connaître à Paris... .*

38. *Annales*, p. 210.

39. *Annales*, p. 212.

40. *Annales*, p. 213.

41. *Annales*, p. 225.

42. *Annales*, p. 205-206.

43. Orest Ranurn. *Paris in the Age of Absolutism: An Essay*. (New York, 1968), p. 229-236.

44. Louis Châtellier, *The Europe of the Devout*, Chapter 8.

45. From *Tartuffe*, cited Châtellier, *The Europe of the Devout*, p. 162.

46. Argenson, *Annales*, p. 231, 232: At a meeting on April 17 1664, Compagnie members decided to press for the suppression of the 'méchante comédie' *Tartuffe*; each resolved to speak to his friends who had some credit at court to prevent its performance. But finally in spite of the 'résistance de la solide piété' the worldly spirit decided 'en faveur de l'auteur libertin'. He, however 'sans doute a été

puni de toutes ses impiétés par une très malheureuse fin.' In May at another meeting it was reported that the king, informed of the ill effects of *Tartuffe* by the archbishop of Paris, M. de Péréfixe (1605-1675; tutor to Louis XIV; abp Paris in 1662), had absolutely forbidden it, but afterwards, in spite of all care, it was permitted and publicly played. If Louis had been serious about banning the play, this would not have been possible.

47. Alain Tallon, *La Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*, p. 12-13.

48. From La Fontaine, cited in Françoise Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), p. 90.

49. Martimort attributes Louis' reversal of France's traditional policy towards Rome to his rebellion against his mother and to his ministers, especially M. de Lionne, Secretary of state for foreign affairs; M. Le Tellier, secretary of state for war; and the *intendant des finances*, M. Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Mme de Motteville, in her *Mémoires*, speaks of Louis' distaste for his mother's piety. Vincent Cronin, in *Louis XIV*, attributes the king's increasing devotion to the aftermath of the Affair of the Poisons which began in 1680 (p. 236), but this seems too early. The marriage of the king and Madame de Maintenon in 1683 or 1684 was a further step in his reconciliation with devotion, if not with Rome, but it still did not seal his attitudes. See also Elisabeth Charlotte of Bavaria, Princess Palatine, *Lettres nouvelles inédites de la princesse Palatine*, translated by A.-A. Rolland (Paris: Hetzel, 1863), 16 May 1696, p. 167: 'D'ailleurs, quand [le Roi] avait une maîtresse qui n'était pas dévote, il ne l'était pas non plus. Maintenant qu'il est devenu amoureux d'une femme qui ne parle que de pénitence, il croit tout ce qu'elle lui dit...'

50. From the *Mémoires de Louis XIV*, ed. J. Longnon, p. 197.

51. Treasure, *Mazarin*, p. 95.

52. In *L'Ancien Régime*, Le Roy Ladurie states, I, p. 79, that the ideal of Christian monarchy was always apparent in Richelieu's work and writings; that it would have been impossible for this to be otherwise with a pious king like Louis XIII.

53. Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, Chapter 6.

54. The title of Marca's work was *Mémoire sur l'Infaillibilité du Pape* (1661). See Gaquère, p. 158-59.

55. For more information on the Créqui affair, see Charles Moüy, *Louis XIV et le Saint-Siège: l'ambassade du duc de Créqui, 1662-1665* (Paris: Hachette, 1893).

56. Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 217-218. Martimort describes Drouet's work as having occasioned as much disturbance in the king's council as the neutrality of the Swiss cantons. It was presented at the height of the Créqui affair, at a time when Le Tellier was gathering troops and Lionne composing threatening dispatches to Rome. For the principal positions of Drouet's thesis Martimort refers the reader to the Bibl. Nat., Mss. fr. 20162, f° 291-293.

57. Martimort states that this is in the official minutes of the Faculty, Arch. Nat. MM 253, f° 33-33^v; see Martimort, *Le gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 222.
58. G. Hermant, *Mémoires de Godefroi Hermant sur l'histoire ecclésiastique du XVIIe siècle (1630-1663)*. Publiés pour la première fois sur le manuscrit autographe et sur les anciennes copies authentiques. Avec une introduction et des notes par A. Gazier. (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1905), T. 6, p. 295-296.
59. Gazier, *Ces Messieurs*, p. 210, points this out.
60. During the Fronde, Port-Royal struggled, along with other Parisian orders of nuns, to assist the starving refugees who had flocked to Paris; see Martimort, p. 184, who says the nuns alerted their friends by the aid of a printed broadside [feuille] citing their *Relation concernant ce qui s'est passé pour l'assistance des pauvres*. They were also in competition with Vincent de Paul for funds from at least one important patron, the queen of Poland who would be such a supporter of both Port-Royal and the Sacred Heart; Vincent somehow persuaded her that funds she had planned to give to Port-Royal should go to his own organizations instead; see Allier, *La Cabale*, p. 80, 82-83.
61. Her first biographer was Gabriel de Roquette (1626-1707), who narrates the story of her life in his *Oraison funèbre*, which is published in *Les orateurs sacrés à la cour de Louis XIV*, published by l'abbé Hurel, Paris, 1872. The duchess was allowed to assume her title after her brother's death. After leading rebels in the Fronde she converted to piety in 1658 and was widowed in 1663, after which she retired from the world. Mme de Sévigné referred to her as 'sainte et pénitente princesse'; Mme de Maintenon said she was as beautiful as an angel and the most spiritual woman of her time. Her conversion led her to Port-Royal and she became one of its most important protectors, in the face of Louis XIV's disapproval.
62. See *Mémoires de Marie d'Orléans, duchesse de Nemours (1625-1707), suivis de Lettres inédites de Marguerite de Lorraine, duchesse d'Orléans*. (Marguerite d'Orléans was Marie's mother.) Marie's education at Port-Royal, says the annotator, made her the best-educated woman in the kingdom: she learned Latin, the 'courtly arts', p. 16-17.
63. Ann-Marie de Conti (1637-1672); her tomb is at Saint-André-des-Arcs; her heart was brought to the Carmélites of the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, and her entrails to Port-Royal itself. See *Une nièce de Mazarin*; also see *Necrologie de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de Port-Royal* (Utrecht, 1723), pp. 67, 294.
64. Rapin, *Mémoires*. See Introduction, p. xiii, for this assessment of Rapin's view of Port-Royal's noble female supporters.
65. See Rapin, *Mémoires*, I, 'Introduction', p. xi; unattributed.
66. The *Dictionnaire du Grand-Siècle*, for example, does so. In describing the lives and careers of the Mesdames de Longueville, Conti, Aiguillon, and Luynes, it connects their rebellious tendencies during the Fronde to their attraction to the unorthodox doctrines of Jansenism.

67. See Victor Tapie, *France in the Age of Louis XIV and Richelieu* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 435, for an example of this view of the matter.
68. Robert Golden. *The Godly Rebellion*, p. 7.
69. du Chesnay, *Les missions de Saint Jean Eudes*, p. 106.
70. Rapin, *Mémoires*, I, p. 22.
71. Paul Broutin, in *La réforme pastorale en France*, vol. II, p. 535.
72. Gazier, *Ces messieurs*, citing Antoine Arnauld, pp. 222-23: 'Depuis tant d'années que je suis sorti du royaume, j'ai rencontré partout beaucoup d'amis qui m'ont toujours témoigné être fort contents de moi, lors sur un seul point qui est que j'étais, à ce qu'il leur semblaît, trop passionné pour mon Roi.'
73. Rapin, *Mémoires*, I, p. 443.
74. See Louis Cognet, Introduction, *Relation de captivité d'Angélique de Saint-Jean Arnauld d'Andilly* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), p. 15.
75. Angélique Arnauld, *Lettre écrite par la Mere Angelique, Abbesse de Port-Royal, a la Reyne Mere du Roy*. Cited in 'Angélique Arnauld', *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique*, p. 540, para. 880.
76. *Relation de captivité*, p. 80.
77. Hildesheimer, *Le Jansénisme: L'histoire et l'héritage*, p. 49, makes this point.
78. Cognet, Introduction, *Relation de captivité*, p. 16.
79. Angélique Arnauld-d'Andilly, *Relation de captivité*, p. 30-31.
80. Cognet, Introduction, *Relation de captivité*, p. 21. Nicole confided this opinion to Racine.
81. In *Lettres, opuscules et mémoires de Madame Périer et de Jacqueline, soeurs de Pascal*, ed. M.P. Faugère (Paris: A. Vaton, 1845), J. Pascal to A. Saint-Jean Arnauld d'Andilly, June 22, 1661, p. 409.
82. *Relation de captivité*, p. 44.
83. *Relation de captivité*, p. 78.
84. *Relation de captivité*, p. 197.
85. *Relation de captivité*, p. 51.

10/ THE LAST DÉVOTE 1648-1717

`[L]e langage est le garant de la foi orthodoxe parce que sans doute (entre autres raisons) il authentifie la spécificité de la confession chrétienne...c'est précisément ce que Bossuet oppose à l'hérésie quiétiste (dont on sait trop les rapports historiques avec Jean de la Croix); contre Madame Guyon qui définissait l'oraison vide comme «un profond recueillement sans acte ni discours». Bossuet édicte que l'acte de foi doit se manifester de manière discursive, l'âme doit demander explicitement son salut: en un mot, il n'y a de prière qu'articulée.»

Near the end of her life, Jeanne Guyon was to write, `Même dès le commencement de la voie de foi, l'âme porte cette disposition foncière, que si sa perte éternelle causait un instant de gloire à son Dieu plus que son salut, elle préférerait sa damnation à son salut, et cela envisagé du côté de la gloire de Dieu.'¹ This was what theologians have called the `supposition impossible', expressed in words that did not differ very greatly from those of Marie des Vallées earlier in the century. They did not, in some respects, differ from similar statements made by Camus, or François de Sales, who claimed that the least hint of self-interest in man's love of God spoilt its perfection. Yet Jeanne was ultimately to spend eight years in prison for her activities, while Marie des Vallées spent less than a year there. Jeanne Guyon's history forms a natural conclusion to the history of the dévotes in seventeenth-century France, illustrating all of its essential themes: the strange mingling of `marginalization' with centrality; the importance of royal policy to the dévotes; the ways in which dévot men authorized women to speak their most radical religious beliefs for them, without really having understood that this placed women in a difficult position.

¹ Roland Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), p. 72. Cited G. Morali, `Jeanne Guyon ou la pensée nue', Introduction to *Torrents spirituels*, p. 14-15.

CHAPTER 10

Jeanne Guyon du Chesnoy was born Jeanne Bouvier de la Mothe in 1648, which made her one year younger than Marguerite-Marie Alacoque. She was distantly related to the Fénelons and came from an aristocratic family of Montargis, with a strong tradition of devotion (many of its members had become religious) and an even stronger sense of its social rank. Jeanne Guyon was a *dévôte*, in all senses of the term. Her spirituality, as expressed in her writing and described in her autobiography, was of the *École française* rather than the Augustinian school. She was socially connected with many other *dévôts/dévôtes* of her time, and her life corresponded very closely to the *dévôte* 'type' recurring in French social and religious life since the turn of the century. Brought up in a convent during her formative years, raised on the literature of devotion and romance, married against her will at an early age, widowed, she finally turned to alms-giving, prayer, and other good works after she had won her independence.

Early life

Historians know more of Jeanne's early life than that of most previous *dévôtes*, for she wrote a kind of spiritual autobiography that she began at some unknown stage in her life and continued to work on until a few years before her death. This was something her predecessors would not have done; first, because they believed in the suppression of self-indulgent self-analysis, in the *vie cachée*, as it was known in *dévôte* circles, and second, because the art of autobiography was as yet in its infancy in the seventeenth century and Jeanne Guyon was one of its first practitioners. Her *Vie* is itself a testament to her modernity. It is untypical of both the medieval traditions of saints' lives (usually not recounted by the saint), and the lives of seventeenth-century *dévôts* and *dévôtes* (again usually recounted by others).² It is unlike the autobiography of Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, for

THE LAST DÉVOTE

example, in its absorption in personal details of the biographical kind, although its account of Jeanne's childhood wilfulness and 'wickedness' bears some resemblance to that in Teresa of Avila's autobiography.

Jeanne was not baptized for a month after her birth. Although her mother was deeply religious, her faith was of the kind that led her to give more attention to prayer and alms-giving than to her children. It was her father who arranged for her baptism, after a crisis in the child's health led him to fear for her survival.³ At the age of two she was sent to the Ursuline convent of Montargis and for the next few years of her life was periodically installed in convents and then removed from them, as her illnesses or her parents' whims dictated. She liked conventual life and often played at being a nun in her games, while struggling with a nature that was 'prompte et orgueilleuse'. Her attraction to religion was strong but she asked many questions; one day while still a child, she writes, she began to suspect that 'la frayeur que l'on me faisait de l'enfer n'était que pour m'intimider', but that very night had a terrifying dream of hell, in which 'ma place m'y fut montrée.'⁴ She then decided she must be a martyr, decreed by the Church to be the surest route to heaven, but, as she said, this was a pose; when the other girls teased her with it, she cried out, 'Il ne m'est pas permis de mourir sans la permission de mon père.'⁵ The episode is notable in that it suggests (if accurate) how the idea of heaven and hell preoccupied her from an early age, and how she was determined to rise above fear, while still imbued with the pride of rank that was to be her greatest stumbling block in pursuit of virtue. Although the accuracy of such memories as hers may be questioned, their immediate and novelistic quality distinguishes them from the far more generalized and stereotyped childhoods as portrayed in other lives of saints and dévots: no vows of perpetual chastity at the age of four are to

CHAPTER 10

be found here! If some of her memories were altered (or even invented) to fit her story, they nevertheless show an interest in childhood behaviour still uncommon for the late seventeenth century (when her autobiography was written) and very uncommon among an earlier generation of *dévots/dévotes*.

Marriage

Jeanne's early views regarding marriage developed in a fashion typical of young, well-bred girls of her day. When she first began to read broadly, it was the *précieuse* novels of the 1650s that attracted her, with their sensitive and high-minded heroines longing for marriages that were based upon more than money and status-seeking. She also read the lives of Jeanne de Chantal and François de Sales, and some of the latter's published works.⁶ These early encounters with literature doubtless dovetailed in her mind to create dreams of the perfect love embodied in a man who would be at once spiritual director, lover, and father, for she was to spend much of her life seeking just such a person. But she was destined for disappointment from the beginning. When she was fifteen, her parents told her that they had found a husband for her. She protested their decision, but she was made to sign her marriage contracts without being allowed to know her prospective husband's name. He was Jacques Guyon du Chesnoy, twenty-two years her senior, the son of a family grown rich on royal contracts, having built the canals in Briare. The Guyon du Chesnoy family had connections in the highest circles in France: they were close associates of the Longuevilles and Fouquets, and at one time were even asked to guarantee a loan on behalf of Monsieur the brother of Louis XIV.⁷

Jeanne nevertheless believed her husband to be far beneath her socially, for his family's way of life was marked by bourgeois rather than aristocratic values. His stinginess horrified her, as did

THE LAST DÉVOTE

his unceasing supervision, with the help of his mother, of all her activities.⁸ They forbade her to read and grudged her the time she spent in prayer, although her husband was himself devout. In spite of her wealth, her life was filled with trials. She had borne two children by the time she was seventeen, and was to bear five altogether, three sons and two daughters, although only three survived into adulthood. Jeanne had lived until the age of fifteen with a young girl's typically exaggerated and romantic views of love, both the sexual and the domestic variety, but her expectations were to be disappointed at every turn. After several years of attempting to come to terms with the frustration and disappointments of her marriage, she began to take up the practice of devotion more seriously. As the pains of a difficult marriage pressed her more closely, she felt a greater need to seek religious consolation, but for some years was unable to find it in conventional methods of prayer. She had first read François de Sales's guide in the year before she was married, but she could not understand its advice regarding mental prayer although she was anxious to do so, believing there must be some secret to the practice.⁹ For some time, she believed that she must summon images to her mind in order to pray in this fashion.

Then, in 1668, she rediscovered a version of the form of prayer known as 'mental prayer', the 'oraison de foi' as recommended by François de Sales in his *Introduction à la vie dévote*. It changed her life. In that year her father's friend, Madame de Charost, Fouquet's daughter, came to stay for a time in Montargis after her own father was exiled by Louis XIV, and she took the young woman to see a Franciscan she had heard of who was in the neighbourhood to convert an influential nobleman. He became Jeanne's spiritual director, telling her in a first brief interview that the source of her problem '[c]'est, Madame, que vous cherchez au-dehors ce que vous avez au-dedans. Accoutumez-

CHAPTER 10

vous à chercher Dieu dans votre coeur et vous l'y trouverez.¹⁰ This was the advice, she says, that she had sought for years without knowing it. She began to spend hours in prayer of this kind, wordless, without images, gathering the powers of her soul in profound recollection.¹¹ The discovery made the conquest of her vices easier for her: she was able to overcome pride, temper, vanity, with God's help. She also began to practise severe physical mortifications: whipping herself, wearing iron-studded belts, and fasting. More than this, she began to teach herself to perform strange austerities that read very oddly to modern eyes: she taught herself to be indifferent to every kind of uncleanness, sucking the wounds of the poor people brought to her to nurse, and occasionally forcing herself to lick the phlegm spat upon the road by passing travellers.¹²

Generations of Jeanne Guyon's later critics have been too ready to point to these activities as a sign of her lack of balance, her 'hysteria', and a natural prelude to her heresies. In fact, there was nothing that she did during the early phase of her spiritual apprenticeship that was outside the traditions of saintly mortification. She was consciously imitating the austerities of Catherine of Genoa, whom she began to read at this time; moreover, her practices also resembled those of Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, who appears to have gone to even greater extremes to overcome her natural repugnancies and discipline her flesh to God's will.¹³ Jeanne's distress of mind was at times so great that she may well have been 'unbalanced', but she was unbalanced in the most orthodox tradition. It was not these things that brought about her condemnation by the Catholic Church. In any case, even Jeanne's more unusual austerities served an important purpose which she acknowledged herself: they broke down the barriers of aristocratic delicacy and reserve - the barriers raised by pride - and allowed her to overcome her many repugnancies.¹⁴ Once her mortification of her senses had

THE LAST DÉVOTE

served its purpose, she gave up her more unusual practises, and went on, as she put it, to the more useful work of the mortification of the will and spirit.¹⁵

Bodily and Spiritual Motherhood

Jeanne's autobiography gives readers a clearer picture than is usual in such writings of the way in which her early disappointments in human love were connected to her pursuit of a more perfect, divinely-inspired love. She was perhaps the first *dévote* to express this so explicitly. In her discussion of her experience of marriage which occurs early in her autobiography she blamed her hardships on family 'interest', the interest her parents showed in marrying her to a man of whom they knew little, for his money, and the interest her in-laws showed in selecting her for her rank. It was perhaps her meditations upon this subject that led her to a severe criticism of the way in which devotion itself sometimes misled parents, especially mothers, to neglect God's way in order to serve him their way, abandoning their children in order to spend the whole day at church, or attending to alms-giving.¹⁶ But she felt most strongly the mistake parents made in making favourites among their children, encouraging jealousy and destroying family unity. Unlike earlier writers on childhood, she was far readier to blame neglect rather than indulgence for the faults of an ill-behaved child, and to blame parents: 'C'est peut-être vous qui êtes causes de sa disgrâce', she wrote.¹⁷ Her mother, she said, as good as she was, would surely not have left her to the care of servants if she had known what harm it could do; how many young girls might be angels, 'et que la liberté et l'oisiveté font devenir démons.'¹⁸

In 1670, when she was twenty-two, she and her children were stricken with smallpox: she was severely scarred, as was her elder son, and her younger son died of the disease.¹⁹ She bore the

CHAPTER 10

loss with composed grief, but the following year in 1672 her father also died, and her elder daughter, with two days of each other. These were the people she loved best, and their loss affected her strangely:

Mon état intérieur était tel que je ne pouvais être plus affligée pour toutes les pertes imaginables, ni plus contente pour tous les biens possibles. Il faut avoir éprouvé ces douleurs délicieuses pour les comprendre.²⁰

Was this subdued reaction the result of repression or religious consolation? Immediately after her daughter's death, she went to see her old mentor, Geneviève Granger of the Montargis Benedictines, who told her to attend communion with a ring upon her finger and then to return home to her *cabinet* and place the ring at the foot of her image of the infant Jesus there, together with a contract drawn up by Mère Geneviève stating: 'Je promets de prendre pour mon Epoux Notre Seigneur Enfant, et me donner à lui pour épouse quoiqu'indigne.'²¹ For her dowry, she must ask for crosses, contempt, and disgrace.

Her mystical marriage established her identification with *Enfance* piety, and Françoise Mallet-Joris has suggested that Jeanne's experiences as a woman, and above all the deaths of her children, were a significant contribution to the development of her concept of spiritual motherhood. Jeanne, according to Mallet-Joris, sought in 'marrying' the infant Jesus to transcend her grief and to validate her motherhood by spiritualising it, the one form of creation accessible to women.²² But it seems more likely, given the context of the gesture, that Jeanne was trying to associate herself with an eternal maternity that might never be frustrated nor denied by death. In any case, according to her own autobiography, Jeanne had been devoted to the infant Jesus since her childhood at the convent, where there was a chapel dedicated to his image, so the deaths of her children are not likely to have

THE LAST DÉVOTE

been the main source of her attachment to the image.²³ Why would she choose to *marry* the infant Jesus, rather than simply regard herself as his mother, if motherhood were the critical factor in her spiritual development at this stage of her life? This is not to deny, however, that Jeanne's maternity was important to her religious development. Her image of herself as a spiritual mother to the men and women whom she encountered in her peripatetic life is too prominent and explicit for it to be a merely incidental part of her piety. At Thonon (see below), she wrote, 'je sentis la qualité de *Mère spirituelle*, car Dieu me donnait un je-ne-sais-quoi pour la perfection des âmes que je ne pouvais cacher'.²⁴

The idea of disinterested love, of *pur amour*, is more prominent in her work, and more explicit, than in that of any other writer of the seventeenth century. For François de Sales, or Camus, or Jean Eudes, or even Marie des Vallées (or the Jansenists) the concept was usually employed only as a way-station en route to explicating some other aspect of Christian spiritual life. For Jeanne Guyon, it was the heart of her doctrine. It is possible that she felt all of her human loves had been so compromised by worldly interests that she felt a need to articulate, in her spiritual life if nowhere else, the idea of a love in which interest was impossible. Everything else she taught was connected to this. Even her methods of prayer, the 'oraison passive' for which she was to be so severely condemned by Bossuet later, was no more than a means of access to the discovery of God's will for her: 'L'indifférence en moi était parfaite, et l'union au bon plaisir de Dieu si grande que je ne trouvais en moi aucun désir ni tendance.'²⁵ By giving up any personal desires or conscious planning for the future and allowing herself to be moved only by the Holy Spirit, she might, she hoped, remove all taint of interest from her love of God. Did she mean what she said? The only possible proof there

CHAPTER 10

could be is in her life itself: we know that she refused to save herself at every point when the opportunity was presented to her. When she permitted herself to second-guess her interrogators, or to anticipate possible problems in her situation, she reproached herself for her lack of love and faith.²⁶

Widowhood

Like other *dévot* women, and perhaps more than many, Jeanne was set free by her husband's death in 1676: 'O mon Dieu,' she wrote, 'Vous avez rompu mes liens, et je vous offrirai une hostie de louange.'²⁷ She found herself, at twenty-eight, a rich widow, with 70,000 livres a year. What would so young a widow do with the rest of her life? She did not wish to marry again,²⁸ for after her conversion sexual relations had become terrible to her (and perhaps equally terrible to her husband, considering her account of her subsequent behaviour to him).²⁹ Her surviving children she also must take into consideration. She was not yet so indifferent as to have no care for her future security or theirs.³⁰ She was advised by two nuns and a priest on different occasions to go to Geneva; the priest was Claude Martin, son of Madame Martin (Marie Guyart, who became Mère Marie de l'Incarnation), but she told him that she might very well contribute to the founding of a hospital there without having to go herself.³¹ She longed for a spiritual director like François de Sales, but 'it is a fact universally acknowledged' that a widow in possession of a good fortune must be in want of the consolations of religion. She was an immediate target, not only to her husband's relations, who did not wish to see her income disappear into a convent, but to male ecclesiastics seeking *dévot* patronage. Moreover, she had emerged from her period of mourning into a world in which the

THE LAST DÉVOTE

conflict between the king and the Jansenists, having been put to rest for a time during the *Paix de l'Église*, was shortly to erupt again, in 1679.

There were by now three distinct *dévot* types Jeanne might have followed: the cloistered religious; the 'dame charitable', like Louise de Marillac or her lesser sisters; or the *dévote* patron of good causes who lived 'dans le siècle'. She was much drawn by such activities, as she had a long history of giving large sums of money to the poor, and liked nursing the sick. But it was difficult for her to find directors who understood that she wished to combine this with a life of prayer. (Vincent de Paul might have been an ideal spiritual director for her, with his ability to teach his *dirigées* to balance the active life with meditative prayer - and his political instincts - but he had died in 1660.) There were also two subtypes of the cloistered religious she might have chosen to take up: the mystic nun, with her visions and her revelations, and the Port-Royalist nun, rejecting rapture for the plainer duties of the religious. Jeanne was to experiment with variations on all of these, and find them wanting; at one time, she even considered becoming a Benedictine, but the birth of her last two children before her husband's death made this impossible, as she would have to prepare them for the future.³² In the end, she was to create a new model, combining all the various forms she had encountered in her reading and her experience. But this was yet to come. What she wanted was to go to Geneva, find a room, and put her skills as a healer to work. It was not 'faith-healing' that she hoped to practise, but medicine of a more assured and practical nature: 'je savais faire toutes sortes d'onguents, panser les plaies, et surtout les écrouelles [i.e. scrofula, the 'king's evil' in both France and England], dont il y a beaucoup en ce lieu, et pour lesquelles j'avais un remède très assuré.'³³ But this would not be open to her. She was still inexperienced, unaccustomed to 'affaires' (though she

CHAPTER 10

handled her husband's estate well³⁴) and eager for advice, a dangerous combination for a woman in her position.

Since 1673 Jeanne had been in the grip of a recognised phase of the process of mystical ascent, a long period of emotional aridity or *sécheresse* which was part of the 'purgative' phase. In 1680, having passed through the purgative and the illuminative stages of her mystical ascent, she was ready to begin the apostolic stage of her apprenticeship.³⁵ That year, while in Paris, she met with the bishop of Geneva, who was passing through the city. The bishop, Jean d'Arenthon d'Alex, invited her to join or to become the patron of the religious order known as the 'Nouvelles Catholiques' in Gex, whose vocation was to help convert Protestants and to care for child converts to Catholicism. (Louis XIV had introduced a law permitting children to 'convert' from Protestantism as young as age seven.) Some of these children had effectively been kidnapped from their homes by well-intentioned Catholic zealots.³⁶

She was to spend several months at Gex, where she discovered that the bishop's offer did not much appeal to her. She wrote of the Nouvelles Catholiques: 'cet institut était opposé à mon esprit et à mon coeur'.³⁷ The words may have contained a veiled criticism, as one of her recent biographers has suggested, of the methods and aims of the Institute; she could scarcely say so explicitly, however, in a book written with the intention of proving her orthodoxy.³⁸ Meanwhile, Jeanne had been corresponding with a Barnabite, Père La Combe, since they first met in 1671. It was her half-brother, Dominique de la Mothe, also a Barnabite, who had first suggested that she meet his confrère. La Combe proved to be a soulmate, the only person in whom she felt able to confide her struggles with mental prayer and its ecstasies and miseries.³⁹ In 1681, the bishop had ordered him to go and meet

THE LAST DÉVOTE

with her in Gex to comfort her in her anxieties, and he became her spiritual director. He told her that she should come to Thonon, where he was now superior of the Barnabites, with her daughter. He also told her that she should not allow herself to be pressed into joining the Nouvelles Catholiques,⁴⁰ and that she should pray to discover her true vocation. It came to her in a kind of auditory vision: 'Aussitôt ces paroles me furent mises dans l'esprit avec beaucoup de vitesse: *Tu es Pierre et sur cette pierre j'établirai mon Église.*'⁴¹ If La Combe had been willing to persuade Jeanne to join the Nouvelles Catholiques, it would have been a mark of distinction for Père La Mothe, as the man who had introduced the two and as a fellow-Barnabite and Jeanne's brother. Poor La Combe did not suspect that by advising her against the Nouvelles Catholiques he had made enemies of both the bishop and of Père La Mothe; the latter's eventual revenge upon him would be terrible.

She left Gex in 1681 and placed her daughter with the Ursulines at Thonon, as the child was ill from the poor conditions of the convent of Nouvelles Catholiques at Gex. In Thonon, she wrote her first book, *Les torrents spirituels* (1682), and was happy; but it was here that she had her first experience of serious persecution. Until now, she had suffered mainly from angry outbursts from the bishop and a few spiteful letters from her half-brother;⁴² now she found stones thrown through her windows, her garden uprooted, 'comme si les soldats y avaient été', and her door hammered on through the night.⁴³ She was invited to Turin by a friend and then went on to Grenoble, where she wrote her second book, *Moyen court et très facile pour faire l'oraison* (1684). It was an immediate success; many editions were published, and it made her name widely known. But she had troubles there too; so she began what was to be a wandering life of prayer, alms-giving, and ultimately teaching and writing about *oraison*, which she believed was simple enough to be practised by every

CHAPTER 10

Christian. Between 1683 and 1686 she moved constantly: she was driven away from Marseilles by rumours of her 'immorality'; and went to Nice; to Gênes, and to Verceil. The bishop of Geneva forbade her to return to Gex in the summer of 1685, and she went instead to Turin and Chambéry. Finally, in July 1686, she returned to Paris with La Combe and rented a house there.

City

Once installed in Paris in 1686, Jeanne found herself faced with the enemy which had always bedeviled dévot activities: the world. In her case, the problem was perhaps more severe than it was for most others, given her wealth and her family connections. Her connections were not necessarily a recommendation to Louis XIV. The duchesse de Longueville, Madame Guyon's closest friend in the city, had died in 1679, but the king remembered the duchess's activities in the Fronde and held them against her. Worse yet, Nicolas Fouquet, superintendent of finances under Mazarin, arrested in August 1661 for robbing the king's treasury, was a close friend of the de la Mothe Bouvier family. Jeanne's father had given shelter to Fouquet's daughter the duchesse de Charost, wife of Armand de Béthune, and to his mother, when Fouquet was exiled. His daughter had advised Jeanne in her prayer-life. Jeanne's spiritual director was Père Bertot (Bertout),⁴⁴ who was known to the duke of Beauvilliers and the duke of Chevreuse, both the sons of former Frondeurs and Fouquet's friends. They were brothers-in-law; they had each married one of Colbert's daughters; they had ties to the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, as well. Bertot introduced Jeanne to the two noblemen, their wives, and their daughters, soon after her arrival in the city in 1686. This was her natural milieu and she was not an outsider here. She found herself, in any case, a part of a dévot circle whose reputation for anti-Gallican activities had long since been established. Jeanne enjoyed some success with the people to

THE LAST DÉVOTE

whom she was introduced, teaching them about the *voie intérieure* which was for her not the goal but the essential tool of devotion. She stayed for a time in the country with the duchess of Chevreuse: 'il se trouva là plusieurs personnes de celles que Notre Seigneur me faisait aider pour l'intérieur, et qui étaient de mes enfants spirituels.'⁴⁵

By this time, however, there appear to have been many people eager to see her fall. It is not clear who her real enemies actually were. In her autobiography she was to blame her brother Père La Mothe for the troubles that now rained upon her: La Mothe, 'celui qui a conduit toute la tragédie,' was able to conceal his enmity, 'donnant des coups fourrés, et faisant semblant de flatter lorsqu'il donnait les plus dangereux coups'. The reason for his grudge was the old one, '[t]outes les persécutions qui me sont venues de la part du père La Mothe et de ma famille, n'ont été que par intérêt.'⁴⁶ He was especially incensed earlier when a sum of money he had hoped to receive from his sister for his convent went instead to a young nun, and his disappointment, coupled with his jealousy of La Combe's success in Paris, pushed his old resentment of the pair toward hatred.⁴⁷

The most sinister of the plots against Madame Guyon and La Combe began shortly after she went to stay in the Chevreuse household in the country. A couple who were supposedly in the pay of La Mothe and the Barnabite general, La Mothe's superior,⁴⁸ (who also had a spite against La Combe) sent a woman to confess to La Combe, an 'âme admirable', who could 'contrefaire la dévote'. She made use of her time in the confessional to discover as far as possible the priest's ideas regarding the inner life of the spirit. La Combe was delighted by her, but Jeanne was disturbed by his letters; there were 'certaines circonstances qui me firent appréhender pour lui'.⁴⁹ The woman's husband was a counterfeiter in a different sense; he was a confessed forger who wrote a number of

CHAPTER 10

'libelles' signed with La Combe's name (whether these were in the form of letters is not clear) which were in the style of the writings of Miguel de Molinos. Molinos was the father of what came to be known as 'quietism'. He was a Spanish cleric, resident in Italy, who had had a great success in Rome and won over many women in high society there with his new doctrines. He was to be tried for heresy in 1687 and sixty-eight propositions from his work were condemned by the Holy Office. The actual nature of the original accusations against Molinos is difficult to determine, as some of the relevant documents have disappeared and others have not yet been made available to the public.⁵⁰

Quietism was the heresy with which the writings of Jeanne Guyon and La Combe were later to be charged. Molinos's theology may in fact have borne some resemblance to theirs; however, this was, for the moment, irrelevant. Their enemies were quite willing to manufacture evidence against them. But who were they? Was this plot engineered only by La Mothe and the Barnabite general, or were other and more powerful interests involved from the start? Molinos was sufficiently well-known outside Rome, through his books, to have awakened the interest of Louis XIV himself, who had intervened against him during his trial. In fact, it was rumoured that it had been Cardinal d'Estrées, for a long time France's ambassador to the Holy See, who had denounced Molinos in the first place, no doubt with the king's support.⁵¹ For some years, the king had been involved in the *régale* dispute (see previous chapter) with Innocent XI, culminating in 1682 in the proclamation of the 'Gallican articles', which laid out the terms upon which he was willing to deal with the papacy from now on, drafted, it was said, by Bossuet.⁵² The controversy embittered relations between the Court of France and the Holy See: the king's ministers had exploited Molinos's trial to accuse the pope himself of being attracted to this new heresy.⁵³ Were the king or his spies hoping to discredit in

THE LAST DÉVOTE

advance any new form of *adhérence à Dieu* that threatened his subjects' adherence to himself? This would have given him a good reason to carry out some form of surveillance against La Combe and his dirigée. Rumours had been circulating in Paris for some time about the widow from Montargis and the unworldly priest, rumours which were all the more likely to have reached the king because they concerned a woman with friends in high places. The king need not have had any particular reason to be suspicious of either of them at this time; the use of spies and forged letters as political weapons had been common in France since at least the time of Richelieu, and might simply have been pre-emptive, an insurance against future trouble.

This is speculation, yet it is plausible for several reasons. First, the campaign against Jeanne and La Combe seems too well-organized to have been the result of a family quarrel involving money or personal jealousy. If the Barnabite general wished to blight La Combe's life out of mere spite there were many ways he, as general of the other man's order, might have done so without resorting to such tactics, which must have been both time-consuming and expensive; the same might be said of La Mothe with regard to his sister. There is also the fact that the organised campaign against La Combe began in the summer of 1686, according to Jeanne's *Vie*, months before Molinos' trial and conviction late in 1687.⁵⁴ Would La Mothe and the Barnabite general have thought, in 1686, to discredit La Combe by linking him with Molinos, without the intervention of some third party better informed about developments in Rome than they were likely to have been? A similar attempt to discredit La Combe had been made earlier by an 'ecclésiastique' of Thonon who sent the Barnabite's writings to Rome on the grounds that their doctrine was unsound; in spite of the prelate's clumsy summaries, writes Jeanne in her autobiography, word came back that La Combe's doctrine was

CHAPTER 10

acceptable.⁵⁵ The outcome of this piece of maneuvering probably gave La Combe's persecutors food for thought, but it does not explain why they chose at this time to connect him with Molinos. Some directive from the king or someone high in government circles seems a plausible explanation for an otherwise mysterious campaign of slanders and libels.

At some unspecified point, the king was told by the two men that Père La Combe was a friend of Molinos's and shared his beliefs.⁵⁶ The priest was then forbidden to preach or to leave his convent on the grounds that his works were redolent of the condemned doctrine. La Combe ignored the ban against preaching and was arrested by *lettre de cachet* on October 3, 1687, (the day after Molinos' conviction on charges of heresy - but this was not made public for months⁵⁷) and imprisoned, without any form of process, for the rest of his life (he did not die until 1714):

On a arrêté un barnabite, accusé d'être un peu moliniste; il y a quelques docteurs en fuite, soupçonnés d'être dans des erreurs, fort approchantes de celle-là, et qu'on accuse d'avoir eu des commerces secrets avec la Cour de Rome.⁵⁸

Louis XIV was excommunicated by the Pope soon after this event, during the period between November 18 and January 12 of the following year.⁵⁹ Whatever had originally moved their persecutors to action, La Combe and Jeanne now became pawns in a serious battle of wills between the Pope and the king.

As Jeanne's association with La Combe was widely known, his arrest could not fail to have repercussions in her own life. A letter forged in her name appeared in the hands of the authorities, in which it was said `que j'avais grands desseins mais que je craignais fort qu'ils ne fussent avortés par la détention du père La Combe; que je ne tenais plus mes assemblées chez moi; que j'étais très espionnée, mais que je les ferais dans telles et telles maisons et dans telles rues, chez telles

THE LAST DÉVOTE

personnes...! The letter was shown to the king: it determined her fate.⁶⁰ Jeanne too was arrested by *lettre de cachet* and imprisoned at the Visitation convent of the rue Saint-Antoine in Paris, January 29, 1688. It was an ironic choice for her internment, given her admiration for the works of its founder; also because it had been the place of imprisonment for Angélique de Saint-Jean, twenty-five years before.

The campaign against both Jeanne and La Combe seems to have been very little concerned with any real fears about their doctrinal soundness; those in authority seem to have been concerned only with the threat they might pose to the state. The king was to say of La Combe that he was 'trop dévoué à Rome et au Pape.'⁶¹ As for Jeanne, her interlocutors made use of a last interview with her before her imprisonment to arrest or exile a number of 'suspects', putting it about that she had accused them; 'on fit entendre que j'avais déclaré beaucoup de choses et accusé bien des personnes, et ils se servirent de cela pour exiler tous les gens que ne leur plaisaient pas.'⁶² Discovering whether she was, in fact, part of a larger conspiracy of some kind may have been part of the original purpose of the exercise. Her books were still on sale in Paris and even reprinted during her term of imprisonment, as they would not have been if anyone had really been concerned about her doctrine.⁶³ Thanks to a curious letter by Jeanne to one of her examiners, lost until the nineteenth century, we know that the examiners themselves had acknowledged that the original incriminating letter supposedly written by her was a forgery, though of course they admitted no guilt in the matter. The earlier letter had vaguely implied that she was guilty of having 'concerté des affaires importantes, peut-être contre l'État.'⁶⁴ Aside from such tangible proofs, her good faith (whatever may later have

CHAPTER 10

been suggested regarding her doctrinal soundness) is attested to by the fact that she made no attempt to leave Paris after La Combe's arrest. 'Je portais tout avec une extrême tranquillité', she wrote.⁶⁵

Convent and Court

Jeanne was not interned for long. While she was still at the convent, the archbishop of Paris, Harlay de Champvallon, approached her and said that if she agreed to marry her daughter to his nephew the marquis de Champvallon, he would overlook the doctrinal irregularities of her work.⁶⁶ Aside from her outrage at being pressed in this way, Jeanne was also appalled at the idea of marrying her daughter to a moral reprobate; the nephew had a very bad reputation, and her daughter was only eleven years old. This interlude apparently did her no harm. Her friends at court intervened timidly on her behalf with the king's wife, Madame de Maintenon; so also did her young cousin, Sylvine de La Maisonfort. It appears, however, that it was the intercession of the charity-worker and hospital-builder Madame de Miramion that was most helpful to her.⁶⁷ They had first met while Jeanne was a prisoner at the Visitation and Madame de Miramion had been charmed by her goodness, to the point of being willing to help her if she could.⁶⁸ And so Jeanne was released September 13, 1688, to the welcome of her old and new friends. Madame de Maintenon was now most anxious to meet the woman of whom she had received so many conflicting reports, and received her at Saint-Cyr a few days later.⁶⁹ For the moment, however, Jeanne had other affairs to arrange and did not immediately pursue the acquaintance. She left Paris shortly after her release to arrange her daughter's marriage, and went to live with the couple in the country for two years.⁷⁰

Jeanne returned to Paris in 1691, and there she was taken up by Madame de Maintenon. Admiring Jeanne, Françoise de Maintenon began to bring her to her famous girls' school at Saint-

THE LAST DÉVOTE

Cyr, where one of the teachers was a relative of Jeanne's, Sylvine de La Maisonfort. Jeanne's new allies at court now included, besides the Chevreuse and Beauvillier families, both Madame de Maintenon and Fénelon.⁷¹ The two women, together with Fénelon, the Beauvilliers and the Chevreuses, often met to read and discuss works of pious literature.⁷² François Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon (1651-1715) had been appointed in 1689 to the post of tutor to the king's grandson, the young duke de Bourgogne, which meant that he would be certain to acquire great influence at court and over the future of the realm. He sometimes joined the small group of friends⁷³ and gradually became the most important person in Jeanne's life. The two were very different: Fénelon was a courtier-priest who suffered greatly from 'sécheresse' of the spirit, but it was for this reason he was greatly impressed by the freshness of the vision she offered him, even if he could neither share nor wholly understand it.⁷⁴

Jeanne now lived a quiet life of retreat in a small house in Paris. The protection of her friends ensured that for a time the 'calomnies' which had so plagued her in earlier years ceased, for a time. For several years, she went often to the school at Saint-Cyr, instructing a few of the girls and teachers in the theology of pur amour and in *oraison*. The school was, for its time, experimental. It was thus the object of much interest and attention in the fashionable society of Paris and Versailles, and envy too. Its former principal, Madame de Brinon, was to be dismissed for defying Madame de Maintenon's orders in administrative matters. Saint-Cyr had not originally been planned as a convent. It was supposed to be a kind of finishing school, but public criticism of its unconventional approach to educating girls was slowly convincing Madame de Maintenon that its inmates must become nuns, even against their will, and in 1692, the matter was settled. Many of the students and teachers there

CHAPTER 10

in fact objected very strongly to the prospective change,⁷⁵ but could do little to help themselves, as most were from families too poor or powerless to protest on their behalf.⁷⁶ When Jeanne Guyon entered their lives, she, with her understanding of rebellious young women, was able to provide them with a means of transcending the school that was turning into a prison.⁷⁷

Madame de Maintenon, in spite of her undoubted power as the king's wife, had always occupied a difficult position at court. Without money of her own, rank, or respectable family connections, she was in a sense the king's *créature*. Their marriage had been kept a secret (some historians still doubt that it took place); and was also morganatic. She was an unreliable ally, for she was too dependent upon the king to be really free. Already worried about her school and the criticism it had brought upon her, she began to hear further rumours of Jeanne's doctrines, rumours which alarmed her and which also awakened her jealousy, for she found that her protégée was more popular among their mutual friends than she was herself.⁷⁸ She had been warned against Jeanne's 'doctrine' by her own confessor, Godet des Marais, bishop of Chartres and thus the ordinary responsible for the school at Saint-Cyr.⁷⁹

In 1693, she asked her friend not to return to the school, accusing her of having sown the seeds of quietism among the students and teachers there.⁸⁰ Once more many of the school's inhabitants were outraged, but there was little they could do to prevent Madame de Maintenon from doing whatever she chose with the school. It was her project; she oversaw its every arrangement and was, besides, its chief patron. Jeanne, without any protest, agreed to stop going to the school, and her books were taken away from the students. In March 1694, Madame de Maintenon was made superior for life of the convent; this meant she could exclude her enemy permanently.⁸¹

THE LAST DÉVOTE

Royal Power

The events at Saint-Cyr are conventionally portrayed by historians favourable to Madame Guyon as the origin of her downfall. But was the affair really so decisive a factor in Jeanne's subsequent downfall? Her first ordeal, the suspicion it had cast upon her, and the complicated forces that had been at work ever since she first left Montargis, must also be taken into account. Besides these, there was also, of course, the king's suspicions of any religious movement that could not be controlled by his hand-picked hierarchy.⁸² He was at last beginning to win the French crown's long battle with Rome and did not intend to give up his hold. A critic had written of him in 1689, 'Les rois de France se sont faits Papes, Muftis, Grands Pontifes, et Princes absolus sur les choses sacrées. Le nom du grand pontife et son autorité n'y sont plus que des fantômes',⁸³ and went on to say, 'Il faut à présent que tous les Supérieurs et les Supérieures des Maisons religieuses soient mises des mains de la Cour, afin qu'ayant des créatures partout, elle domine partout...'⁸⁴ Jeanne was in a vulnerable position from the moment of the rupture of her friendship with Madame de Maintenon, but it was not the rupture alone that ruined her.

The king's suspicions may have been aggravated by some of the activities which took place in the little circle of Jeanne Guyon's friends. At some point, although it is not certain when, its members began to call themselves the '*Confrérie du Pur Amour*', or the '*ordre des Associés à l'Enfance de Jésus*'.⁸⁵ There were two orders in the society: the 'Michelins', after the archangel Michael, and the 'Christofflets', after Christ himself. It is curious that she did not take warning from the fact that her book, *Règle des associés à l'enfance de Jésus*, first printed at Lyon in 1685, had been condemned by the Holy Office in 1689. She was not prepared to allow herself to be ruled by any

CHAPTER 10

considerations of prudence, but she was on dangerous ground. Meanwhile, the suppression of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement was not so far in the past as to have been forgotten by anyone, least of all by the king himself. At that time, the Paris Parlement had called for a ban upon all secret societies, and there was still widespread distrust of the phenomenon among the king's officials, although no doubt many such groups went unremarked by the authorities. Meanwhile, in the eyes of many people, the society was a menace, a reminder of past abuses: 'La société Confrérie des Michelins bien qu'imaginée par Jeanne Guyon était le prolongement des multiples sociétés qui à partir de la Ligue, s'efforcèrent dans l'ombre de faire triompher la politique du parti dévot.'⁸⁶ Was she aware that in establishing such a group she risked re-awakening all the old anti-dévoit prejudices which had brought about the end of the Compagnie? It seems unlikely, for she was the least politically-minded of women. She probably knew nothing of the history of the 'parti dévot' in the first part of the century, nor of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement. In any case, her group did not much resemble the earlier dévots in its sense of purpose, so far as historians can determine, for there are few documents to reveal it. The Acarie circle may never have been as politically-oriented as some of its critics believed, but its members had all been marked by the Wars of Religion and united by their desire to establish the Tridentine decrees in France, a purpose shared by many outside their circle who could also be rallied to the cause of Catholic reform. The Beauvillier-Chevreuse group could not count on support of this kind.

• **Second arrest**

From 1694, events began to unroll with the same seeming inevitability that characterised Jeanne's first arrest and imprisonment. Early in that year, Jeanne met with Bossuet, a meeting at

THE LAST DÉVOTE

which Chevreuse was present too. This was the first meeting of the two antagonists. Bossuet's long experience of crown policy with regard to religion had hardened his attitudes. He had reached a stage in his development at which he was unwilling to tolerate the spectre of any form of religious disobedience. So far did he carry this view that he believed that martyrdom was the only legitimate choice for those who found themselves unable to come to terms with the demands of the existing order: `«A Dieu ne plaise, disoient-ils [early Christian martyrs], que nous offrions pour les empereurs le sacrifice que vous nous demandez pour eux; on nous apprend à leur obéir, mais non pas à les adorer.» L'obéissance qui'ils leur rendoient, servoit de preuve à celle qu'ils vouloient rendre à Dieu.'⁸⁷ No form of concerted effort to change past policy was admissible in his eyes. He said as much to Pierre Jurieu, the Protestant minister, in the controversies at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.⁸⁸ He said as much to Jeanne Guyon, also, at this first meeting. `Il nous donna même des exemples de gens qu'il avait connus, qu'il estimait saints, qui s'étaient tués', she wrote in her autobiography. Her response to this is worth noting: `J'avoue que je fus épouvantée de tous ces discours de M. de Meaux. Je savais que dans la primitive Eglise quelques vierges s'étaient fait mourir pour se conserver pures, mais je ne croyais pas qu'en ce siècle, où il n'y a ni force ni tyrans, un homme pût être approuvé d'une telle action.'⁸⁹ Whether this was an attempt to pacify those of her critics who might read her *Vie* by asserting her own `common sense' (something she was often said to lack), or a naïve faith in the king's justice, is impossible to determine, but the words do not suggest that she was frightened or contemplating any form of political dissent. Unfortunately for her, Bossuet, who had been made the Grand Dauphin's tutor in 1670, represented a powerful faction at

CHAPTER 10

court as a result, and also had the support of Madame de Maintenon, who was looking for someone to extract her from her awkward involvement with Jeanne Guyon.

For the next year, Jeanne's frequent meetings with Bossuet, as he tried to pin her down on matters of doctrine, cast her in the role of Jesus and Bossuet in that of Pilate. She defended herself well, always explaining so well what she had meant, when he questioned various expressions in her book, as to necessitate yet another meeting. He half-admired her; he was wholly exasperated by her, as in that other famous battle between the forces of worldly wisdom and those of other-worldly certainty. After a series of skirmishes in Paris, in which he seemed to her to promise that she would come to no harm at his hands (he gave her communion himself, in the presence of witnesses, on one such occasion, which he would not have done had he then had serious doubts about her doctrinal soundness⁹⁰), she asked him to arrange a meeting of men better-versed in mystical theology than he was himself, to examine her work, question her, and permit her to explain herself if necessary. He consented, if in turn she would agree to retreat to his diocese at Meaux for a time afterwards. The meetings, which took place at Issy in the summer of 1694, were attended by Bossuet, Louis de Noailles (bishop of Châlons; soon to be nominated to Paris), and Louis Tronson, superior of Saint-Sulpice. But Bossuet, strengthened by the support of Madame de Maintenon, dominated the meetings, not letting Jeanne speak, and they settled nothing. Early in 1695, Jeanne went to Meaux, but the meetings she held there with Bossuet grew far more tense, as he himself felt pressed to speed her condemnation. Her situation was growing worse: she had been publicly censured by Harlay de Champvallon in October of the previous year. Bossuet tried to persuade her to sign a confession of heresy at Easter, but she would not, and he was able to extract only a submission to his censure. He

THE LAST DÉVOTE

permitted her at last to leave his diocese in July, with a paper signed by him witnessing her orthodoxy. She thought then that she might have escaped for the time being, but her hope was disappointed. Godet des Marais, also Madame de Maintenon's tool, issued a strongly-worded statement in November, condemning her works and their 'quietism', a word with which the bishops of France were by now familiar. Finally, on December 27, 1695, she was arrested again in the house where she had so far managed to evade the police.⁹¹

Guyon-Fénelon-Bossuet

Fénelon intervened to try to defend his protégée in an anonymous letter to the king in 1694:

Dieu se contentera-t-il d'une dévotion qui consiste à dorer une chapelle, à dire un chapelet, à écouter une musique, à se scandaliser facilement et à chasser quelques jansénistes? Non seulement il s'agit de finir la guerre au-dehors, mais il s'agit encore de rendre au-dedans du pain aux peuples moribonds, de rétablir l'agriculture et le commerce, de réformer le luxe qui gangrène toutes les mœurs de la nation, de se ressouvenir de la vraie forme du royaume, et de tempérer le despotisme, cause de tous nos maux...Vous n'aimez point Dieu; vous ne le craignez même que d'une crainte d'esclave; c'est l'enfer et non pas Dieu que vous craignez.⁹²

It may have been this that sealed his fate, if not Jeanne's own. The letter contained an explicit attack upon state religious policy which was certain to anger both the king and those members of high society who had until now remained neutral in the affair of Jeanne Guyon. The opinion of this small public was of great importance to their future. In its mixture of personal, political, and religious criticisms, Fénelon's letter sounded the authentic note of the dévot, often suppressed through the last century, but never altogether extinguished. It showed the tactlessness that had plagued the once-suave courtier ever since he first met Jeanne Guyon; it showed a man who was trying to understand the meaning of *pur amour* as she lived it.

CHAPTER 10

Fénelon now found that he had raised the stakes against himself. To defend themselves against his accusations, his opponents must show that he was a hypocrite, his system absurd, and his protégée a fraud. This was the task which Bossuet now undertook, on behalf of both the Gallican Church and the king. The venom of his subsequent attacks upon Fénelon and Jeanne Guyon must be understood in this light. Bossuet's first public response to Fénelon's letter about Madame Guyon was an *Ordonnance pastorale* condemning the mystical works of both Jeanne and of the Marseilles mystic, François Malaval, in April 1695; she would be arrested, it will be recalled, in December of the same year, and it is possible that Fénelon's letter helped to ensure that she would not come out of Vincennes soon. Fénelon published his first serious attempt to justify Jeanne's mysticism, the *Explication des maximes des saints*, in January 1697; it was answered the next month by Bossuet's *Instruction sur les états d'oraison*, which attacked Jeanne Guyon explicitly. In April Fénelon submitted his work to the Holy Office for censure (or justification), a step for which Bossuet would severely condemn him. Fénelon was banished to his diocese in August.⁹³

After much delay, and many attempts on the part of both the pope and the college of cardinals to save Fénelon from himself, the work was condemned. The Holy Office appears to have had little choice in the matter, for the pope was elderly and the possibility of a new papal election in which France might attempt to place a pope exclusively favourable to French interests hovered over the proceedings, forcing a fast decision. Still, the censure was as mild as possible, in the form of a papal brief and not a bull. The distinction was an important one: a papal brief is a pastoral letter from the pope, of a private nature and not necessarily demanding action, unlike a bull, which is to be interpreted as a decree. The term 'heretic' was not used in the brief, but her work was criticized for

THE LAST DÉVOTE

its novelty.⁹⁴ In spite of Fénelon's attempt to justify Jeanne, Louis XIV and Bossuet still affected to believe that her doctrine was a 'nouveau'. It is remarkable that Bérulle, François de Sales, Camus, Jean Eudes, and the whole tradition of the *École française* would have been rendered questionable by the new anti-mystical rigidity. Fashion had swung decidedly against the taint of mysticism. Meanwhile, the battle over *Maximes des saints* had little effect upon Jeanne Guyon, who was already in prison and would remain there for eight years altogether. Its effect upon Fénelon, however, was catastrophic: besides his own exile to his diocese, his friends and relations were all removed from their posts; his writings were censured by the Sorbonne; and he lost all his former influence and much of his reputation.

Explanations

• Misogyny

Fénelon's supporters, then and later, thought him foolish to risk his career in defense of a woman whom they could not admire. It was, however, Jeanne who had gone to prison, not Fénelon. Between the two of them it was she who suffered the most in the battle over quietism. It is tempting to point to this distinction between her fate and Fénelon's as a sign of the misogyny of the age of Louis XIV. Certainly the times did not favour women. Not only had French women, by the 1690s, lost some of the legal rights they had held before the re-introduction of Roman law in France, they had also lost ground in cultural terms, or so it seemed. The age of Louis XIV exalted hyper-masculine values at the expense of both women and homosexual men, and accepted no view of women that did not insist upon their absolute subordination to male control. The Church, too, had tightened its control over women: the disorder so apparent in convents earlier in the century was by

CHAPTER 10

now considerably diminished. In explaining Jeanne's fate her recent biographer Françoise Mallet-Joris emphasizes the 'irreducible marginality' of a woman who wanted to live her religious experience outside all established boundaries as the major factor in Jeanne's persecution.⁹⁵

Yet this explanation for Jeanne's treatment is not wholly satisfactory. Père La Combe had previously been imprisoned in stricter conditions than hers; and unlike her he was never to be set free. Moreover, women continued to flourish in the congregations and companies established by Vincent de Paul and others after him; this was a permanent victory for those who had hoped to liberate female religious from the strictures of conventual life, a victory which, as we have seen, was won in defiance of both canon law and French social custom. For all the misogyny apparent in Bossuet's attitude to Jeanne Guyon, too, it is important to recall that he was acting under great pressure from both king and Court. His career and perhaps even his freedom depended upon it, if poor La Combe's fate was any sign of what he might expect.

• **Anti-mystical reaction**

A related explanation is that Jeanne's surprisingly severe treatment was connected to the state's dislike of mysticism, related because mysticism, especially in the form it took in Jeanne's case, was strongly associated with women. The anti-mystical reaction was perhaps a rejection of the feminine element in spirituality. Mysticism provoked the authorities, religious and temporal, both because of its essential 'unruliness' and because it was the special privilege, or curse, of the 'unruly' sex. The quarrel over quietism becomes in this interpretation a battle between masculine and feminine modes of piety, pursued by a coalition of the forces of Church and state in their quest for discipline and order. Certainly Bossuet's *Relation sur le quiétisme*, with its tendency to connect

THE LAST DÉVOTE

Jeanne's notions of the passive love of God with her lack of emotional balance and the absence of male control in her life, makes this a plausible argument. The book also clearly implies that mysticism of this kind was unmanly, and many of Bossuet's supporters have been making this suggestion ever since. But again, the evidence suggests that the Church itself was not, at this period, hostile to mysticism, even in its quietist formulation. Innocent XI had liked and admired Miguel de Molinos, and would act against him only under pressure.⁹⁶ As for Jeanne Guyon, she was never condemned directly by name by the Holy Office. In 1698, when Fénelon's *Maximes des saints* was submitted to Rome, the Holy Office held several votes at which opinion for and against the book's condemnation was evenly divided, so that it was clearly difficult for the pope to force the issue, even after he received a strongly worded letter from Louis XIV, demanding the condemnation of French quietists.⁹⁷ When the *Maximes* were finally condemned, French prelates were able to use the censure to attack Jeanne Guyon and other quietists by imputing to her the doctrines which it described, but as none of the works Fénelon submitted to Rome named her directly, their condemnation could not directly affect her.

Jeanne superficially appears to fit the 'paradigm' of feminine religious experience, as described by Caroline Bynum and discussed elsewhere in this study: she manifests the concern for affective religious response; the taste for extreme forms of penitential asceticism; the same emphasis both on Christ's humanity and on the inspiration of the spirit. But did her life and work also manifest, to use Bynum's terms again, the bypassing of clerical authority that is also said to be characteristic of female spirituality?⁹⁸ If so, it might explain, apart from the political issues involved, why the Gallican Church was prepared to treat her with all possible rigour. But Jeanne did not really seek to

CHAPTER 10

leave behind structured faith; she was not truly anti-sacerdotal. Although she found spoken prayers difficult; although she thought that people must learn to pray with greater commitment and understanding, the principle sacraments, communion and confession, remained extremely important to her all her life. Nor did she neglect Jesus for a purely abstract worship, as Bossuet was to charge in one of their interviews. Her devotion to the idea of the *Enfance de Jésus* never wavered.

There are other circumstances that should be taken into account as well. The men and women of Port-Royal, whose devotional style, although it might loosely be called contemplative, was not, in the conventional sense, either mystical or unmanly, had endured persecution equal to Jeanne's thirty years earlier, and did so again during the years in which the *quérable de pur amour* took place. Does this not suggest that the anti-female, anti-mystical element that was certainly a part of Jeanne's experience in her two trials was only one element in her accusers' case against her? In fact, Jeanne's history was surprisingly similar to that of Angélique de Saint-Jean Arnauld, although their piety was very different. Both women were pulled in conflicting directions by their brother dévots; both found themselves presiding over the collapse of the movements they represented. They were, also, both adherents of 'marginal' forms of devotion, and suffered persecution at the hands of state. Marginal? They lived and worked in the midst of money and power; their marginality was a façade, in some respects, intended, without conscious duplicity perhaps, to deceive their audiences and obtain for them a greater license in speaking out than they might otherwise have had. The fact that both were women was what permitted them to do this. Both women 'internalized' the female role handed to them by society and the Church. There is in Jeanne's writings the same over-literal interpretation of the instructions of her male authority-figures as there is in those of Angélique de Saint-Jean. She

THE LAST DÉVOTE

once told Bossuet, when giving him her *Vie* to read, that if she found it difficult to pray in words, whether aloud or silently, it was because her husband had disliked the practice. Recall the women of Port-Royal saying that for them, signing the formulary was a pointless exercise because they had never been permitted to read Jansenius. Both Jeanne and the women of Port-Royal, in fact, exploited the restrictions placed upon them to evade male criticism. The two women, Jansenist and pur-amourist, were without prudence, as their faith had taught them to be; unworldly but able to use this to defend themselves. Angélique de Saint-Jean was the more openly defiant of the two; Jeanne Guyon was better at exploiting the weakness of her opponents' case against her. During her first round of troubles with the authorities, Chéron had said to her, 'Vous voyez bien, Madame, qu'après une lettre comme celle-là, il y avait bien de quoi vous mettre en prison'; she answered him, 'Oui, Monsieur, si je l'avais écrite.'⁹⁹ Finally, what they had in common and did *not* share with the men who ostensibly directed them was the later dévots' perception of *raison d'état*; they had been, in a sense, trained not to do so by the men themselves.

• Politics

Was the *affaire de quiétisme* a political matter, that is, a factional fight for power and influence? To some contemporary observers, the dispute between Bossuet and Fénelon appeared to be wholly political. Élisabeth-Charlotte, Palatine princess and wife of the king's brother Monsieur, wrote:

Selon ce que M. de Meaux m'a conté de vive voix sur l'affaire de Mme Guyon, M. de Cambrai ne prend parti pour Mme Guyon que pour cacher son ambition immodérée. Rien n'est plus certain, tout cela n'était qu'un jeu pour gouverner le Roi et toute la Cour. On avait résolu de gagner Mme de Maintenon, ce qui fut fait, afin d'être maître du Roi. On a trouvé chez eux *des listes entières de charges à donner*; ils voulaient changer toute la Cour et distribuer tous les hauts postes à leurs créatures.

CHAPTER 10

La religion est ce qu'on avait le moins en vue dans cette affaire; mais Mme de Maintenon, voyant que M. de Meaux avait découvert la fourberie, et qu'il pourrait y avoir un éclat, eut peur que le Roi ne s'aperçut de la manière dont elle l'avait menée; elle vira donc de bord sur-le-champ et abandonna Mme Guyon et tout son parti. Tout alors fut mis au grand jour. Je vous assure que cette querelle d'évêques n'a pas le moins du monde la foi pour but; tout cela est ambition pure, et l'on ne pense presque plus à la religion; elle n'est que le prête-nom.¹⁰⁰

The princess also quoted the words first made famous in the Jansenist debates:

Dans ces combats où nos prélats de France
Semblent chercher la vérité,
L'un dit qu'on détruit l'espérance,
L'autre se plaint que c'est la charité;
C'est la foi qu'on détruit et personne n'y pense...

Most of Fénelon's former associates at court appear to have regarded the affair in this light. Apart from small groups like that to which Fénelon and Jeanne had belonged, fashionable society had remained anti-dévot since the fall of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement and the persecution of the Jansenists. Religious commitment was not fashionable. The Palatine princess's comment is typical of the general tenor of dévot criticism: that the dévots' apparently religious motives were a cloak for nothing more complex than personal ambition. Fénelon, however, effectively gave up his career for Jeanne Guyon, although he had received ample warning to abandon her and might well have saved himself if he had been willing to do so. This fact alone makes it difficult to believe that the initial inspiration of the affair was entirely political; if he had been seeking influence and hoping to use Jeanne's philosophy as a means of justifying himself and establishing a new clique at court, he would surely have retreated from his position once he knew how dangerous it was.

THE LAST DÉVOTE

There is a more broadly ideological point of view from which to approach the affair. Raymond Schmitlein, author of a thesis on *l'Aspect politique du différend Fénelon-Bossuet*, writes in his introduction,

...l'objet apparent de la dispute sera il est vrai d'ordre théologique, mais en réalité l'objet théologique ne constitue qu'un support idéologique à une action politique concrète. C'est un simple décor. On parle de quiétisme parce qu'il n'y a pas encore de marxisme ou de gaullisme. La dispute est politique, le différent est d'ordre politique, le climat sera un climat politique.¹⁰¹

Schmitlein is perhaps more accurate than the two men's contemporaries in depicting the political battle between them as an ideological rather than a merely factional one. Still, we must ask whether it was ideological in the sense which many modern historians suppose. To many of these, Bossuet stood for France: for the king, for Gallican Catholicism, and for a rational, moderated Christianity. Fénelon stood for Rome: for the old aristocracy, for ultramontane Catholicism, and for irrational, intemperate spirituality. To later centuries, Bossuet represented the voice of classicism; Fénelon, in the eyes of historians, was the prototypical romantic, one of the fathers of the Age of Sensibility. Bossuet was innately hostile, according to this interpretation, to the Condren-Vincent-François de Sales 'school', the *École française* piety which he praised in Bérulle and Bourgoing but did not understand or appreciate in its later incarnations. This is an exaggeration. Bossuet, as a young man, had friends in both Jansenist and *École française* circles. He had been a frequent visitor to Vincent de Paul's Tuesday conferences and a friend of Sébastien Zamet's.¹⁰² Bossuet was the man who had been forced, after his involvement in Arnauld's defense, to accept the fact that protest against the crown was from now on, for an ambitious prelate, impossible. He belonged to a different generation than did Jeanne, Fénelon, and, for that matter, Louis XIV himself, but this meant that he should have

CHAPTER 10

been more, rather than less, likely to sympathize with Jeanne Guyon's form of world-renouncing spirituality, for in some ways it harkened back to an earlier era.

The Bossuet-Fénelon quarrel was the culmination of almost one hundred years of *dévot* efforts to ensure that the Catholic Church should retain some voice in the public life of the nation.¹⁰³ Yet Fénelon was not really an ultramontane; like so many earlier *dévots*, his belief in absolute monarchy was paramount, in any situation where Rome and France might come into serious conflict; above all with respect to temporal issues. Moreover, he was rather more convinced than earlier *dévots* had been that national unity was essential to the religious and political stability of the French people. The temporal and the spiritual were now more closely allied than ever; only this time, the state was clearly the one in control.

• Devotion

But a wholly ideological interpretation of the *affaire de quiétisme* that looks only to Gallican-ultramontane squabbles to explain it also leaves Jeanne Guyon in the shadows. Her contribution to the affair was significant enough that it too must be put in its own political and religious context. Ever since the turn of the century, the *dévots* had exploited *dévote* eagerness to participate in the Catholic reformation by assigning them the role of the *enfant terrible*, the court jester, permitted to testify to their faith partly because they were too politically irrelevant to be a threat to the state. Jeanne was the logical culmination, the end-point, of this process. She took many of the devotional modes which had been circulating in *dévot* spheres of influence since Bérulle's time: the idea of childhood naïveté as a blessed state; the rejection of prudence; the emphasis upon charity, or affectivity, as the soul's only route to God; the belief that perfect love demanded perfect indifference,

THE LAST DÉVOTE

and extended them as far as they could be stretched. She was not deceived, as her detractors believed her to be deceived, by the promise of comfort in faith. She knew very well the price of the kind of love she sought from, or wished to give to, God, and she warned those who read her *Vie* of what it might be:

Mes enfants, [she wrote] je ne veux pas vous tromper ni ne vous tromper pas. C'est à Dieu à vous éclairer, et à vous donner du rebut ou du penchant pour ce rien, qui ne sort pas de sa place. C'est un fanal vide: on peut y allumer un flambeau. C'est peut-être un faux brillant qui peut mener au précipice. Je n'en sais rien, Dieu le sait, ce n'est pas mon affaire, c'est à vous de faire ce discernement. Il n'y a qu'à éteindre le faux brillant: le flambeau ne s'allumera jamais par lui-même si Dieu ne l'allume.¹⁰⁴

In considering her fate, we must remember, always, how much support Jeanne received, as well as the persecutions she endured. She would not have done so if her friends and associates had not perceived something in her that compelled them to listen. And they were moved by more than their quest for political influence. They were also attempting to protect what the dévots saw as the essential elements of spiritual life, those which were not concerned with the adjustment of the individual to society, those which involved only the soul's relationship to God. As the demands of the state grew more unconditional, the dévots' inability to resist, and their desire to find a way to transcend the state's demands, grew too. Seeing from this perspective, we can restore Jeanne Guyon to her rightful place in the Bossuet-Fénelon debates. She was the last representative of the dévot hope for a love for God so perfect that it rose above all merely human claims upon the individual. In this she did not differ greatly from her dévoute predecessors. It was her misfortune to be born in an era which rejected the image of the dévoute as holy fool, licensed to speak while men must remain silent. She also shows the continuing power of the image, for in spite of the trouble she endured she

CHAPTER 10

exercised a great influence and forced two ambitious men who would have preferred to live comfortably to go to war over her ideas.

Does disinterested love exist? Fénelon himself half-doubted it, and was willing to acknowledge himself as, at times, a liar and a hypocrite. Bossuet by this period of his life perhaps wholly doubted it. The experience of the *dévots*, throughout the seventeenth century, did not tend to confirm its reality. Jeanne Guyon, with her reckless disregard for her personal safety, was for Bossuet an irritating reminder of his own failure in *adhérence à Dieu*. She was for Fénelon the confirmation of his hope, never wholly suppressed, for an *amour pur de Dieu*. He longed even more than his forerunners for a sign of its presence, but unlike them he was a near-modern man whose faith had been weakened by the spirit of the age. He could not wholly let go of the world. In a painfully ambivalent letter asking to be reinstated as an acting bishop, he wrote, in 1704:

Le roi m'ordonne de me taire; mais Dieu, dans l'écriture, me commande de parler. Le dépôt de la foi est confié solidairement à tous les évêques en commun. Ceux qui ne parlent pas pour défendre la maison de Dieu sont nommés par le Saint-Esprit chiens muets. Malheur à moi, disait un prophète, parce que j'ai gardé le silence! quand la puissance souveraine imposa silence aux apôtres, ils répondirent: «Jugez-vous même s'il est juste devant Dieu que nous vous obéissions plutôt que Dieu. Nous ne pouvons point nous abstenir de dire ce que nous avons vu et entendu.» Saint Paul enchaîné disait «Je suis captif, mais la parole de Dieu n'est point liée.» Elle demeure libre dans ma bouche: nous ne sommes évêques que pour veiller et pour crier contre ceux qui altèrent le dépôt. Je conclus, mon Révérend Père, en me jetant en esprit aux pieds du Roi, pour lui demander, par tout ce qu'il y a de plus sacré dans la religion, la liberté d'exercer mon ministère.¹⁰⁵

Was he thinking of Jeanne Guyon? The answer is irrelevant. The letter remains the *dévots'* epitaph.

As for Jeanne Guyon, once she was finally released from prison, she went to live with her daughter for a time and was able to exercise the kind of influence upon the world of faith which she had so desired, if not perhaps in quite the manner she had expected. She ended as a harbinger of the

THE LAST DÉVOTE

modern world, linking the dévotes to the future as well as to the past. Her influence spread to a number of radical movements in the century after her death: the Freemasons, the Quakers, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and no less a figure than John Wesley would all read and draw upon her works.¹⁰⁶ Her protests did not, after all, fall upon deaf ears.¹⁰⁷ The extent of her influence after her death, and her place in the annals of the dévot movement as a whole, confirms that dévot piety was a phenomenon which cannot be interpreted as a merely conservative movement, in the sense in which this phrase is conventionally understood to apply to the dévots. If Jeanne Guyon was a dévote, as this chapter has argued, then we must accept that the movement as a whole was as much forward-looking in spirit as it was reactionary. Madame Guyon, as unorthodox as she might have been in many respects, cannot be separated from the movement which gave birth to her. She was clearly, in language and in spirit, an heir to the piety of Bérulle and still more of François de Sales, the representatives of masculine authority whom she admired and drew upon. Where her experience differs most from that of her dévote predecessors is in the fact that she was cut off from effective male support as they never were. This cost her much, and yet her story ends on an odd note of triumph. She outlived all her enemies, and her works, which they were so anxious to suppress, have endured and flourished beyond all expectation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 10

1. Jeanne Guyon, *La vie de Madame Guyon, écrite par elle-même*. Prepared by Benjamin Sahler with an introduction by Jean Tourniac (Paris: Dervy-Livres, 1983), p. 587. This edition was prepared in conformity with the original appearing at Cologne in 1720, although spelling and punctuation have been modernised.
2. Nadine Gastaldi, 'Contribution a l'étude des dévots au XVIIe siècle: vie quotidienne et vie spirituelle à partir des biographes pieuses de l'époque', p. 116, 119.
3. *Vie*, p. 21.
4. *Vie*, p. 23.
5. *Vie*, p. 24.
6. *Vie*, p. 39.
7. *Vie*, p. 160-161.
8. The difficulties of the marriage are described throughout Part I of Jeanne's *Vie*. See especially pp. 53-57.
9. *Vie*, p. 39-40.
10. *Vie*, p. 71-73.
11. *Vie*, p. 75.
12. *Vie*, p. 80.
13. See *Vie*, p. 81-83, for an account of the austerities Jeanne practised and her imitation of Catherine of Genoa. An example of Marguerite-Marie's 'excessive mortification' is to be found in *Sainte Marguerite-Marie Alacoque*, (Paris: Éditions Saint-Paul, 1979), p. 101-2: 'une fois que j'avais fait quelque soulèvement de coeur en servant une malade qui avait la dysenterie, [le divin Amour] m'en reprit si fortement que je [me] vis contrainte - pour réparer cette faute - en portant verser ce qu'elle avait fait, d'y tremper ma langue un long espace de temps et d'en remplir ma bouche. Et l'aurais avalé, s'il ne m'avait mis alors l'obéissance devant les yeux, laquelle ne me permettait pas de rien manger sans congé.' The editors add a note saying that this passage was repressed in 19th C. editions of her biography.
14. *Vie*, p. 82.
15. *Vie*, p. 88.
16. *Vie*, p. 25-26.

17. *Vie*, p. 26-27.
18. *Vie*, p. 24-25.
19. *Vie*, p. 118-119.
20. *Vie*, p. 151.
21. *Vie*, p. 151.
22. Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, p. 131-132.
23. See *Vie*, p. 29; also p. 143, where she describes giving contributions to charities for children at Christmas, in memory of Jésus-Enfant.
24. *Vie*, p. 322; for other references to spiritual motherhood, see pp. 344, 346-47, 621.
25. *Vie*, p. 213.
26. See for example Jeanne's *Vie*, p. 618, where she describes an encounter with the chief of police in Paris, La Reynie, as one that disturbed her because of 'une infidélité que je fis. Ce fut de préméditer un jour des réponses que je devais faire à un interrogatoire que je devais prêter le lendemain...je crois, mon Seigneur, que vous ne permîtes cette faute que pour faire voir l'inutilité de nos arrangements en de pareilles rencontres, et la sûreté de s'en fier à vous.' See also p. 549.
27. *Vie*, p. 174.
28. Three men paid court to her but she refused them; her mother-in-law was much impressed by this, and it helped to heal the breach between them. *Vie*, p. 223-24.
29. *Vie*, p. 96: 'Vous me donnâtes alors, ô mon Dieu, un don de chasteté en sorte que je n'avais pas même une mauvaise pensée, et que le mariage m'était fort à charge. [Mon mari] me disait quelquefois: «On voit bien que vous ne perdez point la présence de Dieu.»
30. *Vie*, p. 175: 'Ma belle-mère s'opposa fortement à tout ce que je pouvais faire pour assurer mes intérêts...Je n'avais personne à qui j'osasse demander conseil ouvertement. Je ne savais les affaires en aucune manière...J'accommodai tous mes papiers, et réglai toutes mes affaires, sans secours de qui que ce soit...Cela me fit la réputation de femme habile...'
31. *Vie*, p. 221.
32. *Vie*, p. 175.
33. *Vie*, p. 231.
34. *Vie*, p. 236.

35. See Ross Fuller. *The Brotherhood of the Common Life and Its Influence*. Albany: SUNY, 1995, p. 1-3, for a fuller discussion of the significance of these terms. Most mystics, according to students of the subject, pass through three stages: the illuminative, in which they feel themselves inspired by a powerful sense of God's presence; the purgative, in which they attempt to be worthy of God's favour by practising great austerities; and the 'unitive', which is defined as the mystic's experience of a perfect sense of harmony with God's will; some authorities would also add that in the final stage the mystic becomes ready to take on the duties of evangelization, thus its alternative label, the 'apostolic' stage. It should be noted that some authorities regard these not as stages on the mystic's path but as three separate 'ways' of going to God. Jeanne Guyon's experience of emotional dryness or aridity was a recognised part of the 'purgative' experience in some mystics; its purpose was to teach the seeker to be less dependent upon the emotions. It should not be confused with the 'dark night of the soul', a rarer experience, not connected with the emotions, in which the mystic who has already passed through the customary stages to union finds him/herself so wholly absorbed by God that the divine presence is no longer detectable. This distinction is more fully explained in Serouet, *De la vie dévote à la vie mystique*, Chapter X.

36. See Jean Orcibal's *État présent des recherches sur la répartition géographique des 'Nouveaux Catholiques' à la fin du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1948).

37. *Vie*, p. 228-29.

38. This account of the important dates in Madame Guyon's life is indebted to the chronological table included in Benjamin Sahler's edition of *Madame Guyon et Fénelon: La correspondance secrète*, with an Introduction by Étienne Perrot, (Paris: Dervy-Livres, 1982), p. 27-37. It is more recent and comprehensive than that included in Françoise Mallet-Joris's *Jeanne Guyon*. Madame Guyon's own *Vie* contains few dates, and facts are often reported out of their chronological order.

39. Still in the period of dryness that followed her first enthusiasm, she had written to tell him of her despair at her own lapses in devotion (she even considered conversion to Calvinism; 'Genève me venait dans l'esprit d'une manière que je ne puis dire.') He told her that her state was a state of grace, which brought peace to her spirit and calmed her heart, *Vie*, p. 206.

40. *Vie*, p. 243.

41. *Vie*, p. 245.

42. *Vie*, p. 249-250.

43. *Vie*, p. 353.

44. Bertot was also from Caen and had known Marie des Vallées. See du Chesnay, *Les missions de Saint Jean Eudes*, p. 326-327, Biographical note.

45. *Vie*, p. 448.

46. *Vie*, p. 443.
47. *Vie*, p. 446.
48. *Vie*, p. 446: 'Ils ne songèrent plus qu'aux moyens d'en venir à bout, et pour le faire avec succès, ils envoyèrent à confesse au père La Combe un homme et une femme...'
49. *Vie*, p. 449.
50. Jean Orcibal, *Louis XIV contre Innocent XI*, p. 34-35, p. 61, 62.
51. Orcibal, *Louis XIV contre Innocent XI*, p. 33-34: 'il fallut tous les instances du cardinal d'Estrées pour que [Innocent] permit le procès.' Orcibal believes the fact to be established by witnesses from very diverse sources, which he cites in a long note, n. 174, on p. 34.
52. Bossuet has always been popularly thought to have drafted the Articles. His secretary François Ledieu says in his journals, however, published in two volumes as *Les dernières années de Bossuet* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1928), edited and introduced by C. Urbain and E. Lévesque, that Bossuet denied being their author. He attributed them instead to Colbert, then minister and secretary of state, and controller general of finances; he 'en était véritablement l'auteur' and he alone 'avait déterminé le Roi'. See Ledieu, *Dernières années*, I, entry for Jan. 19, 1700, p. 10.
53. See Jean Orcibal, *Louis XIV contre Innocent XI*, p. 33, n. 170: Louis's minister Talon at this time published a pamphlet, whose preamble stated, 'Chose étrange que le Pape dont le principal soin doit être de conserver la pureté de la foi et d'empêcher le progrès des opinions nouvelles...', discours de Talon, 23 Jan. 1688, in Marquis de Sourches, (1639-1716), *Mémoires du marquis de Sourches sur le règne de Louis XIV*, 13 vols., (Paris: Hachette, 1882-83), II, p. 373. The situation was aggravated, from Louis's point of view, by the fact that French public opinion, outside Court and Parlementaire circles, was strongly favourable to the rights of the papacy, Orcibal, pp. 63-65.
54. There is some confusion here regarding dates. In his chronology of Jeanne Guyon's life, Sahler states that the persecution of P. La Combe began in 1687; but Mallet-Joris says it began in 1686. As the *Vie* is for once clear regarding dates, and states that it began in 1686, mentioning a letter Jeanne received from La Combe regarding the mysterious couple, in the summer when she was with the Chevreuses, this is the date settled on here as marking the beginning of La Combe's persecution by persons unknown. Jeanne gives no date for the forged letters from La Combe containing the Molinist propositions. See *Vie*, p. 249-57; 446-49.
55. *Vie*, p. 276.
56. *Vie*, p. 461.
57. Orcibal, *Louis XIV et Innocent XI*, p. 34-35, see esp. n. 176: As late as Jan. 1688, Talon complained, i) that the pope had not published the bull against the maxims of Molinos; in spite of promises of Sept. 16, 1687, the pope did not sign the bull *Caelestis Pastor* until Nov. 20 and it

remained a secret for three months; ii) that he had taken no public measures against Cardinal Petrucci, convicted of the same errors; iii) and finally that he had prevented 'qu'on recherchât les personnes du premier rang qui les enseignent [i.e. the errors of Molinos] ou en font profession...en Italie et en Espagne.'

58. The Marquis de Dangeau, cited in Madame de Maintenon, *Lettres*, 5 vols., published by Marcel Langlois (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1937), III, note to #525, p. 298. Note that the date of La Combe's arrest is given here as Oct. 24, 1687.

59. *Lettres*, III, p. 298, citing P. Dubruel, s.j., *Études*, 1913, p. 608-634.

60. *Vie*, p. 470.

61. Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, p. 214.

62. *Vie*, p. 474.

63. *Vie*, p. 474.

64. 'Les gens qui l'ont écrite', she wrote to Chéron, one of the archbishop of Paris's men and one of her original examiners, 'ont pris tout le soin possible de me décrier part comme une infâme.' The letter takes for granted Chéron's acknowledgment that the earlier letter was a forgery; from *Archives de la Bastille, docs. inédits*, Tome IX, (Paris, 1877); cited Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, p. 199-200.

65. *Vie*, p. 466.

66. The archbishop's two seconds, Chéron and Pirot, made this proposal to her in the presence of the *supérieure* of the convent at which she was interned, *Vie*, p. 494.

67. *Vie*, p. 508-509. An incidental intervention from an abbess, friend to Mme Guyon and related to Mme de Maintenon, was also helpful. The abbess complained to Mme de Maintenon that she needed to see Mme Guyon on business but had been refused permission to do so by the archbishop of Paris; this gave Mme de Maintenon a reason to approach the king on her behalf.

68. For a brief summary of Mme de Miramion's relations with Jeanne Guyon, see A. Bonneau, *Madame de Miramion, sa vie et ses oeuvres charitables, 1629-1696*. Paris, 1868, pp. 292-296: 'l'esprit du mal cherchait dans l'ombre un moyen de se servir de ses mains innocents pour introduire à Saint Cyr...la séduction et le trouble dans la foi.' Bonneau's evident hostility to Jeanne Guyon may be explained by the fact that Mme de Miramion (née Bonneau) was one of his ancestors and he was anxious to protect her reputation. He claimed Mme de Miramion never saw her after their first meeting; however, Jeanne's *Vie* states that she was there Sept. 20, 1688, at a moment when Jeanne was writing her autobiography, *Vie*, p. 518.

69. *Vie*, p 518. Madame de Maintenon's first letter to Jeanne was written Feb. 25, 1691; it issued an invitation to join her at Saint-Cyr on a visit, 'j'espère...que vous serés de la partie, si vostre santé

vous le permet.' See Mme de Maintenon, *Lettres*, III, #658, p. 501.

70. To the comte de Vaux, the duchess of Béthune's younger brother and the son of the disgraced Fouquet; another marriage of strategy, perhaps; *Vie*, p. 532-33.

71. Jeanne states that their first meeting occurred the day after a dream about 'M. l'abbé de F...' which took place, '[q]uelques jours après ma sortie', in which she dreamt that 'Notre Seigneur me l'unissait très intimement et plus que nul autre.' Some readers have assumed that this 'unity' was with Jesus Himself; the context makes clear that she was referring to Fénelon. *Vie*, p. 518-519.

72. Saint-Simon: 'Mme de Maintenon dînait de règle une et quelquefois plusieurs fois par semaine à l'hôtel de Beauvillier ou de Chevreuse, en cinquième entre les deux soeurs et les deux maris...' Cited in Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, 242-43.

73. Maintenon, *Lettres*, III, editor's note citing the abbé Ledieu, Bossuet's secretary, [in *Revue Bossuet*, 1909], p. 431: 'Tous les dimanches [Fénelon] dinoît en particulier avec [Mme de Maintenon] à l'hôtel de Chevreuse ou de Beauvillier; on n'admettoit qu'un très petit nombre de personnes, et, à l'issue du dîner, Fénelon faisoit une conférence spirituelle...'

74. See *Madame Guyon et Fenelon: La Correspondance secrète, avec un choix de poésies spirituelles*. Edition prepared by Benjamin Sahler, with an Introduction by Etienne Perrot. (Paris: Dervy-Livres, c. 1982). The Introduction discusses Fénelon's 'dryness', and the letters describe it.

75. Maintenon, *Lettres*, IV, p. 101-2.

76. Mme Guyon describes the school as 'pour les demoiselles dont les pères s'étaient ruinés au service du roi'. *Vie*, p. 508.

77. Sylvine de Maisonfort had been sufficiently impressed by Jeanne's work to wish her to direct the 'Dames' of Saint-Cyr. Mme de Maintenon responded that this would be too dangerous - on both sides - with someone who had been in prison. Maintenon, *Lettres*, III, #656, Feb. 6, 1691, p. 498.

78. Maintenon, *Lettres*, IV, 1694, p. 355, editor's note: 'un conflit d'autorité naquit entre [Mme Guyon et Mme de Maintenon]; Mme Guyon était devenue l'oracle, qu'on écoutait de préférence à Mme de Maintenon; celle-ci fit comprendre à Mme Guyon qu'elle devait se retirer...' As early as 1689, Fénelon had written to Mme de Maintenon a long and famous letter to tell her that she must learn to be less worldly. Maintenon, *Lettres*, III, Jan. 1689, p. 387-95.

79. *Vie*, p. 536.

80. *Vie*, p. 535-36. Fénelon approved of this step, it seems; at least this was what he told Mme de Maisonfort in a letter of May 2, 1693; see Maintenon, *Lettres*, IV, editor's note, p. 130. Mme Guyon was instructed to 'disappear' Jan. 10, 1694; see *Lettres*, IV, p. 357.

81. Jeanne's exclusion was made easier when, in April 1694, Godet des Marais composed an ordinance which made Mme de Maintenon 'superior for life' of the school/convent. (Arch. nat., L.L. 1597; copy.) It forbade entry to Saint-Cyr to any lay person whatever her rank or dignity might be, aiming directly at Mme Guyon. See Maintenon, *Lettres*, note to letter 875, p. 250-1.
82. The King did not initially much fear Jeanne, but read her effusions in *Moyen court* and called them 'resveries'. Maintenon, *Lettres*, IV, #795, May 12, 1693, p. 135-6. The exact date of this letter, to the countess of Saint-Géran, is in dispute.
83. Michel Le Vassor [attrib.], *Les soupirs de la France esclave, qui aspire après la liberté* (1689); cited in Maintenon, *Lettres*, III, editor's note, p. 447.
84. *Ibid.* Note also that Mme de Maintenon would be given rights of visitation to all French convents by Innocent XII in 1692; it was a signal honour, normally given only to reigning queens. Maintenon, *Lettres*, IV, p. 106.
85. Jeanne makes no mention of the society in her *Vie*. Accounts of it survive, however, in the letters of her friends and in the writings of Bossuet and Fénelon themselves. But these do not make clear when it began; the collection of the Fénelon-Guyon correspondence in *Madame Guyon et Fénelon* suggests 1694, p. 34; that is, after Jeanne's break with Madame de Maintenon.
86. J. Orcibal, *Fénelon et la cour romaine*, cited Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, p. 244.
87. Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Avertissements aux protestants sur les lettres du ministre Jurieu contre l'histoire des variations, avec la défense de cette histoire*. (Versailles, 1817), 5ième Avertissement, pp. 332-37.
88. *Ibid.*: see the general argument in the fifth 'Avertissement', pp. 315-482.
89. *Vie*, p. 550.
90. *Vie*, p. 551.
91. *Vie*, p. 614.
92. Fénelon, cited Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, p. 303.
93. Apart from Fénelon's *Explication des maximes des saints* (Jan. 1697), and Bossuet's *États d'oraison* (Feb. 1697), the two men published several other works during the period 1694-1698. A complete list follows: Fénelon's *Recueils* (Summer 1694); Bossuet's *Sommaire de la doctrine du livre: Explication des Maximes des saints* (August 1697); Fénelon's *Lettres à un ami* and *Instruction pastorale* (Sept. 1697); Bossuet's *Relation sur le quiétisme* (June 1698); Fénelon's *Réponse à la Relation sur le quiétisme* (July 1698); Bossuet's *Remarques sur la Réponse* (Sept. 1698); Fénelon's *Réponse aux Remarques* (Nov. 1698). After Fénelon's exile to Cambrai in Aug. 1697, he was forced to seek publishers outside France or in Lyons. Note also that Jeanne Guyon published a work of her

own in her defense, her *Justifications* in the summer of 1694.

94. Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, p. 459.

95. Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, p. 204.

96. Orcibal, *Louis XIV contre Innocent XI*, p. 35: Orcibal offers as proofs that: i) in spite of promises of Sept. 16, 1687, the pope did not sign the bull *Caelestis Pastor* until Nov. 20; ii) it remained a secret for three months; iii) he took no public measures against Cardinal Petrucci, convicted of the same errors; iv) finally, he prevented 'qu'on recherchât les personnes du premier rang qui les enseignent ou en font profession...en Italie et en Espagne.'

97. Louis XIV, July 26, 1697: 'Très Saint-Père, l'application et les soins infatigables que V.S. apportait à l'affaire du livre de l'archevêque de Cambrai me persuadaient qu'Elle déciderait bientôt, suivant les fréquentes assurances qu'Elle m'en a fait donner par son nonce, lorsque j'ai appris que les partisans de ce livre faisaient encore des efforts pour embarrasser l'affaire par de nouveaux projets qu'on présente à Votre Béatitude. Quoique je sois persuadé que ses lumières lui découvriront aisément leurs artifices, je me vois cependant obligé, par l'attention principale que je dois à la pureté de la doctrine dans mon royaume, de renouveler encore moi-même à V.S. les mêmes instances tant de fois réitérées pour obtenir d'Elle une prompte décision, claire, nette et suffisante pour arracher le mal dans sa racine.' Cited Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*.

98. Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 17.

99. *Vie*, p. 482.

100. Elisabeth-Charlotte, *Lettres inédites*, LXXXVI, 20 July 1698, p. 186-86.

101. Cited in Françoise Mallet-Joris, *Jeanne Guyon*, p. 255.

102. Martimort, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, p. 196.

103. In historiographical interpretations of the Bossuet-Fénelon debates, Fénelon is sometimes presented as a 'liberal', in comparison to Bossuet, largely because he seems to some of his admirers to have favoured a more limited conception of sovereign authority than did Bossuet. Gaquère, Bremond, and a series of other specialists perceive Fénelon in this light. Among historians who specialise in the study of the first half of the 17th C. (Treasure, Skinner, Le Roy Ladurie, Mousnier, Moote, Collins, Mongrédien, Bonney, to name a few) the 'parti dévot' and its individual representatives, are invariably presented as a 'conservatives' because they supposedly sought to re-establish aristocratic government.

104. *Vie*, p. 621.

105. See Charles Gérin, ed., *Recherches historiques sur l'Assemblée du Clergé de France de 1682*, (Paris and Lyon: Lecoffre, 1869), p. 529.

106. See the Introduction to Mme Guyon's *Vie* for a discussion of her influence on Rousseau and her connections with the Freemasons. Her secretary in her later years belonged to this association. For her influence upon Wesley, see Robert Tuttle, *Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury Press, 1989).

107. The publishers of the edition of Jeanne Guyon's life used in this account were surprised to discover, on the title page of the 1720 edition, the design of a laurel leaf bearing the subscription, 'Vincenti'; i.e., 'Au vainqueur', as they had themselves chosen as an epigraph for their work these words from the *Apocalypse*, 'Au vainqueur, je ferai manger de l'arbre de vie placé dans le paradis de Dieu.' See Jeanne Guyon, *Vie*, 'Avant propos', p. 7.

CONCLUSION

In depicting the rise and fall of *dévot* resistance to the crown, this account has touched upon two larger issues: the emergence and decline of a specifically French theology of indifferentism, with its interiority and its readiness to ‘set Paradise on fire, to defy personal gain’; and the relationship between male and female devotional trends on the one hand, and the political conditions in which they develop, on the other. In spite of its broad scope, this study is not intended to provide a comprehensive theory about men and women, Church and state, or God and Caesar. Concerned with a particular historical moment, it draws no conclusions about essential or eternal differences between men and women. The most critical points it makes are summarized below.

We have seen throughout Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 in particular how clerical men attempted to make use of women to further their own vision of religious devotion. The different models presented here show that their approach to female piety was never uniform, even among men who were close friends and who shared many of the same theological ideas. At the same time, one common theme does emerge: their desire to mold the women under their direction into what Caroline Bynum has described, in another context, as ‘models of interiorized spirituality’.¹ Thus in Chapter 4 Pierre de Bérulle tried to reshape the Carmelites’ piety into his own image of internalized piety, in defiance of their own tradition of body-based mortification. François de Sales, unlike Bérulle, found a willing pupil in Jeanne de Chantal, as Saint-Cyran did in Mère Angélique. Jean Eudes found that his *dirigée* was far ahead of him on the road to interiority, as did Fénelon. But there is no mistaking the fact that *dévot* men placed intense pressure upon the women in their charge and had their own ‘agenda’ for female spirituality that did not always correspond to that which women might have chosen for themselves.

The path to interiority was a dangerous one: it could easily lead to controversy and heresy. What is interesting about the *dévot* clerics' attitude toward interiority, as outlined here, is that they seldom seem to have shied away from it on this account. It would have been less embarrassing for Bérulle to give in to the Carmelites than to insist on pressing them to adopt his reforms. Saint-Cyran, Eudes, and Fénelon must have been aware of the risks they were taking in encouraging their female disciples to practice their peculiar forms of indifferentism. The reason postulated here is that they needed women as a source of consolation too badly to be appropriately cautious. As the *dévot* clerics found themselves increasingly pressed to conform, they pressed the *dévot*es in their charge to ever-greater extremes: thus we find that Marie des Vallées, Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, and Jeanne Guyon were urged on by their directors to heights of extravagance that would have been unthinkable a century earlier, in spite of the fact that in the earlier years of the century extreme forms of religious zeal were generally regarded with a more tolerant eye. In other words, as the outlets for religious zeal declined in number, its expression grew more intense, and these select women were, so to speak, the points of release. If there is a lesson to be drawn from this, it is that female heterodoxy was not necessarily the outgrowth of women's essential spiritual tendencies, or even a response to their own second-rank status in society, but was sometimes the result of male interference and direction.

It should also be emphasized that male *dévots*, for all their admiration for women who were detached from the circles of power, were at least partly, perhaps wholly, responsible for politicizing the *dévot*es, or at least for making them the objects of state interest. This was possibly an unintended consequence of their desire to encourage women to adopt religious extremism, to encourage their *adhérence à Dieu*. In a century when Church and state were so closely intertwined, it was inevitable that religious activism, even when wholly 'internalized' should acquire a political significance. But

we cannot discount the possibility that, in some cases at least, the politicization of the *dévotes* was intentional. Fénelon certainly had a political as well as a religious agenda, which is apparent in his activities at the court of Louis XIV. Although it cannot be said that he succeeded in politicizing Madame Guyon, he certainly made her aware of the revolutionary aspects of her devotional system in a way she had not been before. The same might be said of Antoine Arnauld with regard to the women of Port-Royal in the 1660s.

Talk of the way *dévot* men sought to ‘shape’ and ‘lead’ women should not draw attention away from the fact that women themselves often proved to be extraordinarily resistant to male direction, when it disagreed with their own inclinations. The Carmelites’ resistance to Bérulle’s direction is one example of how resistant they could be: if the Carmelites did not win their battle with Bérulle, neither did he. They fought to a draw that ended in the departure of the rebel nuns for Flanders, not in their acquiescence. Other examples of female resistance to male authority occur in this study. Mère Angélique was prepared to dismiss an endless array of confessors and directors until she found one who was prepared to lead her in the direction she wanted to go. Jeanne Guyon did much the same. And the research undertaken for this study suggested repeatedly that there are many undiscovered examples of female religious, in particular, who flatly refused to take direction from men and, in some cases, succeeded in wearing down their opponents to the point where the latter simply gave in. The support of an order was undoubtedly a great help on such occasions. Women who lived in the world were less able to mount a successful resistance.

But the radical and heretical elements in *dévote* spirituality should not be overemphasized; nor should be the threat it posed to the existing social order. First of all, charges of heresy or heterodoxy against women often seem to have been dictated, as we have seen, by the crown’s

shifting policy toward Rome rather than by the actual content of female spirituality. Neither Jeanne Guyon nor the women of Port-Royal were willingly condemned by Rome. The popes resisted pressure to condemn them as long as they could, and when they finally gave in they expressed their condemnation in relatively mild terms. Outside the period of Louis XIV's struggles against Rome, it should be remembered that *dévotes* often occupied a central place in the society of their time, and that their spirituality was admired rather than rejected by the highest circles of society. Part of the purpose of this study has been to show that even the most extreme forms of religious expression were valued by the institutional Church and by the state. Thus Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, for all the truly extraordinary - even bizarre - elements in her piety, became a symbol of French and Catholic orthodoxy enduring long past the age in which such manifestations of piety were acceptable.

Meanwhile, the critical fact that male *dévots* often suffered the hostility and even outright persecution of both Church and state, sometimes to a greater degree than women, must not be forgotten. Indeed, as this study has argued, their difficulties were at the heart of their interest in and hopes for female spirituality. Bérulle, harassed by Richelieu, Michel de Marillac dying in prison, Saint-Cyran also imprisoned for his resistance, Fénelon denied the right to exercise the duties of his bishopric, and finally the tragic and uncomprehending Père Lacombe in his cell, were all made to know the price of devotion and disobedience. If they cannot truly be described as martyrs, they were certainly rebels, accidental rebels perhaps, but the reality of their sacrifice should not be underestimated.

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The conditions of the seventeenth century seem to have been favourable to a particular kind of feminine leadership, to women's inspiration, influence, and the direction of consciences. This is not the same thing as possessing actual power, of course, and it cannot be denied that *dévot* women remained firmly subordinate to men throughout the period. But this was only to be expected: no serious historian could suppose that the seventeenth century encouraged feminism to flourish either as a theory or in practise. What remains surprising is that women during this era were permitted to rise the Church at all. Their visibility and their importance during an era of reaction and retrenchment are counterintuitive. It suggests that the standard thesis that women's religious influence flourishes only in times of openness and institutional weakness is in need of some revision.

But this revision should be undertaken with caution. It is impossible to predict whether the peculiar conditions which produced the *dévot*es in the seventeenth century, with their strange mixture of defiance and acquiescence, would be likely to do so in another place or time. Yet we do know that the *dévot*es were not a unique phenomenon: men like Jerome, Bernard, Francis and others turned to women for reasons which often closely resembled those of the *dévot*s. They needed women's comfort, practical skills, money, and closeness to God; needed them, in some cases, because women were freer to move about without arousing the suspicions of the authorities than they were themselves. Thus Peter Brown describes the women of Carthage 'bringing back the blessings of the Church to their cowed menfolk', after visiting the martyrs in their prison cells there. The men 'dared not show their faces in the public spaces of a pagan city in times of persecution'; the women 'could pass more easily into the terrible prison-house'.² No doubt this situation found many echoes down the centuries, as it did also in the seventeenth century when the Carmelites were brought to France while the Carmes were left behind. The only sure lesson that may be drawn from this study

is that the development of male and female modes of devotion, the various attitudes of men and women to organized religion, should always be considered in concert. Whether the lesson may be further developed or extended; whether other lessons may be derived, must be left up to future studies of the subject.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. Bynum. 'Women's Stories', p. 111.
2. Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 154.

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