THE CHURCH IN FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XIV

JESUITS, HUGUENOTS, GALLICANISM, AND JANSENISM

Prayer
Scripture: Psalm 21
Hymn: 458 "O God of Bethel"

The second half of the seventeenth century and first fifteen years of the eighteenth century is a period known as the age of Louis XIV. Louis XIV was only five years old when he became king in 1643. When he came of age in 1661 he assumed power in his own name and announced he would be his own chief minister. As absolute monarch of the strongest Kingdom in Europe, his court became the model for the courts of the day. His court was a Catholic court, dominated by court Jesuits.

The religious wars in France ended in 1598 with the Edict of Nantes. When Henry IV, the leader of the Huguenots, turned Catholic, he did not forget his former associates. The Edict of Nantes gave the Huguenots full civic equality with the Catholics, granted them the right to exercise their religion in all of France except in a few reserved places, and guaranteed these rights by putting certain walled cities in control of the Huguenots with the right to garrison these walled cities.

Henry IV avoided further wars and worked to restore the prosperity of France. His chief minister, the Huguenot Duke of Sully, reformed the tax system so thoroughly that at the end of most years there was a surplus in the treasury. He repaired and built roads and planted trees along them. He built bridges and improved the water ways. He encouraged fairs. He zealously encouraged French agriculture which he considered the main source of the country's wealth. Another Huguenot minister, Barthelemy de Laffemas, as Controller-General of Commerce, vigorously developed trade and industry. With loans, special privileges, and tax exemptions he encouraged the production of the raw materials and the building of factories for tapestries, silks, and linens. Henry IV encouraged French colonies; Quebec was founded in 1608. The king with the aid of faithful ministers reduced the power of the troublesome nobles, replacing them with middle-class officials loyal to the crown. Henry IV won the affection of his subjects who called him "The Great King Henry" or "The Good King Henry."

When Henry IV was assassinated by a Catholic maniac in 1610, his son, Louis XIII was only eight years old. Henry's widow, Marie de' Medici, by her incompetence and ineptness, threatened the accomplishments of her husband. She tried to keep the nobles in line with honors and bribes, she allowed the Estates General to increase its powers, her pro-Spanish policy alienated her people, and extravagance and mismanagement brought France to the brink of financial ruin and chaos.

Under the regent, Marie de' Medici, a young noble, Armand de Richelieu (1585-1642) turned from an army career to a career in the church. At the age of twenty-one he became bishop of the small
diocese of Luçon. As a delegate to the Estates General he attracted the attention of Marie de' Medici. She gave him a post in the government and secured his nomination as a cardinal in the Catholic church. When Louis XIII came of age he deposed his mother but kept Cardinal Richelieu as his chief minister.

Cardinal Richelieu devoted himself wholeheartedly to the service of his king. His goals were to make the power of the king absolute in France and to make France the greatest power in Europe. His way to make France strong was to destroy the power of the Huguenots, to abase the pretensions of the nobles, and to humble the proud house of Hapsburg.

Cardinal Richelieu's determination to destroy the power of the Huguenots was motivated by political rather than by religious motives. The Edict of Nantes (1598) had resulted in the Huguenots gaining not only religious toleration but a privileged political position. Huguenots had prospered economically, becoming influential leaders in commerce, industry, and in learning. With their walled cities, their assemblies, their special rights, and their armed forces they formed a state within the state. To Richelieu such a state within the state was a threat to national unity. When the Huguenots, encouraged by England, revolted in the seaport of La Rochelle, Richelieu used the royal armies to crush the Huguenots. After a long siege (1627-1628) in the peace of Alais (1629) he left the Huguenots religious liberty and equal political rights but took away their walled cities, armed forces, special assemblies, and other special rights that gave them the power to cause trouble.

Richelieu broke the nobles by ordering their castles destroyed, by using spies to discover any plots against the crown, by executing conspirators, and by replacing noble governorships with "intendants"—usually lawyers of the bourgeois who owed their position to the crown. Richelieu built up a highly centralized bureaucracy.

The Cardinal sought to humble the Hapsburgs by giving French support to the Swedes against the Hapsburgs and Catholics in the Thirty Years' War.

Louis XIII and Richelieu gave great encouragement to the development of French culture. The cardinal created the French Academy (Académie Française). Madame de Rambouillet hosted a famous literary group that included the dramatist, Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), the poet and critic, François de Malherbe (1555-1628), the letter-writer, Madame de Sévigné (1626-1696), a group that played an important part in standardizing the French language and in awakening an appreciation of literary style.

Also under Louis XIII and Richelieu there was a great religious awakening in France led by Jesuit educators and by two of the great French saints. St. Vincent de Paul (1576-1650) founded hospitals and enlisted the services of the society ladies of Paris. His Lazarist Order and his Sisters of Charity stirred great concern for works of charity. St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) as bishop of Geneva, preached often in the chief cities of France and his
devotional manuals, such as his Introduction to the Devout Life (1608) and his Treatise on the Love of God (1616), were widely read and kindled new life in French Catholicism.

Louis XIV was only five years old when his father died in 1643. The widow, Anne of Austria, took as chief minister in her regency, Jules Mazarin, an Italian who had become a naturalized French citizen, and who had been an aide of Richelieu. Mazarin was most successful in continuing the work of Richelieu that he was rewarded with a cardinal's hat. The Peace of Westphalia (1648), ending the Thirty Years' War, and the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) ending the war with Spain left France the leading power in Europe. Jealousy of Mazarin's power and dislike of his foreign origin resulted in a rebellion, called the Fronde, which lasted from 1648 to 1653. The rebellion petered out and Mazarin died in 1661. Louis XIV, who had come of age, announced that he would be his own chief minister. During his long reign he worked hard at making himself absolute monarch of France and at making France the strongest monarchy in Europe.

LOUIS XIV, EXEMPLAR OF THE ABSOLUTE MONARCH

Louis XIV was king by divine right and it was sacrilege to oppose him. His will was law and he was accountable only to God. He was the father of his people. Courtiers fawned on him and officials abased themselves before him. He was served by able ministers. Colbert was over financial and economic matters and the navy. Le Tellier and his son Louvois directed the army. Lionne Pomponne, and Colbert de Croissy in turn administered foreign affairs. Louis XIV reorganized the royal councils such as the Council of Finance and established new ones like the Council of Commerce. He manned the councils with able lawyers and bourgeois officials. He increased the powers of the intendants and made them the cornerstone of his administration outside Paris. Careful attention was given to the administration of towns and provinces. The upper classes gathered around the royal court, with the nobles becoming courtiers. Colbert was a convinced mercantilist. The crown regulated industry, commerce, production and trade to promote the interests of France. The tariff acts of 1664 and 1667 declared economic war on Holland, England and Italy. Export duties on French goods were reduced. The ministers negotiated commercial treaties favorable to France. The merchant marine was subsidized and a powerful navy was built up to protect French trade. The East India Company was refounded in 1664. A West India Company was formed; also a Levant Company and a Company of the North. Colonization was encouraged, especially in the West Indies and Canada. At home Colbert encouraged agricultural production, horse breeding, and the manufacture of many new commodities. He encouraged importing skilled foreign laborers.

The king was a generous patron of the arts and learning. The French Academy grew in prestige. The Academy of Painting and Sculpture was given a monopoly of the right to teach art. The Academy of the Sciences was founded by Colbert in 1666. This was the Golden Age of French Literature. Colbert subsidized and pensioned such men as Jean Racine, Pierre Corneille, and Molière.
French became the language of diplomacy and also the language of the polite and learned all over Europe.

The architects of Louis XIV turned Paris into a new city of splendid buildings, triumphal arches and city gates. Louis XIV climaxed the building program with the fabulous palace at Versailles that was the envy of all Europe.

Bishop Bossuet was the leading churchman of France. The court of the king was filled with court Jesuits who considered it a breach of etiquette for anyone to have a different religion from that of the king.

Louis XIV was determined to win military glory, to advance the prestige and possessions of the house of Bourbon, and to expand the borders of France until they reached the "natural boundaries" established by God (the Rhine, the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the sea). To accomplish this he built up a powerful standing army. It was the best equipped and best trained army in Europe, led by Louvois, Marshal Vauban, Colonel Martinet, and the Duke of Luxembourg. The first war of Louis XIV was the "War of Devolution" against Spain in 1667-1668. Holland, England and Sweden formed an alliance to check the expansion of France. The second war was with Holland in 1672 that was ended by the treaties of Nimwegen (1678, 1679). The third war was the War of the League of Augsburg that lasted from 1689 to 1697 and ended with the treaty of Ryswick in 1697. The French armies won great glory for the king now known as the "Sun King" but he was disappointed that the gains in territory were not greater. The cost of the wars put great strain on the French economy. The fourth war was the War of Spanish Succession that lasted from 1702 to 1713. In the peace of Utrecht (1713) the Bourbon grandson of Louis XIV was acknowledged King of Spain but France gained no new territory. France actually lost territory and important colonies. England and Holland gained most. Louis XIV was only two years from the end of his long reign with France facing pestilence, famine, excessive taxes, and threatened with national bankruptcy and great unrest.

THE REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES (1685)

It is against such a background that the three great religious problems of the Age of Louis XIV must be viewed. One of these was the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the persecution of the Huguenots.

In 1662 Louis XIV had acknowledged that the Huguenots had given incontestable proof of "their affection and fidelity." They were no longer a menace to the Catholic Church. Some Huguenot pastors were able orators and learned scholars, but few were conspicuous for proselytizing zeal. The Huguenots were very important to the economy of France with many of them being able merchants, manufacturers, some of the most skilled craftsmen of French industry. The average level of learning among the Huguenots was considerably higher than the average among the Catholics. The Catholic Church was at the peak of its power as a result of the revival that had grown out of the Counter-Reformation that had come
late to France. The French clergy contained a number of men eminent for eloquence, learning, zeal, and social sympathies. They had always resented the Edict of Nantes and considered the continued existence of the Huguenots an affront. Ever since the end of the Council of Trent the French clergy had engaged in intermittent controversy with the papacy over the rights and privileges of the French church and its clergy. The clergy found it desirable to emphasize their anti-Protestant zeal. The king's theory of absolute sovereignty demanded religious unity. Dissent was a threat to national strength and could not be tolerated. The King's differences with the pope over their respective roles in the French church made it desirable for the king also to show strong anti-Protestant zeal.

During the early years of his reign Louis XIV and his courtiers were notorious for their irreligion, but the Jesuits and leading prelates in the court made rigorous formal orthodoxy a matter of political loyalty as well as a matter of etiquette. They urged the king that the time was ripe for him to act against the Huguenots. With but little persuasion they could be converted to Catholicism. The Catholics did not demand that the king crush Protestantism with one blow but recommended that it "be enfeebled and gradually starved by the retrenchment of its liberties." The king and his clergy decided on a program of interpreting the Edict of Nantes in the most stringent sense and of curtailing its benefits as severely as possible. An assembly of the Catholic clergy in 1660 suggested the appointment of a commission to investigate the administration of the Edict. On the recommendation of the commissioners the liberties of the Edict were steadily cancelled. Former privileges were rescinded and new burdens imposed. In 1666 a royal edict set forth sixty ways Protestants were to be harassed. Conversion to Catholicism was encouraged by offers of political and economic inducements. Protestants were excluded from all grades of government service. Although the king tried to maintain that the essential provisions of the Edict of Nantes were unchanged, his policy aroused strong criticism and protests from the Protestant countries. Louis XIV revoked the edict and publicly called a halt to the persecution but the harassment of the Huguenots continued.

Ten years later in 1676 when Louis XIV had gained some freedom from foreign pressures, he reverted to his repressive policy against the Huguenots. He was encouraged in this by Mme de Maintenon (later his unofficial wife). Feelings of guilt over his sins and a vein of superstitious zeal brought some improvement in his private morals. The gaiety of his court began to be replaced with a preoccupation with religious observances. With so much to atone for a contemporary observed that he did his penance on the backs of Jansenists and Huguenots. The measures against the Protestants increased in number and severity. Taxes were increased on Huguenots. Their ministers were permitted to live only in certain places and for very limited periods. Huguenot hospitals, schools, and colleges were closed and their endowments were seized and given to Catholic institutions. Their churches were destroyed. Protestants were barred from learned professions. Children were taken from their parents and placed under Catholics on the pretext that the children wished to be Catholic. Soldiers (the infamous dragonnades) were quartered in Huguenot homes with instructions to
harass and rape the women until they returned to the Catholic church. Thousands gave verbal submission to the Catholic faith. A great exodus of Huguenots from France began.

The Catholic prelates urged the king to take the final step of revoking the Edict of Nantes which he did in 1685. All remaining privileges were cancelled. Huguenot ministers were exiled. Lay people who tried to leave France were subjected to severe penalties, but thousands managed to escape. Huguenot rebellion broke out in the south and fighting in the Cevennes valleys continued for twenty years. Multitudes were sent to the galleys and the dragonnades were again stationed in Huguenot homes. The pope expressed public approval of the persecution of the Huguenots.

The loss of the Huguenots was a severe and serious economic blow to France. France lost many of her better educated, most skillful workmen, and better qualified professional men. The Huguenots fled to England, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Africa, and America. France's bitterest enemies gained people who became valuable citizens.

**GALLICANISM**

Louis XIV could no more tolerate a challenge to his absolute rule from outside France than the internal threat of the Huguenots. To the king the church was a part of his domain and his authority over the church absolute. The pope also claimed absolute authority over the church. To Louis XIV the pope was an Italian prince as well as a spiritual leader. He was a foreigner claiming power in France. Louis XIV could tolerate no foreign intervention in his realm.

Clashes between the French crown and the papacy go back at least as far as the time of Charlemagne and Pope Leo III. Across the years the French had been the allies of Rome but they did not want the pope meddling in French affairs. At times there were serious clashes as in the time of Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII that was followed by the Avignon papacy—the Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy when the papacy was moved from Rome to territory controlled by the French. In the fifteenth century the theologians of the University of Paris had been leaders in calling for reforming councils. The Council of Pisa and the Council of Constance established the idea that the pope was subject to ecumenical councils. After the Council of Constance the French were able to force the pope to make large concessions to the French in matters of taxation and clerical appointments. In 1438 King Charles VII with his nobles and clergy adopted the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges that declared the right of the French church to administer the temporal property of the French church independently of the Papacy and the right to fill vacancies in French churches. The French denied the right of the pope to tax the French and his right to fill vacancies in the church. In 1516 in a Concordat between Francis I and Pope Julius II an agreement was made that allowed the French king to nominate all high French ecclesiastics and the right to tax the clergy. The pope would receive the annates high churchmen paid for their office and the tithes and fees for special services. Over the years the French church had developed its own
special traditions and ceremonies that differed from Rome. Frenchmen were very jealous of what were known as "French liberties." There was a long standing tendency for Frenchmen to stand behind their king when he clashed with the pope.

The Council of Trent had resulted in the centralization of power in Rome and in the papacy. The French did not wholeheartedly receive the results of Trent. Many Frenchmen strongly resented the Ultramontanism that followed Trent. The resistance to this Ultramontanism came to be known as "Gallicanism." The Sorbonne was devoted to defending the Gallican liberties: papal bulls could not be published in France without the permission of the French king; judicial decisions of the Vatican had no legal force in France; French subjects could not be cited to Rome for trial; civil courts in France could handle church affairs; the ancient customs and traditions of the French church were upheld with patriotic pride. French theologians attacked Bellarmine's defense of papal infallibility and unlimited power over the whole earth in both temporal and spiritual matters.

One of the liberties claimed by the French king, a liberty known as the "regale", was the right of the King to collect the income from a vacant church. When Louis XIV conquered new territory he claimed the right to extend the regale to the new territory. The pope denied this right and claimed the income from vacant churches in the new territory must go to Rome. An assembly of the French clergy in 1681 backed the claims of the king and extended the regale to all his territory. The pope would not recognize the French claims. Bishop Bossuet drew up the Four Articles of 1682 that came to be known as the Gallican Articles: (1) the pope has no power in temporal matters; (2) the decrees of an ecumenical council are superior to the decrees of a pope; (3) the generally accepted laws and usages of the French church are inviolable; and (4) the pope's decisions are not infallible until they are ratified by an ecumenical council.

Bossuet preached the four articles with great power. They proved very popular with both clergy and laity. The king commanded that the four articles be accepted and preached by all the clergy and that they be taught in all the schools and that they be a part of the training for priests.

The pope retaliated by refusing to consecrate new bishops nominated by Louis XIV. The king toyed with the idea of separating from Rome and establishing a national French church as Henry VIII had done in England.

Pope Innocent XI died. His successor, Innocent XII was anxious to prevent such a split and was conciliatory. Louis XIV was suffering serious reverses abroad and needed to make peace with the pope. In 1693 the pope recognized the Gallican liberties and the king revoked the Gallican Articles—the revocation was rather quiet and did not come close to matching the proclamation of the articles. The king allowed the French to continue to hold and teach the articles. The French continued Catholic but continued to sit rather loose to Rome, maintaining the traditional independence.
FREBRONIUS

The equivalent of Gallicanism spread from France to other countries. Nicolas von Hontheim, Coadjutor Bishop of Trier, in 1763 published his State of the Church and of the Legitimate Power of the Roman Pontiff. He insisted that the power and authority of the church rested in the whole body of the faithful and was exercised by the bishops, of whom the pope was chief, in an ecumenical council. The ultramontane claims for the pope's jurisdiction were false and had been built upon false decretales.

Clement XIII put Febronius' work on the Index in 1764. The book enjoyed wide circulation in Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and France. In Germany such courts as Fulda, Muerzburg, and Mainz tried to imitate the claims of the French and opposed papal interference in their affairs. In 1769 three Archbishop Electors drew up thirty "Articles of Coblenz" based on Hontheim's ideas and demanded the abolition of foreign ecclesiastical superiors and release from the episcopal oath to persecute heretics.

JOSEPHISM

Gallicanism and Febronianism influenced the court in Vienna to formulate a new theory of the state in which the Emperor used the church as an agency of the state. Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II set up state seminaries to train the clergy in natural law as well as canon law. Non-Catholic worship was permitted. Monasteries were closed and the revenues used to support rural churches. The emperor exercised his own censorship of books and sermons and punished "superstition" and "fanaticism." Joseph's brother, Leopold, adopted a similar program in Tuscany.

JANSENISM

A third controversy in the Age of Louis XIV was the Jansenist Controversy. It was a challenge to the religion and morals of the court of Louis and his Jesuits. The Jansenists were the Puritans of France. The controversy resulted in burning passions and lasting bitterness.

The controversy grew out of the introduction into France of the writings of a Dutch theologian, Cornelius Jansen (d. 1638), Bishop of Ypres. Jansen was appalled at the arid theology, the worldliness of the church, and the cold ceremonial formalism of the worship of the churches of his day. He insisted that the stoical self-sufficiency of popular morality ignored the helplessness of man and his utter and absolute dependence on the Creator. Ceremonialism had blinded man to faith, grace, and the love of God. He was especially bitter in his attack on the Jesuits but he also attacked the Protestants. He accused both of exalting human merit. Both were quick to see the fatalism of predestination in his teaching. They insisted this followed from his insistence on salvation being initiated only by the grace of God. In 1640 Jansen published his Augustinus, developed for long study of Augustine on grace.

An intimate friend of Jansen, du Vergier, Abbot of St. Cyran, spread Jansen's views in France. He was especially successful in
arousing the interest of sensitive educated souls who were dissatisfied with the hallowness of the court religion. Angelique Arnauld, Prioress of Port Royal, who was from a prominent family and whose nunnery attracted young ladies from the nobility, made her monastery a Jansenist center. Antoine Arnauld became the foremost leader of the Jansenists in France. Many from the clergy, the nobility, and the educated were won to the movement. There was a great revival of interest in Augustine. Many from the high nobility turned from their dissolute lives to genuine repentance and religious devotion.

The Jansenists bitterly denounced the immorality and empty formality of the court. They charged the Jesuits with neglecting the Eucharist in their emphasis on Confession. Jesuit training centered in "moral theology" with emphasis on the administration of penance. Jansenists attacked the Jesuits fiercely on four points: (1) casuistry, (2) probabilism, (3) mental reservation, and (4) laxism. Probabilism meant that in the confessional the confessor must grant absolution if the penitent can offer any possible warrant or excuse for his sin. Casuistry was a system of analyzing all possible offenses and classifying them as venial or mortal. The Jesuit moral system covered even the depth of the décolletage. Confessors often granted absolution with mental reservations concerning the sincerity of the penitent. Popular confessors were skillful in finding excuses to the worldly courtiers. Alphonsus Liguori was the most famous of the Jesuit moralists. He was made a Doctor of the Church. Sanchez declared that for a servant to steal from a noble was a mortal sin. Escobar felt it was only a venial sin. Molina considered it no sin at all to steal if one were hungry. Jansenists blamed the Jesuits for the decay of morals.

Louis XIV could not remain indifferent to such criticisms of his court and to a movement that showed such independence. In 1649 the Sorbonne drew up a list of errors from the Augustinus and forwarded them to Rome for condemnation. The charges boiled down to two accusations: (1) man cannot perform God's commandments without special assistance from God's grace; (2) grace is irresistible. Pope Alexander VII saw a good opportunity to assert his authority and condemned the Jansenists. The Sorbonne and Jesuits deprived Arnauld of his degrees and forbade him to teach.

Blaise Pascal (1623-62), one of the leading theologians, mathematicians and scholars of France had become interested in the Jansenists in 1646. He was very critical of Jesuit morality. The condemnation of Arnauld by the Sorbonne and the threat of depriving him of his degrees moved Pascal to prepare his famous attack on the Jesuits known as Lettres provinciales that were first printed in 1656.

Louis XIV, the papacy, and the Society of Jesus joined in an effort to destroy the Jansenist movement. The king ordered the General Assembly of the Clergy to develop the means to extirpate the heresy. All members of the clergy were required to sign a condemnation of the errors of the Jansenists. Alexander VII issued his Regiminis apostolici charging the Jansenists with insubordination to the pope. Many Jansenists went into hiding. The nuns of Port
Royal defied the powers. A fierce controversy raged over the exact teachings of the Augustinus. A peace was negotiated in 1668 and for ten years there was a lull in the controversy known as "Peach of the Church" (1669-79).

Quesnel's Morale Reflections on the New Testament revived the controversy. Many of the older leaders of the Jansenists had died. Quesnel's book proved very popular and he became one of the main new leaders. A new condemnation of Jansenists was secured in 1705. In 1709 Port Royal was razed to the ground and the tombs of the dead desecrated. The pope issued a new bull of condemnation, Unigenitus. Pope Clement XI condemned 101 propositions in the Moral Reflections.

In Holland the Archdiocese of Utrecht became a haven for persecuted Jansenists. It was also a center for Gallicanism. Professor van Espen of Louvain in his Jus ecclesiasticum universum (1700) became a favorite. He championed the superiority of an ecumenical council to the pope and sought to prove from the history of canon law that untramontanism was based on false decretales. His name was put on the Index in 1734.

THE RISE OF TOLERATION AND DISSOLUTION OF THE JESUITS

As interest in natural law spread in Europe the great persecutions of Louis XIV abated. In 1724 an edict condemned Protestant ministers to death and those who harbored them were sentenced to the galleys. Men were sent to the galleys by thousands, women were imprisoned in convents and children put under Catholics. After the Pastor de la Rochette was hanged for administering the sacraments in 1762 agitation for tolerance spread even among Catholic intellectuals. In 1787 France and Austria granted Protestants the right to worship and to marry legally.

The power of the Jesuits had become a threat to the absolutism of kings and of the pope. The order had grown wealthy but paid no taxes. At times it defied both civil and religious authorities. The Order refused to be responsible for the crimes of its members. Diplomatic intrigues caused fear of the Jesuits to grow. Portugal suppressed the order in 1759. In France it was suppressed in 1764, and in Spain in 1767. The Bourbons pushed Pope Clement XIV to outlaw and disband the order. In 1773 in his bull Dominus ac redemptor noster the pope finally condemned and ended the order.