

1885

The church in France in the 18th century

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The Church of France in the 18th Century.

To write a complete history of any period it is necessary that one have his hands upon its pulse and feel its throbs.

To do this would require much study and that he place himself in the midst of the events that have transpired and become one in thought and feeling with the people about whom he is to write. He must sit as a judge reviewing carefully the two sides of the case and from an unprejudiced mind draw his conclusions and then render a true verdict.

To do this is one of the difficult things few have ever been able to accomplish. For we find that once early training and the country we live in, its customs, and polity, often cause us to judge men of other days by the light which shines into our own lives.

The purpose of this thesis is not however to decide but to review the events of the 18th century in ~~the~~ relation to the French Church. By the French Church we understand that which though Roman in doctrine still is distinctly under French

control. They took the acknowledged head but even this was limited.

To better understand this century it will be necessary to go back somewhat into the 17th and review the closing thoughts of that century.

In 1715 closed one of the most renowned and prosperous reigns that France has enjoyed. It was an age, brilliant in its attainments in the walks of literature, science, and not more than in political and military achievements. For 72 years Louis XIV held the reins of government.

At the same time began the Jansenite controversy and the seeds were sown that during the next century brought forth fruit which poisoned not only the intellect but also the political life of France.

In 1693 Father Duverney published his moral reflexions on the New Testament. Le Tellier the Jesuit confessor of the king accused this work of containing doctrine in contradiction to those taught by the Roman Church. He persuaded the king to appeal to the pope against its publication.

In 1705 Clement XI mildly condemned the book.

Cardinal de Noailles refused to receive the pope's brief.

This was caused by a renewal of the controversy.

The king incited by his confessor demanded in 1711 a bull which rigidly condemned the work.

He sent appointed 5 cardinals from all orders and schools of theologians to examine the book. This

committee was made up of men who had no knowledge of the French language. They judged the book by a Latin translation.

This examination continued through 18 months. Every proposition was thoroughly examined.

101 of these were condemned. In many respects still savoured of hereticism and hardness of the ears of Jansenism but that it was necessary for the Pope to issue a bull condemning it so that personal displeasure should have been avoided some strange. This will no doubt was forced upon the Pope contrary to his judgment. A mild censure would have been sufficient.

The king called a council of the bishops to consider the matter of its publication.

They were divided. It was, however, finally

accepted, and the bishops decided to issue a pastoral letter. The bull was bitterly criticized.

The people declaring that the pope was condemning St. Augustine, St. Paul and Jesus Christ.

Feb 5 1714 some of the bishops entered a protest.

Le Noailles was forbidden to appear at court.

The King thus favored the decision of the majority.

Nov 1713 the king died. While dying he laid the responsibility of the bull upon Cardinals Le Robecq and Le Tellier.

Philip Duke of Orleans became regent.

He restored Le Noailles.

The constitutionaries were incensed at this.

The Jesuits laid deep schemes to overthrow the government. The Sorbonne declared its acceptance of the bull false and expunged it from the registers.

There was a general release of prisoners who were arrested during the previous reign because of the opposition to the bull. 4 bishops appealed to a general council against the bull. The Theological Faculty of Paris

3.

sent forth its concurrence. At this time de Noaille had an opportunity to force the Pope to modify the bull. De Noaille naturally was a man lacking in decisions. He had not the ability to grasp present opportunities and work them to his or his fellows advantage. While in this state of indcision the 4 appellent bishops were banished. Parliament divided against the sentence. Upon this parties became divided and the instruments that were to divide the political and social life of the people were now going through the process of grinding. Schisms seemed evident ^{every} where. The ~~pope~~ became alarmed and sought reconciliation with de Noaille. De Noaille advised the publication of some explanation of the bull. Philip in the mean time issued a "Lettre de doctrine" signed by the French clergy. The Pope delayed his explanation, this was a ruse for he had no idea of giving any explanation other than the bull itself. He refused to confirm the nominations of the regent. This caused much trouble and the regent prepared to fill the

office himself. Then ^{the} Pope became alarmed and hastily confirmed those nominated by Philip. In 1778 the Inquisition condemned the appeal of the 4 bishops and the Faculty of Paris. Parliament refused to recognize them. The Pope declared them opposers no longer children of the Church.

de Noailles appeal to a general council.

At this point de Noailles again shows his weakness. Fearing ^{that} the opposing party would soon come into power he suddenly resigned his seat in the council of conscience. The court favored the constitution. Parliament the opposing party.

There was great danger of a schism in the church but this was prevented by Abbe Dubois a man of no principle and intrigues. He used his influence for the constitution. A declaration in favor of Parliament refused to register. The Grand Council registered the declaration. de Noailles finally gave his endorsement of the declaration. Parliament then gave its consent for its registration. But this was only a bill in the House. An evocation of the Council of diet to Paris did

issued
bill was

not approve of it and appealed to a future council.
In 1721 Clement XI died. Leubois who ^{had been} for years
intriguing to become Cardinal, in return for his
assistance in the election of Innocent XIII as Pope
received the Cardinalate hat.

A new-council de conscience was formed consisting
of Cardinals Leubois, Le Rohan & Le Mailly. No
mercy was shown the anti constitutionaries. Ben-
dictine wrote the new Pope concerning the bull.
They condemned it in bitter terms and pointed out
its nature. The pope resented this language and
referred it to the inquisition. Here it was condemned
as insulting. The pope remonstrated with the
regent, and he denounced it. Leubois became
prime minister instigated a bitter persecution against
the clergy. He induced them to condemn the government
and then deprived them of their churches. Leubois
died in 1723, and in the same year also the Duke
of Orleans. Fleury became prime minister.
Benedict XIII at Thronet was elected pope.
This gave some encouragement to the
anti-constitutionaries. Dr. Noaille sent a note

1111 in reply ^{part} the intimate his purpose to stand by his predecessor. A lengthy correspondence concerning this subject passed between the Pope and de Noailles. De Noaille was asked to give a written statement of his views in the case. This he did in 12 propositions which it is said the pope approved.

The ultra montane opposed this explanation, denounced the pope in bitter language. The pope relented and gave his approval of a decree endorsing the bull. Then followed another season persecution. The general assembly protested and the Duke of Bourbon put an end to this session. Sranen, a bishop in the mountains, retracted his approval of the bull and declared ^{his belief in} in truth of the Livre des Reflexions and defended the 12 articles of Cardinal de Noailles. For the purpose of punishing him a council was convoked at

Embrun June - 17, 1727.

Tencien Archbishop of Embrun was the leading spirit, a man of low character. This council was called without mentioning its purpose. Sranen learning the purpose of the council

protected against its competency to adjudicate his appeal. The council denounced his writings. No notice was taken of his protest, other than declaring it invalid. He appealed to Parliament but this was suppressed by Filmer, and Loannes was deprived of his office till he retreated. These proceedings stirred up considerable opposition. 50 advocates entered their protest and declared the council not competent to judge. They criticized the policy of suppression. These in turn were declared to be ignorant of the facts and the case in question. De Noailles and 12 publicists entered their protest to the King. They declared the sentence to be unjust. This letter was returned to them and declared seditious. Benedict XIII gave his approval. At first De Noailles opposed the registering of this approval but in a short time gave his consent. In 1729 he with drew his writings against the Bull and gave his consent to it and to the council of Cambray. Abbi L'orraine anticipating that advantage would be taken of the Cardinal's feebleness had him prepare a paper denying that

he had in any way changed his opinion or that he had recanted his former writings. This complicated matters. Both parties played with the old man till he died in 1729. The triumph of the constitution was almost perfect.

But they lacked foresight and attempted to compel obedience to the act, but this brought parliament to the side of the Jansenist.

The time became exciting. War declared between the King and parliament. Parliament declared itself independent. To make matters more interesting Benedict attempted to impose the feast of Hildebrand upon the people. Parliament suppressed it.

The pope declared the act of Parliament invalid and censured the bishops. This brief was suppressed. The Jansenist party now began to weaken and a reaction commenced towards Romanism.

The persecuting party became domineering and unmerciful. Which is the natural tendency of a persecuting party. This weaker party ^{attempted} ~~signed~~ everything that would embarrass their oppressors. In some this led to hypocrisy, in others

to a spirit of intrigue. This destroyed their power as a religious party. The circumstance of the times suggested desperation resource and remedie.

There were introduced the supernatural manifestations viz: the divine interposition in their favor. Some were between 1735 and 1732 a woman named Laforce was miraculously healed during the procession of the Holy Sacrament. Investigations declared this to be a witness to this was the infidel Voltaire. Francois de Paris a man of great wealth and a schismatic died. For a time after his burial he acted as other people in like condition, kept quiet.

Suddenly great activities were manifested in the neighborhood of his tomb Many people of divine disease came to him and were healed.

He was a man of great piety, a dancer and appellant. Among all classes were experienced many remarkable cures. The government attempted to stop the fraud but succeeded only for a short time.

The people worked themselves into a state of ~~convulsion~~ convulsion. This continued till it finally ended in immortality and impiety.

Trouble between the church and state continued. The Archbishop's condemned a weekly journal because of its Jansenist tendencies. 22 of the clergy refused to read the brief. Parliament sided with these and the king forbade parliament discussing the subject. The members refused to obey and were exiled. Parliament resigned and abandoned the Palais de justice. In November peace again established between Fleury and Parliament. During the remainder of his life there was no further disturbance between the state and the church. The king was by dissipation weakened and his prime minister old and worn out, he died in 1743. He advised the king to live a religious life and declared that he had been led by a mistaken and blind conscience.

The next trouble arose because the Bishops refused the last sacraments to the dying. This caused a schism unequalled in the minds of the common people. They were required to have written evidence that they sustained the bull ungenitice.

The king was refused the last sacraments of the

church till he incriminated himself. The Archbishop
de Beaumont demanded of all who were
suspected of Jansenist tendencies a "Billet de confession"
leparter Coffin was refused the last sacraments
because he had not this confession.

Atheal was made to parliament.

The king forbid their discussing the subject and
declared that they had no jurisdiction in the matter
and insisted on the bull being accepted. The
trouble was again renewed! Excitement was
high. The king was assaulted by a half crazy man.
Some attributed this to Jesuit influence, others to
parliament. Neither was to blame. The mind of the
man was turned by the debates, he was another
Guiteau. This attack caused a reaction in the
favor of the king & King sought a reconciliation.

The magistrates and ^{heretics} heretics were recalled.

At this time a movement which had been growing
for some years, demanded public attention, and
called forth a decree from the general ^{assembly} ~~assembly~~ of
condemning it. This was necessitated because of the
influence which it was exerting. It passed under

name of the new-philosophy, ^{and} was due to the lengths to which speculation was carried. Faith declared its vs to ^{its} ~~its~~ faculty. The church emphasised the faculty of faith in decision of all questions.

Reason and judgment had no place.

The church, and state were declared one.

The church was characterized as a hierarchy, superstitious, hypocritical. The church attempted to force upon men its creed. They persecuted all not in sympathy with her. She was very bitter towards the opponents of the bull. These things aroused antagonism in the minds of men, and they rebelled.

The battle was one against intolerance.

The ^{was} cry was liberation and humanity.

They related with the thoughts of reform, had they continued as such the world to day would have called them blessed. They failed because their deductions from undeniable facts, were false.

They did not distinguish between the abuses, and the essential character of the church, & that of the clergy were immoral, and crimes were committed in the name of religion. Seeing here things the new

philosophers declared Unity to be an imposture.

Pierre Bayle was the parent of French infidelity. He was a skeptic, a strong advocate of religious liberty. In his thinking independent. His chief work was his "Historical & Critical Dictionary".

Voltaire a deist. His purpose was to overthrow Unity as a religious system and substitute a religion of sentiment, humanity and benevolence for that of the catholic which rests upon dogmas and authorities.

He acknowledged a first cause but denied the need of objective revelation. Nature and conscience, the only guide of man.

But hardly a Roman Catholic, inwardly nothing. He was false here for he hated all religious bodies. Died in 1778. Repented at first but afterwards made sport of his weaknesses.

The funeral rites of the church were refused him.

He, however, had been buried 24 hours when the order came. Montesquieu was indifferent to the truths of Unity.

To please God we are to obey the rules of society and the duties of charity and humanity.

Condillac chief exponent of sensationalism.

Rousseau was neither a materialist nor a profane

people now a superficial sceptic. Proposed to be
 kindred diet to Xnity. Thought ^{it ought to be} a nominal
 addition to Xnity but to be interpreted by the most
 indulgent latitude. We are not to be troubled by
 any precisely defined dogma. Regarded ^{Xnity} as a system
 but calculated to promote the temporal welfare
 of man. The church attempted to destroy his
 influence and his works as well as the works of
 his sympathizers.

1767 he issued the 7th volume of his encyclopedia.
 The government interfered and prohibited its
 publication but it continued to be secretly
 issued till 1768.

It contained many articles worth on science
 and general subjects but later became very
 irreligious.

In 1762 appeared Emile of Rousseau.

Severely criticized and the author obliged to leave the country.
 In the midst of this ^{the} church did not attempt a
 defence but by oppression to uphold ~~its~~ ^{its} doctrine.

It is true that it would have been a difficult thing to have done otherwise. The method of attack was such that the law alone must stop the sale of these books, and arrest ^{the} writers. There is no defence to be made against sarcasms, ridicule, and bitter criticism.

This element in the church and the corruption prevalent were too much for the church. Still men were found who replied to these works of infidelity. Quite a number of eminent men threw their influence against this tide. One of the most noticed (Whewell) abologists used the same weapons which these infidel writers had used.

And this was really the only way to reply to them.

But it accomplished little, for the people were tired and desired a change.

The philosophers convinced the people that the clergy desired only power and worldly honour. The people became indifferent to their pastors and read anything written against them.

Thus respect for the ~~flow~~ ^{flow} ~~waken~~ ^{waken} and the

revolution began its course.

Suppression of the Jesuits.

Some have declared it due to the facts that they were
the advanced guard and nerve force of the church.

There could be no conspiracy against the Holy See
with any hope of success if they were near.

Condemned because they would not lend their aid
to the intrigues against the Holy Father and secular
the ~~state~~, others have contended that it was not due
to a deliberate plot. The cause was unpermeditated.

The ground was the desperate attempt made upon
the life of Joseph I of Portugal.

The Jesuits were at first accused, then denounced.

The tragedy caused much excitement in Paris and
there was demand for their banishment.

The true reason is found in the jealousy of ^{the} society.

This manifested by themselves and others.

Parliament and the Jesuits were always inimical.

The Jesuits were the cause of the long
Jansenist controversy. They hated all opposers
of the bull.

The destruction of Port Royal still ranked in

the hearts of the Jansenists, and they daily called for
vengeance.

Madame de Pompadour the immediate cause.
The Jansenists refused her the sacraments while
she held her present position at court. The
philosophers considered it dangerous to society and
ought to be destroyed.

Lassette, a Jesuit, entered business in the interest of the
Society. Having met with great loss he was obliged
to fail. The provincial general attempted to pay the
bills but failed because of the lack of funds.
He appealed to Rome. In the midst of the trouble the
general died and the new refused to recognize the
liabilities of his subordinate. Father Lassette and
he pay were sued and judgment declared against
them. They had no funds and could not settle.

The order itself then was ~~passed~~ and judgment rendered
against it. The Society appealed to Parliament.

Here they made a gross mistake they were now in
the hands of their enemies. It would have been better
for them to have paid their indebtedness.

Parliament voided the bills to be paid Aug 6. 1764.

These papers and documents were burned by the executioners. Their colleges closed and they were forbidden to give instruction. The Jesuits attempted to stay off the storm. They relied on the crown but the people had spoken and the king dared not protect against their decision. Appeal made to the Bishops and a compromise was proposed between them and the king. They were no longer to be a secret society. . . .

The general to live in France. Gallican articles to be taught. On these conditions were they to remain in France. The Pope replied thus saying "let them remain as they are or let them exist no longer". . . .

The king attempted to conciliate, but parliament refused. In April 1762 the Jesuits were expelled from 84 colleges. Aug 6 1762 Parliament declared their vows illegal and void. Members no longer to obey the rules of the order. . . .

They were to renounce their oaths and all connection with the society. The Pope and archbishop of Paris remonstrated. Parliament became incensed and exiled the archbishop. . . .

The Jesuits were required to take the oath within a

week or leave the city. Only 23 of the 40 members took
 this oath. Nov 1764 the King issued an edict that
 the jacobins should cease to exist in his realm. The
 Pope, although not to interfere but his advice was not
 heeded. July 21 1773 Clement XIV issued a bull
 suppressing the order. This was hailed with joy by
 Parliament.

On May 10 1774 the king died and was succeeded by
 Louis XVI a weak and indolent man. He was
 kindly disposed to protestantism

He was not the man, however in scope with the
 turbulent elements that later destroyed his government
 and life.

The national church continued to struggle against
 infidelity and irreligion.

The assembly warned the king of its influence but
 neither was able to stop it. June 1880 the clergy again
 remonstrated against the false liberalism and the
 atheistic spirit of the age.

18. The clergy attempted to suppress ^{indefinite books} the publication
 of the correspondence of Voltaire and Le St Lambert
 & owned that they did not believe in Xristy, but were

seeking to overthrow it.

Le Rohean one of the council was accused of em: alins and intrigue with Countess Lamotte. His trial brought disgrace up on the King and the church. Many joined the phobio sphere and a thinly veiled pietij became prevalent in society. Attempt was made to tax the clergy but was a failure. In 1787 an edict was issued favorable to the protestants legalizing their marriages, birth of their children, permission to enter business. They were however, still excluded from public office. 1789 they received equal rights, 1791 permission was given all to ownship as they desired.

Society was much disturbed by it's uncertainty of the government. A states general was called in 1789.

The lower house asserted its rights to act.

They demanded that the votes be taken individually. If this was refused the lower declared that it would act as a National assembly. It invited the other two houses to join them.

They refused, the commons urged them to come.

They still refusing, they declared they would wait

no longer. June 10th crisis came and the entire course of the revolution was determined. Many of the clergy joined them. On the 11th of June they declared themselves the representatives of 96% of the whole French population and that they would now proceed to business as a National Assembly. On the 22nd 149 ecclesiastic were in the procession that marched to the church of St Louis. Two days later Archbishop de Jurgie was assaulted by the people and forced to join the National Assembly. The King commanded the remaining to join the Assembly. This caused great rejoicing among the people.

This body set out now to form a new political system.

Recast the government, ecclesiastical and civil. Disorder was on every hand. The people were excited in a most deplorable manner. Low disregarded and cases refused. Everything pointed to the revolution.

It was voted in the assembly to do away with vestige of feudalism and the distinction of class.

There was a surrender of their rights of the members. They declared that the church property belonged.

to the state and the clergy surrendered on the 1st.
 By a vote of the assembly tithes were forever abolished.
 In these acts we have illustrated the impulsive French
 character. Abbi Legee began to hiss, misquing concerning
 his work. "You desire to be free," he said, but "know not
 how to be free."

M^r Rabane, answered "You have crossed the bull.
 M^r P^r Abbi, and you have no right to complain if he
 makes of his home."

All money and property were devoted to the national
 government. 1200 linc exclusive of house and garden the
 salary of the clergy.

This reducing ^{the clergy} from one independent power, was
 immediately carried in execution.

July 12 1790 a new constitution of the clergy.

The government to regulated the discipline of the
 church. Foreign prelates to have no voice in the
 government of the church. The pope to have nothing
 to do in the election of a bishop. Clergy were
 required to sign the constitution.

During the revolution ^{the french attempted} to destroy Xmits.

The priests were forced to declared that the

doctrines they formerly preached were a delusion.
 Over the gates of the cemeteries were written
 "Death is an Eternal Sleep."

Existence of God denied. The national assembly
 having declared a belief in a supreme being and
 immortal souls of m^{an}, held a national festival in
 honor of their king July 8 1794. Xnity was denounced.
 While catholic clergy cried against Xnity no
 protestant minister confessed that Xnity was a
 delusion. Even some of the clergy of the Roman
 Church maintained the doctrine of the church.
 All that was left of catholicism, was that faith
 could be declared by law.

Feb 1795 freedom of religious opinion and freedom
 of religious worship, were allowed. It now became
 evident that neither Xnity nor catholicism had been
 driven out of the hearts of the people.

The masses flocked to the churches.

Deism also began to express itself.

The French mind could not rid itself of a
 belief in eternity. In 1796 the foundation of a new
 religious system was laid. The heads of families

declared themselves heads of families meeting every week for prayer, ~~and~~ to listen to moral remarks, and sing hymns in honor of God. They were joined soon after by others. The Directory assigned them 10 parish churches. This new-fashioned worship spread in the provinces.

They believed in the immortality of the soul and in the existence of God. These two thoughts were in their minds. An altar whereon were placed flowers and fruits as thank-offering and a votive for the speaker were the central points of their worship. The walls of their churches had the following motto: "Children honor your parents and respect your elders." "Fathers and mothers instruct your children." "Husbands and wives be kind to one another." They did not have the sacraments. Held festivals at the birth of children, at marriage, and funerals. Had as little to do with ceremonies as possible.

Those they retained were divorced of their Christian character. These societies lived but a short time. In 1802 their churches were taken away from them by the consularie. Revolles & Dupare asked

a friend how he could restore the church and received the answer "Go and have yourself hanged and revive the 3rd day".

No positive religions can live for a great length of time which has not the stamp of divine authority.

Going back a little we consider the result following upon the compulsion of the clergy to sign the constitution. The church became divided into ~~pro~~ and ~~non~~ conformists, or conformists and non conformists.

This caused a great deal of excitement and disturbance in the church. The assembly made a mistake. They were trying to do that which in the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" they had declared to be wrong. Two bishops were consecrated by the Bishop of Aletun but this was considered a breach of procedure, as he was not a metropolitan.

So vacant ~~sees~~ were filled. These men possessed no weight of character. The pope disapproved of the constitution and this method of electing bishops. Commanded the clergy to retract or be suspended. Declared the recent consecration null and void. Thus the schism became wider and more

intense. The people were terribly agitated. The spirit of the newspapers was hostile to everything pertaining to the new state of affairs. Disorder was on every hand. The king refused to listen to advisors and vetoed measures sent him by the assembly. Thus began the revolution. The revolutionary organization was a failure.

The origin was in liberalism as to politics, in Jansenism in doctrine. In Gallicanism in matters of discipline. It failed in that it attempted to fasten modern ideas upon old institutions. Rationalistic philosophy was at the bottom of the matter. The clergy remained faithful to the church, and after the reign of terror, tried to revive religious interest. ~~Does not recognize the Roman Catholicism as~~ known. This ^{brief} outline we see that every attempt to force doctrine upon men may ^{or does} result in failure. The history of the country is often that of another. The Catholic by their ~~plutocracy~~ ^{plutocracy} is a bad movement not only failed to accomplish its end, but introduced we caused to be introduced and elements not in, introduced

its influence and the influence of X nity.

French infidelity is not the result of freedom of thought but of intolerance. What France might have been to-day had the church preached Christ we can only judge for what has been done in other lands

I believe that the world would have been better had the Christ life had been preached and lived.

Romanism was not suited to the French mind.

The gospel of Christ would have done more for her.