

THE STRUGGLE OVER ROMAN
CATHOLIC ORTHODOXY IN
FRANCE, 1789-1794

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Charles Michael White
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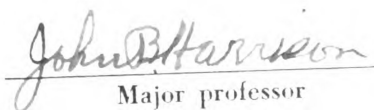
IN FRANCE, 1789 - 1794

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THE STRUGGLE OVER ROMAN CATHOLIC ORTHODOXY
IN FRANCE, 1789-1794

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. The Church Prior to 1789	1
II. Attitudes Toward the Church Revealed in the Cahiers	21
III. First Acts of the Revolution Concerning the Church	28
IV. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy and Its Consequences	48
V. The New Religion	75
VI. Some Typical Roman Catholic Reactions	91
VII. Conclusions	116
Bibliography	120

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I. The Church Prior to 1789

For centuries the dominant historical force in France has been the Roman Catholic Church. During much of the history of France the Church has not only directed the people of France in their strictly spiritual relations, but has also been a dominant force in political and economic matters. High offices of state have been consistently filled with members of the clergy, and, even when the clergy did not actually occupy these offices, their influence as confessors and advisors to the rulers was extremely large. A cursory examination of French political history would give one the impression that 'Cardinal' is a title of a high French political office. This Church, which has had and does have such an enormous influence over the life of France, was an international body, directed by a non-Frenchman whose capital was established at Rome. In the history of the French Catholic Church, the fact that the whole Church is directed from Rome has been the basic factor in determining the conflicts, attitudes, and progress of the Church. The fights on doctrinal principles have been, in the main, revolts from Papal authority, and the temporal squabbles were likewise caused by the fact that the Pope lived in another country.

This dominance on the part of the Church over practically all phases of human life has not gone unchallenged. In opposition to it there have been several major upheavals. In point of time Gallicanism was the first. It was a challenge to the power of the Church, not to its dogma. The second was the combined assaults of Protestantism and

Jansenism, which challenged dogma and not power. A third major assault was that of the philosophes and rationalists, who would have done away with both doctrine and power. A fourth powerful force, one which has as much significance, but not such a colorful history as the other challenges, was indifference.

Any significant degree of nationalism cannot tolerate dominance of the Church over affairs of state when this church is directed by an exterior force. Hence, when the first flickers of nationalism began to kindle France, the French clergy began slowly to formulate a new doctrine in keeping with their new nationalism: This doctrine is called "Gallicanism". Its earliest beginnings may go back to the twelfth century, although indications are that the records of the earliest sanctions are spurious.¹ The very name "pragmatic" sanction, however, seems to indicate that the sanction was given to previously accomplished acts. Whenever usages which are termed "Gallican" first began, it is certain that "The Gallican Church was older than the French Monarchy".² What is this Gallicanism? A. Cobille gives a very good statement of it,

In short, Gallicanism, as it appeared then [during the Schism], still confused, is a conception of the life of the Church opposed to the Papal conception, which is absolutism; it is the idea that the government of the Universal Church belongs to itself, and that, within the Universal Church, there exist national churches, which have a certain right to govern themselves; it is also a protest against Roman financial laws, through which the beneficiaries were injured in their material interests. It is, then, a reaction against every advancement of Papal power, a wish to return to the old days in the church, where [they] supposed that all things were passed according to the canonical rules, being a great fallacy.³

1. E. Lavisse, Histoire de France, illustrée (Paris, 1911), III², 64.

2. Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel, une Introduction historique, (Paris, An IV), p. 4.

3. E. Lavisse, Histoire de France, IV¹, 360-61.

During the Schism, the principle of the superiority of the Councils over the Papacy was introduced into the doctrine. At this time, the proponents of Gallicanism gained the support of the Councillers of Parlement, who saw in the Gallican attempt a monarchical church. The Pope first recognized Gallicanism in 1407 when Alexander V, after the council of Bâle, granted some illusory concessions.⁴ During the next few years, the Popes used their powers to cooperate with the King, and, through judicious appointment of cardinals, by 1419 all former ordinances had been annulled. The pressure of the new nationalism was too great for the Papal authority to withstand, however, and on July 7, 1438 the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges was promulgated by Bossuet. The preamble of this document struck out at the abuses committed or tolerated by Papal sanction. It proclaimed the superiority of councils and provided for general councils every ten years. Other articles provided that bishops and abbeyes be elected, restricted the Pope's control over benefices and candidates, prevented him from reserving for himself the collation of benefices, and suppressed annates, although the Pope did receive one fifth of the taxes previously collected. It was thus a highly successful Gallicanization document, and in addition it chastized the Church severely for lapses in spiritualism and in their duties toward their flocks.⁵ By the Concordat of 1516 the right of electing prelates was lost, the Pope giving the nomination of bishoprics and certain other benefices to the king. He kept a veto on the appointments, however, and invoked

4. Ibid., IV¹, 360-61.

5. Ibid., IV², 267.

his 'apostolic mandate' permitting him to designate some collative seats.⁶ In 1682 the Assembly of the Church of France promulgated four points,

- (1) God has given to Saint Peter and his successors no power, direct or indirect, over temporal affairs.
- (2) Ecumenical councils are superior to the Pope in spiritual matters.
- (3) The rules, usages and statutes admitted by the kingdom and the Church of France must remain inviolate.
- (4) In matters of faith, decisions of the Sovereign Pontiff are irrevocable only after having received the consent of the Church.⁷

These propositions reflected the nationalism of the age of Louis XIV, but while it is true that Anti-Papal feeling in the Church was still strong in the eighteenth century, it was probably not in full accord with the principles of 1682.⁸

This long-continuing movement away from Papal jurisdiction had a great deal to do with the inability of the Pope to stem the tide that turned violently against the Church after 1789. Even though the Pope could do nothing to contradict the actions of the revolutionists, the roots of the Saint-Siege in France were deep enough to allow him to ride the storm and to return in glory in 1801. Another aspect of Gallicanism which was to have a great effect on the revolution was the inability of the nationalist clergy to maintain any principles in the face of desertion by their new master, the national state. The Church in France, as of 1789, had succeeded in gaining for itself a place almost unknown among national churches. Yet its independence did not lead to strength. The assault of Gallicanism on the Church was generally

6. Ibid., V¹, 253-54.

7. E. J. Lowell, The Eve of the French Revolution (Boston, 1892), p. 38.

8. Ibid., p. 38.

successful, and the other assaults, those of Protestantism, Jansenism, Philosophism, and Indifference were directed as much against the Gallican Church as against the Church universal.

The advent and growth of Protestantism are well known. Those of Jansenism are more obscure. Both, however, seem to have drawn heavily on the writings and teachings of St. Augustine. After its original flurry, Protestantism was not a great force in France. But it has always been, in France, a cult of the bourgeois; hence it always held more power than it would deserve on mere force of members. Most of the Protestants in France were Huguenots, followers of John Calvin. Originally they were persecuted rigorously but in 1598 Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes, giving them some civil and full religious liberty. After Henry's death, the rights of the Protestants were gradually reduced, their city of La Rochelle being taken by force in 1628. But as yet their position was not too bad. The treaty of peace, although withholding military and political rights, did grant civil rights and religious freedom. Under the leadership of Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin, however, the Protestants gradually lost ground, and by the seventeen-eighties open force was being used to suppress them. In 1685 came the open revocation of the Edict of Nantes. After this revocation the remaining Huguenots fled, were converted, or remained quiescent - but faithful to their belief. During most of the eighteenth century, they were not persecuted, and by the time of the Revolution a persecution taking place on religious grounds was rare indeed.⁹

9. E. Lowell, Eve of the Revolution, p. 43.

Louis XIV's zeal did not stop with the Huguenots. A second group upon whom Louis vented his anger were the Jansenists. This sect did not wish to break away from the Church, but only to reform the Roman Church, to give it a more puritanical nature. They believed, after Augustine, that men are saved only by the grace of God. Jansenism differs from Calvinism in that it accepts the authority of the Church and has faith in the Eucharist. By closing convents and rigid supervision Louis had, by 1700, successfully eliminated most of the organized Jansenists. Working under the influence of and in conjunction with the high clergy, who had early taken a stand against the Jansenists, Louis XIV accepted the Bull Unigenitus decreed by Pope Clement XI in 1713. This Bull denounced Jansenism as heresy, and, even though there were no real organized Jansenists at that time, stirred up one of the most violent arguments France has ever seen. When the Bull was promulgated, the Cardinal de Noailles and seven other prelates refused to submit to it, and sent a protest to the Holy See.¹⁰ Although the division in theological questions was very absorbing and very real, the hundreds of pamphlets which flooded France were only background for another longstanding problem: the state versus the Church. On the ~~one~~ hand were those who believed in the complete ascendancy of the Roman Church on all ecclesiastical matters. On the other, ardent nationalists who believed in state control of all things within its boundaries, including beliefs.¹¹

10. Casimir Strylenski, The Eighteenth Century (N.Y., n.d.), p. 123.

11. E. Lowell, Eve of the Revolution, p. 105.

The argument was resolved somewhat in the suppression of the Jesuits in 1764 and the demand that ex-Jesuits leave the country in 1767.

While the Jesuits were always the greatest rallying-place for Jansenism, the suppression of the order came from the other factors as much as from Jansenism, among them being a growing nationalism and a growing rationalistic spirit.

It was in the suppression of both groups (Protestants and Jansenists) that we see most clearly their influence on the French Revolution. These suppressions lost for France that thing most needed to combat for France the fanaticism of the terror: Moderation. Of the Protestants, Andrew White says,

"... had that vast body of Huguenots (sic) who were driven by the bigotry of Louis XIV into those countries [U. S., Germany and England] been allowed to remain in their own, the Jacobin phase of the French Revolution and all the ruin and misery which that and the various despotisms following it inflicted upon France would have been impossible."¹²

As a positive force, then, Protestantism in the eighteenth century must be discounted. D'Argenson writes of the Jansenist suppression that "The Bull Unigenitus, ... and not the philosophy imported from England, is the cause of the present hatred of the priesthood."¹³ He based such a claim on the disgust of the people at machinations of the arguers. He believed that the endless arguments served only to increase the incredulity of the populace in regard to Church matters. Although both of these assaults against the doctrine of the Church failed,

12. Andrew White, "The Statesmanship of Turgot", Atlantic Monthly, v. 97 (February, 1906), p. 188.

13. Lord Acton and others, eds., The Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge, England, 1928), VIII, 9.

both served to weaken the Church greatly by driving the wedge between the high and low clergy even deeper. It had this effect because the high clergy, when the Church was assaulted, wrapped itself in the Papal cloak.¹⁴ The lower clergy relied on its good will with the populace.

In the eighteenth century came the first attack which was to assault both the power and the doctrines of the Church. It was a manifestation of the rationalistic spirit which brought forth in France that body of men called the philosophes. A mere listing of the names of the men considered as within this group will give one a reasonably accurate picture of all the men of letters of the period. Of them all, Voltaire is at once the most violent and the most influential. His polemics against the Church were widely read and discussed, and his slogan, "Destroy the infamous thing" was well known. Into his writings Voltaire packs more sarcasm than almost any writer. In most of his works, there is a constant battering at the foundations of the Church. It was maintained that Voltaire was against only the abuses and power of the Church, but even a cursory examination of his works will show one that Voltaire was rejecting the basic doctrines of the Church. And such rejection was imbedded deeply and continually in his writings. An incident from the French Revolution serves to illustrate the point, and proves that the people of the day also knew the ultimate goal of Voltaire's ideas.

Palissot, a celebrated writer, dedicated to the Nation a new edition of Voltaire's works ...

A member of the clergy remarked that the clergy could not receive the gift of Voltaire's work, which are, he said, tarnished with impurities.

14. E. Lavissee, Histoire de France, IX¹, 169.

M. de Sillery replied that Palissot had announced that everything which attacked religion and morals had been abridged from the work ...

Henri Grégoire said that it is useless to take up the question of acceptance before they knew whether the edition was purged or not.

The Archbishop of Paris ... adhered to Grégoire's proposition, and finished by saying that an edition of Voltaire's works, purged of all that could be detrimental to the human mind, would not be very profitable.¹⁵

The greatness of Voltaire's work comes not from his writing as divorced from the time, but from the fact that his works were, in great measure, a reflection of the growing spirit among the French people themselves. If Voltaire was a leader in the movement away from the Church, he was also a follower.¹⁶

It was Voltaire's Letters on the English which most consistently attacked the Church. In his letter on the Anglican Church he says, when these [English clergy] are told that in France young fellows famous for their dissoluteness, and raised to the highest dignities of the Church by female intrigues, address the fair publicly in an amorous way, amuse themselves in writing tender love songs, entertain their friends very splendidly every night at their own houses, and after the banquet is ended withdraw to invoke the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and call themselves boldly the successors of the Apostles, they bless God for their being Protestants.¹⁷

His letters on the Quakers bring all the usages and doctrines of the Church to the forefront. Through the lips of the Quakers, he questions baptism, communion, and the other sacraments. In one passage the old Quaker said, "Friend, ... swear not; we are Christians, and endeavour to be good Christians, but we are not of the opinion that the sprinkling water on a child's head makes him a Christian."¹⁸ Although Voltaire

15. Moniteur, du 23 au 25 septembre, 1789; no. 62; p. 255-6.

16. E. Lowell, Eve of the Revolution, p. 56.

17. Francois Voltaire, "Letters on the English", Harvard Classics, XXXIV (N.Y., 1910), 81-2.

18. Ibid., p. 66.

used one religion to ridicule another, he himself had no preference among the religions, and believed that all religions were sources of tyranny; that things divine were generally abominable. 'For the masses, Voltaire thought that perhaps belief in God was necessary, but for the 'one in one hundred who are not beasts,' such as himself, such belief was a worn-out shibboleth which could only result in harm.

The supreme power in this system was nature, and it is the laws of nature which must be obeyed if people are to attain peace and happiness. Science was supreme and rationalism was the cult. The scientific spirit was praised above all, and that which could not be understood through the use of scientific method was either worthless or it did not exist.

There were others who joined with Voltaire in this campaign for rationalism. Diderot led a group in making the Encyclopedia, a work whose chief purpose was to discredit the Old Regime and the Church. This was done through the explanatory notes and explanations which accompanied the main articles. Always the group was destructive, always "they refused¹⁷ to admit that reason and tradition can occupy ... the same citadel together",¹⁹ and always they demanded the destruction of tradition and the upholding of reason.

One other member of the assaulting forces, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, deserves comment. He became the political idol of the Revolution, and, as idol, his religious ideas were looked to and respected. The seeds of a religion which is a nationalism, which has its saints and its altars, are definitely present in Rousseau's works. The Roman Church,

19. Hippolyte Taine, The Ancient Régime, (Durand Translation), (N.Y., 1876), p. 217.

he believed, was a masterpiece of politics. The binding force within it, he asserted, was communion and excommunication. The greatest of all good things, according to Rousseau, was tolerance, but his tolerance was conceived in such a way that, if the state judged that an institution was inimical to its interest, they would drive it out.²⁰

The Church fought back against these philosophes as well as she was able. But in their rationalism and skepticism the philosophes had enlisted the aid of nationalism and had capitalized on the fights against both Jansenism and Protestantism. In 1758 the Encyclopédie was suppressed, and "the clergy fêted the suppression ... as they had fêted the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes".²¹ Voltaire's works were generally banned also, yet these measures did not stop the writers. Voltaire's works continued to be sold and read, even though castigated, and subsequent volumes of the Encyclopédie kept coming regularly from the printers. Times had already changed. No longer could the Church dictate the attitudes of the nation. She was as yet strong enough to have her decrees made into law, but not powerful enough to compel the laws to be obeyed. The French public had adopted as their own the ideas of the French philosophes. The Church refused to compromise in any way from its traditional forms. The result was to have dire consequences in the French Revolution. Even though the people as a whole did embrace the philosophical doctrines, there was a non-religious reaction against them by some of the people.²²

20. E. Lowell, Eve of the Revolution, p. 300-01.

21. Anon., "Religion Under the French Revolution", Edinburgh Review, V. 203 (January, 1906), p. 35.

22. Francois V. A. Aulard, Christianity and the French Revolution, (trans. by Lady Frazer, Boston, 1927), p. 32.

The men of the eighteenth century, impressed by the progress of science, didn't wish to admit any other methods than the scientific method, nor hear any 'reason other than those that reason alone knows'. However the century of the philosophes has bequeathed its part to the superstition, to the illusion and to the dream; it has had its illuminés and its charlatans, of whom history gives an appendix to a chapter on the sciences, since they there find an indirect protest against the arrogance and the intolerance of the scientific spirit.²³

One other factor which tended to weaken the influence of the Church in the eighteenth century (as well as ever before) was indifference. The people of France, as in most countries, were burdened with their own cares, and if duty or interest in the Church was not regarded by them as requisite, we cannot judge or blame them. Aulard puts forth the thesis that the French people were always predominantly indifferent, if not plainly impious. "Even if we retrace French history to the very heart of the Middle Ages we shall not succeed in finding a period in which piety was general, solid, profound, embracing the whole of both the individual and the nation."²⁴ Although indifference may have been great when it came to actual precepts of the faith, most of the people in France were at least nominal Catholics. Even though they may take no interest in a question whatever, they cannot help but feel and reflect the Catholic viewpoint. Seen in this light, indifference becomes a force on the side of status quo, and if such status is dominated by Catholics, the large body of indifferent people are Catholics. This lack of a positive philosophy, however, created a weak spot in the armor of Catholicism. When the Church is challenged by Jansenism or Protestantism or Rationalism, it is relatively easy for these people to forget their

23. E. Lavissee, Histoire de France, IX¹, 298-99.

24. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 41.

reflected doctrines and adopt the new system. But, generally, such people are as indifferent under one cult as under another. When the thinking populace (contrary to many 'educated persons', most people do have ideas, and opinions to back them up) adopts a philosophy, most of these 'indifferent' people will endorse that philosophy. Aulard insists, however, that even "on the eve of the Revolution there was (sic) in France, even in the country, a small minority of unbelievers and a large majority of indifferent people".²⁵

The effect of these assaults on the power or dogma of the Church is hard to judge. It is immediately apparent that the ones directed toward the restriction of the power of the Church were generally successful, while those that dealt with dogma were less successful. Only future history will tell whether or not the Church was spiritually weakened. The history of these assaults against the Church was well known by the leaders of the French Revolution. In their own fight against the Church during their effort to enthrone the ideas of the philosophes, they were to borrow freely from the ideas which these former attacking groups had used.

In spite of the onslaughts against it, the Church had held up remarkably well. In 1789 the Church was still by far the dominant force in France. It was the first estate of the country, and as such it carried with it social and political force, as well as many privileges. At the end of the Ancient Regime, France was divided into 135 bishoprics and archbishoprics, among whom were divided, according to the

25. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 37.

Royal Almanac of 1789, 34,658 cures; but it seems that the number of cures would have been considerably more. It has been computed that the cures and the vicars numbered 60,000; the prelates, coadjutors, general vicars, and canons of cathedrals numbered 2800; that there were 5600 canons of collegiate churches and 3000 ecclesiastics without benefices. In all, more than 71,000 secular priests.²⁶

Carré based the above figures mainly on Taine. As to the regular clergy, Taine gives 23,000 monks and 38,000 nuns. His totals thus agree with Mohean's, who estimated that there were 130,000 in the kingdom.²⁷

These 130,000 had control of vast wealth. In a report made by Deputy Treilhard for the Ecclesiastical Committee in December, 1789, he reported that the Church possessed four billions of francs, the income from which amounted to eighty or one hundred millions. In addition the tithes amounted to 123,000,000 francs per year, giving a total of over 200,000,000 francs.²⁸ In spite of this tremendous income, the clergy in France were not required to pay taxes. From time to time, the French clergy, in its Assemblies, voted the King a 'free gift' to cover government expenses. Although the royal ministers usually ordered the amount necessary, the Church oftentimes would attach conditions to their 'gift'. For instance, in 1785 the suppression of Voltaire's works were required as terms before the grant would be given.²⁹ Occasionally the assembly would refuse to grant the King's request entirely, and they always maintained this

26. E. Lavissee, Histoire de France, IX¹, 145.

27. H. Taine, Ancient Régime, p. 404.

28. Ibid., p. 14.

29. E. Lowell, Eve of the Revolution, p. 28.

right, though seldom using it. The Assembly meeting in 1725 passed on this question, declaring, "Our gifts [free gifts] are permitted only as long as they are free and voluntary."³⁰ The 'free gifts' from 1772 to 1778 averaged 5,400,000 livres per year. From 1782 on, however, the king had returned a subsidy of 2,500,000 livres per year. In addition to the 'free gift' of the French Clergy, the foreign clergy in France paid some regular taxes, amounting to about 1,300,000 livres per year. This foreign clergy consisted of the ecclesiastics in the lands which had been added to the kingdom since 1516. Thus the Church actually furnished a little over 4,000,000 livres per year to the state.³¹ The clergy, in spite of its exemption from taxes, its subsidies from the government, and its huge income, was in serious financial trouble. They had developed a habit of paying the free gift and other expenses out of money raised by loans. By 1789 this debt appeared to be 134,000,000 livres.³² The Church could pile up such a debt, for with such vast resources, her credit was always good.

With such riches, it would seem that all the clergymen would have comfortable livings. This is not at all the case. The higher clergy received enormous incomes; most of the cures received next to nothing. A bill was introduced during the Revolution to assure rural cures of a salary of at least 1200 livres. In a large number of cases, the curés had received much less, some of them being entirely dependent on the goodness of their flocks. Conversely, many of the high clergy had

30. Moniteur, Introduction, p. 138.

31. E. Lavissee, Histoire de France, IX¹, 146.

32. E. Lowell, Eve of the Revolution, p. 28.

been given benefices they had never seen, with resulting enormous incomes. The Cardinal de Rohan, for example, received more than 1,000,000 livres.³³ Moreover, many of the high clergy had huge outside holdings, as they were almost without exception recruited from the nobility. The offices could always be bought, and in some cases were given away for other consideration. Jacques Necker, a Calvinist, finance minister from 1777 to 1781, demanded from the king liberty to address the council and explain his financial policies. In consequence, "after long and profound deliberation" the court promised him what he asked, provided he would solemnly abjure Calvinism and accept the post of cardinal in the Roman Church.³⁴

Insofar as the position of the clergy was disadvantageous in 1789, it was so because of its excesses in the previous years. This was not only true because of the sale of benefices and rights within the Church, but also because of unjust methods of dealing with their parishioners. Although the writers in the Moniteur were very biased against the Church, we can glean some statements from the paper which will give an indication of the state to which the church in general had descended.

A tradition, very widespread, of the second coming of Jesus Christ one thousand years after his ascension, and of the approaching end of the earth was announced in all the pulpits of truth and caused a universal terror. They were instructed to collect treasures for the other life, by making gifts to the Church of goods henceforth useless: appropinquante mundi termino, said all the contracts of donation. However, the end of the earth did not come, and all the goods demurred to the Clergy.³⁵

33. H. Taine, Ancient Régime, p. 15.

34. Moniteur, Introduction, p. 3.

35. Moniteur, du 9 au novembre, 1789; no. 87; p. 354.

In the same article we find

When the Franks, becoming masters of the Gauls, embraced Christianity, the priests soon found means of entering into partnership with the conquerors and of themselves making the awards of the best spoils.

They thought, in those uncivilized centuries, that avarice was the first attribute of divinity, and that the saints dealt with men for their own favor and protection. From this came the witticism of Clovis that Saint Martin didn't serve his friends badly but he caused them to pay dearly for his trouble.

The priests didn't fail to propagate this doctrine by dint of holding under the eyes of the powerful and the rich the harshness of God's judgements in the other World.³⁶

Operating on such a basis, it was inevitable that the Church should align itself with the forces of wealth and power in the state. After securing its rights against the crown, the Church turned to an alliance with it. "The clergy believed in the indissoluble union of the throne and the altar. It guarded this 'second religion', very near relation of the first, which the bishops of the seventeenth century preached, for the royalty."³⁷

The cahiers of 1789, when dealing with religious questions, do not ask for sweeping reforms, or even for secularization of the civil states.³⁸ This seems strange when the evidence indicates almost unbelievable corruption. The reason seems to be that the authors of the cahiers were more concerned with cures than with bishops, and the bulk of the infection lay in the ranks of the higher clergy. The cahiers, while they generally left religious questions (even toleration) alone, still often times did mention the degradation and uselessness of the regular clergy. For many years the position of the regulars had

36. Moniteur, du 9 au 10 novembre, 1789; no. 87; p. 354.

37. E. Lavis, IX¹, 170.

38. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 41.

been constantly degrading. Many monasteries had been forced to close their doors, and others were subsisting on very meagre memberships. As compared with the 130,000 clergy in 1789, it was estimated that there were 194,000 in 1762. The drop had taken place mainly in the ranks of the regulars. In 1765 the throne issued an edict closing all monasteries which had less than ten monks, and over four hundred were closed in the twenty-four years preceeding the Revolution. Yet even after these closings, cahiers referred to 'unpeopled monasteries'.³⁹ On June 7, 1778, the Archbishop of Tours, worried over the state of the regulars, wrote to Brienne, "The Franciscan course is, in this province, in a state of degradation. The bishops complain of the vulgar and disorderly conduct of these friars."⁴⁰

Seeing this corruption, the Church had made several abortive efforts at reform. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Pope had proposed some meetings looking toward reform, but the Church had rejected them as infringements upon its Gallican liberties. In 1766 the government "instituted a Reform Commission, composed of five prelates and five ministers of state", which functioned until 1789. This commission took action on some of the weak points of the Church, reducing the number of monks from 26,674 in 1774 to 17,500 in 1790.⁴¹ Unfortunately, the hierarchical system of the Church necessitated that members of the high clergy be chosen to lead the reform movements. Thus they were faced with one of the most difficult of human problems, that of removing the

39. Cambridge Modern History, VIII, 53.

40. E. Lavisse, Histoire de France, IX¹, 145.

41. Ibid., IX¹, 146.

note from their own eyes. The Catholic viewpoint on the Reform Commission is interesting, and, while grossly overstated, contains some essential truth. They explain that the president of the Reform Commission, Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Tours, was a secret adherent of the philosophes and a close friend of d'Alembert. In such a position Loménie was in a position to work for the organized plan of Choiseul (Minister in the French government) to destroy the Church and substitute rationalism.⁴²

In spite of the large amount of corruption and avarice found in the Church, the lower clergy (curés and vicars) carried on their work tolerably well. On their salaries they did not have the occasion to become materially minded, and it is doubtful whether they would have been corrupted even if the opportunity had presented itself. Taine, in speaking of the curé, said

He welcomes the unfortunate, feeds them, sets them to work, and unites them in matrimony; beggars, vagabonds, and fugitive peasants gather around the sanctuary ... To food for the body add food for the soul, not less essential ... Down to the middle of the thirteenth century the clergy stands almost alone in furnishing this.⁴³

Although Taine is somewhat sarcastic, it is nonetheless true that the great majority of curés carried on in this tradition until the Revolution of 1789, and since, for that matter. Long before the Revolution the low clergy had aligned themselves with the common people against the nobility. Hence the lower clergy was extremely popular among the peoples of France. "Its charity, its intellectual culture in a world of ignorance [that] shown brightly even when it was

⁴². Donat Sampson, "Pius VI and the French Revolution," American Catholic Quarterly Review, XXXI, no. 122 (April, 1906), p. 226 (taken from Barruel, Histoire du Jacobinisme)

⁴³. H. Taine, Ancient Régime, p. 4.

slender,"⁴⁴ both of these served to endear the lower clergy to the people.

Although the high clergy never abrogated their union with the nobles, there were indications that the views of some of the high clergy were changing, even as were those of a few of the second estate.

Approaching closer to the Revolution, one can see that new ideas had penetrated into the high clergy. Some bishops spoke like liberals, some like nationalists. They wished the monarchy to be a constitutional kingdom. They maintained that, in the matter of taxes, the nation has always insisted on its consent and its free will, and, consequently, the French people are not taxable at will. They asked Louis XVI ... to be not 'King of France, but King of the French'.⁴⁵

⁴⁴. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 35.

⁴⁵. E. Lavisse, Histoire de France, IX¹, 170.

II. Attitudes Toward the Church Revealed in the Cahiers

Historians are extremely fortunate in the wealth of material that is available on the conditions in France in 1789. Almost every bailliage and sénéchaussée in all of France simultaneously drew up a cahier for presentation to the States-General containing the grievances which they wished adjudicated. Originally, the States-General had traded taxing power for the correction of grievances. In 1789 when the States-General met, it was for the first time in 175 years, and the interest in France at its meeting was tremendous. The cahiers, coming as they did from every area and from every economic and social strata in all of France, contain descriptions of anything anywhere that should happen to meet with disapproval. Nearly three fourths of all the cahiers from the bailliages are reproduced in the Archives parlementaires.¹ Oddly enough, historians did not use these sources extensively for almost one hundred years, the first good compilations of cahiers being published in 1886. Because of their nature, that is, grievances, cahiers are likely to be largely negative in their composition. Things which the authors regarded as all right receive scant attention, if any, and, as a result, cahiers must be used with care. Many cahiers failed to mention either the clergy or the Church.²

1. Edme Champion, La France d'après les Cahiers du 1789 (5th ed.), (Paris, 1921) p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 177.

This is not to say that they were not influenced by it or felt that it was not important. If anything, it may be taken as a tribute to the clergy in those districts, for in those districts the ministers had done their job so well that all groups were satisfied. It is further to the credit of the Church that the third estate of Beauvais could express the general sentiment of the majority of the cahiers when it said, "It is without contradiction the body most interested in the public good. All the statesmen have recognized its influence on the happiness of society ... A people without religion is soon a people without morals."³

The cahiers show that Catholicism, in spite of the assaults made on it and the popularity of the works of the philosophes, was in a heavy majority nearly everywhere in France. Although a few cahiers asked for minority rights, none except one, that of the seneschal of Nîmes asked for full freedom for Protestants. Other cahiers which mentioned it asked only for 'civil freedom'.⁴ One might think that the seat of French radicalism, Paris, would appear for a full toleration of all sects and perhaps a separation of church and state; but the Paris cahier resembles many others in feeling that while toleration is fine, "the public order can tolerate but one established religion."⁵ Some of the cahiers took a still stronger position. The cahier of the first estate of Blois, for instance, deplored the extension of religious liberty to non-Catholics and were alarmed at the growing freedom of the

3. Ibid., p. 178.

4. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 41-2.

5. Moniteur, Introduction, p. 218.

press.⁶ Notwithstanding the overwhelming approval of the Church as an institution, there were many cahiers' sections which mentioned the impiety of the clergymen, the inefficiency of the hierarchy, the comparative uselessness of the regular clergy, and the exaggerated wealth of the Church. They were criticising what they felt were abuses within the Church which were against the official practice of the organization. The first estate of Alençon recommended "that the States-General look for means to return to religion the vigor of the discipline."⁷ There was general feeling that the maldistribution of the wealth of the clergy should be corrected. It was obvious to all in France that the cures and vicars were sadly underpaid while the bishops were greatly overpaid. "The great majority of the low clergy, [and even some of the high] insisted on the necessity of finding, in a new and more just distribution of goods, means of furnishing a reasonable income for priests."⁸ The nobility of Blois, facing the same problem, devised a concrete answer. "The augmentation, out of funds of the clergy, of the salary of the parish priests with minimum dotation, the greater part of whom are in a state bordering so close upon poverty that they often share in the misery of the country people, without being able to relieve it."⁹

There were practices other than distribution of salaries which came under the fire of the cahiers. The majority of the grievances

6. Merrick Whitcomb, (ed.) Typical Cahiers of 1789 (Revised), (Philadelphia, 1901), p. 2.

7. E. Champion, France en 1789 n., 2, p. 181.

8. Ibid., p. 186.

9. M. Whitcomb, Typical Cahiers, p. 20.

mentioned one or more of the common malpractices such as plural benefices or sale of benefices. Articles 93 to 98 of the cahier of the third estate at Versailles recommended that all holders of benefices receive adequate pay, to be paid by the provincial estates. The state would sell ecclesiastical property to cover this expense, and in this manner the clergyman was to be relieved of all 'material' worry. Till the provincial estate actually took over, no clergyman could hold more than one benefice. They wanted to require the closing of all commendary abbacies (those abbacies which bestow their income upon one beneficiary) and useless convents, the money from the sale of which was to be added to the salaries of the parish priests. They demanded that there be no non-resident clergymen, and the limitation applied to either the high or low clergy. There were to be age limits for entry into a religious order or convent, and resignations, either from the regulars or seculars, were not to be permitted.¹⁰ As similar criticisms came from all of France, it is apparent that many of the clergy were living highly from their benefices, turning their full attention to the economic position which they occupied. The habit of using the Church for a sojourn of a few years was also prevalent, as the rule on age and on resigning are both intended to prevent the practice.

The people of France strongly disapproved of the Church's activities in the temporal area. It was berated for materialism, and even the provisions against excessive wealth are based on a supposed preoccupation of the clergy with economic matters in order to accumulate it. The cahier of Paris, while it may be a little more radical than many, gives

10. Ibid., p. 34-5.

an accurate view as to the climate of the people on this count, in addition showing the absence of complete toleration and the bent toward Gallicanism:

II Religion is welcomed freely in the state, without committing any offense to its constitution. It is established by persuasion, never by constraint.

III Christian religion embraces civil tolerance. Every citizen ought to enjoy full liberty of conscience; the public order allows but one established religion.

IV The Catholic religion is the established religion in France, it has not been established there only according to the purity of its primitive maxims; that establishment is the foundation of the liberties of the Gallican Church.

VI Ecclesiastical jurisdiction does not extend, in any way, to the temporal; its outside affairs are governed by the laws of the state.¹¹

A dominant characteristic of nearly all the cahiers was the embracing of and the wish for extension of Gallicanism. Almost as a body, they declared against annates, the Concordat, and any other ties which joined the French Church to the Pope. The first estate at Blois even went so far as to point out the great damage done to France by the huge sums which left the monarchy bound for the Holy See.¹² The indications are that this great interest in Gallicanism was recent, and had not had, by 1789, many practical manifestations. "Manuals and usage in the seminaries of France remained silent on the question of infallibility" and so were not strong on Gallicanism.¹³ The emphasis on it in the cahiers was perhaps indicative of the extreme anti-Romanism which was to come. In keeping with the pattern, the third estate at Versaille recommended

11. Moniteur, Introduction, p. 218.

12. E. Champion, France en 1789, p. 181-2; M. Whitcomb, Typical Cahiers, p.

13. E. Lavisse, Histoire de France, IX, 169 - One book, however, La Théologie, published in Lyon by Montazet, taught that infallibility was false and that ecumenical councils were above the Pope.

Art. 99 That it be forbidden to go to the Roman Curia for provisions, nominations, bulls and dispensations of all kinds; and each bishop in his diocese shall have full power in these matters.

Art. 100 That the right of the pope to grant livings in France be suppressed.

Art. 101 That the Concordat be revoked, and all intervention on the part of the Roman Curia made to cease.¹⁴

One of the more unusual aspects of the cahiers of the upper two estates was their willingness to sacrifice their long-held privileges and rights. The clergy of Blois asked the King to cease the patents of the nobility except as a reward for meritorious service to the state. It requested the abolition of the rights of chase, open warren, and pasture.¹⁵ The nobility of Blois wrote

The free and voluntary renunciation which the order of the nobility is about to make of its pecuniary privileges gives it the right to demand that no exemption whatsoever shall be retained in favor of any class of citizens. We have no doubt that the clergy will voluntarily consent to bear all taxes in common with the citizens of other orders, in proportion to their possessions ...¹⁶

The nobility was correct; the clergy of the bailliage of Blois saying "that for the future they desire to sustain the burden of taxation in common with other subjects of the King."¹⁷ And such a statement was typical of many cahiers of the clergy.

The attitudes of the clergy toward many strictly temporal affairs can also be garnered through the cahiers. They were in favor of monarchical rule, believing that either the nation or the king had the power to propose or reject laws. The nation was represented in the States-General, which they believed should meet at least every five years and which should vote by order only, with all orders having

14. M. Whitcomb, Typical Cahiers, p. 35.

15. Ibid., p. 6.

16. Ibid., p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 3-4.

equal power. They realized the necessity of shifting the main tax burden upward, and recommended the abolition of the gabelles and the aides. No tax was to be levied except by the States-General, and all were to be laid for a limited time only. They asked for personal liberty, a limitation on the seignorial court with right of counsel by all; the establishment of a justice of the peace and the codification of the national laws. They did not object to different rules in different sections, however, if such rules were just. They requested legal recognition of provincial estates as a branch of administration, organized on the basis of orders. They desired the subsidization of education by the state, making it absolutely free to all, to be taught under supervision of the regular clergy.¹⁸

Although the foregoing evidence would indicate that there was a considerable movement for the suppression of privileges, C. H. Lincoln, after a careful study, has said that the cahiers of the third estate do not ask to abolish the privileges of the upper two estates, but that "frequently the king and the upper orders are assumed to be ignorant of the evils of the time and the faith is expressed that, were they aware of the conditions, remedies would be effected."¹⁹ It is to be noted that the privileges of the orders lasted less than three months after the States-General convened.

18. Ibid., p. 17 passim.

19. C. H. Lincoln, "The Cahiers of 1789 as an Evidence of Compromise Spirit", American Historical Review (January, 1897), II, 226.

III. First Acts of the Revolution Concerning the Church

Toward nine o'clock in the morning of May 5, 1789, the members elected to the States-General called by Louis XVI began to assemble. By quarter to twelve they were seated by order, the clergy occupying the right side of the hall and being closest to the throne. After the original charge by the king and a speech by Necker, the deputies retired to deliberate by order. The first question taken up by the clergy concerned the method of verifying the powers of the States-General. Under the leadership of the Archbishops of Vienne and Bordeaux (Jean-Georges Pompignan and Champion de Cicé) it was decided 133 to 114 to verify powers by order.¹ For nearly a month the clergy was preoccupied with debate on this question. Twice it was moved to discuss the question of deliberation by head or by order, and both times the motion was heavily rejected.² Meanwhile the communes, or third estate, had been attempting to have a States-General which would deliberate in common. On May 25 they had passed a resolution keeping the seats for the clergy and the nobles vacant, thus providing for union at any time.³ On the tenth of June several curés remarked that the declaration for verification by order, and the results which were obtained with the royal commissioners, were not to invalidate any action which might be taken by verification in common, or by the

1. Moniteur; du 6 au 14 mai 1789; no.2; p. 14.

2. Ibid; du 30 mai au 6 juin, 1789; no. 5; p. 25.

3. Ibid; du 23 au 30 mai, 1789; no. 4; p. 21.

order united.⁴ On the twelfth of June the communes sent delegations to the other orders asking them to meet in common. Jean Siffren Maury led a heated debate in opposition to the move, and no action was taken,⁵ but the next day three parish priests from Poitou left the first estate and took their places in on the benches reserved for the clergy.⁶ On the fourteenth six more clergymen deserted the first estate for a joint Assembly, among them being Henri Grégoire, cure of Embermesnil, the leading left wing clergyman of the Revolution.⁷ Grégoire was the leading liberal churchman of the Revolution, and led the republican forces in the clergy. The main body of the clergy kept up its deliberations on the question, and discussion filled several days, with no votes being taken. On June nineteenth, two days after the third estate had declared itself the National Assembly of France, a vote was taken, with the result that there were 135 votes for verification by order, 127 for verification in common, and 12 who asked for verification in common with reservations. The 127 asked the twelve to change to a non-restricted vote, but were refused. The 127 then adopted a new standard acceptable to the middle dozen: "The plurality of the clergy assembled is of the opinion that final verification of powers should be done in general assembly, under the reserve of the distinction of orders." One hundred and twenty-two members signed the resolution immediately, and majority was secured when 22 more signed later at the house of the Archbishop of Vienne. Later five more signed, the total

4. Ibid; du 6 au 10 juillet, 1789; no. 6; p. 32 (the date line on this paper was in error, the correct month being June).

5. Ibid; du 10 au 15 juin, 1789; no. 7; p. 34.

6. Ibid; du 10 au 15 juin, 1789; no. 7; p. 34.

7. Ibid; du 10 au 15 juin, 1789; no. 7; p.35.

thus reaching 149. Two archbishops, Vienne and Bordeaux, and three bishops, Rhodes, Coutances, and Chartres were among the majority.⁸ The minority did not recognize this decree as binding, and continued to deliberate separately. Of the majority many remained with the communes after the tempestuous royal session of June 23. The next day the Assembly voiced its approval of the move by the clergy by applauding the five bishops and the curés, Jallet (first to go over) and Grégoire.⁹ King Louis XVI gave in to the demands of the third estate and commanded the orders to meet jointly in the National Assembly; the first meeting was held on the 27th of June. There was no prejudice against any of the clerical members in this new assembly, and they assented to clergy being represented on all committees.¹⁰

Very early after the initial meeting of the States-General, it was proposed, in the first estate, that the "chamber renounce, in the name of the clergy, all pecuniary exemptions^{and} privileges ". There was a debate and a voice vote. The decision was in doubt, and the meeting adjourned. The next day, May 20, when the question was revived, it was ruled out of order as premature as the powers of the Assembly had not been determined. There was a strong enough opinion in favor of the proposal, however, to pass a resolution which said, in effect, that individual deputies would talk with the other orders and assure them that the first estate had a firm belief in the equality of taxes

8. Ibid; du 16 au 20 juin, 1789; no. 9; p. 44.

9. Ibid; du 20 au 24 juin, 1789; no. 10; p. 48.

10. Ibid; du 24 au 27 juin, 1789; no. 11; p. 52.

over all citizens.¹¹ Apparently the clergy was sincere in this, for, on the memorable night of August 4, 1789, they joined with the nobles in overthrowing the ancient regime by voluntarily giving up their privileges. The Bishops of Nancy and Chartres were the first spokesmen for the clergy;

Bishop of Nancy [de Lafare] ... 'I rise to express, in the name of the clergy, the vow of justice, of religion and humanity: I move for the sale of the ecclesiastical goods;¹² and I move that the profit go not to the ecclesiastical lords, but that it be made useful in payments for the poor.'

Bishop of Chartres [Lubersac], representing the exclusive right of chase as a scourge of the country, ruining it for more than one year, moved for the abolition of this right, and abandoned it for himself. He was happy, he said, to be able to give to the other proprietors of the monarchy this lesson of humanity and justice.¹³

The idea quickly caught fire, and went to such lengths that "several cures asked that they be permitted to sacrifice their surplice fees. At these words, a noble demanded, for this precious class of clergy, an increase in the portion congrue . The portion congrue was the salary of an ecclesiastic at a post where someone else was the beneficiary. This beneficiary received all income from the post, either tithe or stipend, and paid the ecclesiastic a straight salary, which was often the official minimum wage or below. Applause redoubled on the part of the citizens of all orders.¹⁴ Everyone seemed caught in a violent outburst, the object of which was to better your fellow men in humanity and self sacrifice.

Later, when the excitement and heat of battle was gone, many

11. Ibid; du 14 au 23 mai, 1789; no. 3; p. 19.

12. The French word fonds is translated "goods" throughout.

13. Moniteur; du 4 au 5 août, 1789; p. 142; no. 34.

14. Ibid; du 4 au 5 août, 1789; no. 34; p. 142-3.

probably pondered what they had done and why. The overthrow of an established system is a move which takes thought and planning to be concluded successfully, and the night of August 4 contained neither. When the meeting was finished, at 2 A. M., the deputies had abolished serfdom, abolished all pecuniary privileges and immunities, suppressed the right of *déport* and *vacat*,¹⁵ suppressed annates, denied plural benefices, and abolished the *dîmes*, substituting a money tax.¹⁶ Almost immediately a reaction set in among the clergy. By the sixth of August we find them questioning the suppression of the *dîmes*. All of the accomplishments of the fourth relative to the clergy were reconsidered except the prohibition of annates, and many were modified and changed. The suppression of *dîmes* brought out the greatest controversy, and elicited the greatest defense on the part of the ecclesiastical members. On the tenth of August article seven (relative to the *dîmes*) was rephrased so that all feudal *dîmes*, together with landed incomes, were redeemable in a manner that the Assembly should rule. Gregoire attacked the decree on the grounds of faulty wording, but added that the cures improved the property of their parishes immensely, and that the *dîmes* went solely to aid their flocks.¹⁷ The Bishop of Langres (Laluzerne) went much further in defense of the church's rights:

The ecclesiastical *dîme* is a sacred property, authorized by law and by all the States-Generals. If it is abusive, why aren't the laic *dîmes*? If they are, why shouldn't they too be redeemed? Are the ecclesiastics proprietors, or is the Nation? To whom were

15. The French right of *déport* is that of self-withdrawal from a charge; *vacat* is the holding of a benefice in absentia.

16. Moniteur; du 4 au 5 août, 1789; no. 34; p. 144.

17. Ibid., du 9 au 10 août, 1789; no. 39; p. 163.

the dîmes given? Is it the Nation? No, beyond doubt; they have not been given to the nation nor through it. (There arise rumblings in the room, several voices cry 'order'.)

In suppressing them, to whom will they go? To the Nation. But a Nation has only a moral existence, it is not capable of ownership.¹⁸

Langres concluded that the rights of the dîme could not be isolated.

Two days later, on the eleventh, the National Assembly passed the last of nineteen articles which evolved from the night of the fourth. The article on dîmes, though suppressing them, allowed the continuance of those absolutely necessary for the maintenance of ministers or people nursing the sick, as well as those which were turned over to the poor. Article VI abolished all other perpetual incomes based on land. Article VIII suppressed the right of surplice fees for the country priests, to take effect after the portion congrue had been raised. Article XI took off all restrictions as to qualifications for ecclesiastical service.¹⁹ Article XIII abolished, for all ecclesiastics, the rights of déport, vacat, quit-rent, and all similar rights. Article XIV denied plural benefices or pensions, or a combination of either, from which the income was 3000 livre or more.²⁰ In a little over three months, then, the Church has sustained great losses. All of its feudal characteristics were gone. But the assault had been largely against its temporal relations. Dogma had not been questioned. The clergy, caught in a reform wave, did not protest

18. Ibid., du 9 au 10 août, 1789; no. 39; p. 163.

19. In the Ancient Regime noble birth was regarded as an indispensable qualification for all bishoprics except five, which were known as "lackey bishoprics".

20. Moniteur, du 10 au 14 août, 1789; no. 40; p. 166-7.

too strenuously at these first actions, feeling, perhaps, that the Church had expanded her temporal powers too greatly. As yet, no decree had adversely affected a curé. As the curés outnumbered all other types of clergymen in the Assembly, 205 to 101,²¹ the reaction was comparatively mild.

As the execution of the decrees approached, however, the clergy showed increasing unrest. On September 24th, abbé²² Maury, characterized as the 'zealous defender of the clergy', pointed out the injustice of surrendering the Church goods at that time when the salary payments to the clergy would not begin for six months. In addition he moved that the state take over the clerical debt.²³ The next day a member of the left wing spoke for the Church, Grégoire making a motion that the portion congrue be non-taxable. It was approved by the Assembly.²⁴ By September 28th the clergy as a whole was beginning to worry, for on that date they disavowed the stand of the Archbishop of Paris, who had sanctioned the decree which confiscated for the state many Church valuables.

The communes began to oppose the clergy's reasonings. The clergy replied with the authorities of Saint-Ambroise and Saint-Augustine. They maintained the money of the Church is the inheritance of the cures; the communes rejected these quotations. The clergy, seeing its defeat imminent, defended itself only with a tumult which made discussion impossible. ...

A member of the communes moved adjournment; the clergy moved the previous question; they were going to pass on it, and the money would have remained always in the Church, if some of the

21. C. H. Lincoln, "Cahiers of 1789", Atlantic Monthly (Jan., 1897), II. 228. Of the 101, there were 52 abbots or canons, 42 prelates, and 7 monks. For a complete list, see the Introduction to Le Moniteur, p. 236-38.

22. Abbé, in French, is a term applied to all law clergymen. Maury was a prieur.

23. Moniteur, du 23 au 25 septembre, 1789; no. 62; p. 255.

24. Moniteur, du 23 au 25 septembre, 1789; no. 62; p. 256.

communes [and the quorum] hadn't retired. The clergy, then remaining alone in the hall, were forced to retire also.²⁵

The next day the decree was executed, and the wishes of the clergy were again flouted. Although the low clergy were the keenest objectors to the decree, it must be remembered that the confiscation of monies would hurt the high clergy more than them, and their defense probably suffered correspondingly.

On October 11, Talleyrand, the Bishop of Autun, proposed the nationalization of all church property. The measure was not conceived as an assault against organized religion; it was simply recognized that the Church had enormous holdings while the state was deeply in debt. Mirabeau, the most respected leader in the Assembly, gave a long and cogent speech favoring Talleyrand's motion. This time the clergy was more perturbed, though the left wing was still not ready to put forth full efforts for their Church. Grégoire, leader of the left wing faction, simply moved that the motion be sent back to committee. His motion carried.²⁶ Maury, right wing leader, was incensed. He correctly sensed that, though this action embraced the temporal, it would place the Church in entire subservience to the state because of economic forces. In one of the best speeches which he gave in the Assembly, he foretold the future with accuracy.

The absolute ruin of the secular and regular clergy seems to be decided upon in this Assembly, but if it is the strength of reasoning which it must combat, we do not have to give up hope for our cause. You have placed the credits of the state under the shield of the honor of the nation. Religion is itself the shield of the Empire. The credits of the state are proprietary, their property is sacred;

25. Ibid., du 28 au 29 septembre, 1789; no. 64; p. 263

26. Moniteur, du 12 octobre, 1789; no. 72; p. 296.

I place in your hands this profession of solemn faith. You wish the reestablishment of national credit, that you boast without stopping, but it is this immense credit which has ruined you, it is with it that you have eaten up the subsistence of future generations, it is with this that you have made so many wars, often as harmful to the people as advantageous to the politicians.²⁷

He assured the Assembly that the seizure of Church property would not add anything to the general welfare of the country, but that those lands would ultimately pass into the hands of a few greedy capitalists, who would be less generous with the spoils than the clergy were.²⁸

He then attempted to prove his point by historical argument, and reminded them that only eight days ago they recognized Church property (in debates on usury). He climaxed his speech with "What property is assured, if today, gentlemen, that which we have acquired and cared for can be taken from us?"²⁹

Malonet replied for the Nationalists to Maury's speech and, while his arguments were neither as well formed nor as cogent as Maury's, the applause that he received clearly showed that the property would be nationalized. His principle argument was that the state could distribute the clerical incomes for the "pressing needs of state".³⁰ He made several motions, which stated that the state would pay clerical salaries from the income on confiscated land, and that the surplus would enrich the treasury.

Grégoire attempted to straddle the issue on the 23rd of October, maintaining that the nation was not the proprietor of all lands. He also questioned if, after the confiscation, the state would

27. Ibid., du 12 au 13 octobre, 1789; no. 73; p. 299.

28. Henry Walsh, The Concordat of 1801: A Study of the Problem of Nationalism in the Relations of Church and State (New York, 1933), p. 104.

29. Moniteur, du 12 au 13 octobre, 1789; no. 73; p. 300.

30. Ibid., du 13 au 15 octobre, 1789; no. 74; p. 301.

have enough to pay the local debts of the clergy. At the same time, he said that the state could reclaim any land and change its mode of administration.³¹

In the week that followed Maury and Mirabeau were on the floor many times in seemingly mortal combat. Maury came to be interrupted more and more, while Mirabeau was increasingly applauded. One sentence of Maury's speeches is very worthy of note, "The most terrible despotism is that which wears the mask of liberty".³² The vote was taken on November 2nd. It was 568 for nationalization, 346 against, with 40 abstainers. The decree stood:

That it be declared that all ecclesiastical goods are at the disposition of the state; to the expense of providing, in a suitable manner, for the expenses of the cult, for the maintenance of its ministers and the relief of the poor, under the surveillance and according to the instructions of the provinces. Secondly, that in the regulations to be made for the maintenance of the ministers of religion, it would be assumed that no living will be less than 1200 livres a year, not counting house and garden.³³

Perhaps the setting of a minimum wage provision did gain some votes for the plan, and the provisions relative to 'suitable' maintenance may have allayed the fears of such ecclesiastics as Grégoire, but the vote reflects the actual standing of the Church. Maury's speeches had made the very existence of the Church the central issue, and the votes against the motion would seem to be a fair indication of the strength of the party who wished the Church unblemished. Aulard comments:

To the inferior clergy this opened a vista of real comfort compared with their present poverty. To the superior clergy it meant a reduction

31. Ibid., du 22 au 26 octobre, 1789; no. 77; p. 315.

32. Ibid., du 30 octobre au 2 novembre, 1789; no. 81; p. 329.

33. Ibid., du 2 au 3 novembre, 1789; no. 82; p. 335.

of income which would deprive them of their luxury and, as they thought, of their prestige. From that time onwards they set themselves almost as one body against the Revolution. It was then ... that the first germs of the civil political-religious war may be discovered ...³⁴

Aulard is there, perhaps, too ready to admit the purely economic motive in the lower clergy. The leadership of Maury and the support by Gouttes show that many of the lower clergy remained adamant against this restriction on the church. And, conversely, it was a bishop, Talleyrand, who first proposed the article. The economic factor should here also be questioned, as prelates were nearly always nobles who had income other than their ecclesiastical earnings.

During the first six months of the Assembly, the body took several other actions which concerned the Church either directly or indirectly. On July 23rd Grégoire proposed that the priests of the kingdom be used to quiet the people, by using the priests to publicize its decrees. Grégoire said that the people would then listen with "peace and confidence in the works of the National Assembly".³⁵

On the third of October, Villeneuve moved to repeal all usury laws, the object being to stimulate commerce and agriculture. In his motion he pointed out that the "Court of Rome is not opposed" and that usury was permitted even in certain parts of France. Here was a proposal which was not attacking the temporal relations of the Church as such, but was actually assaulting the doctrine. In this argument both Maury and Gouttes upheld the motion, the

34. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 52.

35. Moniteur, du 23 au 24 juillet, 1789; no. 23; p. 99.

Latter on a pragmatic basis, and because of necessity for commerce, the former distinguishing between loans for charity and loans of commerce. Only one man, abbé Vermont, rose to defend the interests of the Church, and he was interrupted and shouted down. One other curé, unknown to the record, maintained that it was a question of morals and religion and could not be treated upon in a political body.³⁶

There were several attempts to have the National Assembly declare itself a Catholic, Roman, and apostolic body. Without specifically rejecting them, the Assembly, until April 13, 1790, managed to by-pass all such issues. One of the most colorful of these rejected motions was that of a rustic priest whose name is unknown. He spoke on August 3, 1789.

I request the indulgence of the Assembly for a timid debutant who speaks for the first time and perhaps for the last. It [the Assembly] must not glance higher than his shoes, and I am going to speak about a concern of my trade. (Laughter)

Before a meeting of the orders, ought not an altar be set up in the chapel of the National Assembly? Eh! To what god should it be consecrated: Should it be an unknown God, deo ignoto? (Laughter) No, we are always the true children of the Catholic Church, apostolic and Roman.

The president called the cure to order, reminding him that questions of religion were not to be discussed. The cure then went on, affirming that the National Assembly is and ought to be Catholic, apostolic, and Roman ... [He proposed] a chaplain for the gathering.³⁷

The president again declared the meeting out of order, and it was shortly adjourned with no action taken.

On April 12, however, Dom Gerles, after a heated debate on the disposition of Church goods, said that "it must be decreed that the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is and shall

36. Ibid., du 1er au 5 octobre, 1789; no. 67; p. 274-75.

37. Ibid., du 1er au 3 août, 1789; no. 32; p. 135.

remain always the religion of the nation, and the only authorized one." The clergy later applauded an amendment which promised that "the non-Catholic citizens will enjoy all rights which they have been accorded in preceeding decrees." When the motion was about to come to a vote, several deputies moved postponment till the following day. A doubtful voice vote was taken on this motion. After a second voice vote, the president announced postponement and most of the deputies left their places. The president and the secretaries left the tribune, with the deputies of the right still demanding a vote on Dom Gerles' motion. Finally they left, a few at a time.³⁸ The next day Dom Gerles himself acceded to a substitute motion, which, after restatement by Mirabeau, said,³⁹

The National Assembly, considering that it neither has nor can have any power over the conscience or over religious opinions, and that the majesty of religion and the profound respect due to it forbid its becoming a subject of discussion; considering that the attachment of the assembly to the Catholic, apostolic and Roman religion cannot be called in question at a time when the expenses of this religion are being given first place in the budget, and when, with a unanimous sentiment of respect, it has expressed its feelings in the only way befitting the dignity of religion and the character of the National Assembly; it decrees that it cannot, and ought not to, deliberate on the motion proposed, and that it will proceed with the order of the day concerning Church property.⁴⁰

About 300 deputies, supposedly those in favor of the original motion of Dom Gerles, voted against this decree. A better indication of the true division came earlier on a vote to stop debate. In that vote, the minority rose to 400, as against 495 supporting the watered down version.⁴¹

38. Ibid., 13 avril, 1790; no. 103; p. 422.

39. Ibid., 14 avril, 1790; no. 104; p. 425.

40. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 53.

41. Moniteur, 14 avril, 1790; no. 104; p. 425.

This vote was a victory for the philosophes over the forces of religion, although the margin was small. To attain the victory, they had modified their position, making it seem as though it was obvious that they were for Catholicism, although not admitting it. The voluntary retreat of Dom Gerles also would adversely effect the cause of the defenders of the faith. During the remainder of that meeting, abbé Maury kept trying, always in vain, to renew the original motion of the dom. In answer to the question, "Will abbé Maury be heard or not?", the Assembly voted not. Mirabeau, in excellent sarcasm, repeated that it was not necessary to hear him, for if he proposed anything other than "the Catholic religion is the national religion" they "would all drop dead in their seats".⁴² In less than a year, the Church in France had declined from a place of preeminence to a position in which even its 'zealous defenders' were denied the right to speak in the National Assembly. Later Maury began to offer a rider such as Mirabeau had described to the Church goods bill. He was declared out of order six consecutive times and finally, on his seventh try, he said, "This is an insult to the good faith of this assembly; I am defending my opinion, and I am not stepping down; they pretend to be religious by embracing fanaticism. ... " After having been told to leave the platform he shouted "There is no longer liberty, there is no longer authority in the Assembly."⁴³ The rationalism of the philosophes did not have full sway as yet, for the next day, when abbé Maury arrived, the right side of the assembly applauded, and priests embraced him.⁴⁴

42. Ibid., 14 avril, 1790; no. 104; p. 425.

43. Ibid., 14 avril, 1790; no. 104; p. 426.

44. Ibid., 15 avril, 1790; no. 105; p. 428.

The cahiers were overwhelming in their assurances in the belief in the complete Roman Catholic Church. In one year, the sentiment had noticeably turned against it. From whence did this new feeling arise? It was the writings of the philosophes of the eighteenth century put into practice. There were in France during the ancient régime, 'thought clubs' which devoted much time to the works of the philosophes and who had, in some cases, a rudimentary political organization. At the time of the States-General many of these were transformed into 'Societies of the Friends of the Revolution'. These clubs were made up of about two thirds bourgeois and one quarter proletariat.⁴⁵ About 2 per cent of their personnel were clergymen.⁴⁶ In 1789, according to Barreul's Histoire du Jacobinisme, they had 689 lodges in France, of which 150 were in Paris. The number of people enrolled was about 500,000.⁴⁷ These organizations operated as pressure groups for republican ideas. They were not adverse to using violent methods, and accomplished a great deal, especially in Paris, through the use of extralegal force. The Jacobins, as the societies were called, were republican from the outset. We can trace the Assembly's actions against the Church in large part directly to pressure from the Jacobins.

After the events of October 5th and 6th, when the Paris mob marched to Versailles, it was proposed to move the National Assembly to Paris. This brought a discussion as to the dangers inherent in such

⁴⁵. Crane Brinton, The Jacobins: an Essay in the New History (N.Y., 1930), p. 51.

⁴⁶. Crane Brinton, "The Membership of Jacobin Clubs", American Historical Review (July, 1929), XXXIV, 740.

⁴⁷. Donat Sampson, Pius VI and the French Revolution, (published serially) American Catholic Quarterly Review, XXXI (July, 1906), 601-2.

a course. Even the staunch partisan of the left, Grégoire, had misgivings about the movement. Although he voted for the move, he questioned, with sarcasm, the wisdom of sending the clerical deputies into Paris "into the mercy of a 'beloved' people, there to brave for sure the outrages and the persecutions of which they are menaced?"⁴⁸ The irony in Grégoire's voice suggests that perhaps he wished to see the clergy of the right subjected to the menacings of the Paris populace. But his mention of the state of affairs suggests much truth in the statements. On July 13, in the movement which culminated in the storming of the Bastille, a monastery had been attacked, and although it was not for religious reasons, it was a violation of Church property.

The desire of the philosophes to combat the Church had been further fortified by the lack of a resisting spirit in the Church in the decade just preceding the Revolution. Many of the clergy themselves adopted wholeheartedly the ideas of the philosophes. Abbé Raynal said, in 1780

The state, it seems to me, is not made for religion, but religion is made for the state: that is the first principle. The general interest is the rule to determine everything that should exist in the state, that is the second principle. The people ... alone has the right to judge whether any institution conforms to the general interest. That is the third principle.⁴⁹

After the passage of the nationalization decree, there was a flurry of reaction on the part of a substantial number of clergy. The debates of the Assembly contain some of this, but it is the existence of a feature article in the Moniteur of 10 November, 1789, which confirms the broadness of the reaction. It speaks of "the intrigues of bishops,

48. Moniteur, du 5 au 8 octobre, 1789; no. 68; p. 280.

49. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 39.

nobles, and parlements against the decree which nationalized the Church goods". It characterized the three groups as feeling "that this combat will be a combat unto death".⁵⁰ One of the most interesting reactions was in Toulouse, where "eighty nobles and a large group of parlement members ... invited the order of the clergy and the order of the third estate (for it was thus that they still insolently called the communes) to unite with them and to take all measures necessary for restoring to religion its useful influence".⁵¹ Maury, of course, continued to give battle on the basis of the decrees of November 2, but his rashness made his appeal ineffective. One of his abler opponents during this time was Robespierre, who would often answer Maury argument for argument.⁵² Following the excesses of July and August on the part of much of the peasantry, many of the nobles and higher clergy had left the country. One of them, de la Place, published a small tract shortly after the November decree. In it he declared five points

1. It is the Day of Death, 2 November, 1789 ... There was in Paris an ecclipse of the moon.
2. It is a prelate who made this famous motion against his own order.
3. It is Camus, president of the National Assembly, and champion of the clergy, who was president then.
4. It is in the hall of the Archbishopric of Paris that the motion was published.
5. Finally (and the thing which is not perhaps least shocking) that it is to a Protestant minister that are owed the convocation and organization of this venerable assembly to which this beautiful oppressed nation is going to owe its renaissance and its glory.⁵³

50. Moniteur, du 10 novembre, 1789; no. 88; p. 357.

51. Ibid., du 10 novembre, 1789; no. 88; p. 357.

52. For an example, see Le Moniteur, du 18 au 20 novembre, 1789; no. 92; p. 375.

53. Moniteur, 2 décembre, 1789; no. 102; p. 415.

The Assembly ordered the sale of 400,000,000 livres of Church property on December 29.

On October 28, 1789, the Assembly adopted a motion which, suprisingly, met with but feeble resistance. The complete suppression of vows, after discussion, was abandoned, but it was decreed with no opposition that all vows were to be temporarily suspended. The motion for suppression came up for final adoption on the twelfth of February, 1790. Treilhard, a member of the ecclesiastical committee, presented three questions:

1. Shall the religious orders be abolished?
2. What shall be done about the religious who do not wish to remain in the monastery and in the garb of their order?
3. What shall be done with those who wish to remain in their monasteries and in the garb?⁵⁴

Cardinal Rochefoucauld was among those supporting suppression, the Bishop of Nancy leading the forces of opposition. The latter said, "I am far from the belief that you wish to destroy, but it must be acknowledged that all that you have done until now would be proper to assure to success of such an enterprise."⁵⁵ Maury, as usual, disregarded the bishop's mild approach and, interrupting one of the speeches, cried out 'Blasphemy'. He again moved that the Assembly "recognize that the apostolic religion, Catholic and Roman, is the national religion". The motion failed.⁵⁶ Grégoire, as in the battle over nationalization, attempted to compromise. He began, "I begin my profession of faith. I do not believe that religious establishments ought to be abolished

54. Ibid., 13 février, 1790; no. 44; p. 175.

55. Ibid., 13 février, 1790; no. 44; p. 176.

56. Ibid., 14 février, 1790; no. 45; p. 179.

entirely ... There are not enough secular priests, it is necessary to guard the auxiliary troops." He advocated new restrictions and some repressions.⁵⁷ The decree was passed as follows:

- I. ... the law no longer recognizes the solemn and monastic vows of either sex; it declares, consequently, that the orders and congregations of both sexes are and shall continue to be suppressed in France, without being able, in the future, to establish others.
- II. The individuals of either sex in monasteries shall be able to leave upon making their declaration to the municipality in the locality.
- III. There is no change, for the present, in regard to orders charged with education or nursing, until the Assembly passes an order on that subject.
- IV. Nuns will be able to stay where they are at present.⁵⁸

After the sale of all Church property, it was necessary for the state to pay the curés or to see to it that they were paid. Although the dîmes of the low clergy were excepted in the general order, many of the clergy had none, and, when the dîmes to the beneficiary of the parish stopped, the portion congrue was also cut down. Even where the priest did receive some pay from his own flock, he was often deprived of it because of the attitude taken by the public after the suppression of the dîmes, which was simply not to pay. Hence, Guillaume, on December 30, 1789, proclaimed

The tithe-owners are no longer paying the salaries of the cures and vicars. The pastors will revolt, and it is feared, that by this example, the flock will revolt. ...

The abbé Maury applauds his views, saying :
I move, in order to stop these calamities, that it be immediately decreed that the tithe-owners shall continue to pay the portions congrues as in the past.

Camus: It is absolutely necessary to discuss and not deliberate without discussion ... I move for postponement.⁵⁹

57. Ibid., 13 février, 1790; no. 44; p. 176.

58. Ibid., 14 février, 1790; no. 45, p. 180.

59. Ibid., 30 décembre, 1789; no. 130; p. 528.

The decision was for Camus. The affair came up again in April, and this time we find Grégoire doing the battle for the Church. The proposition in April was to end all dîmes completely. Grégoire opposed it, saying

I move ... that the cures and vicars shall continue to enjoy the income of land attached to their benefices for their subsistence ... The curés and vicars shall be endowed as soon as it shall be possible, in land rights, at least up to one half of the pensions which will be set for their benefices.⁶⁰

Deputy Camus, a lawyer from Paris, topped off a year of assault against the Church when he re-echoed Raynal's words: "The Church is in the state, the state is not in the Church. ... We are a national convention, we assuredly have the power to alter religion: but we shall not do it; we are not able to abandon it without crime."⁶¹ The stage was thus set for the complete domination of the Church by the state. It was with Camus' words in their ears that the deputies began work on a Civil Constitution for the Clergy.

60. Ibid., 12 avril, 1790; no. 102; p. 417.

61. Ibid., 2 juin, 1790; no. 153; p. 621.

IV. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy and Its Consequences

On February 6, 1790, the National Assembly adopted a motion posed by Treilhard, a member of the ecclesiastical committee. It decreed "That our ecclesiastical committee be charged with presenting at once (1) a constitutional plan on the organization of the clergy (2) its views on the salaries to pay to actual titularies."¹ Having received this duty, the committee labored for four months, and debate on the plan opened on the 29th of May. Boisgelin, Archbishop of Aix, gave the first speech. It is a carefully worked out talk, and led straight to the basic point.

Does the Ecclesiastical Committee know what is the useful influence of religion on its citizens? It is a bridle which stops the wicked, it is the encouragement of virtuous men. Religion is the shield of the Declaration which assures to man his rights and his liberty; it is inalterable in its dogma; its moral cannot change, and its doctrine will ever be the same. The committee wants to bring the ecclesiastics back to the purity of the primitive Church. This is not that of the bishops, successors to the apostles. This is not that of the pastors, charged with preaching the Bible, who can reject this method; but since the committee assigns us our duty, it will permit us to keep memories of our rights and of the sacred principles of ecclesiastical power. ... The mission which you have received through the voice of ordination and consecration had its origins in the apostles. They propose to you today to destroy a part of the ministers, to divide their jurisdiction; it has been established and delimited by the apostles; any human power has not the right to touch it.²

This was the clearest statement that had been made in many months by a backer of the Church. The state had taken away its possessions, had

1. Moniteur, 8 février, 1790; no. 39; p. 155.

2. Ibid., 30 mai, 1790; no. 150; p. 610.

closed its orders, had restricted its pay and persecuted its members. The Church had shrugged its shoulders and gone on with its duties. Many of its own members were in enemy ranks, and it was increasingly difficult to hold its remaining **strength**. The challenge was at last considered great enough - the Church was going to strike back. The archbishop ended his speech with a warning and a suggestion:

If you do not consult the authority of the Church, you will not again know that catholic unity which forms the Constitution of the Empire. We are not able, in any case, to renounce the forms prescribed by the Councils. We ask you to consult the Gallican Church in a National Council. It is there that the power resides ... We ask ... the King and the National Assembly to permit the convocation of a National Council. If this proposition is not adopted, we declare that we will not be able to participate in the deliberation.³

Deputy Treilhard, one of the five originators of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, introduced it to the Assembly. Very wisely, he took long quotes from Christ, the Bible, and the Church fathers in establishing the need and the correctness for his plan. He traced the development of Church history and tried to prove that the plan offered no inconsistencies with the past. The applause was greater than was usual, and there was considerable noise and commotion when the speech was finished.⁴ The debates that took place on the bills were seemingly endless, and every speaker seemed to wish to prove his point through precedent. Curé Jallet, the first member of the clergy to join with the communes, moved that the plan be adopted "as entirely conforming to the ancient maxims of the Church". Goulard, cure of Roanne, warned that to make a schismatic church is soon to make a

3. Ibid., 30 mai, 1790; no. 150; p. 610.

4. Ibid., 31 mai, 1790; no. 151; p. 613-14.

heretic church.⁵ The Assembly began to take up the Constitution, article by article, on May 31. During the period of debate on the measure as a whole, eight ecclesiastics voiced opinions, only one of which, that of Jallet, was favorable, while five very definitely condemned the Constitution. At this time Mirabeau was absent from the Assembly. Lanjuinais, Camus, Martineau, and Robespierre, the first three being members of the ecclesiastical committee, held up the argument for the Constitutionals, while there were none of the clergy who consistently spoke. Those who did speak, however, were aggressive. Title one was completed by June 8, two by June 14. The third title concerned, among other things, the minimum stipends for the clergymen, and its debate lasted for nearly a month.

In the entire proceedings, the clergy showed much more unity than it had in any previous discussions. Many influential members such as Gouttes, who were heretofore in the center, switched to the right side and fought well against the Civil Constitution. Some of the priests of the left remained there, and at one time several

members of the clergy got together to state their sentiments, 'We adhere with respect and submission to your decrees; our one hand will be holding the Bible, the other the constitution; we shall draw from the two sources justice and good morals; they will be to teach us to render unto God that which is of God, and to the nation what is of the nation'.⁶

The first article reorganized the dioceses so that they corresponded exactly to the departments, and did parallel organization for the lower divisions. It passed by a very large majority. In the debate on the

5. Ibid., 1er juin, 1790; no. 152; p. 617.

6. Ibid., 4 juin, 1790; no. 155; p. 633.

second article Grégoire warned that while it is all right to resist the Pope, one should be tactful about it. It passed in the following form

It is forbidden for any church or parish in the French Empire, and for any French citizen, to recognize, in any way and under whatever pretext it may be, the authority of bishops or metropolitans whose Sees were established under foreign domination nor those of its representatives, residing in France or elsewhere.⁷

The great curtailment of Papal power in this article brought life into some of the clergy. An amendment was offered, and, strangely enough, it passed. It proclaimed for the unity of the faith and of the "communion which will have been taken with the visible head of the Church".⁸

The third article sets up metropolitans and their synods, who were henceforth to commission and ordain the bishops. The Committee's draft was rejected by the Assembly and a new article written, but the controversy had no bearing on doctrinal points. The fourth article elaborated the third. Grégoire thought that both the third and fourth articles carried serious omissions, in that archpriests should be established in each district. In this he was joined by Gouttes, who felt it was necessary to have such an office for the many things which cannot go to the bishop.⁹ Whether or not this amendment is the result of a true democratic spirit in Grégoire is difficult to determine. The amendment was sent back to committee, where it was buried.

7. Ibid., 3 juin, 1790; no. 154; p. 624.

8. Ibid., 3 juin, 1790; no. 154; p. 625.

9. Ibid., 7 juin, 1790; no. 159; p. 649.

Articles five and six defined metropolitans and bishops and their jurisdictions and promised a full survey into parishes in order to divide them equitably. Articles seven and eight, at Grégoire's insistance, were indefinitely postponed. They concerned the duties of cures and vicars. The point at issue concerned who should be the bishop's aides, curés or vicars. Article nine provided that there would be only one seminary per diocese for the preparation to the orders, but that, for the present, the schools already established could remain.¹⁰

Articles ten through fifteen gave details as to the government of the seminaries, and installed vicars in most places. A reconstituted article seven made the cathedral priests vicars. The fifteenth article created the council of the bishop, which was to consist of the vicars of the cathedral church and the top two vicars of the seminary. The bishop was obligated to discuss measures with them before taking any action, either seminarial or diocesan. Article fifteen came in for criticism from the left. Henri Grégoire denounced it as too autocratic, maintaining that the curés ought to have more voice in the diocese between elections or councils. He moved that curés be represented on the bishops council, but the motion lost.¹¹

Articles sixteen through twenty concerned parishes and tried to weed out unnecessary parishes and join together those which had small flocks. A town which had less than ~~six~~ thousand people was not to have more than one parish. In the country, all small parishes within three-

10. Ibid., 7 juin, 1790; no. 159; p. 649.

11. Ibid., 9 juin, 1790; no. 160; p. 653.

fourths leagues of each other were to be combined. One article was added from the floor which abolished all titles except those defined in the Civil Constitution.¹²

Title two of the instrument excited perhaps the most controversy, but the clerical opposition was quickly overridden. The first articles provided for the election of all officials of the French Church. Elections were to be by majority vote, and the entire electorate was to vote. It was assumed, then, that everyone in France was Catholic, and the elections were to take place on Sunday immediately after mass. The theory here is again that non-Catholics will not be at mass. The clergy from left to right instituted alarm at the proposal. Henri Grégoire offered an amendment "by which, in the number of electors, one does not count the non-Catholics". Arguments of the committee prevailed, and the original article passed.¹³ A bishop, before being confirmed, was to give an oath to be loyal to the as yet non-existent constitution of France. The middle articles provide for the oath and for these elections, with details as to confirmation. Article eighteen gives the doctrine of extreme Gallicanism, saying that "The new bishop cannot address himself to the Pope to obtain any confirmation; but he shall write to him as visible chief of the universal Church, and in testimony of the unity of faith and communion that he ought to sustain with him".¹⁴ Both the left and the center supported this proposal, with the curé Gouttes giving the most support and the cure Goulard

12. Ibid., 9 juin, 1790; no. 160; p. 654.

13. Ibid., 9 juin, 1790; no. 161p p. 658.

14. Ibid., 15 juin, 1790; no. 167; p. 679.

incompetently defending Papal authority. The Moniteur's reporter changes his usual style of "it is adopted by a majority" to "Article eighteen was adopted by a very great majority".

The third title concerns the salaries to be paid to ecclesiastics. The range proposed was from 50,000 livres to 700 livres. The division of opinion on the articles did not divide itself clearly into left and right, as had most of the previous discussions. In the final act bishops were to receive 12,000, 20,000, or 50,000 livres, depending on the population of the diocese, the largest amount going only to the bishop of Paris. Parisian vicars were to get 3,000 to 6,000 livres, while six other classes of city vicars ranged from 2,000 to 4,000. Cures were divided into eight classes, a curé in Paris receiving 6,000; one in a city of 50,000 or more 4,000; decreasing to a parish priest who had less than a thousand in his flock getting 1200 livres.¹⁵ The individual church vicars, that is, those subordinate to cures (comparable to the English Curates), were to get from 700 to 2400 livres, with the top stipend outside of Paris being 800 livres. Grégoire strenuously objected to this provision, asking that the salaries of the Paris vicars be reduced in order to raise the salaries of the country vicars. But Vicar Gibert urged passage, saying that the article was all right as written, as he had been around over ten years at 250 livres per year.¹⁶

15. Ibid., 17 juin, 1790; no. 168; p. 688.

16. Ibid., 18 juin, 1790; no. 169; p. 690-91.

Thus was constructed the instrument upon which the future persecution of the Church was to be based. The Assembly approved of all the articles taken in total, and it was decreed that there would be no changes made.¹⁷ That decree did not, however, stop the endless debate which was to go on for many years. Even before the final passage of the Constitution, several important statements were issued which were to affect its situation later. One of these was Talleyrand's letter to his diocesan chapter. In this he discusses one of the basic points of difference for the years to come. Concerned was "the manner in which the assembly pronounced that the Catholic religion is the national religion". One group felt that the document declared Catholicism national, and thus the only authorized religion. A second group received the impression that, as national, it would be under the charge of the nation, while the other religions weren't.¹⁸ A second significant speech was the opening talk of Archbishop Boisgelin. Because of the extralegal character which he ascribed to the document, many clergy went on, insofar as possible, in accordance with his doctrine, and completely ignored the entire work.

On July 14, 1790 it was decreed that all ecclesiastics were to swear an oath "to be faithful to the nation and to the law, and to maintain to the utmost of ... their power the Constitution decreed by the Assembly and accepted by the king". The left side of the clerical party accepted this and wholeheartedly gave their allegiance. The center took a strange position. Their spokesman, Jacques-Andres

17. Ibid., 13 juillet, 1790; no. 194; p. 797.

18. Ibid., 11 juin, 1790; no. 162; p. 661.

Emery, superior of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, concluded that the 'constitution' mentioned in the oath was not the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, for it did not yet have the signature of the King.¹⁹

The Civil Constitution marked a complete break with the Concordat of Francis I without any sanction on the part of the Pope. King Louis, before signing it into law, attempted negotiation with Rome, but on August 24 the king sanctioned the Civil Constitution, even though no word had come from Rome. Very few were the clergy, who, even after the King's signature, would give credence to the Civil Constitution. Of all the French bishops, only six adhered to these new principles. They were Loménie de Brienne, Cardinal Archbishop of Sens, Bishop de Jarente of Orleans, Lafont de Savines, Bishop of Viviers, Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, Bishop Gobel of Lydda, Mirondet of Babylon, and Loménie de Brienne (nephew of the Cardinal Archbishop) of Trajanopolis.²⁰

Inasmuch as many, following Emery's advice, had taken the oath while repudiating the Civil Constitution, it remained a subject of debate for the National Assembly. It was brought up in September and October, and several times in connection with pensions, and, on November 27, 1790, after strong arguments by Camus and Mirabeau, a new oath was passed which affected all public ecclesiastical functionaries. The unceremonious and tactless Maury was again the chief defender of the rightist position. He showed bad judgment in attacking the problem, however, for he said "The nation has given you the right to

19. H. Walsh, Concordat of 1801, p. 23-4.

20. H. Morse Stephens, A History of the French Revolution, I (N.Y., 1886), 302-3.

make decrees, but not to regulate my conclusions. I conclude in this manner. I move that we adjourn discussion until the response of the Pope".²¹ Maury may have been expressing his own views, but it was no way to persuade anyone. The struggle was no longer whether the Pope would have control, it was a question of whether or not the Church in France was to be completely subjugated by the state. The Assembly was more apt to listen to P  thion say "Theology is to religion what chicanery is to justice".²² In the end, it was Mirabeau's brilliant speaking which overwhelmed the group.

The decree of November 27th was a stringent one. Article one and two announced that all public functionaries will be held, if they haven't done it, to taking the oath ... They will swear to watch with care over the faithful ... which are confided to them, to be faithful to the nation, the laws, the king, and of maintaining with all their power the constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King ...²³

They had one week in which to comply if in their diocese, one month if in another section of France, two months if in a foreign country. The second two articles dealt with methods of juring. Article five state that those "who will not have sworn in the time prescribed ... will be considered having renounced their office, and their replacement will be provided". Article six cautioned that if they take it and refuse "to obey decrees of Assembly" or excite "opposition to their execution" they were to be treated as rebels and punished "by forfeiture of their salaries and loss of citizenship rights". The last two articles expanded the classes eligible for punishment.²⁴

21. Moniteur, 29 novembre, 1790; no. 333; p. 1377.

22. Ibid., 29 novembre, 1790; no. 333; p. 1377.

23. Ibid., 29 novembre, 1790; no. 333; p. 1378.

24. Ibid., 29 novembre, 1790; no. 333; p. 1378.

The King signed the decree on December 26th. Henry Grégoire, the next day, was the first to take the oath, and, as he is one of the few devout thinkers of the left, his short speech may be quoted in full. "We swear the vows most ardently in order that all our brothers of the empire, losing their fears, pressing eagerly to fulfill a duty of patriotism so necessary to insure peace in the kingdom, and in order to cement the union between pastor and flock."²⁵ Grégoire's reasons were twofold. The first reason, to insure peace, may have been a sincere wish, or the peace he wanted to secure may have been a bettering of relations between Church and state by a temporary subjection to the state. His second reason, to cement the union of pastor and flock, is certainly genuine, and signifies a desire, on his part, to end the disturbances between the revolutionaries and the peasants. The oath that Grégoire swore was that of July with the addition of "and especially to the decrees relative to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy".²⁶

Following Grégoire fifty-eight ecclesiastics took the oath, most of them cures and none of them prelates. The next day Talleyrand, together with three cures, swore the oath. Seven more took it on the 31st, four on the 2nd, twenty-four on the 3rd, two on the 4th (one driven by the rashness of Maury), none of whom were prelates. Gobel, Bishop of Lydda, a philosophe and probably a skeptic, took it on January 2nd, and the Bishop of Babylon also jured. Thus of the near

25. *Ibid.*, 28 décembre, 1790; no. 362; p. 1493.

26. *Ibid.*, 28 décembre, 1790; no. 362; p. 1493.

three hundred in the National Assembly, one hundred two swore the oath.²⁷

The Bishop of Clermont wished to take the oath, though with restrictions. His statement was

We have always rendered homage to the civil power. We have recognized and we shall acknowledge always that we have received from it great political advantages; but it is not from it that we draw our powers in the spiritual order. We are compelled, as ministers of religion, to defend and teach our doctrine ...²⁸

The bishop was ruled out of order, and the motion was adopted that decrees must be sworn simply and as written.

What was true in the Assembly was even more true in the nation. From all parts of France came reports of violation, indifference, or rejection of the decree. It was reported that in Paris only forty in all took the oath, and twenty-six of these were in Saint-Sulpice.²⁹ Figures at the end of the first half of 1791 indicate that there were, in forty-three departments, 14,047 juring and 10,395 non-juring. The percentage of jurors varied in different departments from 8 per cent in the Bas-Rhin to 96 per cent in the Var.³⁰ Some figures are quoted that make it appear somewhat differently, saying that, in the Department of Doubs, only four of 490 took the oath, and in the District

27. Ibid., Issues of: 28 décembre, 1790; no. 362; p. 1493.
29 décembre, 1790; no. 363; p. 1497.
1 janvier, 1791; no. 1; p. 3.
3 janvier, 1791; no. 3; p. 10.
4 janvier, 1791; no. 4; p. 13.
5 janvier, 1791; no. 5; p. 18 and 20.

28. Ibid., 3 janvier, 1791; no. 3; p. 10.

29. Jean F. E. Robinet, Le Mouvement religieux à Paris pendant la Révolution (Paris, 1896-8), I, 387; indirectly quoted in Anon., "Religion Under the French Revolution", Edinburgh Review, CCIII (January, 1906), 46.

30. F. Aulard, Religion and the Revolution, p. 72-3.

Valençiennes only four of 130.³¹ Both sources agree that there were only five juring prelates.

The resistance of the clergy took many forms, ranging from peaceable arguments to threats and inciting armed resistance. "Many priests, according to an official report from Meaux, told women that it was better to strangle their babies at birth than to let them be baptised by a 'juracier'."³² Whether true or not, and it probably was, it is but an example of the bitterness with which all France was rent. Because of this dissention, the vexing matter appeared on the Assembly order frequently. At first the reports were that everyone was juring. The Assembly applauded for each, and recommended that the town or group be given honorable mention. A typical session is that of January 15, 1791.

... A curé ... who announces that he has sworn the curate's oath, to the great satisfaction of the people, and in the middle of all the regular and secular clergy of his parish; it contains truly patriotic sentiments, and conforms to the true spirit of religion.

(Violent murmurs arise on the right side. The ecclesiastical members of the minority move for the order of the day. The assembly orders the recording of the speech, which receives much applause.)³³

As soon as adverse reports came in, the right gained hope and began once again to bring up the subject. The abbé Maury gave a long speech on the 21st of January. After proving, to his satisfaction, that the oath touched on the spiritual, he said,

31. L. Sciout, Constitution civile du Clergé (Paris), II, 93, indirectly quoted in Anon., "Religion Under the French Revolution", p. 46.

32. J. Robinet, Mouvement religieux à Paris, II, 131, indirectly quoted in Anon., "Religion Under the French Revolution", p. 49.

33. Moniteur, 17 janvier, 1791; no. 18; p. 74. (Dateline on paper is in error. Edition was for January 18.)

You say that you haven't encroached on the spiritual jurisdiction. That is your perception, but it is not ours ... (Murmurs on the left). Look at us then, for our life is going; the people take us for public enemies. Listen to the unhappy men that speak to you only until the moment when there are some martyrs in the kingdom.³⁴

The continual defeats which Maury received heightened this feeling of martyrdom. When he later went to Rome, it was to increase his ineffectiveness in dealing with subsequent events in the Revolution.

On January 27 the priests of Amiens were accused of having changed the formula on the decree before publishing it. The Assembly, over the resistance of Maury, gave the tribunal in that place administrative power to deal with the situation and ordered the directory of Amiens to denounce the ecclesiastics there.³⁵

Economic forces necessitated the nationalization of Church goods. To enforce this nationalization in the face of opposition, the Civil Constitution was promulgated. In the same manner, opposition to the Civil Constitution brought up the question of equalitarian religious toleration. It was necessary, when the principle of a juring Church was established, to create a hierarchy. The Church had only five bishops, needing perhaps a hundred. Consequently, it was Talleyrand, assisted by Gobel and Mironnet, the latter Bishop of Babylon, who consecrated two priests as Bishops of Guimper and Soissons. ... One hundred twenty of such constitutional bishops were to be elected and consecrated in the next ten years.³⁶

34. Ibid., 23 janvier, 1791; no. 23; p. 95.

35. Ibid., 27 janvier, 1791; no. 27; p. 111.

36. D. Sampson, "Fius VI and the French Revolution, American Catholic Quarterly Review, LXXI, (October, 1906), 609.

One of these men, Gobel, whose character was open to reproach from every side, was the first to become a metropolitan, the office created by the Civil Constitution for the consecration and governing of bishops. The election results were learned on March 14 in the Assembly, and Gobel emerged with three bishoprics! (One of the three was Haut-Rhin, which voted 400 to 52 in favor of Gobel. Bas-Rhin was a center of opposition to the Civil Constitution, but Haut-Rhin one of its stronger supporters.) Gobel chose that of Paris.³⁷ He immediately started to constitutionalize his diocese. It resembled a war chest drive; we want 100 per cent jurors in this district. A pastoral letter of April 16th "feared for religion because of the trials" created by this split in the clergy. But he knew all would turn out correctly.

The enemies of the Constitution are seeking to inspire doubts on the legality of ecclesiastical elections. ... They dare to advance the theory that ecclesiastical functionaries, constitutionally elected, are interlopers, schismatics, &. Those unfortunates, blinded by hate, do not perceive that their foolish assertions reflect only on themselves.³⁸

Gobel's pastoral letter failed in its purpose, for a little over a week later we find him beseeching the Assembly to carry out the decrees against the non-juring clergy. He assures them that he is carrying out his duties with a zeal.³⁹

The opposition to the decree of December 26th was so widespread that the government (not the Church) soon found itself with an extremely serious shortage of clergymen. To alleviate this shortage, it was

37. Moniteur, 14 mars, 1791; no. 74; p. 300.

38. Ibid., 18 avril, 1791; no. 108; p. 443. (Page number on paper is in error. Correct page is 445.)

39. Ibid., 26 avril, 1791; no. 116; p. 476.

necessary to relax the laws. On March 25 Lanjuinais, in the name of the ecclesiastical committee, moved that vicars "who have been or will be suppressed" for failure to take the oath, will be given top precedence at their old job if they decide to take the oath.⁴⁰

On May 7, 1791, the inevitable results of the Civil Constitution (with state salaries) became apparent in Paris. A decree of the Municipal directory insured full religious freedom to all congregations. It could not be properly carried out, but in a little over a year such a program was to become the law of France.⁴¹ The first open move in such a direction for the nation was on the following November 29th.

One of the deputies addressed the ecclesiastical committee:

For a long time you have been drawing up the decree about the troubles excited by the non-juring priests. ... We are accused of being hard in the name of tolerance and of indifference by those who suffer so I want immediate action ...

M. Paganel ... [Quoting Rousseau] 'It is absurd to tolerate those who do not tolerate society itself.' I propose, then, barring from the liberty of worship not only the ministers of these cults, but everyone who shall have refused to take the civic oath. ... He went on to propose substitution of 'priest' for 'minister', to put all religions on exactly the same basis. ⁴²

The idea of complete equality of religions in France then lay quiescent for a time, but it was a professed reality already in Paris, though not an actual one. The next May, a Paris curé, abbé Moy of Saint Laurent, held the floor, saying, "All the religious divisions seem to me to spring from the great error of the National Assembly in having made a Civil Constitution of the Clergy."⁴³ By such a

⁴⁰. Ibid., 26 mars, 1791; no. 85; p. 347.

⁴¹. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 77-8.

⁴². Moniteur, 30 novembre, 1791; no. 334; p. 1395.

⁴³. Ibid., 18 mai, 1792; no. 139; p. 574.

system, he said, they must execute and obey all laws, even the bad ones, which clergymen, upright in their duty, cannot do. He proposed seven principles to govern clerical relations, among which were (1) election by cult members only, (2) salaries shall not be paid by the state, (3) 'constitutional' shall be dropped from titles, as a religious man cannot exercise functions delegated by the constitution, but only by God. The seventh principle was that "priests and ministers, of whatever religion they may be, not being public functionaries, not even being obliged to be French citizens, will not be subdued in the future, in their capacity of priest or minister, by any special oath". This did not mean that one could sabotage the nation, for abbé Moy provided in article six that "all priests convicted of having professed or preached maxims contrary to the constitution will be banished from the kingdom."⁴⁴ There are basically, two principles in abbé Moy's proposals. The first is a true understanding of the basic principles of religion, that it is not a temporal function and could not conceivably be regulated by laws which are not in the same area. A nation is always temporal, a church is always spiritual. But in article six Moy seems to condone on occasion, the use of state control over religion. The solution is that to abbé Moy an ecclesiastic, not being concerned with the temporal, could say nothing that concerned a constitution. His speech was applauded by a great majority, but its passage was prevented by parliamentary maneuvers of Ramond, Chalots, and Ducos. Chalots proposed an amendment and this and the reaction of war time (France had declared

⁴⁴. Ibid., 18 mai, 1792; no. 139; p. 574.

war on April 20th) ruined its excellent chances of passing.⁴⁵

Chalots' amendment proposed that if twenty citizens wished, they could, by applying to their department, have a priest banished. If the priest did not go, he was subject to ten years in prison. The law was passed on May 27th, but failed of the king's sanction.⁴⁶ The pressure of the war caused demands for a still more stringent measure, and, on August 26th, 1792, Benoiston presented a decree which passed with almost no opposition. "All ecclesiastics, who, having been compelled by the law of 26 December, 1790, ... have not sworn it ... , or have retracted" (after a series of Papal briefs in 1791, many retracted), are to be deported. It gave them travel money and required them out of the country in fifteen days. All left at the end of the period were subject to ten years in French Guiana. Article six of the decree provided that anyone was eligible for the same rules of deportment on the petition of six citizens, or on the petition of the administration.⁴⁷

One of the last acts by the National Legislative Assembly, taken on September 20, 1792, was of prime importance to the idea of separation of church and state. This measure was the secularization of the civil register. Marriage, birth, death, and contract records of all kinds all became civil records, and the divorce records were instituted. It was, strange to say, the papal Catholics, the party who had exercised these rights for so many years, who secured their passage. Not wishing to confide in constitutional clergy, they were forced into asking for passage of a civil status to obviate the necessity of seeing them.⁴⁸

45. Ibid., 18 mai, 1792; no. 139; p. 574.

46. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 88.

47. Moniteur, 28 août, 1792; no. 241; p. 1020.

48. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 91.

It was Cambon, both in the Legislative Assembly and in the National Convention, who continually stood forth for separation of state and Church. In the discussion of a motion on August 13, 1792, he brought up the question that all religions should be treated alike.⁴⁹ Again on November 2, 1792, he introduced a motion providing that all sects pay their own way.⁵⁰ Finally on September 18, 1794 Cambon's motion, in the name of the committee on finances, was passed. It decreed that the state "would no longer pay the expenses or salaries of any cult". The decree put all religions on their own, though it did provide for small pensions and adjustments in some cases to prevent injustice.⁵¹

Simultaneously with the slow movement which was to end in virtual separation of Church and state, the suppression of the non-juring was continued. On May 16, 1792, Vergniaux introduced a proposal which would have put an obligation on all priests to swear the civic oath on the pain of losing their salary, and which would deport all priests who were the instigators of religious trouble. He was answered that the oath gave religious liberty. How, then, could the second point (on deportation) be justified? It was in answer to this speech that abbé Moy gave his principles.⁵² On August 15, 1792, the Assembly substituted the liberty and equality oath for the old Constitutional one. It was a simple statement, "I swear to be faithful to the nation,

49. Moniteur, 15 août, 1792; no. 228; p. 956.

50. Ibid., 3 novembre, 1792; no. 302; p. 1307.

51. Ibid., 4 sanculottide, an 2; no. 364; p. 1496.

52. Ibid., 18 mai, 1792; no. 139; p. 573-4.

to uphold liberty and equality and to die at my post".⁵³

The days of September 2 and 3, 1792, were memorable in the darkest side of the Revolution. There are hundreds of accounts of the murders of the nights of the 2nd and 3rd, but very few do a dispassionate job. It is probable that the massacres were primarily directed against the clergy or religion. Yet it is probable that the Paris populace, who sat idly by and condoned the entire proceedings, would just as soon that the victims be priests. The movement which spread into the provinces, however, was nearly all anti-religious. The massacres, although not strictly spontaneous, were not planned. The actual number of ecclesiastics killed in Paris varies in different sources, but was probably slightly under two hundred.⁵⁴ Most of the accounts point up one characteristic about the ecclesiastics. "They went to their death as if going to a wedding,"⁵⁵ with no fear and with some calm. An interesting Catholic version of the story of the Carmelite nuns illustrates this calmness. The Carmelites were imprisoned for refusing to take the oath of August 15. This was in spite of the fact that the Pope had not condemned it (it had been submitted to him), Emery had pronounced it harmless, and both their chaplain and superior were of like opinion.

53. Barbara de Courson, "Some Recently Beatified Martyrs", American Catholic Quarterly, XXVII (April, 1907), 34-7.

54. James P. Conry, "In Red September, 1792", Catholic World, CXXVII (September, 1928), 727.

55. Ibid., p. 729.

But although the oath had not been formally condemned, they had been lately informed that it was blamed by the Bishop of Soissons and that in the South of France it was universally regarded as schismatical. The case was a complex one, and M. Emery on the one hand, the Bishop of Soissons on the other, were equally in good faith; but the Carmelites disregarded these subtle arguments and went straight to what was the most perfect and most perilous line of conduct - the uncompromising rejection of a doubtful formula.⁵⁶

This is a very unusual situation: the rejection, by a Catholic, of the Pope's verdict in favor of that of a bishop even though the Pope's pronouncement was not in official form. In addition, the bishop had no connection whatever with the nuns. The martyr complex that Maury had was also present, to a very high degree, in those nuns. It apparently is not true of all the non-juring Catholics, however, for Emery, as devout to the dogma as anyone, certainly had no great amount of it. He did have the calm and assurance of a man of his convictions - or of his religion - however. The Carmelite incident also illustrates one other point on which a partial generalization can be made. They did not analyze the oath themselves, but accepted something from the hierarchy. Here again, although Emery differs considerably, we find some of this spirit in Maury.

The insurrections that the central government had to deal with were the cause of decrees which, while not always levied directly at the priests, were used against them as a group. On March 18, 1793 Lanjuinais, noting that the "emigrées and their valets, the non-juring priests", were the center of counter-revolution, suggested that measures be taken.⁵⁷ Danton talked in favor, and Cambacères

56. B. de Courson, "Recently Beatified Martyrs", American Catholic Quarterly, XXXII (April, 1907), 348.

57. Moniteur, 19 mars, 1793; no. 78; p. 352-3.

presented the decree. The action taken suspended all rights to anyone acting in a rebellious way, gave them a military trial of five people, and established the death penalty. Article six decreed that "the priests ... who have provoked or maintain someone revolting will suffer pain of death".⁵⁸ The decree was to take effect in twenty-four hours. This decree, while against the non-jurors, was dictated by military necessity, not by anti-religious feelings. The non-juring priests, by continuing their campaigns in the country, were forcing the Convention to take 'religion' and 'counter-revolution' as the same term. That this was meant only for use in the Vendée and such regions is shown by the later decree of April 23, which merely subjected all non-juring priests to deportation to Guiana immediately.⁵⁹

The events of the second to the fourth of June, 1793, completely changed the picture as far as the Constitutional Church was concerned. The Church had aligned itself with the Girondist party. Even before the Girondists fell, there were rumors of the suppression of all religion, or at least of complete indifference while they upheld the new religion.

Soon after the Jacobins came to power the distinction, for most purposes, between constitutional and non-juring began to disappear. To be sure, there was always a difference. At first the Jacobins seemed only concerned with marriage of clergy and the war. On October 21 and 22, 1793, it was decreed that

58. Ibid., 21 mars, 1793; no. 80; p. 362.

59. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 98.

Priests communicating with the enemies of the nation ... anywhere were to be put to death within twenty-four hours after being found guilty, by a military commission, of bearing arms; and the fact will be deemed proved either by a written declaration with two signatures, or by one signature vouched for by one witness, or by oral statements of two witnesses, if they agree. As for such priests as had returned to France, they should be put to death if two witnesses agreed they had been sentenced to deportation.⁶⁰

The same decree made all priests subject to deportation if they were denounced for lack of patriotism, even if they had taken the oath.

Six citizens could accuse priests, after which, the directory would try them.

The constitutionals, like the non-jurors before them, were driven underground if they were to survive. The new regime was establishing its own religion, and wished no competition. Grégoire reports that in March and April of 1794 there were still about one hundred fifty parishes functioning in the rituals of the Constitutional Church. In July of that year there was active Catholicism in at least two districts.⁶¹

There was no more aggressive action against the Church after the death of Robespierre on July 27, 1794. But the Church, at that time, lay helpless, being trampled under the feet of the new French Philosophism. It is to Grégoire that the credit must be given for lifting up the Church, for he, on December 23, 1794, in sacerdotal garb, gave one of the most brilliant speeches of his career. He contrasted the fanaticism of a philosophical religion with the inward and spiritual grace of Catholicism. Facing a hostile government, Grégoire subdued it almost single-handedly.

60. Moniteur, 2 du 2^e mois, an II; no. 32; p. 128-29.

61. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 119-20.

Catholic by conviction, priest by choice, I have been elected to be a bishop by the people; but it is neither from them nor you I hold my mission. I consented to the burden of the episcopate in a time when it was surrounded with thorns; I was plagued to accept it; today I am urged to the point of force to an abdication to which I shall never yield. Acting according to sacred principles which were dear to me and which I defy you to steal from me, I have a task to fulfill for the well-being of my diocese; I remain a bishop in order to complete it; I demand liberty for the cults.⁶²

The Convention was not ready to take Grégoire's advice. But the next week Grégoire opened the churches in his district. He was to assume leadership of the French Church, and in contrast to Maury, to lead Catholicism toward a spiritual and tenable position.

Concurrent with the struggle over the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the fight over nationalization continued to flourish. All of the perpetual goods and income of some houses being taken away, the ecclesiastics were destitute. As a result, some embezzlement had taken place. A debate in the Assembly on September 8, 1790 concerned the subject. Abbé Maury was in favor of beginning payments immediately to the dispossessed clergy rather than on January 1, as the law called for. He cited an example where the nuns had little or nothing, and the collector demanding the tax. "When we decided to put ecclesiastical goods at the disposal of the nation," he said, "we took upon ourselves the keep of those who lived from them." Maury was oversimplifying. The nation's promise was to keep the locum tenens (priest who actually performed the duties) but not to keep the curé primitif (titulary of the benefice). Maury, of course, held large holdings as a curé primitif. Although his logic was good, he gave away his own position when he moved

62. H. Walsh, Concordat of 1801, p. 128.

"that it be ordained to the farmers to pay the salaries, and pay the surplus into the bank of the districts. ... Not only do the municipalities retain their revenues, but still they force us (*italics mine*) to pay the portion congrues".⁶³ Maury, as the Moniteur is quick to point out, received a very substantial sum from holdings which he had. Maury's motion failed.

Serious resistance met the decree of the Assembly in the rural areas. In Alsace, the decree nationalizing Church lands, when translated into German, had been altered, presumably by priests, so that it excepted vast areas of land in the province. Custine tried to relieve the Church of responsibility, saying that they were probably ignorant of the translation change. Maury justified the title-holders of Alsace in not giving up the goods to the state. The problem was complicated by the fact that Alsatian Lutheran lands were not touched.⁶⁴ (There were 220,000 Lutherans and 450,000 Catholics in the province, and they both enjoyed full religious freedom.)⁶⁵ Maury ended his argument with "I demand that the ecclesiastical committee or anti-ecclesiastical co—" He was called to order before he could insult the committee.⁶⁶

Following up the decree abolishing orders, Charlier proposed on August 4, 1792 that all monks and nuns be evacuated immediately so that the houses can be sold.⁶⁷ The measure met with no resistance on the

63. Moniteur, 9 septembre, 1790; no. 252; p. 1041.

64. Ibid., 18 octobre, 1790; no. 291; p. 1207.

65. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 26.

66. Moniteur, 18 octobre, 1790; no. 291; p. 1207.

67. Ibid., 4 août, 1792; no. 218; p. 917.

part of the clergy, except to assure the evicted suitable pensions. The pensions finally decreed were ample, being 500 livres if under 40 years old, 600 livres if 40-60, and 700 livres if over 60.⁶⁸ The order was put into effect on September 10th, and generally enforced on the 29th.

The story of the Constitutional Church in Paris is an interesting one. On April 11, 1790 the Paris Directory adopted the Talleyrand report, the object of which was religious liberty. Talleyrand "called the Catholic religion true, ... but went on to say ... that we should assure its triumph 'by leaving to it nothing but the means of persuasion and showing that it has nothing to fear from rival sects'".⁶⁹ The decree named guards called 'laic supervisors' who will prevent "any ecclesiastical function from being exercised in the Church ... other than by" juring priests. It decreed further that any sect, if it placed a description of itself over the door, could hold religious meetings. Any church which didn't agree to this toleration was to be closed in twenty-four hours.⁷⁰ In accordance with this law, Pancemont moved into the Church of Théatins. An inscription "Building consecrated to the religious cult, by a private society: peace and liberty" was placed over the door.⁷¹ Pancemont's group met here from time to time, and it consisted mainly of non-juring clergy. At one of the first regular meetings on June 3rd the Paris crowd, supposedly instigated

68. Ibid., 7 août, 1792; no. 228; p. 958.

69. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 76.

70. Moniteur, 15 avril, 1791; no. 105; p. 431.

71. Ibid., 20 avril, 1791; no. 110; p. 450.

by abbé Latyl, picketed the meeting and reported that refractory priests were giving communion, a public function. LaFayette and the national guard were called in, and restored order. The Paris authorities upheld the decree of April 11th.⁷² Because of the popular menace, however, most non-juring Catholics, after ~~this~~, met only in secret. Impressing the public with their stand on toleration, on October 12, 1791 they reaffirmed the April 11th position, and declared it to be for true tolerance.⁷³ One week later it was ruled that " ... All citizens, all societies, all groups, or religious or secular orders will be able to open any church ... to the exercise of a religious cult" with none other than police protection for the public order.⁷⁴ The situation remained thus until May 2, 1792, when, due somewhat to the war scare, all congregations except jurors were suppressed, and they were rigidly watched. It was a move foreshadowing the new religion.

72. Ibid., 4 juin, 1791; no. 155; p. 643.

73. Ibid., 17 octobre, 1791; no. 290; p. 1027.

74. Ibid., 23 octobre, 1791; no. 296; p. 1233.

V. The New Religion

The division of the clergy by the state into jurors and non-jurors is cited as a cause of the new rationalistic religion which bloomed in France during and after Robespierre's reign. It was a cause only in that it was an agent, allowing those who tended to scoff at religion and adopt philosophism an excuse to ply their trade. Men like Grégoire or Gouttes did not do this; atheists or skeptics who had found their way into the Church, such as Loménie de Brienne and Gobel, did. When the latter swore the oath, they were not swearing to a national Catholicism, but to a national philosophism, an ardent rationalism. The roots of these were based much deeper than the split on the Civil Constitution, going back directly to Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century writers.

To establish this new religion, it was necessary to extirpate Catholicism and put something in its place. The impetus to this movement was greatest during the Convention, when power was the most concentrated, which would seem to indicate that the leaders were not so much interested in 'Destroy the infamous thing' as they were in assuring their continued dominance. Putting words into the mouths of Frenchmen, Vandam has stated one of the basic reasons for the 'new religion'.

'Why can't I make a national god, seeing that the abbe Sieyes is making a national religion', stutters Camille Desmoulins ...

'Why indeed?' echo ... others to whom the idea appeals, not as the deathblow to Catholicism, but as the germ and means of a theocracy likely to benefit the autocrats of the Revolution.¹

1. Albert D. Vandam, "1793-1893", Fortnightly Review, LIV (n.s.) (September, 1893), 382.

Before the Civil Constitution was completed there were some indications of what was coming. On June 16, 1790 there was at Strasbourg a unique baptismal service. Two infants were baptised, one Catholic and one Protestant, each with one Protestant and one Catholic godparent. Following these services there was a civil baptism, in which the godfathers, in the name of the infants, took the civil oath under the flag of the district federation.²

The accent upon this new religion came with the advent of the Convention. When the Girondists were in power, it centered on changing the standards of the constitutional clergy, until they were no longer a Catholic or apostolic group. With some, very little changing had to be done. They began by approving marriage, and made moves which would give married priests more rights and privileges than the bachelors. The impetus may have come from the Jacobins, for in the first part of the Convention, it merely seems to be condoned, not sanctioned. In large measure, the Church fell with the Girondists. Lanjuinais had refused to give permission for Abbé Bruyère to marry another priest on August 10, 1791.³ Immediately after the Jacobins reached full power, the Convention began to restrict the Communes in regard to their power over married priests. On June 19, 1793, a curé appeared before the convention, asking "justice against his parishioners who have refused to recognize him, because he married a woman of less than fifty years". The Assembly promised that his

2. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 67.

3. Ibid., p. 63.

salary would continue to be paid.⁴

On July 19, this decision was put in a decree.⁵ On August 12 Julien gave a long talk, to which no one even tried to reply, which forbade the "destitution of a Catholic minister because of marriage to individuals" to whom he is attached. If such a priest is let go, he was "authorized to return to his functions".⁶ On September 22, the Bishop de la Dordogne presented his wife to the convention. Introducing her as poor in fortune but rich in virtue, he moved that the Convention act especially to safeguard such priestly marriages. His wife and president Cambon embraced. Then Julien moved "for the encouragement of priests to follow the example which Bishop Fontard has just shown". He advocated high pensions for such ecclesiastics.⁷ On November 15, the Convention capped their work off by declaring that if a commune should fire a cure because he is married, that community should continue to pay his salary, and that the priest should be able to do what he wishes with the money.⁸ Admittedly, a condonation of marriage does not mean that one is seriously questioning the authority of the religion. But when added to the attitude and other measures taken, it falls into a definite scheme for the complete rationalization of Catholicism. Henri Grégoire was the only one of the churchmen who was able and ready to challenge the wisdom of the assents to marriage,

4. Moniteur, 22 juin, 1793; no. 173; p. 747.

5. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 101.

6. Moniteur, 14 août, 1793; no. 226; p. 961.

7. Ibid., 24 septembre, 1793; no. 267; p. 1133.

8. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 102.

but, while he doubted the wisdom, he was tolerant of things which he considered did not affect the 'inward grace' of man.

Another movement which was not directed at Catholicism was that in which all church metal except the bare necessities was stripped to be used in the war effort. On August 14, 1792 a delegation appeared before the National Legislative Assembly and rendered an account of destroying a statue of Henry IV (probably this particular king only because of proximity to the statue) and erecting in its place a tablet containing the rights of man.

M. Thuriot moved that the demolished statue be made into cannon.

M. Lacroix I propose consecrating to the same destination all the bronze monuments which are in the churches.

M. Thuriot It is not in Paris alone that this useful reform is needed: it is needed in all parts of the Empire ...⁹

Thus by pure coincidence the state found a good means of alleviating finances and war shortages. If it incidentally had an adverse effect on the Church, it could not be helped. Still, Lacroix only thought of churches, not of kings' palaces and nobles' belongings, as they later did. The first thing to be crossed out in a Frenchman's mind, apparently, was the Church. The idea was carried out at several different times. Many of the provinces at various times raised funds by this method. After stripping the churches several times and accustoming the people to taking the goods of the Church, the final climax came on July 23, 1793, when all bells but one were taken from each parish.¹⁰

The organized campaign for the reduction of the Catholic religion also got under way early. In a debate in the Constituent Assembly on

9. Moniteur, 16 août, 1792; no. 229; p. 962.

10. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 101.

January 7, 1791 Maury was defending a fellow member who was absent because he wished to attend religious rites. Charles Lameth ridiculed such a thing, and, while not saying anything against worship as such, did debase the position it should occupy to a point beneath that of the politicians.¹¹

On March 24, 1791, a trial was ended at which Gobel, the constitutional bishop-elect of Paris, was given temporal possession of the diocese. Two important points were made clear in the decision of the trial. (1) Bishops recognized the legitimate right of persons elected to canonical office under the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. (2) They recognized that the laws decreed by the Assembly and sanctioned by the king had binding force on an ecclesiastical institution.¹²

On the occasion of Mirabeau's funeral, the Assembly turned the Church of Sainte-Geneviève into a civil Pantheon. In a gesture to the great man, they decreed that "the new building of Sainte-Geneviève will be destined ... to hold the ashes of great men who commemorate the era of French liberty". Above it they put the inscription "To Great Men; The Thankful Country".¹³ Although this tended to lower the prestige of the Church, it was a mere nothing compared to the moving of Voltaire's ashes to the Church on May 30.¹⁴ To see such a man enshrined for worship in a building confiscated from the Catholic worship was one factor which determined many of the non-juring never to become constitutional,

11. Moniteur, 8 janvier, 1791; no. 8; p. 31.

12. Ibid., 26 mars, 1791; no. 85; p. 345.

13. Ibid., 5 avril, 1791; no. 95; p. 390.

14. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 75-6.

even after the oath had been changed to the liberty and equality oath.

The struggle between the constitutional and non-juring clergy offered an excellent opportunity for the opponents of religion to make headway. Each side in that struggle was Catholic, and the struggle was in many places so intense that they would accuse each other of any calumny whatsoever. Neither side realized that each of their accusations and actions, no matter how directed, was a reflection on Catholicism itself. There are many instances of non-juring priests being 'deported so many leagues' from their parishes, and of jurors being ostracized from certain communities. E. Perronet Thompson has given a thumbnail characterization of the situation in 1792:

... an anxious peasant is assured that he will not be eternally lost for having replaced his SS. Peter and Paul by pictures of Voltaire and Rousseau; and equal joy is displayed at the marriage of nuns or at their good works in the hospitals. ... only a jarring note where the key of religious bitterness is struck by denouncing some show miracle, said to be wrought by or for non-juring priests.¹⁵

Thompson here is overpainting the acceptance of the peasant. He was more apt to be strenuously opposed, and most certainly he questioned the new innovations which might be made in his district, not the least of which would be the marrying of a nun. It is at least certain that during the struggle many things were said which, for the sake of piety, should have been left unsaid.

In August, 1792, before the Legislative Assembly adjourned, it took a far reaching step toward destroying all religion. On the 13th, the "Assembly decreed that the religious ecclesiastical costumes ...,

15. E. Perronet Thompson, "A French Protestant During the Revolution: Rabaut Saint-Etienne", Littell's Living Age, v. 185 (April 12, 1890), 106.

were abolished and prohibited". A punishment article was added to the decree which provided loss of salary for Catholics, and criminal action for other cults. For a non-Catholic's second offense, he was to be deported.¹⁶ There was no opposition on this plan whatsoever. Only Cambon, a backer of separation (and not of destruction) questioned whether it was right to differentiate among the religions.

In spite of all centuries of Gallicanism could do, the French populace continued to think of the Catholic religion in connection with the Pope. It was a great significance, therefore, when Basseville, the French secretary of the legation at Naples, was murdered on January 13, 1793 at Rome. It was looked upon everywhere as a crime perpetrated by the Pope himself. In the Convention, it was called 'an atrocious crime' and an 'outrage on national security'. Letters were shown in the Convention which 'established', beyond a doubt' the guilt of the Pope.¹⁷ The reflections were greater on the non-juring clergy than on the constitutional, but it also was mirrored in the attitude of the people as a whole toward Catholicism as a religion.

Danton, more moderate than some of his fellow men, on several occasions assured the people that the "Convention never intended to deprive the citizens of the ministrations of religion, which the Civil Constitution of the Clergy had given them".¹⁸ The existence of the words 'never intended to deprive' is indicative of the results of the government program. It was a suppression of Catholicism through

16. Moniteur, 15 août, 1792; no. 228; p. 956.

17. Ibid., 4 février, 1793; no. 35; p. 166.

18. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 95 - see also Moniteur, 13 janvier, 1793; no. 13; p. 56.

inability to pay, though a very acute shortage of priests, and by the actual intentions of the administrators. On January 13, 1793, forty communes of Eure, Orne, and Eure et Loir sent a delegation to the Convention. They said "we have been delegated to you to demand the pure conservation of the Catholic religion, its free worship, and to maintain the pensions of our ministers. Our petition cannot fail to be welcomed because you have not been elected by atheists."¹⁹ It was evident, then, in spite of Danton's periodic assurances, that the worship of Catholicism under the state control was being severely hindered.

During the last half of 1793, the organized campaign to erase Catholicism and substitute a nationalistic religion had full sway. The first place to be vitally changed was Paris. Here on October 14, 1793, Chaumette,

the procurer of the commune, took the floor. He made a list of the charlatanisms of priests ... He pointed out the immorality of the public exercise of religion; he moved that instructions be drawn up on the matter of recording births and giving the dead their last rites.

The council-general ... decreed that it would be prohibited to ministers of all cults to exercise their functions outside the house designated. ... ²⁰

Two days later the work had been done on Chaumette's motion:

Considering that the French people

can recognize no other cult than that of universal morality; no other dogma than that of its sovereignty and its power ... decrees that which follows:

19. Moniteur, 13 janvier, 1793; no. 13; p. 58.

20. Ibid., le 25 du 1er mois; l'an II; no. 25; p. 99.

1. All worship of any religion cannot be exercised except in its respective temples.
2. The Republic recognizes no established religion ...
3. It is forbidden for any minister to appear in public ... in religious costumes.
4. All dead citizens of whatever religion ... are to be buried in common ... covered by a funeral veil on which will be printed 'Sleep' ...
5. There will be a statue of sleep in all cemeteries.
6. Gate of the cemetery will read "Death is eternal sleep".
7. All dead who were 'meritorious' will have a stone figure crowned in oak.²¹

The monument was apparently to be inscribed with the rights of man.

Thus by the end of 1793, the Catholic Church was dead in Paris, except for a few underground groups. Chaumette continued to be the most important member on this subject, and on November 23, because so many priests were in the 'counter-revolutionary' movement, he moved that all churches and temples of faith be closed. In addition, all priests and ministers of any kind were to be individually responsible for all trouble of which the source could be religious opinion. Serious penalties including deportation were involved.²² The measure passed almost unanimously, in part because of the war, in part because people were, by this time, being terrorized by the government, and in part because the people of Paris, as a whole, had already rejected Christianity and, as they called it, 'superstition'. This was not Chaumette's real aim, however, for on the 28th, he put forth a new motion:

I move that in order to fraternize all citizens, there be at the end of each month a reunion of the citizens of all sections, in the Temple of Reason [Notre Dame, converted on November 10, 1793], where there will be a summary of all the interesting news; they will celebrate the

21. Ibid., le 27 du 1er mois; an II^e; no. 27; p. 107.

22. Ibid., 6 frimaire, an II; no. 66; p. 265.

brave actions of the defenders of the country; there will be chanted some patriotic hymns, and some discourses on republican morals will be given.²³

Much of the same type of action was taking place in the provinces.

At Nevers, Fouché in September had moved "to substitute the religion of the Republic and natural morality for the superstitions and hypocritical cults to which the people are still so unfortunately devoted". "At Rochefort, Laignelot [October 31] turned the parish church into a 'Temple of Truth', which ... witnessed a grand ceremony - namely, the abdication of eight Catholic priests and one Protestant minister".²⁴

What was true in Paris and the provinces was also true in the Convention. Marie-Joseph Chénier was the spokesman for the movement in that body, and once again there was no opposition. Not even Grégoire, though he obviously disapproved, said anything to the Convention. Sometime in August, 1793, presumably on the 10th, in honor of the reduction of royalty, the Statue of Nature had received libations. Chénier on October 2 consecrated the movement of Descartes's ashes into the Pantheon, praising him as a man who "rendered a great public service by leading men to examine and not to believe".²⁵ One month later, on ^{Novem}October 4, he gave a stirring speech before the Convention:

Wrench ... the sons of the Republic from the yoke of theocracy which now weighs upon them ... then, freed from prejudice and worthy to represent the French nation, you will be able; on the ruins of fallen superstitions, to found the one universal religion, which has neither secrets nor mysteries, whose one dogma is equality, whose orators are

23. Ibid., 11 frimaire, an II; no. 71; p. 286.

24. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 102.

25. Ibid., p. 103.

the laws, whose pontiffs are the magistrates, which asks no incense from the great human family to burn save before the altar of our country, our mother, and our diety.²⁶

Three days later Catholicism, which had been faltering badly during the last few months, fell with a thud. It took place when Gobel, preceeded by Pache, mayor of Paris, Chaumette, ... and other functionaries, and accompanied by several of his clergy, appeared before the Convention wearing the red cap and carrying in his hand his mitre, his crozier and his ring. These he laid down in the presence of the Assembly and declared that he and his curates renounced their ecclesiastical functions, gave up their ordination letters, ... and that henceforth the national religion should be simply the worship of liberty and equality.²⁷

This service was barely over when Henri Gregoire arrived at the Convention. Immediately he was told the news, and the Jacobins began to chant for Grégoire to come forth and follow Gobel's noble example. Grégoire was in a serious predicament. The Terror had already started and the guillotine was as likely (or perhaps even more so) to fall on old friends' necks than on those of long-standing enemies. But here Grégoire stood firm. He slowly mounted the tribune and gave a very short talk.

I have just this moment arrived in the assembly, and I have just learned that several bishops have abdicated. Is this to renounce fanaticism? Such cannot concern me; I have always combatted it. Proof of it is in my writings, which all breathe hate of kings and of superstition. What do the functions of a bishop mean? I accepted them in difficult times, and I am disposed to abandon them when times will it ...

Thuriot. Grégoire consults his conscience, in order to see if superstition is useful to the progress of liberty and equality. It is this superstition which has given birth to despotism.²⁸

26. Ibid., p. 104.

27. Donat Sampson, Pius VI and the French Revolution (published serially), American Catholic Quarterly Review, XXXI (October, 1906), 617.

28. Moniteur, nonodi 2^e decade de brumaire, an II; no. 49; p. 200.

Later he again defended his position, this time in full sacerdotal robes in front of the Convention! If he had to soften his barb for his own safety in his first defense, he made no concession in his second:

Catholic by conviction, priest by choice, I have been elected to be a bishop by the people; but it is **neither** from them nor you I hold my mission. I consented to the burden of the episcopate in a time when it was surrounded by thorns; I was plagued to accept it; today I am urged to the point of force to an abdication to which I shall never yield. Acting according to sacred principles which are dear to me, I have a task to fulfill for the well-being of my diocese; I remain a bishop in order to complete it; I demand liberty for the cults.²⁹

By his firm stand, Grégoire somehow avoided both the Terror and the sacrifice of his principles. It is Thuriot's rejoinder which gives one the key to the spirit of the rulers of France at the time. The Jacobins not only accepted Thuriot's definition, but they expanded it till religion, or superstition, was synonymous with fanaticism. One of the Carmelites who was condemned in June, 1794 "for having kept up fanatical correspondence" and for "anti-revolutionary meetings" questioned the use of the word 'fanatic'. The judge replied that he meant "your attachment to childish superstitions, to silly practices of religion".³⁰ Although the judge's opinion may have been correct in this case, he was using it as a generalization, making fanaticism, religion, and superstition one and the same. The judge was too close to the events of the day to add another to the list: Jacobinism.

It was inevitable that Grégoire would break with the party. The rebellious attitude he took in refusing to marry was enough to ostracize him. On November 13, 1793, there is a reference to Grégoire as having

29. H. Walsh, Concordat of 1801, p. 128.

30. B. de Courson, "Recently Beatified Martyrs", American Catholic Quarterly Review, XXXII (April, 1907), 351.

been a Jacobin, but "he is no longer", but the sentiment expressed is not strongly against him.³¹

The example of Gobel and others like him spread rapidly, and in the fall of 1793 the sight of a priest or bishop relinquishing his duties and rejecting religion was very common. On a single day, November 15, the Convention received notice of four ceremonies of apostacizing (and to send notice was purely voluntary). Two of these show the general spirit:

1. The citizen Doche, heretofore episcopal vicar in Strasbourg, who has chosen a wise and virtuous mate, renounces his salary and returns his commissioning letters. 'I have glanced through them only with indignation', he writes, 'since the day that man has been permitted to think'.
2. Duharan reads a letter which announced that reason has the greatest success in the department of Gers: Many priests have renounced priesthood; the cross has been shattered, fanaticism and superstition are erased.³²

The laws became increasingly more stringent against the priests. On October 21, 1793, what would seem to be the culmination in laws was passed. All clergy who were subject to deportation or who had been in enemy territory were to suffer death within twenty-four hours after being declared guilty. If a priest returned, after having been exiled, he was subject to death in twenty-four hours. The same was true for one who didn't have both oaths correct, or who retracted either one. There was a reward offered (100 livres) for information leading to the arrest of counter-revolutionary priests. Any priest, even though his oaths be right, who was denounced by six citizens was subject to deportation if a tribunal found him guilty. Furthermore, anyone who

31. Moniteur, 27 brumaire, II; no. 57; p. 229.

32. Ibid., 28 brumaire, II; no. 58; p. 234.

aided any priest under any sentence was subject to the sentence levied against the priest.³³

From time to time the Revolutionary government, in an effort to build a 'new' culture, had authorized fetes to be held commemorating events of the struggle. The fete on August 10, 1793 very definitely had a new cast. The worship of Nature, which had been thought of in the provinces at intervals, received its official boost when Hérault de Séchelles spoke "O Nature, receive the expression of all Frenchmen to thy laws."³⁴ But Worship of Reason was only one of many cults breaking out all over France. Others that attained some prominence were the Religion Naturelle, the Culte Social, and the Culte des Adorateurs. The last of the three was a 'messiah' religion.

On December 6, 1793, the government repudiated all religions, including the Worship of Reason, demanding full religious toleration. And toleration was received for all of the new cults - but not for any priest.³⁵ The state, it should be remembered, kept on paying the salaries of Catholic priests who had not fled, had taken the oath, had not been denounced by their flock; or had not voluntarily given up. There were very few such men.

This situation did not last long. Robespierre, on May 7, 1794, introduced a bill:

(1) The French people recognize the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul; (2) They declare that the best service of the Supreme Being is the practice of the rights of man;

33. Ibid., le 2 du 2^e mois, II^e; no. 32; p. 128-29.

34. H. M. Stephens, French Revolution, II, 353.

35. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 114.

(3) In the first rank of those duties they place hatred of treachery and tyranny, the punishment of tyrants and traitors, succour of the unfortunate, respect for the weak, defense of the oppressed, doing all the good one can and not being unjust to anyone.³⁶

In accordance with this new ritual the fête of the Supreme Being was held on June 8. Almost five years before, Martineau, of the Ecclesiastical Committee, had said that "institutions must be founded on the sacred basis of religion, ... without religion, an oath is but an empty word."³⁷ The fête of the Supreme Being held on June 8 was a gala affair in which Robespierre, assumed the office of diety of the new religion. He delivered a speech in the Tuileries, in which he proclaimed against atheism. In so doing, he burned Atheism, Discord, and Selfishness, and out of their ashes arose Wisdom, slightly blackened by smoke. A procession then formed, going to the Champ de Mars, where the Convention, seated on a man-made mountain, sang patriotic stanzas with the populace in Homeric fashion. Much grumbling could be heard at the antics of the ceremony throughout the fête, and the smoky Wisdom was the object of many taunts. Robespierre was called "Tyrant" and many people declared against him. Perhaps this failure was the basic cause of Robespierre's downfall.³⁸

The story of the assault against the Catholic Church ended shortly after Robespierre's fall on July 26, 1794. On September 18th, Cambon's motion providing that the state shall no longer pay the expenses or

36. Ibid., p. 127.

37. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 58-9.

38. Louis Adolphe Thiers, The History of the French Revolution (trans. by Frederick Shobel; 3rd American ed.), III (Philadelphia, 1847), 54-5.

salary of any cult was passed.³⁹ Religious liberty was assured, and the Catholic Church was free to make the long uphill struggle back to recognition. There was to be a Culte décadaire, but it was but a presage to a return to Catholicism. This cult was the worship instituted for the "Sunday", or décadi, of the republican calendar. It was made a compulsory state religion under the Directory, but never secured a firm foothold. The Theophilanthropist cult was to receive many members, and for a time, exert some pressure on France. Theophilanthropy is a kind of free-thinking naturalism which takes as gods such people (supposedly strong on morality) as Socrates, Rousseau, and George Washington. It was generally restricted to an aristocratic membership, containing both Deists and Atheists.⁴⁰ There are still some of this cult, but their influence by 1800 was small. Of the freethinkers there were many. The story of their assault is not yet over.

Churches began to reopen by January, 1795. On May 30 of that year some churches were opened to both constituents and non-jurors. The Church was coming back, although she was still weak. On November 19, 1795, religion was banished from all schools and replaced by a study of the Constitution and the Declaration of Rights.⁴¹ On July 1, 1797 the Council of Five Hundred repealed almost all laws against priests within the country and put emigrant priests into a class by themselves. On August 24 the Council of Ancients approved their action. On October 20, 1800, priests' names were removed from the lists of emigrants.⁴²

39. Moniteur, 4 sansculottides de l'an 2; no. 364; p. 1496.

40. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 152-57, passim.

41. Ibid., p. 137.

42. Ibid., p. 135-46, passim.

VI. Some Typical Roman Catholic Reactions

The attitude of the French clergy to the acts of the French Revolution was so heterogeneous that it defies clear description. The best an author can do is to make groupings, two or three very broad ones, and try to discern any trends that may have taken place. In doing so, the author is limited by sources available. Undoubtedly Jacques-André Emery, one of the most noted theologians of France at that time, played a most important part in molding and directing the activities of the time. But he was a member of no Assembly, of no Commune, of no legislative, administrative, or judicial bodies, of no group the records of which the history abounds. The difficulty in using the Moniteur, chief source of this paper, is that you know what happened to the Church, but you can only surmise from this what happened to religion.

One man stands out above all others in running a constant course, maintaining throughout the conflict his central belief in the goodness of Catholicism as he saw it, that man being Henri Grégoire. Something has already been said of his life, but his importance is such as to demand a more complete study. In the attitudes and actions of Grégoire, we have on record the course of the school which we have designated as 'left'. Unfortunately, there is no such character available for the 'right'. Those members of the extreme right had fled during the months of July and August in the first year of the Revolution and as a result their influence, while significant, was generally not one which commanded a large following within the country. There was one man outside the country who did exert a powerful influence. That man

was the Pope. As for the attitudes and actions of the rightists in France, we have to rely on Maury. It is unfortunately true that Maury's role was not consistent and that he allowed his personal interests to color his opinions. But it is true that many of the rightist clergy had personal interests similar to Maury's, and thus Maury is a fairly typical example. A man who represents the center between the extremes of Grégoire and Maury was Jean Louis Gouttes. Insofar as possible, his stands will be considered with one or the other of the main characters. The men will be taken up in the order of first, the Pope, then Maury, and last, Grégoire.

The Pope at this time was Pius VI, who was elected in 1775 and was to hold the papacy until 1799. Pius VI was a prudent man, and certainly would have tried any compromise with the Revolution to a degree consistent with his faith and position.¹ The papacy was extremely cautious in taking action on the acts of the Revolution, but was hampered in its actions by the poor character of its representatives in Paris. The papacy possessed, temporally, the small states in Avignon and Comtat-Venaissin in southern France. In February, 1768, Louis XV had occupied the province; later he withdrew the troops. The relation between the papacy and the nation of France at the outbreak of the Revolution was that established by the Concordat of 1516, as modified by the pragmatic of 1682 (though the Pope never recognized this).

At no time did the Pope seriously protest at the breaking of this Concordat. He apparently took it as a matter of course that the Concordat would be broken, and tried to get the best solution possible.

1. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 55.

The first official action taken by the papacy of any importance was a decree issued in November, 1789. A congregation of cardinals had been examining the decrees of the National Assembly relative to the suppression of annates. The result was a resolution, "after long debate, ... consenting to the suppression by a formal brief, but with this clause, 'for the present'."² The Pope's course was certainly the wisest he could have taken. The annates had been lost before, and the suppression of them was deeply embedded in the rights of the Gallican Church. Pius VI was interested in preserving the peace, if possible, and if it were to be ruptured by him, he would wait for a stronger basis from which to launch his attack. Even the clergy of the left, such men as Grégoire, could endorse such a move as Pius had made. Unfortunately for the peace of the Pope, it was not long before actions in France forced him to take a positive stand. It is unfortunate for Pius that the issue was first broached over Avignon and Comtat-Venaissin. Here his influence was temporal as well as spiritual, and it became apparent that the disorders in those provinces were directly traceable to the new spirit in France. If left to continue, these disturbances would have resulted in loss of the provinces. It was one of the greatest errors of Pius VI in the Revolution. He was an able and farseeing Pope, as his first decree on annates had shown, and any sort of parallel thinking would have shown him that he was as bound to lose the provinces as he had the annates. On March 29, 1790 he issued a statement which denounced the French people as a body for

2. Moniteur, 24 novembre, 1789; no. 94; p. 381.

being seduced by the philosophes.³

During the summer months of 1790, while the Assembly worked on its civil constitution, the Pope waited and watched, while urging Louis to withhold sanction of the act. Louis, anxious for harmony within his country and actually trying to carry out the will of the people if he thought it at all feasible, sanctioned the document on August 24, without the approval of the Pope. Pius VI did not take any action for several months. It was true, certainly, that he could not officially sanction a document which contained provisions for selection of prelates with no consent of the Pope. But they had been selected by Frenchmen before, and were selected by the King just prior to the Revolution. If the constitution was merely ratifying an act which was all ready in practice, why not ratify it? The reason was that formerly the officials had been selected by the King, now they were to be selected by the people. The King and the Pope were close together, both wishing for the old régime when their power prevailed. Oddly enough, it was the clergy of France, so proud of their Gallican liberties, who forced the Pope to take a stand on the issue. The Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, an able and devout man, together with twenty-nine other ecclesiastics, sent an "Exposition of the Principles of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy" to him. The principle argument was that "civil power cannot by itself alter the constitution of the Church; it needs the co-operation of the Church and therefore of the Pope."⁴ Previously, in November of 1789, when a weak or non-existent protest had been needed, the Pope had given

3. F. Aulard, Christianity and the Revolution, p. 57.

4. Ibid., p. 69.

a strong one. Now, the following October, when he might have been able to act with both decision and success, he hesitated. While he hesitated hundreds of priests took the oath without knowing the position of Rome, and with each juring priest the decision was harder to make. On March 10, 1791, he took the best course he could at that late date. On one point only did he take a definite stand against the French action, declaring that the election of bishops was a sacrilege. On this he was joined by both the right and the left of the French clergy. Before making any general pronouncements, however, he asked the advice of all the French bishops, not just thirty of them, stating that he wanted them to suggest means of conciliation which should not contravene either doctrine or discipline.⁵ Unfortunately for the Pope, his nuncio in Paris was Mgr. Louis de Salamon, who, even at this time, was slinking around in secret. Much more could be accomplished in the open, even though hated, and if Salamon had spoken out, as did Maury, there is a possibility that schism could have been avoided.

Salamon was born at Carpentras, near Avignon, in papal territory. Through a special dispensation, he had been granted the orders at the age of 22. Two years later, in 1784, he entered into the Paris Parlement. It is significant of his character that he is the only member of that Parlement to live through the Terror.⁶ He received his job as papal nuncio through contact with Zelada, the Pope's prime minister. Salamon was in prison at the time of the September second massacres and watched with amazement the piety and calmness with which the others waited for

5. Ibid., p. 70-1.

6. Barbara de Courson, "The Story of a Papal Envoy During the Reign of Terror", American Catholic Quarterly Review, XXXIII, (January, 1908) 65 passim.

their doom, but even though he felt he should, he did not have "the sentiments of piety with which we ought to be possessed when our last hour comes."⁷ When he was before the trial board he deliberately misrepresented himself by assuming

the offensive, and, without waiting to be spoken to, he put forward his profession as a lawyer, kept silence on his ecclesiastical character, spoke boldly and fluently in his own defense, and quoted, somewhat at haphazard, the names of the well-known Revolutionists who, he said, were his friends and protectors.⁸

He accomplished his escape by this ruse, and after the restoration he became bishop of Saint Flur.⁵

The Pope's chances for a successful settlement, in spite of any wise courses he personally could take, were severely hampered by such a muncio. Salamon delivered a second decree by the Pope in April. Dated April 12, 1791, it voided Talleyrand's and de Loménie's appointments because they excluded the oath to the Pope and professions of faith. He also wished for examination of elected persons. He asked that the clergy not take the oath, but provided no penalties or condemnation if they did.⁹ Salamon was called to Rome at the end of May, and thus the break between Rome and Paris was complete. When he came back it was no longer as official muncio, though he maintained his contacts with the Pope. On October 6 of the same year he demanded liberty of conscience for Catholics in France, but did not press the issue.

By the Pope's decrees he had taken his stand against the Revolution by March, 1790, although being circumspect enough to allow a wavering

7. Anon., "Religion under the French Revolution", Edinburgh Review, CCCIII (January, 1906) 52-3.

8. B. de Courson, A Papal Envoy, p. 70.

9. Moniteur, 1 mai, 1791; no. 121; p. 495.

center room to declare for both Revolution and Pope. In May, Pius VI was burned in effigy in Paris, holding the decrees which he had issued.¹⁰ During the next three years he was to reinforce his stand against the acts of the Revolution several times.

On August 23, 1790, he sent a very strongly worded letter to the court, in which he bewailed the "maxims of independence and of unrestricted liberty that inspires and propagates the enemies of religion." Such, he claimed, were ruining the peace of Avignon. His point was that for centuries the Avignon had enjoyed moderate government of the Apostolic See, and now they were letting themselves be duped by false notions. He asked the very Christian King to help out in this respect.¹¹ There followed the censure of Talleyrand and Gobel, which most clerics took to be a condemnation of the Civil Constitution.

On January 13, 1793, there occurred the Basseville murder at Rome, attributed to the Pope.¹² This deed caused the complete eclipse of any great Papal power left in France, and the Pope was not to regain his status until Napoleon's Concordat in 1801.

One of the Pope's staunchest defenders in France was Jean Siffren Maury. Like Salamon, Maury was born in papal territory, in Comtat-Venaissin in 1756. He was in this Roman Catholic territory because his lineage was protestant, and had moved there from Dauphiné with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He was educated at St. Charles in Avignon, but at twenty went to Paris to seek his fortune. An incident

10. Anon., "Religion Under the French Revolution" Edinburgh Review CCCIII (January, 1906) p. 47.

11. Moniteur, 24 août, 1790; no. 236; p. 973.

12. Ibid., 4 février, 1793; no. 35; p. 166 and 21 février, 1793; no. 52; p. 246.

said to have taken place on the trip is very indicative of his nature. Riding with two other young men, they were giving the future of their lives. The other two, according to the story Portal and Treilhard, cast their horoscopes nearly correctly. The future abbé cast his one hundred percent by saying, "I shall be teacher of religion to the king and a member of the academy".¹³ He early began writing and was elected to the academy in 1772, his greatest work being Panegyrique de saint Vincent de Paul (1785). He wrote and worked with abbé Boismonet, and when the abbé died Maury received his benefices, worth about 20,000 livres annually. He enjoyed several other benefices which he had acquired by his ambition, and in 1789 he, a prior from Lion, was elected to the States-General by the bailliage of Perrone. He uttered another true prophesy in making this trip, saying "I shall be there in peril or I shall gain the hat of a Cardinal".¹⁴ As a religious orator he had few equals, and when he gained the floor in the States-General it was seen that his political oratory was going to surpass his religious. He was to become perhaps the greatest of the defenders of the old régime, in a period when its defenders were most lacking.¹⁵ He quickly was aligned against three opponents, Pétion, Barnave, and Mirabeau. Only the last of the three was any match for him, and even he could not, at times, answer Maury's arguments. "His speeches were... delivered in an acrimonious tone and he succeeded in arousing in his opponents a most violent and bitter hatred against himself personally."¹⁶

His influence with the Assembly was severely damaged from the

13. This, and most of the events of Maury's life, are taken from Pierre Larousse, Grand Dictionnaire Universel X, (Paris, n.d., preface, 1865) 1365.

14. Ibid., X, 1365.

15. H. Walsh, The Concordat of 1801, p. 104.

very start. On July 27, 1789 the Assembly received a letter from officials in Peronne announcing the arrest of Maury, who

seemed to wish to take a route opposite to that which ought to bring him back to the National Assembly. The municipal officers of Peronne ... had judged it prudent to safeguard his person, while waiting till the National Assembly found out his intentions. The abbé Maury wrote also to the president, in order to instruct him on the motives for his journey. He claimed he was soliciting new powers from his constituents.¹⁷

The detention of Maury alarmed several of the rightists delegates over the security of their own persons, and a decree was quickly issued reaffirming the inviolability of the deputies, to apply in Maury's case. Maury was fortunate that the Assembly saved him, for he had hired a post-horse (one of a series of horses used for long trips) instead of going to the Assembly of directors. He was clearly guilty, and Mirabeau was not one to pass over the incident when the time for needling and belittling came.¹⁸

A considerable faction of the extreme right voted with Maury on all issues. Politically, he was a staunch defender of the old regime. Due to the incarceration in the Peronne jail, he was not present at the historic meeting of August 4. We have, therefore no arguments on his attitude toward feudalism. In his arguments presented later on nationalization of Church funds, he several times mentions the inviolability of some of the feudal rights, but anyone, and especially Maury, is apt to use arguments not in full accord with his principles when he is seeking to convince. In his first speech in the Assembly on August 23 he spoke on the basic system of government saying that

17. Moniteur, du 25 au 27 juillet, 1789; no. 25; p. 106.

18. Ibid., du 29 au 30 juillet, 1789; no. 29; p. 122.

"he knew of no greater monstrous despotism than the confusion of the executive power and the legislative. The Comte de Mirabeau replied... that his scruples were the more delicate, for the executive power of the Assembly had been advantageous to him."¹⁹ It is probable, that without Mirabeau's biting sarcasm to his sojourn to Peronne, that some of Maury's ideas would have been accepted by the Assembly. Because of the abbé's rashness in fleeing, however, it established a precedent in the Assembly: that which the abbé Maury supports shall be voted down. He did not make clear to just whom the legislative power should be given, but from his avid defense of the parlements, it can be assumed that it was a body similar to those in the ancient regime.

On January 11, 1790, Maury talked for over an hour and a half, justifying the Province of Bretagne and the Parlement of Rennes in disregarding certain acts of the National Assembly. His arguments were based on (1) Bretagne had rights previous to the French Monarchy, and the French kings have recognized this. Therefore she still has them. (2) The Parlements are old established institutions which do not lose their rights simply by the calling of a States-General. Maury claimed thus to be supporting a motion of Cazales, but Cazales quickly denied such, saying that Maury's speech contained "several inexactitudes in fact, frequent insults, and some violent protests against the preceding decrees of the National Assembly." Cazales's charges were all true, but the president, being fair, gave a summary of Maury's harangue, "Bretagne has rights of which the parlement is the depository. These

19. Ibid., du 23 au 26 août, 1789; no. 46; p. 189.

rights go on entire" to the province unless it consents to losing them. The vote was against Maury and his small band of clerical rightists.²⁰ He had previously defended the Parlements of Marseille and Provence on substantially the same arguments, but there, showing typical inconsistency, he had also included a man, Bournissac, prévôt of Marseille, in his action against the Assembly. The grounds were simply, in his case, that Maury didn't like the decree, though, excellent speaker as he always was, he constructed a semi-reasonable argument.²¹

The Assembly, after a very fiery debate about the prévôt, had censured Maury from further debate on the topic. In January he mounted the tribune to speak. A veritable howl of protest arose. The reporter for the Moniteur gave an excellent account of the scene:

Imagine yourself in the middle of this astonishing confusion, the abbé Maury at first strangely disconcerted, then putting back the ironic smile on his lips and jumping into several silly gestures, then finally demanding, through the mouth of M. Lavie, that a reading be made of his proposal.²²

There were many other occasions on which Maury was hooted down, oftentimes with cries of the left being answered with impiety. Once when Maury thought to persuade his audience by characterizing himself as 'Minister of Altars' he was greeted with laughs. The right wing, under the Bishop of Nîmes, answered with cries of "Impiety". To which a voice from the left answered "We respect the Minister; it is the minister at whom we laugh."²³ The incident shows one more characteristic of Maury, as well as, to a lesser degree, the entire clergy; he would employ any argument to gain his cause.

20. Ibid., 13 janvier, 1790; no. 13; p. 51.

21. Ibid., du 10 novembre, 1789; no. 88; p. 358

22. Ibid., 25 janvier, 1790; no. 25; p. 100.

23. Ibid., 12 août, 1790; no. 224; p. 925.

Maury was surprised only once in his legislative career. On March 24, 1790, he spoke in favor of a hospital, apparently to be public and not under religious supervision. This last was a rare stand for the abbé, and he was rewarded by applause and passage of the act.²⁴

The abbé's position, in the political realm, was perhaps strongest when he was speaking on economics. He opposed the nationalization of the goods of the Church on more than one basis, but one of his best and most telling was his attitude toward capitalists. Once again he made an somewhat accurate prophesy when he told the Assembly that the seizure would add nothing to the "welfare of the country, but that those lands would ultimately pass into the hands of a few greedy capitalists who would be less generous with their spoils than the clergy were."²⁵ It is an interesting side-note to history that this debate was answered by Dupont de Nemours. From today's viewpoint it seems strange that the extreme right declares against the capitalists, but when the period is considered, it is not strange that the privileged should challenge the new bourgeois who were rising to supplant them. Most of the right, although probably not clearly understanding Maury's argument, for it took as its basis future events, supported him nevertheless.

Maury and his rightist clergy stood firmly on the side of continued nobility. In the debate above he pointed out that, in relation to the nationalization of goods, "The people ... will exercise on you all the rights that you are now exercising upon us; it will also assert

24. Ibid., 26 mars, 1790; no. 85; p. 346-7.

25. H. Walsh, Concordat of 1801, p. 104; see also Moniteur, 20 decembre, 1789; no. 120; p. 488.

that it is the nation."²⁶ Maury had thus drawn the line between bourgeois and proletariat, and, in recognizing that they were not the populace, he hoped the bourgeois would realize that the nobility (of which Maury fancied himself) was also an entity whose rights had to be respected. He went on to warn them that it was dangerous to make martyrs, for the 'good blood would out' and the bourgeois would learn the superiority of the nobles. It must have been heartbreaking for this man to be snubbed by royalty because of his low birth when he was later in exile from the excesses of the Revolution.²⁷

Maury and the right had definite and constructive ideas as to the solution of the state debt. Naturally enough for the noble class, they wished the abolition of the right of *entrée* (customs within the country) and of *aides* (a tax on producer and consumer of wines and ciders) which hampered the commerce of the country, and favored making up the difference by increasing *octrois* (taxes levied on goods coming into town). Overlooking this last inconsistency Maury's proposals were generally sound. Describing them he says, "I don't propose to do what has been done so often, to destroy without replacing; I propose, on the contrary, replacing the abolished land tax with a tax on luxury."²⁸

Maury and the clerical right were extremely insistent on the rights of the king. He, from his history, concluded that executive and judicial powers were combined. As only the judicial power, and not the executive, were under the scope of the National Assembly, he advocated that the people elect three judges, one of whom would be chosen by the

26. Mgr. Ricard, Correspondence diplomatique et Memoires inedits du Cardinal Maury, 1792-1817 (Lille, 1891) tom. I, p. x-vi - x-vii as quoted in H. Walsh, Concordat of 1801, p. 104.

27. H. Walsh, Concordat of 1801; p. 105.

28. Moniteur, 20 janvier, 1790; no. 13; p. 79.

king. "This choice ought to be a means of preserving the people from its own errors."²⁹ Maury argued, or at least used the argument, whether from his convictions or not, that the King ought to have an absolute veto. His reasoning maintained that the King and Assembly were co-legislators, and that the Legislature had a veto in that they didn't have to initiate a decree. In order to prevent tyranny, therefore, the King should also have such absolute veto power. "I think; I say, that it is your interest, because it is not the cause of the king that I defend; it is yours; it is mine; it is to your interest that the absolute veto be left with the king."³⁰

As regards minority rights Maury, supported by the right, was far from tolerant. All non-Catholics were to be given nearly complete freedom on motions by Brumet and Duport on December 23, 1789. The motion was defeated 408 to 403.³¹ Thus Maury could not be with his accustomed small minority. Maury in January, 1790, tried to amend a motion that carried full rights for Jews in certain areas by inserting the word 'provisionally'. This was one of the cases where he came into debate with Grégoire, who amended the same motion to include many more Jews in the freedom-receiving areas. Both amendments failed.³² Maury's principal excuse was, and he was backed up, in general, by the right, that the Jews were not a sect, but a nation, and as such, they could not be French. He also called them poor soldiers, here bringing religious holidays as his chief argument.³³ As to the Negroes, Maury

29. Ibid., 7 mai, 1790; no. 127; p. 512.

30. Ibid., du 2 au 3 septembre, 1789; no. 50; p. 208.

31. Ibid., 24 décembre, 1789; no. 124; p. 504.

32. Ibid., 30 janvier, 1790; no. 30; p. 119.

33. Ibid., 23 décembre, 1789; no. 123; p. 500.

suggested making them allies, not subjects. They were to be counted in the census.³⁴

A motion (Grégoire's) was up to require all holders of benefices to be either French or naturalized and a citizen for at least ten months. It was amended so that archbishops and bishops who did not choose to remain at their posts would be suspended. Maury rashly stormed all over the tribune, and shouted about the deadly work of suspending bishops and archbishops.³⁵ As was said before, Maury took his stand firmly against any kind of republican oath. When he was called on to swear the oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy he proposed an amendment which had two objects. The first to maintain the peace; the second to stop this slander of people which, instead of getting the authors in trouble, gets its victims into it. In order to accomplish these two objects, I move that the National Assembly decree that this decree Swearing of the oath be executed only after sixty years.³⁶

The state, on November 7, 1789 had ordered an inventory of all Church goods that were to be taken by the decree. Maury pointed out that it would be useless, for "no one is any longer interested in the conservation of our lands, the titutaries of which are today dependent on you."³⁷

Grégoire and Maury did agree on one thing, the state should not lower its ecclesiastical pensions. Maury voted that the state was not to touch pensions at all.³⁸ Later he protested because the state had not paid for the goods they had confiscated some time before. In neither case did he express his entire ideas, being interrupted by the catcalls from the left.³⁹

34. Ibid., 29 mars, 1790; no. 88; p. 362.

35. Ibid., du 7 au 9 novembre, 1789; no. 86; p. 352.

36. Ibid., 6 janvier, 1791; no. 6; p. 22.

37. Ibid., du 7 au 9 novembre; 1789; no. 86; p. 350.

38. Ibid., 1 janvier, 1790; no. 1; p. 4.

39. Ibid., 9 septembre, 1790; no. 252; p. 1041.

Maury's later life was spent following a course even more devious than in the Revolution. He went to Rome, where he stayed till 1796, then leaving because of the French War. He was appointed Cardinal-Archbishop of Nicea in partibus. When he left Rome, it was to go to Venice, disguised as a cart-driver. He was against Napoleon from his first moment of power, and became known as the "Pope's ambassador to the pretended king of France." Sensing, however, that Napoleon was to be the next god, and not Louis XVIII, in 1804 he wrote him a conciliatory letter. Napoleon had him made a cardinal and appointed him first chaplain to Jerome. French society, however, refused to recognize him. In 1810 Napoleon secured for him the Archbishopric of Paris. This man who had cried so loudly against the Civil Constitution accepted it without the Pope's sanction. In 1815, seeing that his protector was to tumble, Maury crawled to Rome and tried to justify himself. But his ambition had caught up with him. He was convicted by the junte, and spent the rest of his life writing.⁴⁰

This sketch is inadequate for drawing Maury's religious convictions. It can only be surmised what his ideas were. From this sketch, however, it is possible to see what the right wing of the Catholic Church was in the first period of the Revolution.

Henri Grégoire, of whom Larousse says "constituant, Conventional montagnard, constitutional bishop of Blois, erudite, member of the Institute, born at Vaho, near Lunéville December 4, 1750, died in 1831,"⁴¹ was the outstanding religious figure of the Revolution. Grégoire was from a very poor family, and he early showed a scholastic bent. He

⁴⁰ P. Larousse, Grande Dictionnaire Universel, X, 1366.

⁴¹ Ibid., VIII, 1051.

became a professor at the college of Pont-a'-Monsson, where he was found often to be delving into the books. In 1772 he was rewarded by the Academy of Nancy for his Eloge de la poésie. Shortly thereafter he was appointed cure of Babermesnil, and he spent his time at his duties or studying. In 1788 he published Essai sur la régénération physique et morale des Juif, in which he deplored the place of the Jews in Europe and established himself as one of the Church's leading liberal thinkers. The essay won for him another academic palm, this time from the Academy of Metz. He early became noted for his liberalism, as well as his knowledge and philanthropy. He was elected to the States-General from his home bailliage. Once there, his first act was to assist in the formation of the tennis court oath.⁴² Many of Grégoire's ideas have been taken up when dealing with the events of the Revolution. These will not be repeated except where they are extremely important.

If Maury started on the wrong foot with the Assembly immediately, Grégoire was certainly off to a good start. After assisting in the Tennis Court oath, Grégoire was among the very first priests who voluntarily acceded to the demands of the third estate and who took his place among them. First and foremost among the tenets of the Church of Grégoire was nationalism. At times this went so far that it seemed the Church was France but Grégoire, in time of stress, held very firm to his puritanical religious ideas.

On July 14, 1789 he recommended "that a committee be formed to find out and reveal all the ministerial crimes, in order to denounce

⁴². Ibid., VIII, 1501

⁴³. Moniteur, du 13 au 15 juillet, 1789; no. 18; p. 79.

to France the authors of the ill which was afflicting the country, and then to set up judicial forms in order to deliver the guilty to the rigors of the law."⁴³ This early-expressed nationalism was with him throughout his stay in the National Assembly and the Convention, and was to be his peculiar quality in the Council of Five-hundred, the Legislative Corps and in the Senate of the Empire. In the Convention we find Grégoire praising various acts of patriotism, saying that all types of patriotism are but different types of virtue. A committee was created to list all the types of virtue that the Jacobins had shown, and Grégoire was put at its head.⁴⁴

It was early in the Constituant Assembly that Grégoire began to show up as a thinking leader, and not just an absolute revolutionist. On the night of August 4 Grégoire remained the most level-headed, an amazing fact when one realized what a republican this man was. He offered a motion that night to abolish the system of primogeniture. But his greatest work on the fourth was to remind the people who were proclaiming a bill of rights in great ecstasy that there could be no rights without duties, that one must go with the other, and the balance in equilibrium.⁴⁵ He reiterated this two weeks later, saying,

Man has not been thrown into his corner of the earth which he occupies by chance. If he has rights, we must speak of those which he has; if he has duties it is necessary to recall those which are prescribed for him. What name more august, more great could we place at the head of the declaration than that of the divinity, this name which is retained in all nature, in every heart, that we find written on the earth, and that our eyes fix upon ever in the heavens.⁴⁶

Grégoire's position on issues of retirement and salary would have

⁴³. Moniteur, du 13 au 15 juillet, 1789; no. 18; p. 79.

⁴⁴. Ibid., 29 septembre, 1793; no 272; p. 1154.

⁴⁵. Ibid., du 3 au 4 août, 1789; no. 33; p. 138-9.

⁴⁶. Ibid., du 17 au 19 août, 1789; no 42; p. 175.

made even a modern trade unionist happy. He moved that after twenty-five years service, an ecclesiastic ought to be able to retire on full pay. His motion was lost, the feeling being that a clergyman ought not to quit his functions till absolutely unable to continue.⁴⁷ In the salary debate, a member had said that curés could not lead a 'good life if favored with fortune' such as the 1200 livres minimum would give them. Grégoire hastened to say that "the cures disavow what has just been said." He and Gouttes then campaigned for a raise in the country parish stipend, especially for those with very few parishioners, as their parishes were the most spread out. But the Revolution was not yet ready for unionism - nor for the rights of priests.⁴⁸

Grégoire, and the thinking left or center clergy, such as Gouttes, felt very bad about the peasant insurrections which were to go on throughout the Revolution. They seemed to feel that to succeed, the Revolution must establish democracy, and to establish it meant cooperation of both the peasants and the proletariat. The means taken on February 9, 1790, by the Assembly to combat these rebellions were (1) That the King give the necessary executive orders to carry out the decree of 10 August 1789. (This ratified the changes made on the fourth.) (2) That the president write to municipalities that force will be used to quell agitation. Grégoire felt that this was too harsh and would only stir up more trouble. He took the floor saying:

It would seem to me useful to engage the curés, members of this assembly, to write to their brethren, in order that the country curés will know the true interpretation of the decrees of the Assembly. They may then persuade the populace to execute these decrees by all the confidences which they, as sacred ministers, have invested in them.⁴⁹

47. Ibid., 22 juin, 1790; no. 173; p. 706.

48. Ibid., 18 juin, 1790; no. 169; p. 690-91.

49. Ibid., 9 février, 1790; no. 42; p. 167.

Although the abbé Maury voted against Grégoire's amendment, he was not in favor of the Assembly's measures, but more stringent ones against the peasants.

Grégoire's proposals for pulling France from the economic hole she was in were to simplify the laws and educate the people. He favored putting up a model farm in each department, to be run with scientific methods, as an example and an aid to the farmer's desperate plight.⁵⁰ On August 7, 1793, Grégoire, then minister of education, moved for the abolition of all literary societies. His motion stated that they were 'useless institutions' and that all of them would be reorganized. Unfortunately, only the suppression section of his act passed the Convention.⁵¹

To the rights of the king, Grégoire, Gouttes, Jallet, and the entire left clergy were always entirely opposed. Even speaking of history, Grégoire could take none of the power of goodness of kings. When Barrère, in a talk on royalty in August, 1793, called Louis XII the "father of the people" Grégoire immediately said such a statement about a king must be untrue and should be eliminated from the record.⁵² Grégoire considered it dangerous even to have a 'king's memoir' read to an assembly. He felt that it might influence the opinion of the Assembly, and to do that was undemocratic and tyrannical.⁵³

It has been mentioned that Grégoire and Maury were unalterably opposed on the Jewish question. Perhaps being in Alsace, where the Jews had some liberty, but were being constantly persecuted, gave Grégoire his liberal view. However he acquired it, it was a deep

50. Ibid., Octodi, décade de brumaire, II; no. 48; p. 196.

51. Ibid., 9 août, 1793; no. 221; p. 942.

52. Ibid., 3 août, 1793; no. 215; p. 917.

53. Ibid., du 8 au 12 septembre, 1789; no. 55; p. 227.

conviction. Speaking on August 3 of the first year of the Revolution:

M. the abbé Grégoire pronounced the views of the cures of his bailliage; he made a list of the terrible persecutions which had just been exercised towards the Jews in Alsace; he said that, as minister of a religion which regards all men as brothers, he must demand the intervention of the power of the Assembly in favor of a people so proscribed and so unfortunate.⁵⁴

He also went further than Maury on the Negro question, declaring that all Negroes should be equal citizens. One of his works was De la littérature des nègres (1808).⁵⁵

He was very short with the ecclesiastics who left the country, disposing of them in one sentence: "The abbé Grégoire demands the impounding of the revenues of all beneficiaries who are absent from the kingdom without sufficient reason."⁵⁶

Grégoire joined the Jacobin Party shortly after coming to Paris. He was a republican then and he remained so until the end of his life. Instead of trembling in obedience to despots, he said, "We ought to reclaim with courage all the prerogatives of the sovereignty of the people, when that sovereignty is found again. All men are not yet philosophic enough, instructed enough in order to know their rights, it is necessary that the customs of each day be sent to them."⁵⁷ In other words, Grégoire was so democratic that he was willing to foist democracy upon a people who were not yet ready to receive it. But in training the people to receive it, he did not believe in dictatorship or oppression, as did his party, and as the Terror became more stringent Grégoire withdrew from the active ranks of the Jacobins,

54. Ibid., du 1^{er} au 3 août, 1789; no. 32; p. 135.

55. For an exposition of Grégoire's ideas on Negroes, see Le Moniteur, 19 janvier, 1790; no. 19; p. 75.

56. Moniteur, 1 janvier, 1790; no. 1; p. 4.

57. Ibid., 30 décembre, 1789; no. 130; p. 528.

though remaining on the left.

The act of Grégoire of wearing full sacerdotal robes on the tribune of the Convention and refusing to surrender his bishopric's seat is as stirring a tale as can ever be told. Compared with De Salamon's lies and Maury's voluntary exile, it stands as a beacon for those wishing to honor their religion. But it must be remembered that there were many in the papal party and in the extreme right who did not run, and who lost their heads for staying in France. After he had left the Jacobin Party, one of the members said about a measure proposed by Grégoire, "The demand is excellent, but it is irritating to see it made by a man who wished to Christianize the Revolution, and who pretended that Jesus Christ had prophesied that there would be Jacobins."⁵⁸

Grégoire was perfectly willing to let the Church lose its temporal privileges, but the persons of the clergy were not to be at all suppressed. He, at the first sign of popular animosity to the clergy, came to the defense of his profession. He held out the example of the clergy working in their flocks - the foremost constructive force in France. He asked, for the success of the Revolution, that the "Assembly take precautions to place in safety the deputies of the clergy of whom you have declared the person to be inviolable and sacred."⁵⁹

The Civil Constitution bestowed the governing of a diocese upon a council composed of the bishop and a few around him, chosen because of their offices. Grégoire, always loyal to democracy, and trusting in it explicitly, maintained that cures ought to have a strong voice

58. Ibid., 27 brumaire, II; no. 57; p. 229.

59. Ibid., du 5 au 8 octobre, 1789; no. 68; p. 280.

in the government of the diocese. He asked that the four curés who were to be on the council be elected by a vote of the curés in the district.⁶⁰ On July 1, 1793, he expressed somewhat the same idea by asking that episcopal vicars (those in a church in the city where the bishop was located) be suppressed, and their places on the council be taken by curés. This suppression was needed because of the very great need for curés. Even though Grégoire was a bishop at that time, he realized the greatest force for good in the country was the curés.⁶¹

On the date of the abolition of orders, February 12, 1790, Grégoire came to the defense of the brotherhoods. He stated that although the monks are not absolutely necessary for agriculture and science, they certainly were useful to it. He concluded that "it would be impossible and dangerous to suppress entirely the ecclesiastical establishments."⁶² In the debates on the nationalization of Church lands, Grégoire gave some leads as to his notions regarding Church versus state. He opened his arguments by refuting Maury, who had claimed that church goods were irredeemable, by saying

The clergy is not proprietary, it is only dispensational: if it takes more than is necessary, it is a real sacrilege against the canons. But the nation is not proprietary over all goods ... it cannot dispose ... of those of families ... of the parishes ... of the provinces. ... However, in spite of these observations, the principle is always that the nation can reclaim the goods to their true destination, and change the method of their administration. But if it is necessary to take the revenues in the coffers of the provinces, who shall pay the local debts of the clergy? and who will find a means of furnishing their share for divine service?⁶³

In the first meeting of the Convention, Grégoire voted in favor of the motion to abolish royalty. "Kings are in the moral order what monsters are in the physical; the courts are the workshops of crime,

60. Ibid., 9 juin, 1790; no. 160; p. 653.

61. Ibid., 2 juillet, 1793; no. 183; p. 789.

62. Ibid., 13 février, 1790; no. 44; p. 176.

63. Ibid., du 22 au 26 octobre, 1789; no. 77; p. 315.

the foyer of corruption; the history of kings is the martyrdom of nations."⁶⁴ When the vote was taken Grégoire was 'on mission', but he erased the words 'to death', in connection with the punishment of Louis.⁶⁵ He was later accused of having voted for the death of the king. He repudiated the entire letter as a forgery, however.⁶⁶

As he had defied the Jacobins in the Convention, later defied Napoleon by voting against the establishment of the imperial government. He was alone in the Senate against the re-establishment of nobility. Grégoire once said to the Duc de Richelieu, "I am as granite, they may break me, but they can never bend me." He was called "Head of Iron" by Michelet. In 1822 he renounced his title of 'Commander of the Legion of Honor' which he had received in the Empire. The acceptance of this title is the only record we have of a violation of Grégoire's strict conscience.

When he was ready to receive absolution on his deathbed, the Archbishop of Paris refused it unless he should recant and disavow the oath he had taken to support the Civil Constitution of the clergy.⁶⁷ Grégoire, who had said, "By the grace of God ... I shall die a good Catholic and a good republican,"⁶⁸ did not recant. Abbé Guillon disobeyed the prelate, but Grégoire was not buried in the Church. After the July Revolution, however, a service was held for him.⁶⁹

Grégoire's theology seemed to embody a return to primitive Christianity, without the accumulated doctrines of the Church. Grégoire believed that he was the modern spirit of Jansenism. But against the Pope,

64. P. Larousse, Grande Dictionnaire Universel, VIII, 1502.

65. William Gibson, "The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution", Nineteenth Century, XXXIV (August, 1893) p. 278.

66. H. Walsh, The Concordat of 1801, p. 127.

67. P. Larousse, Grande Dictionnaire Universel, VIII, 1502.

68. H. Walsh, Concordat of 1801, p. 126.

69. P. Larousse, Grande Dictionnaire Universel, VIII, 1502.

he went too far by completely repudiating him, while the Jansenists of the Revolution (Jabineau) never would nullify the right of Rome to govern the Church temporally. Thus those who considered themselves Jansenists in the Revolution were split badly. Grégoire's following failed to live up to Revolutionary Jansenism in one other way: While the original Jansenists were against both Pope and King on theological principles, the Church of Grégoire aligned itself with the state and accepted nationalism as one of its doctrines.⁷⁰

70. H. Walsh, Concordat of 1801, p. 123-45 passim.

VII Conclusions

The movement from Roman Catholic Supremacy on May 5, 1789 to the Worship of the Supreme Being on June 8, 1794 is one of the most interesting sections of all religious history. How could such a change take place? One possible solution is that of Aulard, who feels that the French people, including the peasants, were never really religious. To arrive at such a conclusion, it would seem he had started with a preconceived fact: The Catholic Church was eliminated in five years. From such a basis he discovers that the hold of Catholicism was not deeply imbedded in the French people. Nothing could be further from the truth. The French peasants were thoroughly Catholic, and the rebellion against the suppression of their curés is proof enough of such a position. It is true the peasants did allow certain actions to be taken in the suppression of the Church of France in 1789. But what were they: (1) Suppression of Church *dîmes* and similar oppressive taxes, (2) Nationalization of Church goods and lands, (3) Suppression of annates and the limitation of papal authority, (4) Augmentation of the portion congrue.

A cursory listing of these changes reveals the fact that not one was in any way destructive of the Catholic religion. They were, to the contrary, measures which any good Gallican Catholic could, and perhaps should, support. With the exception of the limitation of papal authority, none of them even touches on dogma, and all of them result in greater well-being for the peasants and the curés. The curé held the heart of the peasant, the bishop did not. When measures

which did not affect dogma were enacted, and when those measures were directed against the high clergy, the peasants did not object.

The real cause of the fall of Catholicism was the bishops and the other hierarchy. They had for years been responsible for the condition of the Church in France, corrupted and temporal. And these same bishops were the leaders in the fight against the suppression of the temporal power in France. The lower clergy and, through them, the French people, were not alarmed, and were probably glad, that the first steps toward the elimination of graft and inequality had been taken. It was the existence of the hierarchy which allowed the high clergy to incite the lower and the people to rebellion against the acts of state, and there was no significant religious revolt until 1791 after the promulgation of the Civil Constitution.

Grégoire believed that these rebellions came in ignorance of the decrees of the national Assembly,¹ and, if the people had understood the decrees, no rebellion would have matured. The upper clergy were not defending Catholicism, but the corrupted hierarchy of which they were a part. If the French peasants did not completely support their bishops, it was not because they were not Catholic, but because they realized that the hierarchial system was not necessary to the Catholic religion, but only to the Catholic Church.

It is this that caused the severe cleft in the Church. Maury was supporting the bishops in their temporal and hierarchial glory, while Grégoire was supporting a Catholic theology in which temporal possessions were not necessary. It was not realized, however, that by instituting the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, a new Church patterned upon

1. H. M. Stephens, French Revolution, I, 476.

Grégoire's ideas could come into existence; the Civil Constitution was looked on only as a means of controlling a Church such as Maury's. The resistance against the Civil Constitution assured the eclipse of both factions.

Even spiritually, both factions came near to obliteration, for the Grégoires were far fewer than the Gobels in the constitutional Church, and the Maurys outnumbered the Emerys in the non-juring branch. Napoleon was to revive Maury's Church and set it working. Grégoire's Church has not yet been reconstituted, but the spirit is by no means dead.

Grégoire's adaptation of the Catholic Church was that it should be a Church with its original pure doctrines. He then believed that it would be possible to translate these doctrines into actions by modern methods without succumbing to the religion of rationalism. The great faith in democracy that Grégoire had did not come because of the theories of Voltaire, Diderot, or Rousseau. That faith came as a result of the knowledge, to Grégoire, that a democratic government is the way in which the pure doctrines of Christianity, if applied to eighteenth century France, would be worked out.

Our intellectual and religious history since the French Revolution has been one of this broad fight between rationalism and Christianity. The outcome, as yet, is clouded in darkness and in the distant future. The weakness of the Church in taking the part of Christianity stems from two reasons: (1) It has adopted the policy of Maury, or (2) It has adopted the policy of the citizen Doche² (who abjured religion for 'thought') or Gobel. The strength of the Church, as the defender of

2. See above, p. 87.

Christianity, lies in its adoption of the policies of Grégoire.

In the French Revolution, then, it would seem that it was not the indifference of the peasantry which caused the lack of resistance, but the complete lack of ability, on the part of the prelates and leaders, to reconcile modern times to the Christian doctrine. There were no prelates who followed Gregoire into the Civil Constitution of the Clergy except the five men of Gobel's type. The rest, refusing to recognize that the Church's temporal possessions and power are not her strength, but her weakness, rallied to the defense of the rights of the Church which were temporally given and temporally held.

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