an efficient system of espionage which, a decade later, smashed the Cinq-Mars conspiracy and incidentally gave Sedan to France; by the creation of provincial intendants in 1637 with overriding financial, judicial and police powers, and responsible to the king and his chief minister alone; and by a steady process of attrition, aided by the sale of offices, which gradually transformed the feudal aristocracy into a noblesse de cour lacking real influence and dependent on the monarchy for continued favours. 2

In foreign policy, Richelieu turned the Thirty Years' War into a contest between Bourbon and Hapsburg, and with Protestant help gave France a new Rhine frontier. In the struggle with Spain, the king's chief officer of state was able to secure the Pyrenees border and gain a foothold in northern Italy. 3

This was Mazarin's inheritance after Richelieu's death in 1642. On the European front, with the aid of the young Condé against the Spaniards at Rocroi and with that of the Protestant Turenne in Germany, he gained for France a leading place in Europe in the years following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The war with Spain continued until the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659, after France, with Cromwell's support, had successfully invaded the Spanish Netherlands. At this treaty, the Pyrenean border was finally determined and the province of Artois ceded by Spain, thus providing the French with an additional barrier to foreign incursions in the vulnerable north-east. 4

At home, Mazarin's pressing need to finance an aggressive foreign policy sparked off the series of civil wars from 1648 until 1652 known collectively as the Fronde. Beginning with a constitutional protest by the Paris parlement, influenced in some measure by parliamentary successes in England, the cause of reform was espoused by the populace of the capital. The weakness of the court party gave the nobility a last chance to oppose the king by taking over the leadership of this challenge to his authority. From Paris the revolt spread to the provinces and Mazarin was twice obliged to leave the country before order was restored. 5

But in general the Fronde was not anti-monarchical in character, a circumstance which had its reflection in the many local insurrections of townspeople and peasantry both before and after the troubles of 1648-1652: "Le Vivarais rebelle demeure prudent, royaliste, et comme souvent au XVIIe siècle, purement antifiscal .... Les mutins d'Aube-nas...se bornent à reprendre sous une forme nouvelle le vieux mot d'ordre antifiscal et monarchiste des Carcassonnais de 1655 (Vive le Roi
sans taille et sans gabelle); et ils crient: Vive le Roy, fy des élus”6. It was this attachment to the monarchy which saved the day for Mazarin and paved the way for the re-entry into Paris of Louis XIV in October 1652.

Where did the Calvinists, so recently in armed opposition to royal authority, stand in relation to uprisings, whether of peasants or of the nobility? There is no indication that Huguenots in general played any active part in the Fronde wars, apart from the English-inspired republicanism espoused by some Calvinists in Bordeaux and the temporary disaffection of the military leader Turenne, later to abjure the reformed faith.7 That the loyalty of the many did not go unnoticed is evident from the terms of the confirmation of the Edict of Nantes signed by Louis XIV at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in May 1652.8

A number of earlier insurrections took place in largely Protestant regions, or in provinces where Calvinists formed a strong minority. However, although the Languedoc intendant Jean Baltazar de Malherbe saw the machinations of the Huguenots in the troubles there in the mid-1640s, there is reason to suppose that they did little more than make common cause with Catholics in the face of poverty and grinding taxation. Nor is there any evidence of a religious motive in the revolt of the peasantry of Saintonge and the Angoumois in 1636, or three years later when the Nu-pieds of Normandy presented another challenge to authority.9 Porchnev has suggested that revolt in Calvinist communities had much to do with the element of social protest inherent in French Protestantism, but seventeenth-century uprisings were not, a few incidents apart, religious manifestations, but the result of economic hardship.10 Periodic famine, as in the Blesois in 1662, brought starvation and death to thousands, while low wages, rising prices, exorbitant groundrents and the growing burden of tithes and gabelle added to the general misery.11

It was also characteristic of French Calvinism at this period that it generally endorsed the theory of a royal power deriving from God and not to be questioned by loyal subjects. This attitude, having its source in the thought of Calvin the founder and manifesting itself as the wars of religion drew to a close, was constantly reiterated by theologians of the seventeenth century.12 Although Catholics also subscribed to this view, it led among Calvinists to an exaggerated subservience to royal authority, such as that shown by the provincial synod of Languedoc in 1661, whose members described the king as the Lord’s anointed and true image of God’s power.13 Obedience to the monarch was the keynote of opening speeches at such assemblies, as instanced at the provin-
cial synod of Burgundy, held at Gex in September 1656, where obedience to royal authority was taken for granted, "les monarchies estantz l'ouvrage de Dieu". Some years later, when the Calvinists of Orleans wished to bring their complaints of Catholic hostility to the notice of Louis XIV, they could only do so "prosternez aux pieds de vostre sacré majeusté sous la liberté de vos Eedit".

Seventeenth-century French Calvinism shows no germ of a democratic tradition in its political outlook and was far removed from the republicanism of which, in an earlier age, it had been accused. It must be said, however, that the excessive devotion shown to the king's majesty was perhaps a natural reaction. It was the Catholics who prided themselves on their loyalty and who looked with suspicion in this regard on the Calvinists in their midst. This suspicion was possibly heightened by the presbyterian and synodal form of reformed church government and Jacques Fromental, historian of Calvinism in Burgundy, has suggested that government of a more authoritarian kind, as with the German Lutherans, or of a hierarchical nature, similar to the Anglicanism of England, might have been better received by the civil power. Such ecclesiastical organization would certainly have accorded better with the theory of the divine right to rule. The French system had obvious dangers and Ligou has seen in the extreme loyalism of its members its greatest weakness.

The later period of Richelieu's years in office and the age of Mazarin which succeeded it did not, however, foreshadow the wrath to come, at least until after 1656, when some further prohibitions were placed upon Calvinists in such fields as public preaching and psalm singing. Where reform was strong, it largely held its own without difficulty, but under Richelieu constraints were applied to suspend the free exercise of the reformed religion in some localities of weaker Calvinism, among them Sancerre in Berry, Chartres in the Orléanais and Antibes in Provence. Under Mazarin, little interested in religious controversy, conditions were for long even easier. Moreover, there were influential Protestants in high places, such as the German, Bartholomäus Herwarth, in 1657 controller general of finance. The only major setback for Calvinism occurred at the end of Mazarin's life, when in 1660 a quarrel between students at the Monauban college, which Protestants shared with Jesuits, resulted in the military occupation of the town and severe measures taken against reformers, including arrests, executions and the expulsion of the Calvinist academy to the small town of Puylaurens.

There existed, however, an ultra-Catholic congregation, the Compag-
nie du Saint-Sacrament, a secret society founded in 1627 which placed high on its agenda the extirpation of heresy, although much of its energy was directed into less controversial channels such as help for the sick and needy, the promotion of foreign missions, clergy reform and the encouragement of higher standards of social morality. The company's efforts to combat Calvinism and to win over its adherents took various forms: missionary activity, the creation of funds for the conversion of members of the reformed church, particularly among the poor, the lobbying of *parlements*, especially in the south, and attempts to curtail Calvinist civil liberties, either by preventing non-Catholics from following certain professions, or by trying to boycott the employment of Calvinists by Catholic masters and of Catholic workmen by Protestants. The *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* had affiliations throughout France and was particularly strong in Paris and the *midi*; it enjoyed the support of many of the higher clergy, of court officials and of some of the most influential members of the Paris *parlement*. It had moreover a doctrine with regard to Calvinism: that the Edict of Nantes had been promulgated in order to allow the king to bring his strayed sheep back into the Catholic fold. The legislation of 1598 was not therefore to be regarded in terms of a reprieve for Calvinism, but as a means of glorifying Catholicism.²⁴

The efforts of the company were not conspicuously successful in the years of its greatest activity under Mazarin and the rulings of the king-in-council were frequently in conflict with its aims. It fell into disrepute after 1660 and disappeared within a few years, having, in Ligou's view, made enemies by its moralistic puritanism, its ultramontanism and its underground activities. Molière's *Tartuffe* was to lampoon the excessive piety with which it became associated.²⁵ The company, however, is not without importance in the subsequent history of the reformed church. Its interpretation of the Edict of Nantes was endorsed by Louis XIV, as may be seen in his declaration at La Fère in 1656,²⁶ and its methods were to be resuscitated in the later anti-Calvinist campaign.

In general then, the French reformed church exercised its functions without serious constraint before 1661.²⁷ At the highest level, it met in national synod, although no longer at three-yearly intervals as had been the case from 1598 until 1626. It assembled at Charenton in 1631, at Alençon in Normandy in 1637, at Charenton again in 1644 and at Loudun in Poitou in 1659 – always in localities where Protestantism was a minority cult; always too in the presence of a royal commissioner and with royal permission, obtained through the good offices of deputy generals appointed as intermediaries between the king and the Calvinist
rank-and-file. The earliest holders of this office after 1629 were Isaac Bazin, who died in 1631, and Henri de Clermont-Gallerande, who was succeeded in 1644 by the Dauphinois, Alexandre de Perrinet d’Arzéliers. He in turn gave place to the Ruvignys, father and son, who held office in succession until the revocation. Never a political figure, the deputy general undertook a task which became progressively more onerous during the personal rule of Louis XIV. The elder Ruvigny’s career before his resignation in 1678 is an illustration of the difficulties experienced by so many Calvinists in adopting too royalist a pose.

Legislative body, court of appeal and link between scattered churches, strong and weak, in Calvinist France, the national synod met for a period of several weeks under the control of a moderator. Its two daily sessions were attended by pastors and elders nominated by the synodal provinces of the church – two of each for the fourteen larger provinces and half that number from Brittany and Provence. This representative national assembly depended upon the royal favour for its continued existence and at Loudun the royal commissioner Madeleine let it be known that for the future the synod would no longer be held automatically at the request of the church, but only when the king judged such an assembly to be necessary. It was, in fact, the last to be authorized and the unity of the Calvinist church suffered in consequence a serious setback. Nevertheless, if Louis XIV intended the suppression of national synods as a means of destroying the corporate organization of the church, his action was insufficient.

For at provincial and local levels unity was preserved to the eve of the revocation and contact between the provinces did not cease. At provincial level, synods consisting of the pastors and elders of each church met annually, and subsequently biennially, with royal permission and under the watchful eye of a commissioner responsible to the king, assisted in later years by an additional Catholic commissioner. Their deliberations, clearly of a more regional nature, concerned the affairs of the various churches, problems of finance, education and the administration of the sacraments, and the appointment and dismissal of ministers. Discussions ranged from matters of general importance to the consideration of specific local issues.

Synodal provinces – whose boundaries were not necessarily those of geographical provinces – were further divided into colloquies, although this delimitation was never clearly defined in the Vivarais, a region of relatively strong Protestantism, nor was it ever introduced in Brittany and Provence, where the reformed church was weak. The authority of
the colloquy was subordinate to that of the provincial synod, but it was not, by membership, a direct link in the chain of church government. Its meetings coincided with those of the provincial synods, and were similarly attended by the royal commissioner and by the pastor and an elder of each church in the district, together with a lay representative of the town in which its deliberations took place. Its duties were to transmit to the provincial synod the decisions taken at local level and to settle differences between churches and to keep a watch upon the religious life of the district.

The separate churches within each synodal province and colloquy, forming the Protestant parishes, each with its place of worship, the temple, were the core of active Calvinism in seventeenth-century France. Differing widely in wealth and numbers, they enjoyed equality of status and considerable autonomy. The binding cement was the confession of faith, the Discipline and the dictates of the higher organs of authority of the Calvinist faith. The administrative body regulating the life of the local church was the consistory, a lay assembly which met at fairly regular intervals, often but not exclusively on Sundays, under the chairmanship of the minister. Its members – usually men, although women are known to have been chosen in Burgundy – were co-opted, not elected, and were representative of the various localities served by the church and sometimes of adjoining congregations where regular worship had ceased. This twofold mission can be seen in the organization of the consistory for Is-sur-Tille in Burgundy. Members were chosen for varying periods and it was usual for continuity to be maintained by stipulating that a proportion of the consistory should stand down at a given time. Membership could, however, be extended for further terms. The landowner in a seigneurial church sat in an ex-officio capacity and from 1684 a Catholic official had to be present at meetings.

The size of the consistory depended upon the importance of the church, rather than upon the size of the congregation. Solange Bertheau has given the membership at Niort in Poitou for 1630 as eighteen for a parish of some 6 000 Protestants; the consistory of the church at Nanteuil-lès-Meaux, east of Paris, numbered seventeen members on the eve of the revocation for approximately 3 000 parishioners; that at Mens-en-Trièves in Dauphiné varied between fifteen and twenty for about 1 500 worshippers between 1652 and 1683. An example of a smaller consistory for a parish of fewer than 400 worshippers comes from La Ferté-au-Col – today La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, east of Meaux. The members there in January 1685 numbered only seven. Chizé, a small congregation in southern Poitou, with a chapel of ease attached to
the larger church of Aulnay, had a consistory of eight or nine members before its suppression in 1663.\textsuperscript{40}

Consistorial records suggest that members were selected not only for their moral worth, but also largely for their social and intellectual standing in the community. This made the consistories somewhat less than democratic, but added weight to their deliberations, increased their prestige and, a not unimportant consideration, gave representation to those elements of Calvinist society best able to contribute to the financial stability of the congregations. The seigneurial class was frequently well represented, as were merchants, the bourgeoisie and the professional classes.\textsuperscript{41} At Embrun in Dauphiné for example, all these groups from the upper and middle echelons of society were represented before the revocation.\textsuperscript{42} It is also evident that there was something of a "closed shop" in co-optation to consistories and perhaps a degree of nepotism in the frequency with which members of the same family served the needs of the parish.\textsuperscript{43}

On the other hand, there were congregations of generally lower social standing. Nicolas Payen, chosen by royal command to attend meetings of consistories in the Brie region on the confines of the Ile-de-France and Champagne in the last months before the revocation, found that at Nanteuil all the members were "gens fort grossiers" and that the real power in the deliberative body was the pastor, Jean Jamet. More than half the members, representing Meaux, Nanteuil and neighbouring localities on both banks of the Marne, were vine-dressers. The others were agriculturalists and artisans, of whom perhaps Jean Volcé, master pastry-cook of Meaux, stood highest in his trade.\textsuperscript{44} Another comment on the social deficiencies of consistories comes from Dauphiné, where it was alleged that services were sometimes conducted by "ceux qu'ils nomment anciens, gens sans caractere et la pluspart plebee au grand scandale du public".\textsuperscript{45} In Poitou, and doubtless elsewhere, consistories chose parishioners living in outlying villages and hamlets as \textit{anciens de campagne}, responsible to, but apparently not members of the governing body. These would probably generally be tradesmen or husbandmen.\textsuperscript{46}

It is interesting to note that members of a consistory were all designated elders in provinces as far apart as Dauphiné and Poitou. The deacons were simply elders deputed to undertake special duties associated with the diaconate. In Burgundy at least it would seem to have been usual to appoint a single deacon. In 1614, for example, the consistory of the church at Beaune chose the elder Sébastien Lavize "\textit{diate pour manier les deniers de l'église, payer le pasteur, et fornir (sic) à tous les frais}
qu’il conviendra”. The designation “treasurer” would seem appropriate. The office of deacon was therefore one of the several church duties which fell to the lot of the appointed elder, who would sometimes hold several posts at one and the same time. The elder Jean Desouliès of Mens-en-Trièves, for instance, was for more than twenty years deacon, reader, precentor, secretary and schoolmaster. It was, however, usual in some parishes to appoint salaried officers to undertake some of these duties. In order to facilitate the smooth running of the parish, it was the custom to divide it into districts, or quartiers, each under the control of one or more elders. In Poitou, consistorial districts far from the church were often administered by the heads of Calvinist families.

The finances of the church were of the greatest importance and the work of the elders in this field was often onerous. In some churches congregations were assessed according to their means for general expenses, including the payment of the minister’s salary, while the regular collections in the temple were destined for the poor. On occasion, special collections were taken up, usually for the support of less wealthy churches, while congregations also benefited from testamentary bequests. Money was sometimes scarce and there were instances of churches falling into arrears with their payments to pastors. Usually the collections taken at the quarterly communion services - often held on two successive Sundays on each occasion - were considerably larger than those taken at ordinary services.

Elders had a number of duties in connection with the services. If no salaried official had been appointed as reader and precentor, one of the elders would read the scriptural passages which preceded the sermon and direct the singing of the psalms which was so notable a feature of Calvinist worship and, indeed, while permitted, of social life. On communion Sundays it was the elders who saw that the communion table was properly prepared, who supplied the bread and wine, and who collected the mèreaux, the metal tokens issued to those whose fitness to take communion had been verified in advance.

In Scotland in the following century, it was the minister who distributed these tokens, “a species of priestly power, and sometimes ... abused”, in the view of Dr Johnson’s biographer, James Boswell. This was perhaps the practice in some parts of France in the seventeenth century, but it was a task usually delegated to the elders. Here we touch upon a vital part of the work of the consistory, its moral action in the community. This intensely Calvinistic activity was not without its dangers.
As Pierre Bolle has indicated, too great an interference in the lives, public and private, of members of congregations could lead to a spirit of rebellion and at worst, cause real spiritual values to wither in an excess of sterile moralism. It has also been alleged that the strictness of Calvinist morality was not in keeping with the French character and militated against the wider acceptance of the reformed church. On the other hand, the close hold of the church upon its members helped to sustain it, particularly in regions where it was a minority faith.

Perhaps 20% of the consistory's time was occupied in discussing sins of the spirit and of the flesh. In the first category may be included family disputes, quarrels between master and servant, disagreements involving neighbours and the frequent and interminable squabbles over precedence in the temple and the possession of private seats, leading sometimes to the exchange of blows. In an age which had an unreasoning fear of the supernatural, there were also cases of parishioners frequenting sorcerers and witches. The excesses of youth had to be curbed; so too had debauchery, licentiousness, blasphemy and drunkenness. Unexplained absence from services was censured and elders fought an unrelenting battle with innkeepers. Drinking on Sundays was frowned upon severely and was strictly forbidden during hours of worship. The elders of Mens-en-Trièves whose duty it was to patrol this largely Protestant town at such times kept a close eye upon the taverns. In everyday social life, dancing and the playing of cards and dice were considered particularly reprehensible and in regions where Catholicism was strong, careful attention was paid to contacts with the ceremonies and teachings of the Catholic church, with the preaching of visiting missionaries and in general with all influences who might lead the faithful into what were considered the superstitious practices of Rome.

What were the strictures available to the minister and his consistory? In simple cases, a visit from the ancien du quartier took place, followed by an apology before the consistory. In graver matters, or with failings already known to the community at large, public reparation before the whole congregation after service was expected. Exclusion from the communion table was a common method of punishment. The sentence could be delivered privately by the consistory, or publicly from the pulpit. At Mens-en-Trièves in the last years of active Protestantism before the revocation, public condemnation was restricted to cases of illegitimate birth. Parents too, even of children who had attained their majority, could be deprived of the sacraments for the sins of their offspring. The final sanction, full excommunication, seems rarely to have been invoked, perhaps for fear of driving erring Calvinists into the
The church played an important part in the lives of the congregation and the censure of the consistory was generally accepted. Few were bold enough to make a stand against the weight of public opinion its members claimed to represent. There were, however, exceptions, and here the social position or professional standing of the accused seem sometimes to have strengthened the will to resist. It took sixteen years to persuade the surgeon of Dangeau in the Pays chartrain, Maximilien Séguaret, to mend his irreligious ways; when the sisters Madeleine and Marie Clot, mistresses of the nobleman Alexandre le Blanc du Percy, were suspended from communion, the Calvinist father of their ten illegitimate children described the members of the Mens-en-Trièves consistory as “des jean-foutre”.

The consistory could obviously do no more than put a brake upon antisocial behaviour. Illegitimacy, then a great social scandal, was doubtless more frequent than the expressive entries “né(e) en paillardise” in the registers would suggest. Dancing may have been considered an invitation to lasciviousness by the reformed church, but it formed part of every young nobleman’s education and was certainly accepted at that social level. Locke’s references to this form of entertainment in Languedoc suggest that any opposition to it was probably often disregarded. Drinking and card playing were also too popular to be stamped out entirely. At Mens in 1676, Geneviève, daughter of the pastor Jacques Borel, was discovered one Sunday evening at the house of an elder of the congregation, César-Marie du Maretz, playing cards with a number of friends, among them the Catholic priest Paul Curty. This did not prevent her from being similarly surprised a few years later.

There is no reason to suppose that Calvinists lived better lives than their Catholic neighbours. One of the Montpellier pastors, René Berthou, later exiled to England, told John Locke in 1676 “that there was very little piety or religion among their people and that the lives of the Reformed was (sic) no better than that of the Papists”. It must always have been difficult to prevent contacts between Calvinists and Catholics. Mixed marriages, while still legally permitted in France, were common in some regions – Poitou, for example – but were frowned upon by the reformed church. Members of congregations sometimes expressed contrition for marrying outside the Calvinist faith, as at
Imécourt in Champagne in 1667, where Paul Cholard repented of his “horrible faute”.66

In addition to its task as keeper of the public morals, the consistory had an important charitable duty, both as collector of moneys for the sick and indigent and, under the eye of the minister, of disburser of the funds collected. This was done on a regular basis, often quarterly, after due investigation of the circumstances, while special payments were made as necessary in cases of occasional sickness, unemployment or accident. Assistance was also afforded necessitous travellers, as at Fontenay-le-Comte in Poitou, where a few months before the revocation a young theological student from Languedoc, “en grande nécessité”, was given financial help.67 There are many indications that there was a not inconsiderable itinerant population in seventeenth-century France.

A vital aspect of Calvinist social action was the provision of educational facilities. The Discipline of the reformed church lay great stress upon schools68 and the pastor Isaac d’Huisseau described the youth of the parishes as “la pépinière de l’eglise”.69 It was not just a question of literacy for its own sake, or as a tool for occupational advancement, but also, for a church which laid stress upon a personal knowledge of the Bible, a means of strengthening the faithful in their religious life. The church school – la petite école – taught reading, writing and the rudiments of arithmetic, and sometimes, before a royal decree of 1670 prohibited the further extension of elementary education in reformed church schools, a little Latin as well. These institutions were day schools, although the schoolmaster occasionally gave lodging to pupils coming from a distance.

Samuel Mours claims that the standard of literacy among Calvinists was vastly higher than that among Catholics, taking the country as a whole; that this was so in many regions is evident from an examination of signatures in church registers.70 There were, however, considerable variations. Urban churches had generally more literate congregations than rural ones; the level of literacy north of the Loire was considerably higher than was the case in the midi, and Provence in particular lagged. Nevertheless the reformed church could take pride in its achievements in the elementary field and it was not until later in the seventeenth century that the Catholic church began to make up this leeway, although mention should be made of the outstanding efforts of the Jansenists of Port-Royal. It is interesting to note that in the immediate post-revocation period, when thousands of Calvinists had fled the coun-
try, the literacy levels for France were approximately 30% for men and 14% for women. The Calvinist levels would seem to have been higher than this.71

More advanced education, except where provided privately, was organized within the framework of each synodal province. The college, or high school, was attached to the academy, a university institution with faculties of arts and theology.72 College education emphasized the study of Latin and Greek, the reformed catechism and the confession of faith. From the college, students graduated to the faculty of arts of the academy, following a two-year course in logic, moral philosophy, physical science and metaphysics which terminated in the award of a master's degree.73 Those who then proposed to train as ministers of religion entered the faculty of theology to become the elite of the academy. On the completion of a three-year course, the successful student was given testimonials to present to the synod of his province. Synod would then examine him and hear him preach and, if satisfied, receive him as a pastor.74

Many future pastors, however, studied at Geneva, and several in the United Provinces. While some academies flourished in mid-century – Saumur, Montauban-Puylaurens, Nimes, Die and Sedan, the last, on the borders of Champagne, outside the synodal provinces – other collegiate institutions languished. Provence, for example, failed to make a success of its college at Le Luc.75 The efforts of the reformed church in this field could not compare with those of the Jesuits.76

Nevertheless, in the formation of an educated pastorate in seventeenth-century France the reformed church had the ascendancy over the Catholic church, which lacked enough seminaries to train the large numbers of priests needed to fill its parishes. The secular clergy varied considerably in ability and some were crassly ignorant.77 Country priests too came in general from a lower social background than those who ministered to Protestant congregations. This is not to say that there were not many able men of high intellect in the ranks of the Catholic ecclesiastical establishment; moreover, there was a superabundance of clergy in many dioceses: as many as six priests to every 600 communicants in one parish in the diocese of Limoges, for example. "Le contact avec le clergé", as Lestocquoy has said of the ancien régime, "était de tous les instants";78 some were obviously of outstanding merit. But the French Protestant pastorate is best compared with the Catholic episcopate and in point of training, ability and intellect was in no way inferior. Drawn mainly from the bourgeoisie and the lesser nobility, pastors were often
in easy circumstances, and although their salaries, except in Paris and a few of the larger provincial centres, were not high, they enjoyed free accommodation and other privileges.  

The minister was responsible for catechistical instruction and, through the consistory, for the pastoral care of the faithful, with particular emphasis upon the sick and the aged. Many pastors too devoted much of their leisure time to writing: books of controversy in the earlier part of the century; sermons and other devotional works at all times. The pastorate was then essentially, as it is today, a ministry of the Word, and preaching played the most important part in the duties of every minister. The general level of excellence in the pulpit would seem to have been high, if perhaps lacking in popular appeal, and Louis XIV said of Pierre du Bosc, pastor at Caen in Normandy, that he had no equal in the kingdom as an orator.

There were, inevitably, failures, apostates and dissolutes among the pastors of the reformed church in the seventeenth century; others too who were lax in their duty or uninspiring from the pulpit. They were, however, clearly a small minority and most ministers provided in full measure the spiritual and moral leadership required to guide the congregations entrusted to them. For the minister was expected to be a model to his flock in his spiritual life, his everyday behaviour and even in the sobriety of his dress. He occupied a position of importance within the Calvinist community and, indeed, often in society in general. The sense of calling was a strong one and there are many instances of successive generations of ministers within the same family. Léonard's latter-day echo of Claude Brousson's criticism of pastors before the revocation seems somewhat harsh.

With the pastors we come to the very heart of the worship of the reformed church in the temple, centre of a local community which raised the money to build it and sometimes carried out the work of construction itself. Whether large, as at Charenton, Dieppe or La Rochelle, each capable of seating several thousand people on the ground floor and in the galleries, or just a small rural chapel of ease, the simplicity of the temple distinguished it from the Catholic church. Its plain plastered interior walls had few decorations: the decalogue, perhaps, or the Lord's Prayer on wooden tablets. The temple was not only a place of worship, but also a meeting place for friends and relatives who not infrequently came from a considerable distance and were a source of news, national, local and domestic. Larger temples often had
a separate consistory building attached to them, sometimes housing a library.84

A bell summoned the faithful to the temple. In addition to the regular Sunday services and the quarterly communion, there were occasional special services on fast days set aside to mark disasters – persecution, as at Lusignan, Poitou, in 1666; famine, such as that which afflicted the Orléanais four years earlier. Home devotions were strongly encouraged, but there were also prayer meetings in the temple on weekdays, often presided over by an elder.85

The parish registers took the place of the modern état civil. Baptism, the acceptance of the child into the body of the church, was a solemn occasion, usually taking place in the temple towards the close of a service. Godparents were not obligatory, but were customary. Christian names were frequently chosen from the Old Testament and among the bourgeoisie and the nobility there was a predilection for names associated with classical antiquity.86

Impending marriages were announced in the temple on three successive Sundays and in terms of the Discipline weddings were celebrated publicly before the congregation. John Locke attended a reformed church marriage ceremony in January 1676 at Montpellier, “the bride and bride groome standing under the pulpit and the minister in the pulpit joyned them according to their liturgie, just before the psalme that precedes his extempory prayer”.87 Minors had to have parental permission to marry and the age of majority for men was thirty.88 At Mens-en-Trièves, contracts of marriage in legal form were demanded by the consistory after 1668, in order to avoid opposition when the banns were called.89 Country customs at weddings, always lively and sometimes violent, were strongly discouraged, but a wedding was the occasion of family reunions and banqueting which might continue for several days.90

Entries in the registers relating to burials were usually brief. The reason, as Pierre Bolle has pointed out, had a theological base. Calvinism rejected the idea of purgatory and prayers for the dead were inadmissible.91 In some localities, as at Loriol in Dauphiné, it was the custom to bury the dead immediately after services, but Calvinist funerals were not church ceremonies. The cortège did not halt at the temple, nor was it necessary for the minister to attend what was a simple family affair.92 Cemeteries sometimes adjoined the temple grounds, but were often walled enclosures purchased by the church in another part of the town or village. Scattered localities within a parish
often had their own cemeteries, as with those who worshipped at Nogentel in Brie. There, the Calvinists of the hamlet of Montcourt buried their dead in the Petits-Prés; those of Château-Thierry at the Praillons cemetery. Burials also took place on the estates of the nobility and other landowners.

There was little ostentation in a Calvinist cemetery. Tombstones were few and more imposing sepulchres, such as that in the Paris cemetery at Charenton to Jean de Grassion, Protestant marshal of France, were rarer still. Distinctions of class, however, existed in death as in life. The Calvinists of Saumur in the last months of active church activity there before the revocation complained to the king of outrages to the dead in the sepulchre adjoining the temple wall. This had originally been set aside for the Mornay family, but other notables, including some German princes, had also been buried there. However, when flooding prevented interments in the ordinary cemetery, "on esté (sic) obligé d’y enterrer des particuliers". In north-eastern France the Catholic bishop of Noyon, François de Clermont-Tonnerre, was outraged in 1680 to find inscriptions on some Calvinist tombs at Saint-Quentin, a pretentious display, "a la honte aussi bien qu’au scandale des fideles qui seuls peuvent et doivent jouir apres leur mort de cette honorable et publique preuve d’une sainte Communion pendant leur vie". His comment is a further illustration of the gulf between Calvinism and Catholicism.

The numerical strength of this Calvinism of the mid-seventeenth century has been the subject of much speculation and there can probably be no finality on the precise figure. The most acceptable conclusions would seem to be those offered by Samuel Mours, who gives a total of 856 000 for the sixteen synodal provinces of France, including 5 000 from the churches of independent Orange, attached to the synodal province of Dauphiné, but excluding the reformed churches of Alsace, Sedan and Metz, outside the synodal system. Metz was much the strongest of these, but the total number of Calvinists in all three cannot have exceeded 25 000. Territorial gains by Louis XIII and Louis XIV – Franche-Comté, Roussillon, Artois and Flanders – were not subject to the Edict of Nantes. The total population of France at this period is also uncertain, but was evidently in the region of 19 million people. Calvinists therefore represented about 5% of the whole, a proportion reflected in figures for a single diocese of France, that of Rouen in Normandy, which is perhaps a part of France most representative of the national average.
The geographical distribution was much as it had been at the beginning
of the century, with the great area of strength lying in the west, and
particularly the south-west, in southern Dauphiné and in coastal Nor­
mandy. Although the Calvinism of Paris contained influential elements,
its adherents there formed a numerically insignificant section in a pop­
ulation approaching half a million.101

Mours gives three synodal provinces with Calvinist populations of
90 000 or more: Lower Guyenne, with 100 000 church members in four
colloquies, having large congregations in Bordeaux, Bergerac, Clairac
and Nérac; the province of Saintonge-Aunis-Angoumois, with a Pro­
estant population of 98 000 in five colloquies and its major urban centre
at La Rochelle; and finally Poitou, divided into three colloquies and
having some 90 000 church members, many in rural areas, but with
sizable congregations in towns such as Poitiers, Châtellerault, Niort
and Fontenay-le-Comte.102

Three more synodal provinces had Calvinist populations exceeding
75 000: Lower Languedoc, with 88 000 worshippers in three colloquies,
where many localities, including the city of Nîmes, had a majority of
Protestants; the province of the Cévennes, also with three colloquies
and a population of 82 000 Calvinist worshippers, far in excess of the
Catholic population of the region; and Upper Languedoc and Upper
Guyenne with seven colloquies, 80 000 Calvinists and the town of
Montauban, where Catholics were in a minority.

Four synodal provinces had more than 45 000 Protestants: Dauphiné,
where the Calvinist population of some 72 000 was distributed in eight
colloquies, with a large church at Die, where 85% of the citizens were
of the reformed religion; Normandy, with six colloquies and some
59 000 Calvinists, particularly strong at Dieppe, Rouen and Caen; the
large province of the Île-de-France-Champagne-Picardy, containing
four colloquies and 48 000 church members, a quarter of them in Paris;
and the Vivarais in the strongly Calvinist midi, also with a reformed
church population of about 48 000.

Of the remaining six synodal provinces, that of Béarn on the Spanish
border was the largest, with a Protestant population of some 30 000,
unevenly distributed in six colloquies, of which those of Orthez and
Sauveterre had the largest number. Three other synodal provinces had
populations of between 10 000 and 20 000 Calvinists: Burgundy, with
17 000 in four colloquies, the province for the Orléanais and Berry,
whose two colloquies contained about 15 000 church members to­
gether, with a strong nucleus in the Blésois, and the synodal province of
Anjou-Touraine-Maine, with 13,500 Calvinists in three colloquies, who largely depended, outside the towns of Tours, Saumur, and Loudun, upon the support of the rural lesser nobility of the reformed faith. Finally were the two synodal provinces of marginal Calvinism at opposite extremities of the country: Provence and Brittany. In the former, more than half of the 9,000 members of the reformed church lived in the villages of the Durance valley; Brittany had some 6,000 church members, with the main centres at Rennes and Vitré.

This distribution indicates that something like 70% of all French Calvinists lived in the west and south-west - approximately south of the Loire and west of the Rhône. If the south-eastern provinces are included - Burgundy, Dauphiné and Provence - the figure approaches 85%. Placed in slightly different context, with Burgundy, Poitou, Saintonge and Aunis rightly forming part of the northern “half” of the kingdom, some 60% of all French Calvinists lived in the southern region of the langue d’oc, a part of France less thickly populated, with fewer large urban centres and generally poorer than the rest of the country.

There is no doubt that Calvinism had declined in numbers during the first half of the seventeenth century, and that this decline would be accelerated in the two and a half decades before the revocation of 1685. There were, it is true, abjurations from Catholicism, as, for example, in the records of the church of Mens-en-Trièves, where in August 1658 the consistory of La Mure asked Mens for a contribution towards the education of a young man “quy est sorty des mains de nos adversaire(s)”. Five years later the Catholic François Boucher of Mens promised to abjure “la messe et les abus d’icelle”. Abjurations of more doubtful sincerity were also made to circumvent local regulations forbidding the settlement of Calvinists in towns to which they had previously had free access. Complaints were made at La Rochelle in 1642 about members of the reformed church who temporarily changed their religious allegiance in order to enter the town. Abjurations were also made in cases where marriages would otherwise have taken place between partners of different beliefs, but this was a two-way trade. Conversions to Catholicism would seem to have been more frequent. A surviving register containing the names of those in the Caen district of Normandy in mid-century who, “quictant, detestant, et abjurant l’hérésie, Reviennent au Giron de l’église Catholique, Apostolique, et Romaine, sans la quelle personne ne peut estre sauvé”, shows a steady stream of converts. Among them was Jean Viel de Rondemare, whose abjuration of 1644 ends with an exhortation which Catholics were later
to forget in the struggle for religious unity: "Ne Faictes à autruy sinon ce que vous voudriez vous estre Faict". 

The defection of the higher nobility continued during the seventeenth century and Ligou has devoted an interesting and penetrating section to the causes in his study of early French Protestantism. This desertion stemmed in part from the transformation of a feudal nobility into anoblesse de cour and the monarchy was astute enough to see that withholding favours to Protestant nobles would encourage conversions. Financial pressures also played a part. Noble revenues were reduced during the economic decline of the period and the acceptance of remunerative service under the crown helped to balance budgets. Again, the appeal to national unity was strong among the upper classes. Attachment to the king had replaced the old feudal independence and to be of the king's party presupposed adherence to his religious views. With the disappearance of militant Calvinism it was the bourgeoisie and the noblesse de province which began to dominate reformed church affairs.

There was some decline too in the support of the provincial nobility for the Calvinist church, particularly where, as in Languedoc, this class had played a significant political rôle. Nevertheless many of the lesser gentry retained a strong loyalty to the cause of reform and greatly assisted the church in its struggle with the crown. In regions of marginal Calvinism, especially in northern and western France, the right to hold services was retained or taken up by numerous Protestant landowners and a number of churches originally established for bailiwicks became seigneurial churches. These églises de fief, however, were isolated and vulnerable, and many disappeared after 1669, when the sale of an estate, even to another Calvinist, caused the droit d'exercice to lapse.

It was the bourgeoisie which emerged from the wars of religion as the leading group in church affairs in urban centres. Ligou has pointed out the dominance at Charenton of the directors of state enterprises: bankers, businessmen, architects, industrialists, together with prominent figures in the world of literature and the arts. It was a society in which such men as Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux the memoirist, Abraham Bosse the engraver and Valentin Conrart, first permanent secretary of the Académie française, shared the honours with financiers like the Herwarths and Samuel Bernard.

On a smaller scale, the urban churches of the provinces also frequently reflected the importance of a rising merchant class, often with Calvinist connections abroad, and that of the professions, members of both sharing power in the consistories with the landed gentry. The silk
manufacturers of Languedoc were mainly Calvinists; so too were many
of the merchants of Picardy. Shipbuilding and the export trade in such
ports as Nantes, Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Dieppe were often in
Protestant hands and Solange Bertheau has noted the numerous medi­
cal men – doctors, apothecaries and surgeons – in the consistories of
mid-Poitou. These “métiers de la santé”, easy of access, frequently
attracted Calvinists.112 Another influential reformed church group were
the lawyers, much in demand as members of consistories for their skill
in defending the right of worship in contests with the civil authority.113

Whatever view is taken of the connection between capitalism and
Calvinism, there is no doubt that, as Ligou has observed, Calvin
brought sanctity out of the cloisters and into the everyday world of
affairs. That Calvinism was well represented in the mercantile and
commercial life of seventeenth-century France is incontestable, but it
should be remembered that even before the constraints under which
Protestants were ultimately placed, commercial and professional ad­
vancement gave Calvinists an opportunity to achieve a status outside
the social order – “l’Eglise, l’épée et la robe” – from which they were
largely excluded.114

The great majority of reformed church members were not, however,
part of the aristocracy of wealth or birth. Ligou has suggested that
probably 60% of them were of peasant stock, many no more than semi­
literate.115 To these must be added a not inconsiderable number of town
dwellers of the labouring class. While in some rural areas, like the
country districts of Languedoc, where the reformed faith was strong,
Calvinism lost relatively few adherents, the decline in the size of the
Protestant population in regions of marginal Calvinism was marked,
even before systematic efforts to crush it. There were signs too of a
diminishing zeal among congregations for the upkeep of ministers, as at
Imécourt in 1675.116 This was an economic, as well as a social manifesta­
tion. Economic conditions also led to a decline in popular Calvinism,
both relative and actual, in such urban centres as Nimes, Montauban,
Tours, Metz and Sedan. There were several causes. At Tours, where
Protestants were a small minority, apathy seems to have led to an
abandonment of the reformed faith, while in some towns in the south
an influx of Catholics from the countryside diminished the Calvinist
preponderance.117 Henri Tribout de Morembert has attributed the con­
siderable drop in the proportion of reformed church members to Catho­
lics in Metz – from 50% in 1620 to 5% at the revocation – to a number
of causes: persecution, a falling birth-rate, a reduced flow of Protestant
immigrants and – although this must have affected all sections – the plague of 1635.\(^{118}\)

Calvinists, just as Catholics, were to be found at all levels of society and relations between the two groups were often friendly enough, as was noted by John Locke at Montpellier.\(^{119}\) Certainly, in intellectual circles, as in Paris and at Caen, close contacts took little account of religious differences.\(^{120}\) There were, however, indications of hostility to reform throughout France, especially where Calvinism was marginal: the refusal of burial, for example, in the neighbourhood of Ablon-sur-Seine in 1603\(^{121}\) and the obstructive tactics of Catholics at Houdan in the Ile-de-France when the temple caught fire in 1681.\(^{122}\) Catholic missionary activity sometimes led, as at Blois, to antagonism between the creeds where none had existed before.\(^{123}\)

In some parts of the kingdom, particularly in the south and west, the acceptance of the reformed faith had resulted by the seventeenth century in a considerable transformation of traditional customs. In the Cévennes, the psalms of Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze had driven out the popular songs of an earlier age and Calvinism had so profoundly influenced the social pattern that the revocation of 1685 was, as Le Roy Ladurie has indicated, a traumatic experience, “une véritable déculturation”, from which the Camisard revolt of the early eighteenth century cannot be divorced.\(^{124}\) Elsewhere, Calvinists must often have been regarded by their more numerous neighbours as a group standing on the fringes of traditional society, rejecting not only rites deeply rooted in medieval life, but also many of the secular activities which had their origins in a distant past.\(^{125}\)

The quiet years from 1629 to 1661 have enabled us to see something of the organization of the reformed church in France during the seventeenth century and to place it in social perspective. The major opposition Calvinism had to face in these decades on a national scale came from the French clergy meeting in assembly, but it was not until 1656 that Mazarin decided to investigate complaints from Catholic sources by sending commissioners of both religions into the provinces. The decision, however, was not implemented during his lifetime.\(^{126}\) Mazarin died at Vincennes on March 9, 1661 and Louis XIV assumed personal control of French government. This end of a long period of delegated power marked a significant turning-point in the history of Calvinism in seventeenth-century France.
REFERENCES: CHAPTER TWO


4. FRIEDRICH, *Age of the baroque*, pp. 233-235; 242-244.


13. TT 261, V, Affaires et biens des religionnaires fugitifs, Orléans: Plainte c. 1680 contre les violences des Catholiques, p. 50 (AN).


15. TT 256B, VI, Montpellier: Raisons des habitants Catholiques de la Ville de Montpellier, opposans au mipartim du Consulat de lad. Ville, c. 1656 (AN).


21. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 104.
22. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, p. 44.
25. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 111.
27. The most comprehensive work on the organization and life of the reformed church is that by P. DE FELICE, Les Protestants d’autrefois; vie intérieure des églises, moeurs et usages (4 vols). Modern general studies include S. MOURS, La Vie protestante d’autrefois and the relevant sections of the same author’s Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 58-136, M. RICHARD, La Vie quotidienne des Protestants sous l’Ancien Régime, especially pp. 27-61, LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 120-140; 162-169, and LÉONARD, History of Protestantism, II, pp. 359-371; 394-402. See also the concise account in MOUSNIER, Institutions de la France sous la monarchie absolue, I, pp. 300-303.
28. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, p. 46.
30. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 176: “Chez Ruvigny … on sent le désir de ne pas opposer Dieu à César”. On the Ruvignys see also S. DEYON, Du loyalisme au refus; les Protestants français et leur député général entre la Fronde et la révocation, Publications de l’Univ. de Lille, III.
31. LÉONARD, History of Protestantism, II, p. 413. For the deliberations of this and earlier synods see J. AYMON, Tous les synodes nationaux des églises réformées de France, 2 vols.
32. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 65; 79-81.
33. At Beaune the consistory met monthly on the first Thursday (FROMENTAL, Réforme en Bourgogne, p. 104).
35. FROMENTAL, Réforme en Bourgogne, p. 139.
52. The elders may perhaps have distributed the wine at communion, although this would have been contrary to the Discipline (See LIGOU, *Protestantisme*, p. 137; BOLLE, 'Paroisse réformée', *BSHPF*, CXI, July-Sept. 1965, p. 226).
55. RICHARD, *Vie quotidienne des Protestants*, p. 60.
62. LOUGH (ed.), *Locke's travels*, pp. 43; 68; 109; 113: Feb. 18 (Shrove Tuesday); April 6 (Easter Monday); Sept. 14; Oct. 9, 1676.
64. LOUGH (ed.), Locke’s travels, p. 94: May 20, 1676. This view had earlier been expressed to him by the Calvinist medical doctor from Montpellier, Charles Barbeyrac (Locke’s travels, p. 28: Feb. 5, 1676).
67. I 4, Registres protestants, Fontenay-le-Comte, 1643-1685: consistory records, April 26, 1685 (AD Vendée).
70. Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 119-120.
71. MONGRÉDIEN, Vie quotidienne sous Louis XIV, p. 167.
72. See P.-D. BOURCHENIN, Etude sur les académies protestantes. Among works on institutions are M. NICOLAS, Histoire de l’ancienne académie protestante de Montauban (1598-1659) and de Puylaurens (1660-1685) and F. MOREIL, ‘Le Collège et l’académie réformée de Nîmes’, BSHPF, CXXII, Jan.-March 1976, pp. 77-86.
73. For a printed syllabus of 1680 for Saumur see TT 266, I-XII, Saumur, p. 534 (AN). For academic studies and political thinking see also H. KRETZER, Calvinismus und französische Monarchie im 17. Jahrhundert; die politische Lehre der Akademien Sedan und Saumur, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Pierre du Moulin, Moyse Amyraut und Pierre Jurieu, Historische Forschungen, 8.
74. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 100-101; 120-123.
76. See PRÉCLIN and JARRY, Luttes politiques et doctrinales, II, pp. 680-681n; 683-684. The College Louis le Grand in Paris had 3 000 students in 1710 (G. SNYDERS, La Pédagogie en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, p. 31).
77. PRÉCLIN and JARRY, Luttes politiques et doctrinales, I, p. 277.
78. Vie religieuse, p. 177.
79. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 101-102; LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 166-167. RICHARD (Vie quotidienne des Protestants, p. 55) says that the Paris pastors were ‘les mieux payés et les plus cossus’.
81. HAAG and HAAG, France protestante, IX, pp. 377-378: Pierre Thomines
(Pierre du Bosc). This followed a personal audience on Calvinist grievances. See also A.-R. VINET, *Histoire de la prédication parmi les réformés de France au dix-septième siècle*, pp. 2-3; 6; 119. LÉONARD (*History of Protestantism*, II, p. 401) is severe in his condemnation of "oratorical mediocrity".


83. *History of Protestantism*, II, pp. 398-399. The author does, however, qualify this view (pp. 399-400).

84. MOURS, *Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle*, pp. 88-89; RICHARD, *Vie quotidienne des Protestants*, pp. 31-34.


88. RICHARD, *Vie quotidienne des Protestants*, p. 42.


95. RICHARD, *Vie quotidienne des Protestants*, pp. 44-45. The town cemetery for Paris was in the rue des Saints-Peres, near the present library of the Society of French Protestant history.


97. TT 271, XXI: Saint-Quentin, 1680-1714: to Intendant, April 9, 1680 (AN).


100. Locke, in his journal entry for May 1, 1676, says: “The Protestants of France are thought to be 1/16 part” (LOUGH (ed.), *Locke's travels*, p. 89).

101. MONGRÉDIEN’s estimate, based upon a housing return for 1684 (*Vie quotidienne sous Louis XIV*, p. 29).

102. Figures and other details for the synodal provinces are from two studies by SAMUEL MOURS: *Essai sommaire de géographie du Protestantisme*

103. LIGOU (Protestantisme, p. 126) gives a slightly different division between north and south to indicate the southern preponderance.


105. S E 227/2, Oct. 4, 1663, p. 41.

106. See Ms. 150, Documents XVIe – XVIIIe siècles: Extrait de plusieurs personnes de la (religion) pretendue Reformée qui contre les ordes(s) de sa Majesté se sont establies en la Ville de La Roshelle de puis la reduction dicelle a son Obeissance, 1642, f. 70 (Bibl. mun. La Rochelle).


108. Ms. 150 (In-f° 103), Registre, 1637-1675: see especially p. 9v. (Bibl. mun. Caen).

109. Protestantisme, pp. 193-194. Locke gives an example of pressure quietly imposed which was to lead to a conversion in the case of the soldier Guy-Henri de Bourbon, marquis of Malauze (LOUGH (ed.), Locke’s travels, p. 113: Oct. 20, 1676).

110. LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 195-197; 205-206.

111. Protestantisme, pp. 197-198.


114. See LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 198; 201-203.

115. Protestantisme, p. 205.


117. LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 206-207.


120. LÉONARD, History of Protestantism, II, pp. 383-386.

121. J. JACQUART, La Crise rurale en Ile-de-France 1550-1670, Publications de la Sorbonne, N.S. Recherches, 10, p. 583.


123. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 139-140, quoting Elie Benoist.


126. LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 110-111.
The years from 1661 to 1685 were characterized by a series of attacks on the reformed church in France, interspersed by periods of relative inactivity. This suggests that the events leading up to the revocation Edict of Fontainebleau in October 1685 were not manifestations of a predetermined policy, but were rather dictated by the desire to contain Calvinism, by the hope that its adherents would come to realize that religious unity was an integral part of national unity and by the needs of the moment, either national or political.

The pressures were not always applied at national level, but often in the provinces, and in a wider sense, Calvinism was not the only stumbling-block to religious unity. Jansenism also represented a doctrinal threat to the corporate church, while in the quarrel between the advocates of a separate gallican church and the ultramontanes, Louis XIV had to pick a careful path. The issue came to the fore over the régale question, the
right of the king to the revenues of vacant bishoprics, and gallicanism reached its apogee with the publication of the Four Articles, anti-papal in tone, in 1682. The breach was healed, but after the revocation and in the years which preceded the settlement with Innocent XII in 1693, Louis had to contend with a strongly gallican clergy which met in assembly once in each five years to grant him a “free gift”. Here was a politico-religious force which required tactful handling.3

There is no doubt that Louis XIV wished to see an end to the division between Calvinists and Catholics within the kingdom and did not lose hope that it could be accomplished by missionary endeavour, helped where necessary by judicious bribes, or by some kind of accommodation. In 1661, however, he had no immediate plans for the abrogation of the edict of 1598. He was not then an exemplary Catholic and had some understanding of the fact that reform was at least in part a reaction to abuses within the structure of Catholicism, even if he was unaware of the wide doctrinal gulf separating the two branches of Christendom.4 Moreover he had inherited a foreign policy which, despite the treaty with Spain in 1659, still saw Hapsburg power as the major threat to France and regarded alliances with Protestant powers as a bulwark of defence for the kingdom. Within ten years Louis XIV was to advance in Flanders in the War of Devolution, acquiring Lille and other frontier towns in the Spanish Netherlands before peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1668.5

On the other land, Louis was king by divine right and pledged to support the Catholic church in its fight to bring back the strayed Calvinist sheep into the universal fold. The Edict of Nantes had been wrung from a royal government unable to set about the task of achieving national unity without making concessions. National unity was still the goal and Louis XIV was to move towards it on every front, even the linguistic.6 But a religious settlement was not, in 1661, a priority. Much still had to be done to improve conditions at home in the overhaul of finances and the stimulation of trade, departments entrusted to Colbert; administration required drastic reconstruction; territorial expansion and frontier defence led to further military campaigns by the armies in the control of Louvois. A reversal of the Edict of Nantes in 1661 was not to be thought of and Louis then regarded it as his duty to maintain the existing settlement, to interpret its provisions in the narrowest way and to encourage all efforts to win over the Calvinists to Catholicism by peaceful means. This much is clear from his memoirs of 1671.7
Throughout these years, therefore, alongside a policy of restraints and ultimately of open attack, went attempts to end religious schism by persuasion. Reunion, Richelieu’s dream, was taken up again. The Sedan professor Louis le Blanc de Beaulieu tried to bridge the gap between his standpoint and that of the Catholics soon after Louis XIV had assumed full powers; Bossuet and the Metz pastor Paul Ferry discussed the possibility of accommodation in 1666, with Lutheranism as a via media; Turenne, both as Protestant and Catholic, took a leading part in trying to heal the breach; Alexandre d’Ize, pastor and professor at Die, published a scheme of reunion in 1677 which irritated his co-religionists and displeased the Catholics; the intendant of Languedoc, Henri d’Aguesseau, gained the support of a number of pastors for the cause of reunion, among them Jean du Bourdieu of Montpellier, who addressed a letter to the Assembly of Clergy in 1685, supporting a communion between the churches which would be something more than a mere abjuration of heresy on the part of the Calvinists.

It was also a new age of controversy, in which each side sought to clarify its position: Bossuet face to face with pastor Jean Claude of Charenton; Claude again and Pierre Jurieu of Sedan against the Jansenists with their proofs of the historicity of Catholic dogma; Pierre Bayle from his Rotterdam haven, standing on the edge of a new scepticism; and across the Rhine, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz working on his Systema theologicum and “holding fast to the conviction that the spirit of concord is the truth and the life”.

These intellectual efforts to seek common ground went hand in hand with more practical steps to win over the Calvinists. The missionary zeal of the Catholic church, and particularly of the Jesuits, Capuchins and Oratorians, not only aimed to strengthen the faith, but also to gain converts. The Oratorian Jean Eudes has left a record of the methods of persuasion he employed, but his gains were few and he came to the conclusion that only the authority of the king could effectively overcome heresy. It is difficult to measure the degree of success obtained by the missionary drive. Perhaps those who followed the example of the great Jesuit missionary in the Cévennes and the Vivarais, Jean-François Régis, by countering Calvinist dogmatics and controversy with a simple approach to the Christian life, made the greatest impact. Certainly those who adopted the methods of the Charenton priest François Véron, harassing preachers inside and outside the temples, accusing them of irreverence, fraud and doctrinal irregularities, obtained little success. Some of these missions were conducted by laymen ill-quali-
fied to engage in theological controversy, but well able to rouse ugly sectarian passions.\textsuperscript{14}

There remained the method of bribery. Funds for the support of the converted had long been used by the clergy. Good results were obtained by Etienne le Camus, bishop of Grenoble, among the poorer Vaudois of the Alpine regions after his appointment to the see in 1669.\textsuperscript{15} With assets made available to the king from the income of certain abbeys, Cluny and Saint-Germain-des-Prés among them, a national fund, the \emph{Caisse des Conversions}, was established. Its direction was entrusted in 1676 to a former Calvinist from Béziers in Languedoc, Paul Pellisson. He achieved a certain success – about 10,000 conversions by the close of 1679, according to his own figures – but the method was slow, some of the conversions were suspect and the small sums offered tempted only the impoverished masses in a period of widespread economic depression.\textsuperscript{16} Gaining converts from the reformed church was a heavy drain on financial resources and by 1681 more energetic means were being employed to speed the process, although gentle persuasion and cash inducements continued, even after the revocation. Pastors who abjured were pensioned and Catholic parishioners were invited to pay subscriptions to the \emph{Société chrétienne et royale} to help abolish heresy “par la douceur et les bien-faits”, as a contemporary appeal put it. For, “en cette vie, peut on avoir une plus grande gloire, que d’estre d’une société avec le plus grand Roy du monde, et qui a si bien commancé et reussi”?\textsuperscript{17}

Louis XIV’s personal reign began with a strict interpretation of the terms of the Edict of Nantes based on the results of enquiries made throughout France by the commissioners agreed to by Mazarin in 1656, but only appointed after his death. These commissions became a permanent feature of religious administration until the revocation. Although they were representative of both reformed and Catholic churches, the Catholic commissioner was usually the intendant and frequently overshadowed his Calvinist colleague. Moreover they were accompanied by a clergy representative whose task was an accusatory one. That the operations of the commissioners were regarded as a threat to the reformed church is indicated in the upsurge in Calvinist emigration after 1661, particularly in frontier zones.\textsuperscript{18} Clergy hostility to the reformed church was widespread and although the \emph{Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement} was in decline after Mazarin’s death, its ideals were reflected in such other proselytizing congregations as the \emph{Œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi} which established in various centres the \emph{Maisons de Nouveaux} and \emph{de Nouvelles Catholiques} to welcome and attract
converts and, after 1685, to serve as places of detention for the recalcitrant.¹⁹

Even before the appointment of the commissioners on April 15, 1661, royal decrees had foreshadowed the repressive trend which was to mark Louis XIV’s approach to the Edict of Nantes. In September 1660 Catholic officers of the judiciary at Nîmes were accorded precedence over their Calvinist counterparts. On January 25, 1661 it was decreed that ministers of the Religion prétendue réformée could only bring consolation to prisoners in jails if they spoke in a low voice. On March 17 psalm singing was restricted to the temples and ministers were forbidden to make pastoral visits in a body.²⁰ It should, however, be remembered that there was then and later a wide gulf between the law and its execution. Disobedience frequently tempered the absolutism of seventeenth-century France; moreover, where Calvinism was locally strong, it is doubtful whether all the repressive measures were put into effect, at least until they were backed up by shows of force.²¹ Some decrees, as with those concerning the singing of psalms, had to be promulgated more than once.²²

There were two periods, the second of which was very brief, when it can be said that the pace of persecution of French Calvinists was slowed down. The first was from 1669 until 1679. On April 2, 1666 Louis XIV assented to a long list of grievances submitted to him by the Assembly of the Clergy in October of the previous year. This confirmed all decrees promulgated since 1656 with regard to the Calvinists and added certain new impediments.²³ Although the next two years saw no great increase in anti-Calvinist measures, apart from the strengthening of Catholic control in municipal government,²⁴ the legislation of 1666 effectively curtailed the freedom of action of the reformed church.

On February 1, 1669, however, Louis issued what has been described as a second Édit of Nantes, rescinding many of the measures taken before and guaranteeing again the legal status of the reformed church.²⁵ For the next ten years, while decrees hostile to Calvinism continued to be published, there was no concerted attempt to resume an all-out attack upon the Protestants. The explanation would seem to lie in Louis’s new priorities in the field of foreign policy. The secret Treaty of Dover with Charles II of England in 1670 prepared the way for the Dutch War of 1672, when, as in 1667, French advances in the Spanish Netherlands posed a threat to the peoples living beyond the northeastern borders, among them scattered pockets of Calvinists. Not until the signing of the Treaty of Nijmegen in 1678 and the subsidiary peace
settlements of the following year did the old question of religious unity in France again come to the fore. Thereafter the pace of persecution was accelerated, with a short interlude in 1684, when the further consolidation of French expansion at Spanish expense, confirmed at Ratisbon in August of that year, momentarily turned Louis XIV's attention from the problem of the reformed church.

These respites represented no complete change in policy, nor were they applicable in the same measure in every part of the kingdom. In discussing the legal constraints under which French Calvinism laboured until the revocation they may therefore be disregarded. The most striking demonstration of hostility towards the reformed church was the great increase in the numbers of temples closed for worship or demolished. Many church members were compelled to travel long distances to attend service, or for baptisms and weddings. At Le Mans, capital of Maine, the pastor Pierre Pezé des Galinières, later to take refuge in England, held communion services every Sunday to provide for hundreds of Calvinists deprived of the quarterly communion in their own parishes. The Paris temple of Charenton, widely considered to be inviolate in this period of repression, saw a great increase in worshipers, many of whom had moved permanently to the capital as a measure of safety. Elsewhere simple services and prayer-meetings were held in private houses and even on the sites of former temples. Protestant landowners did what they could to soften the blow by taking up their right under the Edict of Nantes to provide services on their estates, although the help they could offer was sometimes curtailed by legislation precluding them from admitting those living outside their jurisdiction and, after February 1685, those who were newcomers to their lands. Attempts to evade the restrictions were reported. In 1682 Jacques Nompar de Caumont, the duke of La Force, was prohibited from extending his rights by allowing services to be conducted on his estate, "sous une remise de carrosse". Attendance at temples outside the bailiwick of residence was ultimately disallowed, but at Nanteuil near Meaux worshippers from a distance went as far as the law would permit by clustering round the doors and windows of the temple during service. Finally, on the eve of the revocation, all Calvinists in Paris and its suburbs who had not been resident there for at least a year were compelled to leave the city.

After August 1662 churches had to show written title to the right of exercise granted them in terms of the Edict of Nantes, a stipulation which hit many of the smaller rural churches hard, since the necessary documents had often been lost, destroyed or submitted at an earlier
stage for verification and not returned.\textsuperscript{33} At Landouzy in the Thiérache, for example, the church papers had been burned in a Spanish invasion from the southern Netherlands. There, as in so many places in France, the commissioners were not in agreement over the destinies of the church and the matter was submitted to the royal council for arbitration. Royal decisions were frequently hostile to Calvinism and Landouzy was one of several churches in Picardy placed under interdict in September 1664.\textsuperscript{34}

Many temples were either demolished or walled up between 1661 and 1666 following similar decisions, but the severity of the measures taken varied from province to province. The midi, Normandy, Poitou and the Pays de Gex in Burgundy were particularly unfortunate. The Pays de Gex suffered greatly because of its close proximity to Geneva and a special justification for the closure of so many of its temples was found in the contention that the region was not subject to the Edict of Nantes.\textsuperscript{35} The tenor of the complaints put forward by Catholics for investigation by the commissioners is illustrated at Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives in Normandy, where it was alleged that “L'Eglise de la R.P.R. dudit Bourg n'est pas seulement Pretenduë Reformée mais encor qu'elle n'est que Pretenduë Eglise et non pas veritable, puis que lesd' de la R.P.R. n'en peuvent faire valoir l'establissemment dans les formes specifiées”.\textsuperscript{36}

As the revocation approached new pretexts were found to prohibit worship. Chapels of ease were closed as being superfluous, services were disallowed on all Catholic church lands and from 1682, were brought to an end in all localities where Protestants did not exceed ten families, a heavy blow to seigneurial churches. Worship was also prohibited in all towns taken by force during the wars of religion, thus abolishing Calvinist services in most of the old places de sûreté. Temples were demolished on many pretexts: that mixed marriages had been celebrated; seditious sermons preached; insults offered to the local parish priest; or that Catholics and especially converts from Calvinism had been encouraged to attend services.\textsuperscript{37} Official Catholic representatives were, however, nominated to keep a watchful eye on the conduct of Calvinist services from specially designated pews.\textsuperscript{38} Demolition of the temple at Saint-Pargoire in Languedoc was ordered in 1684 because a royalist occupation in 1629 had brought about so many conversions to Catholicism that Calvinist worship had not been restored until 1652.\textsuperscript{39} At Saint-Lô in Normandy demolition of the temple in June 1685 followed accusations that new, and presumably
reluctant converts to Catholicism were seducing Catholics born from their allegiance.\textsuperscript{40}

Not surprisingly the destruction of temples caused much discontent. At the Dauphiné village of Sainte-Croix in 1664 women took a leading part in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the demolition of the temple, while a hostile crowd used similar tactics, again without success, at Exoudun in Poitou in 1665. Six years later the provincial synod of Lower Guyenne proposed offensive action against demolition squads, but was persuaded to take a more moderate line.\textsuperscript{41} When the temple at Saumur was demolished in February 1685 guards were posted in the neighbourhood “pour enpescher la canaille de faire du desordre”.\textsuperscript{42}

Attacks on churches went hand in hand with the persecution of ministers, as at Saint-Lô, one of whose pastors, Pierre Darthenay, died in prison in January 1685 after being accused of anti-Catholic attitudes.\textsuperscript{43} From 1661 onwards, pastors were subjected to an increasing number of disabilities: any description of their calling had to include a reference to the \textit{Religion pretendue réformée}; they could preach only in their own temples; restrictions were placed upon the wearing of the cloth, upon contacts outside their synodal provinces and upon any actions of an anti-Catholic nature; restraints were applied to the ministers of seigneurial churches; pastors were forbidden to live in localities where the exercise of the reformed faith had been abolished; they could not serve congregations for more than three years; and after January 1685 were no longer exempt from tithes.\textsuperscript{44}

Where Calvinist worship was still permitted, it was subjected to a growing list of restrictions. All conversions to Calvinism were prohibited by 1683, even of Jews, Moslems and other non-Christians; due reverence had to be paid to all Catholic ceremonies; consistorial finances were steadily weakened, leading in 1684 to the outright confiscation of their accumulated funds, which were given to local hospitals; a limit was placed upon the number of mourners at funerals, and the guests at weddings and baptisms; burials could only take place at daybreak and dusk; cemeteries had to be outside the boundaries of towns and villages and at a suitable distance from Catholic churches; by 1685 no places of burial were permitted where the Calvinist religion was no longer practised. Legislation passed on the eve of the revocation suggests that at that date the final step had not yet been decided upon. A decree of September 15, 1685 permitted intendants to appoint a minister in places where the reformed church had been abolished. His
task was to celebrate baptisms and marriages and to register deaths among the Calvinist population, but without ceremonial and preaching.

Reformed church life was also inhibited by other restrictions. Calvinists were compelled to support the Catholic church financially from 1684; their hospitals were closed and they were forbidden to live in certain towns: Privas in the Vivarais from 1664; the Burgundian centres of Dijon in 1682 and Autun in 1683; La Rochelle in 1661, for all families who had come to the port since 1629. In the educational sphere, the colleges were systematically turned over to Catholic orders, the great academies closed and elementary schools restricted in number and to the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic. Even so exclusive an establishment as Salomon de Foubert’s academy for the sons of noblemen in the Faubourg Saint-Germain in Paris had to close its doors in 1679, its proprietor taking refuge in England.45

The rights of parents over their offspring were also infringed upon: the age of consent for a change of religion was fixed in 1663 at fourteen for boys and twelve for girls. Although this right by minors to make personal decisions of this nature was abrogated in 1669, it was restored in 1681 for children of seven and upwards. In 1681 too parents were forbidden to send their children or apprentices in their charge abroad for their upbringing in the reformed faith. Mixed marriages were prohibited in 1680 and the products of such unions considered both as illegitimate and Catholic. All foundlings and bastards had been treated as Catholics since 1662. Even the death chamber was no refuge from the anti-Calvinist drive. By 1681 the right of Catholic priests to seek conversions among the terminally sick of Calvinist belief had been fully accepted. The courts established under the Edict of Nantes, which offered a measure of legal protection to Calvinists, were suppressed at Paris and Rouen in 1669 and at Toulouse, Grenoble and Bordeaux ten years later.

There were other disabilities under which French Protestants suffered in their daily lives. These were sometimes of a local nature, gradually extended on a national scale, and involved the collection of debts, exclusion from municipal office, from colonial trade and from a number of other trades and professions. Several legal offices were closed to Calvinists after 1664, including those of registrar and notary in 1681. That these prohibitions were difficult to enforce is suggested by the fact that certain of the relevant statutes had to be re-introduced later. Other trades and professions theoretically barred to members of the reformed church were those of seamstress (1665), midwife (1680), medical doc-
tor, surgeon and apothecary (1685) and in the same year, printer and bookseller. In some regions, as with goldsmiths at Rouen in 1665 and all skilled workers in Languedoc two years later, restrictions were placed upon guild membership to prevent Calvinist dominance in trade. In 1664 it was decreed that *lettres de maîtrise* attesting trade competence had to refer specifically to the R.C.A.R. (*Religion catholique, apostolique et romaine*). Further measures in 1685 prevented Calvinists from employing Catholic servants and deprived widows of Protestant officers who had served in royal and princely households of all privileges previously enjoyed.

Some of these prohibitions were probably more effective in regions of marginal Calvinism than in those where the reformed church was strong. The effects are sometimes indicated in church records, as at Le Mans, where François Ripot’s designation changes from *greffier*, or registrar, in 1680 to bourgeois two years later, in line with the appropriate decree. Le Mans was certainly in a region of marginal Calvinism.

The various measures taken against Calvinists before 1681 undoubtedly made considerable inroads into the strength and numbers of the reformed church. They were, however, insufficient to destroy the faith, except when regarded as part of a long-term policy. There remained a more rapid road to conversion: the use of force. This method of coercion, involving the quartering of troops upon disaffected sections of the population, was not a new one, nor was it restricted to religious dissidents. In the Calvinist context it had been employed early in the century, as Ligou has pointed out, by François de Sales in the Chablais region of Savoy and the *mission botée* had proved its effectiveness during the last years of the French wars of religion and later at Montauban in 1660 and Privas in 1664. The peasants of Catholic Brittany suffered under the soldiery in 1675 and the technique of the dragonnade had been used in 1680 by the Béarn intendant Nicolas-Joseph Foucault against the ultramontanists of Pamiers.

It was another *intendant de province*, René de Marillac of Poitou, who suggested the idea to Louvois in May 1681 of using military force to stamp out a Calvinism in his region which had survived more conventional methods of coercion. Louvois, with idle troops on his hands after the Dutch War, endorsed the proposal and Marillac took the field in person. The dragonnade, which lasted until August and extended over a large part of Poitou, also found an echo at the new port of Rochefort on the Saintonge coast, where the intendant Honoré-Lucas de Muin,
Locke's "very civill and obleiging person", took active anti-Calvinist action.

In its brutality the dragonnade was a conspicuous success, gaining more than 30,000 unwilling converts to the Catholic faith. It is said that Louis XIV was at first opposed to the scheme, but came to appreciate the possible value of a show of force, without realizing how savage the means employed really were. However, although disinclined to accept the remonstrances of the younger Ruvigny in Paris, of the reformers of Châtellerault and of the Poitevin gentry, he paid closer attention to reports from abroad. Refugees brought the sad tale to England, the United Provinces and Protestant Germany, where feeling ran high. In Catholic circles outside France such methods were also unpopular. Pope Innocent XI deplored the violence and his vicar apostolic in the United Provinces, Johannes de Neercassel, feared for Catholicism there in the backlash of public opinion. The Jansenist Antoine Arnauld, then in exile, expressed his detestation of means calculated to bring the Catholic church into disrepute.

The dragonnade was called off and its local instigators censured. The immediate result was a disavowal of many conversions secured under duress and a corresponding hardening of Catholic attitudes in Poitou which led to imprisonments and the destruction of temples. But the significance of the Marillac dragonnade was that it showed the government that force, or even perhaps the threat of force, could effectively break Calvinist resistance.

Marillac's dragonnade was followed by a clerical approach to Calvinists. The Assembly of the Clergy which met in 1682 to draw up the Four Articles of gallicanism also issued a pastoral notice to members of the reformed church, a document not unconnected with the contemporary divisions within the Catholic ranks. In its uncompromising orthodoxy it gave a clear indication to Rome that independent-minded dissidents could be expected to adhere to the tenets of the faith, but it also demonstrated an ecumenical attitude to the religious problem within the kingdom. The king gave this clerical admonition his wholehearted support and it was brought to the attention of Calvinist churches without delay. The notice was read to most consistories by a Catholic ecclesiastic, who was accompanied by a government official, in some centres the intendant himself. Its tone was courteous, but it made no concessions, threatening woes greater than had hitherto been experienced if the reformed church continued in schism and revolt against the universal church. It was received politely, if coldly, as is evidenced at
Is-sur-Tille in Burgundy, where on October 24, 1683, Jacques de Cluny, lieutenant general of the Dijon bailiwick, accompanied Benoist Boulier for the bishopric of Langres to the temple to read the *avertissement pastoral* to the minister Prudent Gauthier and his consistory.56

The Poitou dragonnade and the pastoral circular, coupled with continuing attacks on churches and the closure of temples, were signs of a greater wrath to come and Calvinists were well aware of the danger. Some had already sought refuge abroad; those who remained were swayed by diverging currents of opinion on how best to act in the difficult circumstances of the time. There were those who counselled caution and continued loyalty to the king, an attitude which was seen in retrospect as a direct cause of the revocation. Others adopted a more positive approach. In 1681 measures were taken in Languedoc, the Cévennes, the Vivarais and Dauphiné to establish clandestine links between synodal provinces and to set up an extra-ecclesiastical organization which, it was hoped, would enable the reformed church to function, even under interdict. These tentative steps, in which the aged pastor of Soyons in the Vivarais, Isaac Homel, took an active part, prefigured the post-revocation *Eglise du Desert* which helped to keep Calvinism alive in France through the long years of its illegality.57

In May 1683 resistance took a more spirited form under the leadership of the lawyer Claude Brousson, when a meeting was held in the essentially Catholic city of Toulouse, attended by representatives of churches in the major Calvinist provinces of the west and south: Dauphiné, the Vivarais, the Cévennes, Languedoc, Guyenne, Saintonge and Poitou. A plan was adopted to memorialize the king and to set in motion a campaign of passive resistance which involved holding services in parishes where the practice of the reformed religion had been prohibited. The movement, however, failed to gain general acceptance; several church provinces, Poitou, Guyenne and Saintonge among them, withdrew support. Bourgeois elements too showed a marked reluctance to take part and the younger Ruvigny as deputy general poured cold water on the scheme, considering that it could only provide Louis XIV with a legitimate excuse for further repressive measures. A number of services were held, however, in the summer of 1683, often on the ruins of demolished temples in Languedoc, the Vivarais and Dauphiné, beginning with a large assembly at Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort north-west of Nîmes on July 11 of that year.

The movement assumed a more threatening form with the establishment of encampments of armed Calvinists, the *Camps de l’Eternel*, to
resist attempts to break the spirit of resistance. These were set up in Dauphiné, the Vivarais and the Cévennes. Promises of amnesty from the moderate Pierre-Scipion Grimond de Beauvoir, the count Du Roure, who was one of the lieutenant governors of Languedoc, made some of the less ardent confederates hesitate. Resistance was completely broken by troops dispatched by Louvois which ravaged Dauphiné, the Vivarais, Lower Languedoc and the Cévennes, chief centres of militant Calvinism. Some of the leaders fled to Switzerland, among them Claude Brousson; others were executed, including Homel, broken on the wheel at Tournon on the Rhône. The brief interlude of armed struggle was a faint echo of the civil wars of then distant memory, but it did not represent any movement to re-establish legal rights and civil equality for Huguenots, but was simply an affirmation of the principle of religious freedom in the face of arbitrary attack.

Following the Treaty of Ratisbon of August 1684, a considerable army under Louis-François de Boufflers was massed on the Spanish frontier in Béarn. The intendant Foucault, no stranger to the mission botée, obtained the support of Louvois for the use of these troops in stamping out Calvinism in the province. The dragonnade began in May 1685 and by July Foucault, who possibly exceeded his powers, was able to claim that only a few hundred members of the reformed church still clung to their faith. The familiar method of quartering soldiers on Calvinist families and subjecting them to gross indignities in order to force them to abjure was practised. At Pau, birthplace of Henri IV, some discretion was exercised by the military; elsewhere the severity of the measures adopted frightened communities not yet affected and resulted in mass abjurations in advance of the arrival of the troops. In a period which still entertained hopes of religious accommodation, the bishop of Oloron, François-Charles de Salettes, dangled the carrot of a watered-down Catholicism before the Protestants: the Mass in French; no obligation to venerate the saints or to believe in purgatory; even a freedom to interpret the meaning of the eucharist in Calvinistic terms. Small wonder that the pastor Pierre Goulard of Oloron was able to abjure without too great a strain on his conscience, since, as he said, "la religion catholique n'était pas bien différente de la réformée". The concessions offered, however, never took effect.

The Béarn dragonnade set in motion a further great exodus of Calvinists, some escaping by way of Spain like the pastor of Garlin, Pierre de la Forcade, who had first worked with apparent sincerity among the newly converted. La Forcade made his way to the United Provinces. The emigration was soon to assume larger proportions, for
Foucault’s success speedily led to military activity on a massive scale which engulfed the regions of strongest Calvinism from Poitou to Dauphiné between August and October 1685.

An alliance between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, supported by the presence of swift-moving troops, achieved spectacular results; greater efficiency was also ensured by a reshuffling of intendants. The moderate Henri d’Aguesseau was replaced by Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville in Languedoc and the successful Foucault was transferred to Basville’s former headquarters in Poitiers. The usual method of approach was to convene the notables of the chief towns, often after the locality had been treated to a taste of military methods of barbarism, and to secure their adherence to the Catholic faith as a preliminary to the mass abjuration of those Calvinists who had not already fled before the mission bottée had reached them. That great weakness of seventeenth-century French Calvinism, excessive loyalty to the king’s commands, undoubtedly led to the conversion of many who accepted the specious argument that resistance to the royal will represented a dereliction of religious duty. There were examples of unexpected generosity towards those persecuted from Catholics among both the civil population and the soldiery; Louvois too was prepared to spare women and the gentry the use of force. Nevertheless fear dictated the lack of resistance of most Calvinists and, as in Béarn, the Protestants of several localities, among them Sauve and Anduze in Languedoc, abjured before the dragoons could reach them.

The great centres of Calvinism succumbed one by one; resistance in the rural areas was even easier to break. Montauban in Quercy fell in August; so too did Loudun in Poitou. In September it was the turn of Saint-Jean-d’Angély in Saintonge and Milhau in Rouergue. At the end of that month resistance to Catholicism ceased in Montpellier, opening up to forcible conversion the remainder of Lower Languedoc. September and October saw the abjuration of thousands in the Vivarais and Dauphiné. La Rochelle in Aunis held out until October 12, when the town was given over to military occupation. In five days there was not a Calvinist family left upon which to quarter troops. Abjurations were made en masse and it has been estimated that they numbered more than 300 000 in the west and south. It is clear that by the time of the revocation Calvinism in France – at least on paper – was virtually dead in the regions of its greatest strength.62 But as Nicolas Payen, lieutenant general of the Meaux bailiwick, was later to say when the temple at Nanteuil was demolished: “S’il etoit aussi aisé de detruire l’erreur dans le coeur des protestans!”63
The Edict of Fontainebleau which revoked that of Nantes was registered by the parlements in October 22, 1685. Louis XIV was able to announce, with a backward glance at a time of trouble not yet quite a matter of past history, that the abjuration of the majority of members of the Religion prétendue réformée made it possible for him to blot out the memory of all the evils which a false religion had brought to the nation. There remained, however, the Calvinists of the northern, eastern and south-eastern parts of the kingdom. The dragonnades therefore continued until the end of November in Normandy, where some resistance was encountered, in Anjou and Touraine, in communities on the northern circumference of the massif central, in Picardy, Champagne and the Ile-de-France, in Burgundy, Provence and even at Orange, whose independence was disregarded, although, as in Béarn, the bishop Jean-Jacques d'Obheil promised concessions in religious practice to accommodate converts. At Metz, where worship ended with the revocation, force was not used to procure conversions until the latter part of 1686. The "official" dragonnades ended with this campaign, but quartering of troops suspected of heresy was resorted to on later occasions south of the Loire, even well into the eighteenth century.

Nor did the borderlands escape. Although Alsace was, by the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, exempted from anti-Protestant measures such as the edict of revocation, there were sporadic attacks on both Calvinists and members of the majority Lutheran faith. The same tactics were followed in Montbéliard, recently attached to Franche-Comté. In Savoy, little more than a tributary state, the terms of the revocation and similar methods of dealing with recalcitrant Calvinists as had been used in France were put into effect on January 31, 1686.

How much of the brutality of the mission bottées came to the ears of Louis XIV is uncertain and there is reason to believe that he did not encourage it. He was not, as the English divine Gilbert Burnet put it, "naturally bloody". Nevertheless he cannot have been unaware of the methods employed and was perhaps inclined to disregard the worst aspects of them in view of their apparent success. Moreover any disavowal of the dragonnades might have led to a recantation on the part of many converts from Calvinism.

The dragonnades of May to October 1685 clearly paved the way for the Edict of Fontainebleau and gave the king the opportunity he needed to allege that the reformed faith was the religion of an insignificant minority. Louis XIV had a long tradition of legal opinion on his side in
considering the Edict of Nantes only applicable in a federal state; its perpetuation since 1629 was simply the result of the failure of various coercive measures to effect a marked reduction in the size of the religious minority, at least until after 1679. Until that date other considerations, particularly on the international front, had delayed the “final solution”. Ratisbon in August 1684 had, as Orcibal has said, given Louis “complete freedom to act”.69

It is possible that the king paid greater attention to his spiritual welfare after the death of his mistress Marie-Angélique de Fontanges in 1681; he certainly drew closer to his wife Maria Theresa and after her death in 1683 and his subsequent secret marriage to Madame de Maintenon, the old licence of the court was a thing of the past.70 This deeper Catholicity may perhaps have influenced him to take a firmer line with the Calvinists, an attitude possibly strengthened by his hostility to the United Provinces.71 Louis's state of health too has been suggested as a possible explanation for his harsh treatment of his Protestant subjects. These, however, cannot be fundamental reasons for the revocation and a more telling one concerns the burden placed upon Catholics by Louis's earlier decision to exempt newly converted Calvinists from taxation. The only alternative was for the royal finances to shoulder the burden, a measure unlikely to commend itself to the king. Revocation would obviate the need for special concessions to encourage conversions.72

Louis must certainly have been influenced by the widespread dislike and distrust of Calvinism in France in both lay and ecclesiastical circles suspicious of its exclusiveness and jealous in many localities of its dominance in the commercial sphere. The arguments of those around him doubtless played some part in the final decision. Madame de Maintenon's significance in the overthrow of the reformed church has doubtless been greatly exaggerated;73 Louis XIV's confessor, the Jesuit François d'Aix de la Chaize, was, in Ligou's words, no more than an aimiable courtier, “médiocre, peu scrupuleux, point fanatique”, and therefore unlikely to have played any significant rôle.74 Orcibal minimizes the influence of the archbishop of Paris, François de Harlay de Champvallon, who was more interested in a gallican solution to religious problems, embracing concessions to Calvinists.75 The strained relations with Rome might have led to a policy of accommodation, favoured by the Jesuits, but on the other hand a break between Louis XIV and the papacy could equally have resulted in an affirmation of orthodoxy by a separatist French church, so that Louis might “proclaim himself more Catholic than the Pope”.76 This second interpretation of
TOWARDS A FINAL SOLUTION

events is in keeping with the political implications of the revocation edict.

In general we may take Ligou’s view that although the higher clergy in assembly may perhaps have been more concerned with the gallican church problem of the day and did not therefore play a decisive rôle in the final decisions which preceded the Edict of Fontainebleau, Catholic ecclesiastical opinion as a whole was anxious to see an end of the reformed church. The ecumenical possibilities in the establishment of an independent gallican church were not lost sight of, but the attitude of many bishops during the dragonnades suggests that they were not opposed to the eradication of reform. Moreover the church was represented on a specially convened Council of Conscience, which in 1684 declared that there was no legal impediment to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and that the king should therefore take this final step.

Those closer to the world of diplomacy probably had a greater influence on Louis XIV, particularly Michel le Tellier, the devout chancellor, and his son Louvois, less given to religious fervour, but anxious to keep in favour. The king’s advisers were not, however, unanimous on the propriety of revoking the Edict of Nantes: Colbert’s son Seignelay, the naval chief, for example, was unenthusiastic; so too was the Grand Dauphin Louis. European politics, however, made 1685 a propitious year for the revocation. The accession to the thrones of England and Scotland of the Catholic James II and VII early in that year suggested a measure of sympathy from across the Channel, although the new monarch’s position was to grow increasingly precarious and he would be unable to prevent England from becoming host to a flood of Protestant refugees from France. Louis XIV had no further need of alliance with Protestant powers and the United Provinces remained the chief adversary against which France would soon move again. Another argument on the international scene in favour of the revocation may be seen in the successful repulse of the Turks outside Vienna by the emperor Leopold I. Here was a major triumph against the infidel by imperial armies representative of Germany, Catholic and Protestant, with Polish support. Louis XIV had declined to take part and the revocation can be regarded as an attempt to regain prestige as a champion of the Catholic cause in Europe and perhaps to forge new Catholic alliances to compensate for the movement of German princes away from Louis towards Leopold as a result of the victory over the Ottoman forces.

But perhaps in the final analysis the revocation must be regarded in terms of a desired national unity at all levels. Louis saw religious
separatism in the light in which the French monarchy had always seen it: as a weakening of the state. His pride dictated that it should be his triumph to bring unity to the kingdom and the reports submitted to him of the massive abjurations in the west and south suggested that the reformed church, although not completely crushed, no longer had an appeal to vast numbers of its former adherents.

REFERENCES: CHAPTER THREE

1. See W.C. SCOVILLE, *The Persecution of Huguenots and French economic development 1680-1720*, p. 6. LIGOU, however, has noted that the rhythm varied in different parts of the kingdom (*Protestantisme*, p. 209).
14. MOURS, *Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle*, pp. 139-140.
16. LÉONARD, *History of Protestantism*, II, pp. 411-412; MOURS, *Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle*, pp. 141-143; LIGOU, *Protestantisme*, pp. 224-229. VOLTAIRE has said of Pellisson: "He had the good fortune to become enlightened and change his religion at a time when such a
change could bring him both promotion and wealth” (The Age of Louis XIV, trans. M.P. POLLACK, Everyman’s Library, 780, p. 403).

17. EC, Choulex, 2, BMS (Catholiques), 1686-1756: entered in cover, n.d. (AE Geneva).

18. LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 213-217.


20. HAAG and HAAG, France protestante, X, appendix LXXXVIII, p. 368.


22. See the decrees regarding psalms of Dec. 16, 1661 and Feb. 26, 1663 (HAAG and HAAG, France protestante, X, appendix LXXXVIII, p. 369).

23. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 217. See also HAAG and HAAG, France protestante, X, appendix LXXXVIII, p. 369.


25. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 217.


27. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 209.


29. HAAG and HAAG, France protestante, X, appendix XXXVIII, pp. 374-376.

30. TT 236, I, Bordeaux: Mémoire des gentilshommes de la généralité de Bordeaux, May 2, 1682, p. 74 (AN).


32. FF 7050, R.P.R.: Papiers de M. de la Reynie: Ordonnance du Roy, Oct. 15, 1685, printed (Bibl. nat.).


34. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 215; HAAG and HAAG, France protestante, X, appendix LXXXVIII, p. 379: measure of Sept. 22.

35. FROMENTAL, Réforme en Bourgogne, p. 155. Territories annexed to the crown after 1598 were not governed by the edict.

36. TT 271, XVIII, Saint-Pierre-sur-Dive(s): n.d., p. 591 (AN).

37. See LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 221-222.

38. BAIRD, Huguenots and the revocation, I, pp. 526-528.

39. TT 271, XV, Saint-Pargoire: Commissioners of the edict, 1684, p. 468 (AN).

40. TT 271, II, Saint-Lô: Arrest de la Cour de Parlement pour la Demolition du Presche de la Ville de S. Lo, Le Masson, Rouen, June 2, 1685, printed (AN).

41. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 154; 177.

42. TT 266, I-XII, Saumur: Feb. 1685, p. 575 (AN).
44. On the restrictions imposed upon pastors and laity see in particular HAAG and HAAG, France protestante, X, appendix LXXXVIII, pp. 368-377, and LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 218-223.
46. P. GACHON, Quelques préliminaires de la révocation de l’Edit de Nantes en Languedoc (1661-1685), Bibliothèque méridionale, 2e Série, V, p. 150. Locke noted this restriction (LOUGH (ed.), Locke’s travels, p. 113: Oct. 25, 1676).
47. C. CLAY and A. GRIMWADE (eds), The Register of the reformed church at Le Mans 1650-1685, Publications HSL, XLVII, p. vii.
49. LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 230-231; MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 159-160.
50. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 231.
52. LÉONARD, History of Protestantism, II, p. 421; MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, p. 162.
54. LIGOU, Protestantisme, p. 233.
56. FROMENTAL, Réforme en Bourgogne, pp. 175-177.
57. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 164-165; LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 234-236.
59. MOURS, Protestantisme en France au XVIIe siècle, pp. 185-188; LIGOU, Protestantisme, pp. 239-240.


75. ‘Louis XIV and the Edict of Nantes’, in HATTON (ed.), *Louis XIV*, pp. 159-164. Note the letter from the king to Harlay, Fontainebleau, Oct. 22, 1685, from which it is evident that the communion cup and the use of the vernacular were then live issues (ESMONIN, *Études sur la France*, append­ix, p. 363).


77. *Protestantisme*, p. 244.


79. LIGOU, *Protestantisme*, p. 244.


82. LIGOU, *Protestantisme*, pp. 245-246.