

Zeitschrift: Revue internationale de théologie = Internationale theologische Zeitschrift = International theological review
Band: 9 (1901)
Heft: 35

Artikel: Old Catholicism in France
Autor: Umbers, M.H.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-403513>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 07.09.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

OLD CATHOLICISM IN FRANCE.

[The author of this article thinks, that in making a summary of the principal oppositions which have been made in France to Romanist doctrines, he has «*ipso facto*» summed up the history of Old Catholicism in that country. This is not exactly our point of view. For, if, on the one hand, Old Catholicism is indeed an opposition against all the errors of the Romanist party, it is, on the other hand, something more than that on account of its true and positive Catholicism. Therefore, though we heartily commend the valiant Christians, who in the course of centuries, have fought against the encroachments of the popes and the errors of Romanist theologians, and whom Rome has condemned as heretics, yet, Old Catholicism cannot be held responsible for all that those so-called heretics have taught and done. We think that the trial of most of them needs revising. We believe that on several points they were wrongfully condemned, but we also think that on several other points they overstepped the mark and erred, and in these points we cannot hold them to be in the right. The Old Catholics of the XIXth century must and will profit by their predecessors' failings and mistakes, and not renew them. Such is, in a general way, our exact position towards all so-called sects of the middle ages and of modern times. It is nevertheless with pleasure and gratitude towards the author, that we publish this interesting article, as a specimen, if not of Anglican thought as a whole, at least of the thought of a part of the Anglican Church on the subject of Old Catholicism in France, its past and its future.—*The Editor.*]

Since writing a short article on the above for last January's number of the Anglican Church Magazine, a very slight reflection has convinced me that I had barely touched the fringe of the subject, scarcely handled the skirt of the robe, and but uttered the faintest whisper of what has prevailed in France to a greater or less extent ever since the time of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons in the 2nd century, until 30 years ago, when the

Gallican party was crushed into insignificance and silence, while ultramontanism, swarming over the Alpine barriers which long shut it into Italy, has unfortunately conquered the whole Latin obedience for a time.

Now in justification of the above statement, we will first see how the principles of old catholicism were held and taught by Irenæus, "whose gravity and purity of character, whose reputation for learning, whose well known converse with Polycarp and other disciples of the Apostles, gave him an authority which few bishops of his day, not excepting him of Rome, could exercise". — His biographer¹⁾ says with reference to an extant work of this early Father, "We find there the maintenance of the cardinal doctrines of our faith as the perfect Godhead of the Son, justification through a faith productive of works, the atonement, the resurrection of the body, the personality, gifts and graces of the holy Spirit; and he gives us, moreover, a summary of the faith of the catholic Church of his time. He declares too the sufficiency of the scripture for all doctrine, and *shows the necessity of an apostolic succession of bishops*, for the vindication both of the genuineness of the books and of the purity of the text Irenæus has well proved to the encouragement of all his successors, how learning long sought with a single eye directed upon the truth, and by a heart warmed by God's holy Spirit, can effect a service in the Church which shall never be forgotten He was heard with reverence even by the occupants of the chairs of the Apostles at Rome, and Antioch and Jerusalem The weight of his character was destined to be tried by a remarkable occurrence The Pascal controversy now broke out into an open quarrel through the intemperance of Victor the Roman Bishop. Irenæus, though siding with Victor in his way of observing Easter, and thus opposed to his own native Church, would not allow the imperious and uncharitable spirit of the Roman to go unchecked or unchastised. He stepped forward with a letter of mild but firm expostulation with Victor, which at once restored peace among the parties. The Bishops of Rome thus experienced in him the first instance of that *rebuke* and assertion of *indepen-*

¹⁾ Rev^d R. W. Evans on the "Early Church", p. 236—246. Theological Library, vol. XIV, Rivingtons, London 1837.

dence which they have been obliged to bear at the hands of the Gallican Church.” — A flat contradiction surely to the Papal Supremacy.

He was no believer in Roman Purgatory. Irenæus says that the souls of Christ's disciples “go into the invisible place prepared for them, and there remain awaiting the resurrection: after which they shall receive their bodies again, and rise complete, that is, in the body as the Lord rose, and so shall come to the vision of God”. He was of the same opinion as Justin Martyr, that all souls *after death* remain in Hades, *the just in a happy*, the unjust in a wretched place, and so shall remain to the judgment ¹⁾, and he argues his belief from the parable of Dives and Lazarus. *He taught the sufficiency of the scriptures.* He says, “We know that the scriptures are perfect, as being spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit God's will delivered to us in the scriptures, to be the pillar and ground of our faith ²⁾.” At the same time *he held the catholic doctrine of the apostolical succession and the three fold ministry.* In speaking of the Church he says “It is one, though universal. Its head is Christ ³⁾. It is a visible body, everywhere preaching one and the same faith. The tradition or doctrine of the Apostles is carefully preserved in the Church, and the succession of pastors and bishops from the Apostles”. He says that he was able to reckon up those who had been made bishops by the Apostles and their successors even to his own time — *to which succession he attaches deep importance* ⁴⁾. — *He held and taught the old catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, but not Transubstantiation.* He wrote “as the bread from the earth, receiving the invocation of God, is no longer *common bread*, but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, *earthly* and *Heavenly*; so also our bodies, receiving the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, but have hope of eternal resurrection” ⁵⁾. “In a fragment edited by Pfaff, we have a clear explanation of Irenæus's view, that by the Holy Spirit descending on the Eucharist, the elements be-

¹⁾ Irenæus, Lib. II, IV, 5.—5., 31, quoted by Bishop Harold Browne on 39 articles, pp. 81, 91.

²⁾ Irenæus, Lib. II, III, c. I.

³⁾ Ephesians V, 23.

⁴⁾ Hær. III, 2, quoted by Bishop H. Browne.

⁵⁾ Ditto, pp. 688, 689 and 746.

come so the body and blood of Christ, that though they yet remain *figures* or *emblems*, still the partakers of those emblems obtain pardon and eternal life. He, like Justin Martyr, is a witness against the Roman doctrine, and yet perhaps, as Waterland observes, *still more* against the mere figurists or memorialists. For it is certain that he believed the body and blood of Christ to be verily and indeed taken in the Eucharist, but still he gives no indication of a belief in a change of the elements, acknowledging them to be *emblems*". He held the doctrine of the Eucharistic oblation rightly understood, quoting the prophecy of Malachi (1, 10, 11) and applying it to the Eucharist, saying that the prophet foretold "the new oblation of the New Testament, which the Church receiving from the Apostles offers throughout the world to God". But though the learned Grabe believed that Irenæus held and taught the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice, we have seen that his writings refute the notion of Transubstantiation.

It is one of the principles of Old Catholicism that the Bible with the Tradition is a perfect rule of faith, and ought to be freely circulated amongst and read by the people. Let us see how forcibly this has been taught in France from the earliest times. We have already seen the opinion of Irenæus. A little later, Vincentius Lerensis says "the canon of scripture is perfect, and most abundantly sufficient for all things". — Though we Englishmen claim Alcuin for ourselves, it must not be forgotten that it was in France that he corrected the Vulgate translation of the Bible ¹⁾, and Theodulph Bishop of Orleans was united with him and Charlemagne in their Biblical studies. Charlemagne called him "his most beloved teacher in Christ", and it was probably from Tours that Alcuin sent the Emperor on the occasion of his coronation at Rome in A. D. 800 a copy of the translation of the Bible, and he was opposed to the restriction of the study of the word of God to ecclesiastics, and desired that the Emperor should have diligent searchers of scripture among his ministers of State.

Among the learned Christian teachers who adorned the court of Charlemagne was that great master in Israel, Claude, afterwards Bishop of Turin. He when chaplain to Louis the

¹⁾ Witnesses for Christ, Backhouse and Tyler, p. 273—275.

Pious, who kept his court at Auvergne, was a diligent teacher and student of the new Testament. "He had largely imbibed the spirit of St. Paul's epistles, to the study of which he especially gave himself, and wrote commentaries on the scriptures ¹⁾." Anschar the apostle of the North, who in retirement prepared himself by reading the scriptures and prayer for his great missionary undertakings was born near Amiens in 801 ²⁾. — To come a little later on in the period of the so called "dark ages" we read that though Stephen Harding was a native of Sherborne in Dorsetshire at the close of the 11th century, yet it was in *Paris* whither he was driven by the tyrannical rule of William the Conqueror, that he applied himself "to the study of holy scripture and biblical learning".

As we draw near the period of the Reformation we have the valuable services rendered to the translation and circulation of the Bible in France in the vulgar tongue by Lefevre of Etaples and Briçonnet Bishop of Meaux. Pierre Larousse in his incomparable Dictionary of the 19th century, thus briefly but forcibly introduces them both to our notice: "Le Fevre d'Etaples, un des hommes les plus savants de son siècle, né à Etaples vers 1455, mort à Nérac en 1537. — Un de ses anciens élèves, Guillaume Briçonnet, alors abbé de St-Germain des Prés, esprit ouvert et indépendant, offrit à Le Fevre un asile dans son monastère, puis devenu évêque de Meaux il l'appela dans cette ville pour introduire des réformes dans son diocèse." He introduced the Bible there, publishing a translation in 1530. Bishop Briçonnet was ambassador to Rome for Francis I, and died in 1533. Le Fevre induced the Bishop to study the Bible as he had never studied it before. "The Bible", says Dr Wylie, "had revealed to Briçonnet Christ as the author of a free salvation, and this knowledge was to him as living water, as Heavenly food." — "Such is its sweetness", said the Bishop, "that it makes the mind insatiable, the more we taste of it, the more we long for it. What vessel is able to receive the exceeding fulness of this inexhaustible sweetness?" When Margaret of Angoulême was anxious about her soul, Briçonnet put into her hand the Bible, as Lefevre had put it into his

¹⁾ Ibid., p. 281.

²⁾ Ibid., p. 286.

own, and it was the means of her conversion, and he hastened to circulate the Bible among the people of Meaux. The wool-spinners in that city when their daily toil was ended, opened and read the Bible together, and the Bishop eagerly from his pulpit expounded the scriptures. Meaux became the centre of gospel light and new Testaments were circulated far and wide. And later still when the dungeons of the Bastile were crowded with Port-Royalist prisoners, it was then that M. de Saci, the nephew of the mère Angélique Arnauld, carried on in imprisonment his well known version of the Holy Scriptures. — Among the 101 propositions of Quesnel condemned by the Pope there stand forth preeminently the following: 79. It is useful and necessary at all times and for all kinds of people, to study and learn the spirit, holiness and mysteries of the sacred scripture. 80. The reading of Holy Scripture is for all. 82. The Lord's Day ought to be hallowed by Christians with pious reading and above all with holy scripture. It is dangerous to attempt dissuading Christians from this reading. 84. To take the new Testament out of the hands of Christians, or to keep it shut against them, by taking away the means of understanding it, is to close Christ's mouth to them. 85. To forbid Christians the reading of Holy Scripture, especially of the gospels, is to forbid the use of light to the children of light, and make them undergo a sort of excommunication ¹).

When Fenelon conducted his mission to Poitou and Saintonge we find him writing to the Marquis of Seignelai with respect to his wants for his undertaking "I must not forget to add that we want a great quantity of books, *especially New Testaments*" People brought up in dissent are only to be won *by the Word* spoken to them . . . *We must give New Testaments profusely everywhere*, but they must be in large type; the people cannot read small print ²). " Bossuet was an advocate for the Holy Scriptures being circulated in the vernacular, and in a letter to the Maréchal de Bellefonds dated December 1st 1674, the Bishop says with reference to the Bible: "it is God's voice. I would have the holy truth of God revered, enjoyed and loved in the simplest versions" ³). How different is this from the

¹) Quoted in Dr Littledale's plain reasons against joining the Church of Rome, p. 91.

²) Fenelon's biography by Sidney Lear, p. 27.

³) Bossuet's ditto, p. 132.

practice of the modern Church of Rome, which filches the Bible from the people, whenever she can.

In France perhaps more than any other country, from the time of Irenæus to the time of Darboy, archbishop of Paris, there have been teachers of the doctrines and principles of old catholicism, as distinguished from ultamontanism on the one hand, and ultraprotestantism on the other. — Let us take the case of the two Hilarys. We have seen how opposed Irenæus would have been to the supremacy of the Pope, and as St Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed, so in the year 445 did Hilary, Bishop of Arles, Pope Leo the great. St Hilary having, in his character of Metropolitan, tried and sentenced one of his suffragans, the latter appealed to Rome, and got the ear of the Pope, who directed his re-instatement. St Hilary *refused*, both on the merits of the particular case, and also on the general ground that *the Pope had no right of actual interference whatever in another province*¹⁾. — At a still earlier period when Pope Liberius embraced Arianism, Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, wrote to him “Anathema te Liberi”, and in opposition to the doctrine of Roman Purgatory he also wrote: “The faithful who depart out of the body, are reserved in the safe keeping of the Lord for an entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven, *being in the meantime placed in Abraham’s bosom*, whither the wicked cannot enter, on account of the great gulph fixed between them, until the time comes, when they shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven”²⁾. Let us see how Hilary held the old catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. In his work De Trinitate, he wrote “we truly under the mystery receive Christ’s flesh, by means of which we shall be one: for the Father is in Him and He in us. Christ Himself says concerning the truth of His nature in us, My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in Him. Concerning the truth of His Body and Blood, there is no room for doubt; for now by our Lord’s witness and our own faith, it is truly Flesh and truly Blood. And these received and taken in by us, make that we be in Christ, and Christ in us”³⁾. Bishop Harold Browne says respecting

¹⁾ Dr Littledale’s plain reasons against joining the Church of Rome, p. 240.

²⁾ Hilary in Ps. CXXXVIII, Edit. Benedict, p. 514.

³⁾ Hilary in Trinitate, Lib. VIII, § 13, p. 222. Edit. Benedict.

the teaching of this great Father on the Eucharist "the very object of his reasoning was to prove, that in Christ's person there are two natures; one not extinguished because the other is added. He illustrates this by the bread of the Eucharist, which still retains the nature of the bread unchanged, although the nature of Christ's Body is added to it. Now interpret this how we may, it is a plain witness against transubstantiation. It may mean consubstantiation, but transubstantiation it cannot mean; for it was an error of Eutyches, not of the orthodox S^t Hilary, that the human nature of the Saviour was absorbed and transubstantiated into the Divine ¹)." — A little later on we have "Johannes Scotus Erigena, who lived at the court of Charles the Bald and who at his death was esteemed a martyr, and placed in the Roman calendar. He wrote a book by command of the Emperor Charles against the substantial change in the Sacrament". Bertram too a monk of Corbie, wrote also at the desire of Charles the Bald, concerning this doctrine. Bertram's statements are clear for the spiritual, and against the carnal presence in the Eucharist. „The change", he says, "is not wrought corporally, but spiritually, and figuratively. Under the veil of the material bread and wine the spiritual body and blood of Christ exist Both (the bread and wine) as they are corporally handled, are in their nature corporal creatures; but according to their virtue, and what they become spiritually, they are the mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood." "By all that hath been hitherto said, it appears that the Body and Blood of Christ, which are received *by the mouths* of the faithful in the Church, are figures in respect of their visible nature; but in respect of the invisible substance, that is, the power of the Word of God, they are truly Christ's Body and Blood. Wherefore as they are visible creatures, they feed the body, but as they have the virtue of a more powerful substance, they do both feed and sanctify the souls of the faithful" ²). Not much later Berengarius, Archdeacon of Angers, strenuously maintained the doctrine of Bertram, that the bread and wine remained in their natural substance, yet not denying the invisible grace of the sacrament. *It is*

¹) Bishop H. Browne on XXXIX articles, p. 696.

²) Ratramnus, de Corpore et Sanguine Domini, London, 1686, p. 64.

*probable that many of the Gallican Church sided with him*¹⁾. S^t Bernard of Clairvaux (A. D. 1115) acknowledged no feeding but a spiritual feeding²⁾. Peter Lombard, archbishop of Paris in the same century, held many of the principles of Old Catholicism; he was one of the most illustrious disciples of Abelard; and though speaking of the conversion of the bread and wine of the Eucharist, declines to determine, whether that conversion be formal or substantial, or of some other kind³⁾. Both Fenelon and Bossuet were in favour of the sacrament being administered in both kinds⁴⁾.

As to the superstitious worship of images and other papal corruptions, faithful has been the witness in France.

Much might be said about the reform in monasteries in France effected in the 12th century by Peter the Venerable and S^t Bernard, but time and space fail me, and I must hasten to the history of Port Royal, the mother (if I may call it so) of old catholicism in the 17th century. — I think I cannot give a more impartial view of its merits and influence than that given in the introduction to “*Jacqueline Pascal*”⁵⁾ by the Rev^d W. R. Williams D. D. In speaking of “that body of mighty and devout men, the (so called) Jansenists of France, with their simple earnest and consuming piety” he continues: “The history of the Jansenists forms one of the most interesting and remarkable episodes in the annals of the Christian Church. Although Port Royal, their great foundation, after a fierce and prolonged struggle sank under the combined force of regal and sacerdotal enmity,—Jesuitism could not at the same time extirpate the doctrines and system of Jansenism. These yet survived, and wrought widely and vividly. Their influence either within or without the bounds of the Romish Church is not yet spent; and of their relations to the cause of Christian morals and Evangelical doctrine, of sound learning and national freedom, and individual worth, the Protestant no less than the Romanist may well be the patient and delighted student....

¹⁾ Bishop Harold Browne, p. 698.

²⁾ Ditto, p. 701.

³⁾ Sent. IV, Dist. 10.

⁴⁾ See Biographies, by Sidney Lear.

⁵⁾ *Jacqueline Pascal, or Convent life at Port Royal*, James Nisbet & Co., Berners Street, 1854.

The devout archbishop Leighton, whose seraphic piety so delighted Doddridge, and in our own times so enchanted Coleridge, is thought to have derived some of his religious traits from his acquaintance, whilst in France during his earlier years, with some of the excellent Jansenists of that country... For the authority of scripture, the need of personal conversion, and the great doctrines of grace, as they were stated by Augustine, this body in the catholic Church contended most strenuously and irrefragably... When the (so called) infallible Church cast them out, and condemned their defenders, whilst meaning but to disown St Cyran or Quesnel, she forgot that she was condemning Augustine, the greatest of the old Fathers." — I need not refer to the historical fact that about A. D. 1631 the mère Angélique was selected as the abbess of Port Royal, or that the Archbishop of Sens and the Bishop of Langres took charge of the institution, or I need not speak of M. de St Cyran "a man of eminent holiness, at the head of what was afterwards termed the Jansenist party in France", but I would call particular attention to the conduct of these saints when the flail of persecution attacked them, and I would ask what can be more beautiful than the reply of the captive nun, Gertrude de Valois, to the Bishop who told her that unless she consented to sign the formulary against Jansenism, she should be deprived of the last sacraments, and her body should be thrown on a dunghill? "I do not think your Lordship will be able to discover any place to cast my body where my Saviour cannot find and raise it up at the last day" ¹). — Yes, he might carry out this wicked threat, just the same as a Bishop of Bruges did smash down the monument of Bishop Jansen in Ypres cathedral, leaving only the bare stone with his initials, but it may be said of him, nevertheless, that "he being dead, yet speaketh!" — When Louis XIV. had the anti-jansenist test drawn up for signature, from which there was no escape, "Persecution" says Trageles, "now commenced in earnest. The dungeons of the Bastile were crowded with those who refused to violate their consciences by subscribing what they did not believe. The very passages of the fortress were occupied by prisoners. M. de Saci, the nephew of the mère Angé-

¹) Jacqueline Pascal, p. 58.

lique, carried on during this imprisonment his well known version of the Holy Scriptures. Henri Arnould, bishop of Angers, and three other Bishops, refused to accept the formulary, let the consequences be what they might. But it was upon Port-Royal that the principal fury of the tempest discharged itself" ¹⁾ Vinet in his essay on Jansenism says "Its piety was altogether spiritual, actual, and sincere. It had no toleration for sublime phantasies; the virtues it practised were useful and salutary; it aimed at justice and charity in its relations with mankind, and its morality is no exact, ingenious mechanism, but a living, pliant reality. In a word, these extraordinary beings were only, in their daily life, devoted friends to God and to their neighbour" ²⁾.

Lefevre of whom I have already spoken taught distinctly the doctrine of Justification by faith. — "Salvation is of grace" would the Professor say to his pupils; "The innocent One is condemned and the criminal is acquitted": And in his letters Bishop Briçonnet emphatically taught the same doctrine. Before concluding let us see how the great S^t Bernard opposed the immaculate conception: "Where will be the peculiar privilege of the Lord's Mother, who is held to be the only one rejoicing in the gift of progeny and in virginity of person, if you grant the same to her own mother? This is not to honour the virgin, but to detract from her honour . . . How can that conception be alleged as holy which is not of the holy Ghost—that I may not have to say, which is of sin—or be accounted as a festival when it is not holy? The glorious Virgin will gladly go without this distinction, whereby either sin will seem to be honoured, or a false holiness alleged" ³⁾. S^t Thomas Aquinas wrote to the same effect ⁴⁾. We have seen something of the opposition in France to the pope's supremacy. Let us hear what Bossuet thought of it. He says "Therefore that very late invention, that Bishops receive their jurisdiction from the Pope, and are, as it were, his vicars, ought to be banished from Christian

¹⁾ Jacqueline Pascal, p. 173.

²⁾ Ibid., p. 218.

³⁾ *St. Bernard*, "Letter CLXXIV to the Canons of Lyons on the new Feast of the conception of the B. V. M."

⁴⁾ Summa III, XIV, 3.

schools, as unheard of for 12 centuries ¹⁾.” And earlier still Gilbert Genebrard, archbishop of Aix speaks of the character of the Popes in no measured terms: “This age has been unfortunate, in so far that during nearly a hundred and fifty years about fifty popes have fallen away from the virtues of their predecessors, being *apostates*, or *apostatical*, rather than *apostolical*” ²⁾. — Could Irenæus have foreseen the excesses of Mariolatry that appeared after his time, we may be sure that he in common with the rest of the Fathers would have opposed it, for he wrote, commenting on the miracle of the wine: “When Mary urged the Lord to perform the miracle, desiring before the time to partake of the cup of treasure, repelling her untimely haste, he said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come”.

Did time permit I might further show how Old Catholic principles had taken deep root in France: I might show how Goteschalck, a Benedictine monk in the diocese of Soissons in the 9th century, taught S^t Augustine's views of predestination and how S^t Thomas Aquinas was a disciple of S^t Augustine, and that one of his leading doctrines was that of grace and predestination, and how he taught for some time in Paris, but I will only say one word about the religious tolerance of the old catholics towards those who differ from them, which bears a striking contrast to the persecuting spirit of the Church of Rome. I have already alluded to Port-Royalist persecutions, and that infamous Papal bull “Unigenitus” fulminated against them, calls upon all archbishops and bishops to call in the aid of the secular arm to coerce and punish heretics as rebels, and one of Paul IV's bulls ³⁾ says that “heretics are to be deprived of every consolation of humanity”. It is refreshing to turn from ultramontane intolerance to the truly Gallican spirit of Waso bishop of Liège who died about 1047. During the spread of heretical tenets in the diocese of Châlons-sur-Marne, his opinion was asked on the right mode of dealing with heretics. He answered “Although such doctrines must be condemned as antichristian, yet after the example of our

¹⁾ *Bossuet*, “Defens. Declar. Cleri Gall.” VIII, 14.

²⁾ *Genebrard*, “Chron. Sæc.” IV, ann. 901.

³⁾ *Cum ex Apostolatus officio*, 1559.

Saviour we are bound to bear with those who hold them. The parable of the wheat and the tares teaches us not at once to condemn sinners, but to wait with long suffering for their repentance. By the servants who were for pulling up the tares as soon as they appeared, are to be understood over hasty priests. Those who are of the tares today may to morrow bring forth good fruit; and whilst we are thinking of exercising justice by punishing the wicked we may be counter-acting the purposes of Him who wills not the death of a sinner, but seeks by patience and long suffering to bring back all to repentance. Let these men be reserved then to the last harvest of the great Master of the house, for whose sentence we ourselves also must wait with fear and trembling. He can make those who now fight against us, occupy in that Heavenly country a higher place than we. And we Bishops ought certainly to remember that we did not, at our ordination, receive from God any vocation to slay, but only the vocation to make alive."

Old Catholicism has happily been revived in France a few years ago by the consecration of a Church in Paris by the archbishop of Utrecht, and we should all bid the mission God speed, started as it is on truly Catholic lines. Not only in the capital, but in the South there are many faithful adherents who want churches and Pastors, so called Jansenists and members of the "Petite Eglise", and we should help them in every way by our means and our prayers. Old Catholicism is *the religion* for France. The French like an ornate service. French protestantism has failed to win the hearts of the masses of the people. In the *Chrétien Français* a few weeks ago there occurs the following passage bearing on the subject: "Le protestantisme, avec sa sécheresse, ne peut convenir à la masse bercée depuis des siècles dans les bras du catholicisme qui sait si bien faire vibrer. Le nouveau catholicisme, débarrassé de ces mille scories qui ternissent l'éclat de sa dogmatique, de sa morale et de sa liturgie, sera la religion aimée du peuple de France." Our attention has been drawn of late to the remarkable exodus of French Roman priests from the Roman Church. Now I maintain that the course they should have pursued would have been to have placed themselves at once under the direction of the Old Catholic Bishops, and remained

in the unity of the Catholic Church under Episcopal direction and sanction, as worthy successors of Arnauld, Pascal and Quesnel. When persons leave the Romish Church, there is always a danger of their going too far in the opposite direction—we have had object lessons of this at the time of the Reformation in the Calvinists and after them the Puritans, and the excellent and often persecuted Waldenses. In France in particular, the Paulicians and the Orleanists of the 11th century, the reformers of Arras and Peter of Brueys, the Cathari and the Lyons brotherhood, all went too far and in their eagerness to be delivered from Papal superstitions, gave up some of the verities of the Catholic faith—and so now, some who have lately come out from Rome seem to have forgotten that Episcopacy was of Divine institution, and that apostolical succession is necessary to the existence of a Church and the valid administration of its sacraments. I would conclude by urging the importance of in every way helping forward the Old Catholic mission *which is under the pact of Utrecht*, feeling sure that if it has fair play it will win back the masses of French people who have lost all faith in Ultramontanism, and of making every effort to induce the ex-Roman priests to join this union under the Old Catholic Bishops, for so only will the movement be a national one, and it must be guided always by the motto of Vincent de Lerins, “quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus”, and by the principles of S^t Ignatius, the companion of S^t John, whose maxim was—“No Bishop, no Church”.

Calais, April 1901.

M. H. UMBERS, B. A.
