



OXFORD THEOLOGY & RELIGION MONOGRAPHS

# Jansenism and England

Moral Rigorism across the Confessions

Thomas Palmer

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*Moral Rigorism across the Confessions*

THOMAS PALMER

OXFORD  
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In the text, Old Style dating still in use in England has not been altered, but the year is assumed to begin on 1 January. Where early modern editions are used I have tried to retain the original spelling except where it may produce confusion. Unless otherwise attributed, translations from foreign languages are my own. Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated. Scriptural texts in English are quoted from the King James Version.



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## Abbreviations

AMJ	<i>Additional to the mystery of Jesuitism. Englished by the same hand</i> (1679)
Arnauld, Œuvres	<i>Œuvres de Messire Antoine Arnauld, Docteur de la Maison et Société de Sorbonne</i> , 43v. in 38 (Paris, 1775–83), ed. Gabriel Du Pac de Bellegarde and Jean Hauteffage
BL	British Library
Clark	Ruth Clark, <i>Strangers and Sojourners at Port-Royal: Being an Account of the Connections between the British Isles and the Jansenists of France and Holland</i> (New York, 1972 [1932])
CLP	Blaise Pascal, <i>Les Provinciales ou Les Lettres écrites par Louis de Montalte à un provincial de ses amis et aux RR. PP. Jésuites</i> , ed. Louis Cognet, rev. Gérard Ferreyrolles (Paris, 1992)
CPR	<i>Chroniques de Port-Royal</i>
DTC	A. Vacant (dir.), <i>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique</i> , 15 vols (Paris, 1889–1950)
ESTC	English Short Title Catalogue
FC	Antoine Arnauld, <i>De la fréquente communion, où les sentiments des Pères, des Papes et des Conciles, touchant l'usage des Sacrements de Pénitence &amp; d'Eucharistie, sont fidèlement exposés</i> (5th edn, Paris, 1646, first publ. 1643)
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JM	<i>The Jesuits morals. Collected by a doctor of the college of Sorbon in Paris. Who hath faithfully extracted them out of the Jesuits own books, which are printed by the permission and approbation of the superiours of their Society</i> [tr. Israel Tonge] (1670)
Lafuma	Pascal, <i>Œuvres Complètes</i> , ed. Louis Lafuma (Paris, 1963)
MJ	<i>Les Provinciales: or The Mystery of Jesuitisme, discover'd in certain letters, written upon occasion of the present differences at Sorbonne, between the Jansenists and the Molinists, from January 1656. to March 1657. S. N. Displaying the corrupt maxims and politicks of that society. Faithfully rendered into English</i> (1657)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
Pensées	Blaise Pascal, <i>Pensées</i> , in Lafuma, pp. 493–641. In references to the <i>Pensées</i> numbers indicate fragments in the order established by Lafuma, distinguished by the standard abbreviation L.
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
RH	<i>Recusant History</i>

- Schroeder H. J. Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (London, 1960)
- ST Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*
- UN Jeremy Taylor, *Unum Necessarium, Or, The Doctrine and Practice of Repentance*, in *The Whole Works of the Right Reverend Jeremy Taylor, D. D.*, ed. Reginald Heber, rev. and corrected in 10 vols Charles Page Eden (London, 1850–4)

# Introduction

## I

The seventeenth-century Jansenists of Port-Royal, the reformed Cistercian abbey near Paris which became the spiritual heart of a controversial movement for renewal within post-Tridentine Catholicism, have sometimes inspired comparison with the puritan critics of the post-Reformation English Church. With their insistently expressed concern for doctrinal purity, clerical standards, and lay godliness, the Jansenists, like the puritans, disturbed the civil and religious authorities, who attempted through policy and polemic to define these troublesome tendencies as dissident, sectarian, and, in the case of the Jansenists, heretical. At the moment when the Jansenist controversy first came to a head in the 1640s and 1650s, however, the parallel is not so clear. Following the defeat of the royalist cause, the English puritans had to a degree succeeded in establishing a version of the more perfectly reformed Church and godly commonwealth after which they had thirsted for the better part of a century. The puritan-hammering Church of Bancroft and Laud had been eclipsed. A short walk away from Port-Royal de Paris in the Faubourg St Jacques, a few of her unhappy remnants could be found during the Interregnum celebrating Prayer Book services in Sir Richard Browne's embassy chapel in the Faubourg St Germain, or in the lodgings of John Cosin, the future Bishop of Durham, at the Louvre.<sup>1</sup> Along with illegal, clandestine gatherings in England, such expatriate congregations now represented virtually the whole visible life of the antebellum Church. The Long Parliament had banned the use of her liturgy and the observance of traditional major feasts, attacked the jurisdictional and economic basis of episcopal church-government, and finally abolished episcopacy itself, and established, if in a limited sense and without

<sup>1</sup> On the royalists in exile see Eva Scott, *The King in Exile* (1905), and *The Travels of the King* (1907); P. H. Hardacre, 'The Royalists in Exile during the Puritan Revolution, 1642–1660', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 16, 4 (1953); Robert S. Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement: The Influence of the Laudians 1649–1662* (New York, 1951), ch. 2; Geoffrey Smith, *The Cavaliers in Exile, 1640–1660* (Basingstoke, 2003).

striking success, a national Presbyterian Church.<sup>2</sup> Cathedral life was stopped, and parochial clergy and university members who failed to show themselves amenable to the new dispensation were harassed, and, in a significant number of cases, ejected from office, left with a choice between ‘suffering’ at home or abroad, or making some form of concession to the times.<sup>3</sup> The reality may not always have been as drastic as their rhetorical laments on the theme of persecution represented; but it was now the turn of the ‘confessors’ of the oppressed Church of England to play the part of dissidents and conventiclers.<sup>4</sup>

The Port-Royal group, under heavy pressure to renounce heretical views they denied holding, had an equally legitimate claim to persecuted status; and, as Ruth Clark has shown, they felt sympathy for the plight of the English exiles. Linked to Port-Royal circles by numerous personal connections, the royalists received considerable material assistance from this quarter.<sup>5</sup> Little can be made of the report, which we have only from Anthony à Wood, that Richard Steward (clerk of the closet to Charles I and chaplain to his eldest son) went ‘very far in making an accommodation between the Jansenists and the Reformed Party’ while in Paris in the late 1640s.<sup>6</sup> But it is clear that, in sociological terms, the two groups were very similarly circumstanced. In the middle of the century it was the episcopalian loyalists, not the puritans, who shared with the Jansenists the character of an embattled sect.

<sup>2</sup> John Morrill, ‘The Attack on the Church in the Long Parliament, 1640–42’, in D. Beales and G. Best (eds), *History, Society and the Churches* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 105–24; John Morrill, ‘The Church in England 1642–9’, in Morrill (ed.), *Reactions to the English Civil War* (Basingstoke, 1982). The fullest account of the period is W. A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church During the Civil Wars and Under the Commonwealth 1640–1660*, 2 vols (1900).

<sup>3</sup> A. G. Matthews, *Walker Revised* (new edn, Oxford, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Much new light has been shed on the subject of ‘Anglican survivalism’ in recent decades: see Morrill, ‘The Church in England’; John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England 1646–1689* (New Haven-London, 1991), ch. 1; Judith Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1998), chs 3–6; Maltby, ‘From Temple to Synagogue: “Old” Conformity in the 1640s–1650s and the Case of Christopher Harvey’, in P. Lake and M. Questier (eds), *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560–c. 1660* (Woodbridge, 2000); Maltby, ‘Suffering and Surviving: The Civil Wars, the Commonwealth, and the Formation of “Anglicanism”’, in Stephen Platten (ed.), *Anglicanism and the Western Tradition* (Norwich, 2003); Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored* (Oxford, 2007), ch. 7; Fincham and Stephen Taylor, ‘Episcopalian Conformity and Nonconformity 1646–1660’, in Jason McElligot and D. L. Smith (eds), *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Clark, chs 3–6.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, 2 vols (1691–2), ii, p. 80; Clark, p. 54; Paule Jansen, *De Blaise Pascal à Henry Hammond. Les Provinciales en Angleterre* (Paris, 1954), drew attention to a reference, in John Fell’s account of the MSS of the leading episcopalian theologian Henry Hammond, to ‘a piece of a letter from the Bp of Derry [John Bramhall] about the death of Sr. George Ratcliffe and the hopes of doing good with the Jansenists’: Bodleian, Tanner MS 88, f. 70, cited Jansen, p. 83. Wood mentions ‘that publick-spirited man *Sir George Ratcliffe*’, a legal expert to Lord Strafford who attached himself to the Duke of York during the exile, in connection with Steward’s initiative.

It is one of my assumptions in the present work that the analogy, curious though it is, can be stretched a little further. The controversy which engulfed Port-Royal and made a party of the Jansenists centred on their critical assessment of contemporary formulations of the theology of grace and salvation, and on their connected critique of 'lax' moral theologians and confessors who were encouraging a general deterioration in standards of Christian morality. Similar issues exercised the leading theological lights among the English episcopalians, whose views on grace and salvation were also attacked as unorthodox, and also manifested themselves in a pronounced preoccupation with moral standards. As a matter of fact, the direction in which each group was held to have erred located them on opposite sides of the golden thread of orthodoxy as their critics conceived it. The Jansenists, for their part, considering themselves the true 'disciples of St Augustine' in an age which has been called the century par excellence of the Bishop of Hippo, undertook to defend the doctrine of irresistible grace, that necessary assistance which, as Augustine argued against the Pelagians, is alone capable of rescuing man from the abyss into which he has sunk himself by his sin.<sup>7</sup> Opponents both contemporary and modern have criticized the excessive pessimism of this theological outlook, which, encouraging a preoccupation with sin, produced a harsh and unrealistically rigorous moral teaching. The most active theological spokesmen of the English episcopalian cause, by contrast, inherited and elaborated a doctrinal argument which apparently tended in the opposite direction. Framed against a strain of Protestant theology whose exaggerated emphasis on the gratuity of salvation and on the impotence of human nature seemed to them a recipe either for apathy or for moral licence, it looks very much like an emancipation from the baleful influence of Augustine's authority. The shortcomings of this soteriological argument, in the eyes of its critics, lay in its *overestimation* of human moral potential, and resulted in an excessively legal moral teaching, at once too demanding for fallen nature and too formal for the life of grace. Were we seeking pairs of seventeenth-century theological opposites, then, we could hardly do better than the Jansenists and the exponents of this argument among those to whom, thanks to the strengthened identity conferred upon them by conditions of adversity, we may now refer as Anglican divines.

All the same, I do not, in proposing a comparative study of aspects of their theological views, intend anything facetious. The debates associated with the invidious name of Jansenism, which stirred the whole Roman Church and to which Anglican exiles in Catholic Europe were immediately exposed, involved fundamental theological questions which were neither exclusive to any party of Christian theologians, nor, in many cases, susceptible of final resolution. I do not think I shall be claiming very much when I assert that these questions

<sup>7</sup> Henri Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et l'augustinisme* (Paris, 1955), p. 168.

were of inherent interest to English theologians who were in the process of working out their own relationship to the theological legacy of the sixteenth-century Reformation; and the parts of this work which I should like to qualify primarily as historical are concerned with the impression made on anglo-phone onlookers by the principal themes raised in the course of these intra-Catholic debates. This inquiry into the impact of the major contemporary Catholic controversy is offered as a contribution to our understanding of the intellectual horizons of English thinkers in the mid- to late seventeenth century. Given the quantities of original work produced in diverse fields of theological and scholarly inquiry by those to whom the label Jansenist has become more or less firmly attached, I think it may justifiably be regarded as a preliminary account only.<sup>8</sup>

There is a danger that the reader confuses this historical account of English interest in the intellectual phenomena of the Jansenist controversy with an attempt to establish a case for Jansenist influences on English religious thought. It might well be possible to execute a series of case studies along these lines—though to be really satisfying I think it would have to comprehend the eighteenth and probably the nineteenth century as well<sup>9</sup>—but it should be emphasized at the outset that this is no part of my intention here. What I have attempted in the comparative aspects of this work is to use the theological views of the Jansenists as a point of contrast against which the evolving theological sensibility which forms my subject in the English context may fruitfully be examined. While the Jansenists worked under different theological pressures and, in some respects, from diametrically opposed theological premises, the problems with which they grappled were broadly comparable; and it is my suggestion that the solutions they arrived at can help to throw some of the motivations and priorities of the English thinkers into relief.

In chapter 1 I examine the Jansenists' attack on contemporary moral theologians whom they accused of propagating a lax methodology conducive to ill-discipline and moral irregularity. This argument reflected a reforming outlook which historians of early modern French Catholicism, appropriating part of the technical nomenclature of moral theologians, have become accustomed to describe as 'rigorist'. Moral rigorism was not an attribute peculiar to the Jansenists: many among those who shared the Tridentine aspiration after a better informed, more disciplined, and more committed worshipping community took the view that it would best be realized through a severe pastoral

<sup>8</sup> There is a brief survey in ch. 2, section III.

<sup>9</sup> See Clark, ch. 18, on eighteenth-century readers; and John Barker, *Strange Contraries: Pascal in England during the Age of Reason* (Montreal-London, 1975). One of the most notable collections of Port-Royal materials in nineteenth-century England, now housed in the library of Keble College, Oxford, was that of the Tractarian priest Henry Morgan; his *Port-Royal and Other Studies* (1914), while not, as the casual browser of library catalogues might hope, a first-hand account of Caribbean piracy, is nevertheless an interesting set of portraits.

approach. But the theological assumptions of the Jansenists, which I shall go on to discuss in greater depth in chapter 5, predisposed them to a particularly thoroughgoing form of rigorism. Envisaging the moral life of man as a pair of scales, with concupiscence in one balance and charity in the other, they were intolerant of any suggestion that the failings of the sinful should be accommodated or indulged. In the later 1650s they made a *cause célèbre* out of the less rigid, perhaps more realistic pastoral approach counselled by other clerical reformers, evidence, in their view, of a pernicious 'relâchement' of moral standards; as I show in chapters 2 to 4, meanwhile, this campaign of rigorist polemics made a significant impact in England.

The Anglican theologians examined in this book were receptive to the French critique of lax morals because the question of morality bore closely on their own theological priorities. Their theological case was constructed chiefly against a predestinarian, *sola fide* understanding of grace and salvation, which they depicted as a doorway to antinomian anarchy. The determinist framework of this soteriology, associated in their minds with the name of John Calvin, seemed to them to remove all incentive to moral endeavour. Consequently they were concerned to carve out a meaningful role for obedience in the theory of justification, and placed great emphasis on the stringent prescriptions for 'holy living' set out in the Christian revelation. To the 'speculative' theology of their Calvinist antagonists, with its emphasis on the faith of the elect, they opposed a 'practical' or affective theological approach, focusing on that transformation of the will which is essential to the definition of a justified man. The circumstance of disestablishment functioned as a spur to this anti-Calvinist argument; in sermons and printed works these Anglican divines exhorted their benighted flock to witness to the truth of their cause, like the early Christians under persecution, by lives of sincere repentance and unimpeachable holiness.

My concern in the second half of this work is to suggest that the 'holy living' strain of Anglican theology represented a form of moral rigorism which may plausibly be compared with that of the Jansenist writers. Although the Jansenists defended the effective operation of grace, they too concentrated predominantly upon the formal conversion of the will from sinfulness to charity. The acculturation of the appetites through a rigorous penitential regime was therefore recommended in both cases. Similar defects, meanwhile, were identified in two alternative approaches, which were each held to vitiate morality by encouraging a false confidence based on unsound theories concerning the way moral assurance, and religious certainty more widely, are guaranteed. The guilty parties among the Catholics, from this point of view, guaranteed certainty and settled the individual conscience by an arbitrary and fallible human authority; those among the Protestants, by an arbitrary and unverifiable divine authority. Both set up a principle (respectively the doctrines of probabilism and of justification by imputed righteousness, treated in



chapters 1 and 6) which, being necessary and a priori, seemed to dissolve the relationship of contingency between assurance and the moral condition of the individual. In other words, sinners were acquitted on the strength of the principle regardless of the testimony of the proof, a conclusion reinforced, for the writers examined here, by the moral failings they associated with their opponents' teachings. In their view reliable proof was available, in the form of the individual's own experience of the transformative work of grace. He had access to good evidence of his moral condition in the state of his affections and in his behaviour, and, in scripture and tradition, to a source of independently verifiable knowledge about the standard against which it should be judged. Thus diligent research and moral development were reciprocally related, and certainty was a function of that relationship. It seems likely that this attitude was related to the increasingly historical nature of post-Reformation religious controversy; it may also be that the philosophical sympathies of the writers in question, which lay on the side of the new experimental science and its attack on a priori scholastic explanation, were relevant to some degree. They admired their own arguments as scholarly and testable, while criticizing their opponents for abstraction or speculation.

The thinkers treated here had very different views about aspects of the soteriology and moral doctrine which they espoused, notably in relation to their understanding of grace and human freedom. All, however, emphasized the affective experience of conversion; and the effect of this emphasis was to place the practical weight of responsibility for his moral condition and ultimate salvation squarely on the shoulders of the individual. In this sense I think it is correct to identify among both sets of thinkers signs of a movement towards greater individualism and moral autonomy. In the case of the Jansenists such a tendency has often been attributed to a predestinarian theology which, placing a premium on the luminous experience of grace, filled the elect believer with an unshakeable self-conviction. In the case of the Anglicans, conversely, it has been related to the value they ascribed, in the course of reacting against a soteriology predicated on their irremediable corruption, to man's natural moral faculties; for the tendency of this liberal approach was to reduce the state of grace to a consecutive series of good moral choices, voluntarily undertaken, in response to the Christian Gospel, by free, autonomous agents. As the following chapters will make clear, I do not believe that either of these suggestions fairly reflects the substantive theological statements of the writers in question. In seeking to provide reliable theological and epistemological guarantees for the moral responsibility of individual Christians, however, they each laid out a characteristically rigorist template which, being founded on the absolute priority of interior conversion, did contain an individualist tendency. In this respect both streams of thought seem to exemplify that perennial Christian tension, at its most acute in the post-Reformation era of confession-building, between the logic of conversion and the logic of institution.

## II

Throughout the text I use categories which are open to objection on the grounds either of anachronism or of polemical overdetermination. I do not make any claim for the superiority of these conventional choices, nor do they reflect ideological preferences. My rule has been convenience, and I qualify the relevant terms as follows.

By 'Anglican', I do not intend a body of theological and ecclesiological views characterized by any putative philosophical quality. In general terms my use has a purely institutional sense, denoting loyalty to an ecclesial body distinguished, after the parliamentary attack on the Church in the 1640s, by the circumstances of persecution and proscription. Thus Henry Hammond, for example, referred to 'the Anglican Church' in 1647.<sup>10</sup> In the majority of cases my use of 'Anglican' is narrower still, signifying a specific group of episcopalian divines united by a theological agenda centred on the adjustment of Calvinist soteriology. This group, the subject of chapter 6, I also design the 'holy living' theologians. The Calvinism against which these writers constructed their arguments was a polemical entity, referred to the theological formulations of the Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly. Its relationship to the thought of Calvin may be contestable, but is irrelevant to my analysis.

Like 'Calvinist', 'Jansenist' was a term of abuse, and one whose use is complicated by the formal heresy it is supposed to denominate. I use 'Jansenist' interchangeably with 'Port-Royalist' to indicate a small number of writers who were associated materially with the convents of Port-Royal, and intellectually with the controversial views of the theologian Cornelius Jansen: the abbé de Saint-Cyran, Antoine (le Grand) Arnauld, Blaise Pascal, Pierre Nicole. While the term Jansenist usefully suggests the family relationship between their views in many areas, I do not intend to define Jansenism on the basis of my treatment of those views. Such an exposition would be inauthentic were a more historically satisfactory label substituted for their polemical *bête noire*, 'Semi-Pelagianism'. The same argument cannot be made for the anachronistic terms 'laxism' and 'rigorism'. I am concerned throughout to argue for the application of the latter; in the case of the former, I have tried to distinguish the polemical image from the real tendency which it signified.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Hammond, *Of the Power of the Keyes: Or, Of Binding and Loosing* (1647), sig. A3<sup>r</sup>. While I agree that the term is anachronistic in relation to the earlier history of the English Church, however, it must be said that to refuse it on the grounds that the majority of late Elizabethan and early Stuart churchmen were doctrinally 'Calvinist' seems merely to affirm the Anglo-Catholic 'myth' about the identity of Anglicanism.

# 1

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## The Jansenist Critique

### I

The 1650s witnessed the culmination of the first phase of the distinctive French movement for theological and pastoral renewal known as Jansenism. In the bull *Cum occasione* of 1653 Innocent X condemned Five Propositions extracted from the *Augustinus* of Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638), Bishop of Ypres, where Jansen reclaimed as Catholic truth the Augustinian theology of grace appropriated and distorted by the Protestant reformers.<sup>1</sup> The Jansenists, who made his teaching their own, unsuccessfully attempted to defend its orthodoxy on the grounds that the heretical propositions were not contained in the *Augustinus* (the *question de fait*) and did not represent Jansen's true sense (the *question de droit*). Alexander VII issued another bull, *Ad sacram* (1656), condemning the Propositions in the sense of Jansen, and an assembly of French bishops convoked by Cardinal Mazarin designed a Formulary to the same effect, to which subscription was required from all French ecclesiastics, whether secular or regular. A conjunction of religio-political forces now opposed the Jansenists, from which they were barely shielded by the Gallicanism of the *parlementaires* and what sympathy they could generate among churchmen and public opinion at large. In 1661 the 'petites écoles' run at Port-Royal, where for a short time the future Duke of Monmouth was counted among the pupils, were stopped, and the novices dispersed.<sup>2</sup> The *conseil d'état* demanded unqualified subscription to the Formulary; and when in 1664 the new Archbishop of Paris, Hardouin de Péréfixe, was in a position to take decisive action, he quelled the recalcitrant nuns of Port-Royal de Paris and Port-Royal des Champs with an ugly show of force. A measure of stability was only restored at the end of the 1660s, when Clement IX engineered a compromise with the non-jurors, who were now able to subscribe without committing themselves on the *question de fait*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jansen's work was (posthumously) published Louvain, 1640. It is discussed below, ch. 5, sec. III.

<sup>2</sup> Clark, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> In English see Nigel Abercrombie, *The Origins of Jansenism* (Oxford, 1936); Alexander Sedgwick, *Jansenism in Seventeenth-Century France* (Charlottesville, 1977); William Doyle,

Thus by the end of the 1650s the reformist ambitions of the Port-Royal group, its history marked since the 1620s by the progressive alienation of increasingly powerful interests in Church and state, seemed to have ended in abject failure. Yet to the modern observer the decade also represents a high-water mark for the Jansenist critique of contemporary Catholicism. From the travails of the Port-Royalists' intellectual leader, Antoine Arnauld (1612–94), which ended in his expulsion from the Sorbonne in February 1656, emerged its pithiest and perhaps its most influential expression in the satirical *Lettres Provinciales* of Blaise Pascal (1623–62).<sup>4</sup> With arresting brilliance Pascal denounced 'une morale relâchée' propagated principally by the indulgent moralists and confessors of the Society of Jesus. The origins of this canker, argued Pascal, lay in 'la doctrine des opinions probables', according to which an individual is not obliged to obey the moral law if there exists, in a particular case, any probable opinion—either 'intrinsically', in virtue of rational arguments, or 'extrinsically', in virtue of the authority of learned doctors—in favour of liberty.

Pascal's plea for a renewed rigour in morality made a significant impact, heightened by an apparent mark of divine approbation in the form of a miraculous cure bestowed upon his niece by a thorn from the Holy Crown.<sup>5</sup> The General Assembly of the French Clergy, which in March 1657 closed the door on the *question de fait* by accepting the bull *Ad sacram*, nevertheless endorsed Pascal's arguments against 'les nouveaux casuistes', decreeing that the confessors of France would henceforth administer the sacrament of penance according to the strict rules outlined by St Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, in his *Avvertenze ai Confessori* of 1575.<sup>6</sup> This was done in order to counteract

certain modern opinions, which have so distorted Christian Morality and the maxims of the Gospel, that a profound ignorance would be much more desirable

*Jansenism* (Basingstoke, 2000); and the excellent long essay by Louis Cognet, 'Ecclesiastical Life in France', in Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (eds), *History of the Church*, 10 vols (1965–81), vi. Good introductory works in French are Cognet, *Le jansénisme* (Paris, 1961); Jean Orcibal, *Saint-Cyran et le jansénisme* (Paris, 1961); see also Antoine Adam, *Du mysticisme à la révolte. Les jansénistes du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1968); René Taveneaux, *Jansénisme et politique* (Paris, 1965), pp. 7–50. Behind all stands C. A. Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, 3 vols (Paris, 1953–5 [originally 5 vols, 1840–59]).

<sup>4</sup> The letters appeared episodically from January 1656 to March 1657.

<sup>5</sup> Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, ii, pp. 176ff. For a notice see Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres*, ed. E. Gérard-Gailly, 3 vols (Paris, 1953–7), i, p. 112. Of the truth of this miracle of the *sainte-épine*, which took place at Port-Royal on 24 March 1657, the Duke of York was convinced by the Maréchal de Turenne. His brother Charles II was apparently also persuaded: Clark, pp. 55–6.

<sup>6</sup> The work was printed at Paris, 1657, as *Instructions de S. Charles Borromée [sic] Aux Confesseurs de sa Ville et de son Diocese*. The most thorough treatment is now Jean-Louis Quantin, 'De la rigueur au rigorisme. Les *Avvertenze ai Confessori* de Charles Borromée dans la France du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Studia Borromaica*, 20 (2006), pp. 195–251; further literature is cited ch. 8, n. 25, below.

than such a science, which teaches people to hold all things as problematic, and to seek out means, not to eradicate, but to justify their evil habits, and give themselves the conceit of being satisfied in conscience.<sup>7</sup>

Notwithstanding his failure to vindicate Jansen's orthodoxy, then, Pascal succeeded in convincing contemporaries that there existed a connection between a debasement of pastoral standards and a new moral 'science', built upon the doctrine of probable opinions, and realized in the vitiation of the sacrament of penance. An *Apologie pour les casuistes* published in December 1657 by a Parisian Jesuit, Georges Pirot, was condemned by episcopal censure in nineteen dioceses between April 1658 and May 1659. By mid-1658 the doctors of the Paris theology faculty decided to proceed to a thoroughgoing censure of the work; this was finalized in July, and authorized by Louis XIV in October for publication in French and Latin.<sup>8</sup>

The *Provinciales* did not meet with this apparent success by accident. The doctrine of probable opinions (probabilism, in modern terms) had been a subject of debate for half a century. Allowing for greater flexibility in administering the sacrament of penance, it was well adapted to a positive and comprehensive pastoral strategy, such as suited a newly confessional age. The Jesuits, who quickly came to view the hearing of confessions as a central plank of Catholic renewal, took it up enthusiastically; their study of moral cases (casuistry) came increasingly to be coloured by it. But the urge to be 'mild' and 'approachable', if potentially more fruitful than a rigid pastoral approach, did carry with it the risk of overindulgence.<sup>9</sup> Claudio Aquaviva, general of the Society, alerted his fellow superiors to this danger in 1604; in 1613 he again warned against too great a liberty of opinion. Theologians such as Comitulus, Rebellus, and even Cardinal Bellarmine raised doubts about allowing the choice of a less probable opinion, and these were echoed by

<sup>7</sup> 'Certaines opinions modernes, qui ont tellement altéré la Morale Chrestienne, et les maximes de l'Évangile, qu'une profonde ignorance seroit beaucoup plus souhaitable, qu'une telle science, qui apprend à tenir toutes choses problématiques, et à chercher des moyens, non pas pour exterminer les mauvaises habitudes des hommes; mais pour les justifier, et pour leur donner l'invention de les satisfaire en conscience': Lettre-préface, 'L'Assemblée Générale du Clergé à Messieurs les Évêques de France', in *Instructions de S. Charles Borromée* (Besançon, 1839), pp. 7–8. The letter has been attributed to Antoine Godeau, Bishop of Vence.

<sup>8</sup> Georges Pirot, *Apologie pour les Casuistes contre les calomnies des Jansénistes* (Paris, 1657); Thomas Deman, 'Probabilisme', in *DTC*, XIII, cols 515ff. A useful though not unprejudiced history of this work is in I. de Récalde, *Écrits des Curés de Paris contre les Jésuites* (Paris, 1921), pp. 329–49; the censures are followed *ibid.*, pp. 350–62; but see now Jean-Pascal Gay, *Morales en conflit. Théologie et polémique au Grand Siècle (1640–1700)* (Paris, 2011), pp. 210–41. A number of the episcopal censures were framed with the collaboration of Port-Royal writers, including Pascal: Jean Mesnard, 'La collaboration des Écrivains de Port-Royal aux censures contre l'*Apologie pour les Casuistes* (1658–1659)', *CPR*, 32 (1983), pp. 3–20.

<sup>9</sup> John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), pp. 136–51, quoting Jerome Nadal, Peter Faber, and others; A. Jonsen and S. Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (London-Berkeley, 1988), pt iii; Gay, *Morales en conflit*, ch. 8.

Aquaviva's successor Vitelleschi in 1617.<sup>10</sup> From the mid-seventeenth century the Dominican order became increasingly hostile to the doctrine, as a novelty which departed from the moral teaching of Thomas Aquinas. The General Chapter of 1656, claiming papal approval, ordered Dominican confessors to avoid the 'lax', uncertain, and paradoxical opinions of modern doctors. Dominicans would henceforth stand in the vanguard of the argument against allowing the choice of a less probable opinion.<sup>11</sup> At Jansen's institution of Louvain, scene of long-standing tensions with the Jesuits, propositions illustrative of the 'new morals' were censured on numerous occasions in the late 1640s and 1650s.<sup>12</sup> The Holy Office was sensitive to the issue, censoring works of casuistical theology which contained 'lax' resolutions, and in 1665–6 Alexander VII issued decrees against forty-five 'errors of laxer moral doctrine'.<sup>13</sup> In 1679 Innocent XI censured sixty-five similar errors, including the proposition that it is probable that one can make a decision 'even according to a less probable opinion'.<sup>14</sup>

The French Church had been exercised by a perceived *relâchement* in pastoral standards for several decades before the *Provinciales*.<sup>15</sup> This was related in some ways to a deeper conflict of 'theological cultures', with institutional as well as ideological aspects.<sup>16</sup> Gallican hostility to papal incursions on French ecclesiastical autonomy, while strongest among the political classes, was always well represented at the Sorbonne, and made for tensions with the ambitious Society of Jesus, specially vowed to papal obedience and privileged by exemptions from episcopal control.<sup>17</sup> The *dévo*t party which

<sup>10</sup> Deman, 'Probabilisme', cols 497–501. Paul Comitoli, SJ (1544–1626), and Ferdinand Rebello, SJ (d. 1608), were nevertheless sometimes included in hostile French lists of 'laxist' theologians.

<sup>11</sup> Deman, 'Probabilisme', cols 502ff.; Jean-Louis Quantin, 'Le rigorisme: sur le basculement de la théologie morale catholique au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 89, 222 (2003), pp. 23–43.

<sup>12</sup> Deman, 'Probabilisme', cols 520–3; Lucien Ceyssens, *La première bulle contre Jansénius: sources relatives à son histoire, 1644–1653*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1961), i, 568, 576, 715, 723–4; *ibid.*, ii, 316, 347–54, 481, 484–6; Ceyssens, *La fin de la première période du Jansénisme. Sources des années 1654–1660*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1963–5), i, 141, 261, 317, 637, 664, 673, 680.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. the *Somme des péchés* of Étienne Bauny, SJ (1564–1649), placed on the Index in 1640; and the *Theologiae moralis fundamentalis* of Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz, O. Cist. (1606–82), recalled for correction after its publication in 1651. Alexander VII's decrees in Henricus Denzinger (ed.), *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (33rd edn, Freiburg-Rome, 1965), 2021–65.

<sup>14</sup> Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, 2101–67: the first four propositions concern probabilism; an Eng. edn printed London, 1679, as *The Roman Wonder*.

<sup>15</sup> In 1619 the Sorbonne had censured several lax opinions in a work by Pierre Milhard, OSB, *La Grande Guide des Curez*: see Gay, *Morales en conflit*, pp. 104–8; Robin Briggs, 'The Sins of the People: Auricular Confession and the Imposition of Social Norms', in his *Communities of Belief* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 297–300.

<sup>16</sup> Jean Delumeau, *Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire* (6th edn, Paris, 1996), pt 3, ch. 4; Gay, *Morales en conflit*, *passim*.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Chédozeau, 'La faculté de théologie de Paris au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: un lieu privilégié des conflits entre gallicans et ultramontains (1600–1720)', *Mélanges de la Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne*, 10 (1991), pp. 39–102.

championed the cause of Catholic reform in France, though by no means insular in outlook, included influential figures, such as Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629), whose theological preferences did not coincide with those predominating among the Jesuits, and whose vision for reform privileged the role of the secular hierarchy over that of the regulars. The notion of a seductively accommodating morality, meanwhile, fitted easily into a picture of unscrupulous and disruptive Jesuit ambition, and contributed to the condemnations in 1641 of a work *De hierarchia et hierarchiis* by the future French provincial Louis Cellot, and the *Somme des Péchez* of another Jesuit, Étienne Bauny, denounced by the Assembly of the Clergy in the same year for its ‘corruption des bonnes mœurs’. These condemnations prefaced an offensive against ‘la théologie morale des Jésuites’ which reflected, as much as a concern for ‘bonnes mœurs’, the hardening of party lines.<sup>18</sup>

The *Provinciales*, therefore, took their place in a long-running battle between the perpetrators of a supposed moral ‘relâchement’ and the soi-disant defenders of a purer *morale*, which on the field of polemics would come to bear the device of ‘rigorisme’.<sup>19</sup> Whether or not they constituted a genuinely constructive intervention in a technical debate, there is no doubt that the *Provinciales* and other Jansenist attacks on ‘les nouveaux casuistes’ helped to discredit the probabilist method, and, along with a widespread aspiration after a ‘clear and simple’ theology, founded on an empirical archaeology of the sources of Christian faith and morals, contributed to the gradual preponderance of a rigorist culture in France.<sup>20</sup>

## II

The emergence of a distinctive ‘Jansenism’ in the 1630s and 1640s, centred on Jean Duvergier de Hauranne, abbé de Saint-Cyran (1581–1643) and from 1635 spiritual director of the convent of Port-Royal, in some ways reflected increasing tensions within the French Catholic reform. The de facto leader of the *dévot* party and Saint-Cyran’s mentor, Bérulle, died in 1629, and, having

<sup>18</sup> Gay, *Morales en conflit*, pp. 115–70; A. D. Wright, *The Divisions of French Catholicism, 1629–1645* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 162ff.; on Bauny see Briggs, ‘The Sins of the People’, pp. 300–2; Richard Parish, ‘Le Père Étienne Bauny, SJ: La *Somme des péchés qui se commettent en tous états* face aux *Lettres Provinciales*’, *French Studies*, 63, 4 (2009), pp. 385–98.

<sup>19</sup> Jean-Louis Quantin, *Le rigorisme chrétien* (Paris, 2001), pp. 15–22.

<sup>20</sup> A. Degert, ‘Réaction des “Provinciales” sur la Théologie Morale en France’, *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique de Toulouse*, 5th ser., 5 (1913), pp. 400–20; Quantin, ‘Basculement’; Quantin, *Le rigorisme chrétien*, pp. 40–106; Quantin, *Le catholicisme classique et les Pères de l’Église. Un retour aux sources (1669–1713)* (Paris, 1999), pp. 103ff.; Henri Gouhier, ‘La crise de la théologie au temps de Descartes’, printed in his *La pensée religieuse de Descartes* (2nd edn, Paris, 1972).

been discountenanced in 1630, the *dévots* found themselves opposed to an administration which committed France to a pragmatic foreign policy.<sup>21</sup> The Jesuits, meanwhile, already seen as a hindrance to reform prosecuted through the secular hierarchy, were increasingly dependent on the favour of the Crown and the Richelieu administration.<sup>22</sup> For Saint-Cyran, leaving ultramontanism definitively behind, the cause of Catholic reform came to be inextricably linked to the extirpation of an all-pervasive Jesuit menace. With him originated the anti-Jesuit critique which would find its apotheosis in the *Provinciales*.

Two major influences shaped Saint-Cyran's attitude to his former preceptors.<sup>23</sup> At Louvain he was a contemporary of Cornelius Jansen; they met in Paris in 1609, forming a friendship which led to a five-year cohabitation at Saint-Cyran's Bayonne estate from 1611. This period was spent in methodical study of scripture and its patristic commentators; after his return to Louvain in 1617, Jansen developed a special concern with Augustine.<sup>24</sup> The two became convinced that the Church required a reinjection of primitive clarity and vigour. For Jansen the most pressing issue was the new Jesuit theology of grace, developed by Luis de Molina (1535–1600) and Léonard Lessius (1554–1623). These theologians, in his view, evinced a dangerous overconfidence in human nature, teaching that election is conditioned by foreseen merits and that the effect of grace depends on human consent.<sup>25</sup> Even the Council of Dort, said Jansen, though misunderstanding assurance and perseverance, got closer to the Catholic doctrine of predestination; from 1621 he and Saint-Cyran were discussing a scheme (cryptically referred to as 'cette affaire de Pilmot') to correct the enemies of the Catholic doctrine of grace.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Jansen would displease Richelieu by criticizing his alliances with Protestant powers in a pamphlet, *Mars Gallicus*, of 1635.

<sup>22</sup> Wright, *Divisions*, esp. pp. 121–84.

<sup>23</sup> Saint-Cyran benefited from a Jesuit education as a schoolboy in south-west France, and then at the Jesuit *collège* in Louvain, where Léonard Lessius was his prefect of studies.

<sup>24</sup> Jean Orcibal, *Les origines du Jansénisme*, 5 vols (1946–62), ii, pp. 138–48; Orcibal, *Jansénisme d'Ypres (1585–1638)* (Paris, 1989), pp. 69–72.

<sup>25</sup> See ch. 5, sec. II, below, on Molinism; on Lessius, Xavier-Marie le Bachelet, *Prédestination et Grâce Efficace. Controverses dans la Compagnie de Jésus au temps d'Aquaviva (1610–1613)*, 2 vols (Louvain, 1931), i, chs 2 and 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Naissance du Jansénisme, découverte à Monseigneur le Chancelier par le Sieur de Preville* (Louvain, 1654), pp. 5, 10–14, 20–2 (printed with critical notes in Orcibal, *Origines*, i). 'Pilmot' has generally been taken to refer to Jansen's plan for a systematic exposition of the doctrine of St Augustine, and by extension the general desire shared by Jansen and Saint-Cyran to renew the Church by means of a reinvestment of primitive purity in dogma and discipline under the direction of the secular hierarchy. Henri Bremond elevated it into a fabulous anti-Jesuit conspiracy indicative of Saint-Cyran's delusional and unstable character: *Histoire Littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, 12 vols (Paris, 1916–36), iv, ch. 4. A definite structural programme was envisaged, involving the establishment of the French Oratory in Flanders: Adam, *Du mysticisme à la révolte*, pp. 71–9; Orcibal, *Jansénisme d'Ypres*, pp. 119–30.



A pronounced Augustinianism also characterized Saint-Cyran's other great influence, Bérulle. Throughout 1622 Saint-Cyran visited Bérulle daily, spending, he says, six or seven hours in Bérulle's 'closet'. As a result his views assumed an 'authentically Bérullist' cast.<sup>27</sup> Bérulle's was a mystical theological temperament rendered outward-looking and active by an all-encompassing focus on the Incarnation. This he compared to the Copernican revolution: the relations between heaven and earth are reversed now an incarnate God presides over the celestial hierarchy. The 'christological theocentrism' of this *apostolus verbi incarnati*, as Urban VIII called him, underwrote a demanding template for moral renewal.<sup>28</sup> Since the Word became incarnate so that he might be apprehended by the creature, the creature cannot enter into this apprehension except by a reciprocal participation in his divinity. Bérulle thought of the union of human and divine in mystical terms, dwelling on the 'nothingness' of man and the necessity of self-abnegation. But the 'servitude' of Christ in his humanity also provided a moral template. For Bérulle it is the transformation of the will by love that 'transports us from ourselves into [God]'.<sup>29</sup> A tireless and influential reformer of the clergy, his foundation of the French congregation of the Oratory was inspired by the same incarnational ideal. The mass-celebrating priest was exalted as the bridge between humanity and the archetypal eternal priest, opening the way, not only by his ministry but also by his example, to the union with God towards which every Christian must strive to ascend. Although his reforming focus was clerical, Bérulle's demanding spirituality was thus an ambiguous mixture of elitism and, for want of a better term, an individualism which seems at times to subvert his strongly hierarchical outlook. (By analogy with the celestial hierarchy, Bérulle evolved a high doctrine of episcopacy; like the pedagogic and pastoral brief of the Oratorian priests, this inclined the Jesuits against him.<sup>30</sup>) Bérulle's

<sup>27</sup> *Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles, de L'Abbé de S. Cyran*, 3t. (Lyon, 1674), i, pp. 436–7, see letters LXIII and LXVI in the same volume for more praises of Bérulle; Yves Krumenacker, *L'école française de spiritualité. Des mystiques, des fondateurs, des courants et leurs interprètes* (Paris, 1998), p. 272.

<sup>28</sup> On Bérulle's thought I am indebted to Krumenacker, *L'école française*, esp. ch. 3, his quotation at pp. 186–7; Jean Orcibal, *Le Cardinal de Bérulle, évolution d'une spiritualité* (Paris, 1965); Michel Dupuy, *Bérulle. Une spiritualité de l'adoration* (Paris, 1964); Erik Varden, *Redeeming Freedom: The Principle of Servitude in Bérulle* (Rome, 2011); Leszek Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans l'église. La conscience religieuse et le lieu confessionnel au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, tr. Anna Posner (Paris, 1969), pp. 389–435.

<sup>29</sup> Bérulle, *Discours de l'Estat et des Grandeurs de Jésus par l'Union ineffable de la Divinité avec l'Humanité*, in *Œuvres complètes du Cardinal de Bérulle*, 2t. (1644, reproduction by Maison d'Institution de L'Oratoire, Montsoult), Discourse IX, pp. 206–20: 'l'Amour nous transporte de nous en luy, et ce qui plus est, nous rend tels qu'il est luy-mesme, en nous deïfiant et transformant en Dieu'.

<sup>30</sup> Alison Forrester, *Fathers, Pastors and Kings: Visions of Episcopacy in Seventeenth-century France* (Manchester-New York, 2004), pp. 51–7.

high-minded spirituality profoundly marked the thought of Saint-Cyran and his successors at Port-Royal.<sup>31</sup>

When, in the early 1620s, the Jesuits allied with the enemies of Bérulle, who was suspected of trying to bring the French Carmelites under Oratorian control, Saint-Cyran took the chance to subject them to a wide-ranging theological critique. He published a four-volume demolition of a work by François Garasse, SJ—the *Somme théologique* of 1624—which, in defending Christianity against free-thinking and libertinage, seemed to concede too much to the arguments it purported to refute.<sup>32</sup> Saint-Cyran criticized a pragmatic view of Christian conduct, whose complacent confidence in the competence of natural reason to determine action would entail ‘the corruption and depravation of the Christian Ethic’.<sup>33</sup> Although Saint-Cyran identified only a few lax propositions in Garasse’s work, he established a connection, which the Jansenists would emphasize for the next century and a half, between a degraded methodology, a lax morality, and the Society of Jesus.<sup>34</sup>

Saint-Cyran’s next blow against the Jesuits came in the form of a pseudonymous intervention in disputes within the English Catholic community. The English secular clergy, discomfited by the presence of rivals in the mission field of whose methods and aims they disapproved, had been agitating at Rome since the end of the sixteenth century for the restoration of the hierarchy in England. In 1623 Gregory XV finally appointed William Bishop as titular Bishop of Chalcedon. His ordinary faculties, and those of his successor Richard Smith, were conceded only at the pope’s good pleasure, leaving some doubt as to the extent of the new episcopal jurisdiction. Smith nevertheless attempted to stamp his control on the English mission. He provoked the regular clergy, moving to redistribute pious bequests, and upholding the Tridentine provision that regulars must seek an approbation from the ordinary in order to hear confession and grant absolution. A controversy was consequently raised against Smith, who left England in 1631.<sup>35</sup> Saint-Cyran’s involvement was prompted by the works of two English Jesuits, Edward Knott

<sup>31</sup> Ch. 8, sec. III, below. For his influence see Krumenacker, *L’école française, passim*; William M. Thompson (ed.), *Bérulle and the French School: Selected Writings* (New York, 1989).

<sup>32</sup> François Garasse, *Somme théologique des Véritez capitales de la Religion chrestienne* (Paris, 1625); Saint-Cyran, *Somme des fautes et faussetez capitales contenües dans la Somme théologique de P. Garasse*, 4t. (Paris, 1626), see ii, Ep. Ded. to Richelieu; Adam, *Du mysticisme à la révolte*, p. 97; Orcibal, *Origines*, ii, pp. 26–82; Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, i, pp. 335–8.

<sup>33</sup> *Somme des fautes*, ii, sig. eii<sup>v</sup>, and i, sig. g<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Gay, *Morales en conflit*, pp. 109–10; Orcibal, *Saint-Cyran et le jansénisme*, p. 14, thus calls 1626 ‘a turning point in the history of French spirituality’.

<sup>35</sup> On this history see Philip Hughes, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in England* (1944), pp. 312ff.; John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570–1850* (1975), pp. 11–74; A. F. Allison, ‘A Question of Jurisdiction: Richard Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon, and the Catholic Laity, 1625–1631’, *RH*, 16 (1982), pp. 111–45; Michael Questier, *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England: Politics, Aristocratic Patronage, and Religion, c. 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 417ff.

and John Floyd, written in response to a *Treatise of the Hierarchie* of 1629 by Matthew Kellison, where the rector of the English College at Douai commended episcopal authority and condemned Jesuit papalism by contrast.

Under the name Nicholas Smith, Knott published *A modest briefe discussion of some points taught by Kellison*, while Floyd, using the pseudonym Daniel à Jesu, produced an *Apology of the Holy See Apostolicks Proceeding*. Smith appealed to his episcopal colleagues in France, and a condemnation by the Archbishop of Paris (Jean-François de Gondi) was followed by a censure from the Sorbonne in February 1631. The Jesuits nevertheless published both works in Latin, and Floyd continued the controversy with vituperations upon the censure written as ‘Hermannus Loemelius’.<sup>36</sup> Saint-Cyran, as ‘Petrus Aurelius’, responded with two tracts in which he defended the episcopate, in the high register learnt from Bérulle, against the anti-hierarchical arguments of the Jesuits, and vindicated the censure passed upon them by the theology faculty.<sup>37</sup> He subjected the ‘Molinisticam Societatem’ to violent recriminations, argued that bishops, unlike regular clergy, were of the essence of the Church, and limited the pope’s infallibility to questions of faith and morals insofar as he speaks as chief of the Church and guardian of that which Christ has enjoined and prescribed.<sup>38</sup>

In his vindication of the censure Saint-Cyran again associated the Jesuits, led by ambition to multiply contradictory moral cases without heeding the danger to penitents, with a spirit of moral permissiveness. He criticized their indulgence in allowing a less probable opinion to settle the conscience, and indicated a historical narrative of Jesuit laxism based on their writings, thus adding, to more traditional areas of criticism in ecclesiology and politics, dubious morality as an essential element in the polemical image of the Society.<sup>39</sup> To the profusion of modern works Saint-Cyran opposed the core of scripture and tradition; to scholastic complexity and flexibility he opposed

<sup>36</sup> [Knott], *Modesta et brevis discussio aliquarum assertionum doctoris Kellison* (Anvers, 1631); [Floyd], *Danielis a Jesu apologia pro modo procedenti Sedis Apostolicae in regimine Angliae catholicorum tempore persecutionis cum Defensione Religiosis Status* (Saint-Omer, 1631); [Floyd], *Ecclesiae Anglicanae querimonia apologetica: de censura aliquot episcoporum Galliae, in duos libros Anglicanos* (Saint-Omer, 1631). A description of these proceedings is given in *Petri Aureli Theologi Opera*, 3t. (Paris, 1646), i, sigs ei’ onwards. See also Orcibal, *Origines*, ii, pp. 334–75, and Anthony F. Allison’s trilogy of articles on ‘Richard Smith’s Gallican Backers and Jesuit Opponents’: ‘Part I: Some of the Issues Raised by Kellison’s *Treatise of the Hierarchie*’, *RH*, 18 (1986); ‘Part II: Smith at Paris as Protégé of Richelieu 1631–c. 1642’, *RH*, 19 (1988); ‘Part III: Continuation of the Controversy 1631–c. 1643’, *RH*, 20 (1990).

<sup>37</sup> *Assertio Epistolae Illustrissimorum ac reverendiss[imorum] Galliae Antistitum, Qua libros Nicolai Smithaei & Danielis à Iesu damnarunt* (Paris, 1632); *Vindiciae Censurae Facultatis Theologiae Parisiensis* (Paris, 1632).

<sup>38</sup> See *Petri Aureli Theologi Opera*, i, p. 72, on Floyd’s ill-advised attempt to satirize the Sorbonne’s censure by applying it to the Apostles’ creed; and *ibid.*, i, p. 248; ii, pp. 22ff., 157ff., *et passim*.

<sup>39</sup> Orcibal, *Origines*, ii, pp. 348–9; Gay, *Morales en conflit*, pp. 111ff.

primitive simplicity and rigour. Interestingly, he spent a portion of the *Assertio* defending John Barnes, the renegade Benedictine author of a treatise, based on scripture and the Fathers, especially Augustine, against the casuistical doctrine of equivocation.<sup>40</sup> Barnes has been described as a 'precursor of the *Provinciales*':<sup>41</sup> his *Traicté et dispute contre les équivoques*, published with the backing of the Sorbonne in 1625, was certainly influential, and interested later English writers such as Edward Stillingfleet.<sup>42</sup> Barnes hoped for the reunion of Rome and Canterbury on the basis of a Gallican theory of independent national churches; he wrote several tracts in the service of this case, earning the cruel return of perpetual imprisonment at Rome, from 1628 until he died, not before having lost his sanity, in 1661.<sup>43</sup>

The writings of Petrus Aurelius were heralded by the French clergy, receiving marks of recognition from the episcopal bench and on four occasions in the 1630s and 1640s from the General Assembly of the Clergy. The Dean and Secretary of the English Chapter, the administrative body of the Catholic secular clergy in England, thanked Aurelius for his most devout labours in the service of Mother Church. Intellectuals of international standing such as Hugo Grotius acknowledged the proficiency of his work.<sup>44</sup> During the 1630s Saint-Cyran would propagate a distinctive spirituality—characterized by a penitential method of interior 'renouvellement', to be accomplished before the penitent dares to participate in the eucharist<sup>45</sup>—which condemned by contrast the superficial and corrupt morality of the Jesuits. His intensely inward focus appeared subversive in some eyes, and threatened to endanger the intermediary role of the hierarchical Church: a tendency made clear in the work of his most famous disciple, Arnould, *De la fréquente communion*, where Arnould seemed to question the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the sacraments. But it was the same set of oppositions which inspired Saint-Cyran, that Carthusian-in-spirit, as his editor called him, to dwell on silence and solitude, as it did the violent paranoiac of the pages of Bremond to assail the Society of

<sup>40</sup> *Petri Aureli Theologi Opera*, i, pp. 256–62. Augustine's unequivocal position is laid out in his *De mendacio*.

<sup>41</sup> Maurice Nédoncelles, *Trois aspects du problème Anglo-Catholique au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Avec une analyse des XXXIX articles d'après Chr. Davenport et J. H. Newman* (Strasbourg, 1951), ch. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Ch. 4, sec. III, below.

<sup>43</sup> Some of his proofs were incorporated into the English translation of Isaac Basire's *De antiqua Ecclesiae Britannicae libertate, The Ancient Liberty of the Britannick Church* (1661), pp. 41ff.

<sup>44</sup> *Petri Aureli Theologi Opera*, i, sig. ivi<sup>v-r</sup>; Orcibal, *Saint-Cyran et le jansénisme*, p. 17.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Saint-Cyran, *Le Cœur Nouveau. Explication des Cérémonies de la Messe. Et Exercice pour la bien entendre. Raisons de l'ancienne Cérémonie de suspendre le S. Sacrement au milieu du grand Autel*, in *Théologie Familière, avec divers autres petits traités de dévotion* (2nd edn, Paris, 1669 [1st edn 1627]), pp. 110–11. The suspension of the host in the pyx expresses the essence of the sacrament of the eucharist, which comprehends 'a great number of remarkable suspensions' (p. 271), especially that of concupiscent nature, which is replaced by a new nature flowing from the grace of Christ; see also ch. 2, n. 8, and ch. 8, sec. III, below.

Jesus: that which is interior, permanent, and substantial, was set against that which is exterior, equivocal, and empty; the timeless and immutable laws of God, communicated in the concise record of his revelation, against the recent and flexible determinations of the casuists, in endless reams of subtle reasoning.<sup>46</sup>

Of Arnauld's work, which carried on this argument, and appeared to great acclaim in 1643, it is only necessary to state here that it exhibited all the hallmarks of the method traced out by Saint-Cyran, and achieved through the verve and clarity of its arguments a considerable impression on the public consciousness. An equally important contribution to the controversy under discussion was the small work which Arnauld composed and published in the same year (possibly with the collaboration of his Sorbonne colleague, François Hallier), *La Théologie Morale des Jésuites*. Following a campaign against Jesuit pretensions, prompted by institutional jealousy and prosecuted by Godefroi Hermant, later known for his patristic biographies, this work invented the generic method followed by Pascal in the *Provinciales*.<sup>47</sup> It presented a catalogue of propositions in morality extracted from casuistical works and arrayed in a decontextualized series calculated to produce an impression of horror in the reader.<sup>48</sup> The extracts were indiscriminate and covered a diverse terrain within the four main areas of 'la morale chrestienne en général', specific precepts of the divine law, the use of the sacraments, and ecclesiology. They introduced a cast of unsavoury characters whose names would be familiarized by repetition: the majority of citations were from two censured books, Bauny's *Somme* and Cellot's *De hierarchia*, a work in defence of Knott and Floyd which also pleaded for the modern casuists. This exploitation of discredited figures fused the association between lax morality, casuistry, and the Jesuits.

The form and much of the content of the Jansenist critique had thus been determined: it was only left to Pascal to clothe it in his attractive conceit. Pascal's polemical assumptions and methods did not differ from what has already been described. The *Provinciales* themselves, however, did give rise to some new developments. The first sign of the new momentum they imparted to the debate over casuistry was the initiative now taken by the diocesan clergy of Paris and Rouen. The Parisian curés were in combative mood in the 1650s. They agitated on behalf of their exiled archbishop, the *frondeur* Cardinal de Retz. Inspired by Edmond Richer, the early seventeenth-century syndic of the Paris theology faculty, whose Gallicanism took the form of an ascending theory of spiritual authority with quasi-democratic implications, they aimed

<sup>46</sup> *Lettres Chrétiennes et Spirituelles*, i, sigs. ovi<sup>r</sup> onwards.

<sup>47</sup> See Gay, *Morales en conflit*, pp. 132–40, 153–7; Gustave Lanson, 'Les Provinciales et le livre de la théologie morale des Jésuites', *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 2 (1900), pp. 169–95.

<sup>48</sup> In England it can be consulted in the BL, C.150 n. 12.

at total autonomy in their own parishes.<sup>49</sup> The Jansenist attack on the Jesuits, regulars bound especially to the pope, was therefore sympathetic, and its outlines were now incorporated into their 'mentality of opposition'.<sup>50</sup> In May 1656, after Pascal's seventh letter, they decided corporately to pursue a condemnation of 'these pernicious maxims'.<sup>51</sup> At the same time a dispute was developing at Rouen, where the curé Charles du Four, inspired by the *Provinciales*, had preached against Jesuit moral theology.<sup>52</sup> The archbishop, François II de Harlay, was solicited for arbitration, leading to the production of the *Requête présentée par Messieurs les Curez de Rouën à Monseigneur leur Archevesque*. In September the two bodies of curés joined forces, and there appeared the *Advis de messieurs les curez de Paris, à messieurs les curez des autres diocèses de France sur les mauvaises maximes de quelques nouveaux casuistes*. With it were joined the *Requête* of the Rouen curés, and an *Extraict de quelques-unes des plus dangereuses propositions de la morale de plusieurs nouveaux casuistes fidèlement tirées de leurs ouvrages*, which has been attributed to Arnould and Pascal. De Harlay delated the matter to the Assembly of the Clergy, to whom the *Second Advis des Curez de Paris* and the *Suite de l'extraict de mauvaises propositions* were presented. Meanwhile an anonymous work concentrating on one casuist, Mascarenhas, appeared.<sup>53</sup> Where Pascal had sought to provoke popular outrage, these writings aimed to persuade the curés' ecclesiastical superiors in their capacity as doctors and teachers; they received a work concentrating specifically on the doctrine of probability as explained by the Cistercian Caramuel.<sup>54</sup> Despite the irregular corporate action of the curés, the Assembly evidently agreed with the thrust of the critique: it was at this point that it ordered Borromeo's *Instructions* for confessors to be printed and disseminated throughout the dioceses of France.

The atmosphere now became considerably more heated with the intervention of the Jesuit Georges Pirot. His *Apologie pour les Casuistes* appeared in December 1657, and numbers among the more counterproductive apologies in the history of the Church.<sup>55</sup> Inopportunely justifying the very aspects of the

<sup>49</sup> On Richer, and his *De ecclesiastica et civili potestate libellus* (Paris, 1611), see Monique Cottret, 'Edmond Richer (1539–1631): Le politique et le sacré', in Henry Méchoulan (ed.), *L'État baroque* (Paris, 1985), pp. 161–74; Cognet, 'Ecclesiastical Life in France', pp. 88–9.

<sup>50</sup> Richard M. Golden, *The Godly Rebellion: Parisian Curés and the Religious Fronde, 1652–1662* (Chapel Hill, 1981); Golden, 'The Mentality of Opposition: The Jansenism of the Parisian Curés during the Religious Fronde', *Catholic Historical Review*, 64, 1 (1978), pp. 565–80.

<sup>51</sup> Gay, *Morales en conflit*, pp. 204ff. for more detail on the following narrative.

<sup>52</sup> Appendix, Allestree S.1.25(23).

<sup>53</sup> *Extraict de quelques propositions d'un nouvel Auteur Jésuite nommé Mascarenhas, imprimé chez Cramoisy en cette année 1656 et qui se vend depuis le mois d'octobre* (Paris, 1656). Emmanuel Mascarenhas, SJ (1604–54).

<sup>54</sup> Gay, *Morales en conflit*, p. 208; *Principes et suites de la probabilité expliquée par Caramuel l'un des plus celebres entre les Casuistes nouveaux dans un livre imprimé en 1652 intitulé Theologia Fundamentalis* (1656?).

<sup>55</sup> Gay, *Morales en conflit*, pp. 210ff.