



ECCLÉSIAL DIMENSIONS OF SALESIAN THOUGHT

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Introduction

Every re-evaluation and re-examination, whatever might be the discipline under consideration, inevitably brings with it a renewal in terminology and vocabulary. If there are words that tyrannize our minds, there are others which free them and help us to rethink and re-examine thoroughly what we know. In this regard, within recent years we have seen the word “ecclesial” make its appearance. This term considerably enlarges the too narrow idea of the Church that the word “ecclesiastical” conveys. The latter term emphasizes the hierarchical and juridical aspects of the Church and tends to identify it with the clergy. In addition, it highlights the exclusive and particular elements of the Church. It is interesting to note that certain independent thinkers (*libertins érudits*) of St. Francis de Sales’ day were accused of being heretics because they questioned this limited idea of the Church. On the other hand, the word ecclesial suggests larger perspectives and draws our attention to the Church as an assembly of all men called to lead a communal life of love. In this way it takes on more human proportions.

If we admit this distinction, we can more easily demonstrate the ties, which exist between the current of liberal thought in seventeenth century France and Francis de Sales. As a matter of fact, the idea that a famous foursome of liberal thinkers (La Mothe Le Vayer, P. Gassendi, Guy Patin and G. Naudé - called the “Tetrade”) had of the Church was ecclesial in the sense that we have just explained. They tried to demythologize certain concepts of the Church and to give it more human dimensions. Moreover, they ardently desired “the coming of a religion that would re-unite men into one single spiritual family.”¹ We cannot, however, appreciate the great importance of Salesian ecclesiology without at first considering some aspects of the Saint’s life.

Formation of Salesian Ecclesiology

From his childhood, the struggles and wars of religion, which ravaged his country of Savoy, must have engraved on his alert mind the profound discord that separated Christians. This tragic rift in Christ's body made itself felt in his own family, for he had relatives in the Chablais region who had succumbed to the teachings of Calvin. How many times did he hear his father say that he would never be converted to a religion that was younger than him. The hatred and detraction engendered by these religious differences provoked polemical writings that vilified the Church as the very incarnation of the Anti-Christ. The Saint alludes to this in one of his sermons: "Du Bartas [says] the Church is that great prostitute [mentioned in the book of the Apocalypse]... Calvin says the same thing... and Beze likewise in his *Confession of Faith*..."²

There is no need for us to dwell here on the corruption that existed in the Church and especially in the lives of many ecclesiastics and religious of the period. In the light of this fact, we are not surprised to find that the credibility of the Church was very seriously questioned even after the reforms inaugurated and promulgated by the Council of Trent. In fact, it was to take many years before these reforms were put into effect in certain countries and notably France, where they were never ratified by the French Parliament. De Sales found the profound decadence of the clergy and religious particularly painful. As bishop of Geneva, he wrote that his own diocese was the most "exposed to the plague" of Calvinism in all Christendom. He did not hesitate to write very frankly to Pope Clement VIII in 1604: "Certainly, it is very distressing that among several monasteries of different orders in this diocese, one can scarcely find a single one of them where religious discipline is not shaken and even completely ignored."³

As a young student in Paris, in addition to his studies in the humanities with the Jesuits at the Collège de Clermont, he persuaded his tutor, M. Deage, to allow him to take courses in Sacred Scripture and Hebrew which were taught at the Collège de France by the scholarly Benedictine, Gilbert G n brard. De Sales had very fond memories of his course on the *Canticle of Canticles* which exercised a determining influence on his conception of the Church, his spirituality, and indeed even his anthropology: "I mention the name of Gilbert G n brard out of honour and with consolation for having been his disciple, though not a very good one, when he was royal lecturer in Paris and expounded the *Canticle of Canticles*."⁴ Though occasioned by and written in response to Theodore Beze's commentary on the *Canticle*, the work of G n brard gave the Saint a larger and more human view of the Church, as we will see a little later.

Génébrard's commentary, published in 1585, obviously, contains in essence the contents of the course that de Sales took.⁵

In this commentary, Génébrard interprets the bride or spouse on three different levels, as symbolizing the individual soul, the Blessed Virgin and the Church. The Saint's studies with the Benedictine oriented his thought toward the Christological dimensions of the Church, for Génébrard does not understand the sacraments merely as external rites devoid of all warmth and feeling. On the contrary, he conceives of them [] as the dynamic and affectionate actions of Christ in his Church. He compares them to a loving embrace that Christ gives to his spouse when interpreting verse 2,6 of the *Canticle*: "his left arm is under my head and his right embraces me".⁶ The identification of the actions of the Church with those of Christ is of very great importance if we are to understand the close link between the first writings and sermons of the Saint and his later works. Despite the polemical context of Génébrard's work, the image of the Church presented to the young man is that of an affectionate and loving spouse. But Francis, of course, went beyond this solid and valuable commentary of the Benedictine by a profound and penetrating study of the Fathers, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, Rupert and others. It is likely that he began to study their works at Paris and continued this study under the prudent and scholarly direction of Father Possevin at the University of Padua.

Francis revealed his rather solid formation in theology, exegesis and Patristic literature even before his ordination to the priesthood. His first sermon written on the occasion of the feast of Pentecost in 1593 gives abundant evidence of this.⁷ This sermon, remarkable from many points of view, expresses in germ all the essential aspects of his ecclesiology, which he elaborated on and perfected during his whole life. Moreover, in a very striking and ingenious fashion, he weaves together his doctrine on the Church with a cosmology, anthropology and Mariology that is based on the Scriptures and the Fathers. At the outset the young preacher grounds very deeply the roots of his ecclesiology in the sublime and extremely personal operations of the Holy Trinity. The personal relations of the Father and the Son bind them so closely that a third, person, expressing this bond of love and infinite friendship, is engendered from all eternity. There he presents the Holy Spirit primarily as the love that binds two persons together. The Holy Spirit is born of a mutual and personal love, of an eternal friendship: "The Father... and the Son...seized with a pure and all-absorbing friendship, with one and the same will... brought forth a love so perfect, that in this love they communicated the divinity and the very essence that was common to the Father and the Son."⁸

The Christian God does not live in isolation but in a holy and perpetual communion of three divine persons. Basically the Trinitarian life can be called “ecclesial” because all of its activity depends on a communitarian life of love between persons who communicate to each other all their perfection, their very nature without diminishing in any way their personality, their identity. “For in this love they are not fused together, they are not dissolved, which would be an imperfection. But without changing their nature, they produce a Holy Spirit.”⁹ Moreover, not only do they not destroy individuality and personality but also in reality they engender personality. The third person equals in every respect the two others: “Perfect God of perfect God, possessing fully the one same divine essence among them; and without destroying the divine essence, they communicate it completely and perfectly to this Holy Spirit and to this Holy Love.”¹⁰ Here the young preacher utilizes some ideas common to the Fathers and to scholastic theologians. But while presenting the Holy Trinity as the true and perfect image of the interior life of the Church, he gives this traditional doctrine his own personal development.

After drawing our attention to the intimate operations of the Trinity, he outlines a theology of the Word as the perfect expression, the complete revelation of the nature of the Father. In order to make us grasp better this indescribable emanation of the word from the mouth of the Father, he talks to us about the analogous activity of Adam when he named the animals in Paradise. For him this human action of the first man, as revealed in the Scriptures, furnishes a useful explanation of the generation of the Son as the Word of the Father. This anthropological aspect introduced at the beginning of his ecclesiastical career casts an important light on his ecclesial theology. It is while deciding to create man that God reveals himself as a Trinitarian and ecclesial God. “The creation of the universe,” writes our Saint, “introduces the divine majesty in three persons, when he says: ‘Let us make man to our likeness!’ (Gen.1:26); for if only one person had created man, he would have said: ‘I make’, and not ‘Let us make’, as we find written....”¹¹

The Trinitarian and ecclesial foundation of his first sermon invites us to a more detailed analysis that will highlight the richness and originality of his thought in this area. With great modesty and a fine sensibility, he begins his sermon by asking his audience to overlook his youth and lack of experience. But he boldly adds that the Holy Spirit can enlighten even young people! Then he announces in the very first paragraph the principal theme of the sermon: “If like the Apostles and disciples we begin with one heart and mind to pray to God with devotion together with Mary the Mother of Jesus,” we ourselves will receive the Holy Spirit.¹² This dominant thought, based on Sacred Scriptures relating the Pentecostal experience (Acts, 2), emphasizes the truth that there is no Church

without the Holy Spirit, without a bond of love. Moreover, this Spirit is given only to those who want to come together with an open mind and join themselves to the Mother of Jesus. In his eyes, it is the Holy Spirit that creates a bond of love among persons. This theme will be developed throughout the sermon.

In fact, the work of Pentecost, although common to the three persons of the Trinity, is attributed particularly to the Holy Spirit who has the role of gathering people together in love and friendship. To demonstrate the universal power and presence of the Spirit, de Sales not only cites Sacred Scripture but Virgil as well! His way of approaching the meaning of Pentecost by considering the love of friendship as the basis of the Church would have pleased the liberal foursome who considered friendship as one of the greatest human values.¹³ They realized this value in their own lives by establishing a very close and intimate friendship among themselves.

The exterior signs of fire and a violent noise on the day of Pentecost introduces, in his eyes, an interior reality, namely the interior quality of the grace of God which the Apostles received. In this regard, he quotes from one of the psalms: “All the glory of the daughters of the king is interior.” (Ps. 44:14).¹⁴ He will use this same text later on in his *Meditations on the Church (Controversies)* to express the spirituality of the Church and to show that the word spiritual (*spirituel*) is not opposed to the idea of visible. To say that the Church is spiritual is to say that it is completely impregnated with love: “...you have to consider that the whole interior as well as the exterior of the Church can be said to be spiritual... We use the word spiritual in the sense that St. Paul does [Gal. 6:1], that is, [for] men who make their bodies subject to the spirit, although they are corporal.”¹⁵ The Church is all spiritual because it is the body of Christ baptized in the Holy Spirit to whom all the works of love are attributed.¹⁶ The spiritual life of each Christian binds him to the Church and must consequently be a life of holy communion with and for others. This spiritual life reveals the unity of the members of the Church and becomes a visible sign to the world. It is this sign that testifies that the Father has sent the Son (Jn.17:21). In the preface of his *Treatise on the Love of God*, the Saint summarizes in a beautiful way the role of the spirit of love in the Church: “Everything in the Church belongs to love, is in love, for love and of love.”¹⁷

The loud noise reminds him of the thunder that announces the storm and its clouds, the carriers of rain. It evokes also for him the voice of God whose power and effectiveness is proclaimed by the Psalmist (Ps.28). In this first sermon, the preacher manifests his literary powers in a moving and realistic description of peasants who “with additional sighs and deep emotions, extending their black hands to the sky, clutching the blessed candle, beg the

Creator to send his fructifying rain down upon parched fields.”¹⁸ The idea of the Holy Spirit bound up with that of the fructifying water is bolstered by the fact that the wind [breath or spirit in Hebrew] is the carrier of the rain that fructifies the earth: “his spirit will blow and the waters will flow.”(Ps.147:7).¹⁹ Thus the vivifying rainwater is considered to be the effect of the breath or spirit of God. In later writings this image will be joined to that of the Church compared to a garden and will help us to penetrate his thought on the dignity of man.

On the other hand, the symbol of fire, in his mind, is closely associated with the theme of the formation and the re-formation of the world and of man, an insight that he frequently comes back to in his *Controversies* and in the course of his ministry in the Chablais. In fact, he presents the power of the Holy Spirit as presiding over the creation of the world. "In the beginning I find that the 'Spirit was hovering over the waters' when the world was first formed... The Holy Spirit of God hovered above to give to this unformed chaos, to this sterile matter such fecundity that henceforth without water, neither plant nor animal can grow." ²⁰ Although he stresses here the fecundity of the Holy Spirit, we must remember that this Spirit is also Love. If this is so, then in the Salesian cosmology the world is incomprehensible without the spirit of love which confers on it order, value and beauty. It is love that gives the world all its meaning[]. This same benevolent love along with the Word of God gives order to the chaos, that is, to everything that has not yet been touched by the warmth of his breath and of his word of love and life.

We should note that for the formation of the world God did not encounter opposition, but he does encounter a good deal of it for its re-formation. “To form it you will simply find... ‘Let there be,’ ‘Let the dry land appear’, ‘Let us make,’ but to reform it, ‘The Word was made flesh.’”²¹ The idea of creation as described in the first chapters of Genesis comes, so the exegetes tell us, from the experience of the Israelites at Mount Sinai when they received the word of God amid peals of thunder and flashes of lightening. This powerful word held sway over their rebellious hearts and minds and created a communal life, the Jewish nation. The Israelites believed that if the commandments of Sinai were efficacious enough to create a social order and put goodness and value into their moral lives, then this same word could be powerful enough to create the universe. Briefly, they thought that the re-formation of man was more difficult to achieve than his formation.

The saint’s reasoning can be summarized in this way: Creation is a kind of Pentecost but the true Pentecost is a new creation! It is in this way that he emphasizes the universal significance of Pentecost and at the same time that of

the Church. Moreover, man himself is considered to be a microcosm whose resistance to the new creation stems from his liberty. At the same time, de Sales underscores the freedom and personal responsibility of each man to “row in the ship of the Church” because ‘He who made us without us, does not save us without us’²². Then he returns to the idea of fire. We should not be surprised that the Holy Spirit is at the very center of the fire since this fire is to be more effective to overcome man’s resistance. It is for this reason that fire is, in his eyes, more perfect than water. Water fructified by the Spirit is the cause of creation, whereas the fire fructified by this same Spirit accomplishes a more perfect work, that of the re-formation of the world.

As Psalm 28 indicates, the young[] preacher finds a deeper meaning for the noise that comes from heaven in the voice of God, so powerful that it “strips the bark off of the cedars of Lebanon” (Ps.28:5). “This sound was the sign that the word of God carried by the voice of the Apostles overturned idolatry and its adherents...”²³ However, the spirit of peace and reconciliation of the Gospel was made at Pentecost amid noise, fire and wind, the church must resort to peaceful means to convert others. This is the “catholic” perspective of the mission of the Apostles and the spirit of reconciliation favored by Erasmus and adopted by the liberal foursome known as the “Tetrade”. The notion that at the moment of the Pentecostal experience the Apostles “were of one mind” and assembled in the same place allows him to introduce the theme of penance as necessary to maintain the ecclesial bonds of unity that sin breaks, for sin has dire consequence for the communal life.²⁴ After exhorting his listeners to repentance, the young preacher prays: “Lord Jesus Christ, grant that we may be of ‘one mind and one heart’ for then ‘there will be a great tranquillity!’ ” Then he adds: “I exhort you to have a love of friendship and a love of benevolence among yourselves.”²⁵

Finally, we note that his Mariology is completely biblical and cannot be understood apart from his teaching on the Church. Just as the Apostles and first disciples gathered around the Mother of Jesus, so we must join ourselves to her in order to receive the Holy Spirit; “For no one can have Jesus Christ for a brother,” he adds quoting Pseudo-Augustine, “who will not have Mary for Mother; and he who will not be a brother of Jesus Christ, will no longer be a co-heir.”²⁶ This analysis puts us in a position to understand to what extent the first sermon of the Saint already announces a teaching on the Church that is very human and very open. All the essential aspects of his conception of the Church are put forth with clarity, penetration and conviction. If we keep in mind that this sermon was delivered only about twenty years after the closing of the Council of Trent, then we can better appreciate the new orientation of Salesian ecclesiology.

Genesis and Publication of the “Meditations on the Church”

Almost a year after this magnificent debut, the Saint was sent to the Chablais by his bishop to re-establish the Catholic Church there. He worked in the area several months without making a single convert. Most of the people did not dare to come to hear him preach because the people of Bern threatened them. His apostolic Zeal, however, did not falter in the face of such resistance. If the people would not or could not come to hear his message, then they would receive it by means of leaflets or circulars. It was in this way that this first writings, the *Controversies*, came into being. It is important to say a word about the ill-chosen title of the “*Controversies*”, for it is not at all in keeping with the spirit of St. Francis de Sales. First of all he himself never called these leaflets “*Controversies*”. It was the title given them unfortunately by the publishers of the first edition. He confided to a friend that by nature he “hates all contentions and disputes.”²⁷ In his correspondence to his very close friend, Antoine Favre, he speaks of these leaflets as his “*meditations*”,²⁸ and in the writings themselves he calls them his “*memorial*”.²⁹ Among the three titles, we opt for that of the “*Meditations on the Church*” because it seems to correspond the best to their contents and purpose.

Without discontinuing his preaching, the young priest began these *meditations* six months after he started his missionary work, that is, on January 25, 1595. We are given to understand from a letter to Antoine Favre that de Sales had thought about this project well in advance of this date;³⁰ his friend’s answer informs us that the Saint had the intention of publishing these writings. The reference to the *Meditations* in this correspondence allows us to retrace the different stages of the development of his thought. His apostolic labours “divided among diverse occupations” did not give him the leisure to give himself to it as completely as he would like before the month of January 1595.³¹ Around this time, the ice of the resistance of the people of the Chablais had begun to melt by contact with the ardent preaching of the Saint on the Holy Eucharist. He informs us in a letter written later to Antoine Favre that the leaders of the city of Thonon had almost come to hear his sermon and that some curious souls “who still did not dare to come openly... heard it from a spot that was hidden....”³²

Francis carefully kept these meditations down through the years. Fifteen years after he had written this work, he tells his metropolitan, the archbishop of Vienne, of his intention of having some of these meditations published for the purpose of helping young priests to preach the gospel. In the Saint’s mind, these writings were not only intended to be “instructive” but also “affective”, that is,

intended to move people.³³ So these writings were not only intended to express his essential ideas on the Church but also to demonstrate his method and his style. Towards the end of his life (July 2, 1619) in a letter to a Parisian gentlemen in which de Sales discusses the interpretation and meaning of Sacred Scripture, he sets forth almost the same ideas that he wrote on this subject in his *Meditations*.³⁴

We should note also that there was no mention made of these leaflets during the first process of his canonisation. In 1658 his nephew and biographer, Charles-Auguste de Sales, discovered them in the chateau of Thuille. They had been hidden there so that French soldiers would not destroy them. The praise that these writings received from the apostolic commissioners at the second process of canonization influenced a Minimite Father to publish them in the eight volumes of his works. This edition which contains many changes and is defective from several points of view actually distorts the Saint's thought. For example, in the passage that treats of the infallibility of the Pope, "a permanent authority" replaces the expression "infallible confirmer". As you can see his thought has been misrepresented on a matter of the utmost importance. In addition, the inexact references to Scripture and to the Fathers strongly compromised the Saint's erudition and intellectual integrity.³⁵ Despite all this in 1821 Blaise had the work re-printed without correcting the errors of the first edition. In addition, some notes tainted with gallicanism cast a shadow over the Saint's orthodoxy. To be fair, we should add that in a supplementary volume, Blaise tried to print the authentic text but the damage had already been done.

It was only in the course of the First Vatican Council that people began to appreciate the ecclesial aspects of this work. The passage where Francis designates the Pope as the "infallible confirmer" influenced many of the Council Fathers to accept the definition of Papal infallibility.³⁶ Dom Mackey, the indefatigable editor of the Annecy edition, prepared an English version of the *Meditations*, which was published in 1886. Even this edition was not complete because it lacked some pages that were discovered later in the monastery of the Visitation of Annecy. The first volume of the Annecy edition, which appeared in 1892, is the first complete and integral edition that is faithful to the Chigi manuscript and recent discoveries. The fate of this manuscript is similar to that of many others. During his own life-time, the people who knew his writings and who practiced his spirituality, were not aware, for the most part, of the ecclesial foundation that he went through great pains to establish in his *Meditations*. The numerous mistakes and alterations prevented people from grasping all the nuances of his thought. Perhaps some considered these *Meditations*, which were written for a specific purpose, as having a limited value.

For an edition that was complete and faithful to the manuscripts, it took almost three hundred years after he first wrote these pages. And yet, even after the publication of a complete edition, commentators and publishers were inclined once again to interpret this work almost exclusively in the light of the First Vatican Council which had not completed the schema on the Church. For example, Dom Mackey himself in his English edition did not dare to give one of the Saint's expressions designating the Pope as the "the master valet of the house of our Lord" all of its force.³⁷ Because of the recent definition of Papal infallibility, the editor felt obliged to soften it by the word "steward" which does not express the full meaning of the word "valet"- a term that implies less a position of responsibility than that of personal and humble service. Happily, commentators are now beginning to suspect all the richness, breadth and relevance of the Saint's ecclesiology.³⁸

The Literary Value of the Meditations

We still have to say something about the literary value of the *Meditations*. The circumstances under which this work was written might lead us to believe that it is incomplete and imperfect. Even if the Saint had to write these pages under the pressure of a rather full apostolic activity, the notes that he had accumulated in preparation for it give evidence of the pains he took to treat the subjects adequately. Even if he tells us that he only had the Bible and the *Controversies* of Bellarmine with him, we cannot conclude that he limited himself to these works.³⁹ He could have utilized the libraries of the Baron d'Avully and of the lawyer Poncet as well as his own when he returned to Annecy from time to time.

The words and phrases he crossed out and the words he added to the manuscript demonstrated how careful he was in choosing the right word, the expression that best conveyed his thought. This care, especially in works of a polemical nature, can be seen in a letter to Father Bonnard where the saint gives him some advice about using the expression "the insufficiency of Scripture." The saint feels that this expression would arouse the ire of the heretics. "I would prefer to admit that Scripture is quite sufficient for instructing us about everything and would say that the insufficiency is in us."⁴⁰ This same concern about being precise is clearly evident in the choice of terms that he makes in the *Meditations*. Fortunat Strowski, one of the first commentators to recognize the literary value of the *Meditations*, tells us that the style of these first writings "are not outdated" and announces the classic style. "The *Controversies* demonstrate the universal triumph of the regular, elegant and periodic style before Balzac and the French Academy. From a literary point of view the *Controversies* is a book of high merit."⁴¹

In addition to its literary value, we find that the work is complete, despite the fact that some hold the opposite view.⁴² To support their position they advance three arguments. In the first place, they say the work is incomplete because the Saint wrote to Archbishop Villars that he had intended to use some of these pages for a book on preaching. But this in no way implies that the work itself was incomplete. On the contrary, since it had never been published, some of these *Meditations* could be put to good use. In the second place, they argue that the second part of the work was never finished. Here again this does not indicate that the *Meditations* are incomplete but rather that they had achieved their natural and normal objective, as one of these commentators admits.⁴³ Finally, the third reason is based on the fact that the saint does not mention the *Meditations* in the list of his works that he gives in the Preface of the *Treatise on the Love of God*. Here we can simply answer that he only indicated those works of his that had already been published. We know the *Meditations* were published posthumously. Since these arguments do not stand up under scrutiny, we maintain with the editors of the Annecy edition that the work is complete and finished.⁴⁴

The Relevance of the Meditations

Both sympathetic and unsympathetic critics alike recognize the relevance and theological value of these leaflets of the Chablais. “Destined to have a direct bearing on the people, this work has an individual stamp of life and spontaneity. The work would have exercised a considerable influence if its publication had not been delayed.”⁴⁵ According to Strowski the novelty of the *Meditations*, if they had been published at the time when de Sales wrote them, would have had as liberating an influence on theology as the *Essais* of Montaigne had on the philosophy and study of man. We do not hesitate to assert that this work can bring about, even today, liberation not only in the area of theology but also in the development of Christian anthropology. We are not the only one to hold this opinion. “No one among the more recent Doctors of the Church more than St. Francis de Sales anticipated the deliberations and decisions of the Council with such a profoundly clairvoyant insight.”⁴⁶ To support this argument, it seems worthwhile to point out the most outstanding passages of his teaching on the Church, not for the purpose of presenting a systematic explanation of his ecclesiology, a subject that is worthy of a doctoral thesis, but to give some texts that eloquently express the novelty and originality of his teaching.

Although most of these leaflets of the Chablais were written in the heat of battle, it is surprising that the polemical and juridical aspects do not play a predominant role. At the very beginning of his apostolate, de Sales understood quite clearly the relationship of love which exists between God and his people

and among the people themselves. After emphasizing that the word “Church (*Eglise*) comes from the Greek word, which means to call” and “signifies an assembly or company of people called,” he contrasts the Church with the Jewish synagogue. “The assembly of the Jews was called a synagogue, that of the Christians is called a Church because the Jews were like a herd of cattle, assembled and herded by fear. Christians are assembled together in the union of charity by the preaching of the Apostles and their successors.”⁴⁷ His conception of the Church in this passage is basically biblical. The word “assembly” is widely used in liturgical circles today because it designates very well the nature of the Church. It is precisely this word that the Saint purposely chooses to make us understand better the unique character of the Church. The Christian Church is made up of people “assembled by the Word of God”, called into existence by love and maintained in existence by love, which is the true “cement that holds together the living stones of the Church.”⁴⁸

But if we stop here we will only have an incomplete picture of the Church as the Saint envisions it. He stresses that the Church is the assembly of those who are called to one faith, one worship and one authority. “The Church is a holy university or general company of men, united and gathered together in the profession of the one same Christian faith, in the participation of the same Sacraments and Sacrifice, in the obedience to the one same vicar and lieutenant general on earth of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the successor of St. Peter.”⁴⁹ The question of the visible Church was holy debated in the sixteenth century by both Protestant and Catholic apologists. Luther and the other reformers contrasted “spiritual” with “visible” in speaking about the nature of the Church. They maintained that the true Church is spiritual and hence invisible. But the Saint as a young missionary, in a magnificent paraphrase of the apparition of the resurrected Christ to the Apostles, asserts that there is no inherent opposition between the two ideas. For him the Church is all spiritual and visible because it is the resurrected body of Christ:

But what is the Church? An assembly of men who have flesh and bones. And will we still say that it is only a spirit or phantom which appears to be visible and is only so by illusion?... See her hands, look at her ministers, officers and administrators, see her feet, look at her preachers how they carry it when getting up and when going to bed. All are flesh and blood. Touch her... see her, consider her well in all her body how she is all beautiful, and you will see that she is visible, for a spiritual and invisible thing has neither flesh nor bones as you see I have.⁵⁰

We must keep in mind this very human and very divine image of the Church where we see reconciled tendencies that are apparently contradictory and irreconcilable. Moreover, like the rainbow, the sign of the covenant between God and Noah, or more precisely between God and all of humanity, the Church is the manifestation of God's favor toward all. Just as the rainbow reminds people of God's goodness, so the Church, as the universal sign of a new covenant, must recall the love of God for all of humanity. This is the idea that the Saint sets forth when he writes that the prophets paint the Church as the rainbow, a faithful and sure witness of God's favor toward men who are all the posterity of Noah. Even if the visible Church has as its purpose to exercise this influence on all, the young missionary does not limit the activity of the Holy Spirit to this visible Church. In a manner that is quite surprising for that period, he admits that certain pagans belonged, without knowing it, to the true Church. "I do not deny that among the gentiles there was a true Church consisting of few people, who had faith in the true God and esteemed the observance of the natural commandments [which they kept] by divine grace."⁵¹

Among all the biblical images of the Church, our zealous apologist stresses that of a house or family. "How many times and in how many places, is the Church, both militant and triumphant called a house and family in both the Old and the New Testament."⁵² He bases his notion of authority in the Church on the nature of the Church as a house or family. With all the skill of a tightrope walker, he knew how to find the proper balance between the grandeur and the limitations of the office of Pope in such a way that his adversaries used to say that he did not speak like a "papist."⁵³ Following St. Cyprian, whom he cites, De Sales presents the papacy in its ecclesial dimensions. The Pope is the "bond of unity"⁵⁴ and the "root and nurturer of the Church." He is a rock that nourishes and upon which is engraved "the evangelical law."⁵⁵

Along with these praises, he invites us to look at other side of the coin. He shows a good deal of daring when he characterizes the Pope as the "master valet of the house of our Lord" to emphasize in him the aspect of service. We saw above that interpreters did not dare give this expression its full meaning. Although he speaks of the Pope as a ruler (*gouverneur*),⁵⁶ he underscores once again the idea of service when he calls St. Peter *administrateur* in the sense of administering to the needs of others. This word brings out better the solicitude for the good of others, like a true father of a family rather than like a king or earthly ruler.

The primacy of the Pope in his thought is not to be placed in opposition to collegiality, that is, to the notion of shared authority in the Church. He reminds us rather that all authority in the Church must be a collective effort when he affirms that the bishops are not the "lieutenants of the Pope, but of Our Lord,

whom he calls his brothers.”⁵⁷ Such a statement would have pleased the gallican Guy Patin, a member of the Tetrade. With regard to laymen, de Sales assigned them their true place in the Church. He understood and appreciated profoundly their dignity as priests. “To show then that Christians, being a royal priesthood, are holy to the Lord by the blood of the Savior... they carry the sign of the Cross on the forehead.”⁵⁸ More over, they can participate at the councils “but not to take decisions.”⁵⁹ This very rapid view of the Saint’s *Meditations* will serve as a background for discussing the relationship of de Sales with the liberal thought of his time. Finally, in order to evaluate the influence of other writers on him, we will make some observations on his ties with Erasmus and Montaigne.

The Influence of Erasmus

“ ‘I laid an egg of a dove,’ Erasmus used to say, ‘Luther made a serpent come out of it.’ Let him be assured. His dove was born and was called St. Francis de Sales.”⁶⁰ With a penetrating gaze, Bremond thus perceived some very close ties between Erasmus and de Sales. This “dove” came under the influence of the prince of Christian humanists at Clermont College where they very likely used expurgated versions of Erasmus’ *Adages* and *Letters* for classes in Latin composition. We say “very likely” because the question of Erasmus’ works and the Index of forbidden books is rather complicated “The index of 1558 placed Erasmus among heretical authors of the first class... whose complete works were condemned,... even if they included absolutely nothing against or on religion...”⁶¹ In the face of such a sweeping condemnation, one can readily understand the reactions of Jesuits like Canisius and Nadal who complained strongly about this condemnation. The best interpretation of the problem of the use of Erasmus’ works in Jesuit schools of the period seems to be the one that maintains that these works were put aside in the Jesuit schools and consulted and utilized with discretion by the Fathers with the permission of the provincial.⁶²

In any case, even if we don not know the precise works of Erasmus the saint studied at Paris, we know that he was familiar with several works of the great humanist before and during his stay in the Chablais. As a matter of fact in the appendix of the second volume of his works in the Annecy Edition, we find a list of forbidden books that the saint had in his possession with the proper ecclesiastical permission for his apostolic work. Among these books are two works of Erasmus, *Novum Testamentum cum annotationibus* and *Praecationes aliquot*.⁶³ The Saint admitted that he read prohibited books very carefully.⁶⁴ These books must have had a profound influence on the formation of his thought. Even if he says he was not taken in by the errors of heretical works, he was forced to thoroughly re-think many aspects of the Church and her teaching.

To explain more clearly the Church's teaching on the Eucharist as sacrifice de Sales cites in one of his sermons Erasmus' version of the Bible that favoured this opinion.⁶⁵ It was very probable that he read Erasmus' edition of the Fathers during his stay at Padua. The marginal notes of his manuscript of the *Etendard de la Croix*, written shortly after the *Meditations*, indicates that he knew this edition.⁶⁶ In one of the chapters of the *Etendard*, the Saint criticizes those who accept uncritically the opinion of Erasmus with regard to a work that this humanist attributed to Arnobius. Elsewhere in the same work, he accepts the authenticity of another work that Erasmus attributes to the same author.⁶⁷ While citing a passage from a homily of St. Chrysostom, de Sales utilizes Erasmus' Latin version of this Father's works.⁶⁸ Moreover, to support his argument that the Fathers and the Church venerated the Holy Cross he says: "In the liturgy of St. Chrysostom, according to the version of Erasmus, the priest while turning toward the image of Jesus Christ, is obliged to make a bow."⁶⁹ Quite obviously he knew that the edition of Erasmus differed from the other editions of the Fathers that were available at that time, We should note, however, that the young missionary did not blindly accept the judgement of this great Christian humanist, but made use of him with discretion and found him very much to his liking.

During the first years of his intellectual formation in Paris and at Padua, he came indirectly under the influence of Erasmus, for several young Jesuits who taught at Clermont College had been disciples of the great Maldonatus. The latter had come under the influence of Erasmus through his teacher Vittoria at Salamanca. Maldonatus' method in theology is characterized by the primacy of Holy Scripture and of the Fathers and a return to these sources as well as a good background in knowledge of Antiquity.⁷⁰ The irenic method of his *Controversies* and the breadth of Maldonatus' theology made him one of the Saint's favourite authors. For exegesis, de Sales uses Maldonatus' interpretations more than twenty times in his sermons.⁷¹ But the Saint experienced the spirit and thought of Erasmus most profoundly and indelibly through the intermediary of the works of the Spanish Dominican, Louis de Granada. This author, above all, helped de Sales give a biblical basis to his spirituality "The fact that he [Granada] does not specifically mention Erasmus in his books in no way proves that he had not read and meditated upon his works. Many others, at that time, without mentioning Erasmus' name, flagrantly copied from his."⁷²

The works of Louis de Granada and in particular his *Libro de la oracion* are completely impregnated with Erasmus' spirituality as found in his *Enchiridion*. When the Spanish Dominican emphasizes the opposition between mental and vocal prayer, he is not only relying on the Trattati of Savonarola but also on the *Enchiridion* and the *Modus orandi* of Erasmus. His purpose was to place within

the reach of all a deep Christian spirituality and to remind us that *Monachus non est pietas* (the habit does not make the monk) of Erasmus. The way in which he challenges the spirit of ritual demonstrates quite clearly that the *Enchiridion* is his model here.⁷³ Louis of Granada insists on the fact that spiritual exercises and practices do not express the essence of the Christian life. We try in this way to embrace the true Joseph, which is Christ, but in fact the only thing left in our hands is his robe “and Joseph, escapes from his dwelling place. This is the same illusion that certain religious orders are victims of today. They embrace and only hold on to the form of religion, that is, to what is external and visible.”⁷⁴

The principal traits of Erasmus’ spirituality—return to Sacred Scripture and the Fathers, interiorization of the Christian life, an invitation to all to climb the high road of the spiritual life, the primacy of mental prayer, etc.—that Louis of Granada brings to the fore finds a faithful echo in Salesian thought especially in the *Introduction to the Devout life*. In the preface to this spiritual classic, Francis de Sales refers to Erasmus in this way: “As a great man of letters used to say, a good way to learn is to study, a better way is to listen, and the best way is [] to teach.”⁷⁵ The editors of the Annecy edition are not sure whether he is speaking here of Erasmus or not. “Does this passage,” they ask, “contain an allusion to the next of Quintilian? This explanation is not very satisfactory since the saint cites this same passage in a letter, written several years before in which he explicitly alludes to Erasmus.”⁷⁶ It is our belief that in a work destined for popular consumption, he had to exercise a good deal of discretion so as not to scandalize the weak who might not have looked too kindly on references to an author whose works, at that time, were placed on the Index.

The primary purpose of the *Introduction to the Devout Life* is to illustrate in a masterful way the maxim of Erasmus: “The habit does not make the monk.” The Saint tells us in a celebrated passage that it is “an error, indeed a heresy, to exclude the devout life from the company of soldiers, from the shops of artisans....”⁷⁷ To be perfect, one does not have to be a religious and to vow the evangelical counsels “as long as they are observed. For although they are vowed, and especially solemnly, they put a person in the state of perfection. But to make him perfect, it suffices that they be observed. For there is a big difference between the state of perfection and perfection since all bishops and religious are in the state of perfection, nevertheless not all are perfect, as it is all too evident.”⁷⁸ From the very beginning of his life as an ecclesiastic he showed a very high esteem for the works of Louis of Granada, recommending them not only in his letters but also in the *Introduction* itself.⁷⁹ The advice on preaching that he gave to the bishop of Dol makes us understand to what extent the Saint valued the Spanish Dominican: “I beg you to have the complete works

of Granada. Let them be your second breviary. Cardinal Borromeo had no other theology than that for preaching, and, nonetheless he preached very well.”⁸⁰

One year later in a letter to the archbishop of Bourges, he composed a little treatise on preaching that bears the stamp of Erasmus’ influence. He gives us to understand that he does not cite all the authors to whom he alludes in this letter, but he does insist on the fact that the ideas are essentially his: “I have quoted myself... since you want my opinion and not that of others.”⁸¹ Although the treatise has a completely Salesian stamp, that does not prevent us from pointing out numerous ideas and principles dear to Erasmus. While quoting him on the matter of teaching, the Saint speaks of Erasmus as “great man of letters” and writes his name in parenthesis. You get the impression that he hesitates to mention the name of a man whose reputation as a faithful Catholic was questioned but whom the saint admires and to whom he owes a lot.⁸²

Like his predecessor, the young bishop reacts against all abuses, which crept into the preaching of his time. He rejects the goal that most of the preachers of that day had. Their purpose was to please their listeners and rather than preach Jesus Christ crucified they preach themselves. Therefore, the Saint clearly opts for a very simple kind of language, sincere, and natural, stripped of all pedantry without the ostentation of Greek, Hebrew and new words. As an effective remedy against all these exaggerations and abuses, he insists on a return to the sacred sources of Scripture and the Fathers. In the manner of St. Paul, he reminds his correspondent that preaching is the principal office of bishop. “St. Paul... cries out: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.” After Sacred Scripture, the Fathers and the Councils of the Church hold the second Place. “But what,” he asks, “is the teaching of the Fathers of the Church but the Gospel explained, the Sacred Scriptures explained?”⁸³ He not only advises the study and use of the teaching of the Fathers but also their method of preaching: They know how to use profane histories and pagan myths.

But to get back to the sources one has to have a critical mind. Faced with the multiplicity of opinions of the Fathers, the preacher has to reject the opinion, which is the least probable, and bring to light the others. This critical faculty must be exercised also in the choice that one makes of true histories by “being careful not to recount false miracles and ridiculous stories.”⁸⁴ Since natural histories speak to us about creation, they are a reflection of the Word of God and hence very useful and effective for the preaching of the Gospel. This explains his penchant for Pliny’s natural history. This evangelical preaching must breathe love and reconciliation. Speaking like a true disciple of Erasmus, he admits: “I like the kind of preaching that makes us experience more the love of God than indignation, indeed even of the Huguenots, whom we have to treat with great compassion.”⁸⁵ In a word, to preach is to speak in the pulpit “about

the word of reconciliation.”⁸⁶ The Saint gives evidence here of an ecclesial concern that is characteristic of his preaching and teaching.

Influence of Montaigne

Montaigne is the only profane author that the young missionary mentions in his first writings in the Chablais. This makes us realize that de Sales was very sympathetic and receptive to Montaigne. In 1595, the “erudite layman” (“*docte profane*”) as the Saint calls him, had few admirers and was practically unknown. He admired Montaigne and utilized him as an apologist of the faith. He quotes him three times in his *Mediations*, twice in connection with popular versions of the Bible, once with regard to the veracity of witnesses to miracles.⁸⁷ One can point out several other passages where the Saint borrows from the *Essais*. “Francis de Sales, from the beginning to the end of his book, the *Controversies*, has the *Essais* under his eyes or in his memory.”⁸⁸ Since these meditations were not written at one time but over a period of approximately a year, the missionary quotes Montaigne sometimes from memory and sometimes from the text depending on the circumstances. The fact that he cites a very long paragraph from the *Essais* convinces us that this opinion is very probably true.⁸⁹

The esteem that Francis had for Montaigne at the beginning of his apostolate testifies to the profound impression that the learned layman had on his intellectual formation. The reading of the *Essais* helped the Saint to develop a very sound well-balanced and critical judgement. Montaigne gave Francis an appreciation of the relativity of much of our knowledge, that of customs, and religious practices and exercises. This perspective naturally leads to a less restrictive and more universal understanding of God’s activity in the world.

Salesian Conception of the Church and Humanism

The great concern of every true humanist for human values is summarized by the celebrated phrase of Terence: “nothing human is foreign to me”. It is basically a profound sentiment of the solidarity of all human beings. The motto explains the constant efforts of Christian humanists to compare and harmonize all kinds of human endeavors with Christian teaching. Even the fate of those who do not belong to the visible Church arouses their sympathy and their diligent study. The humanists feel obligated and bound to all of humanity. They realize that all people share the same destiny, the same glory. This awareness of solidarity creates a bond of unity, which can take on a more profound meaning in ecclesial perspectives.

The problem of the Church and humanism is generally treated with the intention of reducing the opposition between man’s works in the areas of art, literature

and sciences on the one hand, and the exigencies of Christianity on the other. In this view the wisdom of Antiquity, of which Christian humanism is heir, gives the Church more human dimensions. So by looking carefully at the Saint's writings, we see that for him the Church, by its nature and function, is destined to create unity among the people. By accomplishing this task, it promotes a fundamental human value. The mission of the Church is to humanize men, its goal, if you will, is primarily humanistic. A letter that the Saint wrote from Thonon to his great friend, Antoine Favre, presents the problem of the Church and humanism in these terms. "In fact, according to our custom of not considering anything human as foreign to us, I was afraid that your heart, which is so sensitive, might have a little more difficulty of putting up with the sight of the miseries of our dear land on hearing them recounted."⁹⁰

The miseries to which he refers are the deplorable and lamentable ravages resulting from the wars of religion in the Chablais. The motto of the humanists that he puts in the plural: "*nihil a nobis humani alienum*" is generally taken in the sense of an esteem and admiration for all human works, and more especially in literature, the fine arts and the natural sciences. But here in the mouth of the Saint, the expression takes on an unusual meaning. For the Saint these words express the sentiments of a Christian compassion. They remind us of St. Paul's words when he advises us "to weep with those who weep" (Rom.12:15). It is a question of a solidarity that the Church has as its mission to bring about, support and perfect. The context of this letter and the historical circumstances associated with it and which he had to face make us understand that Salesian humanism was fashioned by ecclesial pre-occupations and by a profound human friendship. He wrote this letter at the time when he called his "meditations against heretics".⁹¹ As a matter of fact, this whole letter is a striking example of Christian humanism, where, side by side, are quoted pagan writers,⁹² the Sacred Scriptures,⁹³ and the Fathers. Before ending the letter he shows his interest in trying to translate precisely two French expressions into Latin and asks his friend for advice on this translation.

The biblical image of the Church as spouse, an image which Francis de Sales liked very much appears many times in his writings and in his sermons, at the very outset of his ecclesiastical career. Finding his inspiration from the Fathers, he envisages the Church as the new spouse that emerge from the side of Adam.⁹⁴ For him, to admit with the Calvinists to a new and reformed Church would be like saying that Christ, after having united himself indissolubly to his spouse, the Church, in order to form one flesh with her, would divorce her to take another spouses: "The Calvinists brag about serving notice of the divorce between the Son of God and the Church, his former spouse, in order to marry this young assembly, remade and reformed."⁹⁵

The principal argument that he uses against heresy is based on an analogy with the evil effects of original sin on humanity. This sin not only breaks the bond of love between God and man but between man and woman also! It brings about a rupture, a wound in the flesh of humanity and deforms as well the image of God that man and woman together are destined to reflect and reveal. In brief, heresy and sin, since they destroy solidarity among men, dehumanize the world. The Church was founded to restore this unity and to reform man so that he will conform more to the image of God. This unity among men that the Church is called to realize was a value highly esteemed by the Tetrade. Guy Patin seems to express the sentiment of the group when he praises Erasmus because in spite of all the corruption and abuses in the Church he never broke away from her and never broke the ecclesial bonds. “I love Erasmus.” Patin admits, “for many reason of which... the second is that he cried out against the abuses that he saw in ecclesiastics without causing a schism and without separating himself from the Church.”⁹⁶

Conclusion

This rather detailed exposition of Salesian ecclesiology allows us to see better the ties that exist between the Saint and the famous foursome of liberal thinkers (Tetrade). We have tried to point out several points of contact. Like the members of this group, the saintly bishop tried to purify the Church of accidental and extraneous elements, and in particular the ones that were harmful to its humanizing goal. In this respect he thought about publishing a French translation of the “Acts of the Apostles” so that laymen could become acquainted with the primitive idea of the Church.⁹⁷ Let us not forget that the libertinism of the Tetrade was judged to a large extent on the basis of the way they favored individual liberty and challenged certain ecclesiastical laws as well as certain religious practices that bordered on superstition. Without a knowledge of the ecclesial dimensions of Salesian thought, one will have difficulty understanding his anthropology and, consequently, his attitude in the face of human wisdom and the critical and skeptical mind of the liberal thinkers (*libertins érudits*) of his day. It was with the objective of preparing the terrain for such a confrontation that considerable time has been spent with the Saint’s ecclesiology.

¹ Pierre Sage, *Le Préclassicisme* (Paris: Del Duca, 1960, p. 383.

² *Oeuvres*, v.. 7, p. 221

³ *Oeuvres*, v.12, p. 371-373, Letter 235

⁴ *Oeuvres*, v. 5, p.277, *Treatise on the Love of God*, 11:11

⁵ Gilbert Génébrard, *Canticum canticorum Salomonis et commentariis*, Paris, A.E. Gorbinum, 1585. Cf. E. J. Lajeunie, *Saint François de Sales, L’homme, La pensée, L’action*, Paris, Guy Victor, 1966, v.1, p.13 where the author tells us that the Saint took the course in 1584.

⁶ Op. Cit., p.37

⁷We are following here the opinion of the editors of the Annecy edition who state that it is his first sermon. Cf. *Oeuvres*, v. 7, p.20, Sermon 1:1

⁸ Ibid., v.7, p. 4

⁹ Loc, Cit.

¹⁰ Loc, Cit

¹¹ Ibid., v. 7, p.5

¹² Ibid., v.7, p.12

¹³ Cf. La Mothe Le Vayer, De L'amitie, *Oeuvres*, Paris, 1665, v.6, p.129

¹⁴ *Oeuvres*, v.7, p.7, Sermon 1:1

¹⁵ Controversies 1:2, art. 1(1:48)

¹⁶ Cf. *Oeuvres*, v.7, p. 6, Sermon 1:1

¹⁷ *Treatise on the Love of God*, Preface (4:4)

¹⁸ Ibid., 7:8-9; *Oeuvres*, v.7, p.6, Sermon 1:1

¹⁹ Ibid., 7:8

²⁰ Ibid., 7:10

²¹ Ibid., 7:11

²² *Oeuvres*, v. 7, p.14, Sermon 1:1. He quotes St. Augustine here.

²³ Ibid. 7:17

²⁴ Ibid. 7:22

²⁵ Ibid. 7:26

²⁶ Ibid. 7:29

²⁷ Ibid., 15:95, Letter 711

²⁸ Ibid., 9:108,115 Sermon 2:14; Sermon 2:15

²⁹ Controversies 2:1,art. 3, *Oeuvres*, 1:158, Ctr 3, *Oeuvres*, 1:346

³⁰ Ibid., Preface, 1:CIX

³¹ Ibid., 1:CVIII.

³² *Oeuvres*, 11:158, Letter 59

³³ *Oeuvres*, 14:126, Letter 514

³⁴ Controversies 2:3, art. 1, *Oeuvres*, 1:202-209; Letter 1531, *Oeuvres*, 18:403

³⁵ Controversies, Preface, 1:CXIV

³⁶ Ibid., 1:CXIV

³⁷ *The Catholic Controversy*, the Library of St. Francis de Sales, London, Burns & Oates, 1901,v.3, p.165. We admit that the expression “maistre valet” could designate a position of honour and responsibility, but the context here stresses the aspect of service. *Controversies* 1:2, art 1, *Oeuvres*, 1:87

³⁸ E. J. Lajeunie, Op,Cit., v.1, p. 256-266

³⁹ *Oeuvres*, 11:127, Letter 49

⁴⁰ *Controversies*, Preface, 1:CXXVI

⁴¹ Fortunat Strowski, *Saint Francois de Sales*, Paris, Plon, 1928, p.73-74

⁴² Cf. Elisabeth Stopp, “*Meditations sur l’Eglise*”, *Salesian Studies*, 4(Autumn 1967), p.55-56.

⁴³ Ibid., p.60, “One can say that another reason why the work now lapsed was that the active meditation and what could best be worked out as a written treatise had come to a natural end”.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Controversies*, Preface, 1:CXXIV

⁴⁵ Victor Baroni, “*La Bible chez les controversistes du XVIIe Siecle en France*,” *La Revue d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, 19(1939), p.172.

- ⁴⁶ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Letter, *Sabaudiae Gemma*. French translation in La Documentation Catholique , 64(March 1967), p.388.
- ⁴⁷ *Controversies*, 1:2 art. I, *Oeuvres*, 1:42-43
- ⁴⁸ *Controversies*, 1:2 art. I, *Oeuvres*, 1:49
- ⁴⁹ *Controversies*, 1:2, art. I, *Oeuvres*, 1:43
- ⁵⁰ *Oeuvres*, 1:47
- ⁵¹ *Controversies*, 1:3, art. 9 *Oeuvres*, 1:110
- ⁵² *Controversies*, 1:3, art. 1 *Oeuvres*, 1:84-85
- ⁵³ *Controversies*, 1:3
- ⁵⁴ *The Opuscles*, 3:12 *Oeuvres*, 23:147
- ⁵⁵ Sermon 1:2 *Oeuvres* 7:31, 48
- ⁵⁶ *Controversies*, 1:3, Art 1, *Oeuvres* 1:87
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:6, Art 13, *Oeuvres* 1:300; *Controversies* 2:6, art 5, *Oeuvres* 1:256
- ⁵⁸ Std Cr 3:7, *Oeuvres* 2:257
- ⁵⁹ *Controversies* 2: 4 , Art,1 *Oeuvres*, 1:215
- ⁶⁰ Henri Bremond, *Autour de l'humanisme*, Paris, Grasset, 1936
- ⁶¹ Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus et l'Espagne*, Paris, Droz, 1937, p.760
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p.587; See also F. De Dainville, “*Pour L’histoire de l’index*” in *Recherches de Sciences Religieuses*, (Janvier-Mars 1954),p.90
- ⁶³ Std Cr.Appendix IV (2:425-426)
- ⁶⁴ The Deposition of Henry de Charmois, second Process of Geneva, fol. 819.
- ⁶⁵ Sermon 1:26, *Oeuvres* 7:229
- ⁶⁶ Std Cr 1:6 (2:62)
- ⁶⁷ Std Cr 2:12 (2:186 and 191).
- ⁶⁸ Std Cr 3:8 (2:270); this homily is no longer placed among the works of this Father.
- ⁶⁹ Std Cr 2:3 (2:112)
- ⁷⁰ Cf. E. J. Lajeunie, *Op cit.*, v.1, p.135-136
- ⁷¹ Annecy Edition, XXVII, Index doctrinal, p.64
- ⁷² Bataillon, *Op. Cit.*, p.637
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 629-648.
- ⁷⁴ Grenade, *Libro de la oracion*, p.407,ed. cited by Bataillon, *Op.cit.*, p.638. Here is what Erasmus himself says in this regard: “The funniest thing is that all their actions follow a rule and they think they would sin seriously if they were to deviate in the slightest from its mathematical rigor. They forget that Christ, despising all that, will only ask them if they obeyed his law, that of Charity.” *Eloge de la Folie*, ed. of M. Rat, Garnier Freres, p.69
- ⁷⁵ St. Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Preface, 3:10-11
- ⁷⁶ Letter 229, *Oeuvres* 12:301.
- ⁷⁷ *Introduction* 1:3; *Oeuvres*, 3:20-21
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 3:11 *Oeuvres*, 3:172
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Preface de l’ Edition de 1983, 3:XXXVI-XXXVII
- ⁸⁰ Letter 184, *Oeuvres*, 12:189-190
- ⁸¹ Letter 229, *Oeuvres* 12:323
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, *Oeuvres*, 12:301
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, *Oeuvres*, 12:305, 307,322
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, *Oeuvres*, 12: 307
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, *Oeuvres*, 12:323
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, *Oeuvres*, 12:325
- ⁸⁷ *Controversies* 2:1, art 7, *Oeuvres*, 1:180; 182; 2:7, art 2, *Oeuvres*, 1:328-329

⁸⁸ Strowski, *Op. Cit.*, p. 78

⁸⁹ *Controversies*, 2:7, art 2, *Oeuvres*, 1:328

⁹⁰ Letter 45, *Oeuvres*, 11:112-113

⁹¹ *Ibid.* *Oeuvres*, 11:115

⁹² *Ibid.*, *Oeuvres*, 11:113, 114

⁹³ *Controversies*, 1:3, art 10, *Oeuvres*, 1:114, 115, 116

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:3, art 15, *Oeuvres*, 1:128, 129; Sermon 1:25, *Oeuvres*, 7:216-17

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:1, art 1, *Oeuvres* 1:22

⁹⁶ Rene Pintard, *Le libertinage erudit dans la premiere moitie du XVIIe siecle*, Paris, Boivin, 1943, p.324

⁹⁷ Letter 1869, *Oeuvres*, 20:220