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1688

*THE FIRST MODERN
REVOLUTION*

STEVE PINCUS

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a great deal to put his Gallican ideology into practice. But even that achievement paled in comparison to what some of his intimate advisers intended.



French Catholicism also influenced the attitudes that James and his courtiers had toward religious toleration. Gallicans were not only absolutist, they also believed that force was sometimes necessary to break the will of obstinate schismatics and heretics. Because James and his closest advisers embraced the full force of Gallican beliefs, revisionist scholars are wrong to describe them as religious moderates willing to tolerate a religiously pluralist society. James, it is true, publicly and frequently, asserted his belief that "none has or ought to have any power over conscience but God." He reportedly told the Scottish Quaker Robert Barclay on the eve of William's arrival in England in 1688 that he would make any concession to appease his people "except to part with liberty of conscience, which he never would, while he lived." James told William Penn, "It was always my principle that conscience ought not to be forced and it was always my judgment men ought to have the liberty of their conscience."³⁸ It is also true that many Protestant Dissenters published sophisticated defenses of toleration timed to coincide with James's policy pronouncements. However, James's commitment to French-style Catholicism placed limits on his commitment to toleration.

French Catholic writings were not tolerationist. They drew on the full arsenal of Augustinian arguments for intolerance, arguing that Protestantism was both heresy and schism, emphasizing according to one recent scholar "the notion of 'conversion' through compulsion." Bossuet, who was so influential in court Catholic circles, hoped to hear soon that no former Huguenot "absents himself" from Catholic services. Louis Maimbourg praised Louis XIV for "the reduction of the remnant of our Protestants." John Evelyn, who held office under James II, was "showed" the speech of the bishop of Valence "celebrating the French King (as if he were a God) for his persecuting the poor Protestants." Of course, neither Bossuet nor Maimbourg acknowledged that force had been used in the miraculous conversion. Their denial of the existence of the dragonnades did not imply any condemnation of conversion by force. Force, they were suggesting, was a last resort that fortunately was unnecessary in this case. The language with which the French Catholics discussed the Huguenots left little doubt of the limits of their tolerance. Bossuet referred to the Protestant Reformation as a "deplorable apostasy which hath torn from the church whole nations, and which seems to prepare for the kingdom of Antichrist." The French Jesuit Dominique Bouhours was no less concerned about the implications of Protestantism. The Protestants, Bouhours recalled, "having shaken off the yoke of ecclesiastical obedience, and of allegiance to their sovereigns . . . abandoned themselves to all those disorders, which men are capable of, when they are governed by the spirit of lying." This was inevitable because "the manners of men generally grow corrupt by the same degrees that they loose their faith; so were these new heresies followed by a general licentiousness."³⁹ Given

these dire consequences of toleration, those steeped in Gallican teaching could hardly be expected to yearn for long-term indulgence to religious minorities.

Catholic literary production promoted by James and his court was no friendlier to religious toleration. The Catholic convert and master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, Joshua Basset, in a text published by the royal printer Henry Hills, sneered that in tolerant Holland he "saw such a medley of faiths, that it looked to me as Babel might have done, when God confounded their language." The English Jesuit William Darrel described the Protestant Reformation as a "disease." This was, in part, because for these English Catholics as for French Catholics, Protestantism and political rebellion were ineluctably yoked. John Dryden observed that "both the French and English Presbyterians were fundamentally and practically rebels." "This so great decay from the ancient vigor of our government, and the many difficulties in which it is of late so deeply involved, have arisen principally, if not purely, from the course of religion," posited the Catholic recorder of Gloucester Charles Trinder. Since he dated the decay from Henry VIII's succumbing to his "unbridled appetite," Trinder left his auditors and readers in little doubt that the religious troubles began with the Reformation. Surely such a dangerous religion could not be tolerated. John Betham, who was both a doctor of the Sorbonne and a future preceptor of the Prince of Wales, predicted that God would not tolerate those who refused to accept the blessings of the one true faith. "God will not have patience to expect their natural death," he warned, "but will hurry them away without the least warning."⁴⁰ These were hardly the utterances of a tolerationist lot.

The actions and statements of Catholics close to James were no friendlier to toleration. James's ambassador to the papacy, the Earl of Castlemaine, publicly displayed at Rome "his Majesty's picture with John Calvin under his feet." James's lord chancellor of Scotland, the Earl of Perth, hoped fervently that there would be no spread of Protestant conventicles in Scotland since "they are destructive to all government." The French-based commissary general of the Irish Capuchins, Lawrence Dowdall, described the newborn Prince of Wales as "the Messiah of Great Britain, whose cradle is the tomb of heresy and schism." Sir Edward Hales, though he made no specific comment about toleration among the general population, left no doubt that the state could not be religiously pluralist. The Cabinet Council, which Hales thought was the only proper forum for policy making, "must be all of a piece, uniting in the king's interest and loving one another like brothers, therefore they must all be Catholics." Similarly "the great offices should be all in Catholic hands for these are the only sorts of men the king may rely upon in all seasons." Hales's son, also Edward, described the mission of University College, Oxford, now with a Catholic master and two Jesuit chaplains, as being "to begin the restitution of the religion," which would put an end to the "deplorable breach" with the one true Church. These sentiments give a certain plausibility to Gilbert Burnet's claim to have seen in Rome a series of letters from English Catholics asserting they had "no doubt left of their succeeding in the reduction of England" to the Roman Catholic faith.⁴¹

There is good reason to suppose that James shared these views. Though James had long professed his sympathy for liberty of conscience, it is clear that for James, liberty of conscience was a means to an end, not a deeply felt principle. James believed deeply that with proper religious teaching his subjects would convert to Catholicism. Over and over again he informed the French ambassador Barillon that "he would do all he could to advance the Catholic religion," that "his principal goal was the establishment of the Catholic religion," and that "the end of all his designs was uniquely the establishment of the Catholic religion in England." Fortunately, James claimed, the Protestants had left him with ecclesiastical powers—powers not far distant from those being claimed by Louis XIV in his struggle against Innocent XI—"greater than those enjoyed by Catholic Kings in other countries." James apparently was quite taken with the arguments advanced in one French treatise based on Augustine's epistles on the Donatist question in which he justified imperial power to impose religious uniformity. One Jesuit reported that James told him privately "that he would convert England or would die a martyr." No wonder one well-informed French observer thought James was merely following "the example of what he had seen done in France, which served him as a model."⁴²

James's response to Louis XIV's Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was hardly what one would expect from someone committed to the principle of liberty of conscience. Far from expressing outrage at the French king's reversal of a century-old policy of religious indulgence, Barillon reported that James "could not have been more overjoyed" at seeing what Louis XIV had done "to destroy heresy in his kingdom." He told the Spanish ambassador Ronquillo that the revocation "is very laudable, and that since [Louis XIV's] predecessors could" offer Protestants liberties "against the laws with much more reason could he now revoke them." James celebrated each report of the mass conversions of French Huguenots. The French governor James chose for his natural sons made no secret of his belief that "the French King had done well to oblige all his subjects to be of one religion, that [the Huguenots] were of anti-monarchical principles . . . and they were to expect no protection in England." Following Bossuet's lead, James chose to deny the extent of violence perpetrated by Louis XIV's dragoons. He had Jean Claude's gory *Account of the Persecutions and Oppressions of the Protestants of France* publicly burned as an infamous libel. More than once James told the French ambassador that Louis XIV's successes increased his own "zeal and ardor" for the "advancement of the Catholic religion in England."⁴³

James's statements about religious minorities were not those of a committed tolerationist. When James spoke of Ireland, he made clear that he hoped not only to allow the Catholic majority "the free exercise of their religion" but also to award them "all the offices of war, justice and police." Nor did the king sound like a religious pluralist when he came to speak of his northern kingdom. James spoke disparagingly of Scottish "phanaticks" who visited conventicles. He had a "strong desire that only Catholics should have the right to practice their religion" in Scotland, only reluctantly conceding the political folly of such a policy. James spoke so passionately about the Catholicization of Scotland

that the Catholic priest Louis Innes exclaimed, "I never in my life heard so many zealous expressions for the conversion of our poor country as from his Majesty at that time." When the English envoy in Lisbon complained that the English merchants were not allowed "the benefit of the free exercise of their religion," the Portuguese secretary of state replied that he knew James "would be no way displeased with their proceeding in this affair." To the French ambassador James "often had the occasion" to "speak against the Calvinists whom he groups along with the Presbyterians and other Nonconformists," proclaiming that they "all had republican principles and were extremely opposed to monarchy."⁴⁴

James himself expressed views of Protestantism reminiscent of the opinions of the Gallicans. In a volume of James's writings published posthumously by his Jesuit confessor Francis Sanders, the king explained that the Protestant Reformation owed its origins and success to the worst of motives. "Pride was the occasion that Luther and Calvin revolted from the Church their Mother," he wrote. "In the lay people it was avarice that engaged them to follow these false guides, and to embrace their doctrine, to enrich themselves with the spoils of so many churches, which they robbed and whose possessions they took away by force," James lamented. The consequences of such a pernicious social movement were entirely predictable to James. "Since what they call reformation has been introduced among us," James wrote of the advent of Protestantism in England, "all the world knows the disorders it has caused there, and how our isle has been troubled by a variety of sects in the Church, and several rebellions in the state." Although James stopped short of calling for the eradication of British Protestantism, he made his predilections clear. "When we begin ill," he cautioned, referring to confessional allegiance, "and take not the right way, we ought not to wonder if we always go more and more astray."⁴⁵

James was not the defender of religious pluralism imagined by revisionist historians. James and his Gallican supporters clearly did not shy away from anti-Protestant polemic. Instead they adopted the Gallican theology and adapted the political ideology of Maimbourg and Bossuet. Despite James's public defense of liberty of conscience before his Protestant political allies, he had no trouble giving voice to the opposite ideology among his coreligionists. The statements of James's inner circle and those Catholics whom he promoted bore no resemblance to the tolerant effusions of the Quaker William Penn or the Dissenting newspaperman Henry Care or even the West Country natural philosopher Richard Burthogge. James understood that he could gain a strategic advantage by professing support for religious toleration. But among his most trusted friends and most intimate confidants he made clear his real feelings. James's court was not suffused with an aura of religious tolerance. James, the evidence suggests, wanted to establish a Catholic church reminiscent of the Gallican church of Louis XIV.



French Catholic thinking did not, however, achieve hegemonic status during the reign of James II. Many Catholics opposed James's policies. Far from being led by cau-

35. John Kettlewell, *The Religious Loyalist*, 28 August 1685 (London: Robert Kettlewell, 1685), 15, 27–28; Richard Thompson, *A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of Bristol*, 21 June 1685 (London: Luke Meredith, 1685), 5. See also John Curtois, *A Discourse* (London: Jo. Hindmarsh, 1685), 19, 30–31; James Ellesby, *The Doctrine of Passive Obedience*, 30 January 1685 (London: William Crooke, 1685), 16; Thomas Fysh, *A Sermon Preached . . . in Lyn-Regis in Norfolk*, 29 May 1685 (London: Sam. Smith, 1685), 27–28; John Scott, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes at Chelmsford*, 31 August 1685 (London: M. Flesher, 1686), 2–3, 8–9; Erasmus Warren, *Religious Loyalty, or Old Allegiance to the New King*, 8 February 1685 (London: Robert Clavell, 1685), 26; John Petter, *A Sermon*, 5 July 1685 (London: Samuel Walsel, 1685), 19–20; Robert Almond, Account of Magdalen College, 19 October 1687, Magdalen College Archives, 908/26, 1; “An Account of the Magdalen College Vistation,” 21 October 1687, NA, SP 8/1/Pt. 2, fol. 166r; “An Account of the Visitation of S. M. Magd. College,” 21 October 1687, Bodleian, Tanner 29, fol. 93r; Thomas Cartwright, *A Sermon Preached upon the Anniversary Solemnity of the Happy Inauguration of Our Dread Sovereign Lord King James II*, 6 February 1686, 2nd ed. (London: Walter Davis, 1686); Cartwright, *An Answer of a Minister of the Church of England* (London: J. L., 1687), 10; and Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, 1:695–96. For Parker, see Bonrepaus, “Report on the State of England,” 1687, NA, PRO 31/3/174, fols. 106–7; and Parker, *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie* (London: J. Martyn, 1670). For the others, see Morrice, Entering Book, 5 February 1687, DWL, 31 Q, 57; *Speech of the Right Honourable Thomas, Earl of Stamford* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1692), 6; and Memorandum on William’s Descent, 1688, NA, SP 8/2/Pt. 3, fol. 67r. Significantly, in 1687 Parker was known to be minimizing the theological differences between the Church of England and Roman Catholicism: Nathaniel Johnston to Sir John Resesby, 18 December 1687, WYAS, MX/R50/54.
36. *A Proclamation*, 12 February 1687 (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1687); Gilbert Burnet, “Some Reflections on His Majesty’s Proclamation,” 1687, reprinted in *A Collection of Eighteen Papers Relating to the Affairs of Church and State during the Reign of King James the Second* (London: John Starkey and Richard Chiswell, 1689), 10–11. This pamphlet was widely copied during James’s reign in both England and Scotland. For one example, see Hertfordshire SRO, D/EP F 26.
37. Barillon (Windsor) to Louis XIV, 13/23 September 1686, NA, PRO 31/3/167, fols. 11–13; Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, 1:174–75; Dodd, *Church History*, 3:416. Hales was a close friend of the Earl of Melfort. Hales, *Treatise on Government*. See Daniel Szechi, “A Blueprint for Tyranny? Sir Edward Hales and the Catholic Response to the Revolution of 1688,” *English Historical Review* 116 (2001): 342–67; Hales to Melfort, 27 May 1692, AWA, Old Brotherhood Papers, Book 3/253.
38. James II’s speech in Vincent Alsop, *The Humble Address of the Presbyterians* ([London]: J. W., 1687), 7; Robert Barclay, *A Genealogical Account of the Barclays of Urie* (Aberdeen, 1740), 56; James (Hague) to Dartmouth, 25 April 1679, NMM, LBK/49, 5; William Penn (London) to Thomas Lloyd, 16 March, ca. 18 May 1685, *Penn Papers*, 42, 45; J. Tucker to Arran, 19 April 1687, NAS, GD 406/1/3445; London Newsletter, 19 April 1687, FSL, L.c. 1799; James II’s answer to William Penn’s speech, 24 May 1687, BL, Add. 5540, fol. 43; Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, 1:169.
39. John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 396–417; Jacques Benigne Bossuet, *A Pastoral Letter from the Lord Bishop of Meaux* [London: Henry Hills, 1686], 2–3, 36; Maimbourg, *Discourse*, sigs. [A6r], a4v–[a5r]; Evelyn, *Diary*, 3 November 1685, 4:486. Evelyn referred to the “Harangue,” delivered by Daniel de Cosnac at Versailles on 14 July 1685; “Harangue,” in *Memoires de Daniel de Cosnac*, ed. Comte Jules de Cosnac (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1852), 2:316–22; *The Proceedings of the Clergy of France* (Lille: I. Chrysostome Malte, 1686), [ii]. William Clagett claimed that Bossuet had written a letter, which was quickly suppressed, that did “both own and justify the persecution.” Clagett, *Present State of the Controversy*, 24; Dominique Bouhours, *The Life of St. Ignatius* (London: Henry Hills, 1686), 1–2.
40. Joshua Basset, *Reason and Authority* (London: Henry Hills, 1687), 12. Unsurprisingly Basset prevented his college from celebrating the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot: John Verney (London) to Sir Ralph Verney, 17 November 1687, Buckinghamshire SRO, Verney MSS. I disagree with Mark Goldie’s description

of Basset as one who held "principles which modern liberals and secularists hold dear: a university open to a plural society." Mark Goldie, "Joshua Basset, Popery, and Revolution," in *Sidney Sussex College Cambridge: Historical Essays*, ed. D. E. D. Beales and H. B. Nisbet (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1996), 119; William Darrel, *A Vindication of St. Ignatius* (London: Anthony Boudet, 1688), sig. A2r; Dryden, *History of the League*, postscript: 8; Trinder, *Speech*, 8 January 1688, 5-6; John Betham, Sermon, 6 January 1686, in *Select Collection*, 215.

41. Etherege (Ratisbon) to Mr. Maule and Mr. Wynne, 28 February/10 March 1687, Harvard Theatre Collection, fms THR 11, 83; Perth to Hamilton, 1687, NAS, GD 406/1/9201; Lawrence Dowdall (Champagne) to James II, 22 June/2 July 1688, NA, SP 78/151, fol. 190r; Sir Edward Hales to Melfort, 27 May 1692, AWA, Old Brotherhood Papers, Book 3/253; Hales, Treatise on Government; *A Speech Spoken by Mr. Hayles, Student of University-College of Oxford* (London: A. M., 1687), 1-2; Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, 1:661.

42. Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 31 January/10 February 1687, NA, PRO 31/3/168, fol. 24v; Barillon (Windsor) to Louis XIV, 10/20 September 1685, NA, PRO 31/3/161, fol. 47r; Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 11/21 March 1686, NA, PRO 31/3/165, fol. 10v; Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 2/12 May 1687, NA, PRO, 31/3/169, fol. 26r. James made similar statements to Bonrepaus: Bonrepaus, Report on the State of England, 1687, NA, PRO 31/3/174, fol. 75r; Barillon (Windsor) to Louis XIV, 12/22 July 1686, PRO, PRO 31/3/166, fol. 40v; Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 7/17 January 1686, NA, PRO 31/3/163, fol. 8v. In his *Treatise Concerning the Correction of the Donatists*, Augustine justified the use of magisterial forces against both schismatics and heretics on the grounds that once they had been exposed to the truth, those who did not follow it were obstinate and needed to be forcibly corrected. The fourth-century Donatists had called into question the sacrament of penance and had argued that the quality of the sacraments depended on the personal character, rather than on the office of the priest. Augustine took the lead in suppressing this movement. As Mark Goldie has pointed out these were exactly the arguments advanced against toleration in the 1670s by English High Churchmen: see Goldie, "Religious Intolerance in Restoration England," in *From Persecution to Toleration*, ed. Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan Israel, and Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 335-68. Goldie notes how powerful this argument for intolerance was in the French Catholic polemic of the 1680s (338-39); Letter from Jesuit of Liege, 2 February 1687; Léon Lecestre, ed., *Mémoires de Gourville*, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1895), 2:122.

43. Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 19/29 October 1685, NA, PRO 31/3/161, fol. 66r; Ronquillo (London) to Quixon, 5 April 1686, BL, Add. 34502, fol. 61; Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 21 September/1 October, 8/18 October 1685, NA, PRO 31/3/161, fols. 51r, 60v; Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 4/14 January 1686, NA, PRO 31/3/163, fol. 71. Although James did officially welcome Huguenot refugees to England, they could receive support only if they willingly conformed to the Church of England: Jones, *Revolution of 1688*, 112-13; Sir William Trumbull, Autobiography, All Souls College, MSS 317, [42]; Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 10/20 May 1686, NA, PRO 31/3/166, fol. 8v; Jean Claude, *An Account of the Persecutions and Oppressions of the Protestants of France* (London, 1686); Barillon (Windsor) to Louis XIV, 1/11 October 1685, NA, PRO 31/3/161, fols. 57-58; Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 25 March/4 April 1686, NA, PRO 31/3/165, fol. 17v.

44. Bonrepaus (London) to Seignelay, 11/21 January 1686, NA, PRO 31/3/163, fol. 63r; James (Edinburgh) to Dartmouth, 14 December 1679, Beinecke, OSB Shelves fb.190/II, fol. 70r; Hamilton (London) to Duchess of Hamilton, 4 October 1687, NAS, GD 406/1/6236; Barillon (London) to Louis XIV, 19/29 April 1686, NA, PRO 31/3/165, fol. 30v; Innes (Paris) to William Leslie, 20/30 September 1686, SCA, Bl 1/94/10. James established a Jesuit college at the seat of government in Holyroodhouse. For the efforts to Catholicize Scotland and Ireland, see Harris, *Revolution*, 127-29, 166-69, 179-81; Charles Scarburgh (Lisbon) to Sunderland, 11/21 April 1687, NA, SP 89/16, fol. 323; Barillon (Windsor) to Louis XIV, 21 September/1 October 1685, NA, PRO 31/3/161, fol. 51v; William Stanley (Hague) to William Sancroft, 24 January/3 February 1688, Bodleian, Tanner 29, fol. 130v.

45. James II in Father Francis Sanders, *An Abridgement of the Life of James II* (London: R. Wilson, 1704), 174, 176-77.