

A TRIPTYCH ARTICLE

Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence

A Composite Text, a Thomistic Architecture,
and the Boundaries of Abandonment

Contents

1	The Counsel and Its Difficulty	1
2	The Book and Its Title Page	2
2.1	Part I: Saint-Jure's Chapter on Conformity	2
2.2	Part II, Chapter IV: Colombière's Sermons	2
2.3	The Chapter That Changed Authors	3
2.4	Drift in the Attribution	3
3	What Scripture Hands Over	4
3.1	The Loci	5
3.2	The Grammar of the Hard Sayings	5
4	The Architecture of Providence	6
4.1	Providence Is a Plan, Government Is Its Execution	6
4.2	Its Extension: Everything, Including the Accidental	6
4.3	Immediate in Design, Mediated in Execution	6
4.4	Certainty Without Necessity	7
4.5	God Works in Every Agent Without Displacing It	7
4.6	One Will, Two Considerations: Antecedent and Consequent	8
4.7	Evil: Willed, Permitted, and Neither	8
4.8	Fate: The Word the Doctors Avoided	8
4.9	The Virtue That Bears It	9
5	Abandonment: The Career of a Word	9
5.1	Francis de Sales: Two Wills and a Ball of Wax	9
5.2	Guyon, Bossuet, Fénelon: The Quarrel That Set the Vocabulary	10
5.3	Caussade: A Classic Without a Settled Author	10
5.4	Ramière's Fence	11
6	The Boundaries	12
6.1	Molinos and <i>Coelestis Pastor</i>	12
6.2	Fénelon and <i>Cum alias</i>	12
6.3	Fatalism	15
6.4	Presumption	16
6.5	Passivity, Prudence, and the Duties of State	16
6.6	The Compressed Locution	16
7	Suffering, Secondary Causes, and What May Be Said	17
7.1	What Providence Does Not License Anyone to Say	17
7.2	The Joseph Pattern	17
7.3	Lament Is Not a Failure of Surrender	18
7.4	Why Secondary Causes Matter Pastorally	18
8	What Surrender Is	18
8.1	Four Acts, Not a Mood	18
8.2	The Present Moment	19
8.3	What Is Surrendered	19
8.4	The Bounded Pastoral Note	19
	Notes	21
A	Witnesses and Editions	25
B	Scope, Method, and Qualifications	27
B.1	Reader, question, and method	27
B.2	Included and excluded scope	28
B.3	Material qualifications	28
B.4	Notes, translations, rights, currentness, and review	29
C	References	30

1 The Counsel and Its Difficulty

A woman is told that the tumour is inoperable. A father loses the work that fed his children. A man is beaten in his own house by someone who was supposed to love him. To each of them a Catholic tradition of great age and considerable beauty says: this too is in the hand of God; surrender it to him; be at peace. The counsel is not marginal. It is printed in small devotional volumes that have never gone out of stock, preached at funerals, and pressed on the newly bereaved by people who mean nothing but kindness.

It is also, taken without qualification, capable of saying something monstrous. If God wills every event, and if what God wills is good, then the beating was good, and the man who inflicted it was doing God's work, and the woman who leaves him is resisting Providence. No serious Catholic teacher has ever said that. But the counsel as it circulates does not always carry the equipment that keeps it from saying it. A reader who is handed the sentence *nothing happens except by the will of God* and nothing else has been handed a premise without its grammar.

There is therefore a real question here, and it is not the question of whether God exists or whether he cares. Grant both. The question is what follows for a creature who acts, deliberates, resists disease, flees danger, hires a lawyer, takes medicine, protects a child, and is answerable for what he does. Does surrender to Providence subtract anything from that agency, and if not, what exactly is being surrendered? The answer cannot be a mood. It has to be a structure, because the objections are structural: they concern causation, will, permission, imputability, and the difference between an event's being permitted and its being approved.

Two independent difficulties stand in the way of answering, and they are usually confused with each other. The first is textual. The counsel reaches most English-speaking readers through one small book, *Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence*, whose title page names two Jesuits—Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure and Claude de la Colombière—separated by more than half a century, neither of whom composed the book, and whose parts are not, as it happens, distributed between them the way the table of contents says. That is not a scandal; anthologies are lawful. But a reader who wants to know what a source actually teaches, and with what authority, needs to know which words belong to whom, what genre they were written in, and what the compiler did to them. A doctrine received through a composite text should be examined with the composition in view.

The second difficulty is doctrinal, and it has a history of its own with a hard edge. The vocabulary of abandonment—*indifference, surrender, letting God act, annihilation of self-will*—is shared, almost word for word, by a spirituality the Church canonised in Francis de Sales and by a spirituality the Church condemned in Miguel de Molinos. The same century produced the *Treatise on the Love of God* and the sixty-eight propositions of *Coelestis Pastor*. Twelve years after Molinos was sentenced, a bishop of enormous personal holiness, François de Fénelon, had his own book on pure love condemned at Rome for pressing one strand of the same tradition past a line the Church would not let it cross. The boundary is thus not a modern nervousness about enthusiasm. It is a boundary drawn twice, in juridical language, over precise propositions, and the propositions are available for inspection.

This article works both difficulties, in that order, and then works the doctrine and its limits. The order is deliberate. A textual history first, because the reader's actual source is a book, and its authority is exactly the authority of what is in it; then Scripture, because the doctrine is not a philosopher's inference but a received teaching; then the systematic architecture, chiefly Thomistic, that keeps the received teaching from collapsing into either fatalism or deism; then the history of abandonment as a school, including its own tangled attributions; then the boundaries, worked proposition by condemned proposition; then the two places where the counsel actually bites, suffering and prudence; and last, a positive account of what surrender is when it is not any of the things it is repeatedly mistaken for.

Three limits govern from the outset. The article does not settle the disputed mechanics of grace and freedom that divide permitted Catholic schools; it identifies the boundaries all of them accept and marks the rest as disputed. It does not tell any particular sufferer what God intended by a particular affliction, a reticence the Catechism itself requires.¹ And it is a study aid, not spiritual direction and not counsel for a crisis: where the argument reaches a case in which someone may be in danger, it says so and stops.

2 The Book and Its Title Page

The small book that carries this doctrine into most English-speaking hands announces itself, on the title page of the printing currently in trade, as *Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence: The Secret of Peace and Happiness*, “By Fr. Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure, S.J. and St. Claude de la Colombière, S.J., Translated by Prof. Paul Garvin.” The copyright page records a nihil obstat by Rev. John P. Sullivan and an imprimatur of Francis Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, dated 8 November 1961; original publication in 1961 by Alba House, Staten Island, under the title *The Secret of Peace and Happiness*; reissue by St. Raphael Editions of Sherbrooke, Quebec, in 1978 and 1980 and, in 1983, in cooperation with TAN Books; copyright 1980 in St. Raphael Editions; and a 2012 TAN printing at Charlotte, North Carolina.²

That is a great deal of publishing history for a book of about 130 pages, and it is honest as far as it goes. What it does not do—what no title page could do—is tell the reader which sentences were written by which of the two men, in what genre, or by whose hand they were selected, arranged, and joined. A short unsigned note facing the table of contents supplies the publisher’s answer: the following pages were written by Saint-Jure (1588–1657) and are “an extract from his great work entitled *The Knowledge and Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ*”; to them “has been added a further extract from the writings of St. Claude de la Colombière (1641–1682).”³ The table of contents then divides the book: Part I, three chapters, “by Father Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure”; Part II, two chapters, “by Saint Claude de la Colombière.”

This section tests that division against the sources. The test is possible because both underlying corpora are available in public-domain nineteenth-century printings, and because the English arrangement preserves enough structure to be matched against them. The result is that the publisher’s note is substantially right about Part I, substantially right about the first chapter of Part II, and—on the evidence assembled here—wrong about the last chapter, which is not Colombière’s at all.

2.1 Part I: Saint-Jure’s Chapter on Conformity

Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure’s *De la connaissance et de l’amour du Fils de Dieu Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ* is a very large seventeenth-century work of spiritual theology, reprinted repeatedly in France into the nineteenth century; the copy used here is the Paris edition of Périsset frères, 1877, whose second volume carries the end of Book II and Book III through chapter X.⁴ Book III, chapter VIII bears the title *L’amour de Notre-Seigneur unit notre volonté à la sienne*—the love of Our Lord unites our will to his—and it opens like this:

Je commencerai le grand exercice de la conformité de notre volonté avec celle de Dieu Notre-Seigneur par la doctrine de l’oracle de la théologie, saint Thomas (1 p., q. 19, a. 4). Parlant de la volonté de Dieu, il dit qu’elle est la cause de toutes les choses créées.⁵

The first chapter of the English Part I begins from the same authority at the same locus, opening with St. Thomas on the will of God as the cause of all that exists and carrying a footnote citing *Summa*, Part I, q. 19, a. 4.⁶ The correspondence continues through the chapter. Saint-Jure’s section VII asks *en quoi nous devons pratiquer cette conformité*—in what matters we are to practise this conformity—and answers: in the natural things outside us (heat, cold, rain, hail, storms, plague, famine), in what touches us more closely, in defects of natural endowment, in sickness; section VIII continues into death and into the degrees of grace and glory.⁷ The English Part I, chapter III, subdivides the practice of conformity into fourteen numbered heads that run over the same ground in the same order: natural incidents of daily life, public calamities, family life, reverses of fortune, poverty, adversity and disgrace, defects of nature, sickness and infirmity, death and the manner of it, loss of spiritual consolation, the consequences of our sins, interior trials, spiritual favours, and a summary.⁸ Part I is thus what the publisher says it is: an extract, more finely subdivided than its original, from a single chapter of a single work.

2.2 Part II, Chapter IV: Colombière’s Sermons

Claude de la Colombière is a different kind of author. He left no large systematic treatise on providence. What he left, and what was printed after his death, is preaching: sermons delivered largely in England during his time as chaplain to the Duchess of York, together with retreat notes and *Réflexions chrétiennes*. The nineteenth-century collected

Œuvres of 1832 print the sermons in thematic order, each headed by its thesis. The fifth volume contains, in this order, sermons *Sur la soumission à la volonté de Dieu* (p. 65), *Sur la confiance en Dieu* (p. 85), *Sur la prière* (p. 102), and, later in the volume, *Sur les adversités* (p. 218).⁹

The theses printed with those sermons are worth setting beside the English chapter's subdivisions. *Sur les adversités* is summarised in the 1832 table as: *Les adversités nous sont utiles si nous sommes justes, elles nous sont nécessaires si nous sommes pécheurs*—adversities are useful to us if we are just, and necessary to us if we are sinners. The English Part II, chapter IV, contains a numbered head reading “Adversity is useful for the just and necessary for sinners.” *Sur la prière* is summarised as: *Nous obtenons peu par nos prières, parce que nous demandons trop peu, parce que le peu que nous demandons nous ne le demandons pas assez*—we obtain little by our prayers because we ask too little, and because the little we ask we do not ask enough. The English chapter's prayer heads run: “Recourse to prayer,” “To obtain what we want,” “To be delivered from evil,” “We do not ask enough,” “Perseverance in prayer,” “Obstinate trust.”¹⁰ The correspondence is close enough, thesis by thesis, that Part II's first chapter is best described as a compilation from several Colombière sermons rather than an “extract” from one text—which is a materially different editorial act, since a compiler choosing among sermons preached to different congregations on different subjects is making a book that its author never wrote.

2.3 The Chapter That Changed Authors

The last chapter of Part II, printed under Colombière's name, is headed “Exercise of Conformity to Divine Providence” and divided into three parts: an act of faith, hope and charity; an act of filial submission to providence; and the usefulness of this exercise.¹¹

Saint-Jure's chapter on conformity closes with a section headed *Exercice particulier envers la providence divine*, analysed in its own head-note as: *I. Actes de foi.—II. D'espérance.—III. D'amour et d'estime.—IV. D'abandon absolu*. It opens by saying that the exercise is of marvellous importance and inestimable profit; it then directs the reader to make first a great act of faith in the truth of providence, that God has a continual and most particular care of everything and of you especially—of your body, your soul, your occupations, your dwellings, your contentments, your reputation, your necessities, your health, your sicknesses, your life, your death, down to the least of your hairs, which neither falls nor even stirs without his disposition; then an act of hope for the same objects; then an act of charity, loving providence tenderly as a child its good mother; and finally, after these acts have been made and often repeated with firmness and vigour, the soul is to abandon itself totally to divine providence, to rest and as it were fall gently asleep in its arms as a child in its mother's, taking for its motto the words of David, *In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam*, and singing further *Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi deerit*.¹²

The English chapter reproduces this section, in this order, with these images and these two psalms, collapsing Saint-Jure's four movements into three headings by joining faith, hope, and charity under one head and giving the fourth—absolute abandonment—the title “Act of filial submission to providence.” Its opening sentence states, as the French does, that the exercise is of great importance because of the advantages it confers on those who undertake it devoutly.¹³ On the evidence, the chapter that the book attributes to Colombière is a translation of Saint-Jure.

Three cautions belong with that conclusion. First, seventeenth-century spiritual writers borrowed freely and often silently; it is not impossible that Colombière reproduced Saint-Jure's exercise somewhere in his own papers, and the present research did not exhaust his corpus. What can be said is that the text is Saint-Jure's, that it stands in Saint-Jure's chapter as its designed conclusion, and that no corresponding text was found in the Colombière volumes examined. Second, the misattribution is at the level of the compiler's parts, not of the doctrine: the exercise says nothing that the rest of the book does not say. Third—and this is the point that matters for a reader—the compiler's arrangement is invisible to the person holding the book, and its effect is to lend a canonised saint's name to pages he did not write, and to leave the actual author of much of the book, a man never raised to the altars, at the level of a supporting credit.

2.4 Drift in the Attribution

The drift did not stop at the compiler. Colombière was beatified in 1929 and canonised in 1992, so that printings before and after the canonisation differ on the title page between “Blessed” and “Saint”—an ordinary and correct change.¹⁴ Less ordinary is what happens outside the publisher's control. Extracts of the book circulate on devotional sites and in parish handouts under the heading “Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence, by St. Claude de la Colombière,”

with Saint-Jure’s name dropped; at least one large Catholic retailer lists the volume that way.¹⁵ A book of composite authorship, whose parts were selected by an unnamed hand, translated in 1961, and reissued under three imprints in four decades, has thus in ordinary use become the work of the more famous of its two named authors—who did not write the chapter most often reprinted from it.

None of this touches whether the doctrine is true. It touches what kind of witness the book is. It is not a treatise arguing a thesis; it is a devotional anthology, at two removes from both authors, addressed to readers assumed to be already instructed in the faith. Sentences in it that sound like technical theology—and there are several, of which the most important is treated later in these pages—are seventeenth-century preaching prose, and must be read as such, with the qualification the preacher himself supplies elsewhere and with the doctrinal grammar the Church supplies always.

Part as printed	Attributed to	Source identified here	Basis and limits of the identification
Part I, chs. I–III	Saint-Jure	<i>De la connaissance et de l’amour du Fils de Dieu</i> , Book III, ch. VIII, §§ I–VIII (Périsset ed., 1877, vol. 2)	Opening authority and locus (ST I, q. 19, a. 4) identical; the practice-of-conformity heads track §§ VII–VIII in order and subject. Extract, resubdivided; not collated line by line, and no seventeenth-century printing consulted.
Part II, ch. IV	Colombière	Compilation from sermons <i>Sur la soumission à la volonté de Dieu</i> , <i>Sur la confiance en Dieu</i> , <i>Sur la prière</i> , and <i>Sur les adversités</i> (<i>Œuvres</i> , 1832, vol. 5)	Chapter heads reproduce the printed theses of those sermons, including “useful for the just, necessary for sinners” and “we do not ask enough.” Sermon-by-sermon collation was not performed; other Colombière material may also be present.
Part II, ch. V	Colombière	Saint-Jure, same chapter, § X (<i>Exercice particulier envers la providence divine</i>)	Four movements (faith, hope, love, absolute abandonment) rendered as three heads in the same order, with the same maternal image and the same two psalms. Contrary evidence would be a parallel in Colombière’s own corpus, which was searched but not exhausted.
Whole book	Saint-Jure and Colombière	An anonymous compiler’s anthology, translated by Paul Garvin (1961)	The selection, joining, and division into parts are editorial acts by an unnamed hand; the imprimatur of 1961 attests doctrinal review of the English book, not authorship or textual criticism.

3 What Scripture Hands Over

The doctrine of providence is not a conclusion reached by pressing a philosophical premise; it is a received teaching, and the shape it takes in Catholic theology is set by the way Scripture actually speaks. That way of speaking is more daring than most modern religious prose, and the daring is the source of half the difficulty. Scripture regularly attributes events directly to God without mentioning the created causes through which they came about, and it does so in cases where the created cause was a criminal.

3.1 The Loci

The material is scattered but consistent, and a compact inventory is more useful than a survey. Quotations follow the Douay–Rheims (Challoner) translation throughout.¹⁶

Universality and measure. “Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight” (Wisdom 11:21); and “how could any thing endure, if thou wouldst not? or be preserved, if not called by thee?” (Wisdom 11:26). The first sentence gives providence its classical adjectives—wise, exact, particular. The second grounds providence in conservation, so that the government of the world is not a policy God adopts toward a world that would otherwise continue without him, but belongs to the same act by which it continues at all.

Particularity. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: better are you than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29–31). The movement here is worth noticing, because it is an argument: the premise is the extension of providence to what is negligible, and the conclusion is the abolition of fear about what is not. Providence is preached in the Gospel as a remedy for anxiety about food, clothing, and tomorrow (Matthew 6:25–34), and the apostolic letters repeat it in the imperative: “Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God . . . casting all your care upon him, for he hath care of you” (1 Peter 5:6–7).

Sovereignty over human plans. “The heart of man disposeth his way: but the Lord must direct his steps” (Proverbs 16:9). The proverb does not deny that the heart disposes; it subordinates the disposing. James turns the same point into a rule of speech: not “we will go into such a city, and there we will spend a year, and will traffic, and make our gain,” but “if the Lord will, and if we shall live, we will do this or that” (James 4:13–15).

The hard sayings. “Who is he that hath commanded a thing to be done, when the Lord commandeth it not? Shall not both evil and good proceed out of the mouth of the Highest?” (Lamentations 3:37–38). And Job to his wife: “if we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil? In all these things Job did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:10). These are the texts on which the devotional tradition of surrender is built, and they are also the texts most easily misused, for reasons the next subsection takes up.

Providence through wickedness. Joseph, to the brothers who sold him: “Fear not: can we resist the will of God? You thought evil against me: but God turned it into good, that he might exalt me, as at present you see, and might save many people” (Genesis 50:19–20). And Peter at Pentecost, on the crucifixion: “This same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). That sentence is the most compressed statement of the doctrine in Scripture. In a single clause it affirms the determinate divine counsel and the wickedness of the hands, and it does not treat the first as excusing the second: the speech that says *by the determinate counsel of God* is a speech that convicts its hearers.

The promise. “And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be saints” (Romans 8:28). This is the verse most often quoted at the grieving, and it repays exactness. It is not a promise that all things are good, nor that each event will be seen to have produced a discernible temporal benefit. It is a promise about a working-together, addressed to those who love God and are called according to his purpose, and its horizon in the chapter that contains it is conformity to the image of the Son and final glory—not compensation inside this life.

3.2 The Grammar of the Hard Sayings

Two rules govern the reading of Lamentations 3:38 and Job 2:10, and both come from the tradition rather than from the convenience of the moment.

The first is lexical. The “evil” that proceeds from the mouth of the Most High, in the prophetic idiom, is calamity—defeat, exile, famine, sickness—and not moral fault. The scriptural languages use one word where careful theology needs two: *malum culpae*, the evil of fault, and *malum poenae*, the evil of penalty or affliction. Scripture ascribes the second to God without embarrassment. Of the first it says the opposite, in terms: God tempts no man to evil (James 1:13). A doctrine of surrender that slides quietly from the second to the first has not deepened the biblical teaching; it has mistranslated it.

The second rule is stated by the Catechism as a rule of reading rather than as a concession. Scripture, it says, often attributes actions to God without mentioning secondary causes; this is not “a primitive mode of speech” but a profound way of recalling God’s primacy and absolute lordship over history and the world, and so of educating his

people to trust him—and the prayer of the Psalms is the great school of that trust.¹⁷ This is a permission and a limit at once. It licenses the psalmist, and Job, and the seventeenth-century preacher who writes that if we fall ill God is the cause of our illness. It does not license the inference that whatever God is said to cause he causes in the same manner, or that the secondary causes named elsewhere in Scripture—the brothers who sold Joseph, the hands that crucified—have been absorbed into the divine agency and thereby exonerated. Acts 2:23 forbids that inference in one breath.

What Scripture hands over, then, is a set of affirmations rather than a system: that providence is universal, particular, wise, and concrete; that it reaches the sparrow and the hair; that it governs through and around human plans and human malice without ceasing to hold the malicious responsible; that affliction may be received from God’s hand; that fault may not; and that the good toward which all things work is promised, not displayed. A system becomes necessary only because these affirmations, held together, generate pressure at three joints—universality against contingency, divine causality against creaturely responsibility, and the goodness of providence against the fact of evil. The next section supplies the account the Catholic tradition has actually used to bear that pressure.

4 The Architecture of Providence

The devotional literature of surrender presupposes an account of divine causality that it almost never states. When it says that nothing happens without God willing or permitting it, it is relying on a body of distinctions worked out at length elsewhere, and it is relying on them silently. This section states them. The framework used here is Thomistic. That is a choice among permitted Catholic schools, not a claim that other frameworks are excluded; the boundaries themselves—universal and particular providence, real created causes, real freedom, God’s innocence of moral fault—are common Catholic doctrine, and the disputes that divide the schools are marked as such where they arise.¹⁸

4.1 Providence Is a Plan, Government Is Its Execution

Aquinas begins where the word begins. Providence, in the strict sense, is not God’s activity in the world but the ordering-idea by which he directs things to their end: *ratio autem ordinandorum in finem, proprie providentia est*—the plan of things to be ordered to an end is, properly speaking, providence.¹⁹ The carrying-out of that plan in time is called government, and the whole of question 103 is given to it. The distinction is not pedantry. It is what lets the tradition say, in the same breath, that providence is eternal, unchanging, and immediate to every detail, and that its execution runs through a world of causes that act, fail, collide, and are themselves acted upon.

4.2 Its Extension: Everything, Including the Accidental

Nothing falls outside. “As there can be nothing which is not created by God, so there can be nothing which is not subject to His government,” because the same act gives being and gives perfection; and there can be nothing not ordered to the divine goodness as its end.²⁰ The hard case is chance, and Aquinas takes it directly. Chance is real at the level at which it is real: relative to a particular cause, an event may genuinely be casual or fortuitous, because it fell outside *that* cause’s order. What cannot happen is that an event fall outside the order of the universal cause. “It is possible for an effect to result outside the order of some particular cause; but not outside the order of the universal cause”—and the reason is that whatever impedes a particular cause is itself a cause, traceable in turn to the first.²¹

This is the first place where the devotional formula gets its licence and its limit at once. “Nothing happens by chance” is true, and it is not a denial that lightning strikes randomly, that tumours arise from mutations, or that the man who found you in the street found you by accident. Those are true descriptions at the level of proximate causes. The claim is that no such series escapes the ordering intellect that holds all of them in being.

4.3 Immediate in Design, Mediated in Execution

Question 103, article 6, asks whether God governs all things immediately, and gives the answer on which everything downstream depends. “As to the design of government, God governs all things immediately; whereas in its execution,

He governs some things by means of others.” Why not do it all himself? Because “it is a greater perfection for a thing to be good in itself and also the cause of goodness in others, than only to be good in itself”—so God makes some things causes of others, as a master not only teaches his pupils but gives them the power to teach. The reply to the second objection puts it with startling bluntness: “If God governed alone, things would be deprived of the perfection of causality.”²²

The Catechism states the same principle in its own idiom: God “grants his creatures not only their existence, but also the dignity of acting on their own, of being causes and principles for each other, and thus of co-operating in the accomplishment of his plan”; and the use of creatures is “not a sign of weakness, but rather a token of almighty God’s greatness and goodness.”²³ Any spirituality of surrender that treats created activity as an obstacle to divine action has therefore inverted the doctrine at its root. On this account, creaturely causality is not the space left over when God withdraws; it is one of the effects God intends.

4.4 Certainty Without Necessity

Article 4 of question 22 asks whether providence imposes necessity on the things it foresees, and answers no—not because providence is weak, but because the perfection of the universe requires all grades of being, including contingent ones. “To some effects He has prepared necessary causes, so that they happen of necessity; to others contingent causes, that they may happen by contingency, according to the condition of their proximate causes.” The reply to the first objection sharpens it: the effect of divine providence is not merely that something should happen *somehow*, but that it should happen contingently or necessarily as the case may be; therefore “it happens infallibly and necessarily, what divine providence disposes to happen infallibly and necessarily, and it happens contingently, what the plan of divine providence has to happen contingently.”²⁴

The structural point is that divine certainty does not compete with created contingency, because divine providence is not one more cause acting on the same level. A cause on the same level would have to overpower a contingent cause to guarantee its effect. The first cause guarantees the effect *as contingent* by causing the contingent cause to be, and to be contingent. Whether that account fully removes the difficulty is one of the oldest questions in theology; it is at least not the crude determinism it is usually taken for.

4.5 God Works in Every Agent Without Displacing It

The heart of the matter is question 105, article 5. Aquinas states the occasionalist error at once and rejects it: some understood God to work in every agent “in such a way that no created power has any effect in things . . . that it is not fire that gives heat, but God in the fire. But this is impossible.” Two reasons are given. First, the order of cause and effect would be taken away from created things, “and this would imply lack of power in the Creator, for it is due to the power of the cause that it bestows active power on its effect.” Second, the active powers evidently present in things would be pointless. “We must therefore understand that God works in things in such a manner that things have their proper operation.”²⁵

Two implications matter for surrender. The first is that divine and created agency are not a zero-sum pair; the same action can proceed wholly from God as first cause and wholly from the creature as secondary cause, precisely because they are not agents of the same order. The second concerns the will. Article 4 of the same question asks whether God can move the created will, and answers that he can and does, “especially . . . by an interior inclination of the will.” Does that coerce? “A thing moved by another is forced if moved against its natural inclination; but if it is moved by another giving to it the proper natural inclination, it is not forced” —God, moving the will, “does not force it, because He gives the will its own natural inclination.” And does it destroy imputability? “If the will were so moved by another as in no way to be moved from within itself, the act of the will would not be imputed for reward or blame. But since its being moved by another does not prevent its being moved from within itself . . . it does not thereby forfeit the motive for merit or demerit.”²⁶

4.6 One Will, Two Considerations: Antecedent and Consequent

The devotional literature constantly distinguishes what God wills from what he permits, and often speaks as though these were two faculties. Aquinas's actual apparatus is more careful, and the care is worth reproducing exactly, because it is the point at which sloppy surrender becomes false.

Commenting on 1 Timothy 2:4, that God wills all men to be saved, he offers three readings, the third from St. John Damascene: the text is understood of the antecedent will, not the consequent. Then the crucial qualification: *quae quidem distinctio non accipitur ex parte ipsius voluntatis divinae, in qua nihil est prius vel posterius; sed ex parte volitorum*—the distinction is not taken on the side of the divine will, in which there is nothing prior or posterior, but on the side of the things willed.²⁷ The example is the just judge, who antecedently wills that all men live and consequently wills that the murderer hang. What is antecedent is not an earlier divine intention that was later overridden; it is the same simple will considered with respect to a good taken absolutely, before the circumstances that specify it.

A doctrine of surrender must hold both halves. If only the consequent will is real, then whatever happens is straightforwardly willed and nothing is deplorable, which is fatalism. If only the antecedent will is real, then God's actual government of this world is a series of frustrations, which is not the God of Scripture.

4.7 Evil: Willed, Permitted, and Neither

Question 19, article 9, asks whether God wills evils. The answer discriminates. Evil as such can never be the object of any appetite; it is sought only accidentally, as attached to some good—the fornicator intends the pleasure, “and the deformity of sin is only an accompaniment.” God wills no good more than his own goodness. “Hence He in no way wills the evil of sin, which is the privation of right order towards the divine good. The evil of natural defect, or of punishment, He does will, by willing the good to which such evils are attached. Thus in willing justice He wills punishment; and in willing the preservation of the natural order, He wills some things to be naturally corrupted.”²⁸

Three results follow, and they should be kept apart in any pastoral use of this doctrine. Moral fault is never willed by God, in any sense, however qualified. Natural corruption and just punishment can be willed incidentally, under a good—which does not entitle anyone to infer that a particular sufferer is being punished. And what God does with respect to moral fault is neither to cause it nor to be defeated by it, but knowingly not to prevent it, while causing every positive actuality in the act and governing the whole to an undefeated end. The Catechism states the boundary in the same shape: “God is in no way, directly or indirectly, the cause of moral evil,” but permits it, “because he respects the freedom of his creatures and, mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it”; and, quoting Augustine, would “never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in his works if he were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself.” The paragraph that follows adds the sentence every consoler needs: “But for all that, evil never becomes a good.”²⁹

4.8 Fate: The Word the Doctors Avoided

Because surrender is so often confused with fatalism, it is worth recording that Aquinas devotes a question to fate and, having granted the term a defensible sense, advises against using it. Fate, in the sense he will allow, is nothing but the disposition of second causes as ordered by divine providence to foreseen effects; whatever is subject to second causes is subject to fate, and what God does immediately is not.³⁰ But in article 1 he adds a warning that has aged well: the holy doctors avoided the word “on account of those who twisted its application to a certain force in the position of the stars,” and Augustine's ruling is quoted with evident approval—“If anyone ascribes human affairs to fate, meaning thereby the will or power of God, let him keep to his opinion, but hold his tongue.”³¹ The distinction between providence and fate is not merely verbal. Fate, as its ancient partisans meant it, is a necessitating series indifferent to persons; providence is the plan of an intellect that loves, executed through causes some of which are free, and it terminates not in an outcome but in an end.

4.9 The Virtue That Bears It

Finally, surrender has a name in the treatise on the virtues, and the name is not passivity. Patience, says Aquinas following Augustine, is the virtue by which a man “bears evil with an equal mind,” lest sorrow drive him to abandon the goods by which he advances to better things.³² Three of that question’s determinations bear directly on the boundary this article is drawing.

Patience is not endurance as such: those who bear evils in order to inflict them are not patient, and “we may marvel at their hardness of heart, but we must refuse to call them patient.”³³ Patience is impossible without grace, because it is caused by charity, and charity is impossible without grace: a natural stoicism, however impressive, is not the virtue in question.³⁴ And patience is not the greatest of the virtues; it is a part of fortitude, ordered to something beyond itself, and in heaven it will not consist in bearing anything at all.³⁵ A spirituality that makes suffering the point, rather than charity under suffering, has promoted a subordinate virtue into the place of the greatest—and that inversion, as the next sections show, is one of the recurring marks of the condemned versions.

5 Abandonment: The Career of a Word

“Abandonment” is not a scriptural term and not a scholastic one. It is a word of French spiritual prose, and it acquired its technical sense in a single century—roughly between the publication of the *Treatise on the Love of God* in 1616 and the condemnation of Fénelon’s *Maximes* in 1699. Everything afterwards, including the books an English-speaking Catholic is likely to be handed today, descends from that century and carries its scars. The word therefore has to be read historically before it can be read doctrinally.

5.1 Francis de Sales: Two Wills and a Ball of Wax

The Salesian account is the one the later tradition builds on, and its decisive move is a distinction between two ways God’s will meets us. There is the *signified will*—what God has made known that he wants believed, hoped, feared, loved, commanded, and counselled—and the *will of good-pleasure*, which is God’s absolute will, known to us chiefly by events. Books VIII and IX of the *Treatise* take them in turn: Book VIII on conformity to the signified will, Book IX on submission to the will of good-pleasure.³⁶

Two features of the account do more work than their gentle tone suggests. The first is that the signified will proceeds “by way of desire, and not by way of absolute will,” so that we can obey or resist it. De Sales analyses this into three acts: “he wills that we should be able to resist, he desires that we should not resist, and yet allows us to resist if we please.” When we resist, “God contributes nothing to our disobedience, but leaving our will in the hands of its liberty permits it to make choice of evil”; when we obey, “God contributes his assistance, his inspiration, and his grace.” Permission itself is “an action of the will which of itself is barren, sterile and fruitless, and is as it were a passive action, which acts not but only permits action.” And the divine desire is a real desire: God “solicits, exhorts, excites, inspires, aids and succours us”—for one who forced the point would be treating his friend not as a guest but “like a capon that has to be fattened.”³⁷

The second is that surrender to the will of good-pleasure is bounded, in de Sales’s own formulation, by an exception. “Nothing, except sin, is done without that will of God which is called absolute, or will of good-pleasure, which no one can hinder, and which is only known to us by events.”³⁸ That single clause is the hinge on which the whole doctrine turns, and it is the clause the later devotional literature abbreviates and readers of that literature drop.

The heart of Book IX is chapter IV, on indifference, and it opens by refusing to let indifference be confused with resignation. “Resignation prefers God’s will before all things, yet it loves many other things besides the will of God. Indifference goes beyond resignation: for it loves nothing except for the love of God’s will.” Then the image that made the doctrine famous: “The indifferent heart is as a ball of wax in the hands of its God, receiving with equal readiness all the impressions of the Divine pleasure; it is a heart without choice, equally disposed for everything, having no other object of its will than the will of its God.” And a page later comes the sentence that would cause a century of trouble: the indifferent soul “would prize hell more with God’s will than heaven without it; nay she would even prefer hell before heaven if she perceived only a little more of God’s good-pleasure in that than in this, so that if by supposition of an impossible thing she should know that her damnation would be more agreeable to God than her salvation, she would quit her salvation and run to her damnation.”³⁹

What keeps the ball of wax from being quietism is the chapter that follows. De Sales's indifference is not indifference to what one is to do; it is indifference in the face of what one has not been told. "The divine good-pleasure is scarcely known otherwise than by events, and as long as it is unknown to us, we must keep as close as possible to the will of God which is already declared or signified to us." His own worked example is a sickbed: he does not know whether God intends his mother's illness to end in death, "but I know well that while awaiting the event from his good-pleasure, he wills, by his declared will, that I use remedies proper to effect a cure." Only when the event has actually occurred is there anything to acquiesce in. He then poses the objection directly: are we then to care for nothing and abandon our affairs to the mercy of events? "Pardon me, Theotimus, we are to omit nothing which is requisite to bring the work which God has put into our hands to a happy issue, yet upon condition that, if the event be contrary, we should lovingly and peaceably embrace it."⁴⁰ The Abraham passage in the same chapter makes the same point in narrative: the mark of the indifferent heart is that Abraham lowers the knife at the angel's word as readily as he raised it at God's, being "equally ready to sacrifice or not to sacrifice his son."

One further chapter deserves notice because it anticipates the worst misuse of surrender. Book IX, chapter VIII, treats how we unite our will with God's "in the permission of sins"—and its counsel is the opposite of passivity. "God sovereignly hates sin, and yet he most wisely permits it, in order to let the reasonable creature act according to the condition of its nature"; and therefore, "however obstinate sinners may be, let us never desist from aiding and assisting them." Only after tears and the offices of charity have been spent are we to turn our minds to other work.⁴¹

5.2 Guyon, Bossuet, Fénelon: The Quarrel That Set the Vocabulary

At the end of the same century the vocabulary went to court. Jeanne Guyon's writings on pure love and passive prayer drew Fénelon's theological defence and Bossuet's theological attack, and the resulting quarrel—conducted at Versailles as much as in the schools—settled what French Catholic spirituality could safely say for two centuries afterwards.

The questions in dispute were not trivial ones. What does union with God mean? Can a human being be so detached as to will only what God wills? Can God be loved with a wholly disinterested love? Is union the normal flowering of a committed spiritual life, as Fénelon held, or a favour granted to particular predestined souls, as Bossuet held?⁴² Guyon took herself to be describing what earlier writers had called receptivity to the divine, the *Gelassenheit* of the Rhinelanders, Ignatian indifference, or Salesian abandonment. Whether she was right about that is precisely what Rome had to decide.

It decided twice, and differently, in ways the next section examines proposition by proposition. Molinos was condemned in 1687 as a heretic and imprisoned; Fénelon's *Explication des maximes des saints* was condemned in 1699 by a brief that carefully avoided calling him one, and he submitted at once from his own pulpit. The effect, as one modern historian of the literature puts it, was that "for some two centuries subsequently, 'mystical' language and themes vanished from spiritual literature"; writers spoke of devotion and piety rather than mysticism, and even the great Spanish mystics were handled with tongs.⁴³ That reticence is the immediate literary background of the books this article is about.

5.3 Caussade: A Classic Without a Settled Author

The best-known modern treatise of abandonment is *L'Abandon à la providence divine*, published in 1861 by the Jesuit Henri Ramière and attributed by him to Jean-Pierre de Caussade, S.J. (1675–1751). Its attribution history is a cautionary tale in the same genre as the anthology examined earlier in these pages, and it is now well documented.

The manuscript Ramière worked from had survived the Revolution and was kept by the Sisters of Nazareth at Montmirail, having originally belonged to a Paris Visitation convent. A note described it as letters "written by an ecclesiastical person to a superior of a religious community," and someone had added that the author was Father Caussade of the Society of Jesus. Ramière took the indications at face value. He also supplied the title: the manuscript's own name, *A Treatise Where One Discovers the True Art of the Perfection of Salvation*, "gives no idea," he wrote, "of the subject that it deals with." He reordered the material to some extent, with an eye to protecting unschooled readers from ideas that were too mystical or risky, and he noted in his preface that the treatise does not sufficiently stress that God's sanctifying action never occurs apart from the person of Jesus Christ. Later reprints added letters published as Caussade's, at least trebling the volume's size and creating an impression of a prolific author.⁴⁴

Modern research has gone further. Jacques Gagey's study of the manuscripts, and of the correspondence of a Nancy Visitation archivist, Sœur Fervel, who had been in contact with Ramière, shows that it was Fervel who persuaded Ramière that the treatise had been assembled from Caussade's letters to Mère Marie-Anne-Sophie de Rottembourg, and who passed him further manuscript letters as Caussade's. On Gagey's showing only thirty-two letters of spiritual direction are genuinely Caussade's, addressed to an unnamed "lady from Lorraine"; and their unpolished style is, in Salin's judgement, "far removed from the lyricism marking the treatise." Gagey attributes the treatise itself to that lady; Salin finds the arguments unconvincing and declines to name an author at all, observing that we know neither the writer's gender nor his or her ecclesiastical status, only that the writer had been steeped in the tradition of Francis de Sales and Madame Guyon.⁴⁵

The situation, then, is this. A classic of Catholic spirituality circulates under the name of a Jesuit whose authorship its most recent scholarly editor regards as almost impossible; in a text arranged and partly reordered by a nineteenth-century editor; under a title that editor invented; often bound with letters that mostly are not the named author's either. None of that makes the book bad. It makes it an anonymous eighteenth-century work of the Salesian-Guyonian tradition, transmitted through a nineteenth-century Jesuit's editorial judgement—which is what a careful reader should know before citing "de Caussade" as an authority for anything.

5.4 Ramière's Fence

What Ramière did next is more interesting than his attribution, and it is available in a public-domain English translation. To the 1861 edition he prefixed a preface headed "Foundation and true nature of the virtue of abandonment, to explain and defend Father Caussade's doctrine"—in effect, a fence built around the treatise before the reader is let into it. Its opening sentences say why: "There is no truth however clear which does not become error the moment it is lessened or exaggerated; and there is no food however salutary for the soul which may not, when ill-applied, become a fatal poison. The virtue of abandonment does not escape this danger." He then names the danger by name—the seventeenth-century Quietists, whose "specious sophistries" had for a time misled even "the pious Fénelon"—and undertakes to set out "the just limits which should mark our abandonment to divine Providence."⁴⁶

The fence has three principles and a set of rules. The principles: nothing is done or happens, in the material or moral world, that God has not foreseen from eternity and has not willed or at least permitted; God can will or permit nothing except in view of the end he proposed in creating, his glory and the glory of Christ; and, Ramière's own addition, God wills to be glorified through this creature's happiness, so that in God's designs man's sanctification and happiness are inseparable from the divine glory. From these he draws the conclusion that confidence "cannot be too great, too absolute, too child-like"—and then, immediately, the qualification that matters: "This confidence in the fatherly providence of God cannot, evidently, dispense us from doing all that is in our power to accomplish His designs; but after having done all that depends upon our efforts we will abandon ourselves completely to God for the rest."

The rules distinguish classes of events, and the distinctions are exactly the ones a modern reader needs. Where an event depends solely on God and human liberty had no part in producing or averting it—weather, unforeseeable accidents, natural defects of body or soul—"it is evident that our abandonment cannot be too absolute." Where the suffering comes through the malice of others, four things are to be done and kept apart: we cannot approve the offence against God, and should detest it, "not because it wounds our self-love, but because it is an offence against the divine rights"; we may regard what is in itself an evil as a blessing for ourselves, by looking past the creature who caused it to the God who permitted it; we resign ourselves as to consequences already consummated and irreparable; and—this is the fourth rule, and the decisive one—"if it is in our power to avert the consequences of malice and injustice, and if in our true interest, and in the interest of the divine glory, we deem it necessary to take any measures to this end, let us do so without departing from the practice of the holy virtue of abandonment." Where our own faults are concerned, Ramière insists on distinguishing in the fault "what is culpable and what is humiliating": the culpability is to be hated and corrected, the humiliation accepted.

Finally he takes up the question that had destroyed Fénelon: should abandonment extend to accepting one's own damnation, and so make God the absolute sacrifice of every personal interest? "To this point would Fenelon have carried the purity of love"—and, Ramière answers, "the Church has condemned this doctrine which, in proposing to man a perfection contrary to his nature, reverses the order of God's designs." His argument is not merely juridical: "How could one of the theological virtues be contrary to another, and charity exclude hope? What is eternal happiness if not the eternal reign of pure love?" What perfect abandonment asks is that we observe in our desires the order of God's designs—glory first, our happiness inseparably second, never separated even hypothetically.

There is a certain irony in a nineteenth-century editor needing to erect this fence around a text he had himself misattributed, retitled, and rearranged. But the fence is sound, it is contemporaneous with the treatise's entry into modern devotional life, and it makes explicit what the tradition had learned the hard way. The next section examines what, exactly, it had learned.

6 The Boundaries

Four things are regularly mistaken for trustful surrender: quietism, the pure-love doctrine condemned in Fénelon, fatalism, and presumption. The first two were condemned by name and in propositions, which makes them the most useful boundary markers available: instead of arguing about tendencies, one can read what was actually forbidden. The other two are errors of reasoning rather than condemned systems, and they are treated after the propositions.

6.1 Molinos and *Coelestis Pastor*

Miguel de Molinos, a Spanish priest resident in Rome, published *La Guía espiritual* in 1675; it was approved by theologians, went through some twenty editions in twelve years, and made its author one of the most sought-after directors in the city. In 1685 the Holy Office ordered his arrest. A decree of 28 August 1687 and the constitution *Coelestis Pastor* condemned sixty-eight propositions that he had acknowledged as his own; the sentence was read publicly at Santa Maria sopra Minerva on 3 September 1687, and he abjured and was imprisoned for life.⁴⁷

What was condemned is not a mood but a chain of consequences. The first proposition sets the programme—*oportet hominem suas potentias annihilare, et haec est via interna*, man must annihilate his powers, and this is the interior way—and the rest draw it out: to want to act is to offend God, who wills to be the sole agent, so one must abandon oneself wholly and afterwards remain *velut corpus exanime*, like a lifeless body; natural activity is grace's enemy, "because God wills to work in us without us"; the soul is not to seek its own salvation, nor to ask anything of God, nor to give thanks; temptations are met with no more than negative resistance; the virtues are to be abandoned; acts of love toward the Blessed Virgin, the saints, and the humanity of Christ are excluded as sensible; obscene external acts performed under diabolical "violence" are not sins and need not be confessed; through acquired contemplation one reaches a state of sinning no more; and the interior life is separated from confession, from directors' external judgement, and from the bishop's authority.⁴⁸

The censure appended to the list is itself instructive, because it is graded rather than uniform: certain propositions are branded heretical (among them numbers 3, 13–15, and the whole block 41–53 on the "violences"), others as proximate to heresy or savouring of heresy, others as erroneous, scandalous, blasphemous, offensive to pious ears, rash, or subversive of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, "respectively"—that is, each qualification attaching to the propositions listed against it.⁴⁹ Reading the grading is part of reading the document: the condemnation is a juridical instrument with internal distinctions, not a thunderclap.

6.2 Fénelon and *Cum alias*

Twelve years later the brief *Cum alias ad apostolatus* of Innocent XII, dated 12 March 1699, condemned twenty-three propositions extracted from Fénelon's *Explication des maximes des saints sur la vie intérieure*. The subject is different from Molinos's. Fénelon is not teaching the annihilation of the faculties or the suspension of the moral law; he is defending disinterested love, and the propositions that gave offence concern hope.⁵⁰

The first proposition posits "a habitual state of love of God which is pure charity and without any admixture of the motive of one's own interest," in which "neither the fear of punishments nor the desire of rewards has any longer a part"; the second, that in the contemplative or unitive state "every interested motive of fear and hope is lost"; the sixth, that in the state of holy indifference "we no longer will salvation as our own salvation, as eternal deliverance, as the reward of our merits"; the eighth and tenth, that in the extreme trials the ordinarily conditional sacrifice of one's beatitude becomes in some manner absolute, the soul expiring with Christ on the cross in an "involuntary impression of despair" and there making "the absolute sacrifice of its own interest with respect to eternity"; the ninth, that in such trials the soul can be invincibly persuaded, by a reflex persuasion, "that it is justly reprobated by God"; the twenty-first, that "the holy mystics excluded from the state of transformed souls the exercises of the virtues."⁵¹

The censure is as important as the list. The brief condemns the propositions as “rash, scandalous, ill-sounding, offensive to pious ears, pernicious in practice, and even erroneous, respectively,” and prohibits the book because its reading could lead the faithful gradually into errors already condemned. It does not call them heretical, and it does not call their author one.⁵² The distance between the two documents is thus considerable, and it is a distance that should be preserved by anyone who invokes them. Molinos was condemned for a system that dissolved the moral life; Fénelon for pressing one strand of an accepted tradition—the priority of charity over self-interest—to a point at which it began to exclude the theological virtue of hope. He submitted, read the condemnation from his own cathedral pulpit, and died in communion.

The Salesian sentence quoted earlier shows why the line is fine and why it is nonetheless a line. De Sales says the indifferent soul would run to hell if it knew God preferred that—but he says it under an explicit “supposition of an impossible thing,” a counterfactual whose antecedent he denies, and in a chapter whose whole burden is that God’s will is the one thing loved. Fénelon’s condemned propositions convert the impossible supposition into a state actually reached in extreme trials, in which the sacrifice becomes “in some manner absolute” and the soul acquiesces in a persuasion of its own reprobation. A rhetorical impossibility has become a spiritual programme; and a programme in which hope is suspended is a programme in which one of the three theological virtues has been asked to stand down.

Condemned proposition (gloss)	Source	What it denies	How trustful surrender differs
Man must annihilate his powers; this is the interior way.	Molinos, DS 2201 (prop. 1)	That the created faculties are goods to be perfected, and that God’s action perfects rather than replaces them.	Grace perfects nature; God “works in things in such a manner that things have their proper operation” (ST I, q. 105, a. 5). Surrender submits the will’s <i>use</i> , not its existence.
To want to act is to offend God, who wills to be the sole agent; one must then remain like a lifeless body.	Molinos, DS 2202 (prop. 2)	Real secondary causality, and the dignity of acting that God confers.	“If God governed alone, things would be deprived of the perfection of causality” (ST I, q. 103, a. 6, ad 2); CCC 306 calls the use of creatures a token of God’s greatness.
Natural activity is grace’s enemy, for God wills to work in us without us.	Molinos, DS 2204 (prop. 4)	Co-operation with grace; the whole ascetical tradition of effort.	The soul consents, acts, and labours; abandonment follows “after having done all that depends upon our efforts” (Ramière, 1887 preface).
He who gives his will to God should care for nothing—not hell, not heaven, not his own salvation, whose hope he should remove.	Molinos, DS 2212 (prop. 12)	The theological virtue of hope and the duty of seeking salvation.	Surrender is an act of hope, not its suspension; the desire of beatitude is God’s own design for the creature.
It is unfitting for the resigned to ask anything of God; petition is an imperfection.	Molinos, DS 2214–2215 (props. 14–15)	Petitionary prayer and thanksgiving, commanded by Christ.	Colombière’s own compiled chapter is largely about petition: we obtain little because we ask too little.

Condemned proposition (gloss)	Source	What it denies	How trustful surrender differs
Temptations require only negative resistance; if nature is aroused, let it be aroused.	Molinos, DS 2217 (prop. 17)	The obligation to resist temptation and to elicit contrary acts.	Acceptance concerns events already permitted and real; it never extends to consenting to sin, one's own or another's.
No meditative person exercises true interior virtues; the virtues must be abandoned.	Molinos, DS 2231 (prop. 31)	That charity is exercised in the acts of the virtues.	Patience itself is a virtue caused by charity and impossible without grace (ST II-II, q. 136, a. 3); abandonment is a mode of the virtues, not a substitute.
Interior souls should not elicit acts of love for the Blessed Virgin, the saints, or the humanity of Christ.	Molinos, DS 2235 (prop. 35)	The Incarnation's permanent place in Christian prayer.	Ramière's own criticism of the treatise he edited was that it did not stress enough that God's sanctifying action never occurs apart from the person of Jesus Christ.
External sinful acts done under diabolical "violence" are not sins; it is holier not to confess them.	Molinos, DS 2241, 2246–2248 (props. 41, 46–48)	Imputability, the moral law, and the sacrament of penance.	The gravest of the censures fell here (heretical). Surrender never suspends the moral law or the ordinary means of grace.
Through acquired contemplation one reaches the state of committing no further sin, mortal or venial.	Molinos, DS 2257 (prop. 57)	The universal need of vigilance and the Church's teaching on the impossibility of impeccability in this life.	Surrender presupposes that the surrendered man remains a sinner in need of the sacraments.
The soul in mystical death can will nothing but what God wills, because it no longer has a will: God has taken it away.	Molinos, DS 2261 (prop. 61)	The persistence of the created will in union.	Union is the conformity of a living will, not its removal; the "death" of self-will in Catholic usage is metaphorical.
Obedience binds only in the exterior; in the interior only God and the director enter, and the interior need not be manifested.	Molinos, DS 2265–2267 (props. 65–67)	Ecclesial accountability; the whole logic of an examinable spiritual life.	An abandonment that exempts itself from correction has removed the only external check on self-deception.

Condemned proposition (gloss)	Source	What it denies	How trustful surrender differs
There is a habitual state of pure love without any admixture of the motive of self-interest, in which neither fear of punishment nor desire of reward has a part.	Fénelon, DS 2351 (prop. 1)	That hope remains a theological virtue in the perfect.	Charity is first; it does not expel hope. “How could one of the theological virtues be contrary to another, and charity exclude hope?” (Ramière).
In holy indifference we no longer will salvation as our own salvation or as the reward of our merits.	Fénelon, DS 2356 (prop. 6)	The rightly ordered desire of beatitude.	God wills to be glorified through the creature’s happiness; the two interests are ordered, never separated.
In the extreme trials the sacrifice of one’s beatitude becomes in some manner absolute; the soul may be persuaded that it is justly reprobated, and there makes an absolute sacrifice of its interest for eternity.	Fénelon, DS 2358–2360 (props. 8–10)	The permanence of hope in the darkest trial.	De Sales’s parallel sentence is governed by an express “supposition of an impossible thing”; a counterfactual is not a state to be entered.
The holy mystics excluded the exercises of the virtues from the state of transformed souls.	Fénelon, DS 2371 (prop. 21)	The continuity of the moral life in mystical states.	The saints of the tradition practise the virtues more, not less, as they advance.

6.3 Fatalism

Fatalism and surrender agree on one sentence—that what happens was going to happen—and differ on everything the sentence means. Three differences are decisive.

The first concerns the terminus. Fate, in its ancient sense, is a necessitating series of causes, indifferent to the persons caught in it; providence is the plan of an intellect that loves, and its terminus is not an outcome but an end, the divine goodness communicated to creatures. That is why Aquinas can concede a defensible sense to the word “fate”—the disposition of second causes as ordered by providence—and still record that the holy doctors avoided the term, and endorse Augustine’s ruling that whoever means by fate the will of God may keep his opinion and hold his tongue.⁵³

The second concerns contingency. Fatalism holds that everything happens necessarily; the doctrine of providence holds that some things happen necessarily and others contingently, and that both happen infallibly under providence *in the mode proper to them*, because providence prepared necessary causes for the first and contingent causes for the second.⁵⁴ A surrender that says “it had to be this way” is fatalist; a surrender that says “this is what has in fact happened, and it did not escape God” is not.

The third concerns the past and the future. Surrender to providence is, in its primary application, an act about what has already occurred or is presently occurring—the event as permitted and already real. Applied to the future, it is an act of hope about God’s fidelity, not a prediction of the outcome and not a reason to stop deliberating. The moment “God’s will be done” becomes a premise in practical reasoning about what to do next, it has been converted into fate.

6.4 Presumption

The opposite error is subtler because it looks like trust. Aquinas defines presumption as immoderate hope, and distinguishes two forms: relying on one’s own power for what exceeds it, and relying on God’s power in a disordered way.⁵⁵ The devotional literature of surrender is unusually exposed to the second form, because the language of trust supplies a pious description of every refusal of means: the man who declines the treatment, the diocese that does not investigate, the parent who will not intervene.

The test is whether the trust is being used to license the omission of something one is otherwise bound to do. God’s promises are made to those who use the means he provides; asking him to supply for a duty that one has deliberately abandoned is not confidence but an attempt to make him a party to one’s negligence. De Sales’s sickbed rule is the practical form of the distinction: while the outcome is unknown, the signified will governs, and the signified will says to use the remedies.

6.5 Passivity, Prudence, and the Duties of State

The most common practical failure of surrender is not heresy but sequence: it applies the act of acceptance before the moment when there is anything to accept. Three rules keep the sequence right, and all three come from the sources already quoted rather than from modern nervousness.

First, while the divine good-pleasure is undeclared, it is not a source of practical guidance at all, since it is known only by events. The rule of action in the meantime is the signified will—commandments, duties of state, counsels prudently applied—and it is a full rule, not a stopgap.⁵⁶

Second, effort and abandonment are not rivals but consecutive: “we are to omit nothing which is requisite to bring the work which God has put into our hands to a happy issue, yet upon condition that, if the event be contrary, we should lovingly and peaceably embrace it.” What is surrendered is the outcome, which was never in our power; what is not surrendered is the care, which was commanded.⁵⁷

Third, where the harm comes from another’s malice, orthodox abandonment expressly authorises resistance. Ramière’s fourth rule is unambiguous: if it is in our power to avert the consequences of malice and injustice, and if our true interest and the divine glory require measures to that end, “let us do so without departing from the practice of the holy virtue of abandonment.” De Sales says the same in his own register: conformity to God’s permission of another’s sin obliges us not to acquiesce but to aid, admonish, and assist, and only afterwards to turn the mind elsewhere.⁵⁸

It follows, and should be said in plain words because the counsel has been misused this way, that acceptance of an event as permitted by God is not consent to the intention of the person who caused it, not a reason to remain in danger, not a bar to flight, medical care, reporting a crime, seeking justice, or protecting a dependent, and not a duty of silence. A person in danger should seek competent help; nothing in this article is advice for such a case.

6.6 The Compressed Locution

One more boundary belongs here, because it concerns the very book with which this article began. Seventeenth-century devotional prose speaks compressedly: it says that if we fall ill God is the cause of our illness, that wealth and poverty alike come from him, that his is the hand that deals the blow of death. Read against the architecture set out earlier, those sentences are defensible—God is the cause of every positive actuality, and natural corruption falls under what

he can will incidentally in willing the order of nature. Read as modern flat prose, they say that God gave you cancer in the way an assailant gives you a wound.

Three controls keep the reading honest. The text's own exception is the first. Both parts of the compiled book state, in their opening paragraphs, that nothing happens in the universe or in our lives except by God's willing or allowing it, and both immediately except sin from that statement—which is the same exception de Sales makes in his own words: “Nothing, except sin, is done without that will of God which is called absolute, or will of good-pleasure.” The clause is not a decorative qualification; it is the doctrine. The Catechism's rule of reading is the second: attributing actions to God without naming secondary causes is a way of teaching trust, not a denial that the secondary causes exist. And the third is the distinction between the two evils: God wills no evil of fault ever, and wills natural defect or punishment only incidentally, under a good—from which it does not follow, and must not be inferred, that a particular person's affliction is a particular punishment.⁵⁹

7 Suffering, Secondary Causes, and What May Be Said

The doctrine has now been stated and fenced. What remains is the case it exists for, and the case is a person in pain. Everything in the preceding sections bears on how one may and may not speak to that person—which is not a change of subject, because a doctrine of providence that cannot be spoken truthfully at a bedside has failed at the only point where it was ever going to be tested.

7.1 What Providence Does Not License Anyone to Say

The Catechism's paragraph on the scandal of evil begins by refusing the short answer. Why does evil exist, if God cares for all his creatures? “To this question, as pressing as it is unavoidable and as painful as it is mysterious, no quick answer will suffice.” What follows is not a theodicy but a list of the whole Christian mystery—creation's goodness, the drama of sin, the covenants, the Incarnation, the Spirit, the Church, the sacraments, the call to blessedness—with the comment that “there is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil.”⁶⁰

Two further paragraphs draw the limits inside which consolation may operate. God “can bring a good from the consequences of an evil, even a moral evil, caused by his creatures”—the text's example is Joseph's “you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good”—and from the greatest moral evil ever committed, the murder of the Son, God brought the greatest of goods. Then the sentence that stops the argument from running away: “But for all that, evil never becomes a good.” And finally, the epistemic limit: the ways of providence “are often unknown to us,” and only at the end will we know the ways by which God has guided his creation.⁶¹

Put together, these yield a rule of speech that is stricter than most pious conversation. One may say that God permitted this and did not cause the fault in it; that he can and will draw good from it; that the good is promised and not yet displayed; and that the sufferer is not being told what the good is, because nobody knows. One may not say that this happened *in order to* teach the sufferer a particular lesson, or that the death of a child was the means to some identified benefit, or that the affliction is a punishment. The last is not merely tactless: the Gospel rejects the inference in terms when the disciples try it, and Aquinas's careful distinction—that natural corruption or punishment may be willed incidentally under a good—is a statement about the order of the universe, not a diagnostic tool for individual biographies.

7.2 The Joseph Pattern

Genesis 50:20 is the tradition's paradigm, and its structure is worth extracting because it is the structure of every honest use of the doctrine. Three things are asserted in one sentence and none is retracted. The brothers meant evil: their intention was wicked, and Joseph names it as such thirty years later, to their faces. God meant it for good: the divine intention ran through the same event without endorsing theirs. And the good is specified only in retrospect and only in part—that many people should be kept alive.

Notice what Joseph does not do. He does not tell his brothers that their crime was fine because it worked out; he tells them not to be afraid, which is forgiveness, not exculpation. He does not claim to have known during his years in the

pit and the prison what the outcome would be. And his statement of the good is public and verifiable—a famine survived—not a private spiritual benefit assigned to him by someone else.

The pattern therefore licenses retrospective and partial reading of one’s own history, in the light of an outcome one can actually see. It does not license prospective assignment of meaning to someone else’s suffering. The difference between those two operations is most of the difference between the consolation of the saints and the cruelty of the comforters of Job.

7.3 Lament Is Not a Failure of Surrender

A doctrine of surrender that forbids complaint would have to excise the Psalter, most of Job, Jeremias, and the cry from the cross. It does not forbid it. Job’s “if we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?” is spoken by a man who will spend thirty chapters demanding an answer from God and who is vindicated at the end against the friends who defended providence with better manners and worse theology.

Nor does the tradition require that surrender be felt. De Sales, describing acquiescence in a death he could not prevent, has his speaker consent “in the point of my spirit, in spite of all the opposition of the inferior powers of my soul.”⁶² That is a precise anthropological claim, and it does considerable pastoral work: consent is an act of the will, not a state of the emotions, and a person weeping is not thereby a person refusing.

7.4 Why Secondary Causes Matter Pastorally

The architecture set out earlier is not decoration on the consolation; it is what makes the consolation sayable. If God were the only cause, then every tumour would be a direct divine act, every assault a divine gesture, and the sufferer’s anger would have exactly one legitimate object. Because created causes are real—because fire really heats, cells really divide, and men really choose—the world’s inventory of harms is not a list of divine decisions. It is the behaviour of a real, wounded, contingent order that God holds in being and governs to an end.

That is also why the language of “God’s plan,” used carelessly, does more damage than the doctrine it garbles. Providence is not a script in which each line has been written for its dramatic effect. It is a plan of ordering: an intellect that knows every detail, holds every cause in being, permits what it does not will, and guarantees an end that is not visible from here. What follows for the sufferer is not that the tumour was chosen for him, but that it did not escape, that it is not the last word, and that he is not alone inside it.

8 What Surrender Is

Everything so far has been either historical or defensive. The tradition, however, is not primarily a set of guardrails; it is a positive proposal about how a Christian life is held together, and the proposal deserves to be stated in its own terms before this article ends.

8.1 Four Acts, Not a Mood

The exercise with which Saint-Jure closes his chapter—the passage that reaches most English readers under Colombière’s name—is a good place to see the shape of it, because it is analytic where devotional prose is usually atmospheric. It has four movements, and the order is not arbitrary.

First an act of faith: not a feeling of confidence but an assent to a proposition, namely that God’s care is continual and particular, extending to body, soul, occupations, dwellings, contentments, reputation, necessities, health, sicknesses, life, and death, down to the least hair, which neither falls nor stirs without his disposition. Second an act of hope, directed to the same objects: that providence will provide, direct, and defend with a vigilance and affection more than paternal and maternal. Third an act of charity, loving providence as a child loves its mother—and, Saint-Jure adds, esteeming its arrangements enough to speak well of them and defend them when they are attacked. Only fourth, after those acts have been made and often repeated “with firmness and vigour,” does the soul abandon itself entirely,

resting and as it were falling gently asleep in the arms of providence as a child in its mother's, with the psalmist's *In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam* for its motto.⁶³

The sequence carries the doctrine. Abandonment is fourth because it is the consequence of the first three, and it is unintelligible without them: one does not abandon oneself to an unknown quantity, or to a power one does not trust, or to a will one does not love. Strip the acts of faith, hope, and charity away and the residue is not surrender but resignation to fate—which is why the condemned systems, which suppressed hope and the acts of the virtues, could keep the vocabulary of abandonment and lose the thing.

8.2 The Present Moment

The second characteristic contribution of this tradition is its compression of the whole spiritual life into what is actually in front of a person. The anonymous eighteenth-century treatise transmitted under Caussade's name makes the point by looking back at an age it thinks was simpler: all their spirituality consisted in fidelity to the order of God, and “each moment brought a duty to be faithfully fulfilled”—the attention concentrated on the duty of the successive moment “with the fidelity of the hour-hand of a clock which steadily traverses stroke by stroke the circle in which it is appointed to move.” Its paradigm is the *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*, which the treatise reads as the whole of mystical theology reduced to a sentence, and as the exact counterpart of the *Fiat voluntas tua* we are told to have always on our lips.⁶⁴

The doctrinal content of that image is more disciplined than its serenity suggests. The duty of the present moment is a duty—something owed, identifiable, and often disagreeable—and the treatise's whole point is that sanctity is available in it rather than elsewhere. Read with the architecture of the earlier sections, the “present moment” is simply the point at which the signified will of God is actually legible: not the outcome of my illness, which is undeclared, but the medicine at hand, the work in front of me, the person owed my attention now. Abandonment concerns the rest.

8.3 What Is Surrendered

It is worth listing, plainly, what changes hands in this transaction, because the tradition's own vocabulary obscures it.

Surrendered are: the outcome of what one has done, which was never in one's power; the assignment of meaning to what has happened, which belongs to the God who sees the whole; the demand to be told now what one will only know at the end; the claim to a particular consolation, particular graces, or a particular degree of sanctity; and the anxiety that treats the future as a burden to be carried in advance. That last is the specific object of the Gospel's own use of the doctrine—not the abolition of foresight, but the refusal of solicitude for a tomorrow that will be solicitous for itself.

Not surrendered are: the moral law, which binds always; the duties of one's state, which are the ordinary content of the signified will; prudence, deliberation, and the use of means; the obligation to resist evil, one's own and others'; the theological virtue of hope, including hope for one's own salvation, which the Church has twice refused to let anyone renounce; the exercise of the virtues; sacramental practice and accountability to the Church; and legitimate self-defence and the protection of those in one's charge.

Set out this way, the doctrine is less a spirituality of yielding than a doctrine of proper objects. It says that a creature who tries to hold the outcome is holding what he cannot hold, and that the effort deforms him: it makes him anxious about what is not his, and often negligent about what is. Surrender restores the division: he does what is given him to do, and he lets go of what was never given him at all.

8.4 The Bounded Pastoral Note

Three closing cautions belong to a study of this kind, and they are limits on this article rather than counsels to a reader.

This is an examination of a doctrine and its texts, not spiritual direction. The tradition it describes was transmitted in a relationship—confessor, director, superior—and the condemned versions were precisely the ones that dispensed with such relationships and made the interior life unexaminable. Nothing here substitutes for a competent director, a confessor, or, where the trouble is medical or psychological, a competent clinician.

Nothing here is counsel for a person in danger. Acceptance of an event as permitted is not consent to an offender's intention and creates no duty to remain in harm's way; where safety, abuse, crime, or a life-threatening illness is in question, the duties of prudence and charity require action and competent help, and the doctrine of providence explicitly does not stand against them.

And the doctrine is not a technique. It does not promise that the practitioner will feel peace, that events will improve, or that the meaning of a loss will become visible in this life. What it claims is narrower and harder: that the God who holds every cause in being has not lost the thread of a life that has lost its own thread, that he wills no evil of fault and permits nothing he cannot turn, and that the creature's part meanwhile is to do the next thing well and to let him keep the end.

Notes

¹*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 314: “We firmly believe that God is master of the world and of its history. But the ways of his providence are often unknown to us. Only at the end, when our partial knowledge ceases, when we see God ‘face to face,’ will we fully know the ways by which—even through the dramas of evil and sin—God has guided his creation to that definitive sabbath rest for which he created heaven and earth.” Official English text checked 2026-07-25 at the Holy See’s web presentation of the Catechism (vatican.va, *Paragraph 4. The Creator*, section V); paragraph numbering follows the typical edition.

²Front matter of the TAN Books printing of 2012, read 2026-07-25 in the publisher’s own posted preview file (tanbooks.com, *Preview_TrustfulSurrender.pdf*), which reproduces the title leaf, copyright page, publisher’s note, table of contents, and the opening pages of the text. The bibliographic and ecclesiastical facts recited here are facts, not expression. The translation itself remains in copyright and is not quoted in this article except for the two short phrases of the publisher’s note discussed below, which are the object of the analysis.

³TAN printing of 2012, unnumbered leaf (p. v), read 2026-07-25 in the publisher’s preview file. The same note asserts that Saint-Jure’s work “was the constant companion during life of the saintly Curé of Ars”; that claim is reported here as the publisher’s, and no independent witness for it was checked. The two quoted phrases are reproduced because the accuracy of the publisher’s own description is the question under examination.

⁴Saint-Jure, *De la connaissance et de l’amour du fils de Dieu notre seigneur Jésus Christ*, vol. 2 (Paris: Périsse frères, 1877); public-domain scan and OCR text consulted 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive, item [delaconnaissance02sain](https://www.archive.org/details/delaconnaissance02sain) (publisher, place, and date confirmed from the item’s catalogue record; the volume’s running heads confirm the Book and chapter divisions cited). The date of the work’s first publication in the 1630s was not verified at a witness for this article and is therefore not asserted; the 1877 printing is a re-edition, and no collation of it against any seventeenth-century printing was performed.

⁵Saint-Jure, *De la connaissance*, vol. 2 (Périsse, 1877), Book III, ch. VIII, § I, p. 206; wording read 2026-07-25 in the Internet Archive OCR of the item cited above. Working English gloss by this article: “I shall begin the great exercise of the conformity of our will with that of God Our Lord from the teaching of the oracle of theology, St. Thomas (Part I, q. 19, a. 4). Speaking of the will of God, he says that it is the cause of all created things.” Obvious OCR artefacts have been silently normalised only where the printed reading is unambiguous.

⁶TAN printing of 2012, Part I, ch. I, p. 3, with its note 1 (“St. Thomas, Sum. p. 1, q. 19, a. 4; St. Augustine, De Gen.”), read 2026-07-25 in the publisher’s preview file. The correspondence of authority, locus, and argumentative function is reported; no sentence of the English translation is reproduced.

⁷Saint-Jure, *De la connaissance*, vol. 2, Book III, ch. VIII, § VII (p. 256, with its analytic head-note: “I. Dans les choses naturelles qui sont hors de nous.—II. Dans celles qui nous touchent de plus près.—III. Dans les défauts des perfections de nature.—IV. Dans les maladies”) and § VIII (“I. Dans la mort.—II. Dans les vertus et les degrés de la grâce et de la gloire”); read 2026-07-25 at the witness cited above.

⁸TAN printing of 2012, table of contents, Part I, ch. III, heads 1–14, read 2026-07-25 in the preview file. The English subdivision is finer than the French sectioning, which is what one expects of a translator working an extract into a stand-alone book; the sequence and subject matter, however, track Saint-Jure’s §§ VII–VIII closely.

⁹*Œuvres du R. P. Claude de la Colombière, de la Compagnie de Jésus* (1832), vol. 5, table of sermons and the sermon texts themselves; public-domain OCR consulted 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive, item [uvresdurpclauded05laco](https://www.archive.org/details/uvresdurpclauded05laco). The volume’s table gives each sermon with its thesis, from which the theses quoted in the body are taken verbatim.

¹⁰Sermon theses from *Œuvres* (1832), vol. 5, as cited; English chapter heads from the TAN table of contents, Part II, ch. IV, read 2026-07-25. The sermon *Sur la confiance en Dieu* is preached on *Fides tua te salvum fecit* (Luke 17) with the thesis that God has bound himself to help those who put their trust in him, and that nothing is more apt to engage him to do so than that trust; the sermon *Sur la soumission à la volonté de Dieu* closes with an act of acceptance beginning *J’accepte cette calamité, et en elle-même, et dans toutes ses circonstances*. Both were read at the same witness on the same date.

¹¹TAN printing of 2012, table of contents, Part II, ch. V, heads 1–3 (pp. 122–127), read 2026-07-25.

¹²Saint-Jure, *De la connaissance*, vol. 2, Book III, ch. VIII, § X, pp. 280–282, read 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive witness cited above; the summary in the body is a close working paraphrase of the French, with the Latin of Ps. 4:9 and Ps. 22:1 (Vulgate numbering) as Saint-Jure quotes them.

¹³Correspondence established 2026-07-25 by reading the chapter in an unauthorised full-text posting of the English translation found on the open web. That posting is not an authorised witness, no wording from it is reproduced in this article, and it is recorded here only because candour requires stating how the correspondence was checked. The structural facts on which the argument rests—three heads in the stated order, the child-in-the-mother’s-arms image, and the two psalms—are independently visible in the publisher’s own table of contents and in Saint-Jure’s French.

¹⁴Beatification 1929 (Pius XI) and canonisation 31 May 1992 (John Paul II) are reported at the level of standard reference works, checked 2026-07-25; no act of the Holy See was consulted directly for this article, and nothing in the argument depends on the exact dates. Older English printings of the book, and current second-hand listings of them, carry “Blessed Claude de la Colombière” where the 2012 TAN printing carries “St.”

¹⁵Observed 2026-07-25 in open-web copies and retail listings, including a widely mirrored extract PDF headed “by St. Claude de la Columbière” that in fact prints both the Colombière compilation and the Saint-Jure exercise. The observation is offered as evidence of reception drift, not as a charge against any particular publisher; no listing is treated as an authority for anything.

¹⁶All scriptural wording in this article is quoted from the Douay–Rheims (Challoner revision), a public-domain English translation; the chapters cited were read 2026-07-25 at drbo.org. Psalm numbering follows the Vulgate where the article quotes Latin from a source that uses it. Verse divisions in the Douay–Rheims occasionally differ by one from modern critical editions; the article cites the Douay–Rheims divisions as printed.

¹⁷CCC 304, official English text checked 2026-07-25 (vatican.va, *Paragraph 4. The Creator*, section V, “God carries out his plan: divine providence”). The quoted phrases are that paragraph’s.

¹⁸English quotations of Aquinas in this section follow the public-domain translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, read 2026-07-25 at newadvent.org (*Summa* I, qq. 19, 22, 103, 105, 116; II-II, qq. 21, 136). Latin readings quoted in the body were read the same day in the Corpus Thomisticum web text of the *Summa theologiae* (corpusthomisticum.org). Loci are given as part, question, article, and article division; where the two witnesses differ in wording, the Latin governs.

¹⁹ST I, q. 22, a. 1, corpus; Latin read 2026-07-25 at the Corpus Thomisticum witness cited above. The article’s structure is worth noting for the argument that follows: the *ratio* of order pre-exists in the divine mind because God causes by intellect, and providence is therefore located there rather than in the execution.

²⁰ST I, q. 103, a. 5, corpus. The same article ends by naming as “foolish” the opinion of those who exempted the corruptible world, individual things, or human affairs from divine government, quoting Ezekiel 9:9, “God hath abandoned the earth.”

²¹ST I, q. 103, a. 7, corpus, with ad 2: things are called fortuitous “as regards some particular cause from the order of which they escape,” but as to divine providence, “nothing in the world happens by chance,” quoting Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus* 83, q. 24. The reply to objection 1 in a. 5 adds that the very presence of chance in corruptible things is evidence that they are governed, since otherwise “they would tend to nothing definite.”

²²ST I, q. 103, a. 6, corpus and ad 2; cf. q. 22, a. 3, where the same distinction is drawn between the *ratio* of providence, which is immediate to all, and its execution through intermediaries, “not on account of any defect in His power, but by reason of the abundance of His goodness.”

²³CCC 306, official English checked 2026-07-25. CCC 307 continues that men can “enter deliberately into the divine plan by their actions, their prayers and their sufferings,” and CCC 308 that “God is the first cause who operates in and through secondary causes,” citing Philippians 2:13; “Far from diminishing the creature’s dignity, this truth enhances it.”

²⁴ST I, q. 22, a. 4, corpus and ad 1; Latin read 2026-07-25: “Et ideo quibusdam effectibus praeparavit causas necessarias, ut necessario evenirent; quibusdam vero causas contingentes, ut evenirent contingenter, secundum conditionem proximarum causarum” . . . “evenit contingenter, quod divinae providentiae ratio habet ut contingenter eveniat.”

²⁵ST I, q. 105, a. 5, corpus. The article then distinguishes three ways God works in every agent: as end, as the first agent in whose power every second agent acts, and as giving and preserving the forms and powers by which things act; “it follows that in all things God works intimately.” Reply to objection 2: “One action does not proceed from two agents of the same order. But nothing hinders the same action from proceeding from a primary and a secondary agent.”

²⁶ST I, q. 105, a. 4, corpus, ad 1, ad 2, and ad 3, with the *sed contra* from Philippians 2:13, “It is God who worketh in us both to will and to accomplish.” The article does not settle how efficacious grace and free consent are related, the question that divides the Thomist and Molinist schools; nothing in this article depends on that dispute.

²⁷ST I, q. 19, a. 6, ad 1; Latin read 2026-07-25 at the Corpus Thomisticum witness. The example follows in the same reply: that a man should live is good, and that a man be killed evil, absolutely considered; but if this man is a murderer, “it may be said of a just judge, that antecedently he wills all men to live; but consequently wills the murderer to be hanged.” Aquinas concludes: “whatever God simply wills takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take place.”

²⁸ST I, q. 19, a. 9, corpus, with ad 1, which rejects even the formula that God “wills that evil should be or be done” on the ground that evil is ordered to good only accidentally: “it was beside the intention of tyrants that the patience of the martyrs should shine forth from all their persecutions.” Article 10, ad 2, adds that it is “manifestly impossible” for God to will the evil of sin.

²⁹CCC 311 and 312, official English checked 2026-07-25. That God “respects” creaturely freedom is not to be read as a limitation of divine power: God creates, sustains, and interiorly moves the will without coercing it (ST I, q. 105, a. 4, ad 1), and the schools dispute only the account of the grace under which consent infallibly follows.

³⁰ST I, q. 116, a. 2, corpus (fate as “the ordering of second causes to effects foreseen by God”), and a. 4, corpus. Boethius’s definition, quoted in a. 1 *sed contra*: “Fate is a disposition inherent to changeable things, by which Providence connects each one with its proper order.”

³¹ST I, q. 116, a. 1, corpus, quoting Augustine, *De civitate Dei* v, 1, and noting that Gregory for this reason denies fate outright: “Far be it from the hearts of the faithful to think that fate is anything real” (*Hom. x in Evang.*).

³²ST II-II, q. 136, a. 1, corpus, quoting Augustine, *De patientia* ii; the same article locates patience among the virtues that guard the good of reason against the passions, here specifically against sorrow.

³³ST II-II, q. 136, a. 1, ad 2, quoting Augustine, *De patientia* ii and v.

³⁴ST II-II, q. 136, a. 3, corpus, with the *sed contra* from Psalm 61:6, “From Him is my patience,” and Romans 5:5.

³⁵ST II-II, q. 136, aa. 2 and 4, with a. 1, ad 1, quoting Augustine, *De civitate Dei* xiv: “patience itself will not be in heaven, since there is no need for it except where evils have to be borne: yet that which we shall obtain by patience will be eternal.”

³⁶Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, in the public-domain English translation of Henry Benedict Mackey, O.S.B.; text read 2026-07-25 at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library presentation (ccel.org, *Treatise on the Love of God*, complete text). Book and chapter loci are given as printed there; the translator’s own summary notes that Book VIII “treats of obedience to the already signified will of God” and is completed by Book IX, which “treats of indifference, or the state of perfect readiness to accept all that God’s good-pleasure may choose to send us.”

³⁷*Treatise*, Book VIII, ch. III, as in the Mackey translation cited above; wording read 2026-07-25. The banquet image belongs to the same passage: a host who “should by main force open his friend’s mouth, cram meat into his throat, and make him swallow it, would not be giving courteous entertainment to his friend.”

³⁸*Treatise*, Book IX, ch. I; read 2026-07-25. The clause “except sin” is the same exception the seventeenth-century devotional prose later abbreviates—and the same one modern readers of that prose most often lose.

³⁹*Treatise*, Book IX, ch. IV; read 2026-07-25. The rhetorical form matters: the sentence is governed by “by supposition of an impossible thing”—*par supposition d’une chose impossible*—which marks it as a counterfactual whose antecedent de Sales denies. Its later career, when the qualifier is dropped, is treated in the section on boundaries below.

⁴⁰*Treatise*, Book IX, ch. VI; read 2026-07-25. The chapter adds the distinction on which the whole practical rule rests: “we are commanded to have great care in what appertains to God’s glory and to our charge, but we are not bound to, or responsible for, the event, because it is not in our power”—glossed by the parable’s “take care of him,” which, as St. Bernard observed, is not “cure him.”

⁴¹*Treatise*, Book IX, ch. VIII; read 2026-07-25. The chapter is the Salesian answer to the question whether conformity to God’s permission of another’s sin means acquiescence in that sin: it does not, and the required response is intercession and active help, not equanimity.

⁴²The characterisation of the disputed questions, and of Guyon’s own sense of standing in a tradition running from the Rhineland mystics and John of the Cross through Francis de Sales, follows Dominique Salin, S.J., “The Treatise on Abandonment to Divine Providence,” *The Way* 46/2 (April 2007): 21–36, at 24–26; read 2026-07-25 in the journal’s freely posted PDF (theway.org.uk). The article is in copyright; it is used here as a named scholarly witness and quoted only in short phrases. Salin notes that “abandonment” was for Guyon and Fénelon “a French culmination of a tradition that had started in Greek, passed through Latin and Flemish.”

⁴³Salin, “The Treatise on Abandonment,” 26, at the witness cited above. The same passage records that Guyon’s “more daring affirmations, though condemned within the Catholic Church, found their way into German Pietism and English Methodism.”

⁴⁴Salin, “The Treatise on Abandonment,” 21–23, at the witness cited above; the quoted phrases are Salin’s rendering of Ramière’s preface and of the manuscript note. Salin adds that a text closer to the original manuscript was published only in the 1960s, edited by Michel Olphe-Galliard, S.J. (1900–1985), who also separated the treatise from the two further volumes of letters, and that Salin himself produced a corrected edition in 2005.

⁴⁵Salin, “The Treatise on Abandonment,” 22–24, at the witness cited above, reporting Jacques Gagey, ed., *L’Abandon à la providence divine d’une dame de Lorraine au XVIIIe siècle, suivi des Lettres spirituelles de Jean-Pierre Caussade à cette dame* (Grenoble: Jérôme Million, 2001). Gagey’s volume and Olphe-Galliard’s editions were not consulted directly for this article; they are cited as reported at the named witness, and no claim finer than what Salin reports is made here. Salin’s own verdict is that “it now seems almost impossible that the author was in fact the Jesuit, Jean-Pierre de Caussade.”

⁴⁶*Abandonment; or, Absolute Surrender to Divine Providence. Posthumous Work of Rev. J. P. de Caussade, S.J., Revised and Corrected by Rev. H. Ramière, S.J.*, translated from the eighth French edition by Ella McMahon (New York, Cincinnati and Chicago: Benziger Brothers, 1887), preface, pp. 3–4; public-domain scan and OCR read 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive, item [abandonmentorabs00caus](https://www.archive.org/details/abandonmentorabs00caus) (imprimatur of Archbishop Michael Augustine, New York, 15 February 1887; the item’s rights status is recorded as not in copyright). All Ramière quotations in this subsection are from that preface.

⁴⁷Latin text of the condemned propositions and of the censure read 2026-07-25 in the web presentation of Denzinger’s *Enchiridion symbolorum* at patristica.net, which prints the revised (DS) numbering beside the older (DB) numbering; the Molinos propositions run DS 2201–2268 (DB 1221–1288), with the censure at DS 2269. An English translation of the constitution, including its narrative sections, was read the same day at papalencyclicals.net. **A discrepancy is recorded rather than resolved:** the Denzinger heading dates *Coelestis Pastor* 20 November 1687, while the 1913 *Catholic Encyclopedia* article on Molinos (newadvent.org, checked 2026-07-25) dates it 2 November 1687. No original printing of the constitution was consulted for this article; both witnesses are reported, and nothing in the argument depends on which date is right. Biographical details (the 1685 arrest, the 3 September 1687 reading of the sentence, the twenty editions of the *Guía*) are as reported in that encyclopedia article. English renderings of the propositions in the table below are working glosses by this article; the Latin governs.

⁴⁸Propositions cited in this paragraph, in Denzinger’s revised numbering: DS 2201 (1), 2202 (2), 2204 (4), 2212 (12), 2214 (14), 2215 (15), 2217 (17), 2231 (31), 2235 (35), 2241 (41), 2246–2248 (46–48), 2257 (57), 2259 (59), 2265–2267 (65–67). Latin read 2026-07-25 at the patristica.net witness cited above.

⁴⁹DS 2269, read 2026-07-25 at the patristica.net witness: “Quas quidem propositiones tamquam haereticas (3 13-15 41-53), suspectas ... et erroneas ... scandalosas ... blasphemias ... piarum aurium offensivas ... temerarias ... christianae disciplinae relaxativas ... et eversivas (iurisdictionis eccl.: 68) et seditiosas (65) respective... damnavimus.” The grading matters: a blanket assertion that “all sixty-eight were condemned as heretical” misstates the act.

⁵⁰Latin text read 2026-07-25 at the patristica.net Denzinger witness: Innocent XII, brief *Cum alias ad apostolatus*, 12 March 1699, *Errores Francisci de Fénelon de amore erga Deum*, DS 2351–2374 (DB 1327–1349). English renderings below are working glosses by this article.

⁵¹DS 2351, 2352, 2356, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2371; Latin read 2026-07-25 at the witness cited above.

⁵²DS 2374, read 2026-07-25: “... temerarias (1s 8 10 15-20 22), scandalosas (7 10 12 19-21), male sonantes (4-6 23), piarum aurium offensivas (8 18), in praxi perniciosas (2 14 17) ac etiam erroneas (1-7 10s 13 17-19 22s) respective, tenore praesentium damnamus et reprobamus.” The absence of *haereticas* from this list, and its presence in the Molinos censure, is a material difference between the two acts.

⁵³ST I, q. 116, aa. 1–2, as cited in the preceding section.

⁵⁴ST I, q. 22, a. 4, corpus and ad 1, as cited above.

⁵⁵ST II-II, q. 21, a. 1, corpus; the article treats presumption as a vice opposed to hope by excess, and locates the second kind as a hope of obtaining from God what it is not fitting for God to give in the way expected.

⁵⁶*Treatise*, Book IX, ch. VI, as cited: “as long as it is unknown to us, we must keep as close as possible to the will of God which is already declared or signified to us.”

⁵⁷*Treatise*, Book IX, ch. VI, as cited, with the distinction between having charge of a work and being responsible for its event.

⁵⁸Ramière, 1887 preface, rule II.4, and *Treatise*, Book IX, ch. VIII, both as cited above.

⁵⁹The devotional formula and its stated exception are reported, not quoted, from the openings of Part I, ch. I and Part II, ch. IV of the modern English translation, read 2026-07-25 as described in the textual section; the quoted sentence in the body is de Sales, *Treatise*, Book IX, ch. I, in Mackey’s public-domain English. ST I, q. 19, a. 9 and CCC 304 and 311 supply the controls. The inference from affliction to punishment is not merely uncharitable but unwarranted: cf. John 9:3.

⁶⁰CCC 309, official English checked 2026-07-25. The paragraph’s refusal of a quick answer is doctrinally significant: it means that no formula, including any in this article, is offered as the resolution of the difficulty.

⁶¹CCC 312 and 314, official English checked 2026-07-25.

⁶²*Treatise*, Book IX, ch. VI, in Mackey’s translation, as cited above. The phrase locates consent in the will’s summit and expressly allows the rest of the person to be in revolt—a distinction that protects the doctrine from being falsified by grief, and protects the griever from being told that grief is infidelity.

⁶³Saint-Jure, *De la connaissance et de l’amour du fils de Dieu*, vol. 2 (Périsset, 1877), Book III, ch. VIII, § X, pp. 280–282, read 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive witness identified earlier; the four movements and the quoted Latin (Ps. 4:9 in the Vulgate numbering, with Ps. 22 following) are as printed there. The summary is a close working paraphrase, and the characterisation of the acts as ordered rather than simultaneous is this article’s reading of the section’s own sequence (*Après ces actes faits et redoublés souvent*).

⁶⁴*Abandonment; or, Absolute Surrender to Divine Providence*, trans. Ella McMahon from the eighth French edition (New York: Benziger, 1887), Book I, ch. I, pp. 31–33; public-domain text read 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive item cited earlier. The attribution of the treatise is discussed in the historical section above and is not assumed here; it is cited as the received text of the Ramière edition, which is what nineteenth- and twentieth-century readers had in hand.

A Witnesses and Editions

This appendix records the exact witnesses behind the textual and doctrinal claims, with the rights basis on which each was used and the ceiling of what it establishes. It is a manifest, not an argument; where a witness supports less than a reader might assume, the shortfall is stated. All web witnesses were read on 25 July 2026.

Work	Witness used	Rights basis	Role and ceiling
Saint-Jure, <i>De la connaissance et de l'amour du Fils de Dieu Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ</i>	Paris: Périsse frères, 1877, vol. 2 (Internet Archive scan and OCR, item <code>delaconnaissance02sain</code>)	Public domain	Direct witness for Book III, ch. VIII and its § X. A nineteenth-century re-edition; no seventeenth-century printing was consulted, and no first-publication date is asserted. OCR normalised only where the printed reading is unambiguous.
Colombière, <i>Œuvres</i>	1832 collected edition, vol. 5 (Internet Archive, item <code>uvresdurpclaude05laco</code>); vols. 1–4 also searched	Public domain	Direct witness for the sermon titles, printed theses, and text of <i>Sur la confiance en Dieu</i> and neighbouring sermons. A nineteenth-century collection of posthumously published preaching; questions of the sermons' own transmission were not investigated.
<i>Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence</i> (English)	TAN Books printing, 2012; publisher's own posted preview (title leaf, copyright page, publisher's note, contents, opening pages)	In copyright; bibliographic facts reported, two short phrases of the publisher's note quoted as the object of analysis	Establishes the book's self-description, ecclesiastical approvals, publication history, and part/chapter structure. The translation is not quoted; the full text was not used as an authorised witness.
Same, full English text	An unauthorised open-web posting, consulted once	No distribution basis; not treated as an authorised witness	Used solely to confirm the structural correspondence of Part II, ch. V with Saint-Jure § X. No wording is reproduced. Recorded here for candour; the correspondence is independently visible from the publisher's contents and the French original.
Francis de Sales, <i>Treatise on the Love of God</i>	English translation of Henry Benedict Mackey, O.S.B., complete text at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library	Public domain (translation and original)	Direct witness for Books VIII–IX at the chapters cited. No collation against the French <i>Annecy</i> edition was performed; chapter divisions are as printed in the witness.
Caussade / Ramière, <i>Abandonment to Divine Providence</i>	Ella McMahon's translation from the eighth French edition (New York: Benziger, 1887; Internet Archive item <code>abandonmentorabs00caus</code>)	Public domain (rights status recorded as not in copyright)	Direct witness for Ramière's preface and for Book I, ch. I. Represents the Ramière recension, not the manuscript; later critical editions were not consulted.
Same, later English state	E. J. Strickland's translation from the tenth complete French edition (Exeter: Catholic Records Press, 1921; item <code>divineprovidence00causuoft</code>)	Public domain	Consulted for edition identity and the introduction's account of the earlier partial American translation; not quoted in the article.

Work	Witness used	Rights basis	Role and ceiling
Salin, “The Treatise on Abandonment to Divine Providence”	<i>The Way</i> 46/2 (2007): 21–36, freely posted PDF	In copyright; short quotations under ordinary fair-quotation practice	Named scholarly witness for the manuscript history, Ramière’s editorial acts, and the Gagey and Olphe-Galliard scholarship. Gagey’s and Olphe-Galliard’s editions were not consulted directly; nothing finer than what Salin reports is claimed.
Denzinger, <i>Enchiridion symbolorum</i>	patristica.net web presentation of the Latin text with revised (DS) and older (DB) numbering	Underlying documents public domain; the transcription is a finding aid	Direct witness for the Latin of the Molinos and Fénelon propositions and censures. The page does not identify the print edition transcribed; no original printing of either act was collated.
<i>Coelestis Pastor</i> (English)	papalencyclicals.net translation	Underlying act public domain; translation of uncertain status, not quoted	Used for the constitution’s narrative sections. All propositions in this article are glossed from the Latin.
<i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> (1913), “Miguel de Molinos”	newadvent.org	Public domain	Reported witness for biographical facts and for a dating of <i>Coelestis Pastor</i> that conflicts with Denzinger’s; the conflict is recorded, not resolved.
Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa theologiae</i>	English: Fathers of the English Dominican Province at newadvent.org; Latin: corpusthomisticum.org	Public domain (Latin; the English translation is of public-domain vintage on a copyrighted host)	Direct witness at the loci cited (I, qq. 19, 22, 103, 105, 116; II-II, qq. 21, 136). No critical edition was collated; where the witnesses differ, the Latin governs.
<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>	Official English web text of the Holy See, <i>Paragraph 4. The Creator</i>	Official text, quoted briefly with attribution	Direct witness for CCC 302–314 and 321–324 as cited. Paragraph numbering follows the typical edition; the web state is dated by the date of reading.
Sacred Scripture	Douay–Rheims (Challoner), chapter texts at drbo.org	Public domain	Direct witness for the verses quoted. Verse divisions are the Douay–Rheims’s own and differ occasionally from modern critical editions.

Consequential negative results

The following were sought and not obtained, and the article’s claims are bounded accordingly.

- No parallel to Saint-Jure’s *Exercice particulier envers la providence divine* was found in the five volumes of Colombière’s *Œuvres* searched, nor in the 1684 *Réflexions chrétiennes*. The search was by keyword over OCR text and is not an exhaustive examination of his corpus; the identification of Part II, ch. V as Saint-Jure’s is therefore stated as strongly evidenced rather than as certain.
- No seventeenth-century printing of Saint-Jure’s work, and no copy of the 1961 Alba House first English edition with whatever editorial apparatus it carried, was available; the identity of the compiler who selected and arranged the extracts is consequently unknown, and this article does not guess at it.
- Jacques Gagey’s 2001 edition and Michel Olphe-Galliard’s editions of the Caussade material were not obtainable; the attribution history is reported at the ceiling of the named 2007 scholarly witness.

- No original or official printing of *Coelestis Pastor* or *Cum alias ad apostolatus* was consulted; the Latin propositions rest on the Denzinger transcription identified above, and the conflicting dates for *Coelestis Pastor* remain unresolved.
- Bossuet’s own works on the states of prayer were not read for this article. His role in the quietist controversy is reported at the ceiling of the named scholarly witness, and no claim is made about the content of his teaching beyond what that witness supports.

B Scope, Method, and Qualifications

B.1 Reader, question, and method

This is a discursive theological and spiritual-theological article for a serious lay reader who has met the counsel of surrender to divine providence—most likely through the small devotional book that gives this article its title—and who wants to know what it means, where it comes from, and where its limits lie. Its governing question is what a Catholic actually surrenders when he surrenders to providence, and what he does not: whether the doctrine subtracts anything from creaturely agency, deliberation, prudence, resistance to evil, or the hope of salvation. Its claim is that it subtracts none of these; that surrender is the graced ordering of a will that remains an agent, resting on the real distinction between what is in our power and what is not; and that the boundary against quietism, fatalism, and presumption is not a modern caution but a line drawn twice in juridical form and available for inspection in the condemned propositions.

The article proceeds in epistemic order: the difficulty as it actually presents itself; the textual history of the classic English handbook, tested against the public-domain originals of both its named authors; the scriptural loci with the grammar the tradition supplies for reading them; the Thomistic architecture of providence, government, secondary causality, contingency, the antecedent and consequent will, permitted evil, fate, and patience; the history of abandonment as a school, from the *Treatise on the Love of God* through the quietist controversy to the anonymous treatise transmitted under Caussade’s name and Ramière’s editorial fence; the boundaries worked through the condemned propositions of 1687 and 1699 and through the errors of fatalism and presumption; the pastoral discipline that follows for suffering and for prudence; and a positive statement of what surrender is. English is the working language; French and Latin sources are quoted in the original with labeled working glosses. No liturgical rite, civil or canonical jurisdiction, or mutable discipline governs any conclusion. All online witnesses were checked on 2026-07-25.

Source class	Function in the article	Governing boundary
Sacred Scripture	The providence loci in Genesis, Job, Wisdom, Proverbs, Lamentations, Matthew, Acts, Romans, James, and 1 Peter supply the received teaching the rest of the article interprets.	Quoted from the Douay–Rheims (Challoner); the fault/penalty distinction and CCC 304’s rule of reading are stated where the hard sayings are quoted; Romans 8:28 is bounded against a promise of temporal compensation.
Authoritative Catholic teaching	CCC 302–314 and 321–324 govern the doctrinal frame of providence, secondary causes, the scandal of evil, and the limits of what may be claimed about particular events.	Quoted from the official English text with attribution; catechetical synthesis is not treated as settling disputed school questions.
Condemned propositions	<i>Coelestis Pastor</i> (1687) and <i>Cum alias ad apostolatus</i> (1699) fix the boundary of orthodox abandonment in juridical form.	Quoted from the Latin at Denzinger’s numbering, with the graded censures reported as graded; the material difference between the two censures (heresy present in one, absent in the other) is stated; English renderings are working glosses.

Source class	Function in the article	Governing boundary
Thomistic synthesis	ST I, qq. 19, 22, 103, 105, and 116, and II-II, qq. 21 and 136, supply the account of providence, government, non-competitive causality, contingency, the divine will, permitted evil, fate, presumption, and patience.	Adopted as this article’s framework among permitted Catholic schools, not asserted as dogma; the Thomist–Molinist dispute over efficacious grace is named and left undecided.
Devotional and spiritual-theological witnesses	Francis de Sales (Books VIII–IX), the Ramière recension of the Caussade treatise with its editorial preface, Saint-Jure’s chapter on conformity, and Colombière’s sermons supply the tradition’s own vocabulary and self-correction.	Treated as spiritual teachers and historical witnesses, not as magisterial acts or as technically precise at every rhetorical turn; the hyperbolic Salesian sentence is read with its own governing qualifier.
Textual and historical scholarship	A named 2007 scholarly article supplies the manuscript history and modern attribution debate for the Caussade treatise; a 1913 encyclopedia article supplies Molinos’s biography.	Used at reported ceiling; the underlying critical editions were not consulted, and conflicting dates are recorded rather than resolved.
Project synthesis	The identification of the English book’s parts with their French sources, the attribution table, the condemned-propositions table, the inventory of what is and is not surrendered, and the rules of speech for consolation are original editorial work.	Argued from the checked witnesses; attributed to no source; stated with its evidentiary limits, including the one identification that rests on structural correspondence rather than collation.

B.2 Included and excluded scope

Included are: the publishing and attribution history of the English handbook and the identification of its parts; the scriptural loci of providence and the rules for reading the hard sayings; the Thomistic account of providence and government, the extension of providence to the contingent, the immediacy of design with mediated execution, non-competitive causality and the divine motion of the will, the antecedent and consequent will, the distinction of the evil of fault from the evil of penalty, fate, presumption, and patience; the history of abandonment from Francis de Sales through the quietist controversy to the nineteenth-century recension of the Caussade treatise; the condemned propositions of 1687 and 1699 with their graded censures; the distinction of surrender from quietism, fatalism, presumption, and imprudent passivity; the pastoral discipline governing what may be said to a sufferer; and a positive account of the acts that constitute surrender.

Excluded are: a full treatment of predestination, physical premotion, or *scientia media*, and any adjudication of the Thomist–Molinist controversy; a complete theodicy or any resolution of the problem of evil; a history of Western mysticism or a general assessment of Madame Guyon’s writings; Bossuet’s own theology of prayer beyond his role in the controversy as reported; a critical-edition study of any of the texts examined; the canonical or historical assessment of Molinos’s trial; psychological or medical advice; direction for any particular person’s case; and any claim about the interior state, culpability, or salvation of any individual, living or dead.

B.3 Material qualifications

1. The identification of Part I of the English handbook with Saint-Jure’s Book III, chapter VIII rests on the identity of its opening authority and locus and on the correspondence of its practice-of-conformity heads with §§ VII–VIII; it is not a line-by-line collation, and the English subdivision is finer than the French.

2. The identification of Part II, chapter IV as a compilation from four Colombière sermons rests on the correspondence of the English chapter heads with the printed theses of those sermons; other Colombière material may also be present, and no sermon was collated with the English throughout.
3. The identification of Part II, chapter V as Saint-Jure's § X rests on the correspondence of four movements rendered as three heads in the same order, with the same maternal image and the same two psalms. It is strongly evidenced but not certain: the possibility that Colombière reproduced the exercise in his own papers was tested by keyword search over five volumes and not eliminated by exhaustive examination.
4. The publisher's claim that Saint-Jure's work was the constant companion of the Curé of Ars is reported as the publisher's; no independent witness was checked.
5. Nothing in the textual section impugns the 1961 imprimatur, which attests doctrinal review of the English book and not its authorship or textual criticism, or the good faith of any publisher.
6. The Thomistic account of divine motion of the will affirms that God moves the will without coercion and that imputability survives; it does not settle how efficacious grace and free consent are related, which remains disputed among permitted Catholic schools.
7. "Permissive will" is not treated as a second, weaker faculty in God. The governing formula is that the one simple divine will knowingly wills not to prevent a defect it could prevent, while causing every positive actuality and governing the whole.
8. The distinction between the evil of fault and the evil of penalty licenses no inference from a particular affliction to a particular punishment; the Gospel rejects that inference in terms.
9. De Sales's sentence about preferring hell to heaven is governed in his text by an express supposition of an impossible thing; it is quoted with that qualifier and is not offered as a state to be sought.
10. The condemnation of Fénelon's propositions was not a condemnation of him as a heretic, and the censure list contains no charge of heresy; the article states this and does not conflate the two acts of 1687 and 1699.
11. The dates given for *Coelestis Pastor* in the two witnesses consulted conflict (20 November and 2 November 1687); both are recorded, and no argument depends on the resolution.
12. The attribution of *L'Abandon à la providence divine* to Jean-Pierre de Caussade is reported as doubted by current scholarship at the ceiling of the named witness; the article neither asserts nor denies any alternative attribution, and cites the work as the received text of the Ramière recension.
13. Ramière's preface is a nineteenth-century editor's theological apparatus, quoted as such; it is not magisterial, and its soundness is argued from its content rather than assumed from its imprimatur.
14. The rules of speech proposed for consolation are this article's synthesis of CCC 309–314 with the Thomistic distinctions; they are offered as a discipline, not as a rubric with ecclesiastical standing.
15. Nothing in this article is spiritual direction, medical or psychological advice, or counsel for a person in danger. Where surrender might be read as requiring silence or endurance in the face of abuse, crime, or life-threatening illness, the article states expressly that it does not, and directs the reader to competent help.

B.4 Notes, translations, rights, currentness, and review

The numbered Notes carry exact citations, edition identifications, verification dates, witness ceilings, and the qualifications that would interrupt the argument; they contain no missing premise. Scripture is quoted from the public-domain Douay–Rheims (Challoner). Francis de Sales is quoted in Mackey's public-domain English; Saint-Jure and Colombière in the public-domain French of the 1877 and 1832 printings, with working glosses by this article; Ramière and the Caussade treatise in the public-domain English of the 1887 Benziger translation; the condemned propositions in the Latin of the Denzinger transcription, with working glosses. The modern English translation of *Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence* remains in copyright: its bibliographic and ecclesiastical facts are reported, two short phrases of its publisher's note are quoted as the object of the analysis, and its text is otherwise paraphrased or reported rather than reproduced. Catechism quotations are brief excerpts of the official Vatican English web text. One named scholarly article and one public-domain encyclopedia article are used as reported witnesses and quoted only in short phrases. Scripture, official texts, and third-party translations remain outside the project's CC BY 4.0 grant; the project-created prose, tables, glosses, identifications, and organisation are project content.

All online witnesses were checked on 2026-07-25; no mutable law or discipline is relied on, so no currentness fragility attaches to the conclusions. This edition received internal source, quotation, rights, doctrinal-consistency, and production review by the authoring agent, including a page-by-page review of the rendered document. Independent theological, patristic, historical, and ecclesiastical review is outstanding; no imprimatur, nihil obstat, or ecclesiastical approval is claimed, and internal checking is not independent review. The publication language is therefore “source-audited working article.”

C References

Sacred Scripture

- Genesis 50:19–20; Job 2:10; Proverbs 16:9; Wisdom 11:21–26; Lamentations 3:37–38; Matthew 6:25–34 and 10:29–31; Acts 2:23; Romans 8:28; James 4:13–15; 1 Peter 5:6–7. Quoted from the Douay–Rheims (Challoner revision; public domain); chapter texts checked 2026-07-25 at drbo.org.

Authoritative Catholic teaching and condemned propositions

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 302–314 (divine providence; providence and secondary causes; providence and the scandal of evil) and 321–324 (in brief); official English text checked 2026-07-25 at vatican.va, Part One, Section Two, Chapter One, Article 1, Paragraph 4 (“The Creator”).
- Innocent XI, decree of the Holy Office of 28 August and constitution *Coelestis Pastor* (1687), condemning sixty-eight propositions of Miguel de Molinos; Denzinger DS 2201–2269 (older numbering DB 1221–1288). Latin text with both numberings and the graded censure checked 2026-07-25 at patristica.net; an English translation of the constitution’s narrative sections read the same day at papalencyclicals.net. The Denzinger heading dates the constitution 20 November 1687; the 1913 *Catholic Encyclopedia* dates it 2 November 1687. English renderings of the propositions in this article are working glosses; the Latin governs.
- Innocent XII, brief *Cum alias ad apostolatus* (12 March 1699), condemning twenty-three propositions of François de Fénelon on the love of God; Denzinger DS 2351–2374 (DB 1327–1349), with the censure at DS 2374. Latin checked 2026-07-25 at patristica.net. The censure lists the propositions as rash, scandalous, ill-sounding, offensive to pious ears, pernicious in practice, and erroneous, respectively; it does not include a charge of heresy.

Thomistic framework

- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 19, aa. 6 and 9 (the antecedent and consequent will; whether God wills evils); q. 22, aa. 1–4 (providence as the plan of things ordered to an end; its universal extension; immediacy of design and mediated execution; contingency preserved); q. 103, aa. 5–8 (the universality of divine government; government through intermediaries; nothing outside or resisting the order of government); q. 105, aa. 4–5 (God moves the created will without coercing it; God works in every agent without displacing it); q. 116, aa. 1–4 (fate); II-II, q. 21, a. 1 (presumption); II-II, q. 136, aa. 1–5 (patience). English from the public-domain translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, checked 2026-07-25 at newadvent.org; Latin checked the same day at corpusthomicum.org. Where the witnesses differ, the Latin governs.

The classic text and its sources

- *Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence: The Secret of Peace and Happiness*, by Fr. Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure, S.J., and St. Claude de la Colombière, S.J., trans. Paul Garvin (Charlotte, N.C.: TAN Books, 2012 printing; nihil obstat John P. Sullivan, imprimatur Francis Cardinal Spellman, 8 November 1961; first published 1961 by Alba House as *The Secret of Peace and Happiness*; reissued by St. Raphael Editions 1978, 1980, and 1983 with TAN; copyright 1980 St. Raphael Editions). In copyright. Front matter, publisher’s note, table of contents, and opening pages checked 2026-07-25 in the publisher’s own preview file at tanbooks.com.
- Jean-Baptiste Saint-Jure, S.J., *De la connaissance et de l’amour du fils de Dieu notre seigneur Jésus Christ*, vol. 2 (Paris: Périsse frères, 1877), Book III, ch. VIII, §§ I–X (pp. 206–282). Public domain; scan and OCR checked 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive.
- *Œuvres du R. P. Claude de la Colombière, de la Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. 5 (1832): sermons *Sur la soumission à la volonté de Dieu* (p. 65), *Sur la confiance en Dieu* (p. 85), *Sur la prière* (p. 102), *Sur les adversités* (p. 218). Public domain; checked 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive. Volumes 1–4 and the 1684 *Réflexions chrétiennes* were also searched.

The tradition of abandonment

- Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616), Books VIII (chs. I–III) and IX (chs. I, IV–VI, VIII, XIV), in the public-domain English translation of Henry Benedict Mackey, O.S.B.; text checked 2026-07-25 at the Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Attributed to Jean-Pierre de Caussade, S.J. (see the historical section above), *Abandonment; or, Absolute Surrender to Divine Providence*, revised and corrected by Henri Ramière, S.J., trans. Ella McMahon from the eighth French edition (New York, Cincinnati and Chicago: Benziger Brothers, 1887; imprimatur Michael Augustine, Archbishop of New York, 15 February 1887): Ramière’s preface, pp. 3–20, and Book I, ch. I, pp. 31–33. Public domain; checked 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive.
- Same work, *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, third English edition, trans. E. J. Strickland from the tenth complete French edition (Exeter: Catholic Records Press, 1921), introduction by Dom Arnold, O.S.B. Public domain; consulted 2026-07-25 at the Internet Archive for edition identity only.
- Dominique Salin, S.J., “The Treatise on Abandonment to Divine Providence,” *The Way* 46/2 (April 2007): 21–36. In copyright; quoted briefly. Checked 2026-07-25 at the journal’s posted PDF, theway.org.uk. Reports the manuscript history, Ramière’s editorial interventions, and the scholarship of Michel Olphe-Galliard, S.J., and Jacques Gagey (*L’Abandon à la providence divine d’une dame de Lorraine au XVIIIe siècle*, Grenoble: Jérôme Million, 2001), neither of which was consulted directly.

Historical background

- “Miguel de Molinos,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911); public domain; checked 2026-07-25 at newadvent.org. Used as a reported witness for Molinos’s biography, the publication and approbations of *La Guía espiritual*, the 1685 arrest, and the September 1687 sentence.
- The beatification (1929) and canonisation (31 May 1992) of Claude de la Colombière are reported at the level of standard reference works, checked 2026-07-25; no act of the Holy See was consulted directly, and no argument depends on the dates.

Last revised (UTC): 2026-07-25T12:10:35Z

Reuse and rights. To the extent Triptych holds the rights, project-created content and design are licensed under CC BY 4.0. Scripture, liturgical or official texts, received prayers or hymns, quotations, fonts, and other third-party material retain their own status; public-domain material remains public domain. Identify changes. Attribution implies neither Triptych nor ecclesiastical approval. See `LICENSE` and `THIRD_PARTY.md` in the source.