

## INTRODUCTION

In his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* Pierre Bayle depicted the irenicist Théophile Brachet de La Milletière as a charlatan, who had sold himself to the Roman Catholics in order to propagate a surrogate ecclesiastical peace, for which Calvinist orthodoxy was to be sacrificed. The tenor of the article on La Milletière was determined not only by Bayle's chief source, the thoroughly hostile sketch of the irenicist by Samuel Maresius<sup>1</sup>, but was also the unmistakable product of Bayle's scepticism towards irenicism in general. In his view, if the irenicists were not aiming at covert, private objectives of their own, then at best they were trying to square the circle. He had the deepest suspicion of irenicists who professed to be inspired by a rational theology, while in his opinion the pretension that it was possible to reach a consensus on the Scriptures had proved vain after a century and a half of controversy. It was thus that Elisabeth Labrousse summarised Bayle's attitude to irenicism<sup>2</sup>; an attitude from which the picture of La Milletière in the *Dictionnaire* suffered grievously.<sup>3</sup>

But even without his own critical contribution, Bayle could hardly have gathered any but deprecatory comments on the irenicist. La Milletière's contemporaries wanted nothing to do with his irenicism. He himself blamed the obstinacy and partisanship of his theological opponents, especially the Calvinists, and he was certainly correct to do so. In fact neither confession had the slightest wish to put its own dogmatics up for discussion for the sake of church unity.<sup>4</sup> But perhaps this dogmatic rigidity was not the only explanation of the resistance which La Milletière's peace proposals encountered.

We should not underestimate the scepticism that new initiatives for a unification of the Churches had to overcome in the third and fourth

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Maresius, *Concordia discors & Antichristus Revelatus. [...]*, Amsterdam, Joh. & Jod. Janssonius, 1642, pp. 559-586.

<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Labrousse, *Pierre Bayle, II: Hétérodoxie et rigorisme*, La Haye, 1964, p. 539.

<sup>3</sup> The negative tendency of the article on La Milletière was already criticised by the abbé Laurent-Josse Le Clerc in his *Lettre critique sur le Dictionnaire de Bayle*, The Hague, 1732, pp. 50-109. His remarks were included in the edition of the *Dictionnaire* which abbé Ph. Joly edited in 1748.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the discussion of F.P. van Stam, *The controversy over the theology of Saumur, 1635-1650 [...]*, Amsterdam/Maarssen, 1988, by Elisabeth Labrousse in *BSHPF* 136 (1990), (Janvier-Février-Mars), pp. 148-150.

decades of the seventeenth century. Why should Hugo Grotius and La Milletière succeed where illustrious irenicists of the previous century had failed? It is striking that both the irenicist Hugo Grotius and the irreconcilable Calvinist Daniel Jurieu placed La Milletière in the tradition of Erasmus, Wicelius and Cassander, but drew quite different conclusions from this.<sup>5</sup> Grotius wanted to make it clear that La Milletière formed part of an honourable tradition with a noble goal: the restoration of the unity of Christ's Church. Jurieu, on the other hand, not only thought that La Milletière's proposals were old wine in new bottles, ideas whose sterility had been proven many times, but distrusted irenicists as such.<sup>6</sup> Mistrust of irenicists sometimes went so far that theologians preferred to extend a hand to their opponents rather than respond to irenic overtures.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *BW* XI, ep. 4599 (14 April 1640, to Willem de Groot), p. 203: 'Ad meum propositum pacis quaerendae aut certe viae ad eam struendae quod attinet, firmus in eo maneo. Opus saepe est luctari contra alveum, nec ego solus hoc stadium curro. Cucurrit Erasmus, Cassander, Vecelius, Casaubonus; currit nunc Mileterius.' Daniel Jurieu, *La Voix d'Elie contre ceux qui clochent de deux costez [...]*, s.p., 1642, p. 133: '[... La Milletière] suit assurancement les erres & brisées d'Erasmus, de Cassander, de Wicelius & quelques autres qui ont ainsi autrefois cloché des deux costez, ou mesme tenté une telle réunion & conciliation des Religions, ayans esté sans doute sçavans & habiles Theologiens, mais n'ayans pas eu l'amour & le zele pour la verité qu'un Chrestien doit avoir. Aussi peut il prejurer par le succes de leur entreprise quel sera le sien.'

<sup>6</sup> An echo of the irenic initiatives in France around 1640 penetrated to the Republic, where a pamphlet was published in Utrecht in 1643 by Amelis Janssz van Paddenburch, entitled *Den vrede met Roomen, Onmogelijck, Ongeoorloft ende Verderffelijck voor de Gereformeerde Kercke* (Knuttel 5034). The Calvinist author (J.v.A.) does not believe in the unification of the Churches, in view of the irreconcilability of the two confessions: 'So ist doch te vergeefs in dese vereeninge met de Roomsche kercke veel te arbeiden, alsoo sy niet en sullen, ende wy niet en moghen toe-geven ofte vallen laten.' ('So it is vain to strive for this union with the Roman Church, as they will not and we may not yield or give way'; p. 3.) He also feels that irenicism is doomed to failure: 'Oock is na desen Vrede dicwils doch *te vergeefs getracht* van keyseren ende koninghen, die hier toe groote neersticheydt gedaen hebben, maer hebben noyt yet vruchtbaerlix te weech gebracht. Wat heeft doch keyser *Karel* goets met sijn *Interim* uytgherecht? Wat heeftmen met de Consultatien vanden grooten Moderateur *Cassander* gevordert? Voorwaer niet het alderminste, als dat daer uyt geleert is, dat sulcken arbeyt ydel ende vergeefs is: Of sullen de nieuwe Moderateurs het beter maken als *Cassander* ende sijns gelijcke? 't Is te beduchten, dat de nieuwe de oude niet verbeteren en sullen.' ('After this Peace also many vain attempts have been made by emperors and kings who have been greatly zealous for this, but have never brought anything to fruition. For what good did Emperor Charles achieve with his *Interim*? What was gained by the *Consultations* of the great Moderator Cassander? Truly, not the least thing except that it was learned from them that such work is vain and futile. Or will the new Moderators do better than Cassander and his like? It is to be feared that the new will not improve on the old.') Calvinists inside and outside France appear to have thought the same about a peace of the Churches, irrespective of the political beliefs in which their faith was anchored.

<sup>7</sup> An example of this reaction, which made irenicism almost superfluous, can be found in a letter of 13 December 1641, in which Charles Drelincourt, a preacher at Charenton, complained to André Rivet about the latest book of Hugo Grotius: 'On m'avoit dit que ce personnage y

La Milletière was all too well aware of the third reason for his lack of success: the suspicion that he allowed himself to be used as a tool of Richelieu, who was believed to be striving to destroy the Reformed Churches, under the mask of church unity.<sup>8</sup> His repeated assurances that the desire for unity was inspired by the Holy Ghost and not by eagerness for money, fell on deaf ears. La Milletière, originally a passionate and fiery Calvinist, had had a miraculous escape from a death sentence for his involvement in the Protestant revolts in the Midi in the 1620s. Since then he had combined a lofty zeal for the reunification of the Churches with a striking devotion to Richelieu.

When he became a Roman Catholic in 1645 he published a *Declaration du sieur de La Milletière, des causes de sa conversion à la foy Catholique*. La Milletière writes, looking back on the path he had travelled, that he had reached his irenic insights on his own, but that in their presentation he had been confronted with the religious discussions held in various places in France under the auspices of Richelieu. He felt that any result they might have would be far less favourable to the Church than his own proposals, but thought nevertheless that he was doing the right thing to follow the cardinal up to a point. If his peace proposals were to Richelieu's taste, he could profit from the cardinal's protection and authority and be assured of the attention of the Catholics. In good time, once he had been able to explain his ideas more clearly, both confessions would learn to appreciate them for their intrinsic value.<sup>9</sup>

fardoit et plastroit la creance papistique, mais je luy ay trouvé tout à descouvert & je ne doute point qu'il n'ayt des milliers d'hommes doctes en l'Eglise Romaine qui abandonneroyent volontiers quantité de superstitions dont cettuy-ci entreprend ridiculement la deffense.' (UB Leiden, BPL 273, f. 112r<sup>o</sup>.)

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Pierre Blet, 'Le plan de Richelieu pour la réunion des protestants'; in *Gregorianum* XLVIII (1967), pp. 110-129; Hans Bots & Pierre Leroy, 'La mort de Richelieu vue par des protestants: André Rivet et ses correspondants'; in *Lias* IV (1977), I, pp. 85-97; Hans Bots & Pierre-Eugène Leroy, 'Conversion politique ou conversion sincère? Le cas de Théophile Brachet de La Milletière'; in *Actes du XVIIe Colloque de Marseille* (Janvier 1982), C.M.R. 17, pp. 191-199.

<sup>9</sup> *Declaration du sieur de La Milletière, des causes de sa conversion*, pp. 28-29: 'La seconde chose que je consideray, fut que desja se passoient quelques pour-parlers & traittez secrets de personnes Catholiques & Religieuses avec des Ministres, sur les moyens d'une réunion, dont l'effect ne me sembloit pas devoir apporter tant de bien à l'Eglise, que celui de ma proposition, mais davantage de commodité à ceux qui promettoient d'y tendre la main. Ces raisons m'obligerent de mettre au jour les premieres pensées de mon dessein, & de luy donner quelque entrée dans les affections de ceux ausquels ils paroissoit devoir agreer, pour sa conformité d'intention. Et j'estimois qu'en m'associant à cette faveur, ma proposition n'en seroit que mieux escoutée, receuë, & autorisée parmi les Catholiques. Et que toutes ses conditions pourroient en suite estre mieux goustées de tous, par elles-mesmes, lors que le temps auroit fait naistre l'opportunité d'en représenter les circonstances particulieres, & d'en faire cognoistre l'utilité.'

Apart from the question whether the true history is related here, the expectation must be considered rather naive.

Whatever its nature, a certain collaboration between La Milletière and the cardinal can not be denied, and in it the Calvinists found grounds for mistrust. But it was customary at the time to attack irenicism by discrediting the irenicist, often using all kinds of barely relevant personal criticism as a stick to beat him with. The allusions to La Milletière's turbulent past as a rebel, with which the Calvinist authorities in Paris tried to discredit their opponent, are to be explained by the displeasure felt in the capital at the reckless adventurism with which their co-religionists in the provinces had endangered the Protestant privileges. An agent provocateur and troublemaker like La Milletière, who had made a name for himself in these wars, was not the man to give the pastors of Charenton a lesson in dogmatics.

Such personal objections to the irenicist raise the question whether anyone at all could claim the moral right to plead for the union of the Christian Churches.<sup>10</sup> A man of integrity such as Hugo Grotius, the Swedish ambassador to France, who was moreover an eminent scholar and had always opted for a moderate standpoint in the religious disputes of his time, appeared to be just as little able to withstand the test of criticism as the rebellious La Milletière. In one of his polemics against

<sup>10</sup> In his book *Le Catholique Réformé* of 1642, La Milletière summed up all the objections to his person and his inspiration, which were used by his opponents as pretexts for not needing to listen to him. He urged them to lay aside these prejudices: 'Faites de vostre part le devoir de bons ouvriers en la moisson de Christ. Cherchez la paix & l'union. Despoüillez vous de vos prejugez. Sousmettez vostre jugement à la verité. Recevez-la de quelque main qui vous la presente. Et ne dites plus comme vous faites, Qui est celui-cy qui nous exhorte? Se croit-il plus habile que ceux qui l'ont enseigné? En sçait-il plus que tant de gens doctes qu'il veut reprendre? D'où a t'il appris la Theologie? Il a passé sa vie à l'estude des Loix & des autres sciences humaines. Jamais il ne viendra à bout de ce qu'il propose. Entend-il mieux les raisons des definitions Catholiques que les Docteurs Catholiques mesmes? Si les raisons qu'il nous propose pour nous y faire consentir ont esté incogneuës à ceux qui en ont formé les definitions dans les Conciles, comment en autorisera-t'il le sens, qu'il leur donne, parmy ceux avec lesquels il nous veut reunir? Veut-il que les uns & les autres embrassent une religion qu'il nous aura faite toute nouvelle à sa fantaisie? S'il ne trouve pas nostre Religion bonne, s'il la croit contraire à la pieté, pourquoy demeure-t'il encore parmy nous? Pourquoy ne se range-t'il plustost avec les Catholiques, puis qu'il estime qu'ils ont la verité des dogmes, & que c'est la seule ignorance des raisons qu'il en sçait, & qu'il en veut apprendre aux autres, qui engendre la superstition & l'abus, & non les dogmes mesmes. Tout ce qu'il en fait n'est autre chose, sinon qu'il s'est vendu à l'Eglise Romaine, pour destruire nostre communion. Ce qu'il espere faire plus puissamment demeurant parmi nous, pour en seduire plusieurs plus facilement par sa frequentation. Ce sont vos prejugez.' (*o.c.*, pp. 146-147)

Grotius, André Rivet had endorsed Possevino's rule<sup>11</sup>, that an irenicist must stand above all parties ('Qui concordiam Ecclesiae exoptat, is neutri parti nimium inhaereat necesse est.').<sup>12</sup> Yet in the same book he wrote that irenicists who were not attached to one of the confessions—among whom he undoubtedly included Grotius—were certainly the last persons who should incite the faithful to unite in one Church, since they themselves had sworn the discipline of any faith.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in Rivet's view, irenicists of Roman Catholic background or from the Reformed camp were scarcely any better equipped for their task: the former lacked a papal mandate and the latter ought, according to the

<sup>11</sup> Antonio Possevino (1533-1611); cf. on him: Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque* VI, 1061-1093, Hurter I, 180 sqq., *DThC* XII, 2647-2657 (Ledit), Nicéron, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres dans la république des lettres*, Paris: Briasson, 1733, t. XXII, pp. 201-233. Possevino had made his reputation by his mission to the grand principality of Moscow, where, as the envoy of pope Gregory XIII, he had brought about a peace between Poland and Ivan the Terrible and at the same time developed initiatives for a reunion of the eastern Muscovite Churches with the Roman Catholic Church; cf. Stanislas Polcin S.J., *Une tentative d'Union au XVIIe siècle: La mission religieuse du père Antoine Possevin S.J. en Moscovie (1581-1582)*. (= *Orientalia Christiana analecta*, 150), Rome, 1957.

<sup>12</sup> *Hugonis Grotii in Consultationem G. Cassandri Annotata cum necessariis animadversionibus Andreae Riveti*, in *Andreae Riveti [...] Operum Theologicorum quae Latinè edidit, tomus tertius*, Rotterdam: Arnold Leers, 1660, p. 976. Cf. also the letter of Achatius B. de Dona the elder to Rivet, of 15 August 1643 (UB Leiden, BPL 293 II): 'Nous avons en ces quartiers aussi un pretendu Conciliateur des Religions, mais mauvais observateur de la Regle de Possevin que vous allegués in Animadversionibus [...], parceque n'ayant presché entre nous toujours que pax, concordia, conscientia: et promettant un escrit particulier et fort exquis là dessus, en fin le voilà tout soudain aller à la Messe, faire serment publiq à Varsovie sur la bulle du Pape Pie 4 et le Concile Tridentin, et abjurer nostre Religion, et néanmoins nous veut persuader encores, de le croire, puisqu'il s'est fait anathema pro frateribus, et que par le moien du Moine Valerius Magnus [...] le Pape fera merveilles, et le Clergé aussi, et qu'au moins en Pologne sera tenu un Synode National au mois d'octobre prochain, où toutes sortes de Religions auront libera suffragia. C'est Nigrinus Silesien, çï devant ministre à Breslau et Danzig, en sa jeunesse fort débauché, et déréglé toujours, maintenant laceré des gouttes aux pieds et mains et par tout le corps.' A gouty apostate with a debauched youth: ecce irenicus. On the Capuchin Valerianus Magni (1581-1661) and Bartholomeus Nigrinus (1595-1646), see *Correspondance Rivet-Sarrau* I, lettre LXVIII (Rivet to Sarrau, 11 August 1642), p. 218, notes 24 and 25. Also *Correspondance Rivet-Sarrau* II, lettre CCXXXVII (Rivet to Sarrau, 2 May 1644), p. 259, in which Rivet suggests that La Milletière had to take part in the religious colloquy at Toruń in Poland, which he regarded as a misbegotten plan of the Capuchin and his convert. On this religious discussion, see A. Jobert, *De Luther à Mohila. La Pologne dans la crise de la Chrétienté 1517-1648*, Paris, 1974, pp. 384-400.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 927: 'Qui autem extra utramque communionem vivunt, nec dum elegerunt cui Religioni se addicant, quod ipsi pro se nondum facere potuerunt, vix aliis possunt persuadere ut faciant; hoc tantum, ut eorum exemplo, nulli communioni addicti, secure conventus omnes Ecclesiasticos negligent, omnis disciplinae jugum abjicientes. Quod consilium nemo prudens, & salutis suae studiosus sequetur, nisi velit in Academicorum & Scepticorum sectam transire, quae a zelo Christiano tam aliena est, quam quod maxime.'

words of the apostle, to be shunned, because they wanted to arouse dissent from orthodox doctrine.<sup>14</sup> For others too Grotius' stance outside the Churches proved an insuperable obstacle, which immediately disqualified the irenicism of the Delft oracle.<sup>15</sup>

For all these reasons efforts to achieve unity in the Christian Churches in the first half of the seventeenth century met stubborn resistance: an obstruction which was of great importance for the history of French Protestantism and of irenicism. It, therefore, seems interesting to investigate how such a notable propagandist of church unity as La Milletière formulated his irenical theology under such difficult circumstances. By discovering which contemporary theological works and disputes determined his thinking, we can form an impression of the way in which La Milletière judged all kinds of theological developments in both confessions for their irenical potential. Thus he investigated the possibilities which Cameron's and Amyraut's doctrine of grace had created, compared with the Calvinist orthodoxy, nor did he overlook the possible significance for Calvinism of Arnauld's plea for a restoration of early Christian discipline in the sacrament of confession. Profiting from the increasing willingness of Calvinists to allow historical argument in the theological dispute with Rome, he also ransacked the legacy of theology in his search for interpretations of the important controversial questions that could satisfy both confessions. At the same time a survey of the reactions which La Milletière's irenicism provoked, offers an overview of the attitudes taken by various theological groups with regard to one another: on the Calvinist side, the orthodox party, supported by such venerable oracles as André Rivet and Pierre Du Moulin; the school of Saumur, Amyraut and Testard, and the preachers of Charenton, who occupied the middle ground. On the Roman Catholic side: the Sorbonne, the Gallican clergy and the ultramontane orders, and in addition, for a short time, Richelieu

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 927: '[...] inter concionatores Pontificios de quibus dictum est, nullus est qui a Pontifice primum, deinde a sui ordinis Generali non pendeat, nullus qui praestare possit quod promittit, & qui ullo diplomate Pontificio munitus sit ad illud suscipiendum vel exequendum. Proinde quaecumque aut molientur aut gerent, semper improbari potuerunt ab ea potestate cui sunt subjecti. Inter eos qui adhuc externa professione nobis adhaerere videntur, nulli sunt qui suspecti esse non debeant, utpote [...] *dissidia & scandala facientes adversus doctrinam quam didicimus*, a quibus monet Apostolus ut *declinemus*, nedum ut nos iis adjungamus.' (= Rom. 16:17)

<sup>15</sup> Charles Drelincourt wrote in his already cited letter of 13 December 1641 to André Rivet (UB Leiden, BPL 273, f.112r°): 'J'en souhaitterois aussi que Dieu vous mit au coeur de respondre cet escrit & d'y respondre de bonne sorte en n'espargnant point un homme qui n'espargne personne & representant en une preface que celuy là n'est gueres propre à accommoder les Religions qui tesmoigne n'avoir aucune Religion et les avoir toutes pour indifferentes & sur tout qui combat la vraye Religion et en sappe les plus solides fondements.'

with his ecclesiastical policy. And between the two confessions, the small group of irenicists, the ‘hénétiques’, who made a considerable stir around 1642, encouraged by Richelieu.

The question of La Milletière’s honesty cannot simply be dismissed as an example of the accusations to which the irenicists were exposed. The doubt of his integrity which was felt was all too plausible. Several of his books are dedicated to Richelieu, but La Milletière himself supplied the explanation already given. The arguments against him were his past as an intriguer in the service of Rohan, the continual lack of money that made him susceptible to a tempting offer, the amnesty granted him, and the often devious polemical tactics he used in defence of his irenicism, tactics which more than once give the impression that they could be applied in the defence of whatever he chose. But there is also much that speaks in his favour: the good name he quickly managed to win among Protestants, thanks to which he was entrusted, at an early age, with the office of elder in the congregation at Charenton and aroused great expectations among such leading Calvinists as Pierre Du Moulin; his tenacity in the defence of church unity, which continued long after Richelieu had released his grip on him; his naivety which is apparent in such pronouncements as this:

[...] the problems claimed to this very day to be associated with ending the schism troubling the Church exist in the prejudice which has always divided men’s minds and aspires to foment the causes of the division on both sides. And yet no Catholic or Protestant has ever looked among the true reasons for the existence of Christianity for a way to bring about a legitimate reformation of the Church on the basis of the same reasons which oblige Protestants to accept all the doctrines of the Catholic faith which they have rejected.<sup>16</sup>

The conviction emerges that the Christian faith in itself must lead to unity in Christendom. To come closer to this truth, Roman Catholics must subject their Church to a true, ‘legitimate’ reformation, and the Protestants must distinguish their justified demands for reform from grievances which

<sup>16</sup> ‘[...] la difficulté presumée jusqu’ici, de pouvoir faire cesser le schisme qui trouble l’Eglise, n’est procédée que de la preoccupation qui tient les esprits divisez, en la seule pensée, de fomenter, de part & d’autre, toutes les causes qui ont fait naistre la division. Sans que nul Catholique ny Protestant, ait cherché, dans les veritables raisons du Christianisme, le moyen de faire naistre, la legitime reformation de l’Eglise, des mesmes causes qui obligent les Protestans d’embrasser toutes les doctrines de la foy Catholique qu’ils ont rejetsées.’

*Tres-humble remonstration du Sr. de La Milletière à la Roine*, s.p., 1644, p. 22.

arose from the deliberately distorted presentation of Roman Catholic doctrine that the Reformers had held up to their followers in order to make dissension more acute and to justify schism. What the 'legitimate' reformation of the Church involved, and which Protestant doctrines were identified as false and which as true, will be the subject of this book. It must be pointed out at the beginning, however, that the explanation of La Milletière's irenic schemes cannot reveal anything about his motives. To answer the question of his honesty, one is driven, for lack of relevant sources, back to the scanty information on his character that can be gathered here and there. On this question, which was so decisive for his contemporaries, one must bear in mind that a possible contract with Richelieu need not discredit La Milletière's irenicism. Enterprises begun under an unfavourable or dubious star often end honourably.<sup>17</sup>

La Milletière was expelled from the Reformed Church in 1645 and was received into the Roman Catholic Church some months later, in April. After this date, he published a few more books pleading for an end to the schism of the Church and a reunification of Reformed and Roman Catholic Christianity. Yet the content of these later books, written from the bosom of the Catholic Church, is not part of this enquiry into La Milletière's irenicism. An important argument for a caesura in 1645 lies in the question whether the Roman Catholic Church would permit a convert to query its own dogma for the sake of peace in the Church. By his conversion and the excommunication which preceded it, La Milletière lost virtually all his room for manoeuvre. Although the national synods of the French Reformed Churches strove to subject the faithful to a religious discipline as strict as that of the Church of Rome, he had nevertheless managed to remain a member of the Reformed Church from 1634 to 1645 while distancing himself from its dogma on several important points. In this period he repeatedly stressed that continued membership of the Calvinist Church was a condition for his irenicism.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In *Le Catholique Réformé* (1642) La Milletière attacks the suspicion that he was an agent of Rome as follows: 'Si je me suis vendu à Rome, vous cognoistrez bientost que je gagne bien mal mon argent. Et que je suis mauvais flateur de tous les interests, pour lesquels sa cour tient à loüage ceux qui servent à sa grandeur, & non à la veritable autorité du siège de saint Pierre.' He was certainly correct, but his opponents believed that he had sold himself to Richelieu, whose Gallican ideas did not necessarily coincide with those of Rome.

<sup>18</sup> Sarrau also expected that La Milletière's zeal would have to find another target when he went over to Rome: 'Desormais il combattra dans leur gros sans nous harceler de son chef, comme il a fait depuis plusieurs années.' (*Correspondance Rivet-Sarrau* III, lettre CCCXXVI, Sarrau to Rivet, 8 April 1645, p. 89.)

Consultation of the books published after 1645 confirms this doubt of the possibility of compromising with the Roman Catholic faith: the earlier irenic views of the eucharist and grace are slowly abandoned and replaced by an unalloyed Catholic doctrine.<sup>19</sup> Although in the apology for his conversion which he published, La Milletière undertook to continue his efforts for irenicism, and some of his later books went under titles which recalled that undertaking, one may safely state that in the last twenty years of his life, he had taken his place in the procession of Roman Catholic controversialists.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> La Milletière's commission from the general assembly of the French clergy to write a book which would put an end to the controversy, proves that there could be no further question of acting on his own initiative in these years: *La Raison certaine de terminer les differends de la Religion entre les Catholiques et les Protestants. Addressée aux Ministres qui sont dans Paris. Pour estre appellez sur ce sujet à une conference amiable par l'ordre du Roy. Suivant la recommandation que l'Assemblée generale du Clergé en a faite à Monseigneur le Cardinal. Imprimé par l'ordre de l'Assemblée generale du Clergé.* Paris: Antoine Vitré, 1657. La Milletière had opened this book with some 'épîtres dédicatoires', of which that to the Paris clergy caused some stir, because it praised cardinal de Retz, who had fallen out of favour at court at that moment. Decombes wrote to Mazarin about this on 8 September 1657 (*Affaires Etrangères, Mémoires et Documents de France*, vol. 904, f.116-117 (cf. also f.155-156, 160-161, 163 on this affair)).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *M. Friderici Gesenii [...] Liber de unione ecclesiastica. Accessit in fine Mosis Amyraldi, Reformatae Religionis apud Gallicae Hugenottas magni Theologi consilium quomodo qui diversae religionis est, apud illos quibus cum habitat, in usu sacrorum se gerere debeat [...]*, Hemipoli: Tobiae Schroederi, 1694, p. 157: 'Obiit d. 6 Maii huius 1665. anni Dominus de la Milletiere anno aetatis suae 76. ingenti cum dolore omnium Catholicorum (Papaeorum), quibus suis in ecclesiam meri[t]is innotuerat. Namque a tempore conversionis suae flagellum fuerat eorum, qui Religionem Reformatam, cui & ille quondam fuerat addictus, profiterentur. Ita concordia & tolerantia Tyrannidi praetextus fieri debuit.' (My italics.)