



PRIX
FRANÇOIS GUIZOT
INSTITUT DE FRANCE



François Guizot-Institut de France 2020 prize

Award ceremony

Monday 5 October 2020, 6:30 PM, Grande Salle des Séances

Speech of Stéphane Coste

President of the François Guizot Association

Mr. Chancellor,

Mr. Honorary Chancellor,

Mr. Perpetual Secretary,

Mr. Chairman of the Jury,

Ladies and Gentlemen members of the jury of the François Guizot-Institut de France Prize

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

Dear Laureat,

This fourth edition of the François Guizot-Institut de France Prize has been somewhat disturbed by Covid-19, a major event for the members of our association and for the descendants of François Guizot.

I would like to warmly thank Mr. Xavier Darcos, Chancellor of the Institute, for welcoming us today in the prestigious setting of the Institut de France, so dear to Guizot.

I would like to thank the members of the jury, particularly its president Jean-Claude Casanova for their in-depth work, which made it possible to celebrate Catherine Maire's

book, *L'Eglise dans l'Etat*, this year.

Dear Laureate, I congratulate you on being the fourth recipient of the François Guizot-Institut de France Prize for your book.

The Church in the State is a subject which, I must confess, I knew little about, especially the famous *Unigenitus bull* of 1713.

Your work is exciting and very thorough, developing several themes that I would like to bring closer to Guizot.

First of all, protestantism, an integral part of Guizot's life. I had not realized that by integrating the Church into its bosom, the royal power had to make pledges as to its religious or more particularly Catholic commitment in exchange for greater control over the French Church, which resulted in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the consequences that followed for the Protestants of France.

Let me quote you: *Forced conversions and dragonnades will be the fruit of this appropriation of the Catholic cause by royal absolutism. The counterpart of Gallican autonomy was the strengthening of devout politics within the kingdom.*

Pursuing this aspect, we come to the problem of Protestant marriage where the temporal entered into frontal opposition with the spiritual. The Protestants who had remained in France after 1685 had become undocumented by Louis XIV and his successors. This situation lasted for a century until the Edict of 1787, falsely called the Edict of Tolerance, which attempted to square the circle of their status.

Second, the theme of education, with the abbot of Saint Peter. I quote: *"The well-policed State that he calls for must supply sufficient instructors in sufficient numbers to each parish according to the number of its inhabitants. He wants to multiply the number of schoolmasters and the Grey Nuns" in the country.*

D'Holbach whom you also highlight in your book is on the same wavelength in terms of education. I quote: *"Its primary purpose is not to educate scholars and scientists, but good citizens. It is through public education that we can lay the foundations of social harmony, which is as necessary for the happiness of private life as it is for the happiness of public life."*

Guizot, as Minister of Education, realized these wishes in June 1833 with his law on primary education and I take an excerpt from a text on our site guizot.com :

"All in all, this law tended to establish a competition, a complementarity between the State and the Churches—essentially the Catholic Church—in the diffusion of primary education."

But beyond these themes, what would Guizot have thought of the position of the Church in the State? I would like to thank Laurent Theis for his contribution on this point.

Guizot expressed himself on the subject as early as 1817, when he published an article entitled "On the principle that civil status and religious status are absolutely distinct and separate", at a time when the ultra-royalists were leading an offensive to restore the unity of the throne and the altar. He specifies that "a citizen will be subject only to the empire of the law, and the believer only to that of religion", and he concludes that there is, for civil and religious power,

“as much advantage in allying as danger in confusing.”

He is therefore not in favor of the separation of church and state. This will remain his position. He expressed this, for example, in his 1851 preface of *Méditations et études morales* (Meditations and Moral Studies), where he wished “not for the separation of Church and State, a crude expedient which lowers and weakens both entities under the pretext of freeing them from each other, but the separation of the spiritual order from the temporal order, of religious and civil status, and the illegitimacy of any intervention of force in the spiritual order, even in the service of truth.” In other words, the Concordat of 1802, if interpreted and applied as it should have been, would not in any way restrict the freedom of conscience and worship or the independence of the churches. And the mutual support, in the social order, of the Church and the State is beneficial to all in the face of materialism and anarchy.

He was so convinced of this that in 1831, he helped to ensure that the government gave treatment to the rabbis, which was not yet the case, and later admitted that if Muslims on French territory asked to have their cult recognized and to enjoy the treatment attached to such recognition, it was legally impossible to refuse them.

The fact remains that “the merit of the covenant between the State and the Church depends on the terms on which it is entered into” (*The Christian Church and Society in 1861*, p. 49), the main condition being that the Catholic Church fully accepts the modern society, and thus the freedom that came into being in 1789. “For the alliance to be serious and effective, there must be a broad measure of agreement between Church and State as to the essential principles of the religious society and of the civil society they represent; if the two societies and their governments did not admit their mutual principles, if they constantly disavowed themselves and waged open or hidden war within their alliance, the good effects of the alliance would disappear, and the alliance itself would soon be compromised”. (*Meditations on the Christian religion in its Relation to the Present State of Societies and Minds*, 1868, p. 46).

That is to say that Guizot is not an unconditional opponent of separation; the concordatory regime seems preferable to him, but not at all costs.

If we come back to 2020, the separation of Church and State, which seems normal in France, is in reality not so in the rest of Europe. There are two other models: **the system of recognized cults (in Germany for example) and the model of a State religion (in Greece for example). There is therefore no single model despite the evolution of our societies.**

Dear Madam, in order for you to enlighten us on these evolutions, we look forward to the continuation of your work!

Beyond the Guizot-Institut de France Prize that we are celebrating today, the Association François Guizot is working on several other projects in order to bring to the attention of the greatest number, the considerable work of François Guizot who lived through the 19th century and the immense intellectual and cultural heritage that he enriched and transmitted throughout his long life.

The site www.guizot.com gathers all the elements of his life and work and is regularly updated to be a point of reference on Guizot.

Thus, since January 2020 more than 1000 letters from the correspondence exchanged between François Guizot and Princess Dorothee de Lieven have been transcribed and made accessible via the site guizot.com. I take this opportunity to thank Marie Dupond who is in charge of this project. These documents allow us to better understand European diplomatic relations in the middle of the 19th century, all of which have been uploaded on the digital platform E-Man of the CNRS and the ENS.

Our sole objective is to make Guizot's works as accessible as possible to our family, to researchers and to the general public.