



# Charles Tournemire

## *L'Orgue mystique: La haute mission*

by Richard Christopher Spotts

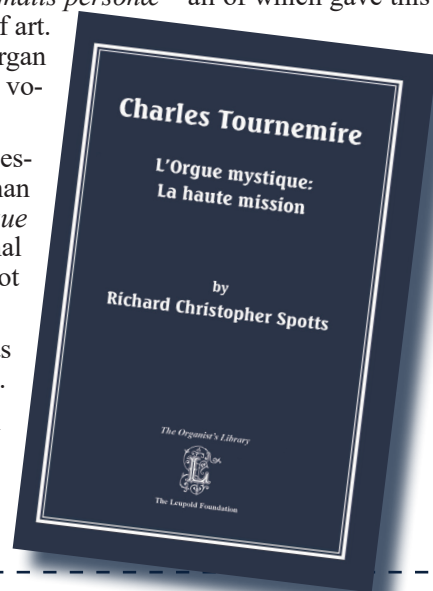
**A definitive study of Charles Tournemire and his  
magnum opus *L'Orgue mystique*.**

There are few lives in the world of music as enigmatic and profound as the French organist Charles Tournemire (1870–1939). *L'Orgue mystique: La haute mission* is a book that seeks to acquaint the world to this nearly forgotten musical luminary and his nonpareil magnum opus, *L'Orgue mystique*. The story of Tournemire and his ideals begins with the trials of the Gallican Church from the time of the Revolution and its attempts to rise from the ashes. From there, the book engages in an exploration of the ensuing liturgical practices; of theological and secular philosophies; of historical events; of visual, literary, and musical artistic movements; of the pipe organ and its technological and tonal evolution; and of a formidable and colorful *dramatis personae*—all of which gave this period life and shaped the beliefs of Tournemire the man and *L'Orgue mystique* the work of art. Tournemire's conception of organ music came to be embodied in his famous aphorism, "Organ music where God is absent is a body without a soul." What evolved in him was a latreutic, vocational understanding of music—an understanding that he termed *La haute mission*.

*Charles Tournemire L'Orgue mystique: La haute mission*, therefore is an interwoven tapestry of history, biography, and musical analysis. In addition to an intimate portrait of the man and a depiction of his times, this book gives an in-depth examination of *L'Orgue mystique* including the full "libretto," which also comprises movements not incorporated into the final publication, along with supplemental notes written by Tournemire that heretofore have not been published.

The author, Richard Spotts, is a graduate of Westminster Choir College in Princeton and has given complete performances of this fifteen-hour, two-hundred fifty-three-movement work.

*Charles Tournemire L'Orgue mystique: La haute mission* is a fascinating journey through French history, culture, and art as well as a window into the life of a man of rare genius. For a subscription or to support this project, please complete the form below and return to The Leupold Foundation. Additional flyers are available upon request.



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