

ASH LIBRARY
ESTABLISHED 1833
W. T. & T. BOADA
Rua do Arsenal, 104
LISBOA

Fernando Pessoa

A SHORT
HISTORY OF FREETHOUGHT

ERRATA

- P. 138, line 26, for "1583" read "1563"
- P. 229, line 5 of note 1, for "Receuil" read
"Recueil"
- P. 241, under "1767," for "religious" read
"religions"
- P. 241, under "1767," for "Freret" read
"Fréret," and so elsewhere

A SHORT HISTORY
OF
FREETHOUGHT

ANCIENT AND MODERN

BY
JOHN M. ROBERTSON

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND EXPANDED

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II

(ISSUED FOR THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED)

LONDON:
WATTS & CO.,
JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1915

CONTENTS

VOLUME II

	PAGE
CHAP. XIII—THE RISE OF MODERN FREETHOUGHT (<i>continued</i>)	
§ 4. <i>England</i> . Persecution and executions under Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth. Charges of atheism. Lilly's polemic. Reginald Scot on witchcraft. The Family of Love. Hamond, Lewes, Kett. Apologetic literature. Influence of Machiavelli. Nashe's polemic. Marlowe, Raleigh, Harriott, Kyd. Protests of Pilkington and Hooker. Polemic of Bishop Morton. Shakespeare. The drama generally. Executions under James. Bacon. Suckling - - - - -	1
§ 5. <i>Popular Thought in Europe</i> . Callidius. Flade. Wier. Coornhert. Grotius. Gortæus. Zwicker. Koerbagh. Beverland. Socinianism. The case of Spain. Cervantes	32
§ 6. <i>Scientific Thought</i> . Copernicus. Giordano Bruno. Vanini. Galileo. The Aristotelian strife. Vives. Ramus. Descartes. Gassendi - - - - -	41
CHAP. XIV—BRITISH FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	
§ 1. Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Hobbes. Selden - - - - -	69
§ 2. The popular ferment: attempted suppression of heresy by Parliament. Lawrence Clarkson. The Levellers and Toleration. Forms of unbelief. The term "rationalist." Propaganda against atheism. Culverwel. The Polemic of Henry More. Freethought at the Restoration. The case of Biddle. The protests of Howe, Stillingfleet, and Baxter. Freethought in Scotland. The argument of Mackenzie. English Apologetics of Casaubon, Ingelo, Temple, Wilkins, Tillotson, Cudworth, Boyle, and others. Martin Clifford. Emergence of Deism. Avowals of Archdeacon Parker, Sherlock, and South. Dryden. Discussion on miracles. Charles Blount. Leslie's polemic. Growth of apologetic literature. Toland. The Licensing Act - - -	75
§ 3. Literary, scientific, and academic developments. Sir Thomas Browne. Jeremy Taylor. John Spencer. Joseph Glanvill. Cartesianism. Glisson. Influence of Gassendi. Resistance to Copernican theory. Lord Falkland. Colonel Fry. Locke. Bury. Temple. The Marquis of Halifax. Newton. Unitarianism. Penn. Firmin. Latitudinarianism. Tillotson. Dr. T. Burnet. Dr. B. Connor. John Craig. The "rationalists" - - - - -	100

	PAGE
CHAP. XV—FRENCH AND DUTCH FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	
1. Influence of Montaigne and Charron. Gui Patin. Naudé. La Mothe le Vayer - - - - -	117
2. Catholic Pyrrhonism - - - - -	120
3. Descartes's influence. Boileau. Jesuit and royal hostility -	121
4. Vogue of freethinking. Malherbe. Jean Fontanier. Théophile de Viau. Claude Petit. Corneille. Molière - - - - -	122
5. Cyrano de Bergerac - - - - -	123
6. Pascal's skepticism. Religious quarrels - - - - -	124
7. Huet's skepticism - - - - -	126
8. Cartesianism. Malebranche - - - - -	128
9. Buffier. Scientific movements - - - - -	130
10. Richard Simon. La Peyrère - - - - -	131
11. Dutch thought. Louis Meyer. Cartesian heresy - - - - -	132
12. Spinoza - - - - -	133
13. Biblical criticism. Spinozism. Deurhoff. B. Bekker - - - - -	137
14. Bayle - - - - -	139
15. Developments in France. The polemic of Abbadie. Persecution of Protestants. Fontenelle - - - - -	141
16. St. Evremond. Regnard. La Bruyère. Spread of skepticism. Fanaticism at court - - - - -	143
CHAP. XVI—BRITISH FREETHOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	
§ 1. Toland. Blasphemy Law. Strifes among believers. Cudworth. Bishops Browne and Berkeley. Heresy in the Church. The Schools of Newton, Leibnitz, and Clarke. Hutcheson. Halley. Provincial deism. Saunderson. Simson. Literary orthodoxy. Addison. Steele. Berkeley. Swift. New deism. Shaftesbury. Trenchard. Unitarianism. Asgill. Coward. Dodwell. Whiston - - - - -	147
§ 2. Anthony Collins. Bentley's attack. Mandeville. Woolston. Middleton. Deism at Oxford. Tindal. Middleton and Waterland - - - - -	154
§ 3. Unitarianism: its spread among Presbyterians. Chubb. Hall. Elwall - - - - -	159
§ 4. Berkeley's polemic. Lady Mary Montagu. Pope. Deism and Atheism. Coward. Strutt - - - - -	162
§ 5. Parvish. Influence of Spinoza - - - - -	167
§ 6. William Pitt. Morgan. Annet. Dodwell the Younger -	169
§ 7. The work achieved by deism. The social situation. Recent disparagements and German testimony - - - - -	170
§ 8. Arrest of English science. Hale. Burnet. Whiston. Woodward. Effects of Imperialism. Contrast with France. The mathematicians - - - - -	176
§ 9. Supposed "decay" of deism. Butler. William Law. Hume	179
§ 10. Freethought in Scotland. Execution of Thomas Aikenhead. Confiscation of innovating books. Legislation against deism. Anstruther's and Halyburton's polemic. Strife	

CONTENTS

vii

		PAGE
	over creeds. John Johnstone. William Dudgeon. Hutcheson. Leechman. Forbes. Miller. Kames. Smith. Ferguson. Church riots - - - - -	181
§ 11.	Freethought in Ireland. Lord Molesworth. Archbishop Syngé. Bishop Clayton - - - - -	188
§ 12.	Situation in England in 1750. Richardson's lament. Middleton. Deism among the clergy. Sykes. The deistic evolution - - - - -	190
§ 13.	Materialism. La Mettrie. Shifting of the social centre: socio-political forces. Gray's avowal. Hume's estimate. Goldsmith's. The later deism. Bolingbroke - - - - -	194
§ 14.	Diderot's diagnosis. Influence of Voltaire. Chatterton. Low state of popular culture. Prosecutions of poor freethinkers. Jacob Hlve. Peter Annet. Later deistic literature. Unitarianism. Evanson. Tomkyns. Watts. Lardner. Priestley. Toulmin. D. Williams - - - - -	198
§ 15.	Gibbon. Spread of unbelief. The creed of the younger Pitt. Fox. Geology. Hutton. Cowper's and Paley's complaints. Erasmus Darwin. Mary Wollstonecraft - - - - -	203
§ 16.	Burns and Scotland - - - - -	208
§ 17.	Panic and reaction after the French Revolution. New aristocratic orthodoxy. Thomas Paine. New democratic freethought - - - - -	209

CHAP. XVII—FRENCH FREETHOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

	1. Boulainvilliers. Strifes in the Church. Fénelon and Ramsay. Fanaticism at court. New freethinking. Gilbert. Tyssot de Patot. Deslandes. Persecution of Protestants - - - - -	213
	2. Output of apologetics - - - - -	214
	3. The political situation - - - - -	216
	4. Huard and Huet - - - - -	217
	5. Montesquieu - - - - -	219
	6. Jean Meslier - - - - -	221
	7. Freethinking priests. Pleas for toleration. Boindin - - - - -	222
	8. Voltaire - - - - -	224
	9. Errors as to the course of development - - - - -	229
	10. Voltaire's character and influence - - - - -	233
	11. Progress of tolerance. Marie Huber. Resistance of bigotry. De Prades. The <i>Encyclopédie</i> . Fontenelle as censor - - - - -	236
	12. Chronological outline of the literary movement - - - - -	244
	13. New politics. The less famous freethinkers: Burigny; Fontenelle; De Brosses; Meister; Vauvenargues; Mirabaud; Fréret - - - - -	244
	14. N.-A. [Boulangier. Dumarsais. Prémontval. Solidity of much of the French product - - - - -	246
	15. General anonymity of the freethinkers. The orthodox defence - - - - -	250
	16. The prominent freethinkers. Rousseau - - - - -	253
	17. Astruc - - - - -	256
	18. Freethought in the Académie. Beginnings in classical research. Emergence of anti-clericalism. D'Argenson's notes - - - - -	257

	PAGE
19. The affair of Pompignan - - - - -	258
20. Marmontel's <i>Bélisaire</i> - - - - -	259
21. The scientific movement: La Mettrie - - - - -	260
22. Study of Nature. Fontenelle. Lenglet du Fresnoy. De Maillet's <i>Telliamed</i> . Mirabaud. Resistance of Voltaire to the new ideas. Switzerland. Buffon and the Church	262
23. Maupertuis. Diderot. Condillac. Robinet. Helvétius -	264
24. Diderot's doctrines and influence - - - - -	267
25. D'Alembert and d'Holbach - - - - -	271
26. Freethought and the Revolution - - - - -	273
27. The conventional myth and the facts. Necker. Abbé Grégoire. The argument of Michelet. The legend of the Goddess of Reason. Sacrilege in the English and French Revolu- tions. Hébert. Danton. Chaumette. Cloetz. The atheist Salaville - - - - -	274
28. Religious and political forces of revolt. The polemic of Rivarol	280
29. The political causation. Rebellion in the ages of faith -	281
30. The polemic of Mallet du Pan. Saner views of Barante. Free- thinkers and orthodox in each political camp. Mably. Voltaire. D'Holbach. Rousseau. Diderot. Orthodoxy of the mass. The thesis of Chamfort - - - - -	284
31. The reign of persecution - - - - -	289
32. Orthodox lovers of tolerance - - - - -	291
33. Napoleon - - - - -	292

CHAP. XVIII—GERMAN FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND
EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

1. Moral Decline under Lutheranism. Freethought before the Thirty Years' War. Orthodox polemic. The movement of Matthias Knutzen - - - - -	294
2. Influence of Spinoza. Stosch. Output of apologetics -	297
3. Leibnitz - - - - -	298
4. Pietism. Orthodox hostility. Spread of Rationalism -	300
5. Thomasius - - - - -	302
6. Dippel - - - - -	304
7. T. L. Lau - - - - -	305
8. Wolff - - - - -	305
9. Freemasonry and freethinking. J. L. Schmidt. Martin Knutzen	306
10. J. C. Edelmann - - - - -	307
11. Abbot Jerusalem - - - - -	308
12. English and French influences. The scientific movement. Orthodox science. Haller. Rapid spread of rationalism	309
13. Frederick the Great - - - - -	312
14. Mauvillon. Nicolai. Riem. Schade. Basedow. Eberhard. Steinbart. Spalding. Teller - - - - -	315
15. Semler. Töllner. Academic rationalism - - - - -	318
16. Bahrdt - - - - -	320
17. Moses Mendelssohn. Lessing. Reimarus - - - - -	322

CONTENTS

ix

	PAGE
18. Vogue of deism. Wieland. Cases of Isenbiehl and Steinbuhler. A secret society. Clerical rationalism. Schulz. The edict of Frederick William II. Persistence of skepticism. The <i>Marokkanische Briefe</i> . Mauvillon. Herder	329
19. Goethe	333
20. Schiller	336
21. Kant	337
22. Influence of Kant. The sequel. Hamann. Chr. A. Crusius. Platner. Beauobre the younger	345
23. Fichte. Philosophic strifes	349
24. Rationalism and conservatism in both camps	350
25. <i>Austria</i> . Jahn. Joseph II. Beethoven	351
CHAP. XIX—FREETHOUGHT IN THE REMAINING EUROPEAN STATES	
§ 1. <i>Holland</i> . Elizabeth Wolff. Leenhof. Booms. Influence of Bayle. Passerano. Lack of native freethought literature	352
§ 2. <i>The Scandinavian States</i> .	
1. Course of the Reformation. Subsequent wars. Retrogression in Denmark	354
2. Holberg's <i>Nicolas Klimius</i>	355
3. Sweden. Queen Christina	357
4. Swedenborg	358
5. Upper-class indifference. Gustavus III. Kjellgren and Bellman. Torild. Retrogression in Sweden	359
6. Revival of thought in Denmark. Struensee. Mary Wollstonecraft's survey	361
§ 3. <i>The Slavonic States</i> .	
1. Poland. Liszinski	362
2. Russia. Nikon. Peter the Great. Kantemir. Catherine	363
§ 4. <i>Italy</i> .	
1. Decline under Spanish Rule. Naples	365
2. Vico	366
3. Subsequent scientific thought. General revival of freethought under French influence	367
4. Beccaria. Algarotti. Filangieri. Galiani. Genovesi. Alfieri. Bettinelli. Dandolo. Giaunone. Algarotti and the Popes. The scientific revival. Progress and reaction in Tuscany. Effects of the French Revolution	368
§ 5. <i>Spain and Portugal</i> .	
1. Progress under Bourbon rule in Spain. Aranda. D'Alba	372
2. Tyranny of the Inquisition. Aranda. Olavidès	373
3. Duke of Almodobar. D'Azara. Ricla	374
4. The case of Samaniego	375
5. Bails. Cagnuelo. Centeno	375
6. Faxardo. Iriarte	376
7. Ista. Salas	376
8. Reaction after Charles III	377
9. <i>Portugal</i> . Pombal	377

	PAGE
§ 6. <i>Switzerland.</i>	
Socinianism and its sequelæ. The Turretini. Geneva and Rousseau. Burlamaqui. Spread of deism -	378
CHAP. XX—EARLY FREETHOUGHT IN THE UNITED STATES	
1. Deism of the revolutionary statesmen - - - -	381
2. First traces of unbelief. Franklin - - - -	381
3. Jefferson. John Adams. Washington - - - -	382
4. Thomas Paine - - - - -	383
5. Paine's treatment in America - - - - -	384
6. Palmer. Houston. Deism and Unitarianism - - - -	385
CHAP. XXI.—FREETHOUGHT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	
<i>The Reaction.</i> Tone in England. Clericalism in Italy and Spain. Movement in France and Germany - - - -	386
<i>The Forces of Renascence.</i> International movement. Summary of critical forces. Developments of science. Lines of resistance - - - - -	389
SECTION I.—POPULAR PROPAGANDA AND CULTURE	
1. Democracy. Paine. Translations from the French -	391
2. Huttman. Houston. Wedderburn - - - -	393
3. Pietist persecution. Richard Carlile. John Clarke. Robert Taylor. Charles Southwell. G. J. Holyoake. Women helpers - - - - -	393
4. Hetherington. Operation of blasphemy law - - - -	395
5. Robert Owen - - - - -	395
6. The reign of bigotry. Influence of Gibbon - - - -	398
7. Charles Bradlaugh and Secularism. Imprisonment of G. W. Foote. Treatment of Bradlaugh by Parliament. Resultant energy of secularist attack - - - -	399
8. New literary developments. Lecky. Conway. Win- wood Reade. Spencer. Arnold. Mill. Clifford. Stephen. Amberley. New apologetics - - - -	402
9. Freethought in France. Social schemes. Fourier. Saint-Simon. Comte. Duruy and Sainte-Beuve -	404
10. Bigotry in Spain. Popular freethought in Catholic countries. Journalism - - - - -	406
11. Fluctuations in Germany. Persistence of religious liberalism. Marx and Socialism. Official orthodoxy -	409
12. The Scandinavian States and Russia - - - -	412
13. "Free-religious" societies - - - - -	413
14. Unitarianism in England and America - - - -	414
15. Clerical rationalism in Protestant countries. Switzer- land. Holland. Dutch South Africa - - - -	415
16. Developments in Sweden - - - - -	417
17. The United States. Ingersoll. Lincoln. Stephen Douglas. Frederick Douglass. Academic persecution. Changes of front - - - - -	419

CONTENTS

xi

SECTION 2.—BIBLICAL CRITICISM

PAGE

1. Rationalism in Germany. The Schleiermacher reaction : its heretical character. Orthodox hostility -	420
2. Progress in both camps. Strauss's critical syncretism -	423
3. Criticism of the Fourth Gospel - - -	425
4. Strauss's achievement - - - -	425
5. Official reaction - - - -	426
6. Fresh advance. Schwegler. Bruno Bauer - -	426
7. Strauss's second <i>Life of Jesus</i> . His politics. His <i>Voltaire</i> and <i>Old and New Faith</i> . His total influence	428
8. Fluctuating progress of criticism. Important issues passed-by. Nork. Ghillany. Daumer. Ewerbeck. Colenso. Kuenen. Kalisch. Wellhausen - -	431
9. New Testament criticism. Baur. Zeller. Van Manen - - - -	434
10. Falling-off in German candidates for the ministry as in congregations. Official orthodox pressures -	435
11. Attack and defence in England. The Tractarian reaction. Progress of criticism. Hennell. The United States: Parker. English publicists: F. W. Newman; R. W. Mackay; W. R. Greg. Translations. E. P. Meredith; Thomas Scott; W. R. Cassels - -	437
12. New Testament criticism in France. Renan and Havet - - - -	439

SECTION 3.—POETRY AND GENERAL LITERATURE

1. The French literary reaction. Chateaubriand -	440
2. Predominance of freethought in later <i>belles lettres</i> -	441
3. Béranger. De Musset. Victor Hugo. Leconte de Lisle. The critics. The reactionists - -	442
4. Poetry in England. Shelley. Coleridge. The romantic movement. Scott. Byron. Keats - - -	443
5. Charles Lamb - - - -	445
6. Carlyle. Mill. Froude - - - -	447
7. Orthodoxy and conformity. Bain's view of Carlyle, Macaulay, and Lyell - - - -	448
8. The literary influence. Ruskin. Arnold. Intellectual preponderance of rationalism - - -	450
9. English fiction from Miss Edgeworth to the present time - - - -	451
10. Richard Jefferies - - - -	452
11. Poetry since Shelley - - - -	452
12. American <i>belles lettres</i> - - - -	453
13. Leopardi. Carducci. Kleist. Heine - - -	454
14. Russian <i>belles lettres</i> - - - -	456
15. The Scandinavian States - - - -	457

SECTION 4.—THE NATURAL SCIENCES

1. Progress in cosmology. Laplace and modern astronomy. Orthodox resistance. Leslie - - -	457
---	-----

	PAGE
2. Physiology in France. Cabanis - - -	459
3. Physiology in England. Lawrence. Morgan - -	461
4. Geology after Hutton. Hugh Miller. Baden Powell -	462
5. Darwin - - - - -	464
6. Robert Chambers - - - - -	464
7. Orthodox resistance. General advance - -	465
8. Triumph of evolutionism. Spencer. Clifford. Huxley	466
 SECTION 5.—THE SOCIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	
1. Eighteenth-century sociology. Salverte. Charles Comte. Auguste Comte - - -	468
2. Progress in England. Orthodoxy of Hallam. Carlyle. Grote. Thirlwall. Long - - -	468
3. Sociology proper. Orthodox hostility - - -	469
4. Mythology and anthropology. Tylor. Spencer. Avebury. Frazer - - -	470
 SECTION 6.—PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS	
1. Fichte. Schelling. Hegel - - -	471
2. Germany after Hegel. Schopenhauer. Hartmann -	474
3. Feuerbach. Stirner - - -	475
4. Arnold Ruge - - -	478
5. Büchner - - -	478
6. Philosophy in France. Maine de Biran. Cousin. Jouffroy - - -	479
7. Movement of Lamennais - - -	480
8. Comte and Comtism - - -	483
9. Philosophy in Britain. Bentham. James Mill. Grote. Political rationalism - - -	484
10. Hamilton. Mansel. Spencer - - -	485
11. Semi-rationalism in the churches - - -	487
12. J. S. Mill - - -	489
 SECTION 7.—MODERN JEWRY	
Jewish influence in philosophy since Spinoza. Modern balance of tendencies - - -	489
 SECTION 8.—THE ORIENTAL CIVILIZATIONS	
Asiatic intellectual life. Japan. Discussions on Japanese psychosis. Fukuzawa. The recent Cult of the Emperor. China. India. Turkey. Greece - -	490
CONCLUSION - - - - -	499
INDEX - - - - -	503

CHAPTER XIII

THE RISE OF MODERN FREETHOUGHT—(Continued)

§ 4. *England*

While France was thus passing from general fanaticism to a large measure of freethought, England was passing by a less tempestuous path to a hardly less advanced stage of opinion. It was indeed a bloody age; and in 1535 we have record of nineteen men and five women of Holland, apparently Anabaptists, who denied the "humanity" of Christ and rejected infant baptism and transubstantiation, being sentenced to be burned alive—two suffering at Smithfield, and the rest at other towns, by way of example. Others in Henry's reign suffered the same penalty for the same offence; and in 1538 a priest named Nicholson or Lambert, refusing on the King's personal pressure to recant, was "brent in Smithfield" for denying the bodily presence in the eucharist.¹ The first decades of "Reformation" in England truly saw the opening of new vials of blood. More and Fisher and scores of lesser men died as Catholics for denying the King's "supremacy" in religion; as many more for denying the Catholic tenets which the King held to the last; and not a few by the consent of More and Fisher for translating or circulating the sacred books. Latimer, martyred under Mary, had applauded the burning of the Anabaptists. One generation slew for denial of the humanity of Christ; the next for denial of his divinity. Under Edward VI there were burned no Catholics, but several heretics, including Joan Bocher and a Dutch Unitarian, George Van Pare, described as a man of saintly life.² Still the English evolution was less destructive than the French or the German, and the comparative bloodlessness of the strife between Protestant and Catholic under Mary³ and Elizabeth, the treatment

¹ Stow's *Annals*, ed. 1615, pp. 570, 575.

² Burnet, *Hist. of the Reformation*, ed. Nares, ii, 179; iii, 289; Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, ed. 1848-54, ii, 100.

³ The Marian persecutions undoubtedly did much to stimulate Protestantism. It is not generally realized that many of the burnings of heretics under Mary were quasi-sacrifices on her behalf. On each occasion of her hopes of pregnancy being disappointed, some victims were sent to the stake. See Strype, ed. cited, iii, 196, and Peter Martyr, there cited; Froude, ed. 1870, v, 521 sq., 530 sq. The influence of Spanish ecclesiastics may be inferred. The expulsions of the Jews and the Moriscos from Spain were by way of averting the wrath of God. Still, a Spanish priest at Court preached in favour of mercy. Lingard, ed. 1835, v, 231.

of the Jesuit propaganda under the latter queen as a political rather than a doctrinal question,¹ prevented any such vehemence of recoil from religious ideals as took place in France. When in 1575 the law *De hæretico comburendo*, which had slept for seventeen years, was set to work anew under Elizabeth, the first victims were Dutch Anabaptists. Of a congregation of them at Aldgate, twenty-seven were imprisoned, of whom ten were burned, and the rest deported. Two others, John Wielmacker and Hendrich Ter Woort, were anti-Trinitarians, and were burned accordingly. Foxe appealed to the Queen to appoint any punishment short of death, or even that of hanging, rather than the horrible death by burning; but in vain. "All parties at the time concurred" in approving the course taken.² Orthodoxy was rampant.

Unbelief, as we have seen, however, there certainly was; and it is recorded that Walter, Earl of Essex, on his deathbed at Dublin in 1576, murmured that among his countrymen neither Popery nor Protestantism prevailed: "there was nothing but infidelity, infidelity, infidelity; atheism, atheism; no religion, no religion."³ And when we turn aside from the beaten paths of Elizabethan literature we see clearly what is partly visible from those paths—a number of free-thinking variations from the norm of faith. Ascham, as we saw, found some semblance of atheism shockingly common among the travelled upper class of his day; and the testimonies continue. Edward Kirke, writing his "glosses" to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1578, observes that "it was an old opinion, and yet is continued in some men's conceit, that men of years have no fear of God at all, or not so much as younger folk," experience having made them skeptical. Erasmus, he notes, in his *Adages* makes the proverb "Nemo senex metuit Jovem" signify merely that "old men are far from superstition and belief in false Gods." But Kirke insists that, "his great learning notwithstanding, it is too plain to be gainsaid that old men are much more inclined to such fond fooleries than younger men,"⁴ apparently meaning that elderly men in his day were commonly skeptical about divine providence.

Other writers of the day do not limit unbelief to the aged. Lilly, in his *Euphues* (1578), referring to England in general or Oxford in particular as Athens, asks: "Be there not many in Athens which think there is no God, no redemption, no resurrection?" Further,

¹ The number slain was certainly not small. It amounted to at least 190, perhaps to 204. Soames, *Elizabethan Religious History*, 1830, p. 596-98. Under Mary there perished some 288. Durham Dunlop, *The Church under the Tudors*, 1860, p. 104 and refs.

² Soames, as cited, pp. 212-18, and refs.

³ Froude, *Hist. of England*, ed. 1870, x, 545 (ed. 1875, xi, 199), citing MSS. Ireland.

⁴ Gloss to February in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, Globe ed. pp. 451-52.

he complains that "it was openly reported of an old man in Naples that there was more lightness in Athens than in all Italy.....more Papists, more *Atheists*, more sects, more schisms, than in all the monarchies in the world";¹ and he proceeds to frame an absurd dialogue of "Euphues and Atheos," in which the latter, "monstrous, yet tractable to be persuaded,"² is converted with a burlesque facility. Lilly, who writes as a man-of-the-world believer, is a poor witness as to the atheistic arguments current; but those he cites are so much better than his own, up to the point of terrified collapse on the atheist's part, that he had doubtless heard them. The atheist speaks as a pantheist, identifying deity with the universe; and readily meets a simple appeal to Scripture with the reply that "whosoever denieth a godhead denieth also the Scriptures which testifie of him."³ But in one of his own plays, played in 1584, Lilly puts on the stage a glimpse of current controversy in a fashion which suggests that he had not remained so contemptuously confident of the self-evident character of theism. In *Campaspe* (i,3) he introduces, undramatically enough, Plato, Aristotle, Cleanthes, Crates, and other philosophers, who converse concerning "natural causes" and "supernatural effects." Aristotle is made to confess that he "cannot by natural reason give any reason of the ebbing and flowing of the sea"; and Plato contends against Cleanthes, "searching for things which are not to be found," that "there is no man so savage in whom resteth not this divine particle, that there is an omnipotent, eternal, and divine mover, which may be called God." Cleanthes replies that "that first mover, which you term God, is the instrument of all the movings which we attribute to Nature. The earth.....seasons.....fruits.....the whole firmament.....and whatsoever else appeareth miraculous, what man almost of mean capacity but can prove it natural." Nothing is concluded, and the debate is adjourned. Anaxarchus declares: "I will take part with Aristotle, that there is *Natura naturans*, and yet not God"; while Crates rejoins: "And I with Plato, that there is *Deus optimus maximus*, and not Nature."

It is a curious dialogue to put upon the stage, by the mouth of children-actors, and the arbitrary ascription to Aristotle of high theistic views, in a scene in which he is expressly described by a fellow philosopher as a Naturalist, suggests that Lilly felt the danger of giving offence by presenting the supreme philosopher as an atheist.

¹ *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*, Arber's reprint, pp. 140, 153. That the reference was mainly to Oxford is to be inferred from the address "To my verie good friends the Gentlemen Schollers of Oxford," prefixed to the ed. of 1581. *Id.* p. 207.

² *Id.* p. 158.

³ *Id.* pp. 161, 166.

It is evident, however, both from *Euphues* and from *Campaspe*, that naturalistic views were in some vogue, else they had not been handled in the theatre and in a book essentially planned for the general reader. But however firmly held, they could not be directly published; and a dozen years later, over thirty years after the outburst of Aseham, we still find only a sporadic and unwritten freethought, however abundant, going at times in fear of its life.

Private discussion, indeed, there must have been, if there be any truth in Bacon's phrase that "atheists will ever be talking of that opinion, as if they.....would be glad to be strengthened by the consent of others"¹—an argument which would make short work of the vast literature of apologetic theism—but even private talk had need be cautious, and there could be no publication of atheistic opinions. Printed rationalism could go no further than such a protest against superstition as Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), which, however, is a sufficiently remarkable expression of reason in an age in which a Bodin held angrily by the delusion.² Elizabeth was herself substantially irreligious,³ and preferred to keep the clergy few in number and subordinate in influence;⁴ but her Ministers regarded the Church as part of the State system, and punished all open or at least aggressive heresy in the manner of the Inquisition. Yet the imported doctrine of the subjective character of hell and heaven,⁵ taken up by Marlowe, held its ground, and is denounced by Stubbes in his *Anatomie of Abuses*⁶ (1583); and other foreign philosophy of the same order found religious acceptance. A sect called the "Family of Love," deriving from Holland (already "a country fruitfull of heretics"),⁷ went so far as to hold that "Christ doth not signify any one person, but a quality whereof many are partakers"—a doctrine which we have seen ascribed by Calvin to the *libertins* of Geneva a generation before;⁸ but it does

¹ *Essay Of Atheism*.

² Lecky, *Rationalism*, I, 103-104. Scot's book (now made accessible by a reprint, 1886) had practically no influence in his own day; and King James, who wrote against it, caused it to be burned by the hangman in the next. Scot inserts the "infidelitie of atheists" in the list of intellectual evils on his title-page; but save for an allusion to "the abomination of idolatrie" all the others indicted are aspects of the black art.

³ "No woman ever lived who was so totally destitute of the sentiment of religion" (Green, *Short History*, ch. vii, § 3, p. 360).

⁴ Cp. Soames, *Elizabethan Religious History*, 1839, p. 225. Yet when Morris, the attorney of the Duchy of Lancaster, introduced in Parliament a Bill to restrain the power of the ecclesiastical courts, she had him dismissed and imprisoned for life, being determined that the control should remain, through those courts, in her own hands. Heylyn, *Hist. of the Reformation*, ed. 1849, pref. vol. I, pp. xiv-xv.

⁵ See above, vol. I, pp. 435, 446, 459.

⁶ Camden, *Annals of Elizabeth*, sub. ann. 1580; 3rd ed. 1635, p. 218. Cp. Soames, p. 214.

⁷ Hooker, Pref. to *Ecclesiastical Polity*, ch. iii, § 9, ed. 1850. Camden (p. 219) states that the Dutch teacher Henry Nichalal, whose works were translated for the sect, "gave out that he did partake of God, and God of his humanity."

⁸ Collier's Reprint, p. 190.

not appear that they were persecuted.¹ Some isolated propagandists, however, paid the last penalty. One Matthew Hamont or Hamond, a ploughwright, of Hetherset, was in 1579 tried by the Bishop and Consistory of Norwich "for that he denyed Christe," and, being found guilty, was burned, after having had his ears cut off, "because he spake wordes of blasphemie against the Queen's Maiestie and others of her Counsell."² The victim would thus seem to have been given to violence of speech; but the record of his negations, which suggest developments from the Anabaptist movement, is none the less notable. In Stow's wording,³ they run:—

"That the newe Testament and Gospell of Christe are but mere foolishnesse, a storie of menne, or rather a mere fable.

"Item, that man is restored to grace by the meere mercy of God, wythout the meane of Christ's blood, death, and passion.

"Item, that Christe is not God, nor the Saviour of the world, but a meere man, a sinfull man, and an abhominable Idoll.

"Item, that al they that worshiipe him are abhominable Idolaters; And that Christe did not rise agayne from death to life by the power of his Godhead, neither, that hee did ascende into Heaven.

"Item, that the holy Ghoste is not God, neither that there is any suche holy Ghoste.

"Item, that Baptisme is not necessarie in the Church of God, neither the use of the sacrament of the body and bloude of Christ."

There is record also of a freethinker named John Lewes burned at the same place in 1583 for "denying the Godhead of Christ, and holding other detestable heresies," in the manner of Hamond.⁴ In the same year Elias Thacker and John Coping were hanged at St. Edmonsbury "for spreading certaine bookes, seditiously penned by one Robert Browne against the Booke of Common Prayer"; and "their bookes so many as could be found were burnt before them."⁵ Further, one Peter Cole, an Ipswich tanner, was burned in 1587 (also at Norwich) for similar doctrine; and Francis Kett, a young clergyman, ex-fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was burned at the same place in 1589 for heresy of the Unitarian order.⁶

¹ See above, i, 458, as to a much more pronounced heresy in 1540, which also seems to have escaped punishment. Camden tells that the books of the "Family of Love" were burnt in 1580, but mentions no other penalties. Stow records that on October 9, 1580, "proclamation was published at London for the apprehension and severe punishing of all persons suspected to be of the family of love." Ed. 1615, p. 687. Five of them had been frightened into a public recantation in 1575. *Id.* p. 679.

² May 13, 1579. The burning was on the 20th.

³ Stow's *Annals*, ed. 1580, pp. 1,194-95. Ed. 1615, p. 695.

⁴ Stow, ed. 1615, p. 697; *David's Evidence*, by William Burton, Preacher of Reading, 1592 (?), p. 125.

⁵ Stow, ed. 1615, p. 696.

⁶ Burton, as cited. See below, pp. 7, 12, as to Kett's writings.

Hamond and Cole seem, however, to have been in their own way religious men,¹ and Kett a devout mystic, with ideas of a Second Advent.² All founded on the Bible.

Most surprising of all perhaps is the record of the trial of one John Hilton, clerk in holy orders, before the Upper House of Convocation on December 22, 1584, on the charge of having "said in a sermon at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields that the Old and New Testaments are but fables." (Lansdowne MSS. British Museum, No. 982, fol. 46, cited by Prof. Storojenko, *Life of Robert Greene*, Eng. tr. in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. of Greene's Works, i, 39, note.) As Hilton confessed to the charge and made abjuration, it may be surmised that he had spoken under the influence of liquor. Even on that view, however, such an episode tells of a considerable currency of unbelieving criticism.

Apart from constructive heresy, the perpetual religious dissensions of the time were sure to stimulate doubt; and there appeared quite a number of treatises directed wholly or partly against explicit unbelief, as: *The Faith of the Church Militant*, translated from the Latin of the Danish divine Hemming (1581), and addressed "to the confutation of the Jewes, Turks, Atheists, Papists, Hereticks, and all other adversaries of the truth whatsoever"; "*The Touchstone of True Religion*.....against the impietie of Atheists, Epicures, Libertines, Hippocrites, and Temporisers of these times" (1590); *An Enemy to Atheisme*, translated by T. Rogers from the Latin of Avenar (1591); the preacher Henry Smith's *God's Arrow against Atheists* (1593, rep. 1611); an English translation of the second volume of La Primaudaye's *L'Académie Française*, containing a refutation of atheistic doctrine; and no fewer than three "Treatises of the Nature of God"—all anonymous, the third known to be by Bishop Thomas Morton—all appearing in the year 1599.

All this smoke—eight apologetic treatises in eighteen years—implies some fire; and the translator of La Primaudaye, one "T. B.," declares in his dedication that there has been a general growth of atheism in England and on the continent, which he traces to "that Monster Machiavell." Among English atheists of that school he ranks the dramatist Robert Greene, who had died in 1592; and it has been argued, not quite convincingly, that it was to Machiavelli that Greene had pointed, in his death-bed recantation *A Groatsworth*

¹ Art. MATTHEW HAMOND, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

² Art. FRANCIS KETT, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

of *Wit* (1592), as the atheistic instructor of his friend Marlowe,¹ who introduces "Machiavel" as cynical prologist to his *Jew of Malta*. Greene's own "atheism" had been for the most part a matter of bluster and disorderly living; and we find his zealously orthodox friend Thomas Nashe, in his *Strange News* (1592), calling the Puritan zealot who used the pseudonym of Martin Marprelate "a mighty platformer of atheism"; even as his own and Greene's enemy, Gabriel Harvey, called Nashe an atheist.² But Nashe in his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1592), though he speaks characteristically of the "atheistical Julian," discusses contemporary atheism in a fashion descriptive of an actual growth of the opinion, concerning which he alleges that there is no "sect now in England so scattered [*i.e.*, so widely spread] as atheisme." The "outward atheist," he declares, "establishes reason as his God"; and he offers some sufficiently primitive arguments by way of confutation. "They follow the Pironicks [*i.e.*, Pyrrhonists], whose position and opinion it is that there is no hell or misery but opinion. Impudently they persist in it, that the late discovered Indians show antiquities thousands before Adam." For the rest, they not only reject the miracles of Moses as mere natural expedients misrepresented, but treat the whole Bible as "some late writers of our side" treat the Apocrypha. And Nashe complains feelingly that while the atheists "are special men of wit," and that "the Romish seminaries have not allured unto them so many good wits as atheism," the preachers who reply to them are men of dull understanding, the product of a system under which preferment is given to graduates on the score not of capacity but of mere gravity and solemnity. "It is the superabundance of wit," declares Nashe, "that makes atheists: will you then hope to beat them down with fusty brown-bread dorbellism?"³ There had arisen, in short, a ferment of rationalism which was henceforth never to disappear from English life.

In 1593, indeed, we find atheism formally charged against two famous men, CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE and Sir WALTER RALEIGH, of whom the first is documentarily connected with Kett, and the second in turn with Marlowe. An official document,⁴ preserved by

¹ Prof. Storojenko, *Life of Greene*, Eng. tr. in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. of Greene's Works, i, 42-50. It is quite clear that Malone and the critics who have followed him were wrong in supposing the unnamed instructor to be Francis Kett, who was a devout Unitarian. Prof. Storojenko speaks of Kett as having been made an Arian at Norwich, after his return there in 1585, by the influence of Lewes and Haworth. Query Hamond?

² In *Pierce's Supererogation*, Collier's ed. p. 85.

³ Rep. of Nashe's Works in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. vol. iv, pp. 172, 173, 178, 182, 183, etc. Ed. McKerrow, 1904, ii, 114-129.

⁴ MS. Harl. 6853, fol. 320. It is given in full in the appendix to the first issue of the selected plays of Marlowe in the Mermaid Series, edited by Mr. Havelock Ellis: and with omissions, in the editions of Cunningham, Dyce, and Bullen.

some chance, reveals that Marlowe was given—whether or not over the wine-cup—to singularly audacious derision of the received beliefs; and so explicit is the evidence that it is nearly certain he would have been executed for blasphemy had he not been privately killed (1593) while the proceedings were pending. The “atheism” imputed to him is not made out in any detail; but many of the other utterances are notably in keeping with Marlowe’s daring temper; and they amount to unbelief of a stringent kind. In *Doctor Faustus*¹ he makes Mephistopheles affirm that “Hell hath no limitsbut where we are is hell”—a doctrine which we have seen to be current before his time; and in his private talk he had gone much further. Nashe doubtless had him in mind when he spoke of men of “superabundance of wit.” Not only did he question, with Raleigh, the Biblical chronology: he affirmed “That Moyses was but a juggler, and that one Heriots” [*i.e.*, Thomas Harriott, or Harriots, the astronomer, one of Raleigh’s circle] “can do more than he”; and concerning Jesus he used language incomparably more offensive to orthodox feeling than that of Hamond and Kett. There is more in all this than a mere assimilation of Machiavelli; though the further saying “that the first beginning of religion was only to keep men in awe”—put also by Greene [if not by Marlowe], with much force of versification, in the mouth of a villain-hero in the anonymous play of *Selimus*²—tells of that influence. Marlowe was indeed not the man to swear by any master without adding something of his own. Atheism, however, is not inferrible from any of his works: on the contrary, in the second part of his famous first play he makes his hero, described by the repentant Greene as the “atheist Tamburlaine,” declaim of deity with signal eloquence, though with a pantheistic cast of phrase. In another passage, a Moslem personage claims to be on the side of a Christ who would punish perjury; and in yet another the hero is made to trample under foot the pretensions of Mohammed.³ It was probably his imputation of perjury to Christian rulers in particular that earned for Marlowe the malignant resentment which inspired the various edifying comments published after his unedifying death. Had he not perished as he did in a tavern brawl, he might have had the nobler fate of a martyr.

Concerning Raleigh, again, there is no shadow of proof of atheism,

¹ Act II, sc. 1.

² Grossart’s ed. in “Temple Dramatists” series, II. 246-371. There is plenty of “irreligion” in the passage, but not atheism, though there is a denial of a future state (365-70). The lines in question strongly suggest Marlowe’s influence or authorship, which indeed is claimed by Mr. C. Crawford for the whole play. But all the external evidence ascribes the play to Greene.

³ *Tamburlaine*, Part II, Act II, sc. ii, iii; V, sc. 1.

though his circle, which included the Earls of Northumberland and Oxford, was called a "school of atheism" in a Latin pamphlet by the Jesuit Parsons,¹ published at Rome in 1593; and this reputation clung to him. It is matter of literary history, however, that he, like Montaigne, had been influenced by the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus;² his short essay *The Sceptick* being a naïf exposition of the thesis that "the sceptick doth neither affirm neither deny any position; but doubteth of it, and applyeth his Reason against that which is affirmed, or denied, to justifie his non-consenting."³ The essay itself, nevertheless, proceeds upon a set of wildly false propositions in natural history, concerning which the adventurous reasoner has no doubts whatever; and altogether we may be sure that his artificial skepticism did not carry him far in philosophy. In the *Discovery of Guiana* (1600) he declares that he is "resolved" of the truth of the stories of men whose heads grow beneath their shoulders; and in his *History of the World* (1603-16) he insists that the stars and other celestial bodies "incline the will by mediation of the sensitive appetite."⁴ In other directions, however, he was less credulous. In the same *History* he points out, as Marlowe had done in talk, how incompatible was such a phenomenon as the mature civilization of ancient Egypt in the days of Abraham with the orthodox chronology.⁵ This, indeed, was heresy enough, then and later, seeing that not only did Bishop Pearson, in 1659, in a work on *The Creed* which has been circulated down to the nineteenth century, indignantly denounce all who departed from the figures in the margin of the Bible; but Coleridge, a century and a half later, took the very instance of Egyptian history as triumphantly establishing the accuracy of the Bible record against the French atheists.⁶ As regards Raleigh's philosophy, the evidence goes to show only that he was ready to read a Unitarian essay, presumably that already mentioned, supposed to be Kett's; and that he had intercourse with Marlowe and others (in particular his secretary, Harriott) known to be freethinkers. A prosecution begun against him on this score, at the time of the inquiry concerning Marlowe (when Raleigh was in disgrace with the Queen), came to nothing. It had been led up to by a translation of Parsons's pamphlet, which affirmed that his private group was known as "Sir Walter Rawley's school of Atheisme," and that therein "both

¹ Writing as Andrew Philopater. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, art. ROBERT PARSONS, and Storozhenko, as cited, 1, 36, and note.

² Translated into Latin by Henri Estienne in 1562.

³ *Remains of Sir Walter Raleigh*, ed. 1657, p. 123.

⁴ Bk. II, ch. I, sec. 7.

⁴ Bk. I, ch. I, sec. 11.

⁶ Essay on the *Prometheus*.

Moyses and our Savior, the Old and the New Testaments, are jested at, and the scholars taught among other things to spell God backwards."¹ This seems to have been idle gossip, though it tells of unbelief somewhere; and Raleigh's own writings always indicate² belief in the Bible; though his dying speech and epitaph are noticeably deistic. That he was a deist, given to free discussion, seems the probable truth.

In passing sentence at the close of Raleigh's trial for treason in 1603, in which his guilt is at least no clearer than the inequity of the proceedings, Lord Chief Justice Popham unscrupulously taunted him with his reputation for heresy. "You have been taxed by the world with the defence of the most heathenish and blasphemous opinions, which I list not to repeat, because Christian ears cannot endure to hear them, nor the authors and maintainers of them be suffered to live in any Christian commonwealth. You know what men said of Harpool."³ If the preface to his *History of the World*, written in the Tower, be authentic, Raleigh was at due pains to make clear his belief in deity, and to repudiate alike atheism and pantheism. "I do also account it," he declares, "an impiety monstrous, to confound God and Nature, be it but in terms."⁴ And he is no more tolerant than his judge when he discusses the question of the eternity of the universe, then the crucial issue as between orthodoxy and doubt. "Whosoever will make choice rather to believe in eternal deformity [=want of form] or in eternal dead matter, than in eternal light and eternal life, let eternal death be his reward. For it is a madness of that kind, as wanteth terms to express it."⁵ Inasmuch as Aristotle was the great authority for the denounced opinion, Raleigh is anti-Aristotelean. "I shall never be persuaded that God hath shut up all light of learning within the lantern of Aristotle's brains."⁶ But in the whole preface there is only one, and that a conventional, expression of belief in the Christian dogma of salvation; and as to that we may note his own words: "We are all in effect become comedians in religion."⁷ Still, untruthful as he certainly was,⁸ we may take him as a convinced theist of the experiential school, standing at the ordinary position of the deists of the next century.

Notably enough, he anticipates the critical position of Hume as

¹ Art. RALEIGH, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, xlvii, 192.

² Report in 1736 ed. of *History of the World*, p. ccxlix. "Harpool" seems an error for Harriott. Cp. Edwards, *Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, 1868, i, 432, 436. It is after naming "Harpool" that the judge says: "Let not any devil persuade you to think there is no eternity in heaven."

³ Ed. cited, p. xxviii.

⁴ *Id.* p. xxii.

⁵ *Id.* p. xxii.

⁶ Cp. Gardiner, *History of England, 1603-1643*, 10-vol. ed. i, 132-35; iii, 150, 152.

⁷ *Id.* pp. 200-201.

⁸ *Id.* p. xxiv.

⁹ *Id.* p. xvi.

to reason and experience: "That these and these be the causes of these and these effects, time hath taught us and not reason; and so hath experience without art."¹ Such utterance, if not connected with professions of piety, might in those days give rise to such charges of unbelief as were so freely cast at him. But the charges seem to have been in large part mere expressions of the malignity which religion so normally fosters, and which can seldom have been more bitter than then. Raleigh is no admirable type of rectitude; but he can hardly have been a worse man than his orthodox enemies. And we must estimate such men in full view of the low standards of their age.

The belief about Raleigh's atheism was so strong that we have Archbishop Abbot writing to Sir Thomas Roe on Feb. 19, 1618-1619, that Raleigh's end was due to his "questioning" of "God's being and omnipotence." It is asserted by Francis Osborn, who had known Raleigh, that he got his title of *Atheist* from Queen Elizabeth. See the preface (*Author to Reader*) to Osborn's *Miscellany of Sundry Essays*, etc., in 7th ed. of his *Works*, 1673. As to atheism at Elizabeth's court see J. J. Tayler, *Retrospect of Relig. Life of England*, 2nd ed. p. 198, and ref. Lilly makes one of his characters write of the ladies at court that "they never jar about matters of religion, because they never mean to reason of them" (*Euphues*, Arber's ed. p. 194).

A curious use was made of Raleigh's name and fame after his death for various purposes. In 1620 or 1621 appeared "*Vox Spiritus*, or Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost; a Conference between Signr. Gondamier.....and Father Bauldwine"—a "seditious" tract by one Captain Gainsford. It appears to have been reprinted in 1622 as "*Prosopoeia*. Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost." Then in 1626 came a new treatise, "Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost, or England's Forewarner," published in 1626 at Utrecht by Thomas Scott, an English minister there, who was assassinated in the same year. The title having thus had vogue, there was published in 1631 "*Rawleigh's Ghost*, or, a Feigned Apparition of Syr Walter Rawleigh to a friend of his, for the translating into English the Booke of Leonard Lessius (that most learned man), entituled *De Providentia Numinis et animi immortalitate*, written against the Atheists and Politicians of these days." The translation of a Jesuit's treatise (1613) thus accredited purports to be by "A. B." In a reprint of 1651 the "feigned" disappears from the title-page; but "Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost" remains to attract readers; and the translation, now purporting to be by John Holden, who claims to

¹ Ed. cited, p. xxii.

have been a friend of Raleigh's, is dedicated to his son Carew. In the preface the Ghost adjures the translator (who professes to have heard him frequently praise the treatise of Lessius) to translate the work with Raleigh's name on the title, so as to clear his memory of "a foul and most unjust aspersion of me for my presumed denial of a deity."

The latest documentary evidence as to the case of Marlowe is produced by Mr. F. S. Boas in his article, "New Light on Marlowe and Kyd," in the *Fortnightly Review*, February, 1899, reproduced in his edition of the works of Thomas Kyd (Clarendon Press, 1901). In addition to the formerly known data as to Marlowe's "atheism," it is now established that Thomas Kyd, his fellow dramatist, was arrested on the same charge, and that there was found among his papers one containing "vile hereticall conceiptes denying the divinity of Jhesus Christe our Saviour." This Kyd declared he had had from Marlowe, denying all sympathy with its view. *Nevertheless, he was put to the torture.* The paper, however, proves to be a vehement Unitarian argument on Scriptural grounds, and is much more likely to have been written by Francis Kett than by Marlowe. In the MSS. now brought to light, one Cholmeley, who "confessed that he was persuaded by Marlowe's reasons to become an Atheiste," is represented by a spy as speaking "all evil of the Counsell, saying that they are all Atheistes and Machiavillians, especially my Lord Admirall." The same "atheist," who imputes atheism to others as a vice, is described as regretting he had not killed the Lord Treasurer, "sayenge that he could never have done God better service."

For the rest, the same spy tells that Cholmeley believed Marlowe was "able to shewe more sound reasons for Atheisme than any devine in Englande is able to geve to prove devinitie, and that Marloe told him that he hath read the Atheist lecture to Sir Walter Raleigh and others." On the last point there is no further evidence, save that Sir Walter, his dependent Thomas Harriott, and Mr. Carewe Rawley, were on March 21, 1593-1594, charged upon sworn testimonies with holding "impious opinions concerning God and Providence." There was, however, no prosecution. Harriott had published in 1588 a work on his travels in Virginia, at the close of which is a passage in the devoutest vein telling of his missionary labours (quoted by Mr. Boas, art. cited, p. 225). Yet by 1592 he had, with his master, a reputation for atheism; and that it was not wholly on the strength of his great scientific knowledge is suggested by the statement of Anthony à Wood that he "made a philosophical theology, wherein he cast off the Old Testament."

Of this no trace remains; but it is established that he was a highly accomplished mathematician, much admired by Kepler;

and that he "applied the telescope to celestial purposes almost simultaneously with Galileo" (art. HARRIOTT in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*; cp. art. in *Encyc. Brit.*). "Harriott.....was the first who dared to say $A=B$ in the form $A-B=O$, one of the greatest sources of progress ever opened in algebra" (Prof. A. De Morgan, *Newton, his Friend and his Niece*, 1885, p. 91). Further, he improved algebraic notation by the use of small italic letters in place of Roman capitals, and threw out the hypothesis of secondary planets as well as of stars invisible from their size and distance. "He was the first to verify the results of Galileo." Rev. Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, pp. 126, 168. Cp. Rigaud, as cited by Powell; Ellis's notes on Bacon, in Routledge's 1-vol. ed. 1905, pp. 674-76; and Storozhenko, as above cited, p. 38, note.

Against the aspersion of Harriott at Raleigh's trial may be cited the high panegyric of Chapman, who terms him "my admired and soul-loved friend, master of all essential and true knowledge,"¹ and one "whose judgment and knowledge, in all kinds, I know to be incomparable and bottomless, yea, to be admired as much as his most blameless life, and the right sacred expense of his time, is to be honoured and revered"; with a further "affirmation of his clear unmatchedness in all manner of learning."²

The frequency of such traces of rationalism at this period is to be understood in the light of the financial and other scandals of the Reformation; the bitter strifes of Church and dissent; and the horrors of the wars of religion in France, concerning which Bacon remarks in his essay *Of Unity in Religion* that the spectacle would have made Lucretius "seven times more Epicure and atheist than he was." The proceedings against Raleigh and Kyd, accordingly, did not check the spread of the private avowal of unbelief. A few years later we find Hooker, in the Fifth Book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity* (1597), bitterly declaring that the unbelievers in the higher tenets of religion are much strengthened by the strifes of believers;³ as a dozen years earlier Bishop Pilkington told of "young whelps" who "in corners make themselves merry with railing and scoffing at the holy scriptures."⁴ And in the *Treatise of the Nature of God*, by Bishop Thomas Morton (1599), a quasi-dialogue in which the arguing is all on one side, the passive interlocutor indicates, in the process of repudiating them, a full acquaintance with the pleas of those who "would openly profess themselves to be of that [the

¹ Title of verses appended to trans. of *Achilles Shield*, 1598. Chapman spells the name Harriots.

² Pref. to complete trans. of *Iliad*.

³ Bk. v, ch. ii, §§ 1-4. *Works*, ed. 1850, i, 432-36.

⁴ *Exposition upon Nehemiah* (1585) in Parker Soc. ed. of *Works*, 1842, p. 401.

atheistic] judgment, and as far as they might without danger defend it by argument against any whatever." The pleas include the lack of moral control in the world, the evidences of natural causation, the varieties of religious belief, and the contradictions of Scripture. And such atheists, we are told, "make nature their God."¹

From Hooker's account also it is clear that, at least with comparatively patient clerics like himself, the freethinkers would at times deliberately press the question of theism, and avow the conviction that belief in God was "a kind of harmless error, bred and confirmed by the sleights of wiser men." He further notes with even greater bitterness that some—an "execrable crew"—who were themselves unbelievers, would in the old pagan manner argue for the fostering of religion as a matter of State policy, herein conning the lesson of Machiavelli. For his own part Hooker was confessedly ill-prepared to debate with the atheists, and his attitude was not fitted to shake their opinions. His one resource is the inevitable plea that atheists are such for the sake of throwing off all moral restraint²—a theorem which could hardly be taken seriously by those who knew the history of the English and French aristocracies, Protestant and Catholic, for the past hundred years. Hooker's own measure of rationalism, though remarkable as compared with previous orthodoxy, went no further than the application of the argument of Pecoock that reason must guide and control all resort to Scripture and authority;³ and he came to it under stress of dispute, as a principle of accommodation for warring believers, not as an expression of any independent skepticism. When his pious antagonist Travers cited him as saying that "his best author was his own reason"⁴ he was prompt to reply that he meant "true, sound, divine reason;.....reason proper to that science whereby the things of God are known; theological reason, which out of principles in Scripture that are plain, soundly deduceth more doubtful inferences."⁵ Of the application of rational criticism to Scriptural claims he had no idea. The unbelievers of his day were for him a frightful portent, menacing all his plans of orthodox toleration; and he would have had them put down by force—a course which in some cases, as we have seen, had in that age been actually taken, and was always apt to be resorted to. But orthodoxy all the while had a sure support in the social and political conditions which made impossible the publication

¹ Work cited, pp. 8-11, 22.

² *Eccles. Pol.* bk. i, ch. vii; bk. ii, ch. i, vii; bk. iii, ch. viii, § 16; bk. v, ch. viii; bk. vii, ch. xi; bk. viii, § 6 (*Works*, i, 165, 231, 300, 446; ii, 388, 537). See the citations in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. iii, 341-42; 1-vol. ed. pp. 193-94.

³ *Supplication of Travers*, in Hooker's *Works*, ed. 1850, ii, 662.

⁴ *Answer to Travers*, *id.* p. 693.

⁵ *Works*, i, 432; ii, 762-63.

of rationalistic opinions. While the whole machinery of public doctrine remained in religious hands or under ecclesiastical control, the mass of men of all grades inevitably held by the traditional faith. What is remarkable is the amount of unbelief, either privately explicit or implicit in the higher literature, of which we have trace.

Above all there remains the great illustration of the rationalistic spirit of the English literary renaissance of the sixteenth century—the drama of SHAKESPEARE. Of that it may confidently be said that every attempt to find for it a religious foundation has failed.¹ Gervinus, while oddly suggesting that “in not only not seeking a reference to religion in his works, but in systematically avoiding it even when opportunity offered,” Shakespeare was keeping clear of an embroilment with the clergy, nevertheless pronounces the plays to be wholly secular in spirit. While contending that “in action the religious and divine in man is nothing else than the moral,” the German critic admits that Shakespeare “wholly discarded from his works.....that which religion enjoins as to faith and opinion.”² And, while refusing the inference of positive unbelief on the poet’s part, he pronounces that, “Just as Bacon banished religion from science, so did Shakespeare from art.....From Bacon’s example it seems clear that Shakespeare left religious matters unnoticed on the same grounds.”³ The latest and weightiest criticism comes to the same conclusion; and it is only on presupposition that any other can be reached. One of the ablest of Shakespearean critics sums up that “the Elizabethan drama was almost wholly secular; and while Shakespeare was writing he practically confined his view to the world of non-theological observation and thought, so that he represents it in substantially one and the same way whether the period of the story is pre-Christian or Christian.”

[Prof. A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 2nd ed. p. 25. In the concluding pages of his lecture on *Hamlet*, Professor Bradley slightly modifies this statement, suggesting that the ghost is made to appear as “the representative of the hidden ultimate power, the messenger of divine justice” (p. 174). Here, it seems to the present writer, Professor Bradley obtrudes the chief error of his admirable book—the constant implication that Shakespeare planned his plays as moral wholes. The fact is that he found the ghost an integral part of the old play which he rewrote; and in making it, in Professor Bradley’s words,

¹ Some typical attempts of the kind are discussed in the author’s two lectures on *The Religion of Shakespeare*, 1887 (South Place Institute).

² *Shakespeare Commentaries*, Eng. tr. 1853, ii. 618-19.

³ *Id.* ii, 586.

"so majestic a phantom," he was simply heightening the character as he does others in the play, and as was his habit in the presentment of a king. In his volume of lectures entitled *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909), Professor Bradley goes more fully into the problem of Shakespeare's religion. Here he somewhat needlessly obscures the issue by contending (p. 349) that it is preposterous to suppose that Shakespeare was "an ardent and devoted atheist or Brownist or Roman Catholic," and makes the most of the poet's sympathetic treatment of religious types and religious sentiments; but still sums up that he "was not, in the distinctive sense of the word, a religious man," and that "all was, for him, in the end, mystery" (p. 353).]

This perhaps somewhat understates the case. The Elizabethan drama was not wholly secular;¹ and certainly the dramatists individually were not. Peele's *David and Bethsabe* is wholly Biblical in theme, and, though sensual in sentiment, substantially orthodox in spirit; and elsewhere he has many passages of Protestant and propagandist fervour.² Greene and Lodge give a highly Scriptural ring to their *Looking-Glass for London*; and Lodge, who uses religious expressions freely in his early treatise, *A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays*,³ later translated Josephus. Kyd in *Arden of Feversham*⁴ accepts the Christian view at the close, though *The Spanish Tragedy* is pagan; and the pre-Shakespearean *King Leir and his Three Daughters* (1594), probably the work of Kyd and Lodge, has long passages of specifically Christian sentiment. Nashe, again, was a hot religious controversialist despite his Bohemian habits and his indecorous vein; Greene on his repentant deathbed was profusely censorious of atheism;⁵ Lilly, as we have seen, is combatively theistic in his *Campaspe*; while Jonson, as we shall see, girds at skeptics in *Volpone* and *The Magnetick Lady*, and further wrote a quantity of devotional verse. Even the "atheist" Marlowe, as we saw, puts theistic sentiment into the mouth of his "atheist Tamburlaine"; and of *Doctor Faustus*, despite incidental heresy, the *dénouement* is religiously orthodox. Thomas Heywood may even be pronounced a religious man,⁶ as he was certainly a strong Protestant,⁷ though an anti-Puritan; and his prose treatise *The*

¹ In the last edition I had written to that effect; but I have modified the opinion.

² The allusion to "popish ceremonies" in *Titus Andronicus* is probably from his hand. See the author's work, *Did Shakespeare Write "Titus Andronicus"?*, where it is argued that the play in question is substantially Peele's and Greene's.

³ Shakespeare Soc. rep. 1853, pp. 14, 16-17, 18, 24, 28, etc.

⁴ This has been shown to be his by Fleay and Mr. Crawford.

⁵ See his *Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*.

⁶ Compare the Jane Shore portions of his *Edward IV* with the close of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Note also the conclusion of *The English Traveller*.

⁷ See the poem *England's Elizabeth*, 1631.

Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels (1635) exhibits a religious temperament. The same may be said of Dekker, who is recorded to have written at least the prologue and the epilogue for a play on Pontius Pilate,¹ and is believed to be the author of the best scenes in *The Virgin Martyr*, in which he collaborated with Massinger. He too uses supererogatory religious expressions,² and shows his warm Protestantism in *The Whore of Babylon*, as he does his general religious sentiment in his treatise *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Chapman was certainly a devout theist, and probably a Christian. In the "domestic" tragedy, *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), which is conjecturally ascribed to Lodge, the conclusion is on Christian lines, as in *Arden*; and the same holds of *The Witch of Edmonton*, by Dekker and others. Of none of these dramatists could it be said, on the mere strength of his work, that he was "agnostic," though Marlowe was certainly a freethinker. The others were, first or last, avowedly religious. Shakespeare, and Shakespeare alone, after Marlowe, is persistently non-religious in his handling of life. *Lear*, his darkest tragedy, is predominantly pagan; and *The Tempest*, in its serener vein, is no less so. But indeed all the genuine plays alike ignore or tacitly negate the idea of immortality; even the conventional religious phrases of Macbeth being but incidental poetry.

In the words of a clerical historian, "the religious phrases which are thinly scattered over his work are little more than expressions of a distant and imaginative reverence. And on the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is significant.....The riddle of life and death.....he leaves.....a riddle to the last, without heeding the common theological solutions around him."³ The practical wisdom in which he rose above his rivals no less than in dramatic and poetic genius, kept him prudently reticent on his opinions, as it set him upon building his worldly fortunes while the others with hardly an exception lived in shallows and miseries. As so often happens, it was among the ill-balanced types that there was found the heedless courage to cry aloud what others thought; but Shakespeare's significant silence reminds us that the largest spirits

¹ Henslowe's Diary, ed. Greg, i, fol. 96.

² E.g., the lines,

The best of men
That e'er wore earth about him, was a sufferer,
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The first true gentleman that ever breathed,

at the close of Part I of *The Honest Whore*; and the phrase, "Heaven's great arithmetician," at the close of *Old Fortunatus*.

³ Green, *Short Hist.* ch. vii, § 7 end. Cp. Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, Lect. iii, § 115.

of all could live in disregard of contemporary creeds. For, while there is no record of his having privately avowed unbelief, and certainly no explicit utterance of it in his plays,¹ in no genuine work of his is there any more than bare dramatic conformity to current habits of religious speech; and there is often significantly less. In *Measure for Measure* the Duke, counselling as a friar the condemned Claudio, discusses the ultimate issues of life and death without a hint of Christian credence.

So silent is the dramatist on the ecclesiastical issues of his day that Protestants and Catholics are enabled to go on indefinitely claiming him as theirs; the latter dwelling on his generally kindly treatment of friars; the former citing the fact that some Protestant preacher—evidently a protégé of his daughter Susannah—was allowed lodging at his house. But the preacher was not very hospitably treated;² and other clues fail. There is good reason to think that Shakespeare was much influenced by Montaigne's *Essays*, read by him in Florio's translation, which was issued when he was recasting the old *Hamlet*; and the whole treatment of life in the great tragedies and serious comedies produced by him from that time forward is even more definitely untheological than Montaigne's own doctrine.³ Nor can he be supposed to have disregarded the current disputes as to fundamental beliefs, implicating as they did his fellow-dramatists Marlowe, Kyd, and Greene. The treatise of De Mornay, of which Sir Philip Sidney began and Arthur Golding finished the translation,⁴ was in his time widely circulated in England; and its very inadequate argumentation might well strengthen in him the anti-theological leaning.

A serious misconception has been set up as to Shakespeare's cast of mind by the persistence of editors in including among his works without discrimination plays which are certainly not his, as the *Henry VI* group, to which he contributed little, and in particular the First Part, of which he wrote probably nothing. It is on the assumption that that play is Shakespeare's work that Lecky (*Rationalism in Europe*, ed. 1887, i, 105-106) speaks of "that melancholy picture of Joan of Arc which is perhaps the darkest blot upon his genius." Now, whatever passages Shakespeare may have contributed to the Second and Third Parts, it is certain that he has barely a scene in the First, and

¹ The old work of W. J. Birch, M.A., *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakspeare* (1848), is an unjudicial *ex parte* statement of the case for Shakespeare's unbelief; but it is worth study.

² The town paid for his bread and wine, no doubt by way of compliment.

³ Cp. the author's *Montaigne and Shakspeare*, 2nd ed. sec. viii.

⁴ A Woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian Religion, 1587. Reprinted in 1592, 1604, and 1617.

that there is not a line from his hand in the La Pucelle scenes. Many students think that Dr. Furnivall has even gone too far in saying that "the only part.....to be put down to Shakespeare is the Temple Garden scene of the red and white roses" (Introd. to *Leopold Shakespeare*, p. xxxviii); so little is there to suggest even the juvenile Shakespeare there. (The high proportion of double-endings is a ground for reckoning it a late sample of Marlowe, who in his posthumously published translation of Lucan had approached that proportion. Cp. the author's vol. on *Titus Andronicus*, p. 190.) But that any critical and qualified reader can still hold him to have written the worst of the play is unintelligible. The whole work would be a "blot on his genius" in respect of its literary weakness. The doubt was raised long before Lecky wrote, and was made good a generation ago. When Lecky further proceeds, with reference to the witches in *Macbeth*, to say (*id. note*) that it is "probable that Shakespeare.....believed with an unfaltering faith in the reality of witchcraft," he strangely misreads that play. Nothing is clearer than that it grounds Macbeth's action from the first in Macbeth's own character and his wife's, employing the witch machinery (already used by Middleton) to meet the popular taste, but never once making the witches really causal forces. An "unfaltering" believer in witchcraft who wrote for the stage would surely have turned it to serious account in other tragedies. This Shakespeare never does. On Lecky's view, he is to be held as having believed in the fairy magic of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*, and in the actuality of such episodes as that of the ghost in *Macbeth*. But who for a moment supposes him to have had any such belief? It is probable that the entire undertaking of *Macbeth* (1605?) and later of the *Tempest* (1610?) was due to a wish on the part of the theatre management to please King James, whose belief in witchcraft and magic was notorious. Even the use of the Ghost in *Hamlet* is an old stage expedient, common to the pre-Shakespearean play and to others of Kyd's and Peele's. Shakespeare significantly altered the dying words of Hamlet from the "heaven receive my soul" of the old version to "the rest is silence." The bequest of his soul to the Deity in his will is merely the regulation testamentary formula of the time. In his sonnets, which hint his personal cast if anything does, there is no real trace of religious creed or feeling. And it is clearly the hand of Fletcher, a no less sensual writer than Peele, that penned the part of Henry VIII in which occurs the Protestant tag: "In her [Elizabeth's] days.....God shall be truly known."¹

¹ As to the expert analysis of this play, which shows it to be in large part Fletcher's, see Furnivall, as cited, pp. xciii-xcvi.

While, however, Shakespeare is notably naturalistic as compared with the other Elizabethan dramatists, it remains true that their work in the mass tells little of a habitually religious way of thinking. Apart from the plays above named, and from polemic passages and devotional utterances outside their plays, they hint as little of Christian dogma as of Christian asceticism. Hence, in fact, the general and bitter hostility of the Puritans to the stage. Even at and after Shakespeare's death, the drama is substantially "graceless." Jonson, who was for a time a Catholic, but reverted to the Church of England, disliked the Puritans, and in *Bartholomew Fair* derides them. The age did not admit of a pietistic drama; and when there was a powerful pietistic public, it made an end of drama altogether. To Elizabeth's reign probably belongs the *Atheist's Tragedy* of Cyril Tourneur, first published in 1611, but evidently written in its author's early youth—a coarse and worthless performance, full of extremely bad imitations of Shakespeare.¹ But to the age of Elizabeth also belongs, perhaps, the sententious tragedy of *Mustapha* by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, first surreptitiously published in 1609. A century and a half later the deists were fond of quoting² the concluding *Chorus Sacerdotum*, beginning:

O wearisome condition of humanity,
 Born under one law, to another bound;
 Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity;
 Created sick, commanded to be sound:
 If nature did not take delight in blood,
 She would have made more easy ways to good.

It is natural to suspect that the author of such lines was less orthodox than his own day had reputed him; and yet the whole of his work shows him much pre-occupied with religion, though perhaps in a deistic spirit. But Brooke's introspective and undramatic poetry is an exception: the prevailing colour of the whole drama of the Shakespearean period is pre-Puritan and semi-pagan; and the theological spirit of the next generation, intensified by King James, was recognized by cultured foreigners as a change for the worse.³ The spirit of free learning for the time was gone, expelled by theological rancours; and when Selden ventured in his *History of Tythes* (1618) to apply the method of dispassionate historical criticism to ecclesiastical matters he was compelled to make a formal retraction.⁴ Early Protestants had attacked, as a

¹ Cp. Seecombe and Allen, *The Age of Shakspeare*, 1903, ii, 189.

² Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Britannien*, Hanover, 1752, ii, 429. Alberti reads "God" at the end of the passage; I follow Grosart's edition.

³ Hallam, *Lit. Europe*, ii, 371, 376; Pattison, *Isaac Casaubon*, 2nd ed. p. 286 sq.

⁴ Pattison, as cited, p. 290; G. W. Johnson, *Memoirs of John Selden*, 1835, pp. 56-70.

papal superstition, the doctrine that tithes were levied *jure divino*: Protestants had now come to regard as atheistic the hint that tithes were levied otherwise.¹

Not that rationalism became extinct. The "Italianate" incredulity as to a future state, which Sir John Davies had sought to repel by his poem, *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), can hardly have been overthrown even by that remarkable production, which in the usual orthodox way pronounces all doubters to be "light and vicious persons," who, "though they would, cannot quite be beasts."² And there were other forms of doubt. In 1602 appeared *The Unmasking of the Politique Atheist*, by J. H. [John Hull], *Batchelor of Divinitie*, which, however, is in the main a mere attempt to retort upon Catholics the charge of atheism laid by them against Protestants. Soon after, in 1605, we find Dr. John Dove producing a *Confutation of Atheisme* in the manner of previous continental treatises, making the word "atheism" cover many shades of theism; and an essayist writing in 1608 asserts that, on account of the self-seeking and corruption so common among churchmen, "prophane Atheisme hath taken footing in the hearts of ignorant and simple men."³ The orthodox Ben Jonson, in his *Volpone* (1607), puts in the mouth of a fool⁴ the lines:—

And then, for your religion, profess none,
But wonder at the diversity of all;
And, for your part, protest, were there no other
But simply the laws o' th' land, you would content you.
Nic Machiavel and Monsieur Bodin both
Were of this mind.

But the testimony is not the less significant; as is the account in *The Magnetick Lady* (1632) of

A young physician to the family
That, letting God alone, ascribes to Nature
More than her share; licentious in discourse,
And in his life a profest voluptuary.⁵

Such statements of course prove merely a frequent coolness towards religion, not a vogue of reasoned unbelief. But the existence of rationalizing heresy is attested by the burning of two men, Bartholomew Legate and Edward Wightman, for avowing Unitarian views, in 1612. These, the last executions for heresy in England, were results of the theological zeal of King James,

¹ *Memoirs* cited, pp. 60-61. On the whole question see the *Review* appended by Selden to his *History* after a few copies had been distributed.

² *Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. Grosart, 1876, i, 82, 83.

³ *Essays Politicke and Morall*, by D. T. Gent, 1608, fol. 9.

⁴ Act i, sc. 1. Jonson himself could have been so indicted on the strength of certain verses.

⁵ Act iv, sc. 1.

stimulated by the Calvinistic fanaticism of Archbishop Abbot, the predecessor of Laud.

James's career as a persecutor began characteristically in a meddlesome attack upon a professor in Holland. A German theologian of Socinian leanings, named Conrad Vorstius, professor at Steinfurth, had produced in 1606 a somewhat heretical treatise, *De Deo*, but had nevertheless been appointed in 1610 professor of theology at Leyden, in succession to Arminius. It was his acceptance of Arminian views, joined with his repute as a scholar,¹ that secured him the invitation, which was given without the knowledge that at a previous period he had been offered a similar appointment by the Socinians. In his *Anti-Bellarminus contractus*, "a brief refutation of the four tomes of Bellarmin," he had taken the Arminian line, repudiating the Calvinist positions which, in the opinion of Arminius, could not be defended against the Catholic attack. But he was too speculative and ratiocinative to be safe in an age in which the fear of spreading Socinianism and the hate of Calvinists towards Arminianism had set up a reign of terror. Vorstius was both "unsettling" and heterodox. His opinions were "such as in our own day would certainly disqualify him from holding such an office in any Christian University";² and James, worked upon by Abbot, went so far as to make the appointment of Vorstius a diplomatic question. The stadhouder Maurice and the bulk of the Dutch clergy being of his view, the more tolerant statesmen of Holland, and the mercantile aristocracy, yielded from motives of prudence, and Vorstius was dismissed in order to save the English alliance. Remaining thenceforth without employment, he was further denounced in 1619 by the Synod of Dort, and banished by the States General. Thereafter he lived for two years in hiding; and soon after obtaining a refuge in Holstein, died, worn out by his troubles. In England, meantime, James drew up with his own hands a catalogue of the heresies found by him in Vorstius's treatise, and caused the book to be burned in London and at the two Universities.³

¹ He had been offered professorships of divinity at Saumur and Marburg.

² Gardiner, *History of England, 1603-1642*, 4th ed. ii, 123. Cp. Bayle, art. VORSTIUS, Note N. By his theological opponents and by James, Vorstius was of course called an atheist. He was in reality not a Socinian, but a "strict Arian, who believed that the Son of God was at first created by the Father, and then delegated to create the universe—a sort of inferior deity, who was nevertheless entitled to religious homage" (James Nichols, note to App. P. on Brandt's *Life of Arminius in Works of Arminius*, 1825, i, 218). Nichols gives a full survey of the subject, pp. 202-237. Fuller (*Ch. Hist.* B. x, cent. 17, sec. iv. §§ 1-5) tells the story, and pronounces the opinions of Vorstius "fitter to be remanded to hell than committed to writing."

³ Bayle (art. cited, Note F) says both Universities, as does Fuller. At the Synod of Dort, however, the British representatives read only, it seems, a decree (dated Sept. 21, 1611) of the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, ordering the burning of the book there. (Nichols, *Account of the Synod of Dort*, in *Works of Arminius*, i, 497).

On the heels of this amazing episode came the cases of Wightman and Legate. Finding, in a personal conversation, that Legate had "ceased to pray to Christ," the King had him brought before the Bishop of London's Consistory Court, which sentenced the heretic to Newgate. Being shortly released, he had the imprudence to threaten an action for false imprisonment, whereupon he was re-arrested. Chief Justice Coke held that, technically, the Consistory Court could not sentence to burning; but Hobart and Bacon, the law officers of the Crown, and other judges, were of opinion that it could. Legate, accordingly, was duly tried, sentenced, and burned at Smithfield; and Wightman a few days later was similarly disposed of at Lichfield.¹

Bacon's share in this matter is obscure, and has not been discussed by either his assailants or his vindicators. As for the general public, the historian records that "not a word was uttered against this horrible cruelty. As we read over the brief contemporary notices which have reached us, we look in vain for the slightest intimation that the death of these two men was regarded with any other feelings than those with which the writers were accustomed to hear of the execution of an ordinary murderer. If any remark was made, it was in praise of James for the devotion which he showed to the cause of God."² That might have been reckoned on. It was not twenty years since Hamond, Lewis, Cole, and Kett had been burned on similar grounds; and there had been no outcry then. For generations "direness" had been too familiar to men's thoughts to admit of their being shocked by a judicial murder or two the more. Catholic priests had been executed by the score: why not a pair of Unitarians?³ Little had gone on in the average intellectual life in the interim save religious discussion and Bibliolatry, and not from such culture could there come any growth of human kindness or any clearer conception of the law of reciprocity. But, whether by force of recoil from a revival of the fires of Smithfield or from a perception that mere cruelty did not avail to destroy heresy, the theological *ultima ratio* was never again resorted to on English ground.

Though no public protest was made, the retrospective Fuller

¹ Gardiner, pp. 129-30. Fuller (as last cited, §§ 6-14) gives a list of Legate's "damnable tenets." See it in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Penalties upon Opinion*, pp. 12-14.

² Gardiner, as cited. Fuller is cheerfully acquiescent, though he notes the private demurs, which he denounces. "God," he says, "may seem well pleased with this seasonable severity."

³ In 1580 Stow records how one Randall was put on trial for "conjuring to know where treasure was hid in the earth and goods feloniously taken were become"; and four others were tried "for being present." Four were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Randall was executed, and the others reprieved. (Ed. 1615, p. 688.)

testifies that "such burning of heretics much startled common people, pitying all in pain, and prone to asperse justice itself with cruelty, because of the novelty (!) and hideousness of the punishment."¹ It is noteworthy that within a few years of the burning of Legate and Wightman there appeared quite a cluster of treatises explicitly contending for toleration. In 1614 came *Religion's Peace: or, a Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, by Leonard Busher, the first English book of the kind. In 1615 came *Persecution for Religion Judged and Condemned*; and in 1620 *An Humble Supplication to the King's Majesty*, pressing the same doctrine.² There is no record of any outcry over these works, though they are tolerably freespoken in their indictment of the coercive school; and they had all to be reprinted a generation later, their point having never been carried; but it may be surmised that their appeal, which is substantially well reasoned from a secular as well as from a theological point of view, had something to do with the abandonment of persecution unto death. Even King James, in opening the Parliament of 1614, professed to recognize that no religion or heresy was ever extirpated by violence.

That an age of cruel repression of heresy had promoted unbelief is clear from the *Atheomastix* of Bishop Fotherby (1622), which notes among other things that as a result of constant disputing "the Scriptures (with many) have lost their authority, and are thought onely fit for the ignorant and idiote."³ On this head the bishop attempts no answer; and on his chosen theme he is perhaps the worst of all apologists. His admission that there can be no *à priori* proof of deity⁴ may be counted to him for candour; but the childishness of his reasoning *à posteriori* excludes the ascription of philosophic insight. He does but use the old pseudo-arguments of universal consent and design, with the simple device of translating polytheistic terms into monotheistic. All the while he makes the usual suggestions that there are few or no atheists to convert, and these not worth converting—this at a folio's length. The book tells only of difficulties evaded by vociferation. And while the growing stress of the strife between the ecclesiasticism of the Crown and the forces of nonconformity more and more thrust to the front religious-political issues, there began alongside of those strifes the new and

¹ Fuller actually alleges that "there was none ever after that openly avowed these heretical doctrines"—an unintelligible figment.

² All reprinted in 1846 for the Hanserd Knollys Society, with histor. introd. by E. B. Underhill, in the vol. *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience and Persecution, 1614-1661*. They do not speak of Legate or Wightman.

³ *Atheomastix*, 1622, pref. Sig. B. 3, verso. The work was posthumous and incomplete.

⁴ Bk. i, ch. i, p. 5.

powerful propaganda of deism, which, beginning with the Latin treatise, *De Veritate*, of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1624), was gradually to leaven English thought for over a century.

Further, there now came into play the manifold influence of FRANCIS BACON, whose case illustrates perhaps more fully than any other the difficulties, alike external and internal, in the way of right thinking. Taken as a whole, his work is on account of those difficulties divided against itself, insisting as he does alternately on a strict critical method and on the subjection of reason to the authority of revelation. He sounds a trumpet-call to a new and universal effort of free and circumspect intelligence; and on the instant he stipulates for the prerogative of Scripture. Though only one of many who assailed alike the methodic tyranny of Aristotelianism¹ and the methodless empiricism of the ordinary "scientific" thought of the past, he made his attack with a sustained and manifold force of insight and utterance which still entitles him to pre-eminence as the great critic of wrong methods and the herald of better. Yet he not only transgresses often his own principal precepts in his scientific reasoning; he falls below several of his contemporaries and predecessors in respect of his formal insistence on the final supremacy of theology over reason, alike in physics and in ethics. Where Hooker is ostensibly seeking to widen the field of rational judgment on the side of creed, Bacon, the very champion of mental emancipation in the abstract, declares the boundary to be fixed.

Of those lapses from critical good faith, part of the explanation is to be found in the innate difficulty of vital innovation for all intelligences; part in the special pressures of the religious environment. On the latter head Bacon makes such frequent and emphatic protest that we are bound to infer on his part a personal experience in his own day of the religious hostility which long followed his memory. "Generally," he wrote of himself in one fragment, "he perceived in men of devout simplicity this opinion, that the secrets of nature were the secrets of God, and part of that glory whereinto the mind of man if it seek to press shall be oppressed;.....and on the other side, in men of a devout policy he noted an inclination to have the people depend upon God the more when they are less acquainted with second causes, and to have no stirring in philosophy, lest it may lead to innovation in divinity or else should discover

¹ In the *Advancement of Learning*, bk. i (Routledge ed. p. 54), he himself notes how, long before his time, the new learning had in part discredited the schoolmen.

matter of further contradiction to divinity"¹—a summary of the whole early history of the resistance to science.² In the works which he wrote at the height of his powers, especially in his masterpiece, the *Novum Organum* (1620), where he comes closest to the problems of exact inquiry, he specifies again and again both popular superstition and orthodox theology as hindrances to scientific research, commenting on "those who out of faith and veneration mix their philosophy with theology and traditions,"³ and declaring that of the drawbacks science had to contend with "the corruption of philosophy by superstition and an admixture of theology is far the more widely spread, and does the greatest harm, whether to entire systems or to their parts. For the human understanding is obnoxious to the influence of the imagination no less than to the influence of common notions."⁴ In the same passage he exclaims at the "extreme levity" of those of the moderns who have attempted to "found a system of natural philosophy on the first chapter of Genesis, on the book of Job, and other parts of the sacred writings";⁵ and yet again, coupling as obstinate adversaries of Natural Philosophy "superstition, and the blind and immoderate zeal of religion," he roundly affirms that "by the simpleness of certain divines access to any philosophy, however pure, is well nigh closed."⁶ These charges are repeatedly salved by such claims as that "true religion" puts no obstacles in the way of science;⁷ that the book of Job runs much to natural philosophy;⁸ and, in particular, in the last book of the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, redacted after his disgrace, by the declaration—more emphatic than those of the earlier *Advancement of Learning*—that "Sacred Theology ought to be derived from the word and oracles of God, and not from the light of nature or the dictates of reason."⁹ In this mood he goes so far as to declare, with the thorough-going obscurantists, that "the more discordant and incredible the divine mystery is, the more honour is shown to God in believing it, and the nobler is the victory of faith."

[It was probably such deliverances as these that led to the ascription to Bacon of *The Christian Paradoxes*, first published

¹ *Filum Labyrinthi*—an English version of the *Cogitata et Visa*—§ 7.

² Cp. Huarte, cited above, p. 471.

³ *Nov. Org.* bk. i, Aph. 62 (*Works*, Routledge ed. p. 271).

⁴ *Id.* Aph. 65.

⁵ *Id.* *ib.* Cp. the *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii, and the *De Augmentis*, bk. ix, near end. (Ed. cited, pp. 173, 634.)

⁶ *Nov. Org.* Aph. 89. Cp. Aph. 46, 49, 96; the *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv; the English *Filum Labyrinthi*, § 7; and the *De Principiis atque Originibus* (ed. cited, p. 650).

⁷ *Valerius Terminus*, cap. i. (Ed. cited, p. 188.)

⁸ *Id.* p. 187; *Filum Labyrinthi*, p. 200.

⁹ Bk. ix, ch. i. (Ed. cited, p. 631.) Compare *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i (p. 186), and *De Aug.* bk. iii, ch. ii (p. 456), as to the impossibility of knowing the will and character of God from Nature, though (*De Aug.* last cit.) it reveals his power and glory.

(surreptitiously), without author's name, in 1645. As has been shown by Dr. Grosart (*Lord Bacon NOT the Author of "The Christian Paradoxes,"* 1865) that treatise was really by Herbert Palmer, B.D., who published it in full in part ii of his *Memorials of Godliness and Christianity*, 5th ed. 1655. The argument drawn from this treatise as to Bacon's skepticism is a twofold mystification. The *Paradoxes* are the deliberate declaration of a pietist that he believes the dogmas of revelation without rational comprehension. The style is plainly not Bacon's; but Bacon had said the same thing in the sentence quoted above. Dr. Grosart's explosive defence against the criticism of Ritter (work cited, p. 14) is an illustration of the intellectual temper involved.]

Yet even in the calculated extravagance of this last pronouncement there is a ground for question whether the fallen Chancellor, hoping to retrieve himself, and trying every device of his ripe sagacity to avert opposition, was not straining his formal orthodoxy beyond his real intellectual habit. As against such wholesale affirmation we have his declarations that "certain it is that God worketh nothing in nature but by second causes," and that any pretence to the contrary "is mere imposture as it were in favour towards God, and nothing else but to offer to the author of truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie";¹ his repeated objection to the discussion of Final Causes;² his attack on Plato and Aristotle for rejecting the atheistic scientific method of Democritus;³ his peremptory assertion that motion is a property of matter;⁴ and his almost Democritean handling of the final problem, in which he insists that primal matter is, "next to God, the cause of causes, itself only without a cause."⁵ Further, though he speaks of Scriptural miracles in a conventional way,⁶ he drily pronounces in one passage that, "as for narrations touching the prodigies and miracles of religions, they are either not true or not natural, and therefore impertinent for the story of nature."⁷ Finally, as against the formal capitulation to theology at the close of the *De Augmentis*, he has left standing in the first book of the Latin version the ringing doctrine of the original *Advancement of Learning* (1605), that "there is no power on earth which setteth

¹ *Advancement*, bk. i (ed. cited, p. 45). Cp. *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i (p. 187).

² *Advancement*, bk. ii; *De Augmentis*, bk. iii, chs. iv and v; *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv; *Novum Organum*, bk. i, Aph. 48; bk. ii, Aph. 2. (Ed. cited, pp. 96, 205, 266, 302, 471, 472.)

³ *De Principiis atque Originibus*. (Ed. cited, pp. 649-50.) Elsewhere (*De Aug.* bk. iii, ch. iv, p. 471) he expressly puts it that the system of Democritus, which "removed God and mind from the structure of things," was more favourable to true science than the teleology and theology of Plato and Aristotle.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 651, 657.

⁵ *De Augmentis*, bk. iii, ch. ii; bk. iv, ch. ii. (Ed. cited, pp. 456, 482.)

⁷ *Id.* bk. ii, ch. i. (Ed. cited, p. 428.)

up a throne or chair in the spirits and souls of men, and in their cogitations, imaginations, opinions, and beliefs, but knowledge and learning";¹ and in his *Wisdom of the Ancients*² he has contrived to turn a crude myth into a subtle allegory in behalf of toleration.

Thus, despite his many resorts to and prostrations before the Scriptures, the general effect of his writings in this regard is to set up in the minds of his readers the old semi-rationalistic equivoque of a "two-fold truth"; reminding us as they do that he "did in the beginning separate the divine testimony from the human." When, therefore, he announces that "we know by faith" that "matter was created from nothing,"³ he has the air of juggling with his problem; and his further suggestion as to the possibility of matter being endowed with a force of evolution, however cautiously put, is far removed from orthodoxy. Accordingly, the charge of atheism—which he notes as commonly brought against all who dwell solely on second causes⁴—was actually cast at his memory in the next generation.⁵ It was of course false: on the issue of theism he is continually descanting with quite conventional unction; as in the familiar essay on atheism.⁶ His dismissal of final causes as "barren" meant merely that the notion was barren of scientific result;⁷ and he refers the question to metaphysic.⁸ But if his theism was of a kind disturbing to believers in a controlling Providence, as little was it satisfactory to Christian fervour: and it can hardly be doubted that the main stream of his argument made for a non-Biblical deism, if not for atheism; his dogmatic orthodoxies being undermined by his own scientific teaching.

Lechler (*Gesch. des englischen Deismus*, pp. 23–25) notes that Bacon involuntarily made for deism. Cp. Amand Saintes, *Hist. de la philos. de Kant*, 1844, p. 69; and Kuno Fischer, *Francis Bacon*, Eng. tr. 1857, ch. xi, pp. 341–43. Dean Church (*Bacon*, in "Men of Letters" series, pp. 174, 205) insists that Bacon held by revelation and immortality; and can of course cite his profession of such belief, which is not to be disputed. (Cp. the careful judgment of Prof. Fowler in his *Bacon*, pp. 180–91, and his ed. of the *Novum Organum*, 1878, pp. 43–53.) But the tendency of the specific Baconian teaching is none the less to put these beliefs aside, and to overlay them with a naturalistic habit of mind. At the first remove from Bacon we have Hobbes.

¹ *De Augmentis*, ed. cited, p. 73.

² No. xviii, *Diomedes*. Ed. cited, p. 841.

³ *Nov. Org.* i, 89; *Filum Labyrinthi*, § 7; Essay 16.

⁴ Francis Osborn, pref. to his "Miscellany," in *Works*, 7th ed. 1673.

⁵ Cp. *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i.

⁶ This is noted by Glasford in his tr. of the *Novum Organum* (1844, p. 26); and by Ellis in his and Spedding's edition of the *Works*. (Routledge ed. pp. 32, 473, note.)

⁷ *De Augmentis*, bk. lii, ch. iv, end.

⁸ *De Principiis atque Originibus*, p. 664.

As regards his intellectual inconsistencies, we can but say that they are such as meet us in men's thinking at every new turn. Though we can see that Bacon's orthodoxy "doth protest too much," with an eye on king and commons and public opinion, we are not led to suppose that he had ever in his heart cast off his inherited creed. He shows frequent Christian prejudice in his references to pagans; and can write that "To seek to extinguish anger utterly is but the bravery of the Stoics,"¹ pretending that the Christian books are more accommodating, and ignoring the Sermon on the Mount. In arguing that the "religion of the heathen" set men upon ending "all inquisition of nature in metaphysical or theological discourse," and in charging the Turks with a special tendency to "ascribe ordinary effects to the immediate workings of God,"² he is playing not very scrupulously on the vanity of his co-religionists. As he was only too well aware, both tendencies ruled the Christian thought of his own day, and derive direct from the sacred books—not from "abuse," as he pretends. And on the metaphysical as on the common-sense side of his thought he is self-contradictory, even as most men have been before and since, because judgment cannot easily fulfil the precepts it frames for itself in illuminated hours. Latter-day students have been impressed, as was Leibnitz, by the original insight with which Bacon negated the possibility of our forming any concrete conception of a primary form of matter, and insisted on its necessary transcendence of our powers of knowledge.³ On the same principle he should have negated every modal conception of the still more recondite Something which he put as antecedent to matter, and called God.⁴ Yet in his normal thinking he seems to have been content with the commonplace formula given in his essay on Atheism—that we cannot suppose the totality of things to be "without a mind." He has here endorsed in its essentials what he elsewhere calls "the heresy of the Anthropomorphites,"⁵ failing to apply his own law in his philosophy, as elsewhere in his physics. When, however, we realize that similar inconsistency is fallen into after him by Spinoza, and wholly escaped perhaps by no thinker, we are in a way to understand that with all his deflections from his own higher law Bacon may have profoundly and fruitfully influenced the thought of the next generation, if not that of his own.

The fact of this influence has been somewhat obscured by the

¹ Essay 57, *Of Anger*.

² *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv.

³ *De Principiis*, ed. cited, pp. 648-49. Cp. pp. 642-43.

⁴ *Id.* p. 648.

⁵ *Valerius Terminus*, ch. ii; *De Augmentis*, bk. v, ch. iv. Ed. cited, pp. 199, 517.

modern dispute as to whether he had any important influence on scientific progress.¹ At first sight the old claim for him in that regard seems to be heavily discounted by the simple fact that he definitely rejected the Copernican system of astronomy.² Though, however, this gravely emphasizes his fallibility, it does not cancel his services as a stimulator of scientific thought. At that time only a few were yet intelligently convinced Copernicans; and we have the record of how, in Bacon's day, Harvey lost heavily in credit and in his medical practice by propounding his discovery of the circulation of the blood,³ which, it is said, no physician over forty years old at that time believed in. For the scientific men of that century—and only among them did Copernicanism find the slightest acceptance—it was thus no fatal shortcoming in Bacon to have failed to grasp the true scheme of sidereal motion, any more than it was in Galileo to be wrong about the tides and comets. They could realize that it was precisely in astronomy, for lack of special study and expert knowledge, that Bacon was least qualified to judge. Intellectual influence on science is not necessarily dependent on actual scientific achievement, though that of course furthers and establishes it; and the fact of Bacon's impact on the mind of the next age is abundantly proved by testimonies.

For a time the explicit tributes came chiefly from abroad; though at all times, even in the first shock of his disgrace, there were Englishmen perfectly convinced of his greatness. To the winning of foreign favour he had specially addressed himself in his adversity. Grown wary in act as well as wise in theory, he deleted from the Latin *De Augmentis* a whole series of passages of the *Advancement of Learning* which disparaged Catholics and Catholicism;⁴ and he had his reward in being appreciated by many Jesuit and other Catholic scholars.⁵ But Protestants such as Comenius and Leibnitz were ere long more emphatic than any Catholics;⁶ and at the time of the Restoration we find Bacon enthusiastically praised among the more open-minded and scientifically biassed thinkers of

¹ Cp. Brewster, *Life of Newton*, 1855, ii, 400-404; Draper, *Intel. Devel. of Europe*, ed. 1875, ii, 258-60; Dean Church, *Bacon*, pp. 180-201; Fowler, *Bacon*, ch. vi; Lodge, *Pioneers of Science*, pp. 145-51; Lange, *Gesch. d. Materialismus*, i, 197 sq. (Eng. tr. i, 236-37), and cit. from Liebig—as to whom, however, see Fowler, pp. 133, 157.

² *Novum Organum*, ii, 46 and 48, § 17; *De Aug.* iii, 4; *Thema Coeli*. Ed. cited, pp. 364, 375, 481, 795, 799. Whewell (*Hist. of Induct. Sciences*, 3rd ed. i, 296, 298) ignores the second and third of these passages in denying Hume's assertion that Bacon rejected the Copernican theory with "disdain." It is true, however, that Bacon had vacillated. The facts are fairly faced by Prof. Fowler in his *Bacon*, 1881, pp. 151-52, and his ed. of *Novum Organum*, Introd. pp. 30-36. See also the summing-up of Ellis in notes to passages above cited, and at p. 675.

³ Aubrey, *Lives of Eminent Persons*, ed. 1813, vol. ii, pt. ii, p. 383.

⁴ See notes in ed. cited, pp. 50, 53, 61, 63, 69, 75, 76, 84, 110.

⁵ Fowler, ed. of *Nov. Org.* § 14, pp. 101-104.

⁶ *Id.* § 14, p. 103; Ellis in ed. cited, p. 643.

England, who included some zealous Christians.¹ It was not that his special "method" enabled them to reach important results with any new facility; its impracticability is now insisted on by friends as well as foes.² It was that he arraigned with extraordinary psychological insight and brilliance of phrase the mental vices which had made discoveries so rare; the alternate self-complacency and despair of the average indolent mind; the "opinion of store" which was "cause of want"; the timid or superstitious evasion of research. In all this he was using his own highest powers, his comprehension of human character and his genius for speech. And though his own scientific results were not to be compared with those of Galileo and Descartes, the wonderful range of his observation and his curiosity, the unwearying zest of his scrutiny of well-nigh all the known fields of Nature, must have been an inspiration to multitudes of students besides those who have recorded their debt to him. It is probable that but for his literary genius, which though little discussed is of a very rare order, his influence would have been both narrower and less durable; but, being one of the great writers of the modern world, he has swayed men down till our own day.

Certain it is that alongside of his doctrine there persisted in England, apart from all printed utterance, a movement of deistic rationalism, of which the eighteenth century saw only the fuller development. Sir John Suckling (1609-1641), rewriting about 1637 his letter to the Earl of Dorset, *An Account of Religion by Reason*, tells how in a first sketch it "had like to have made me an Atheist at Court," and how "the fear of Socinianism at this time renders every man that offers to give an account of religion by reason, suspected to have none at all";³ but he also mentions that he knows it "still to be the opinion of good wits that the particular religion of Christians has added little to the general religion of the world."⁴ Himself a young man of talent, he offers quasi-rational reconciliations of faith with reason which can have satisfied no real doubter, and can hardly have failed to introduce doubt into the minds of some of his readers.

¹ Hawley's *Life*, in ed. cited, p. 9; Osborn, as above cited; Fowler, ed. of *Nov. Org.* Introd. § 14; T. Martin, *Character of Bacon*, 1835, pp. 216, 227, 222-23.

² Cp. Fowler, *Bacon*, pp. 139-41; Mill, *Logic*, bk. vi, ch. v, § 5; Jevons, *Princ. of Science*, 1-vol. ed. p. 576; Tyndall, *Scientific Use of the Imagination*, 3rd ed. pp. 4, 8-9, 42-43; T. Martin, as cited, pp. 210-33; Bagehot, *Postulates of Eng. Polit. Econ.* ed. 1885, pp. 18-19; Ellis and Spedding, in ed. cited, pp. x, xii, 22, 389. The notion of a dialectic method which should mechanically enable any man to make discoveries is an irredeemable fallacy, and must be abandoned. Bacon's own remarkable anticipation of modern scientific thought in the formula that heat is a mode of motion (*Nov. Org.* ii, 20) is not mechanically yielded by his own process, noteworthy and suggestive though that is.

³ Prof. Epistle.

⁴ Works, ed. Dublin, 1766, p. 159; ed. 1910, p. 344.

§ 5. *Popular Thought in Europe*

Of popular freethought in the rest of Europe there is little to chronicle for a hundred and fifty years after the Reformation. The epoch-making work of COPERNICUS, published in 1543, had little or no immediate effect in Germany, where, as we have seen, physical and verbal strifes had begun with the ecclesiastical revolution, and were to continue to waste the nation's energy for a century. In 1546, all attempts at ecclesiastical reconciliation having failed, the emperor Charles V, in whom Melancthon had seen a model monarch,¹ decided to put down the Protestant heresy by war. Luther had just died, apprehensive for his cause. Civil war now raged till the peace of Augsburg in 1555; whereafter Charles abdicated in favour of his son Philip. Here were in part the conditions which in France and elsewhere were later followed by a growth of rational unbelief; and there are some traces even at this time of partial skepticism in high places in the German world, notably in the case of the Emperor Maximilian II, who, "grown up in the spirit of doubt,"² would never identify himself with either Protestants or Catholics.³ But in Germany there was still too little intellectual light, too little brooding over experience, to permit of the spread of such a temper; and the balance of forces amounted only to a deadlock between the ecclesiastical parties. Protestantism on the intellectual side, as already noted, had sunk into a bitter and barren polemic⁴ among the reformers themselves; and many who had joined the movement reverted to Catholicism.⁵ Meanwhile the teaching and preaching Jesuits were zealously at work, turning the dissensions of the enemy to account, and contrasting its schism upon schism with the unity of the Church. But Protestantism was well welded to the financial interest of the many princes and others who had acquired the Church lands confiscated at the Reformation; since a return to Catholicism would mean the surrender of these.⁶ Thus there wrought on the one side the organized spirit of anti-heresy⁷ and on the other the organized spirit of Bibliolatry, neither gaining ground; and between the two, intellectual life was paralysed. Protestantism saw no way of advance; and the prevailing temper began to be that

¹ Kohlrausch, *Hist. of Germany*. Eng. tr. p. 385.

² Moritz Ritter, *Geschichte der deutschen Union, 1567-73*, ii, 55.

³ Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 3te Aufl. Cap. 416.

⁴ Cp. Gardiner, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 12-13; Kohlrausch, p. 438; Pusey, *Histor. Enq. into Ger. Rationalism*, pp. 9-25; Henderson, *Short Hist. of Germany*, i, ch. xvi.

⁵ Kohlrausch, p. 439. A specially strong reaction set in about 1573. Ritter, *Geschichte der deutschen Union*, i, 19. Cp. Menzel, Cap. 433.

⁶ Cp. Gardiner, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 16, 18, 21; Kohlrausch, p. 370.

⁷ As to this see Moritz Ritter, as cited, i, 9, 27; ii, 122 sq.; Dunham, *Hist. of the Germanic Empire*, iii, 186; Henderson, i, 411 sq.

of the Dark Ages, expectant of the end of the world.¹ Superstition abounded, especially the belief in witchcraft, now acted on with frightful cruelty throughout the whole Christian world;² and in the nature of the case Catholicism counted for nothing on the opposite side.

The only element of rationalism that one historian of culture can detect is the tendency of the German moralists of the time to turn the devil into an abstraction by identifying him with the different aspects of human folly and vice.³ There was, as a matter of fact, a somewhat higher manifestation of the spirit of reason in the shape of some new protests against the superstition of sorcery. About 1560 a Catholic priest named Cornelius Loos Callidius was imprisoned by a papal nuncio for declaring that witches' confessions were merely the results of torture. Forced to retract, he was released; but again offended, and was again imprisoned, dying in time to escape the fate of a councillor of Trèves, named Flade, who was burned alive for arguing, on the basis of an old canon (mistakenly named from the Council of Ancyra), that sorcery is an imaginary crime.⁴ Such an infamy explains a great deal of the stagnation of many Christian generations. But courage was not extinct; and in 1563 there appeared the famous John Wier's treatise on witchcraft,⁵ a work which, though fully adhering to the belief in the devil and things demoniac, argued against the notion that witches were conscious workers of evil. Wier⁶ was a physician, and saw the problem partly as one in pathology. Other laymen, and even priests, as we have seen, had reacted still more strongly against the prevailing insanity; but it had the authority of Luther on its side, and with the common people the earlier protests counted for little.

Reactions against Protestant bigotry in Holland on other lines were not much more successful, and indeed were not numerous. One of the most interesting is that of DIRK COORNHERT (1522-1590), who by his manifold literary activities⁷ became one of the founders of Dutch prose. In his youth Coornhert had visited Spain

¹ Freytag, *Bilder aus d. deutschen Vergangenheit*, Bd. ii, 1883, p. 381; Bd. iii, *ad init.*

² Cp. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 53-83.

³ Freytag, *Bilder*, Bd. ii, Abth. ii, p. 378.

⁴ *The Pope and the Council*, Eng. tr. p. 260; French tr. p. 285.

⁵ *De Praestigis Daemonum*, 1563. See it described by Lecky, *Rationalism*, i, 85-87; Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 76.

⁶ By Dutch historians Wier is claimed as a Dutchman. He was born at Grave, in North Brabant, but studied medicine at Paris and Orleans, and after practising physic at Arnhem in the Netherlands was called to Düsseldorf as physician to the Duke of Jülich, to whom he dedicated his treatise. His ideas are probably traceable to his studies in France.

⁷ His collected works (1632) amount to nearly 7,000 folio pages. J. Ten Brink, *Kleine Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letteren*, 1882, p. 91.

and Portugal, and had there, it is said, seen an execution of victims of the Inquisition,¹ deriving thence the aversion to intolerance which stamped his whole life's work. It does not appear, however, that any such peninsular experience was required, seeing that the Dutch Inquisition became abundantly active about the same period. Learning Latin at thirty, in order to read Augustine, he became a translator of Cicero and—singularly enough—of Boccaccio. An engraver to trade, he became first notary and later secretary to the burgomaster of Haarlem; and, failing to steer clear of the strifes of the time, was arrested and imprisoned at the Hague in 1567. On his release he sought safety at Kleef in Santen, whence he returned after the capture of Brill to become secretary of the new national Government at Haarlem; but he had again to take to flight, and lived at Kleef from 1572 to 1577. In 1578 he debated at Leyden with two preachers of Delft on predestination, which he declared to be unscriptural; and was officially ordered to keep silence. Thereupon he published a protest, and got into fresh trouble by drawing up, as notary, an appeal to the Prince of Orange on behalf of his Catholic fellow-countrymen for freedom of worship, and by holding another debate at the Hague.² Always his master-ideal was that of toleration, in support of which he wrote strongly against Beza and Calvin (this in a Latin treatise published only after his death), declaring the persecution of heretics to be a crime in the kingdom of God; and it was as a moralist that he gave the lead to Arminius on the question of predestination.³ “Against Protestant and Catholic sacerdotalism and scholastic he set forth humanist world-wisdom and Biblical ethic,”⁴ to that end publishing a translation of Boëthius (1585), and composing his chief work on *Zedekunst* (Ethics). Christianity, he insisted, lay not in profession or creed, but in practice. By way of restraining the ever-increasing malignity of theological strifes, he made the quaint proposal that the clergy should not be allowed to utter anything but the actual words of the Scriptures, and that all works of theology should be sequestered. For these and other heteroclitic suggestions he was expelled from Delft (where he sought finally to settle, 1587) by the magistrates, at the instance of the preachers, but was allowed to die in peace at Gouda, where he wrote to the last.⁵

All the while, though he drew for doctrine on Plutarch, Cicero,

¹ Ten Brink, p. 86. Jonckbloet (*Beknopte Geschiedenis der Nederl. Letterkunde*, ed. 1880, p. 148) is less specific.

² Ten Brink, pp. 89-90.

³ Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 83.

⁴ Ten Brink, p. 87.

⁵ Jonckbloet, *Beknopte Geschiedenis*, p. 149; Ten Brink, p. 91; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. COUSINNET; Pünjer, *Hist. of the Chr. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. p. 269; Dr. E. Gosse, art. on Dutch Literature in *Encyc. Brit.* 9th ed. xii, 93.

Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius equally with the Bible, Coornbert habitually founded on the latter as the final authority.¹ On no other footing could any one in his age and country stand as a teacher. It was not till after generations of furious intolerance that a larger outlook was possible in the Netherlands; and the first steps towards it were naturally taken independently of theology. Although Grotius figured for a century as one of the chief exponents of Christian evidences, it is certain that his great work on the Law of War and Peace (1625) made for a rationalistic conception of society. "Modern historians of jurisprudence, like Lermnier and Bluntschli, represent it as the distinctive merit of Grotius that he freed the science from bondage to theology."² The breach, indeed, is not direct, as theistic sanctions are paraded in the Prolegomena; but along with these goes the avowal that natural ethic would be valid even were there no God, and—as against the formula of Horace, *Utilitas justis mater*—that "the mother of natural right is human nature itself."³

Where Grotius, defender of the faith, figured as a heretic, unbelief could not speak out, though there are traces of its underground life. The charge of atheism was brought against the *Exercitationes Philosophicæ* of Gorlaeus, published in 1620; but, the book being posthumous, conclusions could not be tried. Views far short of atheism, however, were dangerous to their holders; for the merely Socinian work of Voelkel, published at Amsterdam in 1642, was burned by order of the authorities, and a second impression shared the same fate.⁴ In 1653 the States of Holland forbade the publication of all Unitarian books and all Socinian worship; and though the veto as to books was soon evaded, that on worship was enforced.⁵ Still, Holland was relatively tolerant as beside other countries; and when the Unitarian physician Daniel Zwicker (1612–1678), of Dantzic, found his own country too hot to hold him, he came to Holland (about 1652) "for security and convenience."⁶ He was able to publish at Amsterdam in 1658 his Latin *Irenicum Irenicorum*, wherein he lays down three principles for the settlement of Christian difficulties, the first being "the universal reason of mankind," while Scripture and tradition hold only the second and third places. His book is a remarkable investigation of the rise of the doctrines of the *Logos* and the Trinity, which he traced to polytheism, making out that the first Christians, whom he identified with the Nazarenes, regarded Jesus

¹ Ten Brink, p. 91.

² *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, proleg. §§ 11, 16.

³ Schlegel's note on Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 863.

⁴ Nelson, *Life of Bishop Bull*, 2nd ed. 1714, p. 392.

⁵ Flint, *Vico*, p. 142.

⁶ Bayle, art. VOELKEL.

as a man. The book evoked many answers, and it is somewhat surprising that Zwicker escaped serious persecution, dying peacefully in Amsterdam in 1678, whereas writers much less pronounced in their heresy incurred aggressive hostility. Descartes, as we shall see, during his stay in Holland was menaced by clerical fanaticism. Some fared worse. In the generation after Grotius, one Koerbagh, a doctor, for publishing (1668) a dictionary of definitions containing advanced ideas, had to fly from Amsterdam. At Culenbergh he translated a Unitarian work and began another; but was betrayed, tried for blasphemy, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, to be followed by ten years' banishment. He compromised by dying in prison within the year. Even as late as 1678 the juri-consult Hadrian Beverland (afterwards appointed, through Isaac Vossius, to a lay office under the Church of England) was imprisoned and struck off the rolls of Leyden University for his *Peccatum Originale*, in which he speculated erotically as to the nature of the sin of Adam and Eve. The book was furiously answered, and publicly burned.¹ It was only after an age of such intolerance that Holland, at the end of the seventeenth century, began to become for England a model of freedom in opinion, as formerly in trade. And it seems to have been through Holland, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, that there came the fresh Unitarian impulse which led to the considerable spread of the movement in England after the Revolution of 1688.²

Unitarianism, which we have seen thus invading Holland somewhat persistently during half a century, was then as now impotent beyond a certain point by reason of its divided allegiance, though it has always had the support of some good minds. Its denial of the deity of Jesus could not be made out without a certain superposing of reason on Scripture; and yet to Scripture it always finally appealed. The majority of men accepting such authority have always tended to believe more uncritically; and the majority of men who are habitually critical will always repudiate the Scriptural jurisdiction. In Poland, accordingly, the movement, so flourishing in its earlier years, was soon arrested, as we have seen, by the perception that it drove many Protestants back to Catholicism; among these being presumably a number whose critical insight showed them that there was no firm standing-ground between Catholicism and Naturalism. Every new advance within the Unitarian pale

¹ Nicéron, *Mémoires pour servir*, etc., xiv (1731), 340 sq. One of the replies is the *Justa Detestatio sceleratissimi Ubelli Adriani Beverlandi De Peccato Originale*, by Leonard Ryssen, 1680. A very free version of Beverland's book appeared in French in 1714 under the title *Etat de l'Homme dans le Peché Originel*. It reached a sixth edition in 1741.

² Nelson, *Life of Bishop Bull*, as cited, p. 280.

terrified the main body, many of whom were mere Arians, holding by the term Trinity, and merely making the Son subordinate to the Father. Thus when one of their most learned ministers, Simon Budny, followed in the steps of Ferencz Davides (whom we have seen dying in prison in Transylvania in 1579), and represented Jesus as a "mere" man, he was condemned by a synod (1582) and deposed from his office (1584). He recanted, and was reinstated,¹ but his adherents seem to have been excommunicated. The sect thus formed were termed Semi-Judaizers by another heretic, Martin Czechowicz, who himself denied the pre-existence of Jesus, and made him only a species of demi-god;² yet Fausto Sozzini, better known as Faustus Socinus, who also wrote against them, and who had worked with Biandrata to have Davides imprisoned, conceded that prayer to Christ was optional.³

Faustus, who arrived in Poland in 1579, seems to have been moved to his strenuously "moderate" policy, which for a time unified the bulk of the party, mainly by a desire to keep on tolerable terms with Protestantism. That, however, did not serve him with the Catholics; and when the reaction set in he suffered severely at their hands. His treatise, *De Jesu Christu Servatore*, created bitter resentment; and in 1598 the Catholic rabble of Cracow, led "as usual by the students of the university," dragged him from his house. His life was saved only by the strenuous efforts of the rector and two professors of the university; and his library was destroyed, with his manuscripts, whereof "he particularly regretted a treatise which he had composed against the atheists";⁴ though it is not recorded that the atheists had ever menaced either his life or his property. He seems to have been zealous against all heresy that outwent his own, preaching passive obedience in politics as emphatically as any churchman, and condemning alike the rising of the Dutch against Spanish rule and the resistance of the French Protestants to their king.⁵

This attitude may have had something to do with the better side of the ethical doctrines of the sect, which leant considerably to non-resistance. Czechowicz (who was deposed by his fellow-Socinians for schism) seems not only to have preached a patient endurance of injuries, but to have meant it;⁶ and to the Socinian sect belongs the

¹ Krasinski, *Ref. in Poland*, 1840, ii, 363; Mosheim, 16 Cent. sec. iii, pt. ii, ch. iv, § 23. Budny translated the Bible, with rationalistic notes.

² Krasinski, p. 361.

³ Mosheim, last cit. § 23, note 4.

⁴ Krasinski, p. 367; Wallace, *Anti-trin. Biog.* 1850, ii, 330.

⁵ Bayle, art. FAUSTE SOCIN. Krasinski, p. 374.

⁶ Krasinski, pp. 361-62. Fausto Sozzini also could apparently forgive everybody save those who believed less than he did.

main credit of setting up a humane compromise on the doctrine of eternal punishment.¹ The time, of course, had not come for any favourable reception of such a compromise in Christendom; and it is noted of the German Socinian, Ernst Schoner (Sonerus), who wrote against the orthodox dogma, that his works are "exceedingly scarce."² Unitarianism as a whole, indeed, made little headway outside of Poland and Transylvania.

In Spain, meantime, there was no recovery from the paralysis wrought by the combined tyranny of Church and Crown, incarnate in the Inquisition. The monstrous multiplication of her clergy might alone have sufficed to set up stagnation in her mental life; but, not content with the turning of a vast multitude³ of men and women away from the ordinary work of life, her rulers set themselves to expatriate as many more on the score of heresy. A century after the expulsion of the Jews came the turn of the Moors, whose last hold in Spain, Granada, had been overthrown in 1492. Within a generation they had been deprived of all exterior practice of their religion;⁴ but that did not suffice, and the Inquisition never left them alone. Harried, persecuted, compulsorily baptized, deprived of their Arabic books, they repeatedly revolted, only to be beaten down. At length, in the opening years of the seventeenth century (1610-1613), under Philip III, on the score that the great Armada had failed because heretics were tolerated at home, it was decided to expel the whole race; and now a million Moriscoes, among the most industrious inhabitants of Spain, were driven the way of the Jews. It is needless here to recall the ruinous effect upon the material life of Spain:⁵ the aspect of the matter which specially concerns us is the consummation of the policy of killing out all intellectual variation. The Moriscoes may have counted for little in positive culture; but they were one of the last and most important factors of variation in the country; and when Spain was thus successively denuded of precisely the most original and energetic types among the Jewish, the Spanish, and the Moorish stocks, her mental arrest was complete.

To modern freethought, accordingly, she has till our own age

¹ Cp. the inquiry as to Locke's Socinianism in J. Milner's *Account of Mr. Lock's Religion out of his own Writings*, 1706, and Lessing's *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, i, as to Leibnitz's criticism of Sonerus.

² Enfield's *History of Philosophy* (an abstract of Brucker), ed. 1840, p. 537.

³ In the dominions of Philip II there are said to have been 58 archbishops, 684 bishops, 11,400 abbays, 23,000 religious fraternities, 46,000 monasteries, 13,500 nunneries, 312,000 secular priests, 400,000 monks, 260,000 friars and other ecclesiastics. H. E. Watts, *Miguel de Cervantes*, 1895, pp. 67-68. Spain alone had 9,088 monasteries.

⁴ Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 484; 1-vol. ed. p. 564, and refs.

⁵ Cp. Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 497-99; 1-vol. ed. pp. 572-73; La Rigaudière, *Hist. des Perséc. Relig. en Espagne*, 1860, pp. 226-26.

contributed practically nothing. Huarte seems to have had no Spanish successors. The brilliant dramatic literature of the reigns of the three Philips, which influenced the rising drama alike of France and England, is notably unintellectual,¹ dealing endlessly in plot and adventure, but yielding no great study of character, and certainly doing nothing to further ethics. Calderon was a thorough fanatic, and became a priest;² Lope de Vega found solace under bereavement in zealously performing the duties of an Inquisitor; and was so utterly swayed by the atrocious creed of persecution which was blighting Spain that he joined in the general exultation over the expulsion of the Moriscoes. Even the mind of Cervantes had not on this side deepened beyond the average of his race and time;³ his old wrongs at Moorish hands perhaps warping his better judgment. His humorous and otherwise kindly spirit, so incongruously neighboured, must indeed have counted for much in keeping life sweet in Spain in the succeeding centuries of bigotry and ignorance. But from the seventeenth century till the other day the brains were out, in the sense that genius was lacking. That species of variation had been too effectually extirpated during two centuries to assert itself until after a similar duration of normal conditions. The "immense advantage of religious unity," which even a modern Spanish historian⁴ has described as a gain balancing the economic loss from the expulsion of the Moriscoes, was precisely the condition of minimum intellectual activity—the unity of stagnation. No kind of ratiocinative thought was allowed to raise its head. A Latin translation of the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus had been permitted, or at least published, in Catholic France; but when Martin Martinez de Cantatapiedra, a learned orientalist and professor of theology, ventured to do the same thing in Spain—doubtless with the idea of promoting faith by discouraging reason—he was haled before the Inquisition, and the book proscribed (1583). He was further charged with Lutheran leanings on the score that he had a preference for the actual text of Scripture over that of the commentators.⁵ In such an atmosphere it was natural that works on mathematics, astronomy, and physics should be censured as "favouring materialism and sometimes atheism."⁶ It

¹ Cp. Lewis, *Spanish Drama*, *passim*.

² "He inspires me only with horror for the faith which he professes. No one ever so far disfigured Christianity; no one ever assigned to it passions so ferocious, or morals so corrupt" (Sismondi, *Lit. of South of Europe*, Bohn tr. ii. 379).

³ Ticknor, *Hist. of Spanish Lit.* 6th ed. ii. 501; *Don Quixote*, pt. ii, ch. liv; Ormsby, tr. of *Don Quixote*, 1855, introd. i, 58.

⁴ Lafuente, *Historia de Espana*, 1856, xvii, 340. It is not quite certain that Lafuente expressed his sincere opinion.

⁵ Llorente, ii, 433.

⁶ *Id.* p. 420.

has been held by one historian that at the death of Philip II there arose some such sense of relief throughout Spain as was felt later in France at the death of Louis XIV; that "the Spaniards now ventured to sport with the chains which they had not the power to break"; and that Cervantes profited by the change in conceiving and writing his *Don Quixote*.¹ But the same historian had before seen that "poetic freedom was circumscribed by the same shackles which fettered moral liberty. Thoughts which could not be expressed without fear of the dungeon and the stake were no longer materials for the poet to work on. His imagination, instead of improving them into poetic ideas.....had to be taught to reject them. But the eloquence of prose was more completely bowed down under the inquisitorial yoke than poetry, because it was more closely allied to truth, which of all things was the most dreaded."² Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calderon proved that within the iron wall of Catholic orthodoxy, in an age when conclusions were but slowly being tried between dogma and reason, there could be a vigorous play of imaginative genius on the field of human nature; even as in Velasquez, sheltered by royal favour, the genius of colour and portraiture could become incarnate. But after these have passed away, the laws of social progress are revealed in the defect of all further Spanish genius. Even of Cervantes it is recorded—on very doubtful authority, however—that he said "I could have made *Don Quixote* much more amusing if it were not for the Inquisition"; and it is matter of history that a passage in his book³ disparaging perfunctory works of charity was in 1619 ordered by the Holy Office to be expunged as impious and contrary to the faith.

See H. E. Watts, *Miguel de Cervantes*, p. 167. *Don Quixote* was "always under suspicion of the orthodox." *Id.* p. 166. Mr. Watts, saying nothing of Cervantes's approval of the expulsion of the Moriscoes, claims that his "head was clear of the follies and extravagances of the reigning superstition" (*id.* p. 231). But the case is truly summed up by Mr. Ormsby when he says: "For one passage capable of being tortured into covert satire" against things ecclesiastical, "there are ten in *Don Quixote* and the novels that show—what indeed is very obvious from the little we know of his life and character—that Cervantes was a faithful son of the Church" (tr. of *Don Quixote*, 1885, introd. i, 57).

When the total intellectual life of a nation falls ever further in the rear of the world's movement, even the imaginative arts are

¹ Bouterwek, *Hist. of Spanish and Portuguese Literature*, Eng. tr. 1823, i, 331.

² *Id.* p. 151.

³ Part II, ch. xxxvi.

stunted. Turkey excepted, the civilized nations of Europe which for two centuries have contributed the fewest great names to the world's bead-roll have been Spain, Austria, Portugal, Belgium, and Greece, all noted for their "religious unity." And of all of these Spain is the supreme instance of positive decadence, she having exhibited in the first half of the sixteenth century a greater complex of energy than any of the others.¹ The lesson is monumental.

§ 6. *Scientific Thought*

It remains to trace briefly the movement of scientific and speculative thought which constituted the transition between the Scholastic and the modern philosophy. It may be compendiously noted under the names of Copernicus, Bruno, Vanini, Galileo, Ramus, Gassendi, Bacon, and Descartes.

The great performance of COPERNICUS (Nicolaus Koppernigk, 1473-1543), given to the world with an editor's treacherous preface as he lay paralysed on his deathbed, did not become a general possession for over a hundred years. The long reluctance of its author to let it be published, despite the express invitation of a cardinal in the name of the pope, was well founded in his knowledge of the strength of common prejudice; and perhaps partly in a sense of the scientific imperfection of his own case.² Only the special favour accorded to his first sketch at Rome—a favour which he had further carefully planned for in his dedicatory epistle to Pope Paul—saved his main treatise from prohibition till long after its work was done.³ It was in fact, with all its burden of traditional error, the most momentous challenge that had yet been offered in the modern world to established beliefs, alike theological and lay, for it seemed to flout "common sense" as completely as it did the cosmogony of the sacred books. It was probably from scraps of ancient lore current in Italy in his years of youthful study there that he first derived his idea; and in Italy none had dared publicly to propound the geocentric theory. Its gradual victory, therefore, is the first great modern instance of a triumph of reason over spontaneous and

¹ Bouterwek, whose sociology, though meritorious, is ill-clarified, argues that the Inquisition was in a manner congenital to Spain because before its establishment the suspicion of heresy was already "more degrading in Spain than the most odious crimes in other countries." But the same might have been said of the other countries also. As to earlier Spanish heresy see above, vol. i. p. 337 sq.

² Despite the many fallacies retained by Copernicus from the current astronomy, he must be pronounced an exceptionally scientific spirit. Trained as a mathematician, astronomer, and physician, he showed a keen and competent interest in the practical problem of currency; and one of the two treatises which alone he published of his own accord was a sound scheme for the rectification of that of his own government. Though a canon of Frauenburg, he never took orders; but did manifold and unselfish secular service.

³ It was shielded by thirteen popes—from Paul III to Paul V.

instilled prejudice; and Galileo's account of his reception of it should be a classic document in the history of rationalism.

It was when he was a student in his teens that there came to Pisa one Christianus Urstitius of Rostock, a follower of Copernicus, to lecture on the new doctrine. The young Galileo, being satisfied that "that opinion could be no other than a solemn madness," did not attend; and those of his acquaintance who did made a jest of the matter, all save one, "very intelligent and wary," who told him that "the business was not altogether to be laughed at." Thenceforth he began to inquire of Copernicans, with the result inevitable to such a mind as his. "Of as many as I examined I found not so much as one who told me not that he had been a long time of the contrary opinion, but to have changed it for this, as convinced by the strength of the reasons proving the same; and afterwards questioning them one by one, to see whether they were well possessed of the reasons of the other side, I found them all to be very ready and perfect in them, so that I could not truly say that they took this opinion out of ignorance, vanity, or to show the acuteness of their wits." On the other hand, the opposing Aristoteleans and Ptolemeans had seldom even superficially studied the Copernican system, and had in no case been converted from it. "Whereupon, considering that there was no man who followed the opinion of Copernicus that had not been first on the contrary side, and that was not very well acquainted with the reasons of Aristotle and Ptolemy, while, on the contrary, there was not one of the followers of Ptolemy that had ever been of the judgment of Copernicus, and had left that to embrace this of Aristotle," he began to realize how strong must be the reasons that thus drew men away from beliefs "imbibed with their milk."¹ We can divine how slow would be the progress of a doctrine which could only thus begin to find its way into one of the most gifted scientific minds of the modern world. It was only a minority of the *élite* of the intellectual life who could receive it, even after the lapse of a hundred years.

The doctrine of the earth's two-fold motion, as we have seen, had actually been taught in the fifteenth century by Nicolaus of Cusa (1401-1464), who, instead of being prosecuted, was made a cardinal, so little was the question then considered (Ueberweg, ii, 23-24). See above, vol. i, p. 368, as to Pulci. Only very slowly did the work even of Copernicus make its impression. Green (*Short History*, ed. 1881, p. 297) makes

¹ Galileo, *Dialogi dei due massimi sistemi del mondo*, ii (*Opere*, ed. 1811, xi, 303-304).

first the mistake of stating that it influenced thought in the *fifteenth* century, and then the further mistake of saying that it was brought home to the general intelligence by Galileo and Kepler in the later years of the *sixteenth* century (*id.* p. 412). Galileo's European notoriety dates from 1616; his *Dialogues of the Two Systems of the World* appeared only in 1632; and his *Dialogues of the New Sciences* in 1638. Kepler's indecisive *Mysterium Cosmographicum* appeared only in 1597; his treatise on the motions of the planet Mars not till 1609.

One of the first to bring the new cosmological conception to bear on philosophic thought was GIORDANO BRUNO of Nola (1548-1600), whose life and death of lonely chivalry have won him his place as the typical martyr of modern freethought.¹ He may be conceived as a blending of the pantheistic and naturalistic lore of ancient Greece,² assimilated through the Florentine Platonists, with the spirit of modern science (itself a revival of the Greek) as it first takes firm form in Copernicus, whose doctrine Bruno early and ardently embraced. Baptized Filippo, he took Giordano as his cloister-name when he entered the great convent of S. Domenico Maggiore at Naples in 1563, in his fifteenth year. No human being was ever more unfitly placed among the Dominicans, punningly named the "hounds of the Lord" (*domini canes*) for their work as the corps of the Inquisition; and very early in his cloister life he came near being formally proceeded against for showing disregard of sacred images, and making light of the sanctity of the Virgin.³ He passed his novitiate, however, without further trouble, and was fully ordained a priest in 1572, in his twenty-fourth year. Passing then through several Neapolitan monasteries during a period of three years, he seems to have become not a little of a freethinker on his return to his first cloister, as he had already reached Arian opinions in regard

¹ A good study of Bruno is supplied by Owen in his *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*. He has, however, omitted to embody the later discoveries of Dufour and Berti, and has some wrong dates. The *Life of Giordano Bruno*, by I. Frith (Mrs. Oppenheim), 1887, gives all the data, but is inadequate on the philosophic side. A competent estimate is given in the late Prof. Adamson's lectures on *The Development of Modern Philosophy*, etc., 1903, ii, 23 sq.; also in his art. in *Encyc. Brit.* For a hostile view see Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 106-111. The biography of Bartholmæss, *Jordano Bruno*, 1846, is extremely full and sympathetic, but was unavoidably loose as to dates. Much new matter has since been collected, for which see the *Vita di Giordano Bruno* of Domenico Berti, rev. and enlarged ed. 1889; Prof. J. L. McIntyre, *Giordano Bruno*, 1903; Dufour, *Giordano Bruno à Genève: Documents inédits*, 1884; David Levi, *Giordano Bruno, o la religione del pensiero: l'uomo, l'apostolo e il martire*, 1887; Dr. H. Brunnhofer's *Giordano Bruno's Weltanschauung und Verhängnis*, 1882; and the doctoral treatise of C. Sigwart, *Die Lebensgeschichte Giordano Brunos*, Tübingen, 1880. For other authorities see Owen's and I. Frith's lists, and the final *Literaturnachweis* in Gustav Louis's *Giordano Bruno, seine Weltanschauung und final Lebensverfassung*, Berlin, 1900. The study of Bruno has been carried further in Germany than in England; but Mr. Whittaker (*Essays and Notices*, 1895) and Prof. McIntyre make up much leeway.

² Cp. Bartholmæss, i, 49-53; Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 191-94 (Eng. tr. i, 232); Gustav Louis, as cited, pp. 11, 88.

³ Berti, *Vita di Giordano Bruno*, 1889, pp. 40-41, 420. Bruno gives the facts in his own narrative before the Inquisitors at Venice.

to Christ, and soon proceeded to substitute a mystical and Pythagorean for the orthodox view of the Trinity.¹

For the second time a "process" was begun against him, and he took flight to Rome (1576), presenting himself at a convent of his Order. News speedily came from Naples of the process against him, and of the discovery that he had possessed a volume of the works of Chrysostom and Jerome with the scholia of Erasmus—a prohibited thing. Only a few months before Bartolomeo Carranza, Bishop of Toledo, who had won the praise of the Council of Trent for his index of prohibited books, had been condemned to abjure for the doctrine that "the worship of the relics of the saints is of human institution," and had died in the same year at the convent to which Bruno had now gone. Thus doubly warned, he threw off his priestly habit, and fled to the Genoese territory,² where, in the commune of Noli, he taught grammar and astronomy. In 1578 he visited successively Turin, Venice, Padua, Bergamo, and Milan, resuming at the last-named town his monk's habit. Thereafter he again returned to Turin, passing thence to Chambéry at the end of 1578, and thence to Geneva early in 1579.³ His wish, he said, was "to live in liberty and security"; but for that he must first renounce his Dominican habit; other Italian refugees, of whom there were many at Geneva, helping him to a layman's suit. Becoming a corrector of the press, he seems to have conformed externally to Calvinism; but after a stay of two and a-half months he published a short diatribe against one Antonio de La Faye, who professed philosophy at the Academy; and for this he was arrested and sentenced to excommunication, while his bookseller was subjected to one day's imprisonment and a fine.⁴ After three weeks the excommunication was raised; but he nevertheless left Geneva, and afterwards spoke of Calvinism as the "deformed religion." After a few weeks' sojourn at Lyons he went to Toulouse, the very centre of inquisitional orthodoxy; and there, strangely enough, he was able to stay for more than a year,⁵ taking his degree as Master of Arts and becoming professor of astronomy. But the civil wars made Toulouse unsafe; and at length, probably in 1581 or 1582, he reached Paris, where for a time he lectured as professor extraordinary.⁶ In 1583 he reached England, where he remained till

¹ Berti, pp. 42-43, 47; Owen, p. 265.

² Not to Genoa, as Berti stated in his first ed. See ed. 1889, pp. 54, 392.

³ Berti, p. 65. Owen has the uncorrected date, 1576.

⁴ Dufour, *Giordano Bruno à Genève: Documents Inédits*, 1884; Berti, pp. 95-97; Gustav Louis, *Giordano Bruno*, pp. 73-75. Owen (p. 269) has overlooked these facts, set forth by Dufour in 1884. The documents are given in full in Frith, *Life*, 1887, p. 60 sq.

⁵ The dates are in doubt. Cp. Berti, p. 115, and Frith, p. 65.

⁶ See his own narrative before the Inquisitors in 1592. Berti, p. 394.

1585, lecturing, debating at Oxford on the Copernican theory, and publishing a number of his works, four of them dedicated to his patron Castelnau de Mauvissière, the French ambassador. Oxford was then a stronghold of bigoted Aristotelianism, where bachelors and masters deviating from *the* master were fined, or, if openly hostile, expelled.¹ In that camp Bruno was not welcome. But he had other shelter, at the French Embassy in London, and there he had notable acquaintances. He had met Sir Philip Sidney at Milan in 1578; and his dialogue, *Cena de le Ceneri*, gives a vivid account of a discussion in which he took a leading part at a banquet given by Sir Fulke Greville. His picture of "Oxford ignorance and English ill-manners"² is not lenient; and there is no reason to suppose that his doctrine was then assimilated by many;³ but his stay in the household of Castelnau was one of the happiest periods of his chequered life. While in England he wrote no fewer than seven works, four of them dedicated to Castelnau, and two—the *Heroic Fervours* and the *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*—to Sir Philip Sidney.

Returning to Paris on the recall of Castelnau in 1585, he made an attempt to reconcile himself to the Church, but it was fruitless; and thereafter he went his own way. After a public disputation at the university in 1586, he set out on a new peregrination, visiting first Mayence, Marburg, and Wittemberg. At Marburg he was refused leave to debate; and at Wittemberg he seems to have been carefully conciliatory, as he not only matriculated but taught for over a year (1586–1588), till the Calvinist party carried the day over the Lutheran.⁴ Thereafter he reached Prague, Helmstadt, Frankfort, and Zurich. At length, on the fatal invitation of the Venetian youth Mocenigo, he re-entered Italian territory, where, in Venice, he was betrayed to the Inquisition by his treacherous and worthless pupil.⁵

What had been done for freethought by Bruno in his fourteen years of wandering, debating, and teaching through Europe it is impossible to estimate; but it is safe to say that he was one of the most powerful antagonists to orthodox unreason that had yet

¹ McIntyre, *Giordano Bruno*, 1907, pp. 21–22.

² Frith, *Life*, p. 121, and refs.; Owen, p. 275; Bartholmèss, *Jordano Bruno*, i, 136–38.

³ Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 111, note. As to Bruno's supposed influence on Bacon and Shakespeare, cp. Bartholmèss, i, 134–35; Frith, *Life*, pp. 104–48; and the author's *Montaigne and Shakspeare*, pp. 132–38. Here there is no case; but there is much to be said for Mr. Whittaker's view (*Essays and Notices*, p. 94) that Spenser's late Cantos on Mutability were suggested by Bruno's *Spaccio*. Prof. McIntyre supports.

⁴ His praise of Luther, and his compliments to the Lutherans, are in notable contrast to his verdict on Calvinism. What happened was that at Wittemberg he was on his best behaviour, and was well treated accordingly.

⁵ As to the traitor's motives cp. McIntyre, p. 66 sq.; Berti, p. 262 sq.

where he attains a lifting ardour of inspiration, a fervour of soaring outlook, that puts him in the front rank of the thinkers of his age. And if his literary character is at times open to severe criticism in respect of his lack of balance, sobriety, and self-command, his final courage atones for such shortcomings.

His case, indeed, serves to remind us that at certain junctures it is only the unbalanced types that aid humanity's advance. The perfectly prudent and self-sufficing man does not achieve revolutions, does not revolt against tyrannies; he wisely adapts himself and subsists, letting the evil prevail as it may. It is the more impatient and unreticent, the eager and hot-brained—in a word, the faulty—who clash with oppression and break a way for quieter spirits through the hedges of enthroned authority. The serenely contemplative spirit is rather a possession than a possessor for his fellows; he may inform and enlighten, but is not in himself a countering or inspiriting force: a Shelley avails more than a Goethe against tyrannous power. And it may be that the battling enthusiast in his own way wins liberation for himself from "fear of fortune and death," as he wins for others liberty of action.¹ Even such a liberator, bearing other men's griefs and taking stripes that they might be kept whole, was Bruno.

And though he quailed at the first shock of capture and torture, when the end came he vindicated human nature as worthily as could any quietist. It was a long-drawn test. Charged on the traitor's testimony with many "blasphemies," he denied them all,² but stood to his published writings³ and vividly expounded his theories,⁴ professing in the usual manner to believe in conformity with the Church's teachings, whatever he might write on philosophy. It is impossible to trust the Inquisition records as to his words of self-humiliation;⁵ though on the other hand no blame can rationally attach to anyone who, in his place, should try to deceive such enemies, morally on a level with hostile savages. It is certain that the Inquisitors frequently wrung recantations by torture.⁶

What is historically certain is that Bruno was not released, but sent on to Rome, and was kept there in prison for seven years. He was not the sort of heretic likely to be released; though the fact of his being a Dominican, and the desire to maintain the Church's

¹ As to Bruno's own claim in the *Eroici Furori*, cp. Whittaker, *Essays*, p. 90.

² Documents in Berti, pp. 407-18; McIntyre, p. 75 sq.

³ See the document in Berti, p. 398 sq.; Frith, pp. 270-81.

⁴ See Berti, p. 396; Owen, pp. 285-86; Frith, pp. 282-83.

⁵ The controversy as to whether Galileo was tortured leaves it clear that torture was common. See Dr. Parçhappe, *Galilée, sa vie, etc.*, 1866, Pt. ii, ch. 7.

⁶ Berti, p. 400 sq.

intellectual credit, delayed so long his execution. Certainly not an atheist (he called himself in several of his book-titles *Philotheus*; he consigns *insano ateismo* to perdition;¹ and his quasi-panteism or monism often lapses into theistic modes),² he yet was from first to last essentially though not professedly anti-Christian in his view of the universe. If the Church had cause to fear any philosophic teaching, it was his, preached with the ardour of a prophet and the eloquence of a poet. His doctrine that the worlds in space are innumerable was as offensive to orthodox ears as his specific negations of Christian dogma, outgoing as it did the later idea of Kepler and Galileo. He had, moreover, finally refused to make any fresh recantation; and the only detailed document extant concerning his final trial describes him as saying to his judges: "With more fear, perchance, do you pass sentence on me than I receive it."³ According to all accessible records, he was burned alive at Rome in February, 1600, in the Field of Flowers, near where his statue now stands. As was probably customary, they tied his tongue before leading him to the stake, lest he should speak to the people;⁴ and his martyrdom was an edifying spectacle for the vast multitude of pilgrims who had come from all parts of Christendom for the jubilee of the pope.⁵ At the stake, when he was at the point of death, there was duly presented to him the crucifix, and he duly put it aside.

An attempt has been made by Professor Desdouts in a pamphlet (*La légende tragique de Jordano Bruno*; Paris, 1885) to show that there is no evidence that Bruno was burned; and an anonymous writer in the *Scottish Review* (October, 1888, Art. II), rabidly hostile to Bruno, has maintained the same proposition. Doubt on the subject dates from Bayle. Its main ground is the fewness of the documentary records, of which, further, the genuineness is now called in question. But no good reason is shown for doubting them. They are three.

1. The Latin letter of Gaspar Schopp (Scioppius), dated February 17, 1600, is an eye-witness's account of the sentencing and burning of Bruno at that date. (See it in full, in the original Latin, in Berti, p. 461 *sq.*, and in App. V to Frith, *Life*

¹ *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, ed. Wagner, ii, 120.

² Prof. Carriere has contended that a transition from pantheism to theism marks the growth of his thought; but, as is shown by Mr. Whittaker, he is markedly pantheistic in his latest work of all, though his pantheism is not merely naturalistic. *Essays and Notices*, pp. 72, 253-58.

³ Italian versions differ verbally. Cp. Levi, p. 379; Berti, p. 386. That inscribed on the Bruno statue at Rome is a close rendering of the Latin: *Majori forsan cum timore sententiam in me fertis quam ego accipiam*, preserved by Scioppius.

⁴ *Aviso*, in Berti, p. 329; in Levi, p. 386.

⁵ Levi, pp. 384-92. Levi relates (p. 390) that Bruno at the stake was heard to utter the words: "O Eterno, io fo uno sforzo supremo per attrarre in me quanto vi tra di più divino nell' universo." He cites no authority. An *Aviso* reports that Bruno said his soul would rise with the smoke to Paradise (p. 386; Berti, p. 330), but does not state that this was said at the stake. And Levi accepts the other report that Bruno was gagged.

of Bruno, and partly translated in Prof. Adamson's lectures, as cited. It was rep. by Struvius in his *Acta Literaria*, tom. v, and by La Croze in his *Entretiens sur divers sujets* in 1711, p. 287.) It was not printed till 1621, but the grounds urged for its rejection are totally inadequate, and involve assumptions, which are themselves entirely unproved, as to what Scioppius was likely to do. Finally, no intelligible reason is suggested for the forging of such a document. The remarks of Prof. Desdouits on this head have no force whatever. The writer in the *Scottish Review* (p. 263, and *note*) suggests as "at least as possible an hypothesis as any other that he [Bruno] was the author of the forged accounts of his own death." Comment is unnecessary.

2. There are preserved two extracts from Roman news-letters (*Avvisi*) of the time; one, dated February 12, 1600, commenting on the case; the other, dated February 19, relating the execution on the 17th. (See both in *S. R.*, pp. 264-65. They were first printed by Berti in *Documenti intorno a Giordano Bruno*, Rome, 1880, and are reprinted in his *Vita*, ed. 1889, cap. xix; also by Levi, as cited.) Against these testimonies the sole plea is that they mis-state Bruno's opinions and the duration of his imprisonment—a test which would reduce to mythology the contents of most newspapers in our own day. The writer in the *Scottish Review* makes the suicidal suggestion that, inasmuch as the errors as to dates occur in Schopp's letter, "the so-called Schopp was fabricated from these notices, or they from Schopp"—thus admitting one to be historical.

3. There has been found, by a Catholic investigator, a double entry in the books of the Lay Brotherhood of *San Giovanni Decollato*, whose function was to minister to prisoners under capital sentence, giving a circumstantial account of Bruno's execution. (See it in *S. R.*, pp. 266, 269, 270.) In this case, the main entry being dated "1600. Thursday. February 16th," the anonymous writer argues that "the whole thing resolves itself into a make-up," because February 16 was the Wednesday. The entry refers to the procedure of the Wednesday night and the Thursday morning; and such an error could easily occur in any case. Whatever may be one day proved, the cavils thus far count for nothing. All the while, the records as to Bruno remain in the hands of the Catholic authorities; but, despite the discredit constantly cast on the Church on the score of Bruno's execution, they offer no official denial of the common statement; while they do officially admit (*S. R.*, p. 252) that on February 8 Bruno was sentenced as an "obstinate heretic," and "given over to the Secular Court." On the other hand, the episode is well vouched; and the argument from the silence of ambassadors' letters is so far void. No pretence is made of tracing Bruno anywhere after February, 1600.

Since the foregoing note appeared in the first edition I have met with the essay of Mr. R. Copley Christie, "Was Giordano Bruno Really Burned?" (*Macmillan's Magazine*, October, 1885; rep. in Mr. Christie's *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902). This is a crushing answer to the thesis of M. Desdouts, showing as it does clear grounds not only for affirming the genuineness of the letter of Scioppius, but for doubting the diligence of M. Desdouts. Mr. Christie points out (1) that in his book *Ecclesiasticus*, printed in 1612, Scioppius refers to the burning of Bruno almost in the words of his letter of 1600; (2) that in 1607 Kepler wrote to a correspondent of the burning of Bruno, giving as his authority J. M. Wacker, who in 1600 was living at Rome as the imperial ambassador; and (3) that the tract *Machiavellizatio*, 1621, in which the letter of Scioppius was first printed, was well known in its day, being placed on the *Index*, and answered by two writers without eliciting any repudiation from Scioppius, who lived till 1649. As M. Desdouts staked his case on the absence of allusion to the subject before 1661 (overlooking even the allusion by Mersenne, in 1624, cited by Bayle), his theory may be taken as exploded.

Bruno has been zealously blackened by Catholic writers for the obscenity of some of his writing¹ and the alleged freedom of his life—piquant charges, when we remember the life of the Papal Italy in which he was born. LUCILIO VANINI (otherwise Julius Cæsar Vanini), the next martyr of freethought, also an Italian (b. at Taurisano, 1585), is open to the more relevant charges of an inordinate vanity and some duplicity. Figuring as a Carmelite friar, which he was not, he came to England (1612) and deceitfully professed to abjure Catholicism,² gaining, however, nothing by the step, and contriving to be reconciled to the Church, after being imprisoned for forty-nine days on an unrecorded charge. Previously he had figured, like Bruno, as a wandering scholar at Amsterdam, Brussels, Cologne, Geneva, and Lyons; and afterwards he taught natural philosophy for a year at Genoa. His treatise, *Amphitheatrum Æternæ Providentiæ* (Lyons, 1615), is professedly directed against "ancient philosophers, Atheists, Epicureans, Peripatetics, and Stoics," and is ostensibly quite orthodox.³ In one passage he untruthfully tells how, when imprisoned in England, he burned with the desire to shed his blood for the Catholic Church.⁴ In another, after declaring that some Christian doctors have argued very weakly

¹ Notably his comedy *Il Candelaio*.

² Owen, *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 357. A full narrative, from the documents, is given in R. C. Christie's essay, "Vanini in England," in the *English Historical Review* of April, 1895, reprinted in his *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902.

³ See it analysed by Owen, pp. 361-68, and by Carrière, *Weltanschauung*, pp. 496-504.

⁴ *Amphitheatrum*, 1615, Exercit. xix, pp. 117-18.

against the Epicureans on immortality, he avows that he, "Christianus nomine cognomine Catholicus," could hardly have held the doctrine if he had not learned it from the Church, "the most certain and infallible mistress of truth."¹ As usual, the attack leaves us in doubt as to the amount of real atheism current at the time. The preface asserts that "*'Αθεώρητο autem secta pestilentissima quotidie, latius et latius vires acquirit eundo,*" and there are various hostile allusions to atheists in the text;² but the arguments cited from them are such as might be brought by deists against miracles and the Christian doctrine of sin; and there is an allusion of the customary kind to "*Nicolaus Machiavellus Atheorum facile princeps,*"³ which puts all in doubt. The later published Dialogues, *De Admirandis Naturæ Arcanis*,⁴ while showing a freer critical spirit, would seem to be in part earlier in composition, if we can trust the printer's preface, which represents them as collected from various quarters, and published only with the reluctant consent of the author.⁵ This, of course, may be a mystification; in any case the *Dialogues* twice mention the *Amphitheatrum*; and the fourth book, in which this mention occurs, may be taken on this and other grounds to set forth his later ideas. Even the *Dialogues*, however, while discussing many questions of creed and science in a free fashion, no less profess orthodoxy; and, while one passage is pantheistic,⁶ they also denounce atheism.⁷ And whereas one passage does avow that the author in his *Amphitheatrum* had said many things he did not believe, the context clearly suggests that the reference was not to the main argument, but to some of its dubious facts.⁸ In any case, though the title—chosen by the editors—speaks daringly enough of "Nature, the queen and goddess of mortals," Vanini cannot be shown to be an

¹ *Amphitheatrum*, Exercit. xxvii, p. 164.

² P. 35. Machiavelli is elsewhere attacked. Pp. 36, 50.

² *Id.* pp. 72, 73, 78, 113, etc.

⁴ *Julii Casarii Vanini Neapolitani, Theologi, Philosophi, et juris utriusque Doctoris, de Admirandis Naturæ Reginaeque Mortalium Arcanis, libri quatuor. Lutetiae, 1616.*

⁵ Mr. Owen makes a serious misstatement on this point, by which I was formerly misled. He writes (p. 369) that from the publisher's preface we "learn that the *Dialogues* were not written by Vanini, but by his disciples. They are a collection of discursive conversations embodying their master's opinions." This is not what the preface says. It tells, after a high-pitched eulogy of Vanini, that "nos publicæ utilitatis solliciti, alia eius monumenta, quæ avariis retinebat, per idoneos ex scriptores nancisci curavimus." In ascribing the matter of the dialogues to Vanini's young days, Mr. Owen forgets the references to the *Amphitheatrum*.

⁶ *Alex.* Sed in qua nam Religione verè et piè Deum coli vetusti Philosophi existimant? Vanini. In unica Naturæ lege, quam ipsa Natura, quæ Deus est (est enim principium motus)....." *De Arcanis*, as cited, p. 366. Lib. iv, Dial. 50. See Rousselot's French tr. 1842, p. 227. This passage is cited by Hallam (*Lit. Hist.* ii, 451) as avowing "disbelief of all religion except such as Nature.....has planted in the minds of men"—a heedless perversion.

⁷ *De Arcanis*, pp. 354-60, 420-22 (Dial. 50, 56); Rousselot, pp. 219-23, 271-73.

⁸ The special reference (lib. iv, dial. 56, p. 428) is to a story of an infant prophesying when only twenty-four hours old. (*Amphitheatrum*, Ex. vi, p. 38; cp. Owen, p. 368, note.) On this and on other points Cousin (cited by Owen, pp. 368, 371, 377) and Hallam (*Lit. Hist.* ii, 461) make highly prejudiced statements. Quoting the final pages on which the dialoguist passes from serious debate to a profession of levity, and ends by calling for the play-table, the English historian dismisses him as "the wretched man."

atheist;¹ and the attacks upon him as an immoral writer are not any better supported.² The publication of the dialogues was in fact formally authorized by the Sorbonne,³ and it does not even appear that when he was charged with atheism and blasphemy at Toulouse that work was founded on, save in respect of its title.⁴ The charges rested on the testimony of a treacherous associate as to his private conversation; and, if true, it only amounted to proving his pantheism, expressed in his use of the word "Nature." At his trial he expressly avowed and argued for theism. The judges, by one account, did not agree. Yet he was convicted, by the voices of the majority, and burned alive (February 9, 1619) on the day of his sentence. Drawn on a hurdle, in his shirt, with a placard on his shoulders inscribed "Atheist and Blasphemer of the name of God," he went to his death with a high heart, rejoicing, as he cried in Italian, to die like a philosopher.⁵ A Catholic historian,⁶ who was present, says he hardily declared that "Jesus facing death sweated with fear: I die undaunted." But before burning him they tore out his tongue by the roots; and the Christian historian is humorous over the victim's long cry of agony.⁷ No martyr ever faced death with a more dauntless courage than this

Lonely antagonist of Destiny

That went down scornful before many spears;⁸

and if the man had all the faults falsely imputed to him,⁹ his death might shame his accusers.

Vanini, like Bruno, can now be recognized and understood as an Italian of vivacious temperament, studious without the student's calm, early learned, alert in debate, fluent, imprudent, and ill-

¹ Cp. Carriere's analysis of the Dialogues, pp. 505-59; and the *Apologia pro Jul. Cesare Fanino* (by Arpe), 1712.

² See Owen's vindication, pp. 371-74. Renan's criticism (*Averroès*, pp. 420-23) is not quite judicial. See many others cited by Carriere, p. 516.

³ It is difficult to understand how the censor could let pass the description of Nature in the title; but this may have been added after the authorization. The book is dedicated by Vanini to Marshal Bassompierre, and the epistle dedicatory makes mention of the *Serenissima Regina aeterni nominis Maria Medicæ*, which would disarm suspicion. In any case the permit was revoked, and the book condemned to be burned.

⁴ Owen, p. 395.

⁵ *Mercure François*, 1619, tom. v, p. 64.

⁶ Gramond (Barthélemi de Grammont), *Historia Gallia ab excessu Henrici IV.* 1643, p. 200. Carriere translates the passage in full, pp. 500-12, 515; as does David Durand in his hostile *Vie et Sentimens de Lucilio Vanini*, 1717. As to Gramond see the *Lettres de Gui Patin*, who (Lett. 428, ed. Reveillé-Parise) calls him *âme foible et bigote*, and guilty of falsehood and flattery.

⁷ Gramond, p. 210. Of Vanini, as of Bruno, it is recorded that at the stake he repelled the proffered crucifix. Owen and other writers, who justly remark that he well might overlook the once received belief that it was the official practice, with obstinate heretics, to proffer a red-hot crucifix, so that the victim should be sure to spurn it with open anger.

⁸ Stephen Phillips, *Marpessa*.

⁹ Cp. Owen, pp. 389, 391, and Carriere, pp. 512-13, as to the worst calumnies. It is significant that Vanini was tried *solely* for blasphemy and atheism. What is proved against him is that he and an associate practised a rather gross fraud on the English ecclesiastical authorities, having apparently no higher motive than gain and a free life. Mr. Christie notes, however, that Vanini in his writings always speaks very kindly of England and the English, and so did not add ingratitude to his act of imposture.

balanced. By his own account he studied theology under the Carmelite Bartolomeo Argotti, phoenix of the preachers of the time;¹ but from the English Carmelite, John Bacon, "the prince of Averroists,"² he declares, he "learned to swear only by Averroës"; and of Pomponazzi he speaks as his master, and as "prince of the philosophers of our age."³ He has criticized both freely in his *Amphitheatrum*; but whereas that work is a professed vindication of orthodoxy, we may infer from the *De Arcanis* that the arguments of these skeptics, like those of the contemporary atheists whom he had met in his travels, had kept their hold on his thought even while he controverted them. For it cannot be disputed that the long passages which he quotes from the "atheist at Amsterdam"⁴ are put with a zest and cogency which are not infused into the professed rebuttals, and are in themselves quite enough to arouse the anger and suspicion of a pious reader. A writer who set forth so fully the acute arguments of unbelievers, unprintable by their authors, might well be suspected of writing at Christianity when he confuted the creeds of the pagans. As was noted later of Fontenelle, he put arguments against oracles which endangered prophecy; his dismissal of sorcery as the dream of troubled brains appeals to reason and not to faith; and his disparagement of pagan miracles logically bore upon the Christian.

When he comes to the question of immortality he grows overtly irreverent. Asked by the interlocutor in the last dialogue to give his views on the immortality of the soul, he begs to be excused, protesting: "I have vowed to my God that that question shall not be handled by me till I become old, rich, and a German." And without overt irreverence he is ever and again unserious. Perfectly transparent is the irony of the appeal, "Let us give faith to the precepts of the Church, and due honour to the sacrosanct Gregorian apparitions,"⁵ and the protestation, "I will not invalidate the powers of holy water, to which Alexander, Doctor and Pontifex of the Christians, and interpreter of the divine will, accorded such countless privileges."⁶ And even in the *Amphitheatrum*, with all the parade of defending the faith, there is a plain balance of cogency on the side of the case for the attack,⁷ and a notable disposition to rely finally on lines of argument to which faith could never give real welcome. The writer's mind, it is clear, was familiar with doubt.

¹ *De Arcanis*, p. 205. Lib. iii, dial. 30.

² *De Arcanis*, lib. iv, dial. 52, p. 379; dial. 51, p. 373.

³ *De Arcanis*, p. 20.

⁴ *De Arcanis*, dial. 50 and 55. In the *Amphitheatrum* he adduces an equally skilful German atheist (p. 73).

⁵ Dial. II, p. 371.

⁶ Dial. liv, p. 407.

⁷ *Amphitheatrum*, p. 17.

Cp. *Amphitheatrum*, p. 36; and

Cp. Roussetot, notice, p. xi.

In the malice of orthodoxy there is sometimes an instinctive perception of hostility; and though Vanini had written, among other things,¹ an *Apologia pro lege mosaica et christianá*, to which he often refers, and an *Apologia pro concilio Tridentino*, he can be seen even in the hymn to deity with which he concludes his *Amphitheatrum* to have no part in evangelical Christianity.

He was in fact a deist with the inevitable leaning of the philosophic theist to pantheism; and whatever he may have said to arouse priestly hatred at Toulouse, he was rather less of an atheist than Spinoza or Bruno or John Scotus. On his trial,² pressed as to his real beliefs by judges who had doubtless challenged his identification of God with Nature, he passed from a profession of orthodox faith in a trinity into a flowing discourse which could as well have availed for a vindication of pantheism as for the proposition of a personal God. Seeing a straw on the ground, he picked it up and talked of its history; and when brought back again from his affirmation of Deity to his doctrine of Nature, he set forth the familiar orthodox theorem that, while Nature wrought the succession of seeds and fruits, there must have been a first seed which was created. It was the habitual standing ground of theism; and they burned him all the same. It remains an open question whether personal enmity on the part of the prosecuting official³ or a real belief that he had uttered blasphemies against Jesus or Mary was the determining force, or whether even less motive sufficed. A vituperative Jesuit of that age sees intolerable freethinking in his suggestion of the unreality of demoniacal possession and the futility of exorcisms.⁴ And for that much they were not incapable of burning men in Catholic Toulouse in the days of Mary de Medici.

There are in fact reasons for surmizing that in the cases alike of Bruno and of Vanini it was the attitude of the speculator towards scientific problems that primarily or mainly aroused distrust and anger among the theologians. Vanini is careful to speak equivocally of the eternity of the universe; and though he makes a passing mention of Kepler,⁵ he does not name Copernicus. He had learned something from the fate of Bruno. Yet in the Dialogue *De califorma et motore*⁶ he declares so explicitly for a naturalistic explanation of the movements of the heavenly bodies that he must have aroused in some orthodox readers such anger as was set up in Plato

¹ Durand compiles a list of ten or eleven works of Vanini from the allusions in the *Amphitheatrum* and the *De Arcanis*.

² Reported by Gramond, as cited.

³ Garasse, *Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits*, 1623.

⁴ *De Arcanis*, dial. vii, p. 36.

⁵ Owen, pp. 393-94.

⁶ Dial. iv, p. 21.

by a physical theory of sun and stars. After an *a priori* discussion on Aristotelian lines, the querist in the dialogue asks what may fitly be held, with an eye to religion, concerning the movements of the spheres. "This," answers Vanini, "unless I am in error: the mass of the heaven is moved in its proper gyratory way by the nature of its elements." "How then," asks the querist, "are the heavens moved by certain and fixed laws, unless divine minds, participating in the primal motion, there operate?" "Where is the wonder?" returns Vanini. "Does not a certain and fixed law of motion act in the most paltry clockwork machines, made by a drunken German, even as there works silently in a tertian and quartan fever a motion which comes and goes at fixed periods without transgressing its line by a moment? The sea also at certain and fixed times, by its nature, as you peripatetics affirm, is moved in progressions and regressions. No less, then, I affirm the heaven to be forever carried by the same motion in virtue of its nature (*a sua pura forma*) and not to be moved by the will of intelligence." And the disciple assents. Kepler had seen fit, either in sincerity or of prudence, to leave "divine minds" in the planets; and Vanini's negation, though not accompanied by any assertion of the motion of the earth, was enough to provoke the minds which had only three years before put Copernicus on the *Index*, and challenged Galileo for venting his doctrine.

It is at this stage that we begin to realize the full play of the Counter-Reformation, as against the spirit of science. The movement of mere theological and ecclesiastical heresy had visibly begun to recede in the world of mind, and in its stead, alike in Protestant and in Catholic lands, there was emerging a new activity of scientific research, vaguely menacing to all theistic faith. Kepler represented it in Germany, Harriott and Harvey and Gilbert and Bacon in England; from Italy had come of late the portents of Bruno and Galileo; even Spain yielded the *Examen de Ingenios* of Huarte (1575), where with due protestation of theism the physicist insists upon natural causation; and now Vanini was exhibiting the same incorrigible zest for a naturalistic explanation of all things. His dialogues are full of such questionings; the mere metaphysic and theosophy of the *Amphitheatrum* are being superseded by discussions on physical and physiological phenomena. It was for this, doubtless, that the *De Arcanis* won the special vogue over which the Jesuit Garasse was angrily exclaiming ten years later.¹ Not

¹ *Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps*, 1623, p. 848.

merely the doubts cast upon sorcery and diabolical possession, but the whole drift, often enough erratic, of the inquiry as to how things in nature came about, caught the curiosity of the time, soon to be stimulated by more potent and better-governed minds than that of the ill-starred Vanini. And for every new inquirer there would be a hostile zealot in the Church, where the anti-intellectual instinct was now so much more potent than it had been in the days before Luther, when heresy was diagnosed only as a danger to revenue.

It was with GALILEO that there began the practical application of the Copernican theory to astronomy, and, indeed, the decisive demonstration of its truth. With him, accordingly, began the positive rejection of the Copernican theory by the Church; for thus far it had never been officially vetoed—having indeed been generally treated as a wild absurdity. Almost immediately after the publication of Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610) his name is found in the papers of the Inquisition, with that of Cremonini of Padua, as a subject of investigation.¹ The juxtaposition is noteworthy. Cremonini was an Aristotelian, with Averroïst leanings, and reputed an atheist;² and it was presumably on this score that the Inquisition was looking into his case. At the same time, as an Aristotelian he was strongly opposed to Galileo, and is said to have been one of those who refused to look through Galileo's telescope.³ Galileo, on the other hand, was ostensibly a good Catholic; but his discovery of the moons of Jupiter was a signal confirmation of the Copernican theory, and the new status at once given to that made a corresponding commotion in the Church. Thus he had against him both the unbelieving pedants of the schools and the typical priests.

In his book the great discoverer had said nothing explicitly on the subject of the Copernican theory; but in lectures and conversations he had freely avowed his belief in it; and the implications of the published treatise were clear to all thinkers.⁴ And though, when he visited Rome in 1611, he was well received by Pope Paul V, and his discoveries were favourably reported of by the four scientific experts nominated at the request of Cardinal Bellarmine to examine them,⁵ it only needed that the Biblical cry should be raised to

¹ Karl von Gebler, *Galileo Galilei and the Roman Curia*, Eng. tr. 1879, pp. 36-37.

² This appears from the letters of Sagredo to Galileo. Gebler, p. 37. Cp. Gui Patin, *Lett.* 816, ed. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, iii, 758; Bayle, art. CREMONINI, notes C and D; and Renan, *Averroës*, 3e édit. pp. 408-13. Patin writes that his friend Naudé "avoit été intime ami de Cremonin, qui n'étoit point meilleur Chrétien que Pomponace, que Machiavel, que Cardan et telles autres.....dont le pays abonde."

³ Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 183 (Eng. tr. i, 220); Gebler, p. 25. Libri actually made the refusal; but all that is proved as to Cremonini is that he opposed Galileo's discoveries à priori. As to the attitude of such opponents see Galileo's letter to Kepler.

J. J. Fahie, *Galileo: his Life and Work*, 1903, pp. 101-102.

⁴ Fahie, *Galileo*, p. 100.

⁵ *Id.* p. 127.

change the situation. The Church still contained men individually open to new scientific ideas; but she was then more than ever dominated by the forces of tradition; and as soon as those forces had been practically evoked his prosecution was bound to follow. The cry of "religion in danger" silenced the saner men at Rome.

The fashion in which Galileo's sidereal discoveries were met is indeed typical of the whole history of freethought. The clergy pointed to the story of Joshua stopping the sun and moon; the average layman scouted the new theory as plain folly; and typical schoolmen insisted that "the heavens are unchangeable," and that there was no authority in Aristotle for the new assertions. With such minds the man of science had to argue, and in deference to such he had at length to affect to doubt his own demonstrations.¹ The Catholic Reaction had finally created as bitter a spirit of hostility to free science in the Church as existed among the Protestants; and in Italy even those who saw the moons of Jupiter through his telescope dared not avow what they had seen.² It was therefore an unfortunate step on Galileo's part to go from Padua, which was under the rule of Venice, then anti-papal,³ to Tuscany, on the invitation of the Grand Duke. When in 1613 he published his treatise on the solar spots, definitely upholding Copernicus against Jesuits and Aristotelians, trouble became inevitable; and his letter⁴ to his pupil, Father Castelli, professor of mathematics at Pisa, discussing the Biblical argument with which they had both been met, at once evoked an explosion when circulated by Castelli. New trouble arose when Galileo in 1615 wrote his apology in the form of a letter to his patroness the Dowager Grand Duchess Cristina of Tuscany, extracts from which became current. An outcry of ignorant Dominican monks⁵ sufficed to set at work the machinery of the *Index*,⁶ the first result of which (1616) was to put on the list of condemned books the great treatise of Copernicus, published seventy-three years before. Galileo personally escaped for the present through the friendly intervention of the Pope, Paul V, on the appeal of his patron, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, apparently on the ground that he had not publicly taught the Copernican theory. It would seem

¹ Gebler, pp. 54, 129, and *passim*; *The Private Life of Galileo* (by Mrs. Olney), Boston, 1870, pp. 67-72.

² Galileo's letter to Kepler, cited by Gebler, p. 26.

³ The Jesuits were expelled from Venice in 1616, in retaliation for a papal interdict.

⁴ See it summarized by Gebler, pp. 46-60, and quoted in the *Private Life*, pp. 83-85.

⁵ The measure of reverence with which the orthodox handled the matter may be inferred from the fact that the Dominican Caccini, who preached against Galileo in Florence, took as one of his texts the verse in Acts i: "*Viri Galilaei, quid statis aspicientes in caelum*," making a pun on the Scripture.

⁶ See this summarized by Gebler, pp. 64-70.

as if some of the heads of the Church were at heart Copernicans;¹ but they were in any case obliged to disown a doctrine felt by so many others to be subversive of the Church's authority.

See the details of the procedure in Domenico Berti, *Il Processo Originale de Galileo Galilei*, ed. 1878, cap. iv; in Fahie, ch. viii; and in Gebler, ch. vi. The last-cited writer claims to show that, of two records of the "admonition" to Galileo, one, the more stringent in its terms, was false, *though made at the date it bears*, to permit of subsequent proceedings against Galileo. But the whole thesis is otiose. It is admitted (Gebler, p. 89) that Galileo was admonished "not to defend or hold the Copernican doctrine." Gebler contends, however, that this was not a command to keep "entire silence," and that therefore Galileo is not justly to be charged with having disobeyed the injunction of the Inquisition when, in his *Dialogues on the Two Principal Systems of the World, the Ptolemaic and Copernican* (1632), he dealt dialectically with the subject, neither affirming nor denying, but treating both theories as hypotheses. But the real issue is not Galileo's cautious disobedience (see Gebler's own admissions, p. 149) to an irrational decree, but the crime of the Church in silencing him. It is not likely that the "enemies" of Galileo, as Gebler supposes (pp. 90, 338), anticipated his later dialectical handling of the subject, and so falsified the decision of the Inquisition against him in 1616. Gebler had at first adopted the German theory that the absolute command to silence was forged in 1632; and, finding the document certainly belonged to 1616, framed the new theory, quite unnecessarily, to save Galileo's credit. The two records are quite in the spirit and manner of Inquisitorial diplomacy. As Berti remarks, "the Holy Office proceeded with much heedlessness (*legerezza*) and much confusion" in 1616. Its first judgment, in either form, merely emphasizes the guilt of the second. Cp. Fahie, pp. 167-69.

Thus officially "admonished" for his heresy, but not punished, in 1616, Galileo kept silence for some years, till in 1618 he published his (erroneous) theory of the tides, which he sent with an ironical epistle to the friendly Archduke Leopold of Austria, professing to be propounding a mere dream, disallowed by the official veto on Copernicus.² This, however, did him less harm than his essay *Il Saggiatore* ("The Scales"), in which he opposed the Jesuit Grassi on the question of comets. Receiving the *imprimatur* in 1623, it was dedicated to the new pope, Urban VIII, who, as the Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, had been Galileo's friend. The latter could now

¹ See *The Private Life of Galileo*, pp. 86-87, 91, 99; Gebler, p. 44; Fahie, pp. 169-70; Berti, *Il Processo Originale de Galileo Galilei*, 1878, p. 53.

² Gebler (p. 101) solemnly comments on this letter as a lapse into "servility" on Galileo's part.

hope for freedom of speech, as he had all along had a number of friends at the papal court, besides many priests, among his admirers and disciples. But the enmity of the Jesuits countervailed all. They did not succeed in procuring a censure of the *Saggiatore*, though that subtly vindicates the Copernican system while professing to hold it disproved by the fiat of the Church;¹ but when, venturing further, he after another lapse of years produced his *Dialogues on the Two Systems*, for which he obtained the papal *imprimatur* in 1632, they caught him in their net. Having constant access to the pope, they contrived to make him believe that Galileo had ridiculed him in one of the personages of his *Dialogues*. It was quite false; but one of the pope's anti-Copernican arguments was there unconsciously made light of; and his wounded vanity was probably a main factor in the impeachment which followed.² His Holiness professed to have been deceived into granting the *imprimatur*;³ a Special Commission was set on foot; the proceedings of 1616 were raked up; and Galileo was again summoned to Rome. He was old and frail, and sent medical certificates of his unfitness for such travel; but it was insisted on, and as under the papal tyranny there was no help, he accordingly made the journey. After many delays he was tried, and, on his formal abjuration, sentenced to formal imprisonment (1633) for teaching the "absurd" and "false doctrine" of the motion of the earth and the non-motion of the sun from east to west. In this case the pope, whatever were his motives, acted as a hot anti-Copernican, expressing his personal opinion on the question again and again, and always in an anti-Copernican sense. In both cases, however, the popes, while agreeing to the verdict, abstained from officially ratifying it,⁴ so that, in proceeding to force Galileo to abjure his doctrine, the Inquisition technically exceeded its powers—a circumstance in which some Catholics appear to find comfort. Seeing that three of the ten cardinals named in the preamble to the sentence did not sign, it has been inferred that they dissented; but there is no good reason to suppose that either the pope or they wilfully abstained from signing. They had gained their point—the humiliation of the great discoverer.

Compare Gebler, p. 241; *Private Life*, p. 257, quoting Tiraboschi. For an exposure of the many perversions of the facts as to Galileo by Catholic writers see Parchappe, *Galilée, sa vie*, etc., 2e Partie. To such straits has the Catholic Church been reduced in this matter that part of its defence of the

¹ Gebler, pp. 112-13.

² *Private Life*, pp. 216-18; Gebler, pp. 157-62.

³ Berté, pp. 61-64; *Private Life*, pp. 212-13; Gebler, p. 162.

⁴ Gebler, p. 239; *Private Life*, p. 256.

treatment of Galileo is the plea that he unwarrantably asserted that the fixity of the sun and the motion of the earth were taught in the Scriptures. Sir Robert Inglis is quoted as having maintained this view in England in 1824 (Mendham, *The Literary Policy of the Church of Rome*, 2nd ed. 1830, p. 176), and the same proposition was maintained in 1850 by a Roman cardinal. See *Galileo e l'Inquisizione*, by Monsignor Marini, Roma, 1850, pp. 1, 53-54, etc. Had Galileo really taught as is there asserted, he would only have been assenting to what his priestly opponents constantly dinned in his ears. But in point of fact he had not so assented; for in his letter to Castelli (see Gebler, pp. 46-50) he had earnestly deprecated the argument from the Bible, urging that, though Scripture could not err, its interpreters might misunderstand it; and even going so far as to argue, with much ingenuity, that the story of Joshua, literally interpreted, could be made to harmonize with the Copernican theory, but not at all with the Ptolemaic.

The thesis revived by Monsignor Marini deserves to rank as the highest flight of absurdity and effrontery in the entire discussion (cp. Berti, *Giordano Bruno*, 1889, p. 306, note). Every step in both procedures of the Inquisition insists on the falsity and the anti-scriptural character of the doctrine that the earth moves round the sun (see Berti, *Il Processo*, p. 115 sq.; Gebler, pp. 76-77, 230-34); and never once is it hinted that Galileo's error lay in ascribing to the Bible the doctrine of the earth's fixity. In the Roman *Index* of 1664 the works of Galileo and Copernicus are alike vetoed, with all other writings affirming the movement of the earth and the stability of the sun; and in the *Index* of 1704 are included *libri omnes docentes mobilitatem terrae et immobilitatem solis* (Putnam, *The Censorship of the Church of Rome*, 1906-1907, i, 308, 312).

The stories of his being tortured and blinded, and saying "Still it moves," are indeed myths.¹ The broken-spirited old man was in no mood so to speak; he was, moreover, in all respects save his science, an orthodox Catholic,² and as such not likely to defy the Church to its face. In reality he was formally in the custody of the Inquisition—and this not in a cell, but in the house of an official—for only twenty-two days. After the sentence he was again formally detained for some seventeen days in the Villa Medici, but was then allowed to return to his own rural home at Acatri,³ on condition that he lived in solitude, receiving no visitors. He was

¹ Gebler, pp. 249-63; *Private Life*, pp. 255-56; Marini, pp. 55-57. The "e pur si muove" story is first heard of in 1774. As to the torture, it is to be remembered that Galileo recanted under threat of it. See Berti, pp. 93-101; Marini, p. 59; Sir O. Lodge, *Pioneers of Science*, 1893, pp. 128-31. Berti argues that only the special humanity of the Commissary-General, Maccolano, saved him from the torture. Cp. Gebler, p. 259, note.

² Gebler, p. 281.

³ *Private Life*, pp. 265-60, 268; Gebler, p. 252.

thus much more truly a prisoner than the so-called "prisoner of the Vatican" in our own day. The worst part of the sentence, however, was the placing of all his works, published and unpublished, on the *Index Expurgatorius*, and the gag thus laid on all utterance of rational scientific thought in Italy—an evil of incalculable influence. "The lack of liberty and speculation," writes a careful Italian student, "was the cause of the death first of the Accademia dei Lincei, an institution unique in its time; then of the Accademia del Cimento. Thus Italy, after the marvellous period of vigorous native civilization in the thirteenth century, after a second period of civilization less native but still its own, as being Latin, saw itself arrested on the threshold of a third and not less splendid period. Vexations and prohibitions expelled courage, spontaneity, and universality from the national mind; literary style became uncertain, indeterminate; and, forbidden to treat of government, science, or religion, turned to things frivolous and fruitless. For the great academies, instituted to renovate and further the study of natural philosophy, were substituted small ones without any such aim. Intellectual energy, the love of research and of objective truth, greatness of feeling and nobility of character, all suffered. Nothing so injures a people as the compulsion to express or conceal its thought solely from motives of fear. The nation in which those conditions were set up became intellectually inferior to those in which it was possible to pass freely in the vast regions of knowledge. Her culture grew restricted, devoid of originality, vaporous, umbratile; there arose habits of servility and dissimulation; great books, great men, great purposes were denaturalized."¹

It was thus in the other countries of Europe that Galileo's teaching bore its fruit, for he speedily got his condemned Dialogues published in Latin by the Elzevirs; and in 1638, also at the hands of the Elzevirs, appeared his *Dialogues of the New Sciences* [*i.e.*, of mechanics and motion], the "foundation of mechanical physics." By this time he was totally blind, and then only, when physicians could not help him save by prolonging his life, was he allowed to live under strict surveillance in Florence, needing a special indulgence from the Inquisition to permit him even to go to church at Easter. The desire of his last blind days, to have with him his best-beloved pupil, Father Castelli, was granted only under rigid limitation and supervision, though even the papacy could not keep from him the

¹ Berti, *Il Processo di Galileo*, pp. 111-12.

plaudits of the thinkers of Europe. Finally he passed away in his rural "prison"—after five years of blindness—in 1642, the year of Newton's birth. At that time his doctrines were under anathema in Italy, and known elsewhere only to a few. Hobbes in 1634 tried in vain to procure for the Earl of Newcastle a copy of the earlier *Dialogues* in London, and wrote: "It is not possible to get it for money.I hear say it is called-in, in Italy, as a book that will do more hurt to their religion than all the books of Luther and Calvin, such opposition they think is between their religion and natural reason."¹ Not till 1757 did the papacy permit other books teaching the Copernican system; in 1765 Galileo was still under ban; not until 1822 was permission given to treat the theory as true; and not until 1835 was the work of Copernicus withdrawn from the *Index*.²

While modern science was thus being placed on its special basis, a continuous resistance was being made in the schools to the dogmatism which held the mutilated lore of Aristotle as the sum of human wisdom. Like the ecclesiastical revolution, this had been protracted through centuries. Aristotelianism, whether theistic or pantheistic, whether orthodox or heterodox,³ had become a dogmatism like another, a code that vetoed revision, a fetter laid on the mind. Even as a negation of Christian superstition it had become impotent, for the Peripatetics were not only ready to make common cause with the Jesuits against Galileo, as we have seen; some of them were content even to join in the appeal to the Bible.⁴ The result of such uncritical partisanship was that the immense service of Aristotle to mental life—the comprehensive grasp which gave him his long supremacy as against rival system-makers, and makes him still so much more important than any of the thinkers who in the sixteenth century revolted against him—was by opponents disregarded and denied, though the range and depth of his influence are apparent in all the polemic against him, notably in that of Bacon, who is constantly citing him, and relates his reasoning to him, however antagonistically, at every turn.

Naturally, the less sacrosanct dogmatism was the more freely

¹ Letter of Hobbes to Newcastle, in *Report of the Hist. Mss. Comm. on the Duke of Portland's Papers*, 1892, ii. Hobbes explains that few copies were brought over, "and they that buy such books are not such men as to part with them again." "I doubt not," he adds, "but the translation of it will here be publicly embraced."

² Gebler, pp. 312-15; Putnam, *Censorship of the Church of Rome*, i, 313-14.
³ See Ueberweg, ii, 12, as to the conflicting types. In addition to Cremonini, several leading Aristotelians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were accused of atheism (Hallam, *Lit. Hist.* ii, 101-102), the old charge against the Peripatetic school. Hallam (p. 102) complains that CESALPINI of Pisa "substitutes the barren unity of pantheism for religion." Cp. Ueberweg, ii, 14; Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. p. 417. An Averroist on some points, he believed in separate immortality.

⁴ Gebler, pp. 37, 45. Gebler appears to surmise that Cremonini may have escaped the attack upon himself by turning suspicion upon Galileo, but as to this there is no evidence.

assailed; and in the sixteenth century the attacks became numerous and vehement. Luther was a furious anti-Aristotelian,¹ as were also some Calvinists; but in 1570 we find Beza declaring to Ramus² that "the Genevese have decreed, once and for ever, that they will never, neither in logic nor in any other branch of learning, turn away from the teaching of Aristotle." At Oxford the same code held.³ In Italy, Telesio, who notably anticipates the tone of Bacon as to natural science, and is largely followed by him, influenced Bruno in the anti-Aristotelian direction,⁴ though it was in a long line from Aristotle that he got his principle of the eternity of the universe. The Spaniard Ludovicus Vives, too (1492-1540), pronounced by Lange one of the clearest heads of his age, had insisted on progress beyond Aristotle in the spirit of naturalist science.⁵ But the typical anti-Aristotelian of the century was RAMUS (Pierre de la Ramée, 1515-1572), whose long and strenuous battle against the ruling school at Paris brought him to his death in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.⁶ Ramus hardily laid it down that "there is no authority over reason, but reason ought to be queen and ruler over authority."⁷ Such a message was of more value than his imperfect attempt to supersede the Aristotelian logic. Bacon, who carried on in England the warfare against the Aristotelian tradition, never ventured so to express himself as against the theological tyranny in particular, though, as we have seen, the general energy and vividness of his argumentation gave him an influence which undermined the orthodoxies to which he professed to conform. On the other hand, he did no such service to exact science as was rendered in his day by Kepler and Galileo and their English emulators; and his full didactic influence came much later into play.

Like fallacies to Bacon's may be found in DESCARTES, whose seventeenth-century reputation as a champion of theism proved mainly the eagerness of theists for a plausible defence. Already in his own day his arguments were logically confuted by both Gassendi and Hobbes; and his partial success with theists was a success of partisanism. It was primarily in respect of his habitual appeal to reason and argument, in disregard of the assumptions of faith, and secondarily in respect of his real scientific work, that he counts

¹ Ueberweg, ii. 17.

² *Epist.* 36.

³ See above, p. 45.

⁴ Bartholmæss, *Jordano Bruno*, i. 49.

⁵ Lange, *Gesch. des Mater.* i. 189-90 (Eng. tr. i. 228). Born in Valencia and trained at Paris, Vives became a humanist teacher at Louvain, and was called to England (1523) to be tutor to the Princess Mary. During his stay he taught at Oxford. Being opposed to the divorce of Henry VIII, he was imprisoned for a time, afterwards living at Bruges.

⁶ See the monograph, *Ramus, sa vie, ses écrits, et ses opinions*, par Ch. Waddington, 1855. Owen has a good account of Ramus in his *French Skeptics*.

⁷ *Schola math.* i. iii, p. 78, cited by Waddington, p. 343.

for freethought. Ultimately his method undermined his creed; and it is not too much to say of him that, next to Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo,¹ he laid a good part of the foundation of modern philosophy and science,² Gassendi largely aiding. Though he never does justice to Galileo, from his fear of provoking the Church, it can hardly be doubted that he owes to him in large part the early determination of his mind to scientific methods; for it is difficult to believe that the account he gives of his mental development in the *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) is biographically true. It is rather the schemed statement, by a ripened mind, of how it might best have been developed. Nor did Descartes, any more than Bacon, live up to the intellectual idea he had framed. All through his life he anxiously sought to propitiate the Church;³ and his scientific as well as his philosophic work was hampered in consequence. In England Henry More, who latterly recoiled from his philosophy, still thought his physics had been spoiled by fear of the Church, declaring that the imprisonment of Galileo "frighted Des Cartes into such a distorted description of motion that no man's reason could make good sense of it, nor modesty permit him to fancy anything nonsense in so excellent an author."⁴

But nonetheless the unusual rationalism of Descartes's method, avowedly aiming at the uprooting of all his own prejudices⁵ as a first step to truth, displeased the Jesuits, and could not escape the hostile attention of the Protestant theologians of Holland, where Descartes passed so many years of his life. Despite his constant theism, accordingly, he had at length to withdraw.⁶ A Jesuit, Père Bourdin, sought to have the *Discours de la Méthode* at once condemned by the French clergy, but the attempt failed for the time being. France was just then, in fact, the most freethinking part of Europe;⁷ and Descartes, though not so unsparing with his prejudices as he set out to be, was the greatest innovator in philosophy that had arisen in the Christian era. He made real scientific discoveries,

¹ "In many respects Galileo deserves to be ranked with Descartes as inaugurating modern philosophy." Prof. Adamson, *Development of Mod. Philos.* 1903, i. 5. "We may compare his [Hobbes's] thought with Descartes's, but the impulse came to him from the physical reasonings of Galileo." Prof. Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, 1886, p. 42.

² Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 327-36; 3-vol. ed. ii, 77-85. Cp. Lange, i. 425 (Eng. tr. i. 248, note); Adamson, *Philosophy of Kant*, 1879, p. 194.

³ Cp. Lange, i. 425 (Eng. tr. i. 248-49, note); Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i. 40-47, 185-86; Bartholmèss, *Jordano Bruno*, i. 354-55; Memoir in Garnier ed. of *Œuvres Choiesies*, p. v, also pp. 6, 17, 19, 21. Bossuet pronounced the precautions of Descartes excessive. But cp. Dr. Land's notes in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, 1832, p. 55.

⁴ *Coll. of Philos. Writings*, ed. 1712, pref. p. xi.

⁵ *Discours de la Méthode*, pties. i, ii, iii, iv (*Œuvres Choiesies*, pp. 8, 10, 11, 22, 24); *Meditation I* (id. pp. 73-74).

⁶ Full details in Kuno Fischer's *Descartes and his School*, Eng. tr. 1890, bk. i. ch. vi; Bouillier, i. chs. xii, xiii.

⁷ Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 327-39; 3-vol. ed. ii, 94, 97.

too, where Bacon only inspired an approach and schemed a wandering road to them. He first effectively applied algebra to geometry; he first scientifically explained the rainbow; he at once accepted and founded on Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, which most physiologists of the day derided; and he welcomed Aselli's discovery of the lacteals, which was rejected by Harvey.¹ And though as regards religion his timorous conformities deprive him of any heroic status, it is perhaps not too much to pronounce him "the great reformer and liberator of the European intellect."² One not given to warm sympathy with freethought has avowed that "the common root of modern philosophy is the doubt which is alike Baconian and Cartesian."³

Only less important, in some regards, was the influence of Pierre Gassend or GASSENDI (1592-1655), who, living his life as a canon of the Church, reverted in his doctrine to the philosophy of Epicurus, alike in physics and ethics.⁴ It seems clear that he never had any religious leanings, but simply entered the Church on the advice of friends who pointed out to him how much better a provision it gave, in income and leisure, than the professorship he held in his youth at the university of Aix.⁵ Professing like Descartes a strict submission to the Church, he yet set forth a theory of things which had in all ages been recognized as fundamentally irreconcilable with the Christian creed; and his substantial exemption from penalties is to be set down to his position, his prudence, and his careful conformities. The correspondent of Galileo and Kepler, he was the friend of La Mothe le Vayer and Naudé; and Gui Patin was his physician and intimate.⁶ Strong as a physicist and astronomer where Descartes was weak, he divides with him and Galileo the credit of practically renewing natural philosophy; Newton being Gassendist rather than Cartesian.⁷ Indeed, Gassendi's youthful attack on the Aristotelian physics (1624) makes him the predecessor of Descartes; and he expressly opposed his contemporary on points of physics and metaphysics on which he thought him chimerical, and so promoted unbelief where Descartes

¹ Buckle, pp. 327-30; ii, 81.

² *Id.* p. 330; ii, 82. The process is traced hereinafter.

³ Kuno Fischer, *Francis Bacon*, Eng. tr. 1857, p. 74.

⁴ For an exact summary and criticism of Gassendi's positions see the masterly monograph of Prof. Brétil of Lahore, *The Philosophy of Gassendi*, 1908—a real contribution to the history of philosophy.

⁵ Cp. Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v, ch. i (McCulloch's ed. 1839, pp. 364-65). It is told of him, with doubtful authority, that when dying he said: "I know not who brought me into the world, neither do I know what was to do there, nor why I go out of it." *Reflections on the Death of Freethinkers*, by Deslandes (Eng. tr. of the *Réflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*), 1713, p. 105.

⁶ For a good account of Gassendi and his group (founded on Lange, § iii, ch. i) see Soury, *Bréviaire de l'hist. de matérialisme*, ptie. iii, ch. ii.

⁷ Voltaire, *Éléments de philos. de Newton*, ch. ii; Lange, i, 232 (Eng. tr. i, 267) and 269.

made for orthodoxy.¹ Of the criticisms on his *Méditations* to which Descartes published replies, those of Gassendi are, with the partial exception of those of Hobbes, distinctly the most searching and sustained. The later position of Hume, indeed, is explicitly taken up in the first objection of Cratérus;² but the persistent pressure of Gassendi on the theistic and spiritistic assumptions of Descartes reads like the reasoning of a modern atheist.³ Yet the works of Descartes were in time placed on the *Index*, condemned by the king's council, and even vetoed in the universities, while those of Gassendi were not, though his early work on Aristotelianism had to be stopped after the first volume because of the anger it aroused.⁴ Himself one of the most abstemious of men,⁵ like his master Epicurus (of whom he wrote a *Life*, 1647), he attracted disciples of another temperamental cast as well as many of his own; and as usual his system is associated with the former, who are duly vilified by orthodoxy, although certainly no worse than the average orthodox.

Among his other practical services to rationalism was a curious experiment, made in a village of the Lower Alps, by way of investigating the doctrine of witchcraft. A drug prepared by one sorcerer was administered to others of the craft in presence of witnesses. It threw them into a deep sleep, on awakening from which they declared that they had been at a witches' Sabbath. As they had never left their beds, the experiment went far to discredit the superstition.⁶ One significant result of the experiment was seen in the course later taken by Colbert in overriding a decision of the Parlement of Rouen as to witchcraft (1670). That Parlement proposed to burn fourteen sorcerers. Colbert, who had doubtless read Montaigne as well as Gassendi, gave Montaigne's prescription that the culprits should be dosed with hellebore—a medicine for brain disturbance.⁷ In 1672, finally, the king issued a declaration forbidding the tribunals to admit charges of mere sorcery;⁸ and any future condemnations were on the score of blasphemy and poisoning. Yet further, in the section of his posthumous *Syntagma Philosophicum* (1658) entitled *De Effectibus Siderum*,⁹ Gassendi dealt the

¹ Bayle, art. POMPONACE, Notes F. and G. The complaint was made by Arnauld, who with the rest of the Jansenists was substantially a Cartesian.

² See it in Garnier's ed. of Descartes's *Œuvres Choiesies*, p. 145.

³ *Id.* pp. 158-64.

⁴ Apparently just because the Jansenists adopted Descartes and opposed Gassendi. But Gassendi is extremely guarded in all his statements, save, indeed, in his objections to the *Méditations* of Descartes.

⁵ See Soury, pp. 397-98, as to a water-drinking "debauch" of Gassendi and his friends.

⁶ Bambaud, as cited, p. 154.

⁷ *Id.* p. 155.

⁸ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, ed. Didot, p. 366. "On ne l'eût pas osé sous Henri IV et sous Louis XIII." adds Voltaire. Cp. Michelet, *La Sorcière*, ed. Scailles, 1903, p. 302.

⁹ Tr. into English in 1659, under the title *The Vanity of Judiciary Astrology*.

first great blow on the rationalist side to the venerable creed of astrology, assailed often, but to little purpose, from the side of faith; bringing to his task, indeed, more asperity than he is commonly credited with, but also a stringent scientific and logical method, lacking in the polemic of the churchmen, who had attacked astrology mainly because it ignored revelation. It is sobering to remember, however, that he was one of those who could not assimilate Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, which Descartes at once adopted and propounded.

Such anomalies meet us many times in the history of scientific as of other lines of thought; and the residual lesson is the recognition that progress is infinitely multiplex in its causation. Nothing is more vital in this regard than scientific truth, which is as a lighthouse in seas of speculation; and those who, like Galileo and Descartes, add to the world's exact knowledge, perform a specific service not matched by that of the Bacons, who urge right method without applying it. Yet in that kind also an incalculable influence has been wielded. Many minds can accept scientific truths without being thereby led to scientific ways of thought; and thus the reasoners and speculators, the Brunos and the Vaninis, play their fruitful part, as do the mentors who turn men's eyes on their own vices of intellectual habit. And in respect of creeds and philosophies, finally, it is not so much sheer soundness of result as educativeness of method, effectual appeal to the thinking faculty and to the spirit of reason, that determines a thinker's influence. This kind of impact we shall find historically to be the service done by Descartes to European thought for a hundred years.

From Descartes, then, as regards philosophy, more than from any professed thinker of his day, but also from the other thinkers we have noted, from the reactions of scientific discovery, from the terrible experience of the potency of religion as a breeder of strife and its impotence as a curber of evil, and from the practical free-thinking of the more open-minded of that age in general, derives the great rationalistic movement, which, taking clear literary form first in the seventeenth century, has with some fluctuations broadened and deepened down to our own day.

CHAPTER XIV

BRITISH FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

§ 1

THE propagandist literature of deism begins with an English diplomatist, Lord HERBERT of Cherbury, the friend of Bacon, who stood in the full stream of the current freethought of England and France¹ in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. English deism, as literature, is thus at its very outset affiliated with French; all of its elements, critical and ethical, are germinal in Bodin, Montaigne, and Charron, each and all of whom had a direct influence on English thought; and we shall find later French thought, as in the cases of Gassendi, Bayle, Simon, St. Evremond, and Voltaire, alternately influenced by and reacting on English. But, apart from the undeveloped rationalism of the Elizabethan period, which never found literary expression, the French ferment seems to have given the first effective impulse; though it is to be remembered that about the same time the wars of religion in Germany, following on an age of theological uproar, had developed a common temper of indifferencism which would react on the thinking of men of affairs in France.

We have seen the state of upper-class and middle-class opinion in France about 1624. It was in Paris in that year that Herbert published his *De Veritate*, after acting for five years as the English ambassador at the French court—an office from which he was recalled in the same year.² By his own account the book had been "begun by me in England, and formed there in all its principal parts,"³ but finished at Paris. He had, however, gone to France in 1608, and had served in various continental wars in the years following; and it was presumably in these years, not in his youth in England, that he had formed the remarkable opinions set forth in his epoch-making book.

¹ Jenkin Thomasius in his *Historia Atheismi* (1692) joins Herbert with Bodin as having five points in common with him (ed. 1709, ch. ix, § 2, pp. 76-77).

² It might have been supposed that he was recalled on account of his book; but it was not so. He was recalled by letter in April, returned home in July, and seems to have sent his book thence to Paris to be printed.

³ *Autobiography*, Sir S. Lee's 2nd ed. p. 132.

Hitherto deism had been represented by unpublished arguments disingenuously dealt with in published answers; henceforth there slowly grows up a deistic literature. Herbert was a powerful and audacious nobleman, with a weak king; and he could venture on a publication which would have cost an ordinary man dear. Yet even he saw fit to publish in Latin; and he avowed hesitations.¹ The most puzzling thing about it is his declaration that Grotius and the German theologian Tielenus, having read the book in MS., exhorted him "earnestly to print and publish it." It is difficult to believe that they had gathered its substance. Herbert's work has two aspects, a philosophical and a political, and in both it is remarkable.² Like the *Discours de la Méthode* of Descartes, which was to appear thirteen years later, it is inspired by an original determination to get at the rational grounds of conviction; and in Herbert's case the overweening self-esteem which disfigures his *Autobiography* seems to have been motive force for the production of a book signally recalcitrant to authority. Where Bacon attacks Aristotelianism and the habits of mind it had engendered, Herbert counters the whole conception of revelation in religion. Rejecting tacitly the theological basis of current philosophy, he divides the human mind into four faculties—Natural Instinct, Internal Sense, External Sense, and the Discursive faculty—through one or other of which all our knowledge emerges. Of course, like Descartes, he makes the first the verification of his idea of God, pronouncing that to be primary, independent, and universally entertained, and therefore not lawfully to be disputed (already a contradiction in terms); but, inasmuch as scriptural revelation has no place in the process, the position is conspicuously more advanced than that of Bacon in the *De Augmentis*, published the year before, and even than that of Locke, sixty years later. On the question of concrete religion Herbert is still more aggressive. His argument³ is, in brief, that no professed revelation can have a decisive claim to rational acceptance; that none escapes sectarian dispute in its own field; that, as each one misses most of the human race, none seems to be divine; and that human reason can do for morals all that any one of them does. The negative generalities of Montaigne here pass into a positive anti-Christian argument; for Herbert goes on to pronounce the doctrine of forgiveness for faith immoral.

¹ The book was reprinted at London in Latin in 1633; again at Paris in 1636; and again at London in 1645. It was translated and published in French in 1639, but never in English.

² Compare the verdict of Hamilton in his ed. of Reid, note A, § 6, 35 (p. 781).

³ For a good analysis see Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christ. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. trans. 1887, pp. 292-99; also Noack, *Die Freidenker in der Religion*, Bern, 1853, I, 17-40; and Lechler, *Geschichte des englischen Deismus*, pp. 36-54.

Like all pioneers, Herbert falls into some inconsistencies on his own part; the most flagrant being his claim to have had a sign from heaven—that is, a private and special revelation—encouraging him to publish his book.¹ But his criticism is nonetheless telling and persuasive so far as it goes, and remains valid to this day. Nor do his later and posthumous works² add to it in essentials, though they do much to construct the deistic case on historical lines. The *De religione gentilium* in particular is a noteworthy study of pre-Christian religions, apparently motivated by doubt or challenge as to his theorem of the universality of the God-idea. It proves only racial universality without agreement; but it is so far a scholarly beginning of rational hierology. The English *Dialogue between a Teacher and his Pupil*, which seems to have been the first form of the *Religio Gentilium*,³ is a characteristic expression of his whole way of thought, and was doubtless left unpublished for the prudential reasons which led him to put all his published works in Latin. But the fact that the Latin quotations are translated shows that the book had been planned for publication—a risk which he did wisely to shun. The remarkable thing is that his Latin books were so little debated, the *De Veritate* being nowhere discussed before Culverwel.⁴ Baxter in 1672 could say that Herbert, “never having been answered, might be thought unanswerable”;⁵ and his own “answer” is merely theological.

The next great freethinking figure in England is THOMAS HOBBS (1588–1679), the most important thinker of his age, after Descartes, and hardly less influential. But the purpose of Hobbes being always substantially political and regulative, his unfaith in the current religion is only incidentally revealed in the writings in which he seeks to show the need for keeping it under monarchic control.⁶ Hobbes is in fact the anti-Presbyterian or anti-Puritan philosopher; and to discredit anarchic religion in the eyes of the majority he is obliged to speak as a judicial Churchman. Yet nothing is more certain than that he was no orthodox Christian;

¹ See his *Autobiography*, as cited, pp. 133–34.

² *De causis errorum, una cum tractate de religione laici et appendice ad sacerdotes* (1645); *De religione gentilium* (1653). The latter was translated into English in 1705. The former are short appendices to the *De Veritate*. In 1768 was published for the first time from a manuscript, *A Dialogue between a Tutor and his Pupil*, which, despite the doubts of Lechler, may confidently be pronounced Herbert's from internal evidence. See the “Advertisement” by the editor of the volume, and cp. Lee, p. xxx, and notes there referred to. The “five points,” in particular, occur not only in the *Religio Gentilium*, but in the *De Veritate*. The style is clearly of the seventeenth century.

³ Sir Sidney Lee can hardly be right in taking the *Dialogue* to be the “little treatise” which Herbert proposed to write on behaviour (*Autobiography*, Lee's 2nd ed. p. 43). It does not answer to that description, being rather an elaborate discussion of the themes of Herbert's main treatises, running to 272 quarto pages.

⁴ See below, p. 80.

⁵ *More Reasons for the Christian Religion*, 1672, p. 79.

⁶ It is to be remembered that the doctrine of the supremacy of the civil power in religious matters (Erastianism) was maintained by some of the ablest men on the Parliamentary side, in particular Selden.

and even his professed theism resolves itself somewhat easily into virtual agnosticism on logical pressure. No thought of prudence could withhold him from showing, in a discussion on words, that he held the doctrine of the *Logos* to be meaningless.¹ Of atheism he was repeatedly accused by both royalists and rebels; and his answer was forensic rather than fervent, alike as to his scripturalism, his Christianity, and his impersonal conception of Deity.² Reviving as he did the ancient rationalistic doctrine of the eternity of the world,³ he gave a clear footing for atheism as against the Judæo-Christian view. In affirming "one God eternal" of whom men "cannot have any idea in their mind, answerable to his nature," he was negating all creeds. He expressly contends, it is true, for the principle of a Providence; but it is hard to believe that he laid any store by prayer, public or private; and it would appear that whatever thoughtful atheism there was in England in the latter part of the century looked to him as its philosopher, insofar as it did not derive from Spinoza.⁴ Nor could the Naturalist school of that day desire a better, terser, or more drastic scientific definition of religion than Hobbes gave them: "Fear of power invisible, *feigned by the mind or imagined from tales publicly allowed*, RELIGION; *not allowed*, SUPERSTITION."⁵ As the Churchmen readily saw, his insistence on identifying the religion of a country with its law plainly implied that no religion is any more "revealed" than another. With him too begins (1651) the public criticism of the Bible on literary or documentary grounds;⁶ though, as we have seen, this had already gone far in private;⁷ and he gave a new lead, partly as against Descartes, to a materialistic philosophy.⁸ His replies to the theistic and spiritistic reasonings of Descartes's *Méditations* are, like those of Gassendi, unrefuted and irrefutable; and they are fundamentally materialistic in their drift.⁹ He was, in fact, in a special and peculiar degree for his age, a freethinker; and so deep was his intellectual hostility to the clergy of all species that he could not forego enraging those of his own political side by his sarcasms.¹⁰

¹ *Leviathan*, ch. iv, H. Morley's ed. p. 26.

² Cp. his letter to an opponent, *Considerations upon the Reputation, etc., of Thomas Hobbes*, 1680, with chs. xi and xii of *Leviathan*, and *De Corpore Politico*, pt. ii, c. 6. One of his most explicit declarations for theism is in the *De Homine*, c. 1, where he employs the design argument, declaring that he who will not see that the bodily organs are a *mente aliqua conditas ordinatasque ad sua quasque officia* must be himself without mind. This ascription of "mind," however, he tacitly negates in *Leviathan*, ch. xi, and *De Corpore Politico*, pt. ii, c. 6.

³ Cp. Bentley's letter to Bernard, 1692, cited in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 82-83.

⁴ *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. vi, Morley's ed. p. 34.

⁵ Above, p. 24.

⁶ On this see Lange, *Hist. of Materialism*, sec. iii, ch. ii.

⁷ Molyneux, an anti-Hobbesian, in translating Hobbes's objections along with the *Méditations* (1650) claims that the slightness of Descartes's replies was due to his unacquaintance with Hobbes's works and philosophy in general (trans. cited, p. 114). This is an obviously lame defence. Descartes does parry some of the thrusts of Hobbes; others he simply cannot meet.

¹⁰ E.g., *Leviathan*, pt. iv, ch. xivii.

Here he is in marked contrast with Descartes, who dissembled his opinion about Copernicus and Galileo for peace' sake,¹ and was the close friend of the apologist Mersenne down to his death.²

With the partial exception of the more refined and graceful Peacock, Hobbes has of all English thinkers down to his period the clearest and hardest head for all purposes of reasoning, save in the single field of mathematics, where he meddled without mastery; and against the theologians of his time his argumentation is as a two-edged sword. That such a man should have been resolutely on the side of the king in the Civil War is one of the proofs of the essential fanaticism and arbitrariness of the orthodox Puritans, who plotted more harm to the heresies they disliked than was ever wreaked on themselves. Hobbes came near enough being clerically ostracized among the royalists; but among the earlier Puritans, or under an Independent Puritan Parliament at any time, he would have stood a fair chance of execution. It was doubtless largely due to the anti-persecuting influence of Cromwell, as well as to his having ostensibly deserted the royalists, that Hobbes was allowed to settle quietly in England after making his submission to the Rump Parliament in 1651. In 1666 his *Leviathan* and *De Cive* were together condemned by the Restoration Parliament in its grotesque panic of piety after the Great Fire of London; and it was actually proposed to revive against him the writ *de heretico comburendo*;³ but Charles II protected and pensioned him, though he was forbidden to publish anything further on burning questions, and *Leviathan* was not permitted in his lifetime to be republished in English.⁴ He was thus for his generation the typical "infidel," the royalist clergy being perhaps his bitterest enemies. His spontaneous hostility to fanaticism shaped his literary career, which began in 1628 with a translation of Thucydides, undertaken by way of showing the dangers of democracy. Next came the *De Cive* (Paris, 1642), written when he was already an elderly man; and thenceforth the Civil War tinges his whole temper.

It is in fact by way of a revolt against all theological ethic, as demonstrably a source of civil anarchy, that Hobbes formulates

¹ Kuno Fischer, *Descartes and his School*, pp. 232-35. Cp. Bentley, *Sermons on Atheism* (i.e., his Boyle Lectures), ed. 1724, p. 8.

² Hobbes also was of Mersenne's acquaintance, but only as a man of science. When, in 1647, Hobbes was believed to be dying, Mersenne for the first time sought to discuss theology with him; but the sick man instantly changed the subject. In 1648 Mersenne died. He thus did not live to meet the strain of *Leviathan* (1651), which enraged the French no less than the English clergy. (Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, pp. 63-65.)

³ Hobbes lived to see this law abolished (1677). There was left, however, the jurisdiction of the bishops and ecclesiastical courts over cases of atheism, blasphemy, heresy, and schism, short of the death penalty.

⁴ Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 196; Pepys's Diary, Sept. 3, 1668.

a strictly civic or legalist ethic, denying the supremacy of an abstract or a priori natural moral law (though he founded on natural law), as well as rejecting all supernatural illumination of the conscience.¹ In the Church of Rome itself there had inevitably arisen the practice of Casuistry, in which to a certain extent ethics had to be rationally studied; and early Protestant Casuistry, repudiating the authority of the priest, had to rely still more on reason.

Compare Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, pp. 25-38, where it is affirmed that, after the Reformation, "Since the assertions of the teacher had no inherent authority, he was obliged to give his proofs as well as his results," and "the determination of cases was replaced by the discipline of conscience" (p. 29). There is an interesting progression in English Protestant casuistry from W. Perkins (1558-1602) and W. Ames (pub. 1630), through Bishops Hall and Sanderson, to Jeremy Taylor. Mosheim (17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, § 9) pronounces Ames "the first among the Reformed who attempted to elucidate and arrange the science of morals as distinct from that of dogmatics." See biog. notes on Perkins and Ames in Whewell, pp. 27-29, and Reid's Mosheim, p. 681.

But Hobbes passed in two strides to the position that natural morality is a set of demonstrable inferences as to what adjustments promote general well-being; and further that there is no practical code of right and wrong apart from positive social law.² He thus practically introduced once for all into modern Christendom the fundamental dilemma of rationalistic ethics, not only positing the problem for his age,³ but anticipating it as handled in later times.⁴

How far his rationalism was ahead of that of his age may be realized by comparing his positions with those of John Selden, the most learned and, outside of philosophy, one of the shrewdest of the men of that generation. Selden was sometimes spoken of by the Hobbists as a freethinker; and his *Table Talk* contains some sallies which would startle the orthodox if publicly delivered;⁵ but not only is there explicit testimony by his associates as to his orthodoxy:⁶ his own treatise, *De Jure Naturali et Gentium juxta disciplinam Ebraeorum*, maintains the ground that the "Law of Nature" which underlies the variants of the Laws of Nations is limited to the

¹ *Leviathan*, ch. ii; Morley's ed. p. 19; chs. xiv, xv, pp. 66, 71, 72, 78; ch. xxix, pp. 148, 149.

² *Leviathan*, chs. xv, xvii, xviii. Morley's ed. pp. 72, 82, 83, 85.

³ "For two generations the effort to construct morality on a philosophical basis takes more or less the form of answers to Hobbes" (Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, 3rd ed. p. 169).

⁴ As when he presents the law of Nature as "dictating peace, for a means of the conservation of men in multitudes" (*Leviathan*, ch. xv. Morley's ed. p. 77).

⁵ See the headings, COUNCIL, RELIGION, etc.

⁶ G. W. Johnson, *Memoirs of John Selden*, 1835, pp. 348, 362.

precepts and traditions set forth in the Talmud as delivered by Noah to his posterity.¹ Le Clerc said of the work, justly enough, that in it "Selden only copies the Rabbins, and scarcely ever reasons." It is likely enough that the furious outcry against Selden for his strictly historical investigation of tithes, and the humiliation of apology forced upon him in that connection in 1618,² made him specially chary ever afterwards of any semblance of a denial of the plenary truth of theological tradition; but there is no reason to think that he had ever really transcended the Biblical view of the world's order. He illustrates, in fact, the extent to which a scholar could in that day be anti-clerical without being rationalistic. Like the bulk of the Parliamentarians, though without their fanaticism, he was thoroughly opposed to the political pretensions of the Church,³ desiring however to leave episcopacy alone, as a matter outside of legislation, when the House of Commons abolished it. Yet he spoke of the name of Puritan as one which he "trusted he was not either mad enough or foolish enough to deserve."⁴ There were thus in the Parliamentary party men of very different shades of opinion. The largest party, perhaps, was that of the fanatics who, as Mrs. Hutchinson—herself fanatical enough—tells concerning her husband, "would not allow him to be religious because his hair was not in their cut."⁵ Next in strength were the more or less orthodox but anti-clerical and less pious Scripturalists, of whom Selden was the most illustrious. By far the smallest group of all were the freethinkers, men of their type being as often repelled by the zealotry of the Puritans as by the sacerdotalism of the State clergy. The Rebellion, in short, though it evoked rationalism, was not evoked by it. Like all religious strifes—like the vaster Thirty Years' War in contemporary Germany—it generated both doubt and indifferentism in men who would otherwise have remained undisturbed in orthodoxy.

§ 2

When, however, we turn from the higher literary propaganda to the verbal and other transitory debates of the period of the Rebellion, we realize how much partial rationalism had hitherto subsisted without notice. In that immense ferment some very advanced opinions, such as quasi-Anarchism in politics⁶ and anti-

¹ G. W. Johnson, p. 264.

² Above, p. 20.

³ G. W. Johnson, pp. 258, 302.

⁴ *Id.* p. 302. Cp. in the *Table Talk*, art. TRINITY, his view of the Roundheads.

⁵ *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. 1810, i, 181. Cp. i, 292; ii, 44.

⁶ Cp. Overton's pamphlet, *An Arrow against all Tyrants and Tyranny* (1646), cited in the *History of Passive Obedience since the Reformation*, 1689, i, 59; pt. ii of Thomas

Scripturalism in religion, were more or less directly professed. In January, 1646 (N.S.), the authorities of the City of London, alarmed at the unheard-of amount of discussion, petitioned Parliament to put down all private meetings;¹ and on February 6, 1646 (N.S.), a solemn fast, or "day of publique humiliation," was proclaimed on the score of the increase of "errors, heresies, and blasphemies." On the same grounds, the Presbyterian party in Parliament pressed an "Ordinance for the suppression of Blasphemies and Heresies," which, long held back by Vane and Cromwell, was carried in their despite in 1648, by large majorities, when the royalists renewed hostilities. It enacted the death penalty against all who should deny the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, a day of judgment, or a future state; and prescribed imprisonment for Arminianism, rejection of infant baptism, anti-Sabbatarianism, anti-Presbyterianism, or defence of the doctrine of Purgatory or the use of images.² And of aggressive heresy there are some noteworthy traces. In a pamphlet entitled "*Hell Broke Loose: a Catalogue of the many spreading Errors, Heresies, and Blasphemies of these Times, for which we are to be humbled*" (March 9, 1646, N.S.), the first entry—and in the similar Catalogue in Edwards's *Gangræna*, the second entry—is a citation of the notable thesis, "That the Scripture, whether a true manuscript or no, whether Hebrew, Greek, or English, is but humane, and not able to discover a divine God."³ This is cited from "The Pilgrimage of the Saints, by Lawrence Clarkson," presumably the Lawrence Clarkson who for his book *The Single Eye* was sentenced by resolution of Parliament on September 27, 1650, to be imprisoned, the book being burned by the common hangman.⁴ He is further cited as teaching that even unbaptized persons may preach and baptize. Of the other heresies cited the principal is the old denial of a future life, and especially of a physical and future hell. In general the heresy is pietistic or antinomian; but we have also the declaration "that right Reason is the rule of Faith, and that we are to believe the Scriptures and the doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation, Resurrection, so far as we

Edwards's *Gangræna: or a Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies, and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time, etc.*, 2nd ed. 1646, pp. 33-34 (Nos. 151-53).

¹ *Lords Journals*, January 16, 1645-1646; *Gangræna*, as cited, p. 150; cp. Gardiner, *Hist. of the Civil War*, ed. 1893, iii, 11.

² Green, *Short Hist.* ch. viii, § 8, pp. 551-52; Gardiner, *Hist. of the Civil War*, iv, 22.

³ *Gangræna*, p. 18.

⁴ In 1644 he had been imprisoned at Bury St. Edmunds for "dipping" adults, and after six months' duration had been released on a recantation and promise of amendment. *Gangræna*, as cited, pp. 104-105.

see them to be agreeable to reason and no further." Concerning Jesus there are various heresies, from simple Unitarianism to contemptuous disparagement, with the stipulation for a "Christ formed in us." But though there are cases of unquotable or ribald blasphemy there is little trace of scholarly criticism of the Bible, of reasoning against miracles or the inconsistencies of Scripture, as apart from the doctrine of deity. Nonetheless, it is very credible that "multitudes, unsettled.....have changed their faith, either to Scepticisme, to doubt of everything, or Atheisme, to believe nothing."¹

Against the furious intolerance of the Puritan legislature some pleaded with new zeal for tolerance all round; arguing that certainty on articles of faith and points of religion was impossible—a doctrine promptly classed as a bad heresy.² The plea that toleration would mean concord was met by the confident and not unfounded retort that the "sectaries" would themselves persecute if they could.³ But this could hardly have been true of all. Notable among the new parties were the Levellers, who insisted that the State should leave religion entirely alone, tolerating all creeds, including even atheism; and who put forward a new and striking ethic, grounding on "universal reason" the right of all men to the soil.⁴ In the strictly theological field the most striking innovation, apart from simple Unitarianism, is the denial of the eternity or even the existence of future torments—a position first taken up, as we have seen, either by the continental Socinians or by the unnamed English heretics of the Tudor period, who passed on their heresy to the time of Marlowe.⁵ In this connection the learned booklet⁶ entitled *Of the Torments of Hell: the foundations and pillars thereof discover'd, search'd, shaken, and removed* (1658) was rightly thought worth translating into French by d'Holbach over a century later.⁷ It is an argument on scriptural lines, denying that the conception of a place of eternal torment is either scriptural or credible; and pointing out that many had explained it in a "spiritual" sense.

Humane feeling of this kind counted for much in the ferment; but a contrary hate was no less abundant. The Presbyterian Thomas Edwards, who in a vociferous passion of fear and zeal set

¹ Rev. James Cranford, *Hæreseo-Machia*, a Sermon, 1646, p. 10.

² No. 100 in *Gangrena*.

³ Cranford, as cited, p. 11 sq.

⁴ See G. P. Gooch's *Hist. of Democ. Ideas in England in the 17th Century*, 1898, ch. vi.

⁵ Above, pp. 4 and 8.

⁶ In the British Museum copy the name Richardson is penned, not in a contemporary hand, at the end of the preface; and in the preface to vol. ii of the *Phenix*, 1708, in which the treatise is reprinted, the same name is given, but with uncertainty. The Richardson pointed at was the author of *The Necessity of Toleration in Matters of Religion* (1647). E. B. Underhill, in his collection of that and other *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience* for the Hanserd Knollys Society, 1846, remains doubtful (p. 247) as to the authorship of the tract on hell.

⁷ The fourth English edition appeared in 1754.

himself to catalogue the host of heresies that threatened to overwhelm the times, speaks of "monsters" unheard-of theretofore, "now common among us—as denying the Scriptures, pleading for a toleration of all religions and worships, yea, for blasphemy, and denying there is a God."¹ "A Toleration," he declares, "is the grand design of the Devil, his masterpiece and chief engine"; "every day now brings forth books for a Toleration."² Among the 180 sects named by him³ there were "Libertines," "Antiscripturists," "Skeptics and Questionists,"⁴ who held nothing save the doctrine of free speech and liberty of conscience;⁵ as well as Socinians, Arians, and Anti-trinitarians; and he speaks of serious men who had not only abandoned their religious beliefs, but sought to persuade others to do the same.⁶ Under the rule of Cromwell, tolerant as he was of Christian sectarianism, and even of Unitarianism as represented by Biddle, the more advanced heresies would get small liberty; though that of Thomas Muggleton and John Reeve, which took shape about 1651 as the Muggletonian sect, does not seem to have been molested. Muggleton, a mystic, could teach that there was no devil or evil spirit, save in "man's spirit of unclean reason and cursed imagination";⁷ but it was only privately that such men as Henry Marten and Thomas Chaloner, the regicides, could avow themselves to be of "the natural religion." The statement of Bishop Burnet, following Clarendon, that "many of the republicans began to profess deism," cannot be taken literally, though it is broadly intelligible that "almost all of them were for destroying all clergymen.....and for leaving religion free, as they called it, without either encouragement or restraint."

See Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, bk. i, ed. 1838, p. 43. The phrase, "They were for pulling down the churches," again, cannot be taken literally. Of those who "pretended to little or no religion and acted only upon the principles of civil liberty," Burnet goes on to name Sidney, Henry Nevill, Marten, Wildman, and Harrington. The last was certainly of Hobbes's way of thinking in philosophy (Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 223, note); but Wildman was one of the signers of the Anabaptist petition to Charles II in 1658 (Clarendon, *Hist. of the Rebellion*,

¹ *Gangræna*, ep. ded. (p. 5). Cp. pp. 47, 151, 178-79; and Baillie's *Letters*, ed. 1841, ii, 234-37; iii, 393. The most sweeping plea for toleration seems to have been the book entitled *Toleration Justified*, 1646. (*Gangræna*, p. 151.) The Hanserd Knollys collection, above mentioned, does not contain one of that title.

² *Gangræna*, pp. 152-53.

³ *Id.* p. 15. As to other sects mentioned by him cp. Tayler, p. 194.

⁴ Pp. 18-36.

⁵ On the intense aversion of most of the Presbyterians to toleration see Tayler, *Retrospect of Relig. Life of Eng.* p. 136. They insisted, rightly enough, that the principle was never recognized in the Bible.

⁶ See the citations in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i, 347; 1-vol. ed. p. 196.

⁷ Alex. Ross, *Panæbeta*, 4th ed. 1672, p. 379.

bk. xv, ed. 1843, p. 855). As to Marten and Chaloner, see Carlyle's *Cromwell*, iii, 194; and articles in *Nat. Dict. of Biog.* Vaughan (*Hist. of England*, 1840, ii, 477, note) speaks of Walwyn and Overton as "among the freethinkers of the times of the Commonwealth." They were, however, Biblicists, not unbelievers. Prof. Gardiner (*Hist. of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii, 253, citing a News-letter in the Clarendon MSS.) finds record in 1653 of "a man [who] preached flat atheism in Westminster Hall, uninterrupted by the soldiers of the guard"; but this obviously counts for little.

Between the advance in speculation forced on by the disputes themselves, and the usual revolt against the theological spirit after a long and ferocious display of it, there spread even under the Commonwealth a new temper of secularity. On the one hand, the temperamental distaste for theology, antinomian or other, took form in the private associations for scientific research which were the antecedents of the Royal Society. On the other hand, the spirit of religious doubt spread widely in the middle and upper classes; and between the dislike of the Roundheads for the established clergy and the anger of the Cavaliers against all Puritanism there was fostered that "contempt of the clergy" which had become a clerical scandal at the Restoration and was to remain so for about a century.¹ Their social status was in general low, and their financial position bad; and these circumstances, possible only in a time of weakened religious belief, necessarily tended to further the process of mental change. Within the sphere of orthodoxy, it operated openly. It is noteworthy that the term "rationalist" emerges as the label of a sect of Independents or Presbyterians who declare that "What their reason dictates to them in church or State stands for good, until they be convinced with better."² The "rationalism," so-called, of that generation remained ostensibly scriptural; but on other lines thought went further. Of atheism there are at this stage only dubious biographical and controversial traces, such as Mrs. Hutchinson's characterization of a Nottingham physician, possibly a deist, as a "horrible atheist,"³ and the Rev. John Dove's *Confutation of Atheism* (1640), which does not bear out its title. Ephraim Pagitt, in his *Heresiography* (1644), speaks loosely of an "atheistical sect who affirm that men's soules sleep with them *until the day of judgment*"; and tells of some alleged atheist merely that he "mocked and jeared at Christ's Incarnation."⁴ Similarly a work,

¹ Cp. the present writer's *Buckle and his Critics*, 1895, ch. viii, § 2.

² See above, vol. i, p. 5.

³ *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, 3rd ed. i, 200.

⁴ *Heresiography: The Heretics and Sectaries of these Times*, 1644. Epist. Ded.

entitled *Dispute betwixt an Atheist and a Christian* (1646), shows the existence not of atheists but of deists, and the deist in the dialogue is a Fleming.

More trustworthy is the allusion in Nathaniel Culverwel's *Discourse of the Light of Nature* (written in 1646, published posthumously in 1652) to "those lumps and dunghills of all sects.....that young and upstart generation of gross anti-scripturalists, that have a powder-plot against the Gospel, that would very compendiously behead all Christian religion at one blow, a device which old and ordinary heretics were never acquainted withal."¹ The reference is presumably to the followers of Lawrence Clarkson. Yet even here we have no mention of atheism, which is treated as something almost impossible. Indeed, the very course of arguing in favour of a "Light of Nature" seems to have brought suspicion on Culverwel himself, who shows a noticeable liking for Herbert of Cherbury.² He is, however, as may be inferred from his angry tone towards anti-scripturalists, substantially orthodox, and not very important.

It is contended for Culverwel by modern admirers (ed. cited, p. xxi) that he deserves the praise given by Hallam to the later Bishop Cumberland as "the first Christian writer who sought to establish systematically the principle of moral right independent of revelation." [See above, p. 74, the similar tribute of Mosheim to Ames.] But Culverwel does not really make this attempt. His proposition is that reason, "the candle of the Lord," discovers "that all the moral law is founded in natural and common light, in the light of reason, and that there is nothing in the mysteries of the Gospel *contrary* to the light of reason" (Introd. *end*); yet he contends not only that faith transcends reason, but that Abraham's attempt to slay his son was a dutiful obeying of "the God of nature" (pp. 225-26). He does not achieve the simple step of noting that the recognition of revelation as such must be performed by reason, and thus makes no advance on the position of Bacon, much less on those of Pecoock and Hooker. His object, indeed, was not to justify orthodoxy by reason against rationalistic unbelief, but to make a case for reason in theology against the Lutherans and others who, "because Socinus has burnt his wings at this candle of the Lord," scouted all use of it (Introd.). Culverwel, however, was one of the learned group in Emanuel College, Cambridge, whose tradition developed in the next generation into Latitudinarianism; and he may be taken as a learned type of a number of the clergy who were led by the abundant discussion all around them into professing and encouraging a ratiocinative habit of mind.

¹ *Discourse*, ed. 1857, p. 226.

² Dr. J. Brown's pref. to ed. of 1857, p. xxii.

Thus we find Dean Stuart, Clerk of the Closet to Charles I, devoting one of his short homilies to Jerome's text, *Tentemus animas quae deficiunt a fide naturalibus rationibus adjurare*. "It is not enough," he writes, "for you to rest in an imaginary faith, and easiness in beleeving, except yee know also what and why and how you come to that beleaf. Implicite beleevers, ignorant beleevers, the adversary may swallow, but the understanding beleever hee must chaw, and pick bones before hee come to assimilate him, and make him like himself. The implicite beleever stands in an open field, and the enemy will ride over him easily: the understanding beleever is in a fenced town." (*Catholique Divinity*, 1657, pp. 133-34—a work written many years earlier.)

The discourse on Atheism, again, in the posthumous works of John Smith of Cambridge (d. 1652), is entirely retrospective; but soon another note is sounded. As early as 1652, the year after the issue of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the prolific Walter Charleton, who had been physician to the king, published a book entitled *The Darkness of Atheism Expelled by the Light of Nature*, wherein he asserted that England "hath of late produced and doth.....foster more swarms of atheistical monsters.....than any age, than any Nation hath been infested withal." In the following year Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, published his *Antidote against Atheism*. The flamboyant dedication to Viscountess Conway affirms that the existence of God is "as clearly demonstrable as any theorem in mathematicks"; but, the reverend author adds, "considering the state of things as they are, I cannot but pronounce that there is more necessity of this my Antidote than I could wish there were." At the close of the preface he pleasantly explains that he will use no Biblical arguments, but talk to the atheist as a "mere Naturalist"; inasmuch as "he that converses with a barbarian must discourse to him in his own language," and "he that would gain upon the more weak and sunk minds of sensual mortals is to accommodate himself to their capacity, who, like the bat and owl, can see nowhere so well as in the shady glimmerings of their twilight." Then, after some elementary play with the design argument, the entire Third Book of forty-six folio pages is devoted to a parade of old wives' tales of witches and witchcraft, witches' sabbaths, apparitions, commotions by devils, ghosts, incubi, polter-geists—the whole vulgar medley of the peasant superstitions of Europe.

It is not that the Platonist does violence to his own philosophic tastes by way of influencing the "bats and owls" of atheism. This mass of superstition is his own special pabulum. In the preface

he has announced that, while he may abstain from the use of the Scriptures, nothing shall restrain him from telling what he knows of spirits. "I am so cautious and circumspect," he claims, "that I make use of no narrations that either the avarice of the priest or the credulity and fancifulness of the melancholist may render suspected." As for the unbelievers, "their confident ignorance shall never dash me out of confidence with my well-grounded knowledge; for I have been no careless inquirer into these things." It is after a polter-geist tale of the crassest description that he announces that it was strictly investigated and attested by "that excellently-learned and noble gentleman, Mr. R. Boyle," who avowed "that all his settled indisposedness to believe strange things was overcome by this special conviction."¹ And the section ends with the proposition: "Assuredly that saying is not more true in politick, *No Bishop, no King*, than this in metaphysicks, *No Spirit, no God*." Such was the mentality of some of the most eminent and scholarly Christian apologists of the time. It seems safe to conclude that the Platonist made few converts.

More avowed that he wrote without having read previous apologists; and others were similarly spontaneous in the defence of the faith. In 1654 there is noted² a treatise called *Atheismus Vapulans*, by William Towers, whose message can in part be inferred from his title;³ and in 1657 Charleton issued his *Immortality of the Human Soul demonstrated by the Light of Nature*, wherein the argument, which says nothing of revelation, is so singularly unconfident, and so much broken in upon by excursus, as to leave it doubtful whether the author was more lacking in dialectic skill or in conviction. And still the traces of unbelief multiply. Baxter and Howe were agreed, in 1658, that there were both "infidels and papists" at work around them; and in 1659 Howe writes: "I know some leading men are not Christians."⁴ "Seekers, Vanists, and Behmenists" are specified as groups to which both infidels and papists attach themselves. And Howe, recognizing how religious strifes promote unbelief, bears witness "What a cloudy, wavering, uncertain, lank, spiritless thing is the faith of Christians in this age become!.....Most content themselves to profess it only as the religion of their country."⁵

¹ More, *Collection of Philosophical Writings*, 4th ed. 1692, p. 95.

² Fabricius, *Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus Scriptorum*, 1725, p. 341.

³ No copy in British Museum.

⁴ Urwick, *Life of John Howe*, with 1846 ed. of Howe's Select Works, pp. xiii, xix. Urwick, a learned evangelical, fully admits the presence of "infidels" on both sides in the politics of the time.

⁵ *Discourse Concerning Union Among Protestants*, ed. cited, pp. 146, 156, 158. In the preface to his treatise, *The Redeemer's Tears Wept over Lost Souls*, Howe complains of

Alongside of all this vindication of Christianity there was going on constant and cruel persecution of heretic Christians. The Unitarian John Biddle, master of the Gloucester Grammar School, was dismissed for his denial of the Trinity; and in 1647 he was imprisoned, and his book burned by the hangman. In 1654 he was again imprisoned; and in 1655 he was banished to the Scilly Islands. Returning to London after the Restoration, he was again arrested, and died in gaol in 1662.¹ Under the Commonwealth (1656) James Naylor, the Quaker, narrowly escaped death for blasphemy, but was whipped through the streets, pilloried, bored through the tongue with a hot iron, branded in the forehead, and sent to hard labour in prison. Many hundreds of Quakers were imprisoned and more or less cruelly handled.

From the *Origines Sacrae* (1662) of Stillingfleet, nevertheless, it would appear that both deism and atheism were becoming more and more common.² He states that "the most popular pretences of the atheists of our age have been the irreconcilableness of the account of times in Scripture with that of the learned and ancient heathen nations, the inconsistency of the belief of the Scriptures with the principles of reason; and the account which may be given of the origin of things from the principles of philosophy without the Scriptures." These positions are at least as natural to deists as to atheists; and Stillingfleet is later found protesting against the policy of some professed Christians who give up the argument from miracles as valueless.³ His whole treatise, in short, assumes the need for meeting a very widespread unbelief in the Bible, though it rarely deals with the atheism of which it so constantly speaks. After the Restoration, naturally, all the new tendencies were greatly reinforced,⁴ alike by the attitude of the king and his companions, all influenced by French culture, and by the general reaction against Puritanism. Whatever ways of thought had been characteristic of the Puritans were now in more or less complete disfavour; the belief in witchcraft was scouted as much on this ground as on any other;⁵ and the

¹ "the atheism of some, the avowed mere theism of others," and of a fashionable habit of ridiculing religion. This sermon, however, appears to have been first published in 1684; and the date of its application is uncertain.

² Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, Art. 285.

³ The preface begins: "It is neither to satisfy the importunity of friends, nor to prevent false copies (which and such like excuses I know are expected in usual prefaces), that I have adventured abroad this following treatise: but it is out of a just resentment of the affronts and indignities which have been cast on religion, by such who account it a matter of judgment to disbelieve the Scriptures, and a piece of wit to dispute themselves out of the possibility of being happy in another world."

⁴ See bk. ii, ch. x. Page 338, 3rd ed. 1666.

⁵ Cp. Gianvill, pref. *Address to his Sceptis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. 1885, pp. lv-lvii; and Henry More's *Divine Dialogues*, Dial. i, ch. xxxii.

⁶ Cp. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 109.

deistic doctrines found a ready audience among royalists, whose enemies had been above all things Bibliolaters.

There is evidence that Charles II, at least up to the time of his becoming a Catholic, and probably even to the end, was at heart a deist. See Burnet's *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, pp. 61, 175, and notes; and cp. refs. in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i, 362, note; 1-vol. ed. p. 205. St. Evremond, who knew him and many of his associates, affirmed expressly that Charles's creed "étoit seulement ce qui passe vulgairement, quoiqu' injustement, pour une extinction totale de Religion: je veux dire le Déisme" (*Œuvres mêlées*: t. viii of *Œuvres*, ed. 1714, p. 354). His opinion, St. Evremond admits, was the result of simple recognition of the actualities of religious life, not of reading, or of much reflection. And his adoption of Catholicism, in St. Evremond's opinion, was purely political. He saw that Catholicism made much more than Protestantism for kingly power, and that his Catholic subjects were the most subservient.

We gather this, however, still from the apologetic treatises and the historians, not from new deistic literature; for in virtue of the Press Licensing Act, passed on behalf of the Church in 1662, no heretical book could be printed; so that Herbert was thus far the only professed deistic writer in the field, and Hobbes the only other of similar influence. Baxter, writing in 1655 on *The Unreasonableness of Infidelity*, handles chiefly Anabaptists; and in his *Reformed Pastor* (1656), though he avows that "the common ignorant people," seeing the endless strifes of the clergy, "are hardened by us against all religion," the only specific unbelief he mentions is that of "the devil's own agents, the unhappy Socinians," who had written "so many treatises for.....unity and peace."¹ But in his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, issued in 1667, he thinks fit to prove the existence of God and a future state, and the truth and the supernatural character of the Christian religion. Any deist or atheist who took the trouble to read through it would have been rewarded by the discovery that the learned author has annihilated his own case. In his first part he affirms: "If there were no life of Retribution after this, Obedience to God would be finally men's loss and ruine: But Obedience to God shall not be finally men's loss and ruine: Ergo, there is another life."² In the second part he writes that "Man's personal interest is an unfit rule and measure of God's goodness";³ and, going on to meet the new argument

¹ *The Reformed Pastor*, abr. ed. 1826, pp. 236, 239.

² Work cited, ed. 1667, p. 136. The proposition is reiterated.

³ *Id.* p. 388.

against Christianity based on the inference that an infinity of stars are inhabited, he writes :—

Ask any man who knoweth these things whether all this earth be any more in comparison of the whole creation than one Prison is to a Kingdom or Empire, or the paring of one nail.....in comparison of the whole body. And if God should cast off *all this earth*, and use *all the sinners* in it as they deserve, it is no more sign of a want of benignity or mercy in him than it is for a King to cast *one subject* of a *million* into a jail.....or than it is to *pare a man's nails*, or cut off a wart, or a hair, or to pull out a rotten aking tooth.¹

Thus the second part absolutely destroys one of the fundamental positions of the first. No semblance of levity on the part of the freethinkers could compare with the profound intellectual insincerity of such a propaganda as this; and that deism and atheism continued to gain ground is proved by the multitude of apologetic treatises. Even in church-ridden Scotland they were found necessary; at least the young advocate George Mackenzie, afterwards to be famous as the "bluidy Mackenzie" of the time of persecution, thought it expedient to make his first appearance in literature with a *Religio Stoici* (1663), wherein he sets out with a refutation of atheism. It is difficult to believe that his counsel to Christians to watch the "horror-creating beds of dying atheists"²—a false pretence as it stands—represented any knowledge whatever of professed atheism in his own country; and his discussion of the subject is wholly on the conventional lines—notably so when he uses the customary plea, later associated with Pascal, that the theist runs no risk even if there is no future life, whereas the atheist runs a tremendous risk if there is one;³ but when he writes of "that mystery why the greatest wits are most frequently the greatest atheists,"⁴ he must be presumed to refer at least to deists. And other passages show that he had listened to freethinking arguments. Thus he speaks⁵ of those who "detract from Scripture by attributing the production of miracles to natural causes"; and again⁶ of those who "contend that the Scriptures are written in a mean and low style; are in some places too mysterious, in others too obscure; contain many things incredible, many repetitions, and many contradictions." His own answers are conspicuously weak. In the latter passage he continues: "But those miscreants should consider that much of the Scripture's native splendour is impaired by its translators"; and as to miracles

¹ *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, pp. 388-89.

² *Religio Stoici*, Edinburgh, 1663, p. 19. The essay was reprinted in 1665, and in London in 1693 under the title of *The Religious Stoic*.

³ *Id.* p. 18.

⁴ *Id.* p. 124.

⁵ *Id.* p. 76.

⁶ *Id.* p. 69.

he makes the inept answer that if secondary causes were in operation they acted by God's will; going on later to suggest on his own part that prophecy may be not a miraculous gift, but "a natural (though the highest) perfection of our human nature."¹ Apart from his weak dialectic, he writes in general with cleverness and literary finish, but without any note of sincerity; and his profession of concern that reason should be respected in theology² is as little acted on in his later life as his protest against persecution.³ The inference from the whole essay is that in Scotland, as in England, the civil war had brought up a considerable crop of reasoned unbelief; and that Mackenzie, professed defender of the faith as he was at twenty-five, and official persecutor of nonconformists as he afterwards became, met with a good deal of it in his cultured circle. In his later booklet, *Reason: an Essay* (1690), he speaks of the "ridiculous and impudent extravagance of some who.....take pains to persuade themselves and others that there is not a God."⁴ He further coarsely asperses all atheists as debauchees,⁵ though he avows that "Infidelity is not the cause of false reasoning, because such as are not atheists reason falsely."

When anti-theistic thought could subsist in the ecclesiastical climate of Puritan Scotland, it must have flourished somewhat in England. In 1667 appeared *A Philosophicall Essay towards an eviction of the Being and Attributes of God*, etc., of which the preface proclaims "the bold and horrid pride of Atheists and Epicures" who "have laboured to introduce into the world a general Atheism, or at least a doubtful Skepticisme in matters of Religion." In 1668 was published Meric Casaubon's treatise, *Of Credulity and Incredulity in things Natural, Civil, and Divine*, assailing not only "the Sadducism of these times in denying spirits, witches," etc., but "Epicurus.....and the juggling and false dealing lately used to bring Atheism into Credit"—a thrust at Gassendi. A similar polemic is entombed in a ponderous folio "romance" entitled *Bentivolio and Urania*, by Nathaniel Ingelo, D.D., a fellow first of Emanuel College, and afterwards of Queen's College, Cambridge (1660; 4th ed. amended, 1682). The second part, edifyingly dedicated to the Earl of Lauderdale, one of the worst men of his day, undertakes

¹ *Religio Stoici*, p. 116.

² *Id.* p. 122.

³ This last is interesting as a probable echo of opinions he had heard from some of his older contemporaries: "Opinion kept within its proper bounds is an [=the Scottish "ane"] pure act of the mind; and so it would appear that to punish the body for that which is a guilt of the soul is as unjust as to punish one relation for another" (pref. pp. 10-11). He adds that "the Almighty hath left no warrant upon holy record for persecuting such as dissent from us."

⁴ *Reason: an Essay*, ed. 1690, p. 21. Cp. p. 152.

⁵ *Id.* p. 82. It is noteworthy that Mackenzie puts in a protest against "implicit Faith and Infallibility, those great tyrants over Reason" (p. 88). But the essay as a whole is ill-planned and unimpressive.

to handle the "Atheists, Epicureans, and Skepticks"; and in the preface the atheists are duly vituperated; while Epicurus is described as a gross sensualist, in terms of the legend, and the skeptics as "resigned to the slavery of vice." In the sixth book the atheists are allowed a momentary hearing in defence of their "horrid absurdities," from which it appears that there were current arguments alike anthropological and metaphysical against theism. The most competent part of the author's own argument, which is unlimited as to space, is that which controverts the thesis of the invention of religious beliefs by "politicians"¹—a notion first put in currency, as we have seen, by those who insisted on the expediency and value of such inventions; as, Polybius among the ancients, and Machiavelli among the moderns; and further by Christian priests, who described all non-Christian religions as human inventions.

Dr. Ingelo's folio seems to have had many readers; but he avowedly did not look for converts; and defences of the faith on a less formidable scale were multiplied. A "Person of Honour" (Sir Charles Wolseley) produced in 1669 an essay on *The Unreasonableness of Atheism made Manifest*, which, without supplying any valid arguments, gives some explanation of the growth of unbelief in terms of the political and other antecedents;² and in 1670 appeared Richard Barthogge's *Divine Goodness Explicated and Vindicated from the Exceptions of the Atheists*. Baxter in 1671³ complains that "infidels are grown so numerous and so audacious, and look so big and talk so loud"; and still the process continues. In 1672 Sir William Temple writes indignantly of "those who would pass for wits in our age by saying things which, David tells us, the fool said in his heart."⁴ In the same year appeared *The Reasonableness of Scripture-Belief*, by Sir Charles Wolseley, and *The Atheist Silenced*, by one J. M.; in 1674, Dr. Thomas Good's *Firmitas et Dubitantius, or Dialogues concerning Atheism, Infidelity, and Popery*; in 1675, the posthumous treatise of Bishop Wilkins (d. 1672), *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, with a preface by Tillotson; and a *Brevis Demonstratio*, with the modest sub-title, "The Truth of Christian Religion Demonstrated by Reasons the best that have yet been out in English"; in 1677, Bishop Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist*; and in 1678 the massive work of Cudworth on *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*

¹ Work cited, 2nd ed. pt. ii, pp. 106-15.

² Cf. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 86-87, 89-90. This explanation is also given by Bishop Wilkins in his treatise on *Natural Religion*, 7th ed. p. 354.

³ Replying to Herbert's *De Veritate*, which he seems not to have read before.

⁴ Pref. to *Obs. upon the United Prov. of the Netherlands*, in *Works*, ed. 1814, i. 36.

attacking atheism (not deism) on philosophic lines which sadly compromised the learned author.¹ English dialectic being found insufficient, there was even produced in 1679 a translation by the Rev. Joshua Bonhome of the French *L'Athéisme Convaincu* of David Dersdon, published twenty years before.

All of these works explicitly avow the abundance of unbelief; Tillotson, himself accused of it, pronounces the age "miserably overrun with Skepticism and Infidelity"; and Wilkins, avowing that these tendencies are common "not only among sensual men of the vulgar sort, but even among those who pretend to a more than ordinary measure of wit and learning," attempts to meet them by a purely deistic argument, with a claim for Christianity appended, as if he were concerned chiefly to rebut atheism, and held his own Christianity on a very rationalistic tenure. The fact was that the orthodox clergy were as hard put to it to repel religious antinomianism on the one hand as to repel atheism on the other; and no small part of the deistic movement seems to have been set up by the reaction against pious lawlessness.² Thus we have Tillotson, writing as Dean of Canterbury, driven to plead in his preface to the work of Wilkins that "it is a great mistake" to think the obligation of moral duties "doth solely depend upon the revelation of God's will made to us in the Holy Scriptures." It was such reasoning that brought upon him the charge of freethinking.

If it be now possible to form any accurate picture of the state of belief in the latter part of the seventeenth century, it may perhaps be done by recognizing three categories of temperament or mental proclivity. First we have to reckon with the great mass of people held to religious observance by hebetude,³ devoid of the deeper mystical impulse or psychic bias which exhibited itself on the one hand among the dissenters who partly preserved the "enthusiasms" of the Commonwealth period, and on the other among the more cultured pietists of the Church who, banning "enthusiasm" in its stronger forms, cultivated a certain "enthusiasm" of their own. Religionists of the latter type were ministered to by superstitious mystics like Henry More, who, even when undertaking to "prove" the existence of God and the separate existence of the soul by argument and by demonology, taught them to cultivate a "warranted enthusiasm," and to "endeavour after a certain principle more noble

¹ Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 87, 94-98, 111, 112.

² As to the religious immoralism see Mosheim, 17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. ii, § 23, and Murdock's notes.

³ Compare the picture of average Protestant deportment given by Benjamin Bennet in his *Discourses against Popery*, 1714, p. 377.

and inward than reason itself, and without which reason will falter, or at least reach but to mean and frivolous things"....."something in me while I thus speak, which I must confess is of so retruse a nature that I want a name for it, unless I should adventure to term it divine sagacity, which is the first rise of successful reason, especially in matters of great comprehension and moment."¹ There was small psychic difference between this dubiously draped affirmation of the "inner light" and the more orotund proclamations of it by the dissenters who, for a considerable section of the people, still carried on the tradition of rapturous pietism; and the dissenters were not always at a disadvantage in that faculty for rhetoric which has generally been a main factor in doctrinal religion.²

From the popular and the eclectic pietist alike the generality of the Anglican clergy stood aloof; and among them, in turn, a rationalistic and anti-mythical habit of mind in a manner joined men who were divided in their beliefs. The clergymen who wrote lawyer-like treatises against schism were akin in psychosis to those who, in their distaste for the parade of inspiration, veered towards deism. Tillotson was not the only man reputed to have done so: fervid dissenters declared that many of the established clergy paid "more respect to the light of reason than to the light of the Scriptures," and further "left Christ out of their religion, disowned imputed righteousness, derided the operations of the holy spirit as the empty pretences of enthusiasts."³ Of men of this temperament, some would open dialectic batteries against dissent; while others, of a more searching proclivity, would tend to construct for themselves a rationalistic creed out of the current medley of theological and philosophic doctrine. The great mass of course maintained an allegiance of habit to the main formulas of the faith, putting quasi-rational aspects on the trinity, providence, redemption, and the future life, very much as the adherents of political parties normally vindicate their supposed principles; and there was a good deal of surviving temperamental piety even in the Restoration period.⁴ But the outstanding feature of the age, as contrasted with

¹ More, *Coll. of Philos. Writings*, 4th ed. 1712, gen. pref. p. 7.

² Compare some of the extracts in Thomas Bennet's *Defence of the Discourse of Schism*, etc., 2nd ed. 1704, from the sermons of R. Gouge (1688). The description of men as "mortal crumbling bits of dependency, yesterday's start-ups, that come out of the abyss of nothing, hastening to the bosom of their mother earth" (work cited, p. 93) is a reminder that the resonant and cadenced rhetoric of the Brownes and Taylors and Cudworths was an art of the age, at the command of different orders of propaganda.

³ Cited by Bennet, *A Defence of the Discourse of Schism*, etc., as cited, p. 41.

⁴ Thus Henry More's biographer, the Rev. Richard Ward, says "the late Mr. Chiswel told a friend of mine that for twenty years together after the return of King Charles the Second the *Mystery of Godliness*, and Dr. More's other works, ruled all the booksellers in London" (*Life of More*, 1710, pp. 162-63). We have seen the nature of some of More's other works."

previous periods, was the increasing commonness of the skeptical or rationalistic attitude in general society. Sir Charles Walseley protests¹ that "Irreligion, 'tis true, in its practice hath still been the companion of every age, but its open and public defence seems the peculiar of this"; adding that "most of the bad principles of this age are of no earlier a date than one very ill book, and indeed but the spawn of the *Leviathan*." This, as we have seen, is a delusion; but the influence of Hobbes was a potent factor.

All the while, the censorship of the press, which was one of the means by which the clerical party under Charles combated heresy, prevented any new and outspoken writing on the deistic side. The *Treatise of Humane [i.e. Human] Reason* (1674)² of Martin Clifford, a scholarly man-about-town,³ who was made Master of the Charterhouse, went indeed to the bottom of the question of authority by showing, as Spinoza had done shortly before,⁴ that the acceptance of authority is itself in the last resort grounded in reason. The author makes no overt attack on religion, and professes Christian belief, but points out that many modern wars had been on subjects of religion, and elaborates a skilful argument on the gain to be derived from toleration. Reason alone, fairly used, will bring a man to the Christian faith: he who denies this cannot be a Christian. As for schism, it is created not by variation in belief, but by the refusal to tolerate it. This ingenious and well-written treatise speedily elicited three replies, all pronouncing it a pernicious work. Dr. Laney, Bishop of Ely, is reported to have declared that book and author might fitly be burned together;⁵ and Dr. Isaac Watts, while praising it for "many useful notions," found it "exalt reason as the rule of religion as well as the guide, to a degree very dangerous."⁶ Its actual effect seems to have been to restrain the persecution of dissenters.⁷ In 1680, three years after Clifford's death, there appeared *An Apology for a Treatise of Humane Reason*, by Albertus Warren, wherein one of the attacks, entitled *Plain Dealing*, by a Cambridge scholar, is specially answered.⁸ This helped to evoke

¹ *The Reasonableness of Scripture Belief*, 1672, Epist. Ded.

² Rep. 1675; 2nd ed. 1691; rep. in the *Phoenix*, vol. ii, 1708; 3rd ed. 1736.

³ A very hostile account of him is given in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* He was, however, the friend of Cowley, and the "M. Clifford" to whom Sprat addressed his sketch of Cowley's *Life*. He was also a foe of Dryden—the "malicious Matt Clifford" of Dryden's *Sessions of the Poets*; and he attacked the poet in *Notes on Dryden's Poems* (published 1687), and is supposed to have had a hand in the *Rehearsal*. He was befriended by Shaftesbury.

⁴ *Tract. Theol. Polit.* c. 15.

⁵ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ii, 381-82; Granger, *Biog. Hist. of England*, 5th ed. v, 293.

⁶ Johnson's *Life of Dr. Watts*, 1785, App. i.

⁷ Toulmin, *Hist. of the Prot. Dissenters*, 1814, citing Johnson's *Life of Dr. Watts*.

⁸ It has been suggested that this was really written by Clifford, for posthumous publication. The humorous sketch of "His Character" at the close, suggesting that his vices seem to the writer to have outweighed his virtues, hints of ironical mystification.

the anonymous *Discourse of Things above Reason* (1681), by Robert Boyle, the distinguished author of *The Sceptical Chemist*, whom we have seen backing up Henry More in acceptance of the grossest of ignorant superstitions. The most notable thing about the *Discourse* is that it anticipates Berkeley's argument against freethinking mathematicians.¹

The stress of new discussion is further to be gathered from the work of Howe, *On the Reconcilableness of God's Prescience of the Sins of Men with the Wisdom and Sincerity of his Counsels and Exhortations*, produced in 1677 at Boyle's request. As a modern admirer admits that the thesis was a hopeless one,² it is not to be supposed that it did much to lessen doubt in its own day. The preface to Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist* (1677), which for the first time brings that appellation into prominence in English controversy, tacitly abandoning the usual ascription of atheism to all unbelievers, avows that "a mean esteem of the Scriptures and the Christian Religion" has become very common "among the Skepticks of this Age," and complains very much, as Butler did sixty years later, of the spirit of "Raillery and Buffoonery" in which the matter was too commonly approached. The "Letter" shows that a multitude of the inconsistencies and other blemishes of the Old Testament were being keenly discussed; and it cannot be said that the Bishop's vindication was well calculated to check the tendency. Indeed, we have the angry and reiterated declaration of Archdeacon Parker, writing in 1681, that "the ignorant and the unlearned among ourselves are become the greatest pretenders to skepticism; and it is the common people that nowadays set up for Skepticism and Infidelity"; that "Atheism and Irreligion are at length become as common as Vice and Debauchery"; and that "Plebeians and Mechanicks have philosophized themselves into Principles of Impiety, and read their Lectures of Atheism in the Streets and Highways. And they are able to demonstrate out of the *Leviathan* that there is no God nor Providence," and so on.³ As the Archdeacon's method of refutation consists mainly in abuse, he doubtless had the usual measure of success. A similar order of dialectic is employed by Dr. Sherlock in his *Practical Discourse of Religious Assemblies* (1681). The opening section is addressed to the "speculative atheists," here described as receding from the principles of

¹ Work cited, pp. 10, 14, 30, 55.

² Dr. Urwick, *Life of Howe*, as cited, p. xxxii.

³ *A Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Law of Nature and of the Christian Religion*, by Samuel Parker, D.D., 1681, pref. The first part of this treatise is avowedly a popularization of the argument of Cumberland's *Disquisitio de Legibus Naturæ*, 1672. Parker had previously published in Latin a *Disputatio de Deo et Providentia Divina*, in which he raised the question, *An Philosophorum ulli, et quinam Athei fuerunt* (1678).

their "great Master, Mr. Hobbs," who, "though he had no great opinion of religion in itself, yet thought it something considerable when it became the law of the nation." Such atheists, the reverend writer notes, when it is urged on them that all mankind worship "some God or other," reply that such an argument is as good for polytheism and idolatry as for monotheism; so, after formally inviting them to "cure their souls of that fatal and mortal disease, which makes them beasts here and devils hereafter," and lamenting that he is not dealing with "reasonable men," he bethinks him that "the laws of conversation require us to treat all men with just respects," and admits that there have been "some few wise and cautious atheists." To such, accordingly, he suggests that the atheist has already a great advantage in a world morally restrained by religion, where he is under no such restraint, and that, "if he should by his wit and learning proselyte a whole nation to atheism, Hell would break loose on Earth, and he might soon find himself exposed to all those violences and injuries which he now securely practises." For the rest, they had better not affront God, who may after all exist, and be able to revenge himself.¹ And so forth.

Of deists as such, Sherlock has nothing to say beyond treating as "practical atheists" men who admit the existence of God, yet never go to church, though "religious worship is nothing else but a public acknowledgment of God." Their non-attendance "is as great, if not a greater affront to God, and contempt of him, than atheism itself."² But the reverend writer's strongest resentment is aroused by the spectacle of freethinkers asking for liberty of thought.

"It is a fulsome and nauseous thing," he breathlessly protests, "to see the atheists and infidels of our days to turn great reformers of religion, to set up a mighty cry for liberty of conscience. For whatever reformation of religion may be needful at this time, whatever liberty of conscience may be fit to be granted, yet what have these men to do to meddle with it; those who think religion a mere fable, and God to be an Utopian prince, and conscience a man of clouts set up for a scarecrow to fright such silly creatures from their beloved enjoyments, and hell and heaven to be forged in the same mint with the poet's Styx and Acheron and Elysian Fields? We are like to see blessed times, if such men had but the reforming of religion."³

Dr Sherlock was not going to do good if the devil bade him.

The faith had a wittier champion in South; but he, in a Westminster Abbey sermon of 1684-5,⁴ mournfully declares that

"The weakness of our church discipline since its restoration,

¹ Work cited, 2nd ed. 1682, pp. 32, 38-40, 45-48.

² *Id.* pp. 54-55.

³ *Id.* p. 52.

⁴ *Twelve Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions*, 1692, pp. 438-39.

whereby it has been scarce able to get any hold on men's consciences, and much less able to keep it; and the great prevalence of that atheistical doctrine of the *Leviathan*; and the unhappy propagation of Erastianism; these things (I say) with some others have been the sad and fatal causes that have loosed the bands of conscience and eaten out the very heart and sense of Christianity among us, to that degree, that there is now scarce any religious tye or restraint upon persons, but merely from those faint remainders of natural conscience, which God will be sure to keep alive upon the hearts of men, as long as they are men, for the great ends of his own providence, whether they will or no. So that, were it not for this sole obstacle, religion is not now so much in danger of being divided and torn piecemeal by sects and factions, as of being at once devoured by atheism. Which being so, let none wonder that irreligion is accounted policy when it is grown even to a fashion; and passes for wit, with some, as well as for wisdom with others."

How general was the ferment of discussion may be gathered from Dryden's *Religio Laici* (1682), addressed to the youthful Henry Dickinson, translator of Père Richard Simon's *Critical History of the Old Testament* (Fr. 1678). The French scholar was suspect to begin with; and Bishop Burnet tells that Richard Hampden (grandson of the patriot), who was connected with the Rye House Plot and committed suicide in the reign of William and Mary, had been "much corrupted" in his religious principles by Simon's conversation at Paris. In the poem, Dryden recognizes the upsetting tendency of the treatise, albeit he terms it "matchless":—

For some, who have his secret meaning guessed,
Have found our author not too much a priest;

and his flowing disquisition, which starts from poetic contempt of reason and ends in prosaic advice to keep quiet about its findings, leaves the matter at that. The hopelessly confused but musical passage:

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars,
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is Reason to the soul,

begins the poem; but the poet thinks it necessary both in his preface and in his piece to argue with the deists in a fashion which must have entertained them as much as it embarrassed the more thoughtful orthodox, his simple thesis being that all ideas of deity were *débris* from the primeval revelation to Noah, and that natural reason could never have attained to a God-idea at all. And even at that, as regards the Herbertian argument:

No supernatural worship can be true,
Because a general law is that alone
Which must to all and everywhere be known:

he confesses that

Of all objections this indeed is chief
To startle reason, stagger frail belief;

and feebly proceeds to argue away the worst meaning of the creed of "the good old man" Athanasius. Finally, we have a fatherly appeal for peace and quietness among the sects:—

And after hearing what our Church can say,
If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb
Than by disputes the public peace disturb;
(For points obscure are of small use to learn,
But common quiet is mankind's concern.

It must have been the general disbelief in Dryden's sincerity on religious matters that caused the ascription to him of various freethinking treatises, for there is no decisive evidence that he was ever pronouncedly heterodox. His attitude to rationalism in the *Religio Laici* is indeed that of one who either could not see the scope of the problem or was determined not to indicate his recognition of it; and on the latter view the insincerity of both poem and preface would be exorbitant. By his nominal hostility to deism, however, Dryden did freethought a service of some importance. After his antagonism had been proclaimed, no one could plausibly associate freethinking with licentiousness, in which Dryden so far exceeded nearly every poet and dramatist of his age that the non-juror Jeremy Collier was free to single him out as the representative of theatrical lubricity. But in simple justice it must also be avowed that of all the opponents of deism in that day he is one of the least embittered, and that his amiable superficiality of argument must have tended to stimulate the claims of reason.

The late Dr. Verrall, a keen but unprejudiced critic, sums up as regards Dryden's religious poetry in general that "What is clear is that he had a marked dislike of clergy of all sorts, as such"; that "the main points of Deism are noted in *Religio Laici* (46-61); and that "his creed was presumably some sort of Deism" (*Lectures on Dryden*, 1914, pp. 148-50). Further, "*The State of Innocence* is really deistic and not Christian in tone: in his play of *Tyrannic Love*, the religion of St. Catharine may be mere philosophy"; and though the poet in his preface to that play protests that his "outward conversation shall never be justly taxed with the note of atheism or profaneness," the disclaimer "proves nothing as to his positive belief: Deism is not profane." In *Absalom and Achitophel*, again, the "coarse satire on Transubstantiation (118 ff.) shows rather religious insensibility than hostile theology," though "the poem shows his

dislike of liberty and private judgment (49-50)." Of the *Religio Laici* the critic asks: "Now in all this, is there any religion at all?" The poem "might well be dismissed as mere politics but for its astounding commencement" (p. 155). The critic unexpectedly fails to note that the admired commencement is an insoluble confusion of metaphors.

How far the process of reasoning had gone among quiet thinking people before the Revolution may be gathered from the essay entitled *Miracles no Violations of the Laws of Nature*, published in 1683.¹ Its thesis is that put explicitly by Montaigne and implicitly by Bacon, that Ignorance is the only worker of miracles; in other words, "that the power of God and the power of Nature are one and the same"—a simple and straightforward way of putting a conception which Cudworth had put circuitously and less courageously a few years before. No Scriptural miracle is challenged *qua* event. "Among the many miracles related to be done in favour of the Israelites," says the writer, "there is (I think) no one that can be apodictically demonstrated to be repugnant to th' establisht Order of Nature";² and he calmly accepts the Biblical account of the first rainbow, explaining it as passing for a miracle merely because it was the first. He takes his motto from Pliny: "Quid non miraculo est, cum primum in notitiam venit?"³ This is, however, a preliminary strategy; as is the opening reminder that "most of the ancient Fathers.....and of the most learned Theologues among the moderns" hold that the Scriptures as regards natural things do not design to instruct men in physics but "aim only to excite pious affections in their breasts."

We accordingly reach the position that the Scripture "many times speaks of natural things, yea even of God himself, very improperly, as aiming to affect and occupy the imagination of men, not to convince their reason." Many Scriptural narratives, therefore, "are either delivered poetically or related according to the preconceived opinions and prejudices of the writer." "Wherefore we here absolutely conclude that all the events that are *truly* related in the Scripture to have come to pass, proceeded necessarilyaccording to the immutable Laws of Nature; and that if anything be found which can be apodictically demonstrated to be repugnant to those laws.....we may safely and piously believe the same not to have been dictated by divine inspiration, but impiously added to the sacred volume by sacrilegious men; for whatever is

¹ This has been ascribed, without any good ground, to Charles Blount. It does not seem to me to be in his style.

² Premonition to the Candid Reader.

³ *Hist. Nat.* vii, 1.

against Nature is against Reason; and whatever is against Reason is absurd, and therefore also to be rejected and refuted."¹

Lest this should be found too hard a doctrine there is added, apropos of Joshua's staying of the sun and moon, a literary solution which has often done duty in later times. "To interpret Scripture-miracles, and to understand from the narrations of them how they really happened, 'tis necessary to know the opinions of those who first reported them.....otherwise we shall confound.....things which have really happen'd with things purely imaginary, and which were only prophetic representations. For in Scripture many things are related as real, and which were also believ'd to be real even by the relators themselves, that notwithstanding were only representations form'd in the brain, and merely imaginary—as that God, the Supreme Being, descended from heaven.....upon Mount Sinai.....; that Elias ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot.....which were only representations accommodated to their opinions who deliver'd them down to us."² Such argumentation had to prepare the way for Hume's *Essay Of Miracles*, half a century later; and concerning both reasoners it is to be remembered that their thought was to be "infidelity" for centuries after them. It needed real freethinking, then, to produce such doctrine in the days of the Rye House Plot.

Meanwhile, during an accidental lapse of the press laws, the deist CHARLES BLOUNT³ (1654–1693) had produced with his father's help his *Anima Mundi* (1679), in which there is set forth a measure of cautious unbelief; following it up (1680) by his much more pronounced essay, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, a keen attack on the principle of revelation and clericalism in general, and his translation [from the Latin version] of Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, so annotated⁴ as to be an ingenious counterblast to the Christian claims, and so prefaced as to be an open challenge to orthodoxy. The book was condemned to be burnt; and only the influence of Blount's family,⁵ probably, prevented his

¹ Pamphlet cited, pp. 20, 21.

² *Id.* p. 23.

³ Concerning whom see Macaulay's *History*, ch. xix, ed. 1877, ii, 411–12—a very prejudiced account. Blount is there spoken of as "one of the most unscrupulous plagiarists that ever lived," and as having "stolen" from Milton, because he issued a pamphlet "By Philopatris," largely made up from the *Arcopagittica*. Compare Macaulay's treatment of Locke, who adopted Dudley North's currency scheme (ch. xxi, vol. ii, p. 547).

⁴ Bayle (art. APOLLONIUS, note), who is followed by the French translator of Philostratus with Blount's notes in 1779 (J. F. Salvemini de Castillon), says the notes were drawn from the papers of Lord Herbert of Cherbury; but of this Blount says nothing.

⁵ As to these see the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* The statements of Anthony Wood as to the writings of Blount's father, relied on in the author's *Dynamics of Religion*, appear to be erroneous. Sir Thomas Pope Blount, Charles's eldest brother, shows a skeptical turn of mind in his *Essays* (3rd ed. 1697, *Essay* 7). Himself a learned man, he disparages learning as checking thought; and, professing belief in the longevity of the patriarchs (p. 187), pronounces popery and pagan religion to be mere works of priestcraft (*Essay* 1). He detested theological controversy and intolerance, and seems to have been a Lockian.

being prosecuted. The propaganda, however, was resumed by Blount and his friends in small tracts, and after his suicide¹ in 1693 these were collected as the *Oracles of Reason* (1693), his collected works (without the *Apollonius*) appearing in 1695. By this time the political tension of the Revolution of 1688 was over; Le Clerc's work on the inspiration of the Old Testament, raising many doubts as to the authorship of the Pentateuch, had been translated in 1690; Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) had been translated into English in 1689, and had impressed in a similar sense a number of scholars; his *Ethica* had given a new direction to the theistic controversy; the Boyle Lecture had been established for the confutation of unbelievers; and after the political convulsion of 1688 has subsided it rains refutations. Atheism is now so fiercely attacked, and with such specific arguments—as in Bentley's Boyle Lectures (1692), Edwards's *Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism* (1695), and many other treatises—that there can be no question as to the private vogue of atheistic or agnostic opinions. If we are to judge solely from the apologetic literature, it was more common than deism. Yet it seems impossible to doubt that there were ten deists for one atheist. Bentley's admission that he never met an explicit atheist² suggests that much of the atheism warred against was tentative. It was only the deists who could venture on open avowals; and the replies to them were most discussed.

Much account was made of one of the most compendious, the *Short and Easy Method with the Deists* (1697), by the nonjuror Charles Leslie; but this handy argument (which is really adopted without acknowledgment from an apologetic treatise by a French Protestant refugee, published in 1688³) was not only much bantered by deists, but was sharply censured as incompetent by the French Protestant Le Clerc;⁴ and many other disputants had to come to the rescue. A partial list will suffice to show the rate of increase of the ferment:—

1683. Dr. Rust, *Discourse on the Use of Reason in.....Religion, against Enthusiasts and Deists.*
 1685. Duke of Buckingham, *A Short Discourse upon the Reasonableness of men's having a religion or worship of God.*
 " *The Atheist Unmask'd.* By a Person of Honour.

¹ All that is known of this tragedy is that Blount loved his deceased wife's sister and wished to marry her; but she held it unlawful, and he was in despair. According to Pope, a sufficiently untrustworthy authority, he "gave himself a stab in the arm, as pretending to kill himself, of the consequence of which he really died" (note to *Epilogue to the Satires*, i, 123). An overstrung nervous system may be diagnosed from his writing.

² *Boyle Lectures on Atheism*, ed. 1724, p. 4.

³ *Reflexions upon the Books of the Holy Scriptures to establish the Truth of the Christian Religion*, by Peter Allix, D.D., 1688, i, 6-7.

⁴ As cited by Leslie, *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated*, 1711, pp. 17-21.

1688. Peter Allix, D.D. *Reflexions*, etc., as above cited.
1691. Archbishop Tenison, *The Folly of Atheism*.
 „ *Discourse of Natural and Revealed Religion*.
 „ John Ray, *Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation*.
 (Many reprints.)
1692. C. Ellis, *The Folly of Atheism Demonstrated*.
 „ Bentley's *Sermons on Atheism*. (First Boyle Lectures.)
1693. Archbishop Davies, *An Anatomy of Atheism*. A poem.
 „ *A Conference between an Atheist and his Friend*.
1694. J. Goodman, *A Winter Evening Conference between Neighbours*.
 „ Bishop Kidder, *A Demonstration of the Messias*. (Boyle Lect.)
1695. John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*.
 „ John Edwards, B.D., *Some Thoughts concerning the Several Causes and occasions of Atheism*. (Directed against Locke.)
1696. *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England*.
 „ *Reflections on a Pamphlet*, etc. (the last named).
 „ Sir C. Wolsley, *The Unreasonableness of Atheism Demonstrated*. (Rep.)
 „ Dr. Nichols' *Conference with a Theist*. Pt. I. (Answer to Blount.)
 „ J. Edwards, D.D., *A Demonstration of the Evidence and Providence of God*.
 „ E. Pelling, *Discourse.....on the Existence of God* (Pt. II in 1705).
1697. Stephen Eye, *A Discourse concerning Natural and Revealed Religion*.
 „ Bishop Gastrell, *The Certainty and Necessity of Religion*. (Boyle Lect.)
 „ H. Prideaux, *Discourse vindicating Christianity*, etc.
 „ C. Leslie, *A Short and Easy Method with the Deists*.
1698. Dr. J. Harris, *A Refutation of Atheistical Objections*. (Boyle Lect.)
 „ Thos. Emes, *The Atheist turned Deist, and the Deist turned Christian*.
1699. C. Lidgould, *Proclamation against Atheism*, etc.
 „ J. Bradley, *An Impartial View of the Truth of Christianity*. (Answer to Blount.)
1700. Bishop Bradford, *The Credibility of the Christian Revelation*. (Boyle Lect.)
 „ Rev. P. Berault, *Discourses on the Trinity, Atheism*, etc.
1701. T. Knaggs, *Against Atheism*.
 „ W. Scot, *Discourses concerning the wisdom and goodness of God*.
1702. *A Confutation of Atheism*.
 „ Dr. Stanhope, *The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion*.
 (Boyle Lect.)
1704. *An Antidote of Atheism* (? Reprint of More).
1705. Translation of Herbert's *Ancient Religion of the Gentiles*.
 „ Charles Gildon, *The Deist's Manual* (a recantation).
 „ Ed. Pelling, *Discourse concerning the existence of God*. Part II.
 „ Dr. Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, etc. (Boyle Lect. of 1704.)
1706. *A Preservative against Atheism and Infidelity*.
 „ Th. Wise, B.D., *A Confutation of the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism*
 (recast and abridgment of Cudworth).
 „ T. Oldfield, *Mille Testes; against the Atheists, Deists, and Skepticks*.
 „ *The Case of Deism fully and fairly stated, with Dialogue*, etc.
1707. Dr. J. Hancock, *Arguments to prove the Being of a God*. (Boyle Lect.)

Still there was no new deistic literature apart from Toland's

Christianity not Mysterious (1696) and his unauthorized issue (of course without author's name) of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* in 1699; and in that there is little direct conflict with orthodoxy, though it plainly enough implied that scripturalism would injuriously affect morals. It seems at that date, perhaps through the author's objection to its circulation, to have attracted little attention; but he tells that it incurred hostility.¹ Blount's famous stratagem of 1693² had led to the dropping of the official censorship of the press, the Licensing Act having been renewed for only two years in 1693 and dropped in 1695; but after the prompt issue of Blount's collected works in that year, and the appearance of Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* in the next, the new and comprehensive Blasphemy Law of 1697³ served sufficiently to terrorize writers and printers in that regard for the time being.⁴ Bare denial of the Trinity, of the truth of the Christian religion, or of the divine authority of the Scriptures, was made punishable by disability for any civil office; and on a second offence by three years' imprisonment, with withdrawal of all legal rights. The first clear gain from the freedom of the press was thus simply a cheapening of books in general. By the Licensing Act of Charles II, and by a separate patent, the Stationers' Company had a monopoly of printing and selling all classical authors; and while their editions were disgracefully bad, the importers of the excellent editions printed in Holland had to pay them a penalty of 6s. 8d. on each copy.⁵ By the same Act, passed under clerical influence, the number even of master printers and letter-founders had been reduced, and the number of presses and apprentices strictly limited; and the total effect of the monopolies was that when Dutch-printed books were imported in exchange for English, the latter sold more cheaply at Amsterdam than they did in London, the English consumer, of course, bearing the burden.⁶ The immediate effect, therefore, of the lapse of the Licensing Act must have been to cheapen greatly all

¹ *Characteristics*, ii, 263 (*Moralists*, pt. ii, § 3). One of the most dangerous positions from the orthodox point of view would be the thesis that while religion could do either great good or great harm to morals, atheism could do neither. (BK. I, pt. iii, § 1.) Cp. Bacon's *Essay, Of Atheism*.

² Blount, after assailing in anonymous pamphlets Bohun the licenser, induced him to license a work entitled *King William and Queen Mary Conquerors*, which infuriated the nation. Macaulay calls the device "a base and wicked scheme." It was almost innocent in comparison with Blount's promotion of the "Popish plot" mania. See *Who Killed Sir Edmund Godfrey Berry?* by Alfred Marks, 1905, pp. 133-35, 150.

³ See the text in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Penalties upon Opinion*, pp. 19-21. Macaulay does not mention this measure.

⁴ The Act had been preceded by a proclamation of the king, dated Feb. 24, 1697.

⁵ As to an earlier monopoly of the London booksellers, see George Herbert's letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to Bacon, Jan. 29, 1620. In *Works of George Herbert*, ed. 1841, i, 217-18.

⁶ See Locke's notes on the Licensing Act in Lord King's *Life of Locke*, 1829, pp. 203-206; Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 313-14; Macaulay's *History*, ii, 504.

foreign books by removal of duties, and at the same time to cheapen English books by leaving printing free. It will be seen above that the output of treatises *against* freethought at once increases in 1696. But the revolution of 1688, like the Great Rebellion, had doubtless given a new stimulus to freethinking; and the total effect of freer trade in books, even with a veto on "blasphemy," could only be to further it. This was ere long to be made plain.

§ 3

Alongside of the more popular and native influences, there were at work others, foreign and more academic; and even in professedly orthodox writers there are signs of the influence of deistic thought. Thus Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (written about 1634, published 1642) has been repeatedly characterized¹ as tending to promote deism by its tone and method; and there can be no question that it assumes a great prevalence of critical unbelief, to which its attitude is an odd combination of humorous cynicism and tranquil dogmatism, often recalling Montaigne,² and at times anticipating Emerson. There is little savour of confident belief in the smiling maxim that "to confirm and establish our belief 'tis best to argue with judgments below our own"; or in the avowal, "In divinity I love to keep the road; and though not in an implicit yet an humble faith, follow the great wheel of the Church, by which I move."³ The pose of the typical believer: "I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est*,"⁴ tells in his case of no anxious hours; and such smiling incuriousness is not conducive to conviction in others, especially when followed by a recital of some of the many insoluble dilemmas of Scripture. When he reasons he is merely self-subversive, as in the saying, "'Tis not a ridiculous devotion to say a prayer before a game at tables; for even in sortileges and matters of greatest uncertainty there is a settled and *pre-ordered* course of effects";⁵ and after remarking that the notions of Fortune and astral influence "have perverted the devotion of many into atheism," he proceeds to avow that his

¹ Trinius, *Freydenker-Lexicon*, 1759, p. 120; Pünjer, i. 291, 300-301. Browne was even called an atheist. Arpe, *Apologia pro Vanino*, 1712, p. 27, citing Welschius. Mr. A. H. Bullen, in his introduction to his ed. of Marlowe (1885, vol. i, p. lviii), remarks that Browne, who "kept the road" in divinity, "exposed the vulnerable points in the Scriptural narratives with more acumen and gusto than the whole army of freethinkers, from Anthony Collins downwards." This is of course an extravagance, but, as Mr. Bullen remarks in the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* vii, 66, Browne discusses "with evident relish" the "seeming absurdities in the Scriptural narrative."

² Browne's Annotator points to the derivation of his skepticism from "that excellent French writer Monsieur Mountaign, in whom I often trace him" (Sayle's ed. 1904, i, p. xviii).

³ *Religio Medici*, i, 6.

⁴ *Id.* i, 9.

⁵ *Id.* i, 18.

many doubts never inclined him "to any point of infidelity or desperate positions of atheism; for I have been these many years of opinion there never was any."¹ Yet in his later treatise on *Vulgar Errors* (1645) he devotes a chapter² to the activities of Satan in instilling the belief that "there is no God at all.....that the necessity of his entity dependeth upon ours.....; that the natural truth of God is an artificial erection of Man, and the Creator himself but a subtile invention of the Creature." He further notes as coming from the same source "a secondary and deductive Atheism—that although men concede there is a God, yet should they deny his providence. And therefore assertions have flown about, that he intendeth only the care of the species or common natures, but letteth loose the guard of individuals, and single existences therein."³ Browne now asserts merely that "many there are who cannot conceive that there was ever any absolute Atheist," and does not clearly affirm that Satan labours wholly in vain. The broad fact remains that he avows "reason is a rebel unto faith"; and in the *Vulgar Errors* he shows in his own reasoning much of the practical play of the new skepticism.⁴ Yet it is finally on record that in 1664, on the trial of two women for witchcraft, Browne declared that the fits suffered from by the children said to have been bewitched "were natural, but heightened by the devil's co-operating with the malice of the witches, at whose instance he did the villainies."⁵ This amazing deliverance is believed to have "turned the scale" in the minds of the jury against the poor women, and they were sentenced by the sitting judge, Sir Matthew Hale, to be hanged. It would seem that in Browne's latter years the irrational element in him, never long dormant, overpowered the rational. The judgment is a sad one to have to pass on one of the greatest masters of prose in any language. In other men, happily, the progression was different.

The opening even of Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, so far as it goes, falls little short of the deistic position.⁶ A new vein of rationalism, too, is opened in the theological field by the great

¹ *Religio Medici*, i, 20.

² Bk. I, ch. x.

³ Here we have a theorem independently reached later (with the substitution of Nature for God) by Mary Wollstonecraft and Tennyson in turn. Browne cites yet another: "that he looks not below the moon, but hath resigned the regiment of sublunary affairs unto inferior deputations"—a thesis adopted in effect by Cudworth.

⁴ By an error of the press, Browne is made in Mr. Sayle's excellent reprint (i, 108) to begin a sentence in the middle of a clause, with an odd result:—"I do confess I am an Atheist. I cannot persuade myself to honour that the world adores." The passage should obviously read: "to that subterraneous Idol [avarice] and God of the Earth I do confess I am an Atheist," etc.

⁵ Hutchinson, *Histor. Essay Conc. Witchcraft*, 1718, p. 118; 2nd ed. 1730, p. 151.

⁶ Cp. Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, p. 33.

Cambridge scholar John Spencer, whose *Discourse concerning Prodigies* (1663; 2nd ed. 1665), though quite orthodox in its main positions, has in part the effect of a plea for naturalism as against supernaturalism. Spencer's great work, *De legibus Hebræorum* (1685), is, apart from Spinoza, the most scientific view of Hebrew institutions produced before the rise of German theological rationalism in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Holding most of the Jewish rites to have been planned by the deity as substitutes for or safeguards against those of the Gentiles which they resembled, he unconsciously laid, with Herbert, the foundations of comparative hierology, bringing to the work a learning which is still serviceable to scholars.¹ And there were yet other new departures by clerical writers, who of course exhibit the difficulty of attaining a consistent rationalism.

One clergyman, Joseph Glanvill, is found publishing a treatise on *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661; amended in 1665 under the title *Scep̄sis Scientifica*),² wherein, with careful reservation of religion, the spirit of critical science is applied to the ordinary processes of opinion with much energy, and the "mechanical philosophy" of Descartes is embraced with zeal. Following Raleigh and Hobbes,³ Glanvill also puts the positive view of causation⁴ afterwards fully developed by Hume.⁵ Yet he not only vetoed all innovation in "divinity," but held stoutly by the crudest forms of the belief in witchcraft, and was with Henry More its chief English champion in his day against rational disbelief.⁶ In religion he had so little of the skeptical faculty that he declared "Our religious foundations are fastened at the pillars of the intellectual world, and the grand articles of our belief as demonstrable as geometry. Nor will ever either the subtile attempts of the resolved Atheist, or the passionate hurricanes of the wild enthusiast, any more be able to prevail against the reason our faith is built on, than the blustering winds to blow out the Sun."⁷ He had his due reward in being philosophically assailed by the Catholic priest Thomas White as a promoter of skepticism,⁸

¹ Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, 1889, pref. p. vi; Rev. Dr. Duff, *Hist. of Old Test. Criticism*, R. P. A. 1910, p. 113.

² This appears again, much curtailed and "so altered as to be in a manner new," in its author's collected *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Religion and Philosophy* (1676), under the title *Against Confidence in Philosophy*.

³ See the *Humane Nature* (1640), ch. iv, §§ 7-9.

⁴ *Scep̄sis Scientifica*, ch. 23, § 1.

⁵ See the passages compared by Lewes, *History of Philosophy*, 4th ed. ii, 338.

⁶ In his *Blow at Modern Sadducism* (4th ed. 1668). *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1681; 3rd ed. 1689), and *A Whip to the Droll, Fidler to the Atheist* (1688—a letter to Henry More, who was zealous on the same lines). These works seem to have been much more widely circulated than the *Scep̄sis Scientifica*.

⁷ *Scep̄sis*, ch. 20, § 3.

⁸ See Glanvill's reply in a letter to a friend (1665), re-written as *Essay II. Of Scepticism and Certainty*: in *A short Reply to the learned Mr. Thomas White in his collected Essays on Several Important Subjects*, 1676.

and by an Anglican clergyman, wroth with the Royal Society and all its works, as an infidel and an atheist.¹

This was as true as clerical charges of the kind usually were in the period. But without any animus or violence of interpretation, a reader of Glanvill's visitation sermon on *The Agreement of Reason and Religion*² might have inferred that he was a deist. It sets forth that "religion primarily and mainly consists in worship and vertue," and that it "in a secondary sense consists in some principles relating to the worship of God, and of his Son, in the ways of devout and vertuous living"; Christianity having "superadded" baptism and the Lord's Supper to "the religion of mankind." Apart from his obsession as to witchcraft—and perhaps even as to that—Glanvill seems to have grown more and more rationalistic in his later years. The *Scep sis* omits some of the credulous flights of the *Vanity of Dogmatizing*;³ the re-written version in the collected *Essays* omits such dithyrambs as that above quoted; and the sermon in its revised form sets out with the emphatic declaration: "There is not anything that I know which hath done more mischief to religion than the disparaging of reason under pretence of respect and favour to it; for hereby the very foundations of Christian faith have been undermined, and the world prepared for atheism. And if reason must not be heard, the *Being* of a God and the authority of Scripture can neither be proved nor defended; and so our faith drops to the ground like an house that hath no foundation." Such reasoning could not but be suspect to the orthodoxy of the age.

Apart from the influence of Hobbes, who, like Descartes, shaped his thinking from the starting-point of Galileo, the Cartesian philosophy played in England a great transitional part. At the university of Cambridge it was already naturalized;⁴ and the influence of Glanvill, who was an active member of the Royal Society, must have carried it further. The remarkable treatise of the anatomist Glisson,⁵ *De natura substantiæ energetica* (1672), suggests the influence of either Descartes or Gassendi; and it is remarkable that the clerical moralist Cumberland, writing his *Disquisitio de legibus Naturæ* (1672) in reply to Hobbes, not only takes up a utilitarian position akin to Hobbes's own, and expressly avoids any appeal to the theological

¹ See the reply in PLUS ULTRA: or, the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge since the days of Aristotle, 1668, Epist. Ded. Pref. ch. xviii, and Conclusion. [The re-written treatise, in the collected *Essays*, eliminates the controversial matter.]

² First printed with Glanvill's *Philosophia Pia* in 1671. Rep. as an essay in the collected *Essays*.

³ Owen, pref. to *Scep sis*, pp. xx-xxii.

⁴ Owen, pref. to ed. of *Scep sis Scientifica*, p. ix.

⁵ Of whom, however, a high medical authority declares that, "as a physiologist, he was sunk in realism" (that is, metaphysical apriorism). Prof. T. Clifford Allbutt, *Harveian Oration on Science and Medieval Thought*, 1901, p. 44.

doctrine of future punishments, but introduces physiology into his ethic to the extent of partially figuring as an ethical materialist.¹ In regard to Gassendi's direct influence it has to be noted that in 1659 there appeared *The Vanity of Judiciary Astrology*, translated by "A Person of Quality," from P. Gassendus; and further that, as is remarked by Reid, Locke borrowed more from Gassendi than from any other writer.²

[It is stated by Sir Leslie Stephen (*English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed. i, 32) that in England the philosophy of Descartes made no distinguished disciples; and that John Norris "seems to be the only exception to the general indifference." This overlooks (1) Glanvill, who constantly cites and applauds Descartes (*Scepsis Scientifica*, passim). (2) In Henry More's *Divine Dialogues*, again (1668), one of the disputants is made to speak (*Dial.* i, ch. xxiv) of "that admired wit Descartes"; and he later praises him even when passing censure (above, p. 65). More had been one of the admirers in his youth, and changed his view (cp. Ward's *Life of Dr. Henry More*, pp. 63-64). But his first letter to Descartes begins: "Quanta voluptate perfusus est animus meus, Vir clarissime, scriptis tuis legendis, nemo quisquam præter te unum potest conjectare." (3) There was published in 1670 a translation of Des Fournellis's letter in defence of the Cartesian system, with François Bayle's *General System of the Cartesian Philosophy*. (4) The continual objections to the atheistic tendency of Descartes throughout Cudworth's *True Intellectual System* imply anything but "general indifference"; and (5) Barrow's tone in venturing to oppose him (cit. in Whewell's *Philosophy of Discovery*, 1860, p. 179) pays tribute to his great influence. (6) Molyneux, in the preface to his translation of the *Six Metaphysical Meditations* of Descartes in 1680, speaks of him as "this excellent philosopher" and "this prodigious man." (7) Maxwell, in a note to his translation (1727) of Bishop Cumberland's *Disquisitio de legibus Naturæ*, remarks that the doctrine of a universal *plenum* was accepted from the Cartesian philosophy by Cumberland, "in whose time that philosophy prevailed much" (p. 120). See again (8) Clarke's Answer to Butler's Fifth Letter (1718) as to the "universal prevalence" of Descartes's notions in natural philosophy. (9) The Scottish Lord President Forbes (d. 1747) summed up that "Descartes's romance kept entire possession of men's belief for fully fifty years" (*Works*, ii, 132). (10) And his fellow-judge, Sir William Anstruther, in his "Discourse against Atheism" (*Essays, Moral and Divine*, 1701, pp. 6, 8, 9), cites with much approval

¹ Cp. Whewell, as last cited, pp. 75-83; Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, iv, 159-71.

² Reid, *Intellectual Powers*, Essay I, ch. i; Hamilton's ed. of *Works*, p. 226. Glanvill calls Gassendi "that noble wit." (*Scepsis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. p. 151.)

the theistic argument of "the celebrated Descartes" as "the last evidences which appeared upon the stage of learning" in that connection.

Cp. Berkeley, *Siris*, § 331. Of Berkeley himself, Professor Adamson writes (*Encyc. Brit.* iii, 589) that "Descartes and Locke.....are his real masters in speculation." The Cartesian view of the eternity and infinity of matter had further become an accepted ground for "philosophical atheists" in England before the end of the century (Molyneux, in *Familiar Letters of Locke and his Friends*, 1708, p. 46). As to the many writers who charged Descartes with promoting atheism, see Mosheim's notes in Harrison's ed. of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, i, 275-76; Clarke, as above cited; Leibnitz's letter to Philip, cited by Latta, *Leibnitz*, 1898, p. 8, note; and Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, ii, 315.

Sir Leslie Stephen seems to have followed, under a misapprehension, Whewell, who contends merely that the Cartesian doctrine of vortices was never widely accepted in England (*Philos. of Discovery*, pp. 177-78; cp. *Hist. of the Induct. Sciences*, ed. 1857, ii, 107, 147-48). Buckle was perhaps similarly misled when he wrote in his note-book: "Descartes was never popular in England" (*Misc. Works*, abridged ed. i, 269). Whewell himself mentions that Clarke, soon after taking his degree at Cambridge, "was actively engaged in introducing into the academic course of study, first, the philosophy of Descartes in its best form, and, next, the philosophy of Newton" (*Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, pp. 97-98). And Professor Fowler, in correcting his first remarks on the point, decides that "many of the mathematical teachers at Cambridge continued to teach the Cartesian system for some time after the publication of Newton's *Principia*" (ed. of *Nov. Org.*, p. xi).

It is clear, however, that insofar as new science set up a direct conflict with Scriptural assumptions it gained ground but slowly and indirectly. It is difficult to-day to realize with what difficulty the Copernican and Galilean doctrine of the earth's rotation and movement round the sun found acceptance even among studious men. We have seen that Bacon finally rejected it. And as Professor Masson points out,¹ not only does Milton seem uncertain to the last concerning the truth of the Copernican system, but his friends and literary associates, the "Smectymnuans," in their answer to Bishop Hall's *Humble Remonstrance* (1641), had pointed to the Copernican doctrine as an unquestioned instance of a supreme absurdity. Glanvill, remarking in 1665 that "it is generally opinion'd that the Earth rests as the world's centre," avows that "for a man to go

¹ *Poet. Works of Milton*, 1874, Introd. i, 92 sq.

about to counter-argue this belief is as fruitless as to whistle against the winds. I shall not undertake to maintain the paradox that confronts this almost Catholic opinion. Its assertion would be entertained with the hoot of the rabble; the very mention of it as possible, is among the most ridiculous."¹ All he ventures to do is to show that the senses do not really vouch the ordinary view. Not till the eighteenth century, probably, did the common run of educated people anywhere accept the scientific teaching.

On the other hand, however, there was growing up not a little Socinian and other Unitarianism, for some variety of which we have seen two men burned in 1612. Church measures had been taken against the importation of Socinian books as early as 1640. The famous Lord Falkland, slain in the Civil War, is supposed to have leant to that opinion;² and Chillingworth, whose *Religion of Protestants* (1637) was already a remarkable application of rational tests to ecclesiastical questions in defiance of patristic authority,³ seems in his old age to have turned Socinian.⁴ Violent attacks on the Trinity are noted among the heresies of 1646.⁵ Colonel John Fry, one of the regicides, who in Parliament was accused of rejecting the Trinity, cleared himself by explaining that he simply objected to the terms "persons" and "subsistence," but was one of those who sought to help the persecuted Unitarian Biddle. In 1652 the Parliament ordered the destruction of a certain Socinian Catechism; and by 1655 the heresy seems to have become common.⁶ It is now certain that Milton was substantially a Unitarian,⁷ and that Locke and Newton were at heart no less so.⁸

The temper of the Unitarian school appears perhaps at its best in the anonymous *Rational Catechism* published in 1686. It purports to be "an instructive conference between a father and his son," and is dedicated by the father to his two daughters. The "Catechism" rises above the common run of its species in that it is really a dialogue, in which the rôles are at times reversed, and the catechumen is permitted to think and speak for himself. The exposition is entirely unevangelical. Right religion is declared to consist in right conduct; and while the actuality of the Christian record is maintained on argued grounds, on the lines of Grotius and

¹ *Scep sis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. p. 66. In the condensed version of the treatise in Glanvill's collected *Essays* (1676, p. 20), the language is to the same effect.

² J. J. Tayler, *Retrospect of the Religious Life of England*, Martineau's ed. p. 204; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, iii, 152-53.

³ Cp. Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 347-51; 1-vol. ed. pp. 196-99.

⁴ Tayler, *Retrospect*, pp. 204-205; Wallace, iii, 154-55.

⁵ *Gangræna*, pt. i, p. 38.

⁶ Tayler, p. 221. As to Biddle, the chief propagandist of the sect, see pp. 221-24, and Wallace, Art. 285.

⁷ Macaulay, *Essay on Milton*. Cp. Brown's ed. (Clarendon Press) of the poems of Milton, ii, 30.

⁸ Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. v.

Parker, the doctrine of salvation by faith is strictly excluded, future happiness being posited as the reward of good life, not of faith. There is no negation, the author's object being avowedly peace and conciliation; but the Epistle Dedicatory declares that religious reasoners have hitherto "failed in their foundation-work. They have too much slighted that philosophy which is the natural religion of all men; and which, being natural, must needs be universal and eternal: and upon which therefore, or at least in conformity with which, all instituted and revealed religion must be supposed to be built." We have here in effect the position taken up by Toland ten years later; and, in germ, the principle which developed deism, albeit in connection with an affirmation of the truth of the Christian records. Of the central Christian doctrine there is no acceptance, though there is laudation of Jesus; and reprints after 1695 bore the motto, from Locke:¹ "As the foundation of virtue, there ought very earnestly to be imprinted on the mind of a young man a true notion of God, as of the independent supreme Being, Author, and Maker of all things: And, consequent to this, instil into him a love and reverence of this supreme Being." We are already more than half-way from Unitarianism to deism.

Indeed, the theism of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding* undermined even his Unitarian Scripturalism, inasmuch as it denies, albeit confusedly, that revelation can ever override reason. In one passage he declares that "reason is natural revelation," while "revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, which reason vouchsafes the truth of."² This compromise appears to be borrowed from Spinoza, who had put it with similar vagueness in his great *Tractatus*,³ of which pre-eminent work Locke cannot have been ignorant, though he protested himself little read in the works of Hobbes and Spinoza, "those justly decried names."⁴ The *Tractatus* being translated into English in the same year with the publication of the *Essay*, its influence would concur with Locke's in a widened circle of readers; and the substantially naturalistic doctrine of both books inevitably promoted the deistic movement. We have Locke's own avowal that he had many doubts as to the Biblical narratives;⁵ and he never attempts to remove the doubts of others. Since, however, his doctrine provided a sphere for revelation on the territory of ignorance, giving it prerogative where its assertions

¹ *Of Education*, § 136.

² *Essay*, bk. iv, ch. xix, § 4.

³ *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, c. 15.

⁴ *Third Letter to the Bishop of Worcester*.

⁵ *Some Familiar Letters between Mr. Locke and Several of his Friends*, 1708, pp. 302-304.

were outside knowledge, it counted substantially for Unitarianism insofar as it did not lead to deism.

See the *Essay*, bk. iv, ch. xviii. Locke's treatment of revelation may be said to be the last and most attenuated form of the doctrine of "two-fold truth." On his principle, any proposition in a professed revelation that was not provable or disprovable by reason and knowledge must pass as true. His final position, that "whatever is divine revelation ought to overrule all our opinions" (bk. iv, ch. xviii, § 10), is tolerably elastic, inasmuch as he really reserves the question of the actuality of revelation. Thus he evades the central issue. Naturally he was by critical foreigners classed as a deist. Cp. Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 36. The German historian Tennemann sums up that Clarke wrote his apologetic works because "the consequences of the empiricism of Locke had become so decidedly favourable to the cause of atheism, skepticism, materialism, and irreligion" (*Manual of the Hist. of Philos.* Eng. tr. Bohn ed. § 349).

In his "practical" treatise on *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) Locke played a similar part. It was inspired by the genuine concern for social peace which had moved him to write an essay on Toleration as early as 1667,¹ and to produce from 1685 onwards his famous *Letters on Toleration*, by far the most persuasive appeal of the kind that had yet been produced;² all the more successful so far as it went, doubtless, because the first Letter ended with a memorable capitulation to bigotry: "Lastly, those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all. Besides, also, those that by their atheism undermine and destroy all religion can have no pretence of religion whereupon to challenge the privilege of a toleration." This handsome endorsement of the religion which had repeatedly "dissolved all" in a pandemonium of internecine hate, as compared with the one heresy which had never broken treaties or shed blood, is presumably more of a prudent surrender to normal fanaticism than an expression of the philosopher's own state of mind;³ and his treatise on *The Reasonableness of Christianity* is an attempt to limit religion to a

¹ Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, 1876, ii, 34.

² The first Letter, written while he was hiding in Holland in 1685, was in Latin, but was translated into French, Dutch, and English.

³ Mr. Fox Bourne, in his biography (ii, 41), apologizes for the lapse, so alien to his own ideals, by the remark that "the atheism then in vogue was of a very violent and rampant sort." It is to be feared that this palliation will not hold good—at least, the present writer has been unable to trace the atheism in question. For "atheism" we had better read "religion."

humane ethic, with sacraments and mysteries reduced to ceremonies, while claiming that the gospel ethic was "now with divine authority established into a legible law, far surpassing all that philosophy and human reason had attained to."¹ Its effect was, however, to promote rationalism without doing much to mitigate the fanaticism of belief.

Locke's practical position has been fairly summed up by Prof. Bain: "Locke proposed, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, to ascertain the exact meaning of Christianity, by casting aside all the glosses of commentators and divines, and applying his own unassisted judgment to spell out its teachings.....The fallacy of his position obviously was that he could not strip himself of his education and acquired notions.....He seemed unconscious of the necessity of trying to make allowance for his unavoidable prepossessions. In consequence, he simply fell into an old groove of received doctrines; and these he handled under the set purpose of simplifying the fundamentals of Christianity to the utmost. Such purpose was not the result of his Bible study, but of his wish to overcome the political difficulties of the time. He found, by keeping close to the Gospels and making proper selections from the Epistles, that the belief in Christ as the Messiah could be shown to be the central fact of the Christian faith; that the other main doctrines followed out of this by a process of reasoning; and that, as all minds might not perform the process alike, these doctrines could not be essential to the practice of Christianity. He got out of the difficulty of framing a creed, as many others have done, by simply using Scripture language, without subjecting it to any very strict definition; certainly without the operation of stripping the meaning of its words, to see what it amounted to. That his short and easy method was not very successful the history of the deistical controversy sufficiently proves" (*Practical Essays*, pp. 226-27).

That Locke was felt to have injured orthodoxy is further proved by the many attacks made on him from the orthodox side. Even the first Letter on Toleration elicited retorts, one of which claims to demonstrate "the Absurdity and Impiety of an Absolute Toleration."² On his positive teachings he was assailed by Bishop Stillingfleet; by the Rev. John Milner, B.D.; by the Rev. John Morris; by William Carrol; and by the Rev. John Edwards, B.D.;³ his only assailant with a rationalistic repute being Dr. Thomas Burnet. Some attacked him on his *Essays*; some on his *Reasonableness of Christianity*; orthodoxy finding in both the same tendency to "subvert the nature

¹ *Second Vindication of "The Reasonableness of Christianity,"* 1697, pref.

² Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, ii, 181.

³ Son of the Presbyterian author of the famous *Gangrana*.

and use of divine revelation and faith."¹ In the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Bolde, who defended him in *Some Considerations* published in 1699, the hostile clericals had treated him "with a rudeness peculiar to some who make a profession of the Christian religion, and seem to pride themselves in being the clergy of the Church of England."² This is especially true of Edwards, a notably ignoble type;³ but hardly of Milner, whose later *Account of Mr. Locke's Religion out of his Own Writings, and in his Own Words* (1700), pressed him shrewdly on the score of his "Socinianism." In the eyes of a pietist like William Law, again, Locke's conception of the infant mind as a *tabula rasa* was "dangerous to religion," besides being philosophically false.⁴ Yet Locke agreed with Law⁵ that moral obligation is dependent solely on the will of God—a doctrine denounced by the deist Shaftesbury as the negation of morality.

See the *Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit*, pt. iii, § 2; and the *Letters to a Student*, under date June 3, 1709 (p. 403 in Rand's *Life, Letters, etc., of Shaftesbury*, 1900). The extraordinary letter of Newton to Locke, written just after or during a spell of insanity, first apologizes for having believed that Locke "endeavoured to embroil me with women and by other means," and goes on to beg pardon "for representing that you struck at the root of morality, in a principle you laid down in your book of ideas." In his subsequent letter, replying to that of Locke granting forgiveness and gently asking for details, he writes: "What I said of your book I remember not." (Letters of September 16 and October 5, 1693, given in Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 226-27, and Sir D. Brewster's *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton*, 1855, ii, 148-51.) Newton, who had been on very friendly terms with Locke, must have been repeating, when his mind was disordered, criticisms otherwise current. After printing in full the letters above cited, Brewster insists, on his principle of sacrificing all other considerations to Newton's glory (cp. De Morgan, *Newton: his Friend: and his Niece*, 1885, pp. 99-111), that all the while Newton was "in the full possession of his mental powers." The whole diction of the first letter tells the contrary. If we are not to suppose that Newton had been temporarily insane, we must think of his judgment as even less rational, apart from physics, than it is

¹ Said by Carrol, *Dissertation on Mr. Locke's Essay*, 1706, cited by Anthony Collins, *Essay Concerning the Use of Reason*, 1709, p. 30.

² Cited by Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, ii, 438.

³ Whose calibre may be gathered from his egregious doctoral thesis, *Concio ad clerum de demonum malorum existentia et natura* (1700). After a list of the deniers of evil spirits, from the Sadducees and Sallustius to Bekker and Van Dale, he addresses to his "dilectissimi in Christo fratres" the exordium: "En, Academici, veteres ac hodiernos Sadducæos! quibuscum tota Atheorum cohors amicissimè congruit; nam qui divinum numen, iidem ipsi infernales spiritus acriter negant."

⁴ *Confutation of Warburton* (1757) in *Extracts from Law's Works*, 1768, i, 208-209.

⁵ Cp. the *Essay*, bk. i, ch. iii, § 6, with Law's *Case of Reason*, in *Extracts*, as cited, p. 36.

seen to be in his dissertations on prophecy. Certainly Newton was at all times apt to be suspicious of his friends to the point of moral disease (see his attack on Montague, in his letter to Locke of January 26, 1691-1692: in Fox Bourne, ii, 218; and cp. De Morgan, as cited, p. 146); but the letter to Locke indicates a point at which the normal malady had upset the mental balance. It remains, nevertheless, part of the evidence as to bitter orthodox criticism of Locke.

On the whole, it is clear, the effect of his work, especially of his naturalistic psychology, was to make for rationalism; and his compromises furthered instead of checking the movement of unbelief. His ideal of practical and undogmatic Christianity, indeed, was hardly distinguishable from that of Hobbes,¹ and, as previously set forth by the Rev. Arthur Bury in his *Naked Gospel* (1690), was so repugnant to the Church that that book was burned at Oxford as heretical.² Locke's position as a believing Christian was indeed extremely weak, and could easily have been demolished by a competent deist, such as Collins,³ or a skeptical dogmatist who could control his temper and avoid the gross misrepresentation so often resorted to by Locke's orthodox enemies. But by the deists he was valued as an auxiliary, and by many latitudinarian Christians as a helper towards a rationalistic if not a logical compromise.

Rationalism of one or the other tint, in fact, seems to have spread in all directions. Deism was ascribed to some of the most eminent public men. Bishop Burnet has a violent passage on Sir William Temple, to the effect that "He had a true judgment in affairs, and very good principles with relation to government, but in nothing else. He seemed to think that things are as they were from all eternity; at least he thought religion was only for the mob. He was a great admirer of the sect of Confucius in China, who were atheists themselves, but left religion to the rabble."⁴ The praise of Confucius is the note of deism; and Burnet rightly held that no orthodox Christian in those days would sound it. Other prominent men revealed their religious liberalism. The accomplished and influential George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, often spoken of as

¹ Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 122.

² Fox Bourne, ii, 404-405.

³ An ostensibly orthodox Professor of our own day has written that Locke's doctrine as to religion and ethics "shows at once the sincerity of his religious convictions and the inadequate conception he had formed to himself of the grounds and nature of moral philosophy" (Fowler, *Locke*, 1880, p. 76).

⁴ Burnet, *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, p. 251. Burnet adds that Temple "was a corrupter of all that came near him." The 1838 editor protests against the whole attack as the "most unfair and exaggerated" of Burnet's portraits; and a writer in *The Present State of the Republick of Letters*, Jan., 1736, p. 26, carries the defence to claiming orthodoxy for Temple. But the whole cast of his thought is deistic. Cp. the *Essay upon the Origin and Nature of Government*, and ch. v of the *Observations upon the United Provinces* (*Works*, ed. 1770, i, 29, 36, 170-74).

a deist, and even as an atheist, by his contemporaries,¹ appears clearly from his own writings to have been either that or a Unitarian;² and it is not improbable that the similar gossip concerning Lord Keeper Somers was substantially true.³

That Sir Isaac Newton was "some kind of Unitarian"⁴ is proved by documents long withheld from publication, and disclosed only in the second edition of Sir David Brewster's *Memoirs*. There is indeed no question that he remained a mere scripturalist, handling the texts as such,⁵ and wasting much time in vain interpretations of Daniel and the Apocalypse.⁶ Temperamentally, also, he was averse to anything like bold discussion, declaring that "those at Cambridge ought not to judge and censure their superiors, but to obey and honour them, according to the law and the doctrine of passive obedience"⁷—this after he had sat on the Convention which deposed James II. In no aspect, indeed, apart from his supreme scientific genius, does he appear as morally⁸ or intellectually pre-eminent; and even on the side of science he was limited by his theological presuppositions, as when he rejected the nebular hypothesis, writing to Bentley that "the growth of new systems out of old ones, without the mediation of a Divine power, seems to me apparently absurd."⁹ There is therefore more than usual absurdity in the proclamation of his pious biographer that "the apostle of infidelity cowers beneath the implied rebuke"¹⁰ of his orthodoxy. The very anxiety shown by Newton and his friends¹¹ to checkmate "the infidels" is a proof that his religious work was not scientific even in inception, but the expression of his neurotic side; and the attempt of some of his scientific admirers to show that his religious researches belong solely to the years of his decline is a corresponding oversight. Newton was always pathologically prepossessed on the side of his religion, and subordinated his science to his theology even in the *Principia*. It is therefore all the more significant of the set of opinion in his day that, tied as he was to Scriptural interpretations, he drew away from orthodox dogma as to the Trinity. Not only does he show himself a destructive critic of Trinitarian texts and an opponent of Athanasius¹²: he expressly formulates the propositions (1) that "there is one God the Father.....and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus"; (2) that "the Father is the

¹ Cp. Macaulay, *History*, ch. ii. Student's ed. i, 120.

² Compare his *Advice to a Daughter*, § 1 (in *Miscellanies*, 1700), and his *Political Thoughts and Reflections: Religion*. ³ See Macaulay, ch. xx. Student's ed. ii, 459.

⁴ De Morgan, as cited, p. 107.

⁵ *Id.* p. 327 sq.

⁶ *Id.* p. 115.

⁷ See Brewster, ii, 318, 321-22, 323, 331 sq., 342 sq.

⁸ Cp. De Morgan, pp. 133-45.

⁹ *Four Letters from Sir Isaac Newton to Dr. Bentley*, ed. 1756, p. 25. Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 97-102.

¹⁰ Brewster, ii, 314.

¹¹ *Id.* pp. 315-16.

¹² *Id.* pp. 342-46.

invisible God whom no eye hath seen or can see. All other beings are sometimes visible"; and (3) that "the Father *hath* life in himself, and hath *given* the Son to have life in himself."¹ Such opinions, of course, could not be published: under the Act of 1697 they would have made Newton liable to loss of office and all civil rights. In his own day, therefore, his opinions were rather gossiped-of than known;² but insofar as his heresy was realized, it must have wrought much more for unbelief than could be achieved for orthodoxy by his surprisingly commonplace strictures on atheism, which show the ordinary inability to see what atheism means.

The argument of his *Short Scheme of True Religion* brackets atheism with idolatry, and goes on: "Atheism is so senseless and odious to mankind that it never had many professors. *Can it be by accident* that all birds, beasts, and men have their right side and left side alike shaped (except in their bowels), and just two eyes, and no more, on either side of the face?" etc. (Brewster, ii, 347). The logical implication is that a monstrous organism, with the sides unlike, represents "accident," and that in that case there has either been no causation or no "purpose" by Omnipotence. It is only fair to remember that no avowedly "atheistic" argument could in Newton's day find publication; but his remarks are those of a man who had never contemplated philosophically the negation of his own religious sentiment at the point in question. Brewster, whose judgment and good faith are alike precarious, writes that "When Voltaire asserted that Sir Isaac explained the prophecies in the same manner as those who went before him, he only exhibited his ignorance of what Newton wrote, and what others had written" (ii, 331, note; 355). The writer did not understand what he censured. Voltaire meant that Newton's treatment of prophecy is on the same plane of credulity as that of his orthodox predecessors.

Even within the sphere of the Church the Unitarian tendency, with or without deistic introduction, was traceable. Archbishop Tillotson (d. 1694) was often accused of Socinianism; and in the next generation was smilingly spoken of by Anthony Collins as a leading Freethinker. The pious Dr. Hickes had in fact declared of the Archbishop that "he caused several to turn atheists and ridicule the priesthood and religion."³ The heresy must have been encouraged even within the Church by the scandal which broke out when Dean Sherlock's *Vindication of Trinitarianism* (1690), written in reply to

¹ Brewster, p. 340. See the remaining articles, and App. XXX, p. 533.

² *Id.* p. 388.

³ *Discourse on Tillotson and Burnet*, pp. 38, 40, 74, cited by Collins, *Discourse of Freethinking*, 1713, pp. 171-73.

a widely-circulated antitrinitarian compilation,¹ was attacked by Dean South² as the work of a Tritheist. The plea of Dr. Wallis, Locke's old teacher, that a doctrine of "three somewhats"—he objected to the term "persons"—in one God was as reasonable as the concept of three dimensions,³ was of course only a heresy the more. Outside the Church, William Penn, the great Quaker, held a partially Unitarian attitude;⁴ and the first of his many imprisonments was on a charge of "blasphemy and heresy" in respect of his treatise *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*, which denied (1) that there were in the One God "three distinct and separate persons"; (2) the doctrine of the need of "plenary satisfaction"; and (3) the justification of sinners by "an imputative righteousness." But though many of the early Quakers seem to have shunned the doctrine of the Trinity, Penn really affirmed the divinity of Christ, and was not a Socinian but a Sabellian in his theology. Positive Unitarianism all the while was being pushed by a number of tracts which escaped prosecution, being prudently handled by Locke's friend, Thomas Firmin.⁵ A new impulse had been given to Unitarianism by the learning and critical energy of the Prussian Dr. Zwicker, who had settled in Holland;⁶ and among those Englishmen whom his works had found ready for agreement was Gilbert Clerke (b. 1641), who, like several later heretics, was educated at Sidney College, Cambridge. In 1695 he published a Unitarian work entitled *Anti-Nicenism*, and two other tracts in Latin, all replying to the orthodox polemic of Dr. Bull, against whom another Unitarian had written *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity* in 1694, bitterly resenting his violence.⁷ In 1695 appeared yet another treatise of the same school, *The Judgment of the Fathers concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity*. Much was thus done on Unitarian lines to prepare an audience for the deists of the next reign.⁸ But the most effective influence was probably the ludicrous strife of the orthodox clergy as to what orthodoxy was. The fray over the doctrine of the Trinity waxed so

¹ The *Brief Notes on the Creed of St. Athanasius* (author unknown), printed by Thomas Firmin. Late in 1693 appeared another antitrinitarian tract, by William Freke, who was prosecuted, fined £500, and ordered to make a recantation in the Four Courts of Westminster Hall. The book was burnt by the hangman. Wallace, *Art.* 354. There had also been "two quarto volumes of tracts in support of Unitarianism," published in 1691 (Dr. W. H. Drummond, *An Explanation and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, 1842, p. 17).

² "Locke's ribald schoolfellow of nearly fifty years ago" (Fox Bourne, ii, 405).

³ *Id.* *ib.*

⁴ Tayler, *Retrospect*, p. 226; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, i, 160-69.

⁵ Fox Bourne, ii, 405; Wallace, *art.* 353.

⁶ Above, pp. 35-36.

⁷ Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*, 2nd ed. 1714, p. 398.

⁸ "Perhaps at no period was the Unitarian controversy so actively carried on in England as between 1690 and 1720." *History, Opinions, etc., of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, p. 22.

furious, and the discredit cast on orthodoxy was so serious,¹ that in the year 1700 an Act of Parliament was passed forbidding the publication of any more works on the subject.

Meanwhile the so-called Latitudinarians,² all the while aiming as they did at a non-dogmatic Christianity, served as a connecting medium for the different forms of liberal thought; and a new element of critical disintegration was introduced by a speculative treatment of Genesis in the *Archæologiæ Philosophicæ* (1692) of Dr. Thomas Burnet, a professedly orthodox scholar, Master of the Charterhouse and chaplain in ordinary to King William, who nevertheless treated the Creation and Fall stories as allegories, and threw doubt on the Mosaic authorship of parts of the Pentateuch. Though the book was dedicated to the king, it aroused so much clerical hostility that the king was obliged to dismiss him from his post at court.³ His ideas were partly popularized through a translation of two of his chapters, with a vindictory letter, in Blount's *Oracles of Reason* (1695); and that they had considerable vogue may be gathered from the *Essay towards a Vindication of the Vulgar Exposition of the Mosaic History of the Fall of Adam*, by John Witty, published in 1705. Burnet, who published three sets of anonymous *Remarks* on the philosophy of Locke (1697-1699), criticizing its sensationist basis, figured after his death (1715), in posthumous publications, as a heretical theologian in other regards; and then played his part in the general deistic movement; but his allegorical view of Genesis does not seem to have seriously affected speculation in his time, the bulk of the debate turning on his earlier *Telluris Theoria Sacra* (1681; trans. 1684), to which there were many rejoinders, both scientific and orthodox. On this side he is unimportant, his science being wholly imaginative; and in the competition between his *Theory* and J. Woodward's *Essay towards a Natural History of the Earth* (1695) nothing was achieved for scientific progress.

Much more remarkable, but outside of popular discussion, were the *Evangelium medici* (1697) of Dr. B. CONNOR, wherein the gospel

¹ Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 113-15.—Taylor, *Retrospect*, p. 227.

² As to whom see Taylor, *Retrospect*, ch. v. § 4. They are spoken of as "the new sect of Latitude-Men" in 1662; and in 1705 are said to be "at this day Low Churchmen." See *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men*, by "S. P." of Cambridge, 1662, reprinted in *The Phoenix*, vol. ii, 1708, and pref. to that vol. From "S. P.'s" account it is clear that they connected with the new scientific movement, and lean to Cartesianism. As above noted, they included such prelates as Wilkins and Tillotson. The work of E. A. George, *Seventeenth Century Men of Latitude* (1908), deals with Hales, Chillingworth, Whichcote, H. More, Taylor, Browne, and Baxter.

³ Toulmin, *Histor. View of the Prot. Dissenters*, 1814, p. 270. A main ground of the offence taken was a somewhat trivial dialogue in Burnet's book between Eve and the serpent, indicating the "popular" character of the tale. This was omitted from a Dutch edition at the author's request, and from the 3rd ed. 1733 (Toulmin, as cited). It is given in the partial translation in Blount's *Oracles of Reason*.

miracles were explained away, on lines later associated with German rationalism, as natural phenomena; and the curious treatise of Newton's friend, John Craig,¹ *Theologiæ christianæ principia mathematica* (1699), wherein it is argued that all evidence grows progressively less valid in course of time;² and that accordingly the Christian religion will cease to be believed about the year 3144, when probably will occur the Second Coming. Connor, when attacked, protested his orthodoxy; Craig held successively two prebends of the Church of England;³ and both lived and died unmolested, probably because they had the prudence to write in Latin, and maintained gravity of style. About this time, further, the title of "Rationalist" made some fresh headway as a designation, not of unbelievers, but of believers who sought to ground themselves on reason. Such books as those of Clifford and Boyle tell of much discussion as to the efficacy of "reason" in religious things; and in 1686, as above noted, there appears *A Rational Catechism*,⁴ a substantially Unitarian production, notable for its aloofness from evangelical feeling, despite its many references to Biblical texts in support of its propositions. In the *Essays Moral and Divine* of the Scotch judge, Sir William Anstruther, published in 1701, there is a reference to "those who arrogantly term themselves Rationalists"⁵ in the sense of claiming to find Christianity not only, as Locke put it, a reasonable religion, but one making no strain upon faith. Already the term had become potentially one of vituperation, and it is applied by the learned judge to "the wicked reprehended by the Psalmist."⁶ Forty years later, however, it was still applied rather to the Christian who claimed to believe upon rational grounds than to the deist or unbeliever;⁷ and it was to have a still longer lease of life in Germany as a name for theologians who believed in "Scripture" on condition that all miracles were explained away.

¹ See Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, 1855, ii, 315-16, for a letter indicating Craig's religious attitude. He contributed to Dr. George Cheyne's *Philosophical Principles of Religion, Natural and Revealed*, 1705. (Pref. to pt. i, ed. 1725.)

² See the note of Pope and Warburton on the *Dunciad*, iv, 462.

³ See arts. in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

⁴ *Essays* as cited, p. 84.

⁵ Reprinted at Amsterdam, 1712.

⁶ *Id.* p. 30.

⁷ See *Christianity not Founded on Argument* (by Henry Dodwell, jr.), 1741, pp. 11, 34. Waterland, as cited by Bishop Hurst, treats the terms *Reasonist* and *Rationalist* as labels or nicknames of those who untruly profess to reason more scrupulously than other people. The former term may, however, have been set up as a result of Le Clerc's rendering of "the Logos," in John i, 1, by "Reason"—an argument to which Waterland repeatedly refers.

CHAPTER XV

FRENCH AND DUTCH FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

1. WE have seen France, in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, pervaded in its upper classes by a freethought partly born of the knowledge that religion counted for little but harm in public affairs, partly the result of such argumentation as had been thrown out by Montaigne and codified by Charron. That it was not the freethinking of mere idle men of the world is clear when we note the names and writings of LA MOTHE LE VAYER (1588-1672), GUI PATIN (1601-1671), and GABRIEL NAUDÉ (1600-1653), all scholars, all heretics of the skeptical and rationalistic order. The last two indeed, sided with the Catholics in politics, Patin approving of the Fronde, and Naudé of the Massacre, on which ground they are sometimes claimed as believers.¹ But though in the nature of the case their inclusion on the side of freethought is not to be zealously contended for, they must be classed in terms of the balance of testimony. Patin was the admiring friend of Gassendi; and though he was never explicitly heretical, and indeed wrote of Socinianism as a pestilent doctrine,² his habit of irony and the risk of written avowals to correspondents must be kept in view in deciding on his cast of mind. He is constantly anti-clerical;³ and the germinal skepticism of Montaigne and Charron clearly persists in him.

It is true that, as one critic puts it, such rationalists were not "quite clear whither they were bound. At first sight," he adds, "no one looks more negative than Gui Patin.....He was always congratulating himself on being 'delivered from the nightmare'; and he rivals the eighteenth century in the scorn he pours on priests, monks, and especially 'that black Loyolitic scum from Spain' which called itself the Society of Jesus. Yet Patin was

¹ Prof. Strowski, who is concerned to prove that the freethinkers of the period were mostly men-about-town, claims Patin as a Frondeur (*De Montaigne à Pascal*, p. 215). But Patin's attitude in this matter was determined by his detestation of Mazarin, whom he regarded as an arch-scoundrel. Naudé's defence of the Massacre is forensic.

² *Lettres de Gui Patin*, No. 188, édit. Revellé-Parise, 1846, I, 364.

³ Cp. Revellé-Parise, as cited, *Notice sur Gui Patin*, pp. xxiii-xxvii, and Bayle, *art. PATIN*.

no freethinker. Skeptics who made game of the kernel of religion came quite as much under the lash of his tongue as bigots who dared defend its husks. His letters end with the characteristic confession: '*Credo in Deum, Christum crucifixum, etc.;.....De minimis non curat prator*'" (Viscount St. Cyres in *Cambridge Modern History*, v, 73). But the last statement is an error, and Patin did not attack Gassendi, though he did Descartes. He says of Rabelais: "C'étoit un homme qui se moquoit de tout; en verité il y a bien des choses dont on doit raisonnablement se moquer.....elles sont presque tous remplies de vanité, d'imposture et d'ignorance: ceux qui sont un peu philosophes ne doivent-ils pas s'en moquer?" (Lett. 485, éd. cited, iii, 148). Again he writes that "la vie humaine n'est qu'un bureau de rencontre et un théâtre sur lesquels domine la fortune" (Lett. 726, iii, 620). This is pure Montaigne. The formula cited by Viscount St. Cyres is neither a general nor a final conclusion to the letters of Patin. It occurs, I think, only once (18 juillet, 1642, à M. Belin) in the 836 letters, and not at the end of that one (Lett. 55, éd. cited, i, 90).

Concerning his friend Naudé, Patin writes: "Je suis fort de l'avis de feu M. Naudé, qui disoit qu'il y avait quatre choses dont il se fallait garder, afin de n'être point trompé, savoir, de prophéties, de miracles, de révélations, et d'apparitions" (Lett. 353, éd. cited, ii, 490). Again, he writes of a symposium of Naudé, Gassendi, and himself: "Peut-être, tous trois, guéris de loup-garou et delivrés du mal des scrupules, qui est le tyran des consciences, nous irons peut-être jusque fort près du sanctuaire. Je fis l'an passé ce voyage de Gentilly avec M. Naudé, moi seul avec lui tête-à-tête; il n'y avait point de témoins, aussi n'y en falloit-il point: nous y parlâmes fort librement de tout, sans que personne en ait été scandalisé" (Lett. 362, ii, 508). This seems tolerably freethinking.

All that the Christian editor cares to claim upon the latter passage is that assuredly "l'unité de Dieu, l'immortalité de l'âme, l'égalité des hommes devant la loi, ces verités fondamentales de la raison et consacrées par le Christianisme, y étaient placées au premier rang" in the discussion. As to the skepticism of Naudé the editor remarks: "Ce qu'il y a de remarquable, c'est que Gui Patin soutenait que son ami.....avait puisé son opinion, en général très peu orthodoxe, en Italie, pendant le long séjour qu'il fit dans ce pays avec le cardinal Bagni" (ii, 490; cp. Lett. 816; iii, 758, where Naudé is again cited as making small account of religion).

Certainly Patin and Naudé are of less importance for freethought than La Mothe le Vayer. That scholar, a "Conseiller d'Etat ordinaire," tutor of the brother of Louis XIV, and one of the early members of the new Academy founded by Richelieu, is an interesting

figure¹ in the history of culture, being a skeptic of the school of Sextus Empiricus, and practically a great friend of tolerance. Standing in favour with Richelieu, he wrote at that statesman's suggestion a treatise *On the Virtue of the Heathen*,² justifying toleration by pagan example—a course which raises the question whether Richelieu himself was not strongly touched by the rationalism of his age. If it be true that the great Cardinal "believed as all the world did in his time,"³ there is little more to be said; for unbelief, as we have seen, was already abundant, and even somewhat fashionable. Certainly no ecclesiastic in high power ever followed a less ecclesiastical policy;⁴ and from the date of his appointment as Minister to Louis XIII (1624), for forty years, there was no burning of heretics or unbelievers in France. If he was orthodox, it was very passively.⁵

And Le Vayer's way of handling the dicta of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas as to the virtues of unbelievers being merely vices is for its time so hardy that the Cardinal's protection alone can explain its immunity from censure. St. Augustine and St. Thomas, says the critic calmly, had regard merely to eternal happiness, which virtue alone can obtain for no one. They are, therefore, to be always interpreted in this special sense. And so at the very outset the ground is summarily cleared of orthodox obstacles.⁶ The *Petit discours chrétien sur l'immortalité de l'âme*, also addressed to Richelieu, tells of a good deal of current unbelief on that subject; and the epistle dedicatory professes pain over the "philosopher of our day [Vanini] who has had the impiety to write that, unless one is very old, very rich, and a German, one should never expatiate on this subject." But on the very threshold of the discourse, again, the skeptic tranquilly suggests that there would be "perhaps something unreasonable" in following Augustine's precept, so popular in later times, that the problem of immortality should be solved by the dictates of religion and feeling, not of "uncertain" reason. "Why," he asks, "should the soul be her own judge?"⁷ And he shows a distinct appreciation of the avowal of Augustine in his *Retractationes* that his own book on the Immortality of the Soul was so obscure to him that in many places he himself could not understand it.⁸ The

¹ See the notices of him in Owen's *Skeptics of the French Renaissance*; and in Sainte-Beuve, *Port Royal*, lii, 180, etc.

² *De la Vertu des Payens*, in t. v. of the 12mo ed. of *Œuvres*, 1669.

³ Hanotaux, *Hist. du Cardinal de Richelieu*, 1893, i, pref. p. 7.

⁴ Cp. Buckle, ch. viii, 1-vol. ed. pp. 305-10, 325-28.

⁵ See the good criticism of M. Hanotaux in Perrens, *Les Libertins en France au xvii. siècle*, p. 95 sq.

⁶ *Œuvres*, ed. 1809, v. 4 sq. Bellarmin, as Le Vayer shows, had similarly explained away Augustine. But the doctrine that heathen virtue was not true virtue had remained orthodox.

⁷ Ed. cited, iv, 125.

⁸ *Id.* pp. 123-24.

"Little Christian Discourse" is, in fact, not Christian at all; and its arguments are but dialectic exercises, on a par with those of the *Discours sceptique sur la musique* which follows. He was, in short, a skeptic by temperament; and his *Préface d'une histoire*¹ shows his mind to have played on the "Mississippi of falsehood called history" very much as did that of Bayle in a later generation.

Le Vayer's *Dialogues of Oratius Tubero* (1633) is philosophically his most important work;² but its tranquil Pyrrhonism was not calculated to affect greatly the current thought of his day; and he ranked rather as a man of all-round learning³ than as a polemist, being reputed "a little contradictory, but in no way bigoted or obstinate, all opinions being to him nearly indifferent, excepting those of which faith does not permit us to doubt."⁴ The last phrase tells of the fact that it affects to negate: Le Vayer's general skepticism was well known.⁵ He was not indeed an original thinker, most of his ideas being echoes from the skeptics of antiquity;⁶ and it has been not unjustly said of him that he is rather of the sixteenth century than of the seventeenth.⁷

2. On the other hand, the resort on the part of the Catholics to a skeptical method, as against both Protestants and freethinkers, which we have seen originating soon after the issue of Montaigne's *Essais*, seems to have become more and more common; and this process must rank as in some degree a product of skeptical thought of a more sincere sort. In any case it was turned vigorously, even recklessly, against the Protestants. Thus we find Daillé, at the outset of his work *On the True Use of the Fathers*,⁸ complaining that when Protestants quote the Scriptures some Romanists at once ask "whence and in what way those books may be known to be really written by the prophets and apostles whose names and titles they bear." This challenge, rashly incurred by Luther and Calvin in their pronouncements on the Canon, later Protestants did not as a rule attempt to meet, save in the fashion of La Placette, who in his work *De insanibili Ecclesiæ Romanæ Scepticismo* (1688)⁹ under-

¹ Tom. iii, 251.

² He wrote very many, the final collection filling three volumes folio, and fifteen in duodecimo. The *Cinq Dialogues faits à l'imitation des Anciens* were pseudonymous, and are not included in the collected works.

³ "On le regarde comme le Plutarque de notre siècle" (Perrault, *Les Hommes Illustres du XVIIe Siècle*, éd. 1701, ii, 131).

⁴ Perrault, ii, 132.

⁵ Bayle, *Dict.* art. LA MOTHE LE VAYER. Cp. introd. to *L'Esprit de la Mothe le Vayer*, par M. de M. C. D. S. P. D. L. (i.e. De Montlinot, chanoine de Saint Pierre de Lille (1763), pp. xviii, xxi, xxvi.

⁶ M. Perrens, who endorses this criticism, does not note that some passages he quotes from the *Dialogues*, as to atheism being less disturbing to States than superstition, are borrowed from Bacon's essay *Of Atheism*, of which Le Vayer would read the Latin version.

⁷ Perrens, p. 132.

⁸ In French, 1631; in Latin, 1656, amended.

⁹ Translated into English in 1688, and into French, under the title *Traité du Pyrrhonisme de l'église romaine*, by N. Chalaire, Amsterdam, 1721.

takes to show that Romanists themselves are without any grounds of certitude for the authority of the Church. It was indeed certain that the Catholic method would make more skeptics than it won.

3. Between the negative development of the doctrine of Montaigne and the vogue of upper-class deism, the philosophy of Descartes, with its careful profession of submission to the Church, had at first an easy reception; and on the appearance of the *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) it speedily affected the whole thought of France; the women of the leisured class, now much given to literature, being among its students.¹ From the first the Jansenists, who were the most serious religious thinkers of the time, accepted the Cartesian system as in the main soundly Christian; and its founder's authority had some such influence in keeping up the prestige of orthodoxy as had that of Locke later in England. Boileau, who wrote a satire in defence of the system when it was persecuted after Descartes's death, is named among those whom he so influenced.² But a merely external influence of this kind could not counteract the fundamental rationalism of Descartes's thought, and the whole social and intellectual tendency towards a secular view of life. Soon, indeed, Descartes became suspect, partly by reason of the hostile activities of the Jesuits, who opposed him because the Jansenists generally held by him, though he had been a Jesuit pupil, and had always some adherents in that order;³ partly by reason of the inherent naturalism of his system. That his doctrine was incompatible with the eucharist was the standing charge against it,⁴ and his defence was not found satisfactory,⁵ though his orthodox followers obtained from Queen Christina a declaration that he had been largely instrumental in converting her to Catholicism.⁶ Pascal reproached him with having done his best to do without God in his system;⁷ and this seems to have been the common clerical impression. Thirteen years after his death, in 1663, his work was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, under a modified censure,⁸ and in 1671 a royal order was obtained under which his philosophy was proscribed in all the universities of France.⁹ Cartesian professors and curés were persecuted and exiled, or

¹ Bouillier, *Hist. de la Philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i. 410 sq., 430 sq.; Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, 5e édit. p. 396; Brunetière, *Études Critiques*, 3e série, p. 2; Buckle, 1-vol. ed. p. 535. Bouillier notes (i. 426) that the *femmes savantes* ridiculed by Molière are Cartesians.

² Bouillier, i. 456; Lanson, p. 397.

³ Bouillier, i. 411 sq.

⁴ *Id.* p. 431 sq.

⁵ *Id.* p. 437 sq.

⁶ *Id.* pp. 440-50.

⁷ "Il disait très souvent," said Pascal's niece:—"Je ne puis pardonner à Descartes: il aurait bien voulu, dans toute sa philosophie, pouvoir se passer de Dieu; mais il n'a pu s'empêcher de lui accorder une chiquenade, pour mettre le monde en mouvement; après cela il n'a plus que faire de Dieu." *Récit de Marguerite Perier* ("De ce que j'ai ouï dire par M. Pascal, mon oncle"), rep. with *Pensées*, ed. 1853, pp. 38-39.

⁸ Bouillier, p. 453.

⁹ *Id.* p. 455 sq.

compelled to recant; among the victims being Père Lami of the Congregation of the Oratory and Père André the Jesuit;¹ and the Oratorians were in 1678 forced to undergo the humiliation of not only renouncing Descartes and all his works, but of abjuring their former Cartesian declarations, in order to preserve their corporate existence.² Precisely in this period of official reaction, however, there was going on not merely an academic but a social development of a rationalistic kind, in which the persecuted philosophy played its part, even though some freethinkers disparaged it.

4. The general tendency is revealed on the one hand by the series of treatises from eminent Churchmen, defending the faith against unpublished attacks, and on the other hand by the prevailing tone in *belles lettres*. Malherbe, the literary dictator of the first quarter of the century, had died in 1628 with the character of a scoffer;³ and the fashion now lasted till the latter half of the reign of Louis XIV. In 1621, two years after the burning of Vanini, a young man named Jean Fontanier had been burned alive on the Place de Grève at Paris, apparently for the doctrines laid down by him in a manuscript entitled *Le Trésor Inestimable*, written on deistic and anti-Catholic lines.⁴ He was said to have been successively Protestant, Catholic, Turk, Jew, and atheist; and had conducted himself like one of shaken mind.⁵ But the cases of the poet Théophile de Viau, who about 1623 suffered prosecution on a charge of impiety,⁶ and of his companions Berthelot and Colletet—who like him were condemned but set free by royal favour—appear to be the only others of the kind for over a generation. Frivolity of tone sufficed to ward off legal pursuit. It was in 1665, some years after the death of Mazarin, who had maintained Richelieu's policy of tolerance, that Claude Petit was burnt at Paris for "impious pieces";⁷ and even then there was no general reversion to orthodoxy, the upper-class tone remaining, as in the age of Richelieu and Mazarin, more or less unbelieving. When Corneille had introduced a touch of Christian zeal into his *Polyeucte* (1643) he had given general offence to the dilettants of both sexes.⁸ Molière, again, the

¹ See Bouillier, i. 460 sq.; ii. 373 sq.; and introd. to *Œuvres philos. du Père Bufier*, 1846, p. 4; and cp. Rambaud, *Hist. de la civilisation française*, 6e édit. ii. 336.

² Bouillier, i. 465.

³ Perrens, pp. 84-85.

⁴ Cp. Perrens, pp. 68-69, and refs.

⁵ Cp. Strowski, *De Montaigne à Pascal*, p. 141.

⁶ See Duvernet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ch. i, and note 1; and Perrens, pp. 74-80.

⁷ For all that is known of Petit see the Avertissement to Bibliophile Jacob's edition of *Paris ridicule et burlesque au 17ième siècle*, and refs. in Perrens, p. 153. After Petit's death, his friend Du Pelletier defended him as being a deist; but he seems in his youthful writings to have blasphemed at large, and he had been guilty of assassinating a young monk. He was burned, however, for blaspheming the Virgin.

⁸ Guizot, *Corneille et son temps*, ed. 1880, p. 200. The circle of the Hôtel Rambouillet were especially hostile. Cp. Falissot's note to *Polyeucte*, end. On the other hand, Corneille found it prudent to cancel four skeptical lines which he had originally put in the mouth of the pagan Severus, the sage of the piece. Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 140.

disciple of Gassendi¹ and "the very genius of reason,"² was unquestionably an unbeliever;³ and only the personal protection of Louis XIV, which after all could not avail to support such a play as *Tartufe* against the fury of the bigots, enabled him to sustain himself at all against them.

5. Equally freethinking was his brilliant predecessor and early comrade, CYRANO DE BERGERAC (1620-1655), who did not fear to indicate his frame of mind in one of his dramas. In *La Mort d'Agrippine* he puts in the mouth of Sejanus, as was said by a contemporary, "horrible things against the Gods," notably the phrase, "whom men made, and who did not make men,"⁴ which, however, generally passed as an attack on polytheism; and though there was certainly no blasphemous intention in the phrase, *Frappons, voilà l'hostie* [= *hostia*, victim], some pretended to regard it as an insult to the Catholic *host*.⁵ At times Cyrano writes like a deist;⁶ but in so many other passages does he hold the language of a convinced materialist, and of a scoffer at that,⁷ that he can hardly be taken seriously on the former head.⁸ In short, he was one of the first of the hardy freethinkers who, under the tolerant rule of Richelieu and Mazarin, gave clear voice to the newer spirit. Under any other government, he would have been in danger of his life: as it was, he was menaced with prosecutions; his *Agrippine* was forbidden; the first edition of his *Pédant joué* was confiscated; during his last illness there was an attempt to seize his manuscripts; and down till the time of the Revolution the editions of his works were eagerly bought up and destroyed by zealots.⁹ His recent literary rehabilitation thus hardly serves to realize his importance in the history of freethought. Between Cyrano and Molière it would appear that there was little less of rationalistic ferment in the France of their day than in England. Bossuet avows in a letter to Huet in 1678 that impiety and unbelief abound more than ever before.¹⁰

¹ Under whom he studied in his youth with a number of other notably independent spirits, among them Cyrano de Bergerac. See Sainte-Beuve's essay on Molière, prefixed to the Hachette edition. Molière held by Gassendi as against Descartes. Boullier, i. 542 sq.

² Constant Coquelin, art. "Don Juan" in the *International Review*, September, 1903, p. 61—an acute and scholarly study.

³ "Molière is a freethinker to the marrow of his bones" (Perrens, p. 280). Cp. Lanson, p. 520; Fournier, *Études sur Molière*, 1885, pp. 122-23; Soury, *Brève de l'hist. du matér.* p. 284. "Ginguenè," writes Sainte-Beuve, "a publié une brochure pour montrer Rabelais précurseur de la révolution française; c'étoit inutile à prouver sur Molière" (essay cited).

⁴ Act II, sc. iv, in *Œuvres Comiques*, etc., ed. Jacob, rep. by Garnier, pp. 426-27.

⁵ See Jacob's note in *loc.*, ed. cited, p. 455.

⁶ E.g. his *Lettre contre un Pédant* (No. 13 of the *Lettres Satiriques* in ed. cited, p. 181), which, however, appears to have been mutilated in some editions; as one of the deistic sentences cited by M. Perrens, p. 247, does not appear in the reprint of Bibliophile Jacob.

⁷ E.g. the *Histoire des Oiseaux* in the *Histoire Comique des états et empires du Soleil*, ed. Jacob (Garnier), p. 378; and the *Fragment de Physique* (same vol.).

⁸ See the careful criticism of Perrens, pp. 248-50.

⁹ Bibliophile Jacob, *pref.* to ed. cited, pp. 1-11.

¹⁰ Perrens, p. 302. Compare Bossuet's earlier sermon for the Second Sunday of Advent.

6. Even in the apologetic reasoning of the greatest French prose writer of that age, Pascal, we have the most pregnant testimony to the prevalence of unbelief; for not only were the fragments preserved as *Pensées* (1670), however originated,¹ developed as part of a planned defence of religion against contemporary rationalism,² but they themselves show their author profoundly unable to believe save by a desperate abnegation of reason, though he perpetually commits the gross fallacy of trusting to reason to prove that reason is untrustworthy. His work is thus one continuous paralogism, in which reason is disparaged merely to make way for a parade of bad reasoning. The case of Pascal is that of Berkeley with a difference: the latter suffered from hypochondria, but reacted with nervous energy; Pascal, a physical degenerate, prematurely profound, was prematurely old; and his pietism in its final form is the expression of the physical collapse.

This is disputed by M. Lanson, an always weighty authority. He writes (p. 464) that Pascal was "neither mad nor ill" when he gave himself up wholly to religion. But ill he certainly was. He had *chronically* suffered from intense pains in the head from his eighteenth year; and M. Lanson admits (p. 451) that the *Pensées* were written in intervals of acute suffering. This indeed understates the case. Pascal several times told his family that since the age of eighteen he had never passed a day without pain. His sister, Madame Perier, in her biographical sketch, speaks of him as suffering "continual and ever-increasing maladies," and avows that the four last years of his life, in which he penned the fragments called *Pensées*, "were but a continual languishment." The Port Royal preface of 1670 says the same thing, speaking of the "four years of languor and malady in which he wrote all we have of the book he planned," and calling the *Pensées* "the feeble essays of a sick man." Cp. Pascal's *Prière pour demander à Dieu le bon usage des maladies*; and Owen *French Skeptics*, pp. 746, 784.

Doubtless the levity and licence of the *libertins* in high places³ confirmed him in his revolt against unbelief; but his own credence was an act rather of despairing emotion than of rational conviction. The man who advised doubters to make a habit of causing masses to be said and following religious rites, on the score that *cela vous*

1665, cited by Perrens, pp. 253-54, where he speaks with something like fury of the free discussion around him.

¹ Cousin plausibly argues that Pascal began writing *Pensées* under the influence of a practice set up in her circle by Madame de Sablé. *Mme. de Sablé*, 5^e édit. p. 124 sq.

² It is to be remembered that the work as published contained matter not Pascal's. Cp. Brunetière, *Études*, iii, 46-47; and the editions of the *Pensées* by Faugère and Havet.

³ As to some of these see Perrens, pp. 158-69. They included the great Condé and some of the women in his circle; all of them unserious in their skepticism, and all "converted" when the physique gave the required cue.

fera croire et vous abêtira—"that will make you believe and will stupefy you"¹—was a pathological case; and though the whole Jansenist movement latterly stood for a reaction against free-thinking, it can hardly be doubted that the *Pensées* generally acted as a solvent rather than as a sustainer of religious beliefs.² This charge was made against them immediately on their publication by the Abbé de Villars, who pointed out that they did the reverse of what they claimed to do in the matter of appealing to the heart and to good sense, since they set forth all the ordinary arguments of Pyrrhonism, denied that the existence of God could be established by reason or philosophy, and staked the case on a "wager" which shocked good sense and feeling alike. "Have you resolved," asks this critic in dialogue, "to make atheists on pretext of combatting them?"³

The same question arises concerning the famous *Lettres Provinciales* (1656), written by Pascal in defence of Arnauld against the persecution of the Jesuits, who carried on in Arnauld's case their campaign against Jansen, whom they charged with mis-stating the doctrine of Augustine in his great work expounding that Father. Once more the Catholic Church was swerving from its own established doctrine of predestination, the Spanish Jesuit Molina having set up a new movement in the Pelagian or Arminian direction. The cause of the Jansenists has been represented as that of freedom of thought and speech;⁴ and this it relatively was insofar as Jansen and Arnauld sought for a hearing, while the Jesuit-ridden Sorbonne strove to silence and punish them. Pascal had to go from printer to printer as his Letters succeeded each other, the first three being successively prosecuted by the clerical authorities; and in their collected form they found publicity only by being printed at Rouen and published at Amsterdam, with the rubric of Cologne. All the while Jansenism claimed to be strict orthodoxy; and it was in virtue only of the irreducible element of rationalism in Pascal that the school of Port Royal made for freethought in any higher or more general sense. Indeed, between his own reputation for piety and that of the Jansenists for orthodoxy, the *Provincial Letters* have a conventional standing as orthodox compositions. It is strange, however, that those who charge upon the satire of the later philosophers the downfall of Catholicism in France should

¹ *Pensées*, ed. Faugère, II, 168-69. The "abêtira" comes from Montaigne.

² Thus Mr. Owen treats Pascal as a skeptic, which philosophically he was, insofar as he really philosophized and did not merely catch at pleas for his emotional beliefs. "Les *Pensées* de Pascal," writes Prof. Le Dantec, "sont à mon avis le livre le plus capable de renforcer l'athéisme chez un athée" (*L'Athéisme*, 1906, pp. 24-25). They have in fact always had that effect.

³ *De la Délicatesse*, 1671, dial. v, p. 323, etc.

⁴ Vinet, *Études sur Blaise Pascal*, 3e édit. p. 267 sq.

not realize the plain tendency of these brilliant satires to discredit the entire authority of the Church, and, further, by their own dogmatic weaknesses, to put all dogma alike under suspicion.¹ Few thoughtful men can now read the *Provinciales* without being impressed by the utter absurdity of the problem over which the entire religious intelligence of a great nation was engrossed.

It was, in fact, the endless wrangles of the religious factions over unintelligible issues that more than any other single cause fostered the unbelief previously set up by religious wars;² and Pascal's writings only deepened the trouble. Even Bossuet, in his *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches* (1688), did but throw a new light on the hollowness of the grounds of religion; and for thoughtful readers gave a lead rather to atheism than to Catholicism. The converts it would make to the Catholic Church would be precisely those whose adherence was of least value, since they had not even the temperamental basis which, rather than argument, kept Bossuet a believer, and were Catholics only for lack of courage to put all religion aside. When "variation" was put as a sign of error by a Churchman the bulk of whose life was spent in bitter strifes with sections of his own Church, critical people were hardly likely to be confirmed in the faith. Within ten years of writing his book against the Protestants, Bossuet was engaged in an acrid controversy with Fénelon, his fellow prelate and fellow demonstrator of the existence and attributes of God, accusing him of holding unchristian positions; and both prelates were always fighting their fellow-churchmen the Jansenists. If the variations of Protestants helped Catholicism, those of Catholics must have helped unbelief.

7. A similar fatality attended the labours of the learned Huet, Bishop of Avranches, whose *Demonstratio Evangelica* (1678) is remarkable (with Boyle's *Discourse of Things above Reason*) as anticipating Berkeley in the argument from the arbitrariness of mathematical assumptions. He too, by that and by his later works, made for sheer philosophical skepticism,³ always a dangerous basis for orthodoxy.⁴ Such an evolution, on the part of a man of

¹ Cp. the *Éloge de Pascal* by Bordas Demoulin in Didot ed. of the *Lettres*, 1854, pp. xxii-xxiii, and cit. from Saint-Beuve. Mark Pattison, it seems, held that the Jesuits had the best of the argument. See the *Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone*, 1904, p. 207. As regards the effect of Jansenism on belief, we find De Tocqueville pronouncing that "Le Jansenisme ouvrit.....la brèche par laquelle la philosophie du 18e siècle devait faire irruption" (*Hist. philos. du règne de Louis XV*, 1849, i, 2). This could truly be said of Pascal.

² Cp. Voltaire's letter of 1768, cited by Morley, *Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 159.

³ Cp. Owen, *French Sceptics*, pp. 762-63, 767.

⁴ This was expressly urged against Huet by Arnauld. See the *Notice* in Jourdain's ed. of the *Logique de Port Royal*, 1854, p. xi; Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 301; and Bouillier *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 595-96, where are cited the letters of Arnauld (Nos.

uncommon intellectual energy, challenges attention, the more so seeing that it typifies a good deal of thinking within the Catholic pale, on lines already noted as following on the debate with Protestantism. Honestly pious by bent of mind, but always occupied with processes of reasoning and research, Huet leant more and more, as he grew in years, to the skeptical defence against the pressures of Protestantism and rationalism, at once following and furthering the tendency of his age. That the skeptical method is a last weapon of defence can be seen from the temper in which the demonstrator assails Spinoza, whom he abuses, without naming him, in the fashion of his day, and to whose arguments concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch he makes singularly feeble answers.¹ They are too worthless to have satisfied himself; and it is easy to see how he was driven to seek a more plausible rebuttal.² A distinguished English critic, noting the general movement, pronounces, justly enough, that Huet took up philosophy "not as an end, but as a means—not for its own sake, but for the support of religion"; and then adds that his attitude is thus quite different from Pascal's.³ But the two cases are really on a level. Pascal too was driven to philosophy in reaction against incredulity; and though Pascal's work is of a more bitter and morbid intensity, Huet also had in him that psychic craving for a supernatural support which is the essence of latter-day religion. And if we credit this spirit to Pascal and to Huet, as we do to Newman, we must suppose that it partly touched the whole movement of pro-Catholic skepticism which has been above noted as following on the Reformation. It is ascribing to it as a whole too much of calculation and strategy to say of its combatants that "they conceived the desperate design of first ruining the territory they were prepared to evacuate; before philosophy was handed over to the philosophers the old Aristotelean citadel was to be blown into the air."⁴ In reality they caught, as religious men will, with passion rather than with policy, at any plea that might seem fitted to beat down the presumption of "the wild, living intellect of man";⁵ and their skepticism had a certain sincerity inasmuch as, trained to uncritical belief, they had never found for themselves the grounds of rational certitude.

530, 534, and 537 in *Œuvres Compl.* iii, 306, 404, 424) denouncing Huet's Pyrrhonism as "impious" and perfectly adapted to the purposes of the freethinkers.

¹ Cp. Alexandre Westphal, *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, i (1888), pp. 64-68.

² Huet himself incurred a charge of temerity in his handling of textual questions. *Id.* p. 66.

³ Pattison, *Essays*, 1880, i, 303-304.

⁴ Pattison, as cited.

⁵ After all, a book [the Bible] cannot make a stand against the wild, living intellect of man." Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1st ed. p. 382; ed. 1875, p. 245. The same is said by Newman of religion in general (p. 243).

Inasmuch too as Protestantism had no such ground, and rationalism was still far from having cleared its bases, Huet, as things went, was within his moral rights when he set forth his transcendentalist skepticism in his *Quæstiones Alnetanæ* in 1690. Though written in very limpid Latin,¹ that work attracted practically no attention; and though, having a repute for provincialism in his French style, Huet was loth to resort to the vernacular, he did devote his spare hours through a number of his latter years to preparing his *Traité Philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain*, which, dying in 1722, he left to be published posthumously (1723). The outcry against his criticism of Descartes and his *Demonstratio* had indisposed him for further personal strife; but he was determined to leave a completed message. Thus it came about that a sincere and devoted Catholic bishop "left, as his last legacy to his fellow-men, a work of the most outrageous skepticism."²

8. Meanwhile the philosophy of Descartes, if less strictly propitious to science at some points than that of Gassendi, was both directly and indirectly making for the activity of reason. In virtue of its formal "spiritualism," it found access where any clearly materialistic doctrine would have been tabooed; so that we find the Cartesian ecclesiastic Régis not only eagerly listened to and acclaimed at Toulouse in 1665, but offered a civic pension by the magistrates³—this within two years of the placing of Descartes's works on the *Index*. After arousing a similar enthusiasm at Montpellier and at Paris, Régis was silenced by the Archbishop, whereupon he set himself to develop the Cartesian philosophy in his study. The result was that he ultimately went beyond his master, openly rejecting the idea of creation out of nothing,⁴ and finally following Locke in rejecting the innate ideas which Descartes had affirmed.⁵ Another young Churchman, Desgabets, developing from Descartes and his pupil Malebranche, combined with their "spiritist" doctrine much of the virtual materialism of Gassendi, arriving at a kind of pantheism, and at a courageous pantheistic ethic, wherein God is recognized as the author alike of good and evil⁶—a doctrine which we find even getting a hearing in general society, and noticed in the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné in 1677.⁷

Malebranche's treatise *De la Recherche de la Vérité* (1674) was

¹ Pattison disparages it as colourless, a fault he charges on Jesuit Latin in general. But by most moderns the Latin style of Huet will be found pure and pleasant.

² Pattison, *Essays*, i. 299. Cp. Bouillier, i. 585.

³ Fontenelle, *Éloge sur Régis*; Bouillier, *Philos. cartés.* i. 507.

⁴ Réponse to Huet's *Censura philosophiæ cartés.* 1691; Bouillier, i. 515.

⁵ *Usage de la raison et de la foi*, 1704, liv. i, ptie. i, ch. vii; Bouillier, p. 511.

⁶ Bouillier, i. 521-25.

⁷ Lettre de 10 août, 1677, No. 591, éd. Nodier.

in fact a development of Descartes which on the one hand sought to connect his doctrine of innate ideas with his God-idea, and on the other hand headed the whole system towards pantheism. The tendency had arisen before him in the congregation of the Oratory, to which he belonged, and in which the Cartesian philosophy had so spread that when, in 1678, the alarmed superiors proposed to eradicate it, they were told by the members that, "If Cartesianism is a plague, there are two hundred of us who are infected."¹ But if Cartesianism alarmed the official orthodox, Malebranche wrought a deeper disintegration of the faith. In his old age his young disciple De Mairan, who had deeply studied Spinoza, pressed him fatally hard on the virtual coincidence of his philosophy with that of the more thoroughgoing pantheist; and Malebranche indignantly repudiated all agreement with "the miserable Spinoza,"² "the atheist,"³ whose system he pronounced "a frightful and ridiculous chimera."⁴ "Nevertheless, it was towards this chimera that Malebranche tended."⁵ On all hands the new development set up new strife; and Malebranche, who disliked controversy, found himself embroiled alike with Jansenists and Jesuits, with orthodox and with innovating Cartesians, and with his own Spinozistic disciples. The Jansenist Arnauld attacked his book in a long and stringent treatise, *Des vrayes et des fausses idées* (1683),⁶ accumulating denials and contradictions with a cold tenacity of ratiocination which never lapsed into passion, and was all the more destructive. For the Jansenists Malebranche was a danger to the faith in the ratio of his exaltation of it, inasmuch as reference of the most ordinary beliefs back to "faith" left them no ground upon which to argue up to faith.⁷ This seems to have been a common feeling among his readers. For the same reason he made no appeal to men of science. He would have no recognition of secondary causes, the acceptance of which he declared to be a dangerous relapse into paganism.⁸ There was thus no scientific principle in the new doctrine which could enable it to solve the problems or absorb the systems of other schools. Locke was as little moved by it as were the Jansenists. Malebranche won readers everywhere by his

¹ Bouillier, ii, 10.

² *Entretiens métaphysiques*, viii.

³ Bouillier, ii, 33. So Kuno Fischer: "In brief, Malebranche's doctrine, rightly understood, is Spinoza's" (*Descartes and his School*, Eng. tr. 1890, p. 583. Cp. p. 542).

⁴ The work of Arnauld was reprinted in 1724 with a remarkable *approbation* by Clavel, in which he eulogises the style and the dialectic of Arnauld, and expresses the hope that the book may "guérir, s'il se peut, d'une étrange préoccupation et d'une excessive confiance, ceux qui enseignent ou soutiennent comme évident ce qu'il y a de plus dangereux dans la nouvelle philosophie non-obstant les défenses faites par le feu Roi Louis XIV à l'Université d'Angers en l'année 1675 et à l'Université de Paris aux années 1681 et 1704 de le laisser enseigner ou soutenir."

⁵ *Des vrayes et des fausses idées*, ch. xxviii.

⁶ *Recherches de la Vérité*, liv. vi, ptie ii, ch. iii.

⁷ *Méditations chrétiennes*, ix, § 13.

⁸ *Id.* viii, ix.

charm of style;¹ but he was as much of a disturber as of a reconciler. The very controversies which he set up made for disintegration; and Fénelon found it necessary to "refute" Malebranche as well as Spinoza, and did his censure with as great severity as Arnauld's.² The mere fact that Malebranche put aside miracles in the name of divine law was fatal from the point of view of orthodoxy.

9. Yet another philosophic figure of the reign of Louis XIV, the Jesuit Père Buffier (1661-1737), deserves a passing notice here—out of his chronological order—though the historians of philosophy have mostly ignored him.³ He is indeed of no permanent philosophic importance, being a precursor of the Scottish school of Reid, nourished on Locke, and somewhat on Descartes; but he is significant for the element of practical rationalism which pervades his reasoning, and which recommended him to Voltaire, Reid, and Destutt de Tracy. On the question of "primary truths in theology" he declares so boldly for the authority of revelation in all dogmas which pass comprehension, and for the non-concern of theology with any process of rational proof,⁴ that it is hardly possible to suppose him a believer. On those principles, Islam has exactly the same authority as Christianity. In his metaphysic "he rejects all the ontological proofs of the existence of God, and, among others, the proof of Descartes from infinitude: he maintains that the idea of God is not innate, and that it can be reached only from consideration of the order of nature."⁵ He is thus as much of a force for deism as was his master, Locke; and he outgoes him in point of rationalism when he puts the primary ethic of reciprocity as a universally recognized truth,⁶ where Locke had helplessly fallen back on "the will of God." On the other hand he censures Descartes for not admitting the equal validity of other tests with that of primary consciousness, thus in effect putting himself in line with Gassendi. For the rest, his *Examen des préjugés vulgaires*, the most popular of his works, is so full of practical rationalism, and declares among other things so strongly in favour of free discussion, that its influence must have been wholly in the direction of free-thought. "Give me," he makes one of his disputants say, "a nation where they do not dispute, do not contest: it will be, I assure

¹ This was the main theme of the finished *Éloge* of Fontenelle, and was acknowledged by Bayle, Daguesseau, Arnauld, Bossuet, Voltaire, and Diderot, none of whom agreed with him. Bouillier, ii, 19. Fontenelle opposed Malebranche's philosophy in his *Doutes sur le système physique des causes occasionelles*. *Id.* p. 575. ² Cp. Bouillier, ii, 260-61.

³ He is not mentioned by Ueberweg, Lange, or Lewes. His importance in aesthetics, however, is recognized by some moderns, though he is not named in Mr. Bosanquet's *History of Aesthetic*.

⁴ *Traité des premières vérités*, 1724, §§ 521-31.

⁵ Bouillier, introd. to Buffier's *Œuvres philosophiques*, 1846, p. xiii.

⁶ *Remarques sur les principes de la métaphysique de Locke*, passages cited by Bouillier.

you, a very stupid and a very ignorant nation."¹ Such reasoning could hardly please the Jesuits,² and must have pleased freethinkers. And yet Buffier, like Gassendi, in virtue of his clerical status and his purely professional orthodoxy, escaped all persecution.

While an evolving Cartesianism, modified by the thought of Locke and the critical evolution of that, was thus reacting on thought in all directions, the primary and proper impulse of Descartes and Locke was doing on the Continent what that of Bacon had already done in England—setting men on actual scientific observation and experiment, and turning them from traditionalism of every kind. The more religious minds, as Malebranche, set their faces almost fanatically against erudition, thus making an enemy of the all-learned Huet,³ but on the other hand preparing the way for the scientific age. For the rest we find the influence of Descartes at work in heresies at which he had not hinted. Finally we shall see it taking deep root in Holland, furthering a rationalistic view of the Bible and of popular superstitions.

10. Yet another new departure was made in the France of Louis XIV by the scholarly performance of RICHARD SIMON (1638–1712), who was as regards the Scriptural texts what Spencer of Cambridge was as regards the culture-history of the Hebrews, one of the founders of modern methodical criticism. It was as a devout Catholic refuting Protestants, and a champion of the Bible against Spinoza, that Simon began his work; but, more sincerely critical than Huet, he reached views more akin to those of Spinoza than to those of the Church.⁴ The congregation of the Oratory, where Simon laid the foundations of his learning, was so little inclined to his critical views that he decided to leave it; and though persuaded to stay, and to become for a time a professor of philosophy at Julli, he at length broke with the Order. Then, from his native town of Dieppe, came his strenuous series of critical works—*L'histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1678), which among other things decisively impugned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; the *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament* (Rotterdam, 1689); numerous other volumes of critical studies on texts, versions, and commentators; and finally a French translation of the New Testament with notes. His *Bibliothèque Critique* (4 vols. under the name of Saint-Jore) was suppressed by an order in council; the translation was condemned by Bossuet and the Archbishop of Paris;

¹ *Œuvres*, éd. Bouillier, p. 320.

² *Op. Bouillier, Hist. de la philos. cartés. ii, 391.*

³ Malebranche, *Tratté de Morale*, liv. II, ch. 10. *Op. Bouillier, i, 562, 588-90; ii, 23.*

⁴ *Op. Westphal, Les Sources du Pentateuque, 1888, i, 67 sq.*

and the two first-named works were suppressed by the Parlement of Paris and attacked by a host of orthodox scholars; but they were translated promptly into Latin and English; and they gave a new breadth of footing to the deistic argument, though Simon always wrote as an avowed believer.

Before Simon, the Protestant Isaac la Peyrère, the friend of La Mothe le Vayer and Gassendi, and the librarian of Condé, had fired a somewhat startling shot at the Pentateuch in his *Præadamitæ*¹ and *Systema Theologica ex Præ-adamitarum Hypothesi* (both 1655: printed in Holland²), for which he was imprisoned at Brussels, with the result that he recanted and joined the Church of Rome, going to the Pope in person to receive absolution, and publishing an *Epistola ad Philotimum* (Frankfort, 1658), in which he professed to explain his reasons for abjuring at once his Calvinism and his treatise. It is clear that all this was done to save his skin, for there is explicit testimony that he held firmly by his Preadamite doctrine to the end of his life, despite the seven or eight confutations of his work published in 1656.³ Were it not for his constructive theses—especially his idea that Adam was a real person, but simply the father of the Hebrews and not of the human race—he would deserve to rank high among the scientific pioneers of modern rationalism, for his negative work is shrewd and sound. Like so many other early rationalists, collectively accused of “destroying without replacing,” he erred precisely in his eagerness to build up, for his negations have all become accepted truths.⁴ As it is, he may be ranked, after Toland, as a main founder of the older rationalism, developed chiefly in Germany, which sought to reduce as many miracles as possible to natural events misunderstood. But he was too far before his time to win a fair hearing. Where Simon laid a cautious scholarly foundation, Peyrère suddenly challenged immemorial beliefs, and failed accordingly.

11. Such an evolution could not occur in France without affecting the neighbouring civilization of Holland. We have seen Dutch life

¹ *Præadamitæ, sive Exercitatio super versibus 12, 13, 14 cap. 5, Epist. D. Pauli ad Romanos, quibus inducuntur Primi Homines ante Adamum conditi*. The notion of a pre-Adamite human race, as we saw, had been held by Bruno. (Above, p. 46.)

² My copies of the *Præadamitæ* and *Systema* bear no place-imprint, but simply “Anno Salutis MDCLV.” Both books seem to have been at once reprinted in 12mo.

³ Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. PEYRÈRE. A correspondent of Bayle's concludes his account of “le Præadamite” thus: “Le Pereire étoit le meilleur homme du monde, le plus doux, et qui tranquillement croyoit fort peu de chose.” There is a satirical account of him in the *Lettres de Gué Patin*, April 5, 1658 (No. 454, ed. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, iii, 581), cited by Bayle.

⁴ See the account of his book by Mr. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 295-97. Rejecting as he did the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, he ranks with Hobbes and Spinoza among the pioneers of true criticism. Indeed, as his book seems to have been in MS. in 1645, he may precede Hobbes. Patin had heard of Peyrère's *Præadamitæ* as ready for printing in 1643. Let. 169, ed. cited, i, 297.

at the beginning of the seventeenth century full of Protestant fanaticism and sectarian strife; and in the time of Descartes these elements, especially on the Calvinist side, were strong enough virtually to drive him out of Holland (1647) after nineteen years' residence.¹ He had, however, made disciples; and his doctrine bore fruit, finding doubtless some old soil ready. Thus in 1666 one of his disciples, the Amsterdam physician Louis Meyer, published a work entitled *Philosophia Sacrae Scripturae Interpres*,² in which, after formally affirming that the Scripture is the infallible Word of God, he proceeds to argue that the interpretation of the Word must be made by the human reason, and accordingly sets aside all meanings which are irreconcilable therewith, reducing them to allegories or tropes. Apart from this, there is somewhat strong evidence that in Holland in the second half of the century Cartesianism was in large part identified with a widespread movement of rationalism, of a sufficiently pronounced kind. Peter von Mastricht, Professor of Theology at Utrecht, published in 1677 a Latin treatise, *Novitatum Cartesianarum Gangrana*, in which he made out a list of fifty-six anti-Christian propositions maintained by Cartesians. Among them are these: That the divine essence, also that of angels, and that of the soul, consists only in Cogitation; That philosophy is not subservient to divinity, and is no less certain and no less revealed; That in things natural, moral, and practical, and also in matters of faith, the Scripture speaks according to the erroneous notions of the vulgar; That the mystery of the Trinity may be demonstrated by natural reason; That the first chaos was able of itself to produce all things material; That the world has a soul; and that it may be infinite in extent.³ The theologian was thus visibly justified in maintaining that the "novelties" of Cartesianism outwent by a long way those of Arminianism.⁴ It had in fact established a new point of view; seeing that Arminius had claimed for theology all the supremacy ever accorded to it in the Church.⁵

12. As Meyer was one of the most intimate friends of Spinoza, being with him at death, and became the editor of his posthumous works, it can hardly be doubted that his treatise, which preceded Spinoza's *Tractatus* by four years, influenced the great Jew, who speedily eclipsed him.⁶ SPINOZA, however (1632-1677), was first led

¹ Kuno Fischer, *Descartes and his School*, pp. 254-68.

² Colerus (i.e., Köhler), *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of the *Opera*, pp. xiv-xlvii.

³ Cited by George Sinclair in pref. to *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 1655, rep. 1871.

⁴ I have been unable to meet with a copy of Mastricht's book.

⁵ "Novitates Cartesianae multis parasangas superant Arminianas."

⁶ Nichols, *Works of Arminius*, 1824, i, 257 b (paging partly duplicated).

⁷ Cp. Bouillier, i, 223-24.

to rationalize by his Amsterdam friend and teacher, Van den Ende, a scientific materialist, hostile to all religion;¹ and it was while under his influence that he was excommunicated by his father's synagogue. From the first, apparently, Spinoza's thought was shaped partly by the medieval Hebrew philosophy² (which, as we have seen, combined Aristotelean and Saracen influences), partly by the teaching of Bruno, though he modified and corrected that at various points.³ Later he was deeply influenced by Descartes, whom he specially expounded for a pupil in a tractate.⁴ Here he endorses Descartes's doctrine of freewill, which he was later to repudiate and overthrow. But he drew from Descartes his retained principle that evil is not a real existence. In a much less degree he was influenced by Bacon, whose psychology he ultimately condemned; but from Hobbes he took not only his rationalistic attitude towards "revelation," but his doctrine of ecclesiastical subordination.⁵ Finally evolving his own conceptions, he produced a philosophic system which was destined to affect all European thought, remaining the while quietly occupied with the handicraft of lens-grinding by which he earned his livelihood. The Grand Pensionary of the Netherlands, John de Witt, seems to have been in full sympathy with the young heretic, on whom he conferred a small pension before he had published anything save his Cartesian *Principia* (1663).

The much more daring and powerful *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670⁶) was promptly condemned by a Dutch clerical synod, along with Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which it greatly surpassed in the matter of criticism of the scriptural text. It was the most stringent censure of supernaturalism that had thus far appeared in any modern language; and its preface is an even more mordant attack on popular religion and clericalism than the main body of the work. What seems to-day an odd compromise—the reservation of supra-rational authority for revelation, alongside of unqualified claims for the freedom of reason⁷—was but an adaptation of the old scholastic formula of "twofold truth," and was perhaps at the time the possible maximum of open rationalism in regard to the current creed, since both Bacon and Locke, as we have seen, were fain to resort to it. As revealed in his letters, Spinoza in almost all things stood at

¹ Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of *Opera*, p. xxv; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, 1882, pp. 20-22; Pollock, *Spinoza*, 2nd ed. 1899, pp. 10-14.

² As set forth by Joel, *Beiträge zur Gesch. der Philos.*, Breslau, 1876. See citations in Land's note to his lecture in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, 1882, pp. 51-53.

³ Land, "In Memory of Spinoza," in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, pp. 57-58; Sigwart, as there cited; Pollock, *Spinoza*, p. 12. Cp. however, Martineau, p. 101, note.

⁴ *Renati Des Cartes Princip. Philos. more geometrico demonstrata*, 1663.

⁵ Cp. Martineau, pp. 46, 57.

⁶ Reprinted in 1674, without place-name, and with the imprint of an imaginary Hamburg publisher.

⁷ *Tractatus*, c. 15.

the point of view of the cultivated rationalism of two centuries later. He believed in a historical Jesus, rejecting the Resurrection;¹ disbelieved in ghosts and spirits;² rejected miracles;³ and refused to think of God as ever angry;⁴ avowing that he could not understand the Scriptures, and had been able to learn nothing from them as to God's attributes.⁵ The *Tractatus* could not go so far; but it went far enough to horrify many who counted themselves latitudinarian. It was only in Holland that so aggressive a criticism of Christian faith and practice could then appear; and even there neither publisher nor author dared avow himself. Spinoza even vetoed a translation into Dutch, foreseeing that such a book would be placed under an interdict.⁶ It was as much an appeal for freedom of thought (*libertas philosophandi*) as a demonstration of rational truth; and Spinoza dexterously pointed (c. 20) to the social effects of the religious liberty already enjoyed in Amsterdam as a reason for carrying liberty further. There can be no question that it powerfully furthered alike the deistic and the Unitarian movements in England from the year of its appearance; and, though the States-General felt bound formally to prohibit it on the issue of the second edition in 1674, its effect in Holland was probably as great as elsewhere: at least there seems to have gone on there from this time a rapid modification of the old orthodoxy.

Still more profound, probably, was the effect of the posthumous *Ethica* (1677), which he had been prevented from publishing in his lifetime,⁷ and which not only propounded in parts an absolute pantheism (=atheism⁸), but definitely grounded ethics in human nature. If more were needed to arouse theological rage, it was to be found in the repeated and insistent criticism of the moral and mental perversity of the defenders of the faith⁹—a position not indeed quite consistent with the primary teaching of the treatise on the subject of Will, of which it denies the entity in the ordinary sense. Spinoza was here reverting to the practical attitude of Bacon, which, under a partial misconception, he had repudiated; and he did not formally solve the contradiction. His purpose was to confute the ordinary orthodox dogma that unbelief is wilful sin;

¹ Ep. xxiv. to Oldenburg.

² Ep. xxiii. to Oldenburg.

³ Ep. xxiv. to W. van Bleyenbergh.

⁴ Ep. xvii. to Jellis, Feb. 1671.

⁵ "Spinozism is atheistic, and has no valid ground for retaining the word 'God'" (Marsicano, p. 349). This estimate is systematically made good by Prof. E. E. Powell of Miami University in his *Spinoza and Religion* (1906). See in particular ch. v. The summing-up is that "the right name for Spinoza's philosophy is Atheistic Monism" (pp. 233-40).

⁶ *Ethica*, pt. i, App.; pt. ii, end; pt. v, prop. 41, schol. Cp. the Letters, *passim*.

² Epp. lviii, lx, to Boxel.

⁴ Ep. xxiv.

⁷ Ep. xix, 1675, to Oldenburg.

and to retort the charge without reconciling it with the thesis was to impair the philosophic argument.¹ It was not on that score, however, that it was resented, but as an unpardonable attack on orthodoxy, not to be atoned for by any words about the spirit of Christ.² The discussion went deep and far. A reply to the *Tractatus* which appeared in 1674, by an Utrecht professor (then dead), is spoken of by Spinoza with contempt;³ but abler discussion followed, though the assailants mostly fell foul of each other. Franz Cuper or Kuyper of Amsterdam, who in 1676 published an *Arcana Atheismi Revelata*, professedly refuting Spinoza's *Tractatus*, was charged with writing in bad faith and with being on Spinoza's side—an accusation which he promptly retorted on other critics, apparently with justice.⁴

The able treatise of Prof. E. E. Powell on *Spinoza and Religion* is open to demur at one point—its reiterated dictum that Spinoza's character was marred by "lack of moral courage" (p. 44). This expression is later in a measure retreated from: after "his habitual attitude of timid caution," we have: "Spinoza's timidity, or, if you will, his peaceable disposition." If the last-cited concession is to stand, the other phrases should be withdrawn. Moral courage, like every other human attribute, is to be estimated comparatively; and the test-question here is: Did any other writer in Spinoza's day venture further than he? Moral courage is not identical with the fanaticism which invites destruction; fanaticism supplies a motive which dispenses with courage, though it operates as courage might. But refusal to challenge destruction gratuitously does not imply lack of courage, though of course it may be thereby motivated. A quite brave man, it has been noted, will quietly shun a gratuitous risk where one who is "afraid of being afraid" may face it. When all is said, Spinoza was one of the most daring writers of his day; and his ethic made it no more a dereliction of duty for him to avoid provoking arrest and capital punishment than it is for either a Protestant or a rationalist to refrain from courting death by openly defying Catholic beliefs before a Catholic mob in Spain. It is easy for any of us to-day to be far more explicit than Spinoza was. It is doubtful whether any of us, if we had lived in his day and were capable of going as far in heresy, would

¹ The solution is, of course, that the attitude of the will in the forming of opinion may or may not be passionately perverse, in the sense of being inconsistent. To show that it is inconsistent may be a means of enlightening it; and an aspersion to that effect may be medicinal. Spinoza might truly have said that passionate perversity was at least as common on the orthodox side as on the other. In any case, he quashes his own criticism of Bacon. Cp. the author's essay on Spinoza in *Pioneer Humanists*.

² Pt. iv, prop. 68, schol.

³ Colerus, as cited, p. liv. Cuper appears to have been genuinely anti-Spinozist, while his opponent, Breitburg, or Bredenburg, of Rotterdam, was a Spinozist. Both were members of the society of "Collegiants," a body of non-dogmatic Christians, which for a time was broken up through their dissensions. Mosheim, 17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. vii, § 2, and note.

⁴ Ep. 1; 2 June, 1674.

have run such risks as he did in publishing the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. For those who have lived much in his society, it should be difficult to doubt that, if allowed, he would have dared death on the night of the mob-murder of the De Witts. The formerly suppressed proof of his very plain speaking on the subject of prayer, and his indications of aversion to the practice of grace before meals (Powell, pp. 323-25) show lack even of prudence on his part. Prof. Powell is certainly entitled to censure those recent writers who have wilfully kept up a mystification as to Spinoza's religiosity; but *their* lack of courage or candour does not justify an imputation of the same kind upon him. That Spinoza was "no saint" (Powell, p. 43) is true in the remote sense that he was not incapable of anger. But it would be hard to find a Christian who would compare with him in general nobility of character. The proposition that he was not "in *any* sense religious" (*id. ib.*) seems open to verbal challenge.

13. The appearance in 1678 of a Dutch treatise "against all sorts of atheists,"¹ and in 1681, at Amsterdam, of an attack in French on Spinoza's Scriptural criticism,² points to a movement outside of the clerical and scholarly class. All along, indeed, the atmosphere of the Arminian or "Remonstrant" School in Holland must have been fairly liberal.³ Already in 1685 Locke's friend Le Clerc had taken up the position of Hobbes and Spinoza and Simon on the Pentateuch in his *Sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande* (translated into English and published in 1690 as "Five Letters Concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures").⁴ And although Le Clerc always remained something of a Scripturalist, and refused to go the way of Spinoza, he had courage enough to revive an ancient heresy by urging, in his commentary on the fourth Gospel (1701), that "the Logos" should be rendered "Reason"—an idea which he probably derived from the Unitarian Zwicker without realizing how far it could take him. His ultimate recantation, on the subject of the authorship of the Pentateuch, served only to weaken his credit with freethinkers, and came too late to arrest the intellectual movement which he had forwarded.

A rationalizing spirit had now begun to spread widely in Holland; and within twenty years of Spinoza's death there had arisen a Dutch

¹ *Theologisch, Philosophisch, en Historisch proces voor God, tegen allerley Atheïsten*. By Francis Ridder, Rotterdam, 1678.

² *L'Impiété Convaincu*, par Pierre Yvon, Amsterdam, 1681. Really by the Sieur Noël Aubert de Versé. This appears to have been reprinted in 1685 under the title *L'Impie convaincu, ou Dissertation contre Spinoza, ou l'on réfute les fondemens de son athéisme*.

³ See Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 282-83, as to Locke's friendly relations with the Remonstrants in 1683-89.

⁴ See the summary of his argument by Alexandre Westphal, *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, 1888, i, 78 sq.

sect, led by Pontiaan van Hattem, a pastor at Philipsland, which blended Spinozism with evangelicalism in such a way as to incur the anathema of the Church.¹ In the time of the English Civil War the fear of the opponents of the new multitude of sects was that England should become "another Amsterdam."² This very multiplicity tended to promote doubt; and in 1713 we find Anthony Collins³ pointing to Holland as a country where freedom to think has undermined superstition to a remarkable degree. During his stay, in the previous generation, Locke had found a measure of liberal theology, in harmony with his own; but in those days downright heresy was still dangerous. DEURHOFF (d. 1717), who translated Descartes and was accused of Spinozism, though he strongly attacked it,⁴ had at one time to fly Holland, though by his writings he founded a pantheistic sect known as Deurhovians; and BALTHASAR BEKKER, a Cartesian, persecuted first for Socinianism, incurred so much odium by publishing in 1691 a treatise denying the reality of witchcraft that he had to give up his office as a preacher.

Cp. art. in *Biographie Universelle*, and Mosheim, 17 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 35, and notes in Reid's ed. Bekker was not the first to combat demonology on scriptural grounds; Arnold Geulinx, of Leyden, and the French Protestant refugee Dailon having less confidently put the view before him, the latter in his *Daimonologia*, 1687 (trans. in English, 1723), and the former in his system of ethics. Gassendi, as we saw, had notably discredited witchcraft a generation earlier; Reginald Scot had impugned its actuality in 1584; and Wier, still earlier, in 1583. And even before the Reformation the learned King Christian II of Denmark (deposed 1523) had vetoed witch-burning in his dominions. (Allen, *Hist. de Danemark*, French tr. 1878, i, 281.) As Scot's *Discoverie* had been translated into Dutch in 1609, Bekker probably had a lead from him. Glanvill's *Blow at Modern Sadducism* (1688), reproduced in *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, undertakes to answer some objections of the kind later urged by Bekker; and the discussion was practically international. Bekker's treatise, entitled *De Betooverte Wereld*, was translated into English—first in 1695, from the French, under the title *The World Bewitched* (only 1 vol. published), and again in 1700 as *The World turned upside down*. In the French translation, *Le Monde Enchanté* (4 tom. 1694), it had a great vogue. A refutation was published in English in *An Historical Treatise of Spirits*, by J. Beaumont, in 1705. It is noteworthy

¹ Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 836; Martineau, pp. 327-28. The first MS. of the treatise of Spinoza, *De Deo et Homine*, found and published in the nineteenth century, bore a note which showed it to have been used by a sect of Christian Spinozists. See Janet's ed. 1878, p. 3. They altered the text, putting "faith" for "opinion." *Id.* p. 53, notes.

² Edwards, *Ganagræna*, as before cited.

³ *Discourse of Freethinking*, p. 28.

⁴ Colerus, as cited, p. lviii.

that Bekker was included as one of "four modern sages (*vier neuer Welt-Weisen*)" with Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza, in a German folio tractate (hostile) of 1702.

14. No greater service was rendered in that age to the spread of rational views than that embodied in the great *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*¹ of PIERRE BAYLE (1644-1706), who, born in France, but driven out by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, spent the best part of his life and did his main work at Rotterdam. Persecuted there for his freethinking, to the extent of having to give up his professorship, he yet produced a virtual encyclopedia for freethinkers in his incomparable Dictionary, baffling hostility by the Pyrrhonian impartiality with which he handled all religious questions. In his youth, when sent by his Protestant father to study at Toulouse, he had been temporarily converted, as was the young Gibbon later, to Catholicism;² and the retrospect of that experience seems in Bayle's case, as in Gibbon's, to have been a permanent motive to practical skepticism.³ But, again, in the one case as in the other, skepticism was fortified by abundant knowledge. Bayle had read everything and mastered every controversy, and was thereby the better able to seem to have no convictions of his own. But even apart from the notable defence of the character of atheists dropped by him in the famous *Pensées diverses sur la Comète* (1682), and in the *Éclaircissements* in which he defended it, it is abundantly evident that he was an unbeliever. The only alternative view is that he was strictly or philosophically a skeptic, reaching no conclusions for himself; but this is excluded by the whole management of his expositions.⁴ It is recorded that it was his vehement description of himself as a Protestant "in the full force of the term," accompanied with a quotation from Lucretius, that set the clerical diplomatist Polignac upon re-reading the Roman atheist and writing his poem *Anti-Lucretius*.⁵ Bayle's ostensible Pyrrhonism was simply the tactic forced on him by his conditions; and it was the positive unbelievers who specially delighted in his volumes. He laid down no cosmic doctrines, but he illuminated all; and his air of repudiating

¹ First ed. Rotterdam, 2 vols. folio, 1696.

² Albert Cazes, *Pierre Bayle, sa vie, ses idées, son influence, son œuvre*, 1905, pp. 6, 7.

³ A movement of skepticism had probably been first set up in the young Bayle by Montaigne, who was one of his favourite authors before his conversion (Cazes, p. 5). Montaigne, it will be remembered, had been a fanatic in his youth. Thus three typical skeptics of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries had known what it was to be Catholic believers.

⁴ Cf. the essay on *The Skepticism of Bayle* in Sir J. F. Stephen's *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, vol. III, and the remarks of Perrens, *Les Libertins*, pp. 331-37.

⁵ *Éloge de M. le Cardinal Polignac* prefixed to Bougainville's translation, *L'Anti-Lucretius*, 1767, i, 141. Bayle's quoted words are: "Oui, monsieur, je suis bon Protestant, et dans toute la force du mot; car au fond de mon âme je proteste contre tout ce qui se dit et tout ce qui se fait."

such views as Spinoza's had the effect rather of forcing Spinozists to leave neutral ground than of rehabilitating orthodoxy.

On one theme he spoke without any semblance of doubt. Above all men who had yet written he is the champion of toleration.¹ At a time when in England the school of Locke still held that atheism must not be tolerated, he would accept no such position, insisting that error as such is not culpable, and that, save in the case of a sect positively inciting to violence and disorder, all punishment of opinion is irrational and unjust.² On this theme, moved by the memory of his own life of exile and the atrocious persecution of the Protestants of France, he lost his normal imperturbability, as in his Letter to an Abbé (if it be really his), entitled *Ce que c'est que la France toute catholique sous le règne de Louis le Grand*, in which a controlled passion of accusation makes every sentence bite like an acid, leaving a mark that no dialectic can efface. But it was not only from Catholicism that he suffered, and not only to Catholics that his message was addressed. One of his most malignant enemies was the Protestant Jurieu, who it was that succeeded in having him deprived of his chair of philosophy and history at Rotterdam (1693) on the score of the freethinking of his *Pensées sur la Comète*. This wrong cast a shadow over his life, reducing him to financial straits in which he had to curtail greatly the plan of his Dictionary. Further, it moved him to some inconsistent censure of the political writings of French Protestant refugees³—Jurieu being the reputed author of a violent attack on the rule of Louis XIV, under the title *Les Soupirs de la France esclave qui aspire après la liberté* (1689).⁴ Yet again, the malicious Jurieu induced the Consistory of Rotterdam to censure the Dictionary on the score of the tone and tendency of the article "David" and the renewed vindications of atheists.

But nothing could turn Bayle from his loyalty to reason and toleration; and the malice of the bigots could not deprive him of his literary vogue, which was in the ratio of his unparalleled industry. As a mere writer he is admirable: save in point of sheer wit, of which, however, he has not a little, he is to this day as readable as Voltaire. By force of unflinching lucidity, wisdom, and

¹ Cp. the testimony of Bonet-Maury, *Histoire de la liberté de conscience en France*, 1900, p. 55. Besides the writings above cited, note, in the *Dictionnaire*, art. MAHOMET, § ix; art. CONJECTE; art. SIMONIDE, notes H and G; art. SPONDE, note C.

² *Commentaire philosophique sur la parabole: Contrains-les d'entrer*, 2e ptie, vi. Cp. the *Critique générale de l'histoire du Calvinisme du Père Maimbourg*, passim.

³ See pref. to Eng. tr. of Hotman's *Franco-Gallia*, 1711.

⁴ Rep. at Amsterdam, 1788, under the title, *Vœux d'un Patriote*. Jurieu's authorship is not certain. Cp. Ch. Nodier, *Mélanges tirés d'une petite bibliothèque*, 1829, p. 357. But it is more likely than the alternative ascription to Le Vassor. The book made such a sensation that the police of Louis XIV destroyed every copy they could find; and in 1772 the Chancellor Maupeou was said to have paid 500 livres for a copy at auction over the Duc d'Orléans.

knowledge, he made the conquest of literary Europe; and fifty years after his death we find the Jesuit Delamare in his (anonymous) apologetic treatise, *La Foi justifiée de tout reproche de contradiction avec la raison* (1761), speaking of him to the deists as "their theologian, their doctor, their oracle."¹ He was indeed no less; and his serene exposure of the historic failure of Christianity was all the more deadly as coming from a master of theological history.

15. Meantime, Spinoza had reinforced the critical movement in France,² where decline of belief can be seen proceeding after as before the definite adoption of pietistic courses by the king, under the influence of Madame de Maintenon. Abbadie, writing his *Traité de la vérité de la religion chrétienne* at Berlin in 1684, speaks of an "infinity" of prejudiced deists as against the "infinity" of prejudiced believers³—evidently thinking of northern Europeans in general; and he strives hard to refute both Hobbes and Spinoza on points of Biblical criticism. In France he could not turn the tide. That radical distrust of religious motives and illumination which can be seen growing up in every country in modern Europe where religion led to war, was bound to be strengthened by the spectacle of the reformed sensualist harrying heresy in his own kingdom in the intervals of his wars with his neighbours. The crowning folly of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes⁴ (1685), forcing the flight from France of some three hundred thousand industrious⁵ and educated inhabitants for the offence of Protestantism, was as mad a blow to religion as to the State. Less paralysing to economic life than the similar policy of the Church against the Moriscoes in Spain, it is no less striking a proof of the paralysis of practical judgment to which unreasoning faith and systematic ecclesiasticism can lead. Orthodoxy in France was as ecstatic in its praise of the act as had been that of Spain in the case of the expulsion of the Moriscoes. The deed is not to be laid at the single door of the king or of any of his advisers, male or female: the act which deprived France of a vast host of her soundest citizens was applauded by

¹ Ed. 1766, p. 7.

² The *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* had been translated into French in 1678 by Saint-Glain, a Protestant, who gave it no fewer than three other titles in succession to evade prosecution. (Note to Colerus in Gfrörer's ed. of Spinoza, p. xlix.) In addition to the work of Aubert de Versé, above mentioned, replies were published by Simon, De la Motte (minister of the Savoy Chapel, London), Lami, a Benedictine, and others. Their spirit may be divined from Lami's title, *Nouvel athéisme renversé*, 1706.

³ Tom. I, § II, ch. ix (ed. 1864, I, 134, 177).

⁴ The destruction of Protestant liberties was not the work of the single Act of Revocation. It had begun in detail as early as 1663. From the withholding of court favour it proceeded to subsidies for conversions, and thence to a graduated series of invasions of Protestant rights, so that the formal Revocation was only the violent consummation of a process. See the recital in Bonet-Maury, *Histoire de la liberté de conscience en France*, 1900, pp. 46-52.

⁵ As to the loss to French industry see Bonet-Maury, as cited, p. 59, and refs.

nearly all cultured Catholicism.¹ Not merely the bishops, Bossuet and Fénelon² and Masillon, but the Jansenist Arnauld; not merely the female devotees, Mademoiselle de Scudéry and Madame Deshoulières, but Racine, La Bruyère, and the senile la Fontaine—all extolled the senseless deed. The not over-pious Madame de Sévigné was delighted with the "dragoonades," declaring that "nothing could be finer: no king has done or will do anything more memorable"; the still less mystical Bussy, author of the *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*, was moved to pious exultation; and the dying Chancellor le Tellier, on signing the edict of revocation, repeated the legendary cry of Simeon, *Nunc dimitte servum tuum, Domine!* To this pass had the Catholic creed and discipline brought the mind of France. Only the men of affairs, nourished upon realities—the Vaubans, Saint Simons, and Catinats—realized the insanity of the action, which Colbert (d. 1683) would never have allowed to come to birth.

The triumphers, doubtless, did not contemplate the expatriation of the myriads of Protestants who escaped over the frontiers in the closing years of the century in spite of all the efforts of the royal police, "carrying with them," as a later French historian writes, "our arts, the secrets of our manufactures, and their hatred of the king." The Catholics, as deep in civics as in science, thought only of the humiliation and subjection of the heretics—doubtless feeling that they were getting a revenge against Protestantism for the Test Act and the atrocities of the Popish Plot mania in England. The blow recoiled on their country. Within a generation, their children were enduring the agonies of utter defeat at the hands of a coalition of Protestant nations every one of which had been strengthened by the piously exiled sons of France; and in the midst of their mortal struggle the revolted Protestants of the Cévennes so furiously assailed from the rear that the drain upon the king's forces precipitated the loss of their hold on Germany.

For every Protestant who crossed the frontiers between 1685 and 1700, perhaps, a Catholic neared or crossed the line between indifferentism and active doubt. The steady advance of science all the while infallibly undermined faith; and hardly was the bolt launched against the Protestants when new sapping and mining was going on. FONTENELLE (1657-1757), whose *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* (1686) popularized for the elegant world the new cosmology,

¹ See Duruy, *Hist. de la France*, II, 253; Bonet-Maury, as cited, pp. 53-66.

² As to whose attitude at this crisis see O. Douen, *L'Intolérance de Fénelon*, 1880.

cannot but have undermined dogmatic faith in some directions; above all by his graceful and skilful *Histoire des Oracles* (also 1686), where "the argumentation passes beyond the thesis advanced. All that he says of oracles could be said of miracles."¹ The Jesuits found the book essentially "impious"; and a French culture-historian sees in it "the first attack which directs the scientific spirit against the foundations of Christianity. All the purely philosophic arguments with which religion has been assailed are in principle in the work of Fontenelle."² In his abstract thinking he was no less radical, and his *Traité de la Liberté*³ established so well the determinist position that it was decisively held by the majority of the French freethinkers who followed. Living to his hundredth year, he could join hands with the freethought of Gassendi and Voltaire,⁴ Descartes and Diderot. Yet we shall find him later, in his official capacity of censor of literature, refusing to pass heretical books, on principles that would have vetoed his own. He is in fact a type of the freethought of the age of Louis XIV—Epicurean in the common sense, unheroic, resolute only to evade penalties, guiltless of over-zeal. Not in that age could men generate an enthusiasm for truth.

16. Of the new Epicureans, the most famous in his day was SAINT-EVREMOND,⁵ who, exiled from France for his politics, maintained both in London and in Paris, by his writings, a leadership in polite letters. In England he greatly influenced young men like Bolingbroke; and a translation (attributed to Dryden) of one of his writings seems to have given Bishop Butler the provocation to the first and weakest chapter of his *Analogy*.⁶ As to his skepticism there was no doubt in his own day; and his compliments to Christianity are much on a par with those paid later by the equally conforming and unbelieving Shaftesbury, whom he also anticipated in his persuasive advocacy of toleration.⁷ REGNARD, the dramatist, had a similar private repute as an "Epicurean." And even among the nominally orthodox writers of the time in France a subtle skepticism touches nearly all opinion. La Bruyère is almost the only lay classic of the period who is pronouncedly religious; and his essay on the freethinkers,⁸ against whom his reasoning is so forcibly

¹ Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 627.

² *Id ib.* Cp. Demogéot, p. 468.

³ Not printed till 1743, in the *Nouvelles libertés de penser*; and still read in MS. by Grimm in 1754. Fontenelle was also credited with a heretical letter on the resurrection, and an essay on the Infinite, pointing to disbelief. It should be noted, however, that he stands for deism in his essay, *De l'existence de Dieu*, which is a guarded application of the design argument against what was then assumed to be the only alternative—the "fortuitous concourse of atoms."

⁴ But Voltaire and he were not at one. He is the "nain de Saturne" in *Micromégas*.

⁵ B. 1613; d. 1703. A man who lived to ninety can have been no great debauchee.

⁶ Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 173.

⁷ Cp. Gidel, *Étude* prefixed to *Œuvres Choiesies de Saint-Evremond*, ed. Garnier, pp. 64-69.

⁸ *Caractères* (1687), ch. xvi: *Les Esprits Forts*.

feeble, testifies to their numbers and to the stress of debate set up by them. Even he, too, writes as a deist against atheists, hardly as a believing Christian. If he were a believer he certainly found no comfort in his faith: whatever were his capacity for good feeling, no great writer of his age betrays such bitterness of spirit, such suffering from the brutalities of life, such utter disillusionment, such unfaith in men. And a certain doubt is cast upon all his professions of opinion by the sombre avowal: "A man born a Christian and a Frenchman finds himself constrained¹ in satire: the great subjects are forbidden him: he takes them up at times, and then turns aside to little things, which he elevates by his.....genius and his style."²

M. Lanson remarks that "we must not let ourselves be abused by the last chapter [*Des esprits forts*], a collection of philosophic reflections and reasonings, where La Bruyère mingles Plato, Descartes, and Pascal in a vague Christian spiritualism. This chapter, evidently sincere, but without individuality, and containing only the reflex of the thoughts of others, is not a conclusion to which the whole work conducts. It marks, on the contrary, the lack of conclusion and of general views. What is more, with the chapter *On the Sovereign*, placed in the middle of the volume, it is destined to disarm the temporal and spiritual powers, to serve as passport for the independent freedom of observation in the rest of the *Caractères*" (p. 599).

On this it may be remarked that the essay in question is not so much Christian as theistic; but the suggestion as to the object is plausible. Taine (*Essais de critique et d'histoire*, ed. 1901) first remarks (p. 11) on the "christianisme" of the essay, and then decides (p. 12) that "he merely exposes in brief and imperious style the reasonings of the school of Descartes." It should be noted, however, that in this essay La Bruyère does not scruple to write: "If all religion is a respectful fear of God, what is to be thought of those who dare to wound him in his most living image, which is the sovereign?" (§ 27 in ed. Walckenaer, p. 578. Pascal holds the same tone. *Vie*, par Madame Perier.) This appears first in the fourth edition; and many other passages were inserted in that and later issues: the whole is an inharmonious mosaic.

Concerning La Bruyère, the truth would seem to be that the inconsequences in the structure of his essays were symptomatic of variability in his moods and opinions. Taine and Lanson are struck by the premonitions of the revolution in his famous picture of the peasants, and other passages; and the latter remarks (p. 603) that "the points touched by La Bruyère are precisely those where the writers of the next age undermined

¹ "Is embarrassed" in the first edition.

² *Des ouvrages de l'esprit*, near end. § 65 in ed. Walckenaer, p. 176.

the old order: La Bruyère is already *philosophe* in the sense which Voltaire and Diderot gave to that term." But we cannot be sure that the plunges into convention were not real swervings of a vacillating spirit. It is difficult otherwise to explain his recorded approbation of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

The *Dialogues sur le Quiétisme*, published posthumously under his name (1699), appear to be spurious. This was emphatically asserted by contemporaries (*Sentiments critiques sur les Caractères de M. de la Bruyère*, 1701, p. 447; *Apologie de M. de la Bruyère*, 1701, p. 357, both cited by Walckenaer) who on other points were in opposition. Baron Walckenaer (*Étude*, ed. cited, p. 76 sq.) pronounces that they were the work of Elliès du Pin, a doctor of the Sorbonne, and gives good reasons for the attribution. The Abbé d'Olivet in his *Histoire de l'Académie française* declares that La Bruyère only drafted them, and that du Pin edited them; but the internal evidence is against their containing anything of La Bruyère's draught. They are indeed so feeble that no admirer cares to accept them as his. (Cp. note to Suard's *Notice sur la personne et les écrits de la Bruyère*, in Didot ed. 1865, p. 20.) Written against Madame Guyon, they were not worth his while.

If the apologetics of Huet and Pascal, Bossuet and Fénelon, had any influence on the rationalistic spirit, it was but in the direction of making it more circumspect, never of driving it out. It is significant that whereas in the year of the issue of the *Demonstratio* the Duchesse d'Orléans could write that "every young man either is or affects to be an atheist," Le Vassor wrote in 1688: "People talk only of reason, of good taste, of force of mind, of the advantage of those who can raise themselves above the prejudices of education and of the society in which one is born. Pyrrhonism is the fashion in many things: men say that rectitude of mind consists in 'not believing lightly' and in being 'ready to doubt.'"¹ Pascal and Huet between them had only multiplied doubters. On both lines, obviously, freethought was the gainer; and in a Jesuit treatise, *Le Monde condamné par lui-même*, published in 1695, the *Préface contre l'incrédulité des libertins* sets out with the avowal that "to draw the condemnation of the world out of its own mouth, it is necessary to attack first the incredulity of the unbelievers (*libertins*), who compose the main part of it, and who under some appearance of Christianity conceal a mind either Judaic [read *deistic*] or pagan." Such was France to a religious eye at the height of the Catholic triumph over Protestantism. The statement that the *libertins*

¹ M. Le Vassor, *De la véritable religion*, 1688, préf. Le Vassor speaks in the same preface of "this multitude of *libertins* and of unbelievers which now terrifies us." His book seeks to vindicate the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, inspiration, prophecies, and miracles, against Spinoza, Le Clerc, and others.

formed the majority of "the world" is of course a furious extravagance. But there must have been a good deal of unbelief to have moved a priest to such an explosion. And the unbelief must have been as much a product of revulsion from religious savagery as a result of direct critical impulse, for there was as yet no circulation of positively freethinking literature. For a time, indeed, there was a general falling away in French intellectual prestige,¹ the result, not of the mere "protective spirit" in literature, as is sometimes argued, but of the immense diversion of national energy under Louis XIV to militarism;² and the freethinkers lost some of the confidence as well as some of the competence they had exhibited in the days of Molière.³ There had been too little solid thinking done to preclude a reaction when the king, led by Madame de Maintenon, went about to atone for his debaucheries by an old age of piety. "The king had been put in such fear of hell that he believed that all who had not been instructed by the Jesuits were damned. To ruin anyone it was necessary only to say, 'He is a Huguenot, or a Jansenist,' and the thing was done."⁴ In this state of things there spread in France the revived doctrine or temper of Quietism, set up by the Spanish priest, Miguel de Molinos (1640-1697), whose *Spiritual Guide*, published in Spanish in 1675, appeared in 1681 in Italian at Rome, where he was a highly influential confessor. It was soon translated into Latin, French, and Dutch. In 1685 he was cited before the Inquisition; in 1687 the book was condemned to be burned, and he was compelled to retract sixty-eight propositions declared to be heretical; whereafter, nonetheless, he was imprisoned till his death in 1696. In France, whence the attack on him had begun, his teaching made many converts, notably Madame Guyon, and may be said to have created a measure of religious revival. But when Fénelon took it up (1697), modifying the terminology of Molinos to evade the official condemnation, he was bitterly attacked by Bossuet as putting forth doctrine incompatible with Christianity; the prelates fought for two years; and finally the Pope condemned Fénelon's book, whereupon he submitted, limiting his polemic to attacks on the Jansenists. Thus the gloomy orthodoxy of the court and the mysticism of the new school alike failed to affect the general intelligence; there was no real building up of belief; and the forward movement at length recommenced.

¹ Cp. Huet, *Huetiana*, § 1.

² The question is discussed in the author's *Buckle and his Critics*, pp. 324-42, and ed. of *Buckle's Introduction*. Buckle's view, however, was held by Huet, *Huetiana*, § 73.

³ Cp. Ferrens, pp. 310-14.

⁴ Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, cited by Rocquain, *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1876, p. 3, note.

CHAPTER XVI

BRITISH FREETHOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

§ 1

It appears from our survey that the "deistic movement," commonly assigned to the eighteenth century, had been abundantly prepared for in the seventeenth, which, in turn, was but developing ideas current in the sixteenth. When, in 1696, JOHN TOLAND published his *Christianity Not Mysterious*, the sensation it made was due not so much to any unheard-of boldness in its thought as to the simple fact that deistic ideas had thus found their way into print.¹ So far the deistic position was explicitly represented in English literature only by the works of Herbert, Hobbes, and Blount; and of these only the first (who wrote in Latin) and the third had put the case at any length. Against the deists or atheists of the school of Hobbes, and the Scriptural Unitarians who thought with Newton and Locke, there stood arrayed the great mass of orthodox intolerance which clamoured for the violent suppression of every sort of "infidelity." It was this feeling, of which the army of ignorant rural clergy were the spokesmen, that found vent in the Blasphemy Act of 1697. The new literary growth dating from the time of Toland is the evidence of the richness of the rationalistic soil already created. Thinking men craved a new atmosphere. Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* is an unsuccessful compromise: Toland's book begins a new propagandist era.

Toland's treatise,² heretical as it was, professed to be a defence of the faith, and avowedly founded on Locke's anonymous *Reasonableness of Christianity*, its young author being on terms of acquaintance with the philosopher.³ He claimed, in fact, to take for granted "the Divinity of the New Testament," and to "demonstrate the verity of divine revelation against atheists and all enemies of revealed religion," from whom, accordingly, he expected to receive

¹ As Voltaire noted, Toland was persecuted in Ireland for his circumspect and cautious first book, and left unmolested in England when he grew much more aggressive.

² First ed. anonymous. Second ed., of same year, gives author's name. Another ed. in 1702.

³ See *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 129.

no quarter. Brought up, as he declared, "from my cradle, in the grossest superstition and idolatry," he had been divinely led to make use of his own reason; and he assured his Christian readers of his perfect sincerity in "defending the true religion."¹ Twenty years later, his primary positions were hardly to be distinguished from those of ratiocinative champions of the creed, save in respect that he was challenging orthodoxy where they were replying to unbelievers. Toland, however, lacked alike the timidity and the prudence which so safely guided Locke in his latter years; and though his argument was only a logical and outspoken extension of Locke's position, to the end of showing that there was nothing supra-rational in Christianity of Locke's type, it separated him from "respectable" society in England and Ireland for the rest of his life. The book was "presented" by the Grand Juries of Middlesex and Dublin;² the dissenters in Dublin being chiefly active in denouncing it—with or without knowledge of its contents;³ half-a-dozen answers appeared; and when in 1698 Toland produced another, entitled *Amyntor*, showing the infirm foundation of the Christian canon, there was again a speedy crop of replies. Despite the oversights inevitable to such pioneer work, this opens, from the side of freethought, the era of documentary criticism of the New Testament; and in some of his later freethinking books, as the *Nazarenus* (1718) and the *Pantheisticon* (1720), he continues to show himself in advance of his time in "opening new windows" for his mind.⁴ The latter work represents in particular the influence of Spinoza, whom he had formerly criticized somewhat forcibly⁵ for his failure to recognize that motion is inherent in matter. On that head he lays down⁶ the doctrine that "motion is but matter under a certain consideration"—an essentially "materialist" position, deriving from the pre-Socratic Greeks, and incidentally affirmed by Bacon.⁷ He was not exactly an industrious student or writer; but he had scholarly knowledge and instinct, and several of his works show close study of Bayle.

As regards his more original views on Christian origins, he is not impressive to the modern reader; but theses which to-day stand for little were in their own day important. Thus in his *Hodegus* (pt. i

¹ Pref. to 2nd ed. pp. vi, viii, xxiv, xxvi.

² As late as 1701 a vote for its prosecution was passed in the Lower House of Convocation. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, p. 180.

³ Molyneux, in *Familiar Letters of Locke*, etc. p. 228.

⁴ No credit for this is given in Sir Leslie Stephen's notice of Toland in *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i. 101-12. Compare the estimate of Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i. 272-76 (Eng. tr. i. 324-30). Lange perhaps idealizes his subject somewhat.

⁵ In two letters published along with the *Letters to Serena*, 1704.

⁶ *Letters to Serena*, etc. 1704, pref.

⁷ *De Principiis atque Originibus* (Routledge's 1-vol. ed. pp. 651, 667).

of the *Tetradymus*, 1720) it is elaborately argued that the "pillar of fire by night and of cloud by day" was no miracle, but the regular procedure of guides in deserts, where night marches are the rule; the "cloud" being simply the smoke of the vanguard's fire, which by night flared red. Later criticism decides that the whole narrative of the Exodus is myth. Toland's method, however, was relatively so advanced that it had not been abandoned by theological "rationals" a century later. Of that movement he must be ranked an energetic pioneer: though he lacked somewhat the strength of character that in his day was peculiarly needed to sustain a freethinker. Much of his later life was spent abroad; and his *Letters to Serena* (1704) show him permitted to discourse to the Queen of Prussia on such topics as the origin and force of prejudice, the history of the doctrine of immortality, and the origin of idolatry. He pays his correspondent the compliment of treating his topics with much learning; and his manner of assuming her own orthodoxy in regard to revelation could have served as a model to Gibbon.¹ But, despite such distinguished patronage, his life was largely passed in poverty, cheerfully endured,² with only chronic help from well-to-do sympathizers, such as Shaftesbury, who was not over-sympathetic. When it is noted that down to 1761 there had appeared no fewer than fifty-four answers to his first book,³ his importance as an intellectual influence may be realized.

A certain amount of evasion was forced upon Toland by the Blasphemy Law of 1697; inferentially, however, he was a thorough deist until he became pantheist; and the discussion over his books showed that views essentially deistic were held even among his antagonists. One, an Irish bishop, got into trouble by setting forth a notion of deity which squared with that of Hobbes.⁴ The whole of our present subject, indeed, is much complicated by the distribution of heretical views among the nominally orthodox, and of orthodox views among heretics.⁵ Thus the school of Cudworth, zealous against atheism, was less truly theistic than that of Blount,⁶

¹ *Letters to Serena*, pp. 19, 67.

² Sir Henry Craik (cited by Temple Scott, Bohn ed. of Swift's Works, iii, 9) speaks of Toland as "a man of utterly worthless character." This is mere malignant abuse. Toland is described by Pope in a note to the *Dunciad* (ii, 309) as a spy to Lord Oxford. There could hardly be a worse authority for such a charge.

³ Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 26.

⁴ Cp. Stephen, as cited, p. 115.

⁵ "The Christianity of many writers consisted simply in expressing deist opinions in the old-fashioned phraseology" (Stephen, i, 91).

⁶ Cp. Pänzer, *Christ. Philos. of Religion*, i, 289-90; and *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 94-98.

Lord Morley's reference to "the godless deism of the English school" (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 60) is puzzling. Cp. Rosenkranz (*Diderot's Leben und Werke*, 1866, ii, 421) on "den ungöttlichen Gott der Jesuiten und Jansenisten, dies monströse Zerrbild des alten Jahovah, diesen apotheosirten Tyrannen, diesen Moloch." The latter application of the term seems the more plausible.

who, following Hobbes, pointed out that to deny to God a continual personal and providential control of human affairs was to hold to atheism under the name of theism;¹ whereas Cudworth, the champion of theism against the atheists, entangled himself hopelessly² in a theory which made deity endow Nature with "plastic" powers and leave it to its own evolution. The position was serenely demolished by Bayle,³ as against Le Clerc, who sought to defend it; and in England the clerical outcry was so general that Cudworth gave up authorship.⁴ Over the same crux, in Ireland, Bishop Browne and Bishop Berkeley accused each other of promoting atheism; and Archbishop King was embroiled in the dispute.⁵ On the other hand, the theistic Descartes had laid down a "mechanical" theory of the universe which perfectly comported with atheism, and partly promoted that way of thinking;⁶ and a selection from Gassendi's ethical writings, translated into English⁷ (1699), wrought in the same direction. The Church itself contained Cartesians and Cudworthians, Socinians and deists.⁸ Each group, further, had inner differences as to free-will⁹ and Providence; and the theistic schools of Newton, Clarke, and Leibnitz rejected each other's philosophies as well as that of Descartes. Leibnitz complained grimly that Newton and his followers had "a very odd opinion concerning the Work of God," making the universe an imperfect machine, which the deity had frequently to mend; and treating space as an organ by which God perceives things, which are thus regarded as not produced or maintained by him.¹⁰ Newton's principles of explanation, he insisted, were those of the materialists.¹¹ John Hutchinson, a professor at Cambridge, in his *Treatise of Power, Essential and Mechanical*, also bitterly assailed Newton as a deistical and anti-scriptural sophist.¹² Clarke, on the other hand, declared that the philosophy of Leibnitz was "tending to banish God from the

¹ Macaulay's description of Blount as an atheist is therefore doubly unwarranted.

² Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 94-98.

³ *Continuation des Pensées Diverses.....à l'occasion de la Comète.....de 1680*, Amsterdam, 1705, i. 91.

⁴ Warburton, *Divine Legation*, vol. ii, preface.

⁵ Stephen, *English Thought*, i. 114-18.

⁶ This, according to John Craig, was Newton's opinion. "The reason of his [Newton's] showing the errors of Cartes's philosophy was because he thought it made on purpose to be the foundation of infidelity." Letter to Conduitt, April 7, 1727, in Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, ii. 315. Clarke, in his Answer to Butler's Fifth Letter, expresses a similar view.

⁷ "Three Discourses of Happiness, Virtue, and Liberty, Collected from the Works of the Learned Gassendi by Monsieur Bernier. Translated out of the French, 1699."

⁸ Cp. W. Sichel, *Boingbroke and His Times*, 1901, i. 175.

⁹ Sir Leslie Stephen (i. 33) makes the surprising statement that a "dogmatic assertion of free-will became a mark of the whole deist and semi-deist school." On the contrary, Hobbes and Anthony Collins, not to speak of Locke, wrote with uncommon power against the conception of free-will, and had many disciples on that head.

¹⁰ Letter to the Princess of Wales, November, 1715, in Brewster, ii. 284-85.

¹¹ Second Letter to Clarke, par. 1.

¹² *Abstract from the Works of John Hutchinson*, 1755, pp. 149-63.

world."¹ Alongside of such internecine strife, it was not surprising that the great astronomer Halley, who accepted Newton's principles in physics, was commonly reputed an atheist; and that the free-thinkers pitted his name in that connection against Newton's.² As it was he who first suggested³ the idea of the total motion of the entire solar system in space—described by a modern pietist as "this great cosmical truth, the grandest in astronomy"⁴—they were not ill justified. It can hardly be doubted that if intellectual England could have been polled in 1710, under no restraints from economic, social, and legal pressure, some form of rationalism inconsistent with Christianity would have been found to be nearly as common as orthodoxy. In outlying provinces, in Devon and Cornwall, in Ulster, in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as in the metropolis, the pressure of deism on the popular creed evoked expressions of Arian and Socinian thought among the clergy.⁵ It was, in fact, the various restraints under notice that determined the outward fortunes of belief and unbelief, and have substantially determined them since. When the devout Whiston was deposed from his professorship for his Arianism, and the unbelieving Saunderson was put in his place,⁶ and when Simson was suspended from his ministerial functions in Glasgow,⁷ the lesson was learned that outward conformity was the sufficient way to income.⁸

Hard as it was, however, to kick against the pricks of law and prejudice, it is clear that many in the upper and middle classes privately did so. The clerical and the new popular literature of the time prove this abundantly. In the *Tatler* and its successors,⁹ the decorous Addison and the indecorous Steele, neither of them a competent thinker, frigidly or furiously asperse the new tribe of freethinkers; while the evangelically pious Berkeley and the extremely unevangelical Swift rival each other in the malice of

¹ Clarke's Answer to Leibnitz's First Letter, *end.*

² Berkeley, *Defence of Freethinking in Mathematics*, par. vii; and Stock's Memoir of Berkeley. Cp. Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, ii, 408.

³ In the *Philosophical Transactions*, 1718, No. 355, i, v, vi.

⁴ Brewster, *More Worlds than One*, 1854, p. 110.

⁵ Lecky, *Hist. of England in the Eighteenth Cent.* ed. 1892, iii, 22-24.

⁶ The tradition of Saunderson's unbelief is constant. In the memoir prefixed to his *Elements of Algebra* (1740) no word is said of his creed, though at death he received the sacrament.

⁷ See *The State of the Process depending against Mr. John Simson*, Edinburgh, 1728. Simson always expressed himself piously, but had thrown out such expressions as *Ratio est principium et fundamentum theologicæ*, which "contravened the Act of Assembly, 1717" (vol. cited, p. 316). The "process" against him began in 1714, and dragged on for nearly twenty years, with the result of his resigning his professorship of theology at Glasgow in 1729, and seceding from the Associate Presbytery in 1733. Burton, *History of Scotland*, vii, 399-400.

⁸ Cp. the pamphlet by "A Presbyterian of the Church of England," attributed to Bishop Hare, cited in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 177-78, and by Lecky, iii, 25.

⁹ *Tatler*, Nos. 12, 111, 135; *Spectator*, Nos. 234, 381, 389, 599; *Guardian*, Nos. 3, 9, 27, 35, 39, 55, 63, 70, 77, 83, 88, 126, 130, 169. Most of the *Guardian* papers cited are by Berkeley. They are extremely virulent; but Steele's run them hard.

their attacks on those who rejected their creed. Berkeley, a man of philosophic genius but intense prepossessions, maintained Christianity on grounds which are the negation of philosophy.¹ Swift, the genius of neurotic misanthropy, who, in the words of Macaulay, "though he had no religion, had a great deal of professional spirit,"² fought venomously for the creed of salvation. And still the deists multiplied. In the EARL OF SHAFTESBURY³ they had a satirist with a finer and keener weapon than was wielded by either Steele or Addison, and a much better temper than was owned by Swift or Berkeley. He did not venture to parade his unbelief: to do so was positively dangerous; but his thrusts at faith left little doubt as to his theory. He was at once dealt with by the orthodox as an enemy, and as promptly adopted by the deists as a champion, important no less for his ability than for his rank. Nor, indeed, is he lacking in boldness in comparison with contemporary writers. The anonymous pamphlet entitled *The Natural History of Superstition*, by the deist John Trenchard, M.P. (1709), does not venture on overt heresy. But Shaftesbury's *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1708), his *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1709), and his treatise *The Moralists* (1709), had need be anonymous because of their essential hostility to the reigning religious ethic.

Such polemic marks a new stage in rationalistic propaganda. Swift, writing in 1709, angrily proposes to "prevent the publishing of such pernicious works as under pretence of freethinking endeavour to overthrow those tenets in religion which have been held inviolable in almost all ages."⁴ But his further protest that "the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the immortality of the soul, and even the truth of all revelation, are daily exploded and denied in books openly printed," points mainly to the Unitarian propaganda. Among freethinkers he names, in his *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* (1708), Asgill, Coward, Toland, and Tindal. But the first was an ultra-Christian; the second was a Christian upholder of the thesis that spirit is not immaterial; and the last, at that date, had published only his *Four Discourses* (collected in 1709) and his *Rights of the Christian Church*, which are anti-clerical, but not

¹ *Analyst*, Queries 60 and 62: *Defence of Freethinking in Mathematics*, §§ 5, 6, 50. Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 141-42.

² Letter in De Morgan's *Newton: his Friend; and his Niece*, 1885, p. 69.

³ The essays in the *Characteristics* (excepting the *Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit*, which was published by Toland, without permission, in 1699) appeared between 1708 and 1711, being collected in the latter year. Shaftesbury died in 1713, in which year appeared his paper on *The Judgment of Hercules*.

⁴ *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*. Bohn ed. of *Works*, iii, 44. In this paper Swift reveals his moral standards by the avowal (p. 40) that "hypocrisy is much more eligible than open infidelity and vice: it wears the livery of religion.....and is cautious of giving scandal."

anti-Christian. Prof. Henry Dodwell, who about 1673 published *Two Letters of Advice, I, For the Susception of Holy Orders; II, For Studies Theological, especially such as are Rational*, and in 1706 an *Epistolary Discourse Concerning the Soul's Natural Mortality*, maintaining the doctrine of conditional immortality,¹ which he made dependent on baptism in the apostolical succession, was a devout Christian; and no writer of that date went further. Dodwell is in fact blamed by Bishop Burnet for stirring up fanaticism against lay-baptism among dissenters.² It would appear that Swift spoke mainly from hearsay, and on the strength of the conversational freethinking so common in society.³ But the anonymous essays of Shaftesbury which were issued in 1709 might be the immediate provocation of his outbreak.⁴

An official picture of the situation is formally drawn in *A Representation of the Present State of Religion, with regard to the late excessive growth of infidelity, heresy, and profaneness*, drawn up by the Upper House of Convocation of the province of Canterbury in 1711.⁵ This sets forth, as a result of the disorders of the Rebellion, a growth of all manner of unbelief and profanity, including denial of inspiration and the authority of the canon; the likening of Christian miracles to heathen fables; the treating of all religious mysteries as absurd speculations; Arianism and Socinianism and scoffing at the doctrine of the Trinity; denial of natural immortality; Erastianism; mockery of baptism and the Lord's Supper; decrying of all priests as impostors; the collecting and reprinting of infidel works; and publication of mock catechisms. It is explained that all such printing has greatly increased "since the expiration of the Act for restraining the press"; and mention is made of an Arian work just published to which the author has put his name, and which he has dedicated to the Convocation itself. This was the first volume of Whiston's *Primitive Christianity Revived*, the work of a devout eccentric, who had just before been deprived of his professorship at Cambridge for his orally avowed heresy. Whiston, whose cause was

¹ Sir Leslie Stephen (*English Thought*, i, 283) speaks of Dodwell's thesis as deserving only "pity or contempt." Cp. Macaulay, *Student's ed.* ii, 107-108. But a doctrine of conditional immortality had been explicitly put by Locke in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 1695, p. 13. Cp. Prof. Fraser's *Locke*, 1890, pp. 259-60, and Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 287. The difference was that Dodwell elaborately gave his reasons, which, as Dr. Clarke put it, made "all good men sorry, and all profane men rejoice."

² *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, p. 887.

³ Compare his ironical *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, 1708.

⁴ He had, however, hailed the anonymous *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* as "very well writ," believing it to be by a friend of his own—(Robert Hunter, to whom, accordingly, it has since been mistakenly attributed by various bibliographers, including Barbier).

⁵ "Enthusiasm," as meaning "popular fanaticism," was of course as repellent to a Churchman as to the deists.

⁶ Printed in folio 1711. Rep. in vol. xi of the *Harleian Miscellany*, p. 168 sq. (2nd ed. p. 163 sq.).

championed, and whose clerical opponents were lampooned, in an indecorous but vigorous sketch, *The Tryal of William Whiston, Clerk, for defaming and denying the Holy Trinity, before the Lord Chief Justice Reason* (1712; 3rd ed. 1740), always remained perfectly devout in his Arian orthodoxy; but his and his friends' arguments were rather better fitted to make deists than to persuade Christians; and Convocation's appeal for a new Act "restraining the present excessive and scandalous liberty of printing wicked books at home, and importing the like from abroad" was not responded to. There was no love lost between Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury; but the government in which the former, a known deist, was Secretary of State, could hardly undertake to suppress the works of the latter.

§ 2

Deism had been thus made in a manner fashionable¹ when, in 1713, ANTHONY COLLINS (1676-1729) began a new development by his *Discourse of Freethinking*. He had previously published a notably freethinking *Essay Concerning the Use of Reason* (1707), albeit without specific impeachment of the reigning creed; carried on a discussion with Clarke on the question of the immateriality of the soul; and issued treatises entitled *Priestcraft in Perfection* (1709, dealing with the history of the Thirty-nine Articles)² and *A Vindication of the Divine Attributes* (1710), exposing the Hobbesian theism of Archbishop King on lines followed twenty years later by Berkeley in his *Minute Philosopher*. But none of these works aroused such a tumult as the *Discourse of Freethinking*, which may be said to sum up and unify the drift not only of previous English freethinking, but of the great contribution of Bayle, whose learning and temper influence all English deism from Shaftesbury onwards.³ Collins's book, however, was unique in its outspokenness. To the reader of to-day, indeed, it is no very aggressive performance: the writer was a man of imperturbable amenity and genuine kindness of nature; and his style is the completest possible contrast to that of the furious replies it elicited. It was to Collins that Locke wrote, in 1703: "Believe it, my good friend, to love truth for truth's sake is the

¹ Dr. E. Synge, of Dublin (afterwards Archbishop of Tuam), in his *Religion Tried by the Test of Sober and Impartial Reason*, published in 1713, seems to be writing before the issue of Collins's book when he says (*Dedication*, p. 11) that the spread of the "disease not only of Heterodoxy but of Infidelity" is "too plain to be either denied or dissembled."

² Leslie affirms in his *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated* (1711, p. 14) that the satirical *Detection of his Short Method with the Deists*, to which the *Truth* is a reply, was by the author of *Priestcraft in Perfection*; but, while the *Detection* has some of Collins's humour, it lacks his amenity, and is evidently not by him.

³ An English translation of the *Dictionary*, in 5 vols. folio, with "many passages restored," appeared in 1734.

principal part of human perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all other virtues; and, if I mistake not, you have as much of it as I ever met with in anybody."¹ The *Discourse* does no discredit to this uncommon encomium, being a luminous and learned plea for the conditions under which alone truth can be prosperously studied, and the habits of mind which alone can attain it. Of the many replies, the most notorious is that of Bentley writing as *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, a performance which, on the strength of its author's reputation for scholarship, has been uncritically applauded by not a few critics, of whom some of the most eminent do not appear to have read Collins's treatise.² Bentley's is in reality pre-eminent only for insolence and bad faith, the latter complicated by lapses of scholarship hardly credible on its author's part.

See the details in *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. vii. I am compelled to call attention to the uncritical verdict given on this matter by the late Sir Leslie Stephen, who asserts (*English Thought*, i, 206) that Bentley convicts Collins of "unworthy shuffling" in respect of his claim that freethinking had "banished the devil." Bentley affirmed that this had been the work, not of the freethinkers, but of "the Royal Society, the Boyles and the Newtons"; and Sir Leslie comments that "nothing could be more true." Nothing could be more untrue. As we have seen (above p. 82), Boyle was a convinced believer in demonology; and Newton did absolutely nothing to disperse it. Glanvill, a Royal Society man, had been a vehement supporter of the belief in witchcraft; and the Society as such never meddled with the matter. As to Collins's claim for the virtue of freethinking, Sir Leslie strangely misses the point that Collins meant by the word not unbelief, but free inquiry. He could not have meant to say that Holland was full of deists. In Collins's sense of the word, the Royal Society's work in general was freethinking work.

One mistranslation which appears to have been a printer's error, and one mis-spelling of a Greek name, are the only heads on which Bentley confutes his author. He had, in fact, neither the kind of knowledge nor the candour that could fit him to handle the problems raised. It was Bentley's cue to represent Collins as an atheist, though he was a very pronounced deist;³ and in the first uproar

¹ *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Locke*, 1730, p. 271.

² E.g. Mark Pattison, who calls Collins's book of 178 pages a "small tract."

³ "Ignorance," Collins writes, "is the foundation of Atheism, and Freethinking the cure of it" (*Discourse of Freethinking*, p. 105). Like Newton, he contemplated only an impossible atheism, never formulated by any writer. The *Philosophical Principles of Religion, Natural and Revealed*, of Dr. George Cheyne (1705, 2nd ed. 1715), similarly declares (pref. end) that "if the modern [*i.e.* Newtonian] philosophy demonstrates nothing else, yet it infallibly proves Atheism to be the most gross ignorance." Thus the vindicator of "religion" was writing in the key of the deist.

Collins thought it well to fly to Holland to avoid arrest.¹ But deism was too general to permit of such a representative being exiled; and he returned to study quietly, leaving Bentley's vituperation and prevarication unanswered, with the other attacks made upon him. In 1715 he published his brief but masterly *Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty*—anonymous, like all his works—which remains unsurpassed as a statement of the case for Determinism.²

The welcome given to Bentley's attack upon Collins by the orthodox was warm in proportion to their sense of the general inadequacy of the apologetics on their side. Amid the common swarm of voluble futilities put forth by Churchmen, the strident vehemence as well as the erudite repute of the old scholar were fitted at least to attract the attention of lay readers in general. Most of the contemporary vindications of the faith, however, were fitted only to move intelligent men to new doubt or mere contempt. A sample of the current defence against deism is the treatise of Joseph Smith on *The Unreasonableness of Deism, or, the Certainty of a Divine Revelation*, etc. 1720, where deists in general are called "the Wicked and Unhappy men we have to deal with":³ and the argumentation consists in alleging that a good God must reveal himself, and that if the miracle stories of the New Testament had been false the Jews would have exposed and discarded them. Against such nugatory traditionalism, the criticism of Collins shone with the spirit of science. Not till 1723 did he publish his next work, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, a weighty attack on the argument from prophecy, to which the replies numbered thirty-five; on which followed in 1727 his *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*, a reply to criticisms. The former work was pronounced by Warburton one of the most plausible ever written against Christianity, and he might well say so. It faced the argument from prophecy not merely with the skepticism of the ordinary deist, but with that weapon of critical analysis of which the use had been briefly shown by Hobbes and Spinoza. Apparently for the first time, he pointed out that the "virgin prophecy" in Isaiah had a plain reference to contemporary and not to future events; he showed that the "out of Egypt" prophecy referred to the Hebrew past; and he revived the ancient demonstration of Porphyry that the Book of Daniel is

¹ Mr. Temple Scott, in his Bohn ed. of Swift's Works (iii, 166), asserts that Swift's satire "frightened Collins into Holland." For this statement there is no evidence whatever, and as it stands it is unintelligible. The assertion that Collins had had to fly to Holland in 1711 (Dr. Conybeare, *Hist. of N. T. Crit. R. P. A.* 1910, p. 38) is also astray.

² Second ed. 1717. Another writer, William Lyons, was on the same track, publishing *The Infallibility of Human Judgment, its Dignity and Excellence* (2nd ed. 1720), and *A Discourse of the Necessity of Human Actions* (1730).

³ Work cited, p. 13.

Maccabean. The general dilemma put by Collins—that either the prophecies must be reduced, textually and otherwise, to non-prophetic utterances, or Christianity must give up prophetic claims—has never since been solved.

The deistic movement was now in full flood, the acute MANDEVILLE¹ having issued in 1720 his *Free Thoughts on Religion*, and in 1723 a freshly-expanded edition of his very anti-evangelical *Fable of the Bees*; while an eccentric ex-clergyman, THOMAS WOOLSTON, who had already lost his fellowship of Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge, for vagaries of doctrine and action, contributed in 1726–28 his freshly reasoned but heedlessly ribald *Discourses on Miracles*. Voltaire, who was in England in 1728, tells that thirty thousand copies were sold;² while sixty pamphlets were written in opposition. Woolston's were indeed well fitted to arouse wrath and rejoinder. The dialectic against the argument from miracles in general, and the irrelevance or nullity of certain miracles in particular, is really cogent, and anticipates at points the thought of the nineteenth century. But Woolston was of the tribe who can argue no issue without jesting, and who stamp levity on every cause by force of innate whimsicality. Thus he could best sway the light-hearted when his cause called for the winning-over of the earnest. Arguments that might have been made convincing were made to pass as banter, and serious spirits were repelled. It was during this debate that CONYERS MIDDLETON, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, produced his *Letter from Rome* (1729), wherein the part of paganism in Christianity is so set forth as to carry inference further than the argument ostensibly goes. In that year the heads of Oxford University publicly lamented the spread of open deism among the students; and the proclamation did nothing to check the contagion. In *Fogg's Weekly Journal* of July 4, 1730, it is announced that "one of the principal colleges in Oxford has of late been infested with deists; and that three deistical students have been expelled; and a fourth has had his degree deferred two years, during which he is to be closely confined in college; and, among other things, is to translate Leslie's *Short and*

¹ As to whose positions see a paper in the writer's *Pioneer Humanists*, 1907.

² There were six separate *Discourses*. Voltaire speaks of "three editions *coup sur coup* of ten thousand each" (*Lettre sur les auteurs Anglais*—in *Œuvres*, ed. 1791. lxxviii. 339). This seems extremely unlikely as to any one *Discourse*; and even 5,000 copies of each *Discourse* is a hardly credible sale, though the writer of the sketch of his life (1733) says that "the sale of Mr. Woolston's works was very great." In any case, Woolston's *Discourses* are now seldomer met with than Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking*. Alberti (*Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Brittannien*) wrote in 1752 that the *Discourses* were even in that day somewhat rare, and seldom found together. Many copies were probably destroyed by the orthodox, and many would doubtless be thrown away, as tracts so often are.

Easy Method with the Deists."¹ It is not hard to divine the effect of such exegetic methods. In 1731, the author of an apologetic pamphlet in reply to Woolston laments that even at the universities young men "too often" become tainted with "infidelity"; and, on the other hand, directing his battery against those who "causelessly profess to build their skeptical notions" on the writings of Locke, he complains of Dr. Holdsworth and other academic polemicists who had sought to rob orthodoxy of the credit of such a champion as Locke by "consigning him over to that class of freethinkers and skeptics to which he was an adversary."²

With the most famous work of MATTHEW TINDAL,³ *Christianity as Old as Creation* (1730), the excitement seems to have reached high-water mark. Here was vivacity without flippancy, and argument without irrelevant mirth; and the work elicited from first to last over a hundred and fifty replies, at home and abroad. Tindal's thesis is that the idea of a good God involved that of a simple, perfect, and universal religion, which must always have existed among mankind, and must have essentially consisted in moral conduct. Christianity, insofar as it is true, must therefore be a statement of this primordial religion; and moral reason must be the test, not tradition or Scripture. One of the first replies was the *Vindication of Scripture* by Waterland, to which Middleton promptly offered a biting retort in a *Letter to Dr. Waterland* (1731) that serves to show the slightness of its author's faith. After demolishing Waterland's case as calculated rather to arouse than to allay skepticism, he undertakes to offer a better reply of his own. It is to the simple effect that some religion is necessary to mankind in modern as in ancient times; that Christianity meets the need very well; and that to set up reason in its place is "impracticable" and "the attempt therefore foolish and irrational," in addition to being "criminal and immoral," when politically considered.⁴ Such legalist criticism, if seriously meant, was hardly likely to discredit Tindal's book. Its directness and simplicity of appeal to what passed for theistic common-sense were indeed fitted to give it the widest audience yet won by any deist; and its anti-clericalism would carry it far among his fellow Whigs to begin with.⁵ One tract of the

¹ Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, ed. 1871, i, 65-66.

² *The Infidel Convicted*, 1731, pp. 33, 62.

³ Tindal (1653-1733) was the son of a clergyman, and in 1678 was elected a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. From 1685 to 1688 he was a Roman Catholic. Under William III he wrote three works on points of political freedom—one, 1698, on *The Liberty of the Press*. His *Rights of the Christian Church*, anonymously published in 1706, a defence of Erastianism, made a great sensation, and was prosecuted—only to be reprinted. His later *Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church* was in 1710, by order of the House of Commons, burned by the common hangman.

⁴ Middleton's *Works*, 2nd ed. 1755, iii, 50-56.

⁵ Tindal (Voltaire tells) regarded Pope as devoid of genius and imagination, and so treble earned his place in the *Dunciad*.

period, dedicated to the Queen Regent, complains that "the present raging infidelity threatens an universal infection," and that it is not confined to the capital, but "is disseminated even to the confines of your kingdom."¹ Tindal, like Collins, wrote anonymously, and so escaped prosecution, dying in 1733, when the second part of his book, left ready for publication, was deliberately destroyed by Bishop Gibson, into whose hands it came. In 1736 he and Shaftesbury are described by an orthodox apologist as the "two oracles of deism."²

Woolston, who put his name to his books, after being arrested in May, 1728, and released on bail, was prosecuted in 1729 on the charge of blasphemy, in that he had derided the gospel miracles and represented Jesus alternately as an impostor, a sorcerer, and a magician. His friendly counsel ingeniously argued that Woolston had aimed at safeguarding Christianity by returning to the allegorical method of the early Fathers; and that he had shown his reverence for Jesus and religion by many specific expressions; but the jury took a simpler view, and, without leaving the court, found Woolston guilty. He was sentenced to pay a fine of £100, to suffer a year's imprisonment, and either to find surety for his future good conduct or pay or give sureties for £2,000.³ He is commonly said to have paid the penalty of imprisonment for the rest of his life (d. 1733), being unable to pay the fine of £100; but Voltaire positively asserts that "nothing is more false" than the statement that he died in prison; adding: "Several of my friends have seen him in his house: he died there, at liberty."⁴ The solution of the conflict seems to be that he lived in his own house "in the rules of" the King's Bench Prison—that is, in the precincts, and under technical supervision.⁵ In any case, he was sentenced; and the punishment was the measure of the anger felt at the continuous advance of deistic opinions, or at least against hostile criticism of the Scriptures.

§ 3

Unitarianism, formerly a hated heresy, was now in comparison leniently treated, because of its deference to Scriptural authority,

¹ *A Layman's Faith*,....."By a Freethinker and a Christian," 1732.

² Title-page of Rev. Elisha Smith's *Cure of Deism*, 1st ed. 1736; 3rd ed. 1740.

³ Le Moine, *Dissertation historique sur les écrits de Woolston, sa condamnation*, etc. pp. 29-31, cited by Salchi, *Lettres sur le Déisme*, 1759, p. 67 sq.

⁴ *Lettre sur les auteurs Anglais*, as cited. Voltaire tells that, when a she-bigot one day spat in Woolston's face, he calmly remarked: "It was so that the Jews treated your God." Another story reads like a carefully-improved version of the foregoing. A woman is said to have accosted him as a scoundrel, and asked him why he was not yet hanged. On his asking her grounds for such an accost, she replied: "You have writ against my Saviour. What would become of my poor sinful soul if it was not for my dear Saviour—my Saviour who died for such wicked sinners as I am." *Life of Mr. Woolston*, prefixed to a reprint of his collected *Discourses*, 1733, p. 27. Cp. Salchi, p. 78.

⁵ Life cited, pp. 22, 26, 29.

Where the deists rejected all revelation, Unitarianism held by the Bible, calling only for a revision of the central Christian dogma. It had indeed gained much theological ground in the past quarter of a century. Nothing is more instructive in the culture-history of the period than the rapidity with which the Presbyterian succession of clergy passed from violent Calvinism, by way of "Baxterian" Arminianism, to Arianism, and thence in many cases to Unitarianism. First they virtually adopted the creed of the detested Laud, whom their fathers had hated for it; then they passed step by step to a heresy for which their fathers had slain men. A closely similar process took place in Geneva, where Servetus after death triumphed over his slayer.¹ In 1691, after a generation of common suffering, a precarious union was effected between the English Presbyterians, now mostly semi-Arminians, and the Independents, still mostly Calvinists: but in 1694 it was dissolved.² Thereafter the former body, largely endowed by the will of Lady Hewley in 1710, became as regards its Trust Deeds the freest of all the English sects in matters of doctrine.³ The recognition of past changes had made their clergy chary of a rigid subscription. Naturally the movement did not gain in popularity as it fell away from fanaticism; but the decline of Nonconformity in the first half of the eighteenth century was common to all the sects, and did not specially affect the Presbyterians. Of the many "free" churches established in England and Wales after the Act of Toleration (1689), about half were extinct in 1715;⁴ and of the Presbyterian churches the number in Yorkshire alone fell from fifty-nine in 1715 to a little over forty in 1730.⁵ Economic causes were probably the main ones. The State-endowed parish priest had an enduring advantage over his rival. But the Hewley endowment gave a certain economic basis to the Presbyterians; and the concern for scholarship which had always marked their body kept them more open to intellectual influences than the ostensibly more free-minded and certainly more democratic sectaries of the Independent and Baptist bodies.⁶

The result was that, with free Trust Deeds, the Presbyterians

¹ *An Historical Defence of the Trustees of Lady Hewley's Foundations*, by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, 1834, pp. 17, 35; *The History, Opinions, and present legal position of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, pp. 18, 29; Skeats, *History of the Free Churches of England*, ed. Miall, p. 240.

² Hunter, as cited, p. 17; *History of the Presbyterians*, as cited, p. 19; Fletcher, *History of Independency*, 1862, iv, 266-67.

³ Skeats, as cited, p. 225.

⁴ Hunter, pp. 37, 39.

⁵ Hunter, pp. 24-25.

⁶ Skeats (pp. 239-40) sums up that while the Baptists had probably "never been entirely free from the taint" of Unitarianism, the Particular Baptists and the Congregationalists were saved from it by their lack of men of "eminently speculative mind"; while the Presbyterians "were men, for the most part, of larger reading than other Nonconformists, and the writings of Whiston and Clarke had found their way among them." But the tendency existed before Whiston and Clarke.

openly exhibited a tendency which was latent in all the other churches. In 1719, at a special assembly of Presbyterian ministers at Salters' Hall, it was decided by a majority of 73 to 69 that subscription to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity should no longer be demanded of candidates for the ministry.¹ Of the 73, the majority professed to be themselves orthodox; but there was no question that antitrinitarian opinions had become common, especially in Devonshire, where the heresy case of Mr. Peirce of Exeter had brought the matter to a crisis.² From this date "Arian" opinions spread more rapidly in the dwindling denomination, shading yet further into Unitarianism, step for step with the deistic movement in the Church. "In less than half a century the doctrines of the great founders of Presbyterianism could scarcely be heard from any Presbyterian pulpit in England."³ "In the English Presbyterian ministry the process was from Arian opinions to those called Unitarian.....by a gradual sliding," even as the transition had been made from Calvinism to Arminianism in the previous century.⁴

Presbyterianism having thus come pretty much into line with Anglicanism on the old question of predestination, while still holding fast by Scriptural standards as against the deists, the old stress of Anglican dislike had slackened, despite the rise of the new heretical element. Unitarian arguments were now forthcoming from quarters not associated with dissent, as in the case of THOMAS CHUBB'S first treatise, *The Supremacy of the Father Asserted* (1715), courteously dedicated "To the Reverend the Clergy, and in particular to the Right Reverend Gilbert Lord Bishop of Sarum, our vigilant and laborious Diocesan." Chubb (1679-1747) had been trained to glove-making, and, as his opponents took care to record, acted also as a tallow-chandler;⁵ and the good literary quality of his work made some sensation in an England which had not learned to think respectfully of Bunyan. Chubb's impulse to write had come from the perusal of Whiston's *Primitive Christianity Revived*, in 1711, and that single-minded Arian published his book for him.

The Unitarians would naturally repudiate all connection with such a performance as *A Sober Reply to Mr. Higgs's Merry Arguments from the Light of Nature for the Tritheistic Doctrine of the Trinity*, which was condemned by the House of Lords on

¹ *History*, cited, p. 22; Hunter, pp. 44-45; Skeats, pp. 243-44.

² Skeats, pp. 240-43, 245 sq.

³ Skeats, p. 248.

⁴ Hunter, p. 50.

⁵ As Sir Leslie Stephen has observed (*English Thought*, i, 164), Chubb "deserves the praise of Malthusians." Having a sufficiency of means for himself, but not more, he lived a single life, judging it greatly improper to introduce a family into the world without a prospect of maintaining them." The proverb as to mouths and meat, he drily observes, had not been verified in his experience. (*The Author's Account of Himself*, pref. to *Posthumous Works*, 1748, i, p. iv.)

February 12, 1720, to be burnt, as having "in a daring, impious manner, ridiculed the doctrine of the Trinity and all revealed religion." Its author, Joseph Hall, a serjeant-at-arms to the King, seems to have undergone no punishment, and more decorous antitrinitarians received public countenance. Thus the Unitarian Edward Elwall,¹ who had published a book called *A True Testimony for God and his Sacred Law* (1724), for which he was prosecuted at Stafford in 1726, was allowed by the judge to argue his cause fully, and was unconditionally acquitted, to the displeasure of the clergy.

§ 4

Anti-scriptural writers could not hope for such toleration, being doubly odious to the Church. Berkeley, in 1721, had complained bitterly² of the general indifference to religion, which his writings had done nothing to alter; and in 1736 he angrily demanded that blasphemy should be punished like high treason.³ His *Minute Philosopher* (1732) betrays throughout his angry consciousness of the vogue of freethinking after twenty years of resistance from his profession; and that performance is singularly ill fitted to alter the opinions of unbelievers. In his earlier papers attacking them he had put a stress of malice that, in a mind of his calibre, is startling even to the student of religious history.⁴ It reveals him as no less possessed by the passion of creed than the most ignorant priest of his Church. For him all freethinkers were detested disturbers of his emotional life; and of the best of them, as Collins, Shaftesbury, and Spinoza, he speaks with positive fury. In the *Minute Philosopher*, half-conscious of the wrongness of his temper, he sets himself to make the unbelievers figure in dialogue as ignorant, pretentious, and coarse-natured; while his own mouthpieces are meant to be benign, urbane, wise, and persuasive. Yet in the very pages so planned he unwittingly reveals that the freethinkers whom he goes about to caricature were commonly good-natured in tone, while he becomes as virulent as ever in his eagerness to discredit them. Not a paragraph in the book attains to the spirit of judgment or fairness; all is special pleading, overstrained and embittered sarcasm, rankling animus. Gifted alike for literature and for philosophy, keen of vision in economic problems where the mass of men were short-sighted, he was flawed on the side of his faith by the hysteria to which it always

¹ One of the then numerous tribe of eccentrics, who held by Judaic Sabbatarianism, and affected a Rabinnical costume. He made a competence, however, as an ironmonger.

² *Essay Towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain.*

³ *Discourse to Magistrates.*

⁴ *Guardian*, Nos. 3, 55, 88.

stirred him. No man was less qualified to write a well-balanced dialogue as between his own side and its opponents. To candour he never attains, unless it be in the sense that his passion recoils on his own case. Even while setting up ninepins of ill-put "infidel" argument to knock down, he elaborates futilities of rebuttal, indicating to every attentive reader the slightness of his rational basis.

On the strength of this performance he might fitly be termed the most ill-conditioned sophist of his age, were it not for the perception that religious feeling in him has become a pathological phase, and that he suffers incomparably more from his own passions than he can inflict on his enemies by his eager thrusts at them. More than almost any gifted pietist of modern times he sets us wondering at the power of creed in certain cases to overgrow judgment and turn to naught the rarest faculties. No man in Berkeley's day had a finer natural lucidity and suppleness of intelligence; yet perhaps no polemist on his side did less either to make converts or to establish a sound intellectual practice. Plain men on the freethinking side he must either have bewildered by his metaphysic or revolted by his spite; while to the more efficient minds he stood revealed as a kind of inspired child, rapt in the construction and manipulation of a set of brilliant sophisms which availed as much for any other creed as for his own. To the armoury of Christian apologetic now growing up in England he contributed a special form of the skeptical argument: freethinkers, he declared, made certain arbitrary or irrational assumptions in accepting Newton's doctrine of fluxions, and it was only their prejudice that prevented them from being similarly accommodating to Christian mysteries.¹ It is a kind of argument dear to minds pre-convinced and incapable of a logical revision, but worse than inept as against opponents; and it availed no more in Berkeley's hands than it had done in those of Huet.² To theosophy, indeed, Berkeley rendered a more successful service in presenting it with the no better formula of "existence [*i.e.*, in consciousness] dependent upon consciousness"—a verbalism which has served the purposes of theology in the philosophic schools down till our own day. For his, however, the popular polemic value of such a theorem must have been sufficiently countervailed by his vehement championship of the doctrine of passive obedience in its most extreme form—"that loyalty is a virtue or moral duty; and disloyalty or rebellion, in the most strict and proper sense, a vice or crime against the law of nature."³

¹ *The Analyst*, Queries, 55-67.

² See above, pp. 126-28.

³ *Discourse of Passive Obedience*, § 26.

It belonged to the overstrung temperament of Berkeley that, like a nervous artist, he should figure to himself all his freethinking antagonists as personally odious, himself growing odious under the obsession; and he solemnly asserts, in his *Discourse to Magistrates*, that there had been "lately set up within this city of Dublin" an "execrable fraternity of blasphemers," calling themselves "blasters," and forming "a distinct society, whereof the proper and avowed business shall be to shock all serious Christians by the most impious and horrid blasphemies, uttered in the most public manner."¹ There appears to be not a grain of truth in this astonishing assertion, to which no subsequent historian has paid the slightest attention. In a period in which freethinking books had been again and again burned in Dublin by the public hangman, such a society could be projected only in a nightmare; and Berkeley's hallucination may serve as a sign of the extent to which his judgment had been deranged by his passions.² His forensic temper is really on a level with that of the most incompetent swashbucklers on his side.

When educated Christians could be so habitually envenomed as was Berkeley, there was doubtless a measure of contrary heat among English unbelievers; but, apart altogether from what could be described as blasphemy, unbelief abounded in the most cultured society of the day. Bolingbroke's rationalism had been privately well known; and so distinguished a personage as the brilliant and scholarly Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, hated by Pope, is one of the reputed freethinkers of her time.³ In the very year of the publication of Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*, the first two epistles of the *Essay on Man* of his own friend and admirer, Pope, gave a new currency to the form of optimistic deism created by Shaftesbury, and later elaborated by Bolingbroke. Pope was always anxiously hostile in his allusions to the professed freethinkers⁴—among whom Bolingbroke only posthumously enrolled himself—and in private he specially aspersed Shaftesbury, from whom he had taken so much;⁵ but his prudential tactic gave all

¹ *Works*, ed. 1837, p. 352.

² See the whole context, which palpitates with excitement.

³ Mr. Walter Sichel (*Bolingbroke and his Times*, 1901, i, 175) thinks fit to dispose of her attitude as "her aversion to the Church and to everything that transcended her own faculties." So far as the evidence goes, her faculties were much superior to those of most of her orthodox contemporaries. For her tone see her letters.

⁴ E.g. *Dunciad*, ii, 399; iii, 212; iv, 492.

⁵ Voltaire commented pointedly on Pope's omission to make any reference to Shaftesbury, while vending his doctrine. (*Lettres Philosophiques*, xxii.) As a matter of fact Pope does in the *Dunciad* (iv, 483) refer maliciously to the Theocles of Shaftesbury's *Moralists* as maintaining a Lucretian theism or virtual atheism. The explanation is that Shaftesbury had sharply criticized the political course of Bolingbroke, who in turn ignored him as a thinker. See the present writer's introd. to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, ed. 1900 (rep. in *Pioneer Humanists*); and cp. W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900, p. 101.

the more currency to the virtual deism he enunciated. Given out without any critical allusion to Christianity, and put forward as a vindication of the ways of God to men, it gave to heresy, albeit in a philosophically incoherent exposition, the status of a well-bred piety. A good authority pronounces that "the *Essay on Man* did more to spread English deism in France than all the works of Shaftesbury";¹ and we have explicit testimony that the poet privately avowed the deistic view of things.²

The line of the *Essay* which now reads:

The soul, uneasy and confined from home,

originally ran "at home"; but, says Warton, "this expression seeming to exclude a future existence, as, to speak the plain truth, it was intended to do, it was altered"—presumably by Warburton. (Warton's *Essay on Pope*, 4th ed. ii, 67.) The Spinozistic or pantheistic character of much of the *Essay on Man* was noted by various critics, in particular by the French Academician De Crousaz (*Examen de l'Essay de M. Pope sur l'Homme*, 1748, p. 90, etc.) After promising to justify the ways of God to man, writes Crousaz (p. 33), Pope turns round and justifies man, leaving God charged with all men's sins. When the younger Racine, writing to the Chevalier Ramsay in 1742, charged the *Essay* with irreligion, Pope wrote him repudiating alike Spinoza and Leibnitz. (Warton, ii, 121.) In 1755, however, the Abbé Gauchat renewed the attack, declaring that the *Essay* was "neither Christian nor philosophic" (*Lettres Critiques*, i, 346). Warburton at first charged the poem with rank atheism, and afterwards vindicated it in his manner. (Warton, i, 125.) But in Germany, in the youth of Goethe, we find the *Essay* regarded by Christians as an unequivocally deistic poem. (Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. II, B. vii: *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 263.) And by a modern Christian polemist the *Essay* is described as "the best positive result of English deism in the eighteenth century" (Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 31).

In point of fact, deism was the fashionable way of thinking among cultured people. Though Voltaire testifies from personal knowledge that there were in England in his day many principled atheists,³ there was little overt atheism,⁴ whether by reason of the special

¹ Texts, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature*. Eng. tr. pp. 117-18.

² Chesterfield in his *Characters* (app. to the *Letters*) testifies that Pope "was a deist believing in a future state; this he has often owned himself to me." (Bradshaw's ed. of *Letters*, iii, 1410.) Chesterfield makes a similar statement concerning Queen Caroline:—"After puzzling herself in all the whimsies and fantastical speculations of different sects, she fixed herself ultimately in Deism, believing in a future state." (*Id.* p. 1406.)

³ *Diet. Philos.* art. ATHEISM, § 2.

⁴ Wise, in his adaptation of Cudworth, *A Confutation of the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism* (1706), writes (l. 5) that "the philosophical atheists are but few in number," and their objections so weak "as that they deserve not a hearing but rather neglect"; but confusedly goes on to admit that "one or two broachers of 'em may be thought able to infect a whole nation, as.....sad experience tells us."

odium attaching to that way of thought, or of a real production of theistic belief by the concurrence of the deistic propaganda on this head with that of the clergy, themselves in so many cases deists.¹ Bishop Burnet, in the Conclusion to the *History of his Own Time*, pronounces that "there are few atheists, but many infidels, who are indeed very little better than the atheists." Collins observed that nobody had doubted the existence of God until the Boyle lecturers began to prove it; and Clarke had more than justified the jest by arguing, in his Boyle Lectures for 1705, that all deism logically leads to atheism. But though the apologists roused much discussion on the theistic issue, the stress of the apologetic literature passed from the theme of atheism to that of deism. Shaftesbury's early *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* had assumed the existence of a good deal of atheism; but his later writings, and those of his school, do not indicate much atheistic opposition.² Even the revived discussion on the immateriality and immortality of the soul—which began with the *Grand Essay* of Dr. William Coward,³ in 1704, and was taken up, as we have seen, by the non-juror Dodwell⁴—was conducted on either orthodox or deistic lines. Coward wrote as a professed Christian,⁵ to maintain, "against impostures of philosophy," that "matter and motion must be the foundation of thought in men and brutes." Collins maintained against Clarke the proposition that matter is capable of thought; and SAMUEL STRUTT ("of the Temple"), whose *Philosophical Inquiry into the Physical Spring of Human Actions, and the Immediate Cause of Thinking* (1732), is a most tersely cogent sequence of materialistic argument, never raises any question of deity. The result was that the problem of "materialism" was virtually dropped, Strutt's essay in particular passing into general oblivion.

It was replied to, however, with the *Inquiry* of Collins, as late as 1760, by a Christian controversialist who admits Strutt

¹ Complaint to this effect was made by orthodox writers. The Scotch Professor Halyburton, for instance, complains that in many sermons in his day "Heathen Morality has been substituted in the room of Gospel Holiness. And Ethics by some have been preached instead of the Gospels of Christ." *Natural Religion Insufficient* (Edinburgh), 1714, p. 25. Cp. pp. 23, 26-27, 53, etc. Bishop Burnet, in the Conclusion to his *History of his Own Time*, declares, "I must own that the main body of our clergy has always seemed dead and lifeless to me," and ascribes much more zeal to Catholics and dissenters. (Ed. 1838, pp. 907-910.)

² *The Moralists* deals rather with strict skepticism than with substantive atheism.

³ *The Grand Essay: or, a Vindication of Reason and Religion against Impostures of Philosophy*. The book was, on March 18, 1704, condemned by the House of Commons to be burned in Palace Yard, along with its author's *Second Thoughts Concerning the Human Soul* (1702). A second ed. of the latter appeared soon after. ⁴ Above, p. 153.

⁵ Mr. Herbert Paul, in his essay on Swift (*Men and Letters*, 1901, p. 267), lumps as deists the four writers named by Swift in his *Argument*. Not having read them, he thinks fit to asperse all four as bad writers. Asgill, as was noted by Coleridge (*Table Talk*, July 30, 1831; April 30, 1832), was one of the best writers of his time. He was, in fact, a master of the staccato style, practised by Mr. Paul with less success.

to have been "a gentleman of an excellent genius for philosophical inquiries, and a close reasoner from those principles he laid down" (*An Essay towards demonstrating the Immateriality and Free Agency of the Soul*, 1760, p. 94). The Rev. Mr. Monk, in his *Life of Bentley* (2nd ed. 1833, ii, 391), absurdly speaks of Strutt as having "dressed up the arguments of Lord Herbert of Cherbury and other enemies of religion in a new shape." The reverend gentleman cannot have paid any attention to the arguments either of Herbert or of Strutt, which have no more in common than those of Toland and Hume. Strutt's book was much too closely reasoned to be popular. His name was for the time, however, associated with a famous scandal at Cambridge University. When in 1739 proceedings were taken against what was described as an "atheistical society" there, Strutt was spoken of as its "oracle." One of the members was Paul Whitehead, satirized by Pope. Another, Tinkler Ducket, a Fellow of Caius College, in holy orders, was prosecuted in the Vice-Chancellor's Court on the twofold charge of proselytizing for atheism and of attempting to seduce a "female." In his defence he explained that he had been for some time "once more a believer in God and Christianity"; but was nevertheless expelled. See Monk's *Life of Bentley*, as cited, ii, 391 sq.

§ 5

No less marked is the failure to develop the "higher criticism" from the notable start made in 1739 in the very remarkable *Inquiry into the Jewish and Christian Revelations* by Samuel Parvish, who made the vital discovery that Deuteronomy is a product of the seventh century B.C.¹ His book, which is in the form of a dialogue between a Christian and a Japanese, went into a second edition (1746); but his idea struck too deep for the critical faculty of that age, and not till the nineteenth century was the clue found again by De Wette, in Germany.² Parvish came at the end of the main deistic movement,³ and by that time the more open-minded men had come to a point of view from which it did not greatly matter when Deuteronomy was written, or precisely how a cultus was built up; while orthodoxy could not dream of abandoning its view of inspiration. There was thus an arrest alike of historical criticism and of the higher philosophic thought under the stress of the concrete disputes over ethics, miracles, prophecy, and politics; and

¹ Work cited, p. 324. The book is now rare.

² Cp. Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, 1893, p. 2.

³ Dr. Cheyne expresses surprise that a "theological writer" who got so far should not have been "prompted by his good genius to follow up his advantage." It is, however, rather remarkable that Parvish, who was a bookseller at Guildford (Alberti, *Briefe*, p. 430), should have achieved what he did. It was through not being a theological writer that he went so far, no theologian of his day following him.

a habit of taking deity for granted became normal, with the result that when the weak point was pressed upon by Law and Butler there was a sense of blankness on both sides. But among men theistically inclined, the argument of Tindal against revelationism was extremely telling, and it had more literary impressiveness than any writing on the orthodox side before Butler. By this time the philosophic influence of Spinoza—seen as early as 1699 in Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*,¹ and avowed by Clarke when he addressed his *Demonstration* (1705) "more particularly in answer to Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, and their followers"—had spread among the studious class, greatly reinforcing the deistic movement; so that in 1732 Berkeley, who ranked him among "weak and wicked writers," described him as "the great leader of our modern infidels."

See the *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. vii, § 29. Similarly Leland, in the *Supplement* (1756) to his *View of the Deistical Writers* (afterwards incorporated as Letter VI), speaks of Spinoza as "the most applauded doctor of modern atheism." Sir Leslie Stephen's opinion (*English Thought*, i, 33), that "few of the deists, probably," read Spinoza, seems to be thus outweighed. If they did not in great numbers read the *Ethica*, they certainly read the *Tractatus* and the letters. As early as 1677 we find Stillingfleet, in the preface to his *Letter to a Deist*, speaking of Spinoza as "a late author [who] I hear is mightily in vogue among many who cry up anything on the atheistical side, though never so weak and trifling"; and further of a mooted proposal to translate the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* into English. A translation was published in 1689. In 1685 the Scotch Professor George Sinclair, in the "Preface to the Reader" of his *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, writes that "There are a monstrous rable of men, who following the *Hobbesian* and *Spinosian* principles, slight religion and undervalue the Scripture," etc. In Gildon's work of recantation, *The Deist's Manual* (1705, p. 192), the indifferent Pleonexus, who "took more delight in bags than in books," and demurs to accumulating the latter, avows that he has a few, among them being Hobbes and Spinoza. Evelyn, writing about 1680-90, speaks of "that infamous book, the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*," as "a wretched obstacle to the searchers of holy truth" (*The History of Religion*, 1850, p. xxvii). Cp. Halyburton, *Natural Religion Insufficient*, Edinburgh, 1714, p. 31, as to the "great vogue among our young Gentry and Students" of Hobbes, Spinoza, and others.

¹ See the author's introduction to ed. of the *Characteristics*, 1900, rep. in *Pioneer Humanists*.

§ 6

Among the deists of the upper classes was the young William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, if, as has been alleged, it was he who in 1733, two years before he entered Parliament, contributed to the *London Journal* a "Letter on Superstition," the work of a pronounced freethinker.¹ On the other hand, such deistic writing as that with which Chubb, in a multitude of tracts, followed up his early Unitarian essay of 1715, brought an ethical "Christian rationalism" within the range of the unscholarly many. THOMAS MORGAN (d. 1741), a physician, began in the *Moral Philosopher*, 1739-1740,² to sketch a rationalistic theory of Christian origins, besides putting the critical case with new completeness. Morgan had been at one time a dissenting minister at Frome, Somerset, and had been dismissed because of his deistical opinions. Towards the Jehovah and the ethic of the Old Testament he holds, however, the attitude rather of an ancient Gnostic than of a modern rationalist; and in his philosophy he is either a very "godly" deist or a pantheist miscarried.³

At the same time PETER ANNET (1693-1769), a schoolmaster and inventor of a system of shorthand, widened the propaganda in other directions. He seems to have been the first freethought lecturer, for his first pamphlet, *Judging for Ourselves: or, Free-thinking the Great Duty of Religion*, "By P. A., Minister of the Gospel" (1739), consists of "Two Lectures delivered at Plaisterers' Hall." Through all his propaganda, of which the more notable portions are his *Supernaturals Examined* and a series of controversies on the Resurrection, there runs a train of shrewd critical sense, put forth in crisp and vivacious English, which made him a popular force. What he lacked was the due gravity and dignity for the handling of such a theme as the reversal of a nation's faith. Like Woolston, he is facetious where he should be serious; entertaining where he had need be impressive; provocative where he should have aimed at persuasion. We cannot say what types he influenced, or how deep his influence went: it appears only that he swayed many whose suffrages weighed little. At length, when in 1761 he issued nine numbers of *The Free Inquirer*, in which he attacked the Pentateuch with much insight and cogency, but with a certain

¹ The question remains obscure. Cp. the Letter cited, reprinted at end of Carver's 1830 ed. of Paine's Works (New York); F. Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii, 405; and Chatham's "scalping-knife" speech.

² A *Findication of the Moral Philosopher* appeared in 1741.

³ Cp. Lechler, pp. 371, 386.

want of rational balance (shown also in his treatise, *Social Bliss Considered*, 1749), he was made a victim of the then strengthened spirit of persecution, being sentenced to stand thrice in the pillory with the label "For Blasphemy," and to suffer a year's hard labour. Nevertheless, he was popular enough to start a school on his release.

Such popularity, of course, was alien to the literary and social traditions of the century; and from the literary point of view the main line of deistic propaganda, as apart from the essays and treatises of Hume and the posthumous works of Bolingbroke, ends with the younger HENRY DODWELL'S (anonymous) ironical essay, *Christianity not Founded on Argument* (1741). So rigorously congruous is the reasoning of that brilliant treatise that some have not quite unjustifiably taken it for the work of a dogmatic believer, standing at some such position as that taken up before him by Huet, and in recent times by Cardinal Newman.¹ He argues, for instance, not merely that reason can yield none of the confidence which belongs to true faith, but that it cannot duly strengthen the moral will against temptations.² But the book at once elicited a number of replies, all treating it unhesitatingly as an anti-Christian work; and Leland assails it as bitterly as he does any openly freethinking treatise.³ Its thesis might have been seriously supported by reference to the intellectual history of the preceding thirty years, wherein much argument had certainly failed to establish the reigning creed or to discredit the unbelievers.

§ 7

Of the work done by English deism thus far, it may suffice to say that within two generations it had more profoundly altered the intellectual temper of educated men than any religious movement had ever done in the same time. This appears above all from the literature produced by orthodoxy in reply, where the mere defensive resort to reasoning, apart from the accounts of current rationalism, outgoes anything in the previous history of literature. The whole evolution is a remarkable instance of the effect on intellectual progress of the diversion of a nation's general energy from war and intense political faction to mental activities. A similar diversion had taken place at the Restoration, to be followed by a return to civil and foreign strife, which arrested it. It was in the closing years of Anne, and in the steady *régime* of Walpole under the first two Georges, that the ferment worked at its height. Collins's

¹ Cp. Cairns, *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 101.

² Ed. 1741, p. 30 sq.

³ *View of the Deistical Writers*, Letter XI (X in 1st ed.).

Discourse of Freethinking was synchronous with the Peace of Utrecht: the era of war re-opened in 1739, much against the will of Walpole, who resigned in 1742. Home and foreign wars thereafter became common; and in 1751 Clive opened the period of imperialistic expansion, determining national developments on that main line, concurrently with that of the new industry. Could the discussion have been continuous—could England have remained what she was in the main deistic period, a workshop of investigation and a battleground of ideas—all European development might have been indefinitely hastened. But the deists, for the most part educated men appealing to educated men or to the shrewdest readers among the artisans, had not learned to reckon with the greater social forces; and beyond a certain point they could not affect England's intellectual destinies.

It is worse than idle to argue that "the true cause of the decay of deism is to be sought in its internal weakness," in the sense that "it was not rooted in the deepest convictions, nor associated with the most powerful emotions of its adherents."¹ No such charge can be even partially proved. The deists were at least as much in earnest as two-thirds of the clergy: the determining difference, in this regard, was the economic basis of the latter, and their social hold of an ignorant population. The clergy, who could not argue the deists down in the court of culture, had in their own jurisdiction the great mass of the uneducated lower classes, and the great mass of the women of all classes, whom the ideals of the age kept uneducated, with a difference. And while the more cultured clergy were themselves in large measure deists, the majority, in the country parishes, remained uncritical and unreflective, caring little even to cultivate belief among their flocks. The "contempt of the clergy" which had subsisted from the middle of the seventeenth century (if, indeed, it should not be dated from the middle of the sixteenth) meant among other things that popular culture remained on a lower plane. With the multitude remaining a ready hotbed for new "enthusiasm," and the women of the middle and upper orders no less ready nurturers of new generations of young believers, the work of emancipation was begun when deism was made "fashionable." And with England on the way to a new era at once of industrial and imperial expansion, in which the energies that for a generation had made her a leader of European thought were diverted to arms and to commerce, the critical and rationalizing work of the deistical generation could not go on as

¹ Sir Leslie Stephen, *English Thought*, i, 169.

it had begun. That generation left its specific mark on the statute-book in a complete repeal of the old laws relating to witchcraft;¹ on literature in a whole library of propaganda and apology; on moral and historic science in a new movement of humanism, which was to find its check in the French Revolution.

How it affected the general intelligence for good may be partly gathered from a comparison of the common English political attitudes towards Ireland in the first and the last quarters of the century. Under William was wrought the arrest of Irish industry and commerce, begun after the Restoration; under Anne were enacted the penal laws against Catholics—as signal an example of religious iniquity as can well be found in all history. By the middle of the century these laws had become anachronisms for all save bigots.

“The wave of freethought that was spreading over Europe and permeating its literature had not failed to affect Ireland. . . . An atmosphere of skepticism was fatal to the Penal Code. What element of religious persecution there had been in it had long ceased to be operative” (R. Dunlop, in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* vi, 489). Macaulay’s testimony on this head is noteworthy: “The philosophy of the eighteenth century had purified English Whiggism of the deep taint of intolerance which had been contracted during a long and close alliance with the Puritanism of the eighteenth century” (*History*, ch. xvii, *end*).

The denunciations of the penal laws by Arthur Young in 1780² are the outcome of two generations of deistic thinking; the spirit of religion has been ousted by judgment.³ Could that spirit have had freer play, less hindrance from blind passion, later history would have been a happier record. But for reasons lying in the environment as well as in its own standpoint, deism was not destined to rise on continuous stepping-stones to social dominion.

Currency has been given to a misconception of intellectual history by the authoritative statement that in the deistic controversy “all that was intellectually venerable in England” appeared “on the side of Christianity” (Sir Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, 86). The same thing, in effect, is said by Lecky: “It was to repel these [deistic] attacks [‘upon the miracles’] that the evidential school arose, and the annals of religious controversy narrate few more complete victories than they achieved” (*Rise and Influence of Rationalism*, pop. ed. i, 175). The proposition seems to be an echo of orthodox

¹ Act 9th, Geo. II (1736), ch. 5.

² *A Tour in Ireland*, ed. 1892, ii, 59-72.

³ Young at this period was entirely secular in his thinking. Telling of his recovery from a fever in 1790, he writes: “I fear that not one thought of God ever occurred to me at that time” (*Autobiography*, 1898, p. 188). Afterwards he fell into religious melancholia (Introd. note of editor).

historiography, as Buckle had before written in his note-book: "In England skepticism made no head. Such men as Toland and Tindal, Collins, Shaftesbury, Woolston, were no match for Clarke, Warburton, and Lardner. They could make no head till the time of Middleton" (*Misc. Works*, abridged ed. i, 321)—a strain of assertion which clearly proceeds on no close study of the period. In the first place, all the writing on the freethinking side was done under peril of Blasphemy Laws, and under menace of all the calumny and ostracism that in Christian society follow on advanced heresy; while the orthodox side could draw on the entire clerical profession, over ten thousand strong, and trained for and pledged to defence of the faith. Yet, when all is said, the ordinary list of deists amply suffices to disprove Sir L. Stephen's phrase. His "intellectually venerable" list runs: Bentley, Locke, Berkeley, Clarke, Butler, Waterland, Warburton, Sherlock, Gibson, Conybeare, Smalbroke, Leslie, Law, Leland, Lardner, Foster, Doddridge, Lyttelton, Barrington, Addison, Pope, Swift. He might have added Newton and Boyle. Sykes,¹ Balguy, Stebbing, and a "host of others," he declares to be "now for the most part as much forgotten as their victims"; Young and Blackmore he admits to be in similar case. It is expressly told of Doddridge, he might have added, that whereas that well-meaning apologist put before his students at Northampton the ablest writings both for and against Christianity, leaving them to draw their own conclusions, many of his pupils, "on leaving his institution, became confirmed Arians and Socinians" (Nichols in App. P to *Life of Arminius—Works of Arminius*, 1825, i, 223-25). This hardly spells success.² All told, the list includes only three or four men of any permanent interest as thinkers, apart from Newton; and only three or four more important as writers. The description of Waterland,³ Warburton,⁴ Smalbroke,⁵ Sherlock, Leslie, and half-a-dozen more as "intellectually venerable" is grotesque; even Bentley is a strange subject for veneration.

On the other hand, the list of "the despised deists," who "make but a poor show when compared with this imposing list," runs thus: Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Halley (well known to be an unbeliever, though he did not write on the subject),

¹ Really an abler man than half the others in the list, but himself a good deal of a heretic. So far from attempting to make "victims," he pleaded for a more candid treatment of deistic objections.

² Doddridge himself was not theologically orthodox, but was an evangelical Christian. Dr. Stoughton, *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, 1878, i, 344-46.

³ Whose doctrine Sir Leslie Stephen elsewhere (p. 238) calls a "brutal theology which gloried in trampling on the best instincts of its opponents," and a "most unlovely product of eighteenth-century speculation."

⁴ Of Warburton Sir Leslie writes elsewhere (p. 353) that "this colossus was built up of rubbish." See p. 352 for samples. Again he speaks (p. 368) of the bishop's pretensions as "colossal impudence." It should be noted, further, that Warburton's teaching in the *Divine Legation* was a gross heresy in the eyes of William Law, who in his *Short but Sufficient Confutation* pronounced its main thesis a "most horrible doctrine." Ed. 1768, as cited, i, 217.

⁵ As to whose "senile incompetence" see same vol. p. 234.

Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, Mandeville, Tindal, Chubb, Morgan, Dodwell, Middleton, Hume, Bolingbroke, Gibbon. It would be interesting to know on what principles this group is excluded from the intellectual veneration so liberally allotted to the other. It is nothing to the purpose that Shaftesbury and Mandeville wrote "covertly" and "indirectly." The law and the conditions compelled them to do so. It is still more beside the case to say that "Hume can scarcely be reckoned among the deists. He is already [when?] emerging into a higher atmosphere." Hume wrote explicitly as a deist; and only in his posthumous Dialogues did he pass on to the atheistic position. At no time, moreover, was he "on the side of Christianity." On the other hand, Locke and Clarke and Pope were clearly "emerging into a higher atmosphere" than Christianity, since Locke is commonly reckoned by the culture-historians, and even by Sir Leslie Stephen, as making for deism; Pope was the pupil of Bolingbroke, and wrote as such; and Clarke was shunned as an Arian. Newton, again, was a Unitarian, and Leibnitz accused his system of making for irreligion. It would be hard to show, further, who are the "forgotten victims" of Balguy and the rest. Balguy criticized Shaftesbury, whose name is still a good deal better known than Balguy's. The main line of deists is pretty well remembered. And if we pair off Hume against Berkeley, Hobbes against Locke, Middleton (as historical critic) against Bentley, Shaftesbury against Addison, Mandeville against Swift, Bolingbroke against Butler, Collins against Clarke, Herbert against Lyttelton, Tindal against Waterland, and Gibbon against—shall we say?—Warburton, it hardly appears that the overplus of merit goes as Sir Leslie Stephen alleges, even if we leave Newton, with brain unhinged, standing against Halley. The statement that the deists "are but a ragged regiment," and that "in speculative ability most of them were children by the side of their ablest antagonists," is simply unintelligible unless the names of all the ablest deists are left out. Locke, be it remembered, did not live to meet the main deistic attack on Christianity; and Sir Leslie admits the weakness of his pro-Christian performance.

The bases of Sir Leslie Stephen's verdict may be tested by his remarks that "Collins, a *respectable country gentleman*, showed considerable acuteness; Toland, a *poor denizen of Grub Street*, and Tindal, a Fellow of All Souls, made a *certain display of learning*, and succeeded in planting some effective arguments." Elsewhere (pp. 217-227) Sir Leslie admits that Collins had the best of the argument against his "venerable" opponents on Prophecy; and Huxley credits him with equal success in the argument with Clarke. The work of Collins on *Human Liberty*, praised by a long series of students and experts, and entirely above the capacity of Bentley, is philosophically as durable as any portion of Locke, who made Collins his chosen friend and

trustee, and who did not live to meet his anti-Biblical arguments. Tindal, who had also won Locke's high praise by his political essays, profoundly influenced such a student as Laukhard (Lechler, p. 451). And Toland, whom even Mr. A. S. Farrar (Bampton Lectures, p. 179) admitted to possess "much originality and learning," has struck Lange as a notable thinker, though he *was* a poor man. Leibnitz, who answered him, praises his acuteness, as does Pusey, who further admits the uncommon ability of Morgan and Collins (*Histor. Enq. into German Rationalism*, 1828, p. 126). It is time that the conventional English standards in these matters should be abandoned by modern rationalists.

The unfortunate effect of Sir Leslie Stephen's dictum is seen in the assertion of Prof. Höfding (*Hist. of Modern Philos.* Eng. tr. 1900, i, 403), that Sir Leslie "rightly remarks of the English deists that they were altogether inferior to their adversaries"; and further (p. 405), that by the later deists, "Collins, Tindal, Morgan, etc., the dispute as to miracles was carried on with great violence." It is here evident that Prof. Höfding has not read the writers he depreciates, for those he names were far from being violent. Had he known the literature, he would have named Woolston, not Collins and Tindal and Morgan. He is merely echoing, without inquiring for himself, a judgment which he regards as authoritative. In the same passage he declares that "only one of all the men formerly known as the 'English deists' [Toland] has rendered contributions of any value to the history of thought." If this is said with a knowledge of the works of Collins, Shaftesbury, and Mandeville, it argues a sad lack of critical judgment. But there is reason to infer here also that Prof. Höfding writes in ignorance of the literature he discusses.

While some professed rationalists thus belittle a series of pioneers who did so much to make later rationalism possible, some eminent theologians do them justice. Thus does Prof. Cheyne begin his series of lectures on *Founders of Old Testament Criticism* (1893): "A well-known and honoured representative of progressive German orthodoxy (J. A. Dorner) has set a fine example of historical candour by admitting the obligations of his country to a much-disliked form of English heterodoxy. He says that English deism, which found so many apt disciples in Germany, 'by clearing away dead matter, prepared the way for a reconstruction of theology from the very depths of the heart's beliefs, and also subjected man's nature to stricter observation.'¹ This, however, as it appears to me, is a very inadequate description of the facts. It was not merely a new

¹ *History of Protestant Theology*, Eng. tr. ii, 77. For the influence of deism on Germany, see Tholuck (*Vermischte Schriften*, Bd. ii) and Lechler (*Gesch. des englischen Deismus*).—Note by Dr. Cheyne.

constructive stage of German theoretic theology, and a keener psychological investigation, for which deism helped to prepare the way, but also a great movement, which has in our own day become in a strict sense international, concerned with the literary and historical criticism of the Scriptures. Beyond all doubt, the Biblical discussions which abound in the works of the deists and their opponents contributed in no slight degree to the development of that semi-apologetic criticism of the Old Testament of which J. D. Michaelis, and in some degree even Eichhorn, were leading representatives.....It is indeed singular that deism should have passed away in England without having produced a great critical movement among ourselves." Not quite so singular, perhaps, when we note that in our own day Sir Leslie Stephen and Lecky and Prof. Höffding could sum up the work of the deists without a glance at what it meant for Biblical criticism.

§ 8

If we were to set up a theory of intellectual possibilities from what has actually taken place in the history of thought, and without regard to the economic and political conditions above mentioned, we might reason that deism failed permanently to overthrow the current creed because it was not properly preceded by discipline in natural science. There might well be stagnation in the higher criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures when all natural science was still coloured by them. In nothing, perhaps, is the danger of Sacred Books more fully exemplified than in their influence for the suppression of true scientific thought. A hundredfold more potently than the faiths of ancient Greece has that of Christendom blocked the way to all intellectually vital discovery. If even the fame and the pietism of Newton could not save him from the charge of promoting atheism, much less could obscure men hope to set up any view of natural things which clashed with pulpit prejudice. But the harm lay deeper, inasmuch as the ground was preoccupied by pseudo-scientific theories which were at best fanciful modifications of the myths of Genesis. Types of these performances are the treatise of Sir Matthew Hale on *The Primitive Origination of Mankind* (1685); Dr. Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1680-1689); and Whiston's *New Theory of the Earth* (1696)—all devoid of scientific value; Hale's work being pre-Newtonian; Burnet's anti-Newtonian, though partly critical as regards the sources of the Pentateuch; and Whiston's a combination of Newton and myth with his own quaint speculations. Even the *Natural History of the Earth* of Prof. John Woodward (1695), after

recognizing that fossils were really prehistoric remains, decided that they were deposited by the Deluge.¹

Woodward's book is in its own way instructive as regards the history of opinion. A "Professor of Physick" in Gresham College, F.C.P., and F.R.S., he goes about his work in a methodical and ostensibly scientific fashion, colligates the phenomena, examines temperately the hypotheses of the many previous inquirers, and shows no violence of orthodox prepossession. He claims to have considered Moses "only as an historian," and to give him credit finally because he finds his narrative "punctually true."² He had before him an abundance of facts irreconcilable with the explanation offered by the Flood story; yet he actually adds to that myth a thesis of universal decomposition and dissolution of the earth's strata by the flood's action³—a hypothesis far more extravagant than any of those he dismissed. With all his method and scrutiny he had remained possessed by the tradition, and could not cast it off. It would seem as if such a book, reducing the tradition to an absurdity, was bound at least to put its more thoughtful readers on the right track. But the legend remained in possession of the general intelligence as of Woodward's; and beyond his standpoint science made little advance for many years. Moral and historical criticism, then, as regards some main issues, had gone further than scientific; and men's thinking on certain problems of cosmic philosophy was thus arrested for lack of due basis or discipline in experiential science.

The final account of the arrest of exact Biblical criticism in the eighteenth century, however, is that which explains also the arrest of the sciences. English energy, broadly speaking, was diverted into other channels. In the age of Chatham it became more and more military and industrial, imperialist and commercial; and the scientific work of Newton was considerably less developed by English hands than was the critical work of the first deists. Long before the French Revolution, mathematical and astronomical science were being advanced by French minds, the English doing nothing. Lagrange and Euler, Clairaut and D'Alembert, carried on the task, till Laplace consummated it in his great theory, which is to Newton's what Newton's was to that of Copernicus. It was Frenchmen, freethinkers to a man, who built up the new astronomy, while England was producing only eulogies of Newton's greatness. "No British name is ever mentioned in the list of mathematicians

¹ *An Essay towards a Natural History of the Earth*, 3rd ed. 1733, pref. and pp. 16 sq.

² *sq.* Cp. White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 227.

³ End of pref. ³ Work cited, p. 85.

who followed Newton in his brilliant career and completed the magnificent edifice of which he laid the foundation."¹ "Scotland contributed her Maclaurin, but England no European name."² Throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century "there was hardly an individual in this country who possessed an intimate acquaintance with the methods of investigation which had conducted the foreign mathematicians to so many sublime results."³ "The English mathematicians seem to have been so dazzled with the splendour of Newton's discoveries that they never conceived them capable of being extended or improved upon";⁴ and Newton's name was all the while vaunted, unwarrantably enough, as being on the side of Christian orthodoxy. Halley's great hypothesis of the motion of the solar system in space, put forward in 1718, borne out by Cassini and Le Monnier, was left to be established by Mayer of Göttingen.⁵ There was nothing specially incidental to deism, then, in the non-development of the higher criticism in England after Collins and Parvish, or in the lull of critical speculation in the latter half of the century. It was part of a general social readjustment in which English attention was turned from the mental life to the physical, from intension of thought to extension of empire.

Playfair (as cited, p. 39; Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, i, 348, note) puts forward the theory that the progress of the higher science in France was due to the "small pensions and great honours" bestowed on scientific men by the Academy of Sciences. The lack of such an institution in England he traces to "mercantile prejudices," without explaining these in their turn. They are to be understood as the consequences of the special expansion of commercial and industrial life in England in the eighteenth century, when France, on the contrary, losing India and North America, had her energies in a proportional degree thrown back on the life of the mind. French freethought, it will be observed, expanded *with* science, while in England there occurred, not a spontaneous reversion to orthodoxy any more than a surrender of the doctrine of Newton, but a general turning of attention in other directions. It is significant that the most important names in the literature of deism after 1740 are those of Hume and Smith, late products of the intellectual atmosphere of pre-industrial Scotland; of Bolingbroke, an aristocrat of the deistic generation, long an exile in France, who left his works to be published after his death; and of Gibbon, who also breathed the intellectual air of France.

¹ Playfair, in the *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1808, cited by Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, 1855, i, 347.

² Brewster, as last cited.

³ Grant, *History of Physical Astronomy*, 1852, p. 108.

⁴ Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, p. 363.

⁵ Brewster, *More Worlds than One*, 1854, p. 111.

§ 9

It has been commonly assumed that after Chubb and Morgan the deistic movement in England "decayed," or "passed into skepticism" with Hume; and that the decay was mainly owing to the persuasive effect of Bishop Butler's *Analogy* (1736).¹ This appears to be a complete misconception, arising out of the habit of looking to the mere succession of books without considering their vogue and the accompanying social conditions. Butler's book had very little influence till long after his death,² being indeed very ill-fitted to turn contemporary deists to Christianity. It does but develop one form of the skeptical argument for faith, as Berkeley had developed another; and that form of reasoning never does attain to anything better than a success of despair. The main argument being that natural religion is open to the same objections as revealed, on the score (1) of the inconsistency of Nature with divine benevolence, and (2) that we must be guided in opinion as in conduct by probability, a Mohammedan could as well use the theorem for the Koran as could a Christian for the Bible; and the argument against the justice of Nature tended logically to atheism. But the deists had left to them the resource of our modern theists—that of surmising a beneficence above human comprehension; and it is clear that if Butler made any converts they must have been of a very unenthusiastic kind. It is therefore safe to say with Pattison that "To whatever causes is to be attributed the decline of deism from 1750 onwards, the books polemically written against it cannot be reckoned among them."³

On the other hand, even deists who were affected by the plea that the Bible need not be more consistent and satisfactory than Nature, could find refuge in Unitarianism, a creed which, as industriously propounded by Priestley⁴ towards the end of the century, made a numerical progress out of all proportion to that of orthodoxy. The argument of William Law,⁵ again, which insisted on the irreconcilability of the course of things with human reason, and called for

¹ Sir James Stephen, *Hovæ Sabbaticæ*, ii, 281; Lechler, p. 451.

² See details in *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. viii.

³ Essay on "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England: 1688-1750," in *Essays and Reviews*, 9th ed. p. 304.

⁴ In criticizing whom Sir Leslie Stephen barely notices his scientific work, but dwells much on his religious fallacies—a course which would make short work of the fame of Newton.

⁵ In his *Case of Reason; or, Natural Religion Fully and Fairly Stated*, in answer to Tindal (1732). See the argument set forth by Sir Leslie Stephen, i, 158-63. It is noteworthy, however, that in his *Spirit of Prayer* (1750), pt. ii, dial. i, Law expressly argues that "No other religion can be right but that which has its foundation in Nature. For the God of Nature can require nothing of his creatures but what the state of their nature calls them to." Like Baxter, Berkeley, Butler, and so many other orthodox polemicists, Law uses the argument from ignorance when it suits him, and ignores or rejects it when used by others.

an abject submission to revelation, could appeal only to minds already thus prostrate. Both his and Butler's methods, in fact, prepared the way for HUME. And in the year 1741, five years after the issue of the *Analogy* and seven before the issue of Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, we find the thesis of that essay tersely affirmed in a note to Book II of an anonymous translation (ascribed to T. FRANCKLIN) of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*.

The passage is worth comparing with Hume: "Hence we see what little credit ought to be paid to facts said to be done out of the ordinary course of nature. These miracles [cutting the whetstone, etc., related by Cicero, *De Div.* i, c. xvii] are well attested. They were recorded in the annals of a great people, believed by many learned and otherwise sagacious persons, and received as religious truths by the populace; but the testimonies of ancient records, the credulity of some learned men, and the implicit faith of the vulgar, can never prove that to have been, which is impossible in the nature of things ever to be." *M. Tullius Cicero Of the Nature of the Gods*.....with Notes, London, 1741, p. 85. It does not appear to have been noted that in regard to this as to another of his best-known theses, Hume develops a proposition laid down before him.

What Hume did was to elaborate the skeptical argument with a power and fullness which forced attention once for all, alike in England and on the Continent. It is not to be supposed, however, that Hume's philosophy, insofar as it was strictly skeptical—that is, suspensory—drew away deists from their former attitude of confidence to one of absolute doubt. Nor did Hume ever aim at such a result. What he did was to countermine the mines of Berkeley and others, who, finding their supra-rational dogmas set aside by rationalism, deistic or atheistic, sought to discredit at once deistic and atheistic philosophies based on study of the external world, and to establish their creed anew on the basis of their subjective consciousness. As against that method, Hume showed the futility of all apriorism alike, destroying the sham skepticism of the Christian theists by forcing their method to its conclusions. If the universe was to be reduced to a mere contingent of consciousness, he calmly showed, consciousness itself was as easily reducible, on the same principles, to a mere series of states. Idealistic skepticism, having disposed of the universe, must make short work of the hypostatized process of perception. Hume, knowing that strict skepticism is practically null in life, counted on leaving the ground cleared for experiential rationalism. And he did, insofar as he was read. His essay, *Of Miracles* (with the rest of the *Inquiries* of 1748-1751,

which recast his early *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739), posits a principle valid against all supernaturalism whatever; while his *Natural History of Religion* (1757), though affirming deism, rejected the theory of a primordial monotheism, and laid the basis of the science of Comparative Hierology.¹ Finally, his posthumous *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) admit, though indirectly, the untenableness of deism, and fall back decisively upon the atheistic or agnostic position.² Like Descartes, he lacked the heroic fibre; but like him he recast philosophy for modern Europe; and its subsequent course is but a development of or a reaction against his work.

§ 10

It is remarkable that this development of opinion took place in that part of the British Islands where religious fanaticism had gone furthest, and speech and thought were socially least free. Free-thought in Scotland before the middle of the seventeenth century can have existed only as a thing furtive and accursed; and though, as we have seen from the *Religio Stoici* of Sir George Mackenzie, unbelief had emerged in some abundance at or before the Restoration, only wealthy men could dare openly to avow their deism.³ Early in 1697 the clergy had actually succeeded in getting a lad of eighteen, Thomas Aikenhead, hanged for professing deism in general, and in particular for calling the Old Testament "Ezra's Fables," ridiculing the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and expressing the hope and belief that Christianity would be extinct within a century.⁴ The spirit of the prosecution may be gathered from the facts that the boy broke down and pleaded penitence,⁵ and that the statute enacted the capital penalty only for obstinately persisting in the denial of any of the persons of the Trinity.⁶ He had talked reck-

¹ The general reader should take note that in A. Murray's issue of Hume's *Essays* (afterwards published by Ward, Lock, and Co.), which omits altogether the essays on *Miracles* and *a Future State*, the *Natural History of Religion* is much mutilated, though the book professes to be a verbatim reprint.

² Even before his death he was suspected of that view. When his coffin was being carried from his house for interment, one of "the refuse of the rabble" is said to have remarked, "Ah, he was an atheist." "No matter," replied another, "he was an honest man" (*Curious Particulars, etc., respecting Chesterfield and Hume*, 1788, p. 15).

³ See Burton, *Hist. of Scotland*, viii, 549-50, as to the case of Pitcairne.

⁴ Howell's *State Trials*, xiii (1812), coll. 917-38.

⁵ Macaulay, *History*, ch. xxii; student's ed. ii, 620-21; Burton, *History of Scotland*, viii, 78-77. Aikenhead seems to have been a boy of unusual if unbalanced capacity, even by the bullying account of Macaulay, who missed no opportunity to cover himself by stoning heretics. See the boy's arguments on the bases of ethics, set forth in his "dying speech," as cited by Halyburton, *Natural Religion Insufficient*, 1714, pp. 119-23, 131, and the version in the *State Trials*, xiii, 930-34.

⁶ Macaulay ascribes the savagery of the prosecution to the Lord Advocate, Sir James Stewart, "as cruel as he was base"; but a letter printed in the *State Trials*, from a member of the Privy Council, says the sentence would have been commuted if "the ministers would intercede." They, however, "spoke and preached for cutting him off." *Trials*, xiii, 930; Burton, viii, 77.

lessly against the current creed among youths about his own age, one of whom was in Locke's opinion "the decoy who gave him the books and made him speak as he did."¹ It would appear that a victim was very much wanted; and Aikenhead was not allowed the help of a counsel. It is characteristic of the deadening effect of dogmatic religion on the heart that an act of such brutish cruelty elicited no cry of horror from any Christian writer. At this date the clergy were hounding on the Privy Council to new activity in trying witches; and all works of supposed heretical tendency imported from England were confiscated in the Edinburgh shops, among them being Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth*.² Scottish intellectual development had in fact been arrested by the Reformation, so that, save for Napier's *Logarithms* (1614) and such a political treatise as Rutherford's *Lex Rex* (1644), the nation of Dunbar and Lyndsay produced for two centuries no secular literature of the least value, and not even a theology of any enduring interest. Deism, accordingly, seems in the latter half of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century to have made fully as much progress in Scotland as in England; and the bigoted clergy could offer little intellectual resistance.

As early as 1696 the Scottish General Assembly, with theological candour, passed an Act "against the Atheistical opinions of the Deists." (*Abridgment of the Acts of the General Assemblies*, 1721, pp. 16, 76; Cunningham, *Hist. of the Ch. of Scotland*, ii, 313.) The opinions specified were "The denying of all revealed religion, the grand mysteries of the gospels.....the resurrection of the dead, and, in a word, the certainty and authority of Scripture revelation; as also, their asserting that there must be a mathematical evidence for each purpose.....and that Natural Light is sufficient to Salvation." All this is deism, pure and simple. But Sir W. Anstruther (a judge in the Court of Session), in the preface to his *Essays Moral and Divine*, Edinburgh, 1710, speaks of "the spreading contagion of atheism, which threatens the ruin of our excellent and holy religion." To atheism he devotes two essays; and neither in these nor in one on the Incarnation does he discuss deism, the arguments he handles being really atheistic. Scottish free-thought would seem thus to have gone further than English at the period in question.

As to the prevalence of deism, however, see the posthumous work of Prof. Halyburton, of St. Andrews, *Natural Religion*

¹ Letter to Sir Francis Masham, printed in the *State Trials*, xiii, 928-29—evidently written by Locke, who seems to have preserved all the papers printed by Howell.

² Macaulay, as cited. In 1681 one Francis Borthwick, who had gone abroad at the age of fourteen and turned Jew, was accused of blaspheming Jesus, and had to fly for his life, being outlawed. *State Trials*, as cited, col. 939.

Insufficient (Edinburgh, 1714), Epist. of Recom.; pref. pp. 25, 27, and pp. 8, 15, 19, 23, 31, etc. Halyburton's treatise is interesting as showing the psychological state of argumentative Scotch orthodoxy in his day. He professes to repel the deistical argument throughout by reason; he follows Huet, and concurs with Berkeley in contending that mathematics involves anti-rational assumptions; and he takes entire satisfaction in the execution of the lad Aikenhead for deism. Yet in a second treatise, *An Essay Concerning the Nature of Faith*, he contends, as against Locke and the "Rationalists," that the power to believe in the word of God is "expressly deny'd to man in his natural estate," and is a supernatural gift. Thus the Calvinists, like Baxter, were at bottom absolutely insincere in their profession to act upon reason, while insolently charging insincerity on others.

Even apart from deism there had arisen a widespread aversion to dogmatic theology and formal creeds, so that an apologist of 1715 speaks of his day as "a time when creeds and Confessions of Faith are so generally decried, and not only exposed to contempt, as useless inventions.....but are loaded by many writers of distinguished wit and learning with the most fatal and dangerous consequences."¹ This writer admits the intense bitterness of the theological disputes of the time;² and he speaks, on the other hand, of seeing "the most sacred mysteries of godliness impudently denied and impugned" by some, while the "distinguishing doctrines of Christianity are by others treacherously undermined, subtilized into an airy phantom, or at least doubted, if not disclaimed."³ His references are probably to works published in England, notably those of Locke, Toland, Shaftesbury, and Collins, since in Scotland no such literature could then be published; but he doubtless has an eye to Scottish opinion.

While, however, the rationalism of the time could not take book form, there are clear traces of its existence among educated men, even apart from the general complaints of the apologists. Thus the Professor of Medicine at Glasgow University in the opening years of the eighteenth century, John Johnston, was a known freethinker.⁴ In the way of moderate or Christian rationalism, the teaching of the prosecuted Simson seems to have counted for something, seeing that Francis Hutcheson at least imbibed from him "liberal" views about future punishment and the salvation of the heathen, which

¹ *A Full Account of the Several Ends and Uses of Confessions of Faith*, first published in 1719 as a preface to a Collection of Confessions of Faith, by Prof. W. Dunbar, of Edinburgh University, 3rd ed. 1775, p. 1.

² Work cited, p. 48.

³ *Id.* p. 198.

⁴ *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*. From the MSS. of John Ramsay, of Ochtertyre, 1888, i. 277. Ramsay describes Johnston as a "joyous, manly, honourable man," of whom Kames "was exceedingly fond" (p. 278).

gave much offence in the Presbyterian pulpit in Ulster.¹ And Hutcheson's later vindication of the ethical system of Shaftesbury in his *Inquiry Concerning the Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) must have tended to attract attention in Scotland to the *Characteristics* after his instalment as a Professor at Glasgow. In an English pamphlet, in 1732, he was satirized as introducing Shaftesbury's system into a University,² and it was from the Shaftesbury camp that the first literary expression of freethought in Scotland was sent forth. A young Scotch deist of that school, William Dudgeon, published in 1732 a dialogue entitled *The State of the Moral World Considered*, wherein the optimistic position was taken up with uncommon explicitness; and in 1739 the same writer printed *A Catechism Founded upon Experience and Reason*, prefaced by an Introductory Letter on Natural Religion, which takes a distinctly anti-clerical attitude. The *Catechism* answers to its title, save insofar as it is à priori in its theism and optimistic in its ethic, as is another work of its author in the same year, *A View of the Necessarian or Best Scheme*, defending the Shaftesburian doctrine against the criticism of Crousaz on Pope's *Essay*. Still more heterodox is his little volume of *Philosophical Letters Concerning the Being and Attributes of God* (1737), where the doctrine goes far towards pantheism. All this propaganda seems to have elicited only one printed reply—an attack on his first treatise in 1732. In the letter prefaced to his *Catechism*, however, he tells that "the bare suspicion of my not believing the opinions in fashion in our country hath already caused me sufficient trouble."³ His case had in fact been raised in the Church courts, the proceedings going through many stages in the years 1732-36; but in the end no decision was taken,⁴ and the special stress of his rationalism in 1739 doubtless owes something alike to the prosecution and to its collapse. Despite such hostility, he must privately have had fair support.⁵

The prosecution of Hutcheson before the Glasgow Presbytery in 1738 reveals vividly the theological temper of the time. He was indicted for teaching to his students "the following two false and dangerous doctrines: first, that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others; and, second, that we could

¹ W. B. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900, pp. 15, 20-21.

² *Id.* p. 52.

³ Cp. Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Brittannien*, 1732, pp. 430-31.

⁴ See Dr. McCosh's *Scottish Philosophy*, 1875, pp. 111-13. Dr. McCosh notes that at some points Dudgeon anticipated Hume.

⁵ Dr. McCosh, however, admits that the absence of the printer's name on the 1765 edition of Dudgeon's works shows that there was then no thorough freedom of thought in Scotland.

have a knowledge of good and evil without and prior to a knowledge of God."¹ There has been a natural disposition on the orthodox side to suppress the fact that such teachings were ever ecclesiastically denounced as false, dangerous, and irreligious; and the prosecution seems to have had no effect beyond intensifying the devotion of Hutcheson's students. Among them was Adam Smith, of whom it has justly been said that, "if he was any man's disciple, he was Hutcheson's," inasmuch as he derived from his teacher the bases alike of his moral and political philosophy and of his deistic optimism.² Another prosecution soon afterwards showed that the new influences were vitally affecting thought within the Church itself. Hutcheson's friend Leechman, whom he and his party contrived to elect as professor of theology in Glasgow University, was in turn proceeded against (1743-44) for a sermon on Prayer, which Hutcheson and his sympathizers pronounced "noble,"³ but which "resolved the efficacy of prayer into its reflex influence on the mind of the worshipper"⁴—a theorem which has chronically made its appearance in the Scottish Church ever since, still ranking as a heresy, after having brought a clerical prosecution in the last century on at least one divine, Prof. William Knight, and rousing a scandal against another, the late Dr. Robert Wallace.⁵

Leechman in turn held his ground, and later became Principal of his University; but still the orthodox in Scotland fought bitterly against every semblance of rationalism. Even the anti-deistic essays of Lord-President Forbes of Culloden, head of the Court of Session, when collected⁶ and posthumously published, were offensive to the Church as laying undue stress on reason; as accepting the heterodox Biblical theories of Dr. John Hutchinson; and as making the awkward admission that "the freethinkers, with all their perversity, generally are sensible of the social duties, and act up to them better than others do who in other respects think more justly than they."⁷ Such an utterance from such a dignitary told of a profound change; and, largely through the influence of Hutcheson and Leechman on

¹ Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895, p. 13. Prof. Fowler shows no knowledge of this prosecution in his monograph on Hutcheson (*Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, 1882); and Mr. W. R. Scott, in his, seems to rely for the wording of the indictment solely on Mr. Rae, who gives no references, drawing apparently on unpublished MSS.

² Rae, as cited, pp. 11-15.

³ Scott, as cited, p. 87.

⁴ Dr. James Orr, *David Hume and his Influence*, etc., 1903, pp. 36-37.

⁵ Also for a time a theological professor in Edinburgh University.

⁶ The *Thoughts Concerning Religion, Natural and Revealed*, appeared in 1735; the *Letter to a Bishop* in 1732; and the *Reflections on the Sources of Incredulity* (left unfinished) posthumously about 1750. Forbes in his youth had been famed as one of the hardest drinkers of his day.

⁷ *Reflections on Incredulity*, in *Works*, undated, ii, 141-42. Yet the works of Forbes were translated for orthodox purposes into German, and later into French by Père Houbigant (1769), who preserves the passage on freethinkers' morals, though curtailing the *Reflections* as a whole.

a generation of students, the educated Scotland of the latter half of the eighteenth century was in large part either "Moderate" or deistic. After generations of barren controversy,¹ the very aridity of the Presbyterian life intensified the recoil among the educated classes to philosophical and historical interests, leading to the performances of Hume, Smith, Robertson, Millar, Ferguson, and yet others, all rationalists in method and sociologists in their interests.

Of these, Millar, one of Smith's favourite pupils, and a table-talker of "magical vivacity,"² was known to be rationalistic in a high degree;³ while Smith and Ferguson were certainly deists, as was Henry Home (the judge, Lord Kames), who had the distinction of being attacked along with his friend Hume in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1755-56. Home wrote expressly to controvert Hume, alike as to utilitarianism and the idea of causation; but his book, *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion* (published anonymously, 1751), handled the thorny question of free-will in such fashion as to give no less offence than Hume had done; and the orthodox bracketed him with the subject of his criticism. His doctrine was indeed singular, its purport being that there can be no free-will, but that the deity has for wise purposes implanted in men the feeling that their wills are free. The fact of his having been made a judge of the Court of Session since writing his book had probably something to do with the rejection of the whole subject by the General Assembly, and afterwards by the Edinburgh Presbytery; but there had evidently arisen a certain diffidence in the Church, which would be assiduously promoted by "moderates" such as Principal Robertson, the historian. It is noteworthy that, while Home and Hume thus escaped, the other Home, John, who wrote the then admired tragedy of *Douglas*, was soon after forced to resign his position as a minister of the Church for that authorship, deism having apparently more friends in the fold than drama.⁴ While the theatre was thus being treated as a place of sin, many of the churches in Scotland were the scenes of repeated Sunday riots. A new manner of psalm-singing had been introduced, and it frequently happened that the congregations divided into two parties, each singing in its own way, till they came to blows. According to one of Hume's biographers, unbelievers were at this

¹ As to which see *A Sober Enquiry into the Grounds of the Present Differences in the Church of Scotland*, 1723.

² Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*, ed. 1872, p. 10.

³ See the *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle*, 1850, pp. 492-93. Millar's *Historical View of the English Government* (censured by Hallam) was once much esteemed; and his *Origin of Ranks* is still worth the attention of sociologists.

⁴ Ritchie's *Life of Hume*, 1807, pp. 52-81; Tytler's *Life of Lord Kames*, 2nd ed. 1814, l. ch. v; Burton's *Life of Hume*, 1, 425-30.

period went to go to church to see the fun.¹ Naturally orthodoxy did not gain ground.

In the case of Adam Smith we have one of the leading instances of the divorce between culture and creed in the Scotland of that age. His intellectual tendencies, primed by Hutcheson, were already revealing themselves when, seeking for something worth study in the unstudious Oxford of his day, he was found by some suspicious supervisor reading Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. The book was seized and the student scolded.² When, in 1751, he became Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University, he aroused orthodox comment by abandoning the Sunday class on Christian Evidences set up by Hutcheson, and still further, it is said, by petitioning the Senatus to be allowed to be relieved of the duty of opening his class with prayer.³ The permission was not given; and the compulsory prayers were "thought to savour strongly of natural religion"; while the lectures on Natural Theology, which were part of the work of the chair, were said to lead "presumptuous striplings" to hold that "the great truths of theology, together with the duties which man owes to God and his neighbours, may be discovered by the light of nature without any special revelation."⁴ Smith was thus well founded in rationalism before he became personally acquainted with Voltaire and the other French freethinkers; and the pious contemporary who deplores his associations avows that neither before nor after his French tour was his religious creed ever "properly ascertained."⁵ It is clear, however, that it steadily developed in a rationalistic direction. In the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) the prevailing vein of theistic optimism is sufficiently uncritical; but even there there emerges an apparent doubt on the doctrine of a future state, and positive hostility to certain ecclesiastical forms of it.⁶ In the sixth edition, which he prepared for the press in 1790, he deleted the passage which pronounced the doctrine of the Atonement to be in harmony with natural ethics.⁷ But most noteworthy of all is his handling of the question of religious establishments in the *Wealth of Nations*.⁸ It is so completely naturalistic that only the habit of taking the

¹ Ritchie, as cited, p. 57.

² McCulloch, *Life of Smith* prefixed to ed. of *Wealth of Nations*, ed. 1839, p. ii.

³ Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, 1888, i,

462-63. Mr. Rae doubts the story, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895, p. 60.

⁴ Ramsay, as last cited.

⁵ Ramsay, passage cited.

⁶ *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, pt. iii, ch. ii, end.

⁷ Cp. Rae, pp. 427-30. Mr. Rae thinks the deletion stood for no change of opinion, and cites Smith's own private explanation (Sinclair's *Life of Sir John Sinclair*, i, 40) that he thought the passage "unnecessary and misplaced." But this expression must be read in the light of Smith's general reticence concerning established dogmas. Certainly he adhered to his argument—which does not claim to be a demonstration—for the doctrine of a future state.

⁸ Bk. v, ch. i, pt. iii, art. 3.

Christian religion for granted could make men miss seeing that its account of the conditions of the rise of new cults applied to that in its origin no less than to the rise of any of its sects. As a whole, the argument might form part of Gibbon's fifteenth chapter. And even allowing for the slowness of the average believer to see the application of a general sociological law to his own system, there must be inferred a great change in the intellectual climate of Scottish life before we can account for Smith's general popularity at home as well as abroad after his handling of "enthusiasm and superstition" in the *Wealth of Nations*. The fact stands out that the two most eminent thinkers in Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century were non-Christians,¹ and that their most intellectual associates were in general sympathy with them.

§ 11

In Ireland, at least in Dublin, during the earlier part of the century, there occurred, on a smaller scale, a similar movement of rationalism, also largely associated with Shaftesbury. In Dublin towards the close of the seventeenth century we have seen Molyneux, the friend and correspondent of Locke, interested in "freethought," albeit much scared by the imprudence of Toland. At the same period there germinated a growth of Unitarianism, which was even more fiercely persecuted than that of Toland's deism. The Rev. Thomas Emlyn, an Englishman, co-pastor of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation of Wood Street (now Strand Street), Dublin, was found by a Presbyterian and a Baptist to be heretical on the subject of the Trinity, and was indicted in 1702 for blasphemy. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of £1,000, which was partly commuted on his release. He protested that South and Sherlock and other writers on the Trinitarian controversy might have been as justly prosecuted as he; but Irish Protestant orthodoxy was of a keener scent than English, and Emlyn was fain, when released, to return to his native land.² His colleague Boyse, like many other Churchmen, wished that the unhappy trinitarian controversy "were buried in silence," but was careful to conform doctrinally. More advanced thinkers

¹ Smith's admiration for Voltaire might alone indicate his mental attitude. As to that see F. W. Hirst, *Adam Smith* (Eng. Men of Letters ser.), pp. 127-28. But the assertion of Skarzynski, that Smith, after being an Idealist under the influence of Hume, "returned a materialist" from his intercourse with Voltaire and other French freethinkers, is an exhibition of learned ignorance. See Hirst, p. 181.

² *An Explanation and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, by the Rev. Dr. W. Hamilton Drummond, 1842, pp. 5-6, 47; Skeats, *Hist. of the Free Churches of England*, ed. Miall, pp. 238-39; Wallace, *Anti-Trinitarian Biography*, iii, art. 360.

had double reason to be reticent. As usual, however, persecution provoked the growth it sought to stifle; and after the passing of the Irish Toleration Act of 1719, a more liberal measure than the English, there developed in Ulster, and even in Dublin, a Unitarian movement akin to that proceeding in England.¹ In the next generation we find in the same city a coterie of Shaftesburyans, centring around Lord Molesworth, the friend of Hutcheson, a man of affairs devoted to intellectual interests. It was within a few years of his meeting Molesworth that Hutcheson produced his *Inquiry*, championing Shaftesbury's ideas;² and other literary men were similarly influenced. It is even suggested that Hutcheson's clerical friend Synge, whom we have seen³ in 1713 attempting a ratiocinative answer to the unbelief he declared to be abundant around him, was not only influenced by Shaftesbury through Molesworth, but latterly "avoided publication lest his opinions should prejudice his career in the Church."⁴ After the death of Molesworth, in 1725, the movement he set up seems to have languished;⁵ but, as we have seen, there were among the Irish bishops men given to philosophic controversy, and the influence of Berkeley cannot have been wholly obscurantist. When in 1756 we read of the Arian Bishop Clayton⁶ proposing in the Irish House of Lords to drop the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, we realize that in Ireland thought was far from stagnant. The heretic bishop, however, died (February, 1758) just as he was about to be prosecuted for the anti-Athanasian heresies of his last book; and thenceforth Ireland plays no noticeable part in the development of rationalism, political interests soon taking the place of religious, with the result that orthodoxy recovered ground.

It cannot be doubted that the spectacle of religious wickedness presented by the operation of the odious penal laws against Catholics,

¹ Cp. Drummond, as cited, pp. 29-30; *History, Opinions, etc., of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, p. 29.

² W. B. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, p. 31.

³ Above, p. 154, note.

⁴ Scott, pp. 28-29, 35-36. The suggestion is not quite convincing. Synge, after becoming Archbishop of Tuam, continued to publish his propagandist tracts, among them *An Essay towards making the Knowledge of Religion Easy to the Meanest Capacity* (6th ed. 1734), which is quite orthodox, and which argues (p. 3) that the doctrine of the Trinity is to be believed, and not pried into, "because it is above our understanding to comprehend." All the while there was being sold also his early treatise, "*A Gentleman's Religion: in Three Parts*.....with an Appendix, wherein it is proved that nothing contrary to our Reason can possibly be the object of our belief, but that it is no just exception against some of the doctrines of Christianity that they are above our reason." Scott, p. 36.

⁵ All that is told of this prelate by Lecky (*Hist. of Ireland in the 18th Cent.* 1892, I, 207) is that at Killala he patronized horse-races. He was industrious on more episcopal lines. He wrote an *Introduction to the History of the Jews*; a *Vindication of Biblical Chronology*; two treatises on prophecy; an anti-Athanasian *Essay on Spirit* (1751), which aroused much controversy; a *Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testament*, in answer to Hellingbroke (2 vols. 1752-1754; 2nd ed. 1757; rep. with the *Essay on Spirit*, Dublin, 1759), which led to his being prosecuted; and other works. The offence given by the *Vindication* lay in his denunciation of the Athanasian creed, and of the bigotry of those who supported it. See pt. III, letters i and ii. The *Essay on Spirit* is no less heterodox. In other respects, however, Clayton is ultra-orthodox.

and the temper of the Protestant Ascendancy party in religious matters, had bred rational skepticism in Ireland in the usual way. Molesworth stands out in Irish history as a founder of a new and saner patriotism; and his doctrines would specially appeal to men of a secular and critical way of thinking. Heretical bishops imply heretical laymen. But the environment was unpropitious to dispassionate thinking. The very relaxation of the Penal Code favoured a reversion to "moderate" orthodoxy; and the new political strifes of the last quarter of the century, destined as they were to be reopened in the next, determined the course of Irish culture in another way.

§ 12

In England, meanwhile, there was beginning the redistribution of energies which can be seen to have prepared for the intellectual and political reaction of the end of the century. There had been no such victory of faith as is supposed to have been wrought by the forensic theorem of Butler. An orthodox German observer, making a close inquest about 1750, cites the *British Magazine* as stating in 1749 that half the educated people were then deists; and he, after full inquiry, agrees.¹ In the same year, Richardson speaks tragically in the Postscriptum to *Clarissa* of seeing "skepticism and infidelity openly avowed, and even endeavoured to be propagated from the press; the great doctrines of the gospel brought into question"; and he describes himself as "seeking to steal in with a disguised plea for religion." Instead of being destroyed by the clerical defence, the deistic movement had really penetrated the Church, which was become as rationalistic in its methods as its function would permit, and the educated classes, which had arrived at a state of compromise. Pope, the chief poet of the preceding generation, had been visibly deistic in his thinking; as Dryden had inferribly been before him; and to such literary prestige was added the prestige of scholarship. The academic Conyers Middleton, whose *Letter from Rome* had told so heavily against Christianity in exposing the pagan derivations of much of Catholicism, and who had further damaged the doctrine of inspiration in his anonymous *Letter to Dr. Waterland* (1731), while professing to refute Tindal, had carried to yet further lengths his service to the critical spirit. In his famous *Free Inquiry* into the miracles of post-apostolic Christianity (1749), again professing to strike at Rome, he had laid the foundations of a new structure of

¹ Dr. G. W. Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Brittannien*, Hannover, 1752, p. 440.

comparative criticism, and had given permanent grounds for rejecting the miracles of the sacred books.

Middleton's book appeared a year after Hume's essay *Of Miracles*, and it made out no such philosophic case as Hume's against the concept of miracle; but it created at once, by its literary brilliance and its cogent argument, a sensation such as had thus far been made neither by Hume's philosophic argument nor by Francklin's anticipation of that.¹ Middleton had duly safeguarded himself by positing the certainty of the gospel miracles and of those wrought by the Apostles, on the old principle² that prodigies were divinely arranged so far forth as was necessary to establish Christianity, but no further. "The history of the gospel," he writes, "I hope may be true, though the history of the Church be fabulous."³ But his argument against post-Apostolic miracles is so strictly naturalistic that no vigilant reader could fail to realize its fuller bearing upon all miracles whatsoever. With Hume and Francklin, he insisted that facts incredible in themselves could not be established by any amount or kind of testimony; and he suggested no measure of comparative credibility as between the two orders of miracle. With the deists in general, he argued that knowledge "either of the ways or will of the Creator" was to be had only through study of "that revelation which he made of himself from the beginning in the beautiful fabric of this visible world."⁴ An antagonist accordingly wrote that his theses were: "First, that there were no miracles wrought in the primitive Church; Secondly, that all the primitive fathers were fools or knaves, and most of them both one and the other. And it is easy to observe, the whole tenor of your argument tends to prove, Thirdly, that no miracles were wrought by Christ or his apostles; and Fourthly, that these too were fools or knaves, or both."⁵ A more temperate opponent pressed the same point in less explosive language. Citing Middleton's demand for an inductive method, this critic asks with much point: "What does he mean by 'deserting the path of Nature and experience,' but giving in to the belief of *any* miracles, and acknowledging the reality of events contrary to the known effects of the established Laws of Nature?"⁶

No other answer was seriously possible. In the very act of ostentatiously terming Tindal an "infidel," Middleton describes an answer made to him by the apologist Chapman as a sample of a

¹ Above, p. 180.

² *Inquiry*, p. 163.

³ Put by Huarte in 1575. Above, i, 472.

⁴ *Inquiry*, pref. pp. x, xxii.

⁵ *A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton, occasioned by his late "Free Inquiry."*

1749, pp. 3-4.

⁶ *A Free Answer to Dr. Middleton's "Free Inquiry,"* by William Dodwell [son of the elder and brother of the younger Henry], Rector of Shottesbrook, 1749, pp. 14-15.

kind of writing which did "more hurt and discredit" to Christianity "than all the attacks of its open adversaries."¹ In support of the miracles of the gospel and the apostolic history he offers merely conventional pleas: against the miracles related by the Fathers he brings to bear an incessant battery of destructive criticism. We may sum up that by the middle of the eighteenth century the essentials of the Christian creed, openly challenged for a generation by avowed deists, were abandoned by not a few scholars within the pale of the Church, of whom Middleton was merely the least reticent. After his death was published his *Vindication of the Inquiry* (1751); and in his collected works (1752) was included his *Reflections on the Variations or Inconsistencies which are found among the Four Evangelists*, wherein it is demonstrated that "the belief of the inspiration and absolute infallibility of the evangelists seems to be more absurd than even that of transubstantiation itself."² The main grounds of orthodoxy were thus put in doubt in the name of a critical orthodoxy. In short, the deistic movement had done what it lay in it to do. The old evangelical or pietistic view of life was discredited among instructed people, and in this sense it was Christianity that had "decayed." Its later recovery was economic, not intellectual.

Thus Skelton writes in 1751 that "our modern apologists for Christianity often defend it on deistical principles" (*Deism Revealed*, pref. p. xii. Cp. vol. ii, pp. 234, 237). See also Sir Leslie Stephen as cited above, p. 149, *note*; and Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, pp. 33-36.

An interesting instance of liberalizing orthodoxy is furnished by the Rev. Arthur Ashley Sykes, who contributed many volumes to the general deistic discussion, some of them anonymously. In the preface to his *Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion* (1732; 2nd ed. enlarged, 1755) Sykes remarks that "since..... systematical opinions have been received and embraced in such a manner that it has not been safe to contradict them, the burden of vindicating Christianity has been very much increased. Its friends have been much embarrassed through fear of speaking against *local truths*; and its adversaries have so successfully attacked those weaknesses that Christianity itself has been deemed indefensible, when in reality the follies of Christians alone have been so." Were Christians left to the simple doctrines of Christ and the Apostles, he contends, Infidelity could make no converts. And at the close of the book he writes: "Would to God that Christians would be content with the plainness and simplicity of the gospel.....That they would not vend under the name of evangelical truth the absurd and

¹ *Inquiry*, p. 162.

² *Works*, 2nd ed. 1755, ii, 348.