contradictory schemes of ignorant or wicked men! That they would part with that load of rubbish which makes thinking men almost sink under the weight, and gives too great a handle for Infidelity!" Such writing could not give satisfaction to the ecclesiastical authorities; and as little could Sykes's remarkable admission (*The Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1740, p. 242): "When the advantages of revelation are to be specified, I cannot conceive that it should be maintained as necessary to *fix a rule of morality*. For what one principle of morality is there which the heathen moralists had not asserted or maintained? Before ever any revelation is offered to mankind they are supposed to be so well acquainted with moral truths as from them to judge of the truth of the revelation itself." Again he writes:—

"Nor can revelation be necessary to *ascertain religion*. For religion consisting in nothing but doing our duties from a sense of the being of God, revelation is not necessary to this end, unless it be said that we cannot know that there is a God, and what our duties are, without it. *Reason* will teach us that there is a *God*.....that we are to be just and charitable to our neighbours; that we are to be temperate and sober in ourselves" (*id.* p. 244).

This is simple Shaftesburyan deism, and all that the apologist goes on to contend for is that revelation "contains *motives* and *reasons* for the practice of what is right, more and different from what natural reason without this help can suggest." He seems, however, to have believed in miracles, though an anonymous *Essay on the Nature, Design, and Origin of Sacrifices* (1748) which is ascribed to him quietly undermines the whole evangelical doctrine. Throughout, he is remarkable for the amenity of his tone towards "infidels."

Balguy, a man of less ability, is notably latitudinarian in his theology. In the very act of criticizing the deists, he complains of Locke's arbitrariness in deriving morality from the will of God. Religion, he argues, is so derived, but morality is inherent in the whole nature of things, and is the same for God and men. This position, common to the school of Clarke, is at bottom that of Shaftesbury and the Naturalists. All that Balguy says for religion is that a doctrine of rewards and punishments is necessary to stimulate the average moral sense; and that the Christian story of the condescension of Omnipotence in coming to earth and suffering misery for man's sake ought to overwhelm the imagination! (See *A Letter to a Deist*, 2nd ed. 1730, pp. 5, 14, 15, 31; *Foundation of Moral Goodness*, pt. ii, 1729, p. 41 *sq.*)

The next intellectual step in natural course would have been a revision of the deistic assumptions, insofar, that is, as certain positive assumptions were common to the deists. But, as we have seen,

certain fresh issues were raised as among the deists themselves. In addition to those above noted, there was the profoundly important one as to ethics. Shaftesbury, who rejected the religious basis, held a creed of optimism; and this optimism was assailed by Mandeville, who in consequence was opposed as warmly by the deist Hutcheson and others as by Law and Berkeley. To grapple with this problem, and with the underlying cosmic problem, there was needed at least as much general mental activity as went to the antecedent discussion; and the main activity of the nation was now being otherwise directed. The negative process, the impeachment of Christian supernaturalism, had been accomplished so far as the current arguments went. Toland and Collins had fought the battle of free discussion, forcing ratiocination on the Church; Collins had shaken the creed of prophecy; Shaftesbury had impugned the religious conception of morals; and Mandeville had done so more profoundly, laying the foundations of scientific utilitarianism.[1] So effective had been the utilitarian propaganda in general that the orthodox Brown (author of the once famous *Estimate* of the life of his countrymen), in his criticism of Shaftesbury (1751), wrote as a pure utilitarian against an inconsistent one, and defended Christianity on strictly utilitarian lines. Woolston, following up Collins, had shaken the faith in New Testament miracles; Middleton had done it afresh with all the decorum that Woolston lacked; and Hume had laid down with masterly clearness the philosophic principle which rebuts all attempts to prove miracles as such.[2] Tindal had clinched the case for "natural" theism as against revelationism; and the later deists, notably Morgan, had to some extent combined these results.[3] This literature was generally distributed; and so far the case had been thrashed out.

§ 13

To carry intellectual progress much further there was needed a general movement of scientific study and a reform in education. The translation of La Mettrie's *Man a Machine* (1749)[4] found a public no better prepared for the problems he raised than that addressed by Strutt eighteen years before; and the reply of Luzac, *Man More than a Machine*, in the preface to which the translator (1752) declared that "irreligion and infidelity overspread the land,"

[1] Cp. essay on Mandeville, in the author's *Pioneer Humanists*, 1907.
[2] As against the objections of Mr. Lang, see the author's paper in *Studies in Religious Fallacy*.
[3] Cp. the summary of Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, pp. 177–78, which is founded on that of Pusey's early *Historical Enquiry* concerning German Rationalism, pp. 124–26.
[4] Rep. same year at Dublin; 2nd ed. 1750. The first ed. was ascribed to D'Argens—an error caused though not justified by the publisher's notice.

probably satisfied what appetite there was for such a discussion. There had begun a change in the prevailing mental life, a diversion of interest from ideas as such to political and mercantile interests. The middle and latter part of the eighteenth century is the period of the rise of (1) the new machine industries, and (2) the new imperialistic policy of Chatham.[1] Both alike withdrew men from problems of mere belief, whether theological or scientific.[2] That the reaction was not one of mere fatigue over deism we have already seen. It was a general diversion of energy, analogous to what had previously taken place in France in the reign of Louis XIV. As the poet Gray, himself orthodox, put the case in 1754, "the mode of freethinking has given place to the mode of not thinking at all."[3] In Hume's opinion the general pitch of national intelligence south of the Tweed was lowered.[4] This state of things of course was favourable to religious revival; but what took place was rather a new growth of emotional pietism in the new industrial masses (the population being now on a rapid increase), under the ministry of the Wesleys and Whitefield, and a further growth of similar religion in the new provincial middle-class that grew up on the industrial basis. The universities all the while were at the lowest ebb of culture, but officially rabid against philosophic freethinking.[5]

It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that all this meant a dying out of deism among the educated classes. The statement of Goldsmith, about 1760, that deists in general "have been driven into a confession of the necessity of revelation, or an open avowal of atheism,"[6] is not to be taken seriously. Goldsmith, whose own orthodoxy is very doubtful, had a whimsical theory that skepticism, though it might not injure morals, has a "manifest tendency to subvert the literary merits" of any country;[7] and argued accordingly. Deism, remaining fashionable, did but fall partly into the background of living interests, the more concrete issues of politics and the new imaginative literature occupying the foreground. It was early in the reign of George III that Sir William Blackstone, having had the curiosity to listen in succession

[1] The point is further discussed in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 175–76.
[2] Cp. G. B. Hertz, *The Old Colonial System*, 1905, pp. 4, 22, 93, 157.
[3] Letter xxxi, in Mason's *Memoir*.
[4] Hill Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii, 433, 434, 484–85, 487.
[5] Compare the verdicts of Gibbon in his *Autobiography*, and of Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v, ch. i, art. 2; and see the memoir of Smith in 1831 ed. and McCulloch's ed., and Rae's *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 24. It appears that about 1764 many English people sent their sons to Edinburgh University on account of the better education there. Letter of Blair, in Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii, 229.
[6] *Essays*, iv, end.
[7] *Present State of Polite Learning*, 1765, ch. vi. His story of how the father of St. Foix cured the youth of the desire to rationalize his creed is not suggestive of conviction. The father pointed to a crucifix, saying, "Behold the fate of a reformer." The story has been often plagiarized since—*e.g.*, in Galt's *Annals of the Parish*.

to the preaching of every clergyman in London, "did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero," and declared that it would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mahomet, or of Christ.[1] When the Church was thus deistic, the educated laity can have been no less so. The literary status of deism after 1750 was really higher than ever. It was now represented by Hume; by ADAM SMITH (*Moral Sentiments*, 1759); by the scholarship of Conyers Middleton; and by the posthumous works (1752–54) of Lord BOLINGBROKE, who, albeit more of a debater than a thinker, debated often with masterly skill, in a style unmatched for harmony and energetic grace, which had already won him a great literary prestige, though the visible insincerity of his character, and the habit of browbeating, always countervailed his charm. His influence, commonly belittled, was much greater than writers like Johnson would admit; and it went deep. Voltaire, who had been his intimate, tells[2] that he had known some young pupils of Bolingbroke who altogether denied the historic actuality of the Gospel Jesus—a stretch of criticism beyond the assimilative power of that age.

His motive to write for posthumous publication, however, seems rather to have been the venting of his tumultuous feelings than any philosophic purpose. An overweening deist, he is yet at much pains to disparage the à priori argument for deism, bestowing some of his most violent epithets on Dr. Samuel Clarke, who seems to have exasperated him in politics. But his castigation of "divines" is tolerably impartial on that side; and he is largely concerned to deprive them of grounds for their functions, though he finally insists that churches are necessary for purposes of public moral teaching. His own teachings represent an effort to rationalize deism. The God whom he affirms is to be conceived or described only as omnipotent and omniscient (or all-wise), not as good or benevolent any more than as vindictive. Thus he had assimilated part of the Spinozistic and the atheistic case against anthropomorphism, while still using anthropomorphic language on the score that "we must speak of God after the manner of men." Beyond this point he compromises to the extent of denying special while admitting collective or social providences; though he is positive in his denial of the actuality or the moral need of a future state. As to morals he takes the ordinary deistic line, putting the innate "law of nature"

[1] Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 1878, ii, 37.
[2] *Dieu et les Hommes*, ch. xxxix.

as the sufficient and only revelation by the deity to his creatures. On the basis of that inner testimony he rejects the Old Testament as utterly unworthy of deity, but endorses the universal morality found in the gospels, while rejecting their theology. It was very much the deism of Voltaire, save that it made more concessions to anti-theistic logic.

The weak side of Bolingbroke's polemic was its inconsistency—a flaw deriving from his character. In the spirit of a partisan debater he threw out at any point any criticism that appeared for the moment plausible; and, having no scientific basis or saving rectitude, would elsewhere take up another and a contradictory position. Careful antagonists could thus discredit him by mere collation of his own utterances.[1] But, the enemy being no more consistent than he, his influence was not seriously affected in the world of ordinary readers; and much of his attack on "divines," on dogmas, and on Old Testament morality must have appealed to many, thus carrying on the discredit of orthodoxy in general. Leland devoted to him an entire volume of his *View of the Principal Deistical Writers*, and in all bestows more space upon him than on all the others together—a sufficient indication of his vogue.

In his lifetime, however, Bolingbroke had been extremely careful to avoid compromising himself. Mr. Arthur Hassall, in his generally excellent monograph on Bolingbroke (Statesmen Series, 1889, p. 226), writes, in answer to the attack of Johnson, that "Bolingbroke, during his lifetime, had never scrupled to publish criticisms, remarkable for their freedom, on religious subjects." I cannot gather to what he refers; and Mr. Walter Sichel, in his copious biography (2 vols. 1901–1902), indicates no such publications. The *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, which contain (Lett. iii, sect. 2) a skeptical discussion of the Pentateuch as history, though written in 1735–36, were only posthumously published, in 1752. The *Examen Important de Milord Bolingbroke*, produced by Voltaire in 1767, but dated 1736, is Voltaire's own work, based on Bolingbroke. In his letter to Swift of September 12, 1724 (*Swift's Works*, Scott's ed. 1824, xvi, 448–49), Bolingbroke angrily repudiates the title of *esprit fort*, declaring, in the very temper in which pious posterity has aspersed himself, that "such are the pests of society, because they endeavour to loosen the bands of it.....I therefore not only disown, but I detest, this character." In this letter he even affects to believe in "the truth of the divine revelation

[1] Cp. Bishop Law, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, 6th ed. 1774, p. 65, *note*, and the *Analysis* of Bolingbroke's writings (1755) there cited. Mr. Sichel's reply to Sir L. Stephen's criticism may or may not be successful; but he does not deal with Bishop Law's.

of Christianity." He began to write his essays, it is true, before his withdrawal to France in 1735, but with no intention of speedily publishing them. In his *Letter to Mr. Pope* (published with the *Letter to Wyndham*, 1753), p. 481, he writes: "I have been a martyr of faction in politics, and have no vocation to be so in philosophy." Cp. pp. 485–86. It is thus a complete blunder on the part of Bagehot to say (*Literary Studies*, Hutton's ed. iii, 137) that Butler's *Analogy*, published in 1736, was "designed as a confutation of Shaftesbury *and Bolingbroke*." It is even said (Warton, *Essay on Pope*, 4th ed. ii, 294–95) that Pope did not know Bolingbroke's real opinions; but Pope's untruthfulness was such as to discredit such a statement. Cp. Bolingbroke's *Letter* as cited, p. 521, and his *Philosophical Works*, 8vo-ed. 1754, ii, 405. It is noteworthy that a volume of controversial sermons entitled *A Preservative against unsettled notions and Want of Principles in Religion*, so entirely stupid in its apologetics as to be at times positively entertaining, was published in 1715 by Joseph Trapp, M.A., "Chaplain to the Right Honble. The Lord Viscount Bolingbroke."

In seeking to estimate Bolingbroke's posthumous influence we have to remember that after the publication of his works the orthodox members of his own party, who otherwise would have forgiven him all his vices and insincerities, have held him up to hatred. Scott, for instance, founding on Bolingbroke's own dishonest denunciation of freethinkers as men seeking to loosen the bands of society, pronounced his arrangement for the posthumous issue of his works "an act of wickedness more purely diabolical than any hitherto upon record in the history of any age or nation" (Note to Bolingbroke's letter above cited in *Swift's Works*, xvi, 450). It would be an error, on the other hand, to class him among either the great sociologists or the great philosophers. Mr. Sichel undertakes to show (vol. ii, ch. x) that Bolingbroke had stimulated Gibbon to a considerable extent in his treatment of early Christianity. This is in itself quite probable, and some of the parallels cited are noteworthy; but Mr. Sichel, who always writes as a panegyrist, makes no attempt to trace the common French sources for both. He does show that Voltaire manipulated Bolingbroke's opinions in reproducing them. But he does not critically recognize the incoherence of Bolingbroke's eloquent treatises. Mr. Hassall's summary is nearer the truth; but that in turn does not note how well fitted was Bolingbroke's swift and graceful declamation to do its work with the general public, which (if it accepted him at all) would make small account of self-contradiction.

§ 14

In view of such a reinforcement of its propaganda, deism could

not be regarded as in the least degree written down. In 1765, in fact, we find Diderot recounting, on the authority of d'Holbach, who had just returned from a visit to this country, that "the Christian religion is nearly extinct in England. The deists are innumerable; there are almost no atheists; those who are so conceal it. An atheist and a scoundrel are almost synonymous terms for them."[1] Nor did the output of deistic literature end with the posthumous works of Bolingbroke. These were followed by translations of the new writings of VOLTAIRE,[2] who had assimilated the whole propaganda of English deism, and gave it out anew with a wit and brilliancy hitherto unknown in argumentative and critical literature. The freethinking of the third quarter of the century, though kept secondary to more pressing questions, was thus at least as deeply rooted and as convinced as that of the first quarter; and it was probably not much less common among educated men, though new social influences caused it to be more decried.

The hapless Chatterton, fatally precocious, a boy in years and experience of life, a man in understanding at seventeen, incurred posthumous obloquy more for his "infidelity" than for the harmless literary forgeries which reveal his poetic affinity to a less prosaic age. It is a memorable fact that this first recovery of the lost note of imaginative poetry in that "age of prose and reason" is the exploit of a boy whose mind was as independently "freethinking" on current religion as it was original even in its imitative reversion to the poetics of the past. Turning away from the impossible mythicism and mysticism of the Tudor and Stuart literatures, as from the fanaticism of the Puritans, the changing English world after the Restoration had let fall the artistic possession of imaginative feeling and style which was the true glory of the time of Renascence. The ill-strung genius of Chatterton seems to have been the first to reunite the sense of romantic beauty with the spirit of critical reason. He was a convinced deist, avowing in his verse, in his pathetic will (1770), in a late letter, and at times in his talk, that he was "no Christian," and contemning the ethic of Scripture history and the absurdity of literal inspiration.[3] Many there must have been who went as far, with less courage of avowal.

What was lacking to the age, once more, was a social foundation on which it could not only endure but develop. In a nation of which the majority had no intellectual culture, such a foundation could not

[1] *Mémoires de Diderot*, ed. 1841, ii. 25.
[2] These had begun as early as 1753 (*Micromégas*).
[3] *Works*, ed. 1842, i. pp. cix, 445; ii, 628, 728. Cp. the poem *Kew Gardens*, left in MS.

exist. Green exaggerates[1] when he writes that "schools there were none, save the grammar schools of Edward and Elizabeth";[2] but by another account only twelve public schools were founded in the long reign of George III;[3] and, as a result of the indifference of two generations, masses of the people "were ignorant and brutal to a degree which it is hard to conceive."[4] A great increase of population had followed on the growth of towns and the development of commerce and manufactures even between 1700 and 1760;[5] and thereafter the multiplication was still more rapid. There was thus a positive fall in the culture standards of the majority of the people. According to Massey, "hardly any tradesman in 1760 had more instruction than qualified him to add up a bill"; and "a labourer, mechanic, or domestic servant who could read or write possessed a rare accomplishment."[6] As for the Charity Schools established between 1700 and 1750, their express object was to rear humble tradesmen and domestics, not to educate in the proper sense of the term.

In the view of life which accepted this state of things the educated deists seem to have shared; at least, there is no record of any agitation by them for betterment. The state of political thought was typified in the struggle over "Wilkes and Liberty," from which cool temperaments like Hume's turned away in contempt; and it is significant that poor men were persecuted for freethinking while the better-placed went free. JACOB ILIVE, for denying in a pamphlet (1753) the truth of revelation, was pilloried thrice, and sent to hard labour for three years. In 1754 the Grand Jury of Middlesex "presented" the editor and publisher of Bolingbroke's posthumous works[7]—a distinction that in the previous generation had been bestowed on Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees;* and in 1761, as before noted, Peter Annet, aged seventy, was pilloried twice and sent to prison for discrediting the Pentateuch; as if that were a more serious offence than his former attacks on the gospels and on St. Paul. The personal influence of George III, further, told everywhere against freethinking; and the revival of penalties would have checked publishing even if there had been no withdrawal of interest to politics.

Yet more or less freethinking treatises did appear at intervals

[1] I here take a few sentences from my paper, *The Church and Education*, 1903.
[2] *Short History*, p. 717. The *Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools*, by Nicholas Carlisle, 1818, shows that schools were founded in all parts of the country by private bequest or public action during the eighteenth century.
[3] Collis, in *Transactions of the Social Science Association*, 1857, p. 126. According to Collis, 48 had been founded by James I, 28 under Charles I, 16 under the Commonwealth, 36 under Charles II, 4 under James II, 7 under William and Mary, 11 under Anne, 17 under George I, and 7 under George II. He does not indicate their size.
[4] Green, as last cited. [5] Gibbins, *Industrial History of England*, 1894, p. 151.
[6] *Hist. of England under George III*, ed. 1865, ii, 83.
[7] The document is given in Ritchie's *Life of Hume*, 1807, pp. 53–55.

in addition to the works of the better-known writers, such as Bolingbroke and Hume, after the period commonly marked as that of the "decline of deism." In the list may be included a few by Unitarians, who at this stage were doing critical work. Like a number of the earlier works above mentioned, the following (save Evanson) are overlooked in Sir Leslie Stephen's survey:—

1746. *Essay on Natural Religion.* Falsely attributed to Dryden.
„ *Deism fairly stated and fully vindicated*, etc. Anon.
1749. J. G. Cooper, *Life of Socrates.*
1750. John Dove, *A Creed founded on Truth and Common Sense.*
„ *The British Oracle.* (Two numbers only.)
1752. *The Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy Shaken.* Four vols. of free-thinking pamphlets, collected (and some written) by Thomas Gordon, formerly secretary to Trenchard. Edited by R. Barron. (Rep. 1768.)
1765. W. Dudgeon, *Philosophical Works* (reprints of those of 1732,-4,-7,-9, above mentioned). Privately printed—at Glasgow?
1772. E. Evanson, *The Doctrines of a Trinity and the Incarnation*, etc.
1773. —— *Three Discourses* (1. Upon the Man after God's own Heart; 2. Upon the Faith of Abraham; 3. Upon the Seal of the Foundation of God).
1777. —— *Letter to Bishop Hurd.*
1781. W. Nicholson, *The Doubts of the Infidels.* (Rep. by R. Carlile.)
1782. W. Turner, *Answer to Dr. Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever.*
1785. Dr. G. Hoggart Toulmin, *The Antiquity and Duration of the World.*
1789. —— *The Eternity of the Universe.*[1] (Rep. 1825.)
„ Dr. T. Cooper, *Tracts, Ethical, Theological, and Political.*
1792. E. Evanson, *The Dissonance of the Four Evangelists.* (Rep. 1805.)
1795. Dr. J. A. O'Keefe, *On the Progress of the Human Understanding.*
1797. John C. Davies, *The Scripturian's Creed.* Prosecuted and imprisoned. (Book rep. 1822 and 1839.)

Of the work here noted a considerable amount was done by Unitarians, Evanson being of that persuasion, though at the time of writing his earlier Unitarian works he was an Anglican vicar.[2] During the first half of the eighteenth century, despite the movement at the end of the seventeenth, specific anti-Trinitarianism was not much in evidence, the deistic controversy holding the foreground. But gradually Unitarianism made fresh headway. One dissenting clergyman, Martin Tomkyns, who had been dismissed by his congregation at Stoke Newington for his "Arian or Unitarian opinions," published in 1722 *A Sober Appeal to a Turk or an Indian, concerning the plain sense of the Trinity*, in reply to the treatise of Dr. Isaac Watts on *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.* A second edition of Tomkyns's book appeared in 1748, with a further reply to Watts's *Dissertations* of 1724. The result seems to have been an unsettlement of the orthodoxy of the hymn-writer. There is express testimony from Dr. Lardner, a very trustworthy witness, that

[1] A reply, *The World proved to be not eternal nor mechanical*, appeared in 1790.
[2] *The Doctrines of a Trinity and the Incarnation of God* was published anonymously.

Watts in his latter years, "before he was seized with an imbecility of his faculties," was substantially a Unitarian. His special papers on the subject were suppressed by his executors; but the full text of his *Solemn Address to the Great and Blessed God* goes far to bear out Lardner's express assertion.[1] Other prominent religionists were more outspoken. The most distinguished names associated with the position were those of Lardner and Priestley, of whom the former, trained as a simple "dissenter," avowedly reached his conclusions without much reference to Socinian literature;[2] and the second, who was similarly educated, no less independently gave up the doctrines of the Atonement and the Trinity, passing later from the Arian to the Socinian position after reading Lardner's *Letter on the Logos*.[3] As Priestley derived his determinism from Collins,[4] it would appear that the deistical movement had set up a general habit of reasoning which thus wrought even on Christians who, like Lardner and Priestley, undertook to rebut the objections of unbelievers to their faith. A generally rationalistic influence is to be noted in the works of the Unitarian Antipædobaptist Dr. Joshua Toulmin, author of lives of Socinus (1777) and Biddle (1789), and many other solid works, including a sermon on "The Injustice of classing Unitarians with Deists and Infidels" (1797). In his case the "classing" was certainly inconvenient. In 1791 the effigy of Paine was burned before his door, and his windows broken. His house was saved by being closely guarded; but his businesses of schoolkeeping and bookselling had to be given up. It thus becomes intelligible how, after a period in which Dissent, contemned by the State Church, learned to criticize that Church's creed, there emerged in England towards the close of the eighteenth century a fresh movement of specific Unitarianism.

Evanson and Toulmin were scholarly writers, though without the large learning of Lardner and the propagandist energy and reputation of Priestley; and the Unitarian movement, in a quiet fashion, made a numerical progress out of all proportion to that of orthodoxy. It owed much of its immunity at this stage, doubtless, to the large element of tacit deism in the Church; and apart from the scholarly work of Lardner both Priestley and Evanson did something for New Testament criticism, as well as towards the

[1] See the *Biographical Introduction* to the Unitarian reprint of Watts's *Solemn Address*, 1840, which gives the letters of Lardner. And cp. Skeats, *Hist. of the English Free Churches*, ed. Miall, p. 240.

[2] *Life of Lardner*, by Dr. Kippis, prefixed to *Works*, ed. 1835, i. p. xxxii.

[3] *Memoirs of Priestley*, 1806, pp. 30-32, 35, 37. The *Letter on the Logos* was addressed by Lardner to the first Lord Barrington, and was first published anonymously, in 1759.

[4] *Memoirs of Priestley*, p. 19.

clearing-up of Christian origins. Evanson was actually prosecuted in 1773, on local initiative, for a sermon of Unitarian character delivered by him in the parish church of Tewkesbury on Easter-Day of 1771; and, what is much more remarkable, members of his congregation, at a single defence-meeting in an inn, collected £150 to meet his costs.[1] Five years later he had given up the belief in eternal punishment, though continuing to believe in "long protracted" misery for sinners.[2] Still later, after producing his *Dissonance*, he became uncommonly drastic in his handling of the Canon. He lived well into the nineteenth century, and published in 1805 a vigorous tractate, *Second Thoughts on the Trinity, recommended to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester.* In that he treats the First Gospel as a forgery of the second century. The method is indiscriminating, and the author lays much uncritical stress upon prophecy. On the whole, the Unitarian contribution to rational thought, then as later, was secondary or ancillary, though on the side of historical investigation it was important. Lardner's candour is as uncommon as his learning; and Priestley[3] and Evanson have a solvent virtue.[4] In all three the limitation lies in the fixed adherence to the concept of revelation, which withheld them from radical rationalism even as it did from Arianism. Evanson's ultra-orthodox acceptance of the Apocalypse is significant of his limitations; and Priestley's calibre is indicated by his life-long refusal to accept the true scientific inference from his own discovery of oxygen. A more pronounced evolution was that of the Welsh deist David Williams, who, after publishing two volumes of *Sermons on Religious Hypocrisy* (1774), gave up his post as a dissenting preacher, and, in conjunction with Franklin and other freethinkers, opened a short-lived deistic chapel in Margaret Street, London (1776), where there was used a "Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality."[5]

§ 15

On the other hand, apart from the revival of popular religion under Whitefield and Wesley, which won multitudes of the people

[1] Pamphlet of 1778, printing the sermon, with reply to a local attack.
[2] MS. alteration in print. See also p. 1 of Epistle Dedicatory.
[3] 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.
[4] A Church dignitary has described Evanson's *Dissonance* as "the commencement of the destructive criticism of the Fourth Gospel" (Archdeacon Watkins's Bampton Lectures, 1890, p. 174).
[5] Williams (d. 1816), who published 3 vols. of "Lectures on Education" and other works, has a longer claim on remembrance as the founder of the "Literary Fund."

whom no higher culture could reach, there was no recovery of educated belief upon intellectual lines; though there was a steady detachment of energy to the new activities of conquest and commerce which mark the second half of the eighteenth century in England. On this state of things supervened the massive performance of the greatest historical writer England had yet produced. GIBBON, educated not by Oxford but by the recent scholarly literature of France, had as a mere boy seen, on reading Bossuet, the theoretic weakness of Protestantism, and had straightway professed Romanism. Shaken as to that by a skilled Swiss Protestant, he speedily became a rationalist pure and simple, with as little of the dregs of deism in him as any writer of his age; and his great work begins, or rather signalizes (since Hume and Robertson preceded him), a new era of historical writing, not merely by its sociological treatment of the rise of Christianity, but by its absolutely anti-theological handling of all things.

The importance of the new approach may be at once measured by the zeal of the opposition. In no case, perhaps, has the essentially passional character of religious resistance to new thought been more vividly shown than in that of the contemporary attacks upon Gibbon's *History*. There is not to be found in controversial literature such another annihilating rejoinder as was made by Gibbon to the clerical zealots who undertook to confound him on points of scholarship, history, and ratiocination. The contrast between the mostly spiteful incompetence of the attack and the finished mastery of the reply put the faith at a disadvantage from which it never intellectually recovered, though other forces reinstated it socially. By the admission of Macaulay, who thought Gibbon "most unfair" to religion, the whole troup of his assailants are now "utterly forgotten"; and those orthodox commentators who later sought to improve on their criticism have in turn, with a notable uniformity, been rebutted by their successors; till Gibbon's critical section ranks as the first systematically scientific handling of the problem of the rise of Christianity. He can be seen to have profited by all the relevant deistic work done before him, learning alike from Toland, from Middleton, and from Bolingbroke; though his acknowledgments are mostly paid to respectable Protestants and Catholics, as Basnage, Beausobre, Lardner, Mosheim, and Tillemont; and the sheer solidity of the work has sustained it against a hundred years of hostile comment.[1] While Gibbon was thus earning for his

[1] The subject is discussed at length in the essay on Gibbon in the author's *Pioneer Humanists*.

country a new literary distinction, the orthodox interest was concerned above all things to convict him of ignorance, incompetence, and dishonesty; and Davis, the one of his assailants who most fully manifested all of these qualities, and who will long be remembered solely from Gibbon's deadly exposure, was rewarded with a royal pension. Another, Apthorp, received an archiepiscopal living; while Chelsum, the one who almost alone wrote against him like a gentleman, got nothing. But no cabal could avail to prevent the instant recognition, at home and abroad, of the advent of a new master in history; and in the worst times of reaction which followed, the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* impassively defied the claims of the ruling creed.

In a literary world which was eagerly reading Gibbon[1] and Voltaire,[2] there was a peculiar absurdity in Burke's famous question (1790) as to "Who now reads Bolingbroke" and the rest of the older deists.[3] The fashionable public was actually reading Bolingbroke even then;[4] and the work of the older deists was being done with new incisiveness and thoroughness by their successors.[5] In the unstudious world of politics, if the readers were few the indifferentists were many. Evanson could truthfully write to Bishop Hurd in 1777 that "That general unbelief of revealed religion among the higher orders of our countrymen, which, however your Lordship and I might differ in our manner of accounting for it, is too notorious for either of us to doubt of, hath, by a necessary consequence, produced in the majority of our present legislators an absolute indifference towards religious questions of every kind."[6] Beside Burke in Parliament, all the while, was the Prime Minister, WILLIAM PITT the younger, an agnostic deist.

> Whether or not the elder Pitt was a deist, the younger gave very plain signs of being at least no more. Gladstone (*Studies subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler*, ed. 1896, pp. 30–33) has sought to discredit the recorded testimony of Wilberforce (*Life of Wilberforce*, 1838, i, 98) that Pitt told him "Bishop

[1] Cp. Bishop Watson's *Apology for Christianity* (1776) as to the vogue of unbelief at that date. (*Two Apologies*, ed. 1806, p. 121. Cp. pp. 179, 399.)

[2] The panegyric on Voltaire delivered at his death by Frederick the Great (Nov. 26, 1778) was promptly translated into English (1779).

[3] *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1790, p. 131.

[4] See Hannah More's letter of April, 1777, in her *Life*, abridged 16mo-ed. p. 36. An edition of Shaftesbury, apparently, appeared in 1773, and another in 1790.

[5] The essays of Hume, including the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1779), were now circulated in repeated editions. Mr. Rae, in his valuable *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 311, cites a German observer, Wendeborn, as writing in 1785 that the *Dialogues*, though a good deal discussed in Germany, had made no sensation in England, and were at that date entirely forgotten. But a second edition had been called for in 1779, and they were added to a fresh edition of the essays in 1788. Any "forgetting" is to be set down to preoccupation with other interests.

[6] *Letter to the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry*, 1777, p. 3.

Butler's work raised in his mind more doubts than it had answered." Gladstone points to another passage in Wilberforce's diary which states that Pitt "commended Butler's *Analogy*" (*Life*, i, 90). But the context shows that Pitt had commended the book for the express purpose of turning Wilberforce's mind from its evangelical bias. Wilberforce was never a deist, and the purpose accordingly could not have been to make him orthodox. The two testimonies are thus perfectly consistent; especially when we note the further statement credibly reported to have been made by Wilberforce (*Life*, i, 95), that Pitt later "*tried to reason me out of my convictions.*" We have yet further the emphatic declaration of Pitt's niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, that he "never went to church in his life..... never even talked about religion" (*Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope*, 1845, iii, 166–67). This was said in emphatic denial of the genuineness of the unctuous death-bed speech put in Pitt's mouth by Gifford. Lady Hester's high veracity is accredited by her physician (*Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, 1846, i, pref. p. 11). No such character can be given to the conventional English biography of the period.

We have further to note the circumstantial account by Wilberforce in his letter to the Rev. S. Gisborne immediately after Pitt's death (*Correspondence*, 1840, ii, 69–70), giving the details he had had in confidence from the Bishop of Lincoln. They are to the effect that, after some demur on Pitt's part ("that he was not worthy to offer up any prayer, or was too weak,") the Bishop prayed with him once. Wilberforce adds his "fear" that "no further religious intercourse took place before or after, *and I own I thought what was inserted in the papers impossible to be true.*"

There is clear testimony that Charles James Fox, Pitt's illustrious rival, was no more of a believer than he,[1] though equally careful to make no profession of unbelief. And it was Fox who, above all the English statesmen of his day, fought the battle of religious toleration[2] —a service which finally puts him above Burke, and atones for many levities of political action.

Among thinking men too the nascent science of geology was setting up a new criticism of "revelation"—this twenty years before the issue of the epoch-making works of Hutton.[3] In England the impulse seems to have come from the writings of the Abbé Langlet du Fresnoy, De Maillet, and Mirabaud, challenging the Biblical

[1] Dr. Parr, *Characters of C. J. Fox*, i, 220; cited in *Charles James Fox, a Commentary*, by W. S. Landor, ed. by S. Wheeler, 1907, p. 147. Fox's secretary and biographer, Trotter, while anxious to discredit the statement of Parr, gives such a qualified account (*Memoirs of the Latter Years of C. J. Fox*, 1811, pp. 470–71) of Fox's views on immortality as to throw much doubt on the stronger testimony of B. C. Walpole (*Recollections of C. J. Fox*, 1808, p. 242).

[2] See J. L. Le B. Hammond, *Charles James Fox*, 1903, ch. xiii.

[3] See a letter in Bishop Watson's *Life*, i, 402; and cp. Buckle, ch. vii, *note* 218.

account of the antiquity of the earth. The new phase of "infidelity" was of course furiously denounced, one of the most angry and most absurd of its opponents being the poet Cowper.[1] Still rationalism persisted. Paley, writing in 1786, protests that "Infidelity is now served up in every shape that is likely to allure, surprise, or beguile the imagination, in a fable, a tale, a novel, or a poem, in interspersed or broken hints, remote and oblique surmises, in books of travel, of philosophy, of natural history—in a word, in any form rather than that of a professed and regular disquisition."[2] The orthodox Dr. J. Ogilvie, in the introduction to his *Inquiry into the Causes of the Infidelity and Skepticism of the Times* (1783), begins: "That the opinions of the deists and skeptics have spread more universally during a part of the last century and in the present than at any former æra since the resurrection of letters, is a truth to which the friends and the enemies of religion will give their suffrage without hesitation." In short, until the general reversal of all progress which followed on the French Revolution, there had been no such change of opinion as Burke alleged.

One of the most popular poets and writers of the day was the celebrated ERASMUS DARWIN, a deist, whose *Zoonomia* (1794) brought on him the charge of atheism, as it well might. However he might poetize about the Creator, Dr. Darwin in his verse and prose alike laid the foundations of the doctrines of the transmutation of species and the aqueous origin of simple forms of life which evolved into higher forms; though the idea of the descent of man from a simian species had been broached before him by Buffon and Helvétius in France, and Lords Kames and Monboddo in Scotland. The idea of a *Natura naturans* was indeed ancient; but it has been authoritatively said of Erasmus Darwin that "he was the first who proposed and consistently carried out a well-rounded theory with regard to the development of the living world—a merit which shines forth more brilliantly when we compare it with the vacillating and confused attempts of Buffon, Linnæus, and Goethe. It is the idea of a power working from within the organisms to improve their natural position"[3]—the idea which, developed by Lamarck, was modified by the great Darwin of the nineteenth century into the doctrine of natural selection.

And in the closing years of the century there arose a new promise of higher life in the apparition of MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT,

[1] See his *Task*, bk. iii, 150-90 (1783-1784), for the prevailing religious tone.
[2] *Princ. of Moral Philos.* bk. v. ch. ix. The chapter tells of widespread freethinking.
[3] Ernest Krause, *Erasmus Darwin*, Eng. tr. 1879, p. 211. Cp. pp. 193, 194.

ill-starred but noble, whose *Letters on Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) show her to have been a freethinking deist of remarkable original faculty,[1] and whose *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was the first great plea for the emancipation of her sex.

§ 16

Even in rural Scotland, the vogue of the poetry of BURNS told of germinal doubt. To say nothing of his mordant satires on pietistic types—notably *Holy Willie's Prayer*, his masterpiece in that line—Burns even in his avowed poems[2] shows small regard for orthodox beliefs; and his letters reveal him as substantially a deist, shading into a Unitarian. Such pieces as *A Prayer in the prospect of Death*, and *A Prayer under the pressure of Violent Anguish*, are plainly unevangelical;[3] and the allusions to Jesus in his letters, even when writing to Mrs. Maclehose, who desired to bring him to confession, exclude orthodox belief,[4] though they suggest Unitarianism. He frequently refers to religion in his letters, yet so constantly restricts himself to the affirmation of a belief in a benevolent God and in a future state that he cannot be supposed to have held the further beliefs which his orthodox correspondents would wish him to express. A rationalistic habit is shown even in his professions of belief, as here: "Still I am a very sincere believer in the Bible; but I am drawn by the conviction of a man, not the halter of an ass";[5] and in the passage: "Though I have no objection to what the Christian system tells us of another world, yet I own I am partial to those proofs and ideas of it which we have wrought out of our own heads and hearts."[6] Withal, Burns always claimed to be "religious," and was so even in a somewhat conventional sense. The lines:

> An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
> For Deity offended[7]

exhibit a sufficiently commonplace conception of Omnipotence; and

[1] Letters vii, viii, ix, xix, xxii.

[2] *E.g.*, *The Ordination*, the *Address to the Deil*, A *Dedication to Gavin Hamilton*, *The Kirk's Alarm*, etc.

[3] See also the pieces printed between these in the Globe edition, pp. 66–68.

[4] The benevolent Supreme Being, he writes, "has put the immediate administration of all this into the hands of Jesus Christ—a great personage, whose relation to Him we cannot fathom, but whose relation to us is [that of] a guide and Saviour." Letter 86 in Globe ed. Letters 189 and 197, to Mrs. Dunlop, similarly fail to meet the requirements of the orthodox correspondent. The poem *Look up and See*, latterly printed several times apart from Burns's works, and extremely likely to be his, is a quite Voltairean criticism of David. If the poem be ungenuine, it is certainly by far the ablest of the unacknowledged pieces ascribed to him, alike in diction and in purport.

[5] Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, Jan. 1, 1789, in *Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop*, ed. by W. Wallace, 1898, p. 129. The passage is omitted from Letter 168 in the Globe ed., and presumably from other reprints.

[6] Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, July 9, 1790. Published for the first time in vol. cited, p. 266.

[7] *Epistle to a Young Friend.*

there is no sign that the poet ever did any hard thinking on the problem. But, emotionalist of genius as he was, his influence as a satirist and mitigator of the crudities and barbarities of Scots religion has been incalculably great, and underlies all popular culture progress in Scotland since his time. Constantly aspersed in his own day and world as an "infidel," he yet from the first conquered the devotion of the mass of his countrymen; though he would have been more potent for intellectual liberation if he had been by them more intelligently read. Few of them now, probably, realize that their adored poet was either a deist or a Unitarian—presumably the former.

§ 17

With the infelicity in prediction which is so much commoner with him than the "prescience" for which he is praised, Burke had announced that the whole deist school "repose in lasting oblivion." The proposition would be much more true of 999 out of every thousand writers on behalf of Christianity. It is characteristic of Burke, however, that he does not name Shaftesbury, a Whig nobleman of the sacred period.[1] A seeming justice was given to Burke's phrase by the undoubted reaction which took place immediately afterwards. In the vast panic which followed on the French Revolution, the multitude of mediocre minds in the middle and upper classes, formerly deistic or indifferent, took fright at unbelief as something now visibly connected with democracy and regicide; new money endowments were rapidly bestowed on the Church; and orthodoxy became fashionable on political grounds just as skepticism had become fashionable at the Restoration. Class interest and political prejudice wrought much in both cases; only in opposite directions. Democracy was no longer Bibliolatrous, therefore aristocracy was fain to became so, or at least to grow respectful towards the Church as a means of social control. Gibbon, in his closing years, went with the stream. And as religious wars have always tended to discredit religion, so a war partly associated with the freethinking of the French revolutionists tended to discredit freethought. The brutish wrecking of Priestley's house and library and chapel by a mob at Birmingham in 1791 was but an extreme

[1] Lecky, writing in 1865, and advancing on Burke, has said of the whole school, including Shaftesbury, that "the shadow of the tomb rests on all: a deep, unbroken silence, the chill of death, surrounds them. They have long ceased to wake any interest" (*Rationalism in Europe*, i, 116). As a matter of fact, they had been discussed by Tayler in 1853; by Pattison in 1860; and by Farrar in 1862; and they have since been discussed at length by Dr. Hunt, by Dr. Cairns, by Lange, by Gyzicki, by M. Sayous, by Sir Leslie Stephen, by Prof. Höffding, and by many others.

manifestation of a reaction which affected every form of mental life. But while Priestley went to die in the United States, another English exile, temporarily returned thence to his native land, was opening a new era of popular rationalism. Even in the height of the revolutionary tumult, and while Burke was blustering about the disappearance of unbelief, THOMAS PAINE was laying deep and wide the English foundations of a new democratic freethought; and the upper-class reaction in the nature of the case was doomed to impermanency, though it was to arrest English intellectual progress for over a generation. The French Revolution had re-introduced freethought as a vital issue, even in causing it to be banned as a danger.

That freethought at the end of the century was rather driven inwards and downwards than expelled is made clear by the multitude of fresh treatises on Christian evidences. Growing numerous after 1790, they positively swarm for a generation after Paley (1794). Cp. *Essays on the Evidence and Influence of Christianity*, Bath, 1790, pref.; Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel its own Witness*, 1799, pref. and concluding address to deists; Watson's sermon of 1795, in *Two Apologies*, ed. 1806, p. 399; Priestley's *Memoirs* (written in 1795), 1806, pp. 127–28; Wilberforce's *Practical View*, 1797, *passim* (*e.g.*, pp. 366–69, 8th ed. 1841); Rev. D. Simpson, *A Plea for Religion..... addressed to the Disciples of Thomas Paine*, 1797. The latter writer states (2nd ed. p. 126) that "infidelity is at this moment running like wildfire among the common people"; and Fuller (2nd ed. p. 128) speaks of the *Monthly Magazine* as "pretty evidently devoted to the cause of infidelity." A pamphlet on *The Rise and Dissolution of the Infidel Societies in this Metropolis* (London, 1800), by W. Hamilton Reid, describes the period as the first "in which the doctrines of infidelity have been extensively circulated among the lower orders"; and a *Summary of Christian Evidences*, by Bishop Porteous (1800; 16th ed. 1826), affirms, in agreement with the 1799 Report of the Lords' Committee on Treasonable Societies, that "new compendiums of infidelity, and new libels on Christianity, are dispersed continually, with indefatigable industry, through every part of the kingdom, and every class of the community." Freethought, in short, was becoming democratized.

As regards England, Paine is the great popular factor; and it is the bare truth to say that he brought into the old debate a new earnestness and a new moral impetus. The first part of the *Age of Reason*, hastily put together in expectation of speedy death in 1793, and including some astronomic matter that apparently antedates 1781,[1] is a swift outline of the position of the rationalizing deist,

[1] Conway, introd. to *Age of Reason*, in his ed. of Paine's Works, iv. 3.

newly conscious of firm standing-ground in astronomic science. That is the special note of Paine's gospel. He was no scholar; and the champions of the "religion of Galilee" have always been prompt to disparage any unlearned person who meddles with religion as an antagonist; but in the second part of his book Paine put hard criticism enough to keep a world of popular readers interested for well over a hundred years. The many replies are forgotten: the Biblical criticism of Paine will continue to do its work till popular orthodoxy follows the lead of professional scholarship and gives up at once the acceptance and the circulation of things incredible and indefensible as sacrosanct.

Mr. Benn (*Hist. of Eng. Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, i, 217) remarks that Paine's New Testament criticisms are "such as at all times would naturally occur to a reader of independent mind and strong common sense." If so, these had been up to Paine's time, and remained long afterwards, rare characteristics. And there is some mistake about Mr. Benn's criticism that "the repeated charges of fraud and imposture brought against the Apostles and Evangelists.....jar painfully on a modern ear. But they are largely due to the mistaken notion, shared by Paine with his orthodox contemporaries, that the Gospels and Acts were written by contemporaries and eye-witnesses of the events related." Many times over, Paine argues that the documents could not have been so written. *E.g.* in Conway's ed. of Works, pp. 157, 158, 159, 160, 164, 167, 168, etc. The reiterated proposition is "that the writers cannot have been eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of what they relate; .....and consequently that the books have not been written by the persons called apostles" (p. 168). And there is some exaggeration even in Mr. Benn's remark that, "strangely enough, he accepts the Book of Daniel as genuine." Paine (ed. p. 144) merely puts a balance of probability in favour of the genuineness. It may be sometimes—it is certainly not always—true that Paine "cannot distinguish between legendary or [? and] mythical narratives" (Benn, p. 216); but it is to be feared that the disability subsists to-day in more scholarly quarters.

Despite his deadly directness, Paine, in virtue of his strong sincerity, probably jars much less on the modern ear than he did on that of his own, which was so ready to make felony of any opinion hostile to reigning prejudices. But if it be otherwise, it is to be feared that no less offence will be given by Mr. Benn's own account of the Hexateuch as "the records kept by a lying and bloodthirsty priesthood"; even if that estimate be followed by the very challengeable admission that "priesthoods are generally distinguished for their superior humanity" (Benn, p. 350, and *note*).

Henceforth there is a vital difference in the fortunes of free-thought and religion alike. Always in the past the institutional strength of religion and the social weakness of freethought had lain in the credulity of the ignorant mass, which had turned to naught an infinity of rational effort. After the French Revolution, when over a large area the critical spirit began simultaneously to play on faith and life, politics and religion, its doubled activity gave it a new breadth of outlook as of energy, and the slow enlightenment of the mass opened up a new promise for the ultimate reign of reason.

Chapter XVII

FRENCH FREETHOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1. The fruits of the intellectual movement of the seventeenth century are seen beginning to take form on the very threshold of the eighteenth. In 1700, at the height of the reign of the King's confessors, there was privately printed the *Lettre d'Hippocrate à Damagète*, described as "the first French work openly destructive of Christianity." It was ascribed to the Comte de Boulainvilliers, a pillar of the feudal system.[1] Thus early is the sound of disintegration heard in the composite fabric of Church and State; and various fissures are seen in all parts of the structure. The king himself, so long morally discredited, could only discredit pietism by his adoption of it; the Jansenists and the Molinists [*i.e.*, the school of Molina, not of Molinos] fought incessantly; even on the side of authority there was bitter dissension between Bossuet and Fénelon;[2] and the movement of mysticism associated with the latter came to nothing, though he had the rare credit of converting, albeit to a doubtful orthodoxy, the emotional young Scotch deist Chevalier Ramsay.[3] Where the subtlety of Fénelon was not allowed to operate, the loud dialectic of Bossuet could not avail for faith as against rationalism, whatever it might do to upset the imperfect logic of Protestant sects. In no society, indeed, does mere declamation play a larger part than in that of modern France; but in no society, on the other hand, is mere declamation more sure to be disdained and derided by the keener spirits. In the years of disaster and decadence which rounded off in gloom the life of the Grand Monarque, with defeat dogging his armies and bankruptcy threatening his finances, the

[1] Lemontey, *Hist. de la régence et de la minorité de Louis XV*, 1835, ii. 358, *note*. In 1731 there was published under the name of Boulainvilliers (d. 1722) a so-called *Réfutation de Spinoza*, which was "really a popular exposition." Pollock, *Spinoza*, 2nd ed. p. 363. Sir F. Pollock assents to Voltaire's remark that Boulainvilliers "gave the poison and forgot to give the antidote."

[2] For a brief view of the facts, usually misconceived, see Lanson, pp. 610-11. Fénelon seems to have been uncandid, while Bossuet, by common consent, was malevolent. There is probably truth, however, in the view of Shaftesbury (*Characteristics*, ed. 1900, ii. 214), that the real grievance of Fénelon's ecclesiastical opponents was the tendency of his mysticism to withdraw devotees from ceremonial duties.

[3] Now remembered chiefly through the account of his intercourse with Fénelon (repr. in Didot ed. of Fénelon's misc. works), and Hume's long extract from his *Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion* in the concluding note to the *Essays*. Cp. M. Matter, *Le Mysticisme en France au temps de Fénelon*, 1865, pp. 352-54.

spirit of criticism was not likely to slacken. Literary polemic, indeed, was hardly to be thought of at such a time, even if it had been safe. In 1709 the king destroyed the Jansenist seminary of Port Royal, wreaking an ignoble vengeance on the very bones of the dead there buried; and more heretical thinkers had need go warily.

Yet even in those years of calamity, perhaps by reason of the very stress of it, some freethinking books somehow passed the press, though a system of police espionage had been built up by the king, step for step with some real reforms in the municipal government of Paris. The first was a romance of the favourite type, in which a traveller discovers a strange land inhabited by surprisingly rational people. Such appear to have been the *Histoire de Calejava*, by Claude Gilbert, produced at Dijon in 1700, and the imaginary travels of Juan de Posos, published at Amsterdam in 1708. Both of these were promptly suppressed; the next contrived to get into circulation. The work of Symon Tyssot de Patot, *Voyages et Avantures de Jacques Massé*, published in 1710, puts in the mouths of priests of the imaginary land discovered by the traveller such mordant arguments against the idea of a resurrection, the story of the fall, and other items of the Christian creed, that there could be small question of the deism of the author;[1] and the prefatory *Lettre de l'éditeur* indicates misgivings. The *Rèflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*, by Deslandes, ostensibly published at Amsterdam in 1712, seems to have had a precarious circulation, inasmuch as Brunet never saw the first edition. To permit of the issue of such a book as *Jacques Massé*—even at Bordeaux—the censure must have been notably lax; as it was again in the year of the king's death, when there appeared a translation of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking*. For the moment the Government was occupied over an insensate renewal of the old persecution of Protestants, promulgating in 1715 a decree that all who died after refusing the sacraments should be refused burial, and that their goods should be confiscated. The edict seems to have been in large measure disregarded.

2. At the same time the continuous output of apologetics testified to the gathering tide of unbelief. The Benedictine Lami followed up his attack on Spinoza with a more popular treatise, *L'Incrédule amené á la religion par la raison* (1710); the Abbé Genest turned Descartes into verse by way of *Preuves naturelles de l'existence de*

[1] Tyssot de Patot was Professor of Mathematics at Deventer. In his *Lettres choisies*, published in 1726, there is an avowal that "he might be charged with having different notions from those of the vulgar in point of religion" (*New Memoirs of Literature*, iv (1726), 267); and his accounts of pietists and unbelieving and other priests sufficiently convey that impression (*id.* pp. 268-84).

Dieu et de l'immortalité de l'âme (1716); and the *Anti-Lucretius* of Cardinal Polignac (1661–1741), though only posthumously published in full (1745), did but pass on to the next age, when deism was the prevailing heresy, a deistic argument against atheism. It is difficult to see any Christian sentiment in that dialectic performance of a born diplomatist.[1]

When the old king died, even the fashion of conformity passed away among the upper classes;[2] and the feverish manufacture of apologetic works testifies to an unslackened activity of unbelief. In 1719 Jean Denyse, professor of philosophy at the college of Montaigu, produced *La vérité de la religion chrétienne demontrée par ordre géométrique* (a title apparently suggested by Spinoza's early exposition of Descartes), without making any permanent impression on heterodox opinion. Not more successful, apparently, was the performance of the Abbé Houteville, first published in 1722.[3] Much more amiable in tone, and more scientific in temper, than the common run of defences, it was found, says an orthodox biographical dictionary, to be "better fitted to make unbelievers than to convert them," seeing that "objections were presented with much force and fulness, and the replies with more amenity than weight."[4] That the Abbé was in fact not rigorously orthodox might almost be suspected from his having been appointed, in the last year of his life (1742), "perpetual secretary" to the Académie, an office which somehow tended to fall to more or less freethinking members, being held before him by the Abbé Dubos, and after him by Mirabaud, the Abbé Duclos,[5] D'Alembert, and Marmontel. The *Traités des Premières Veritéz* of the Jesuit Father Buffier (1724) can hardly have been more helpful to the faith.[6] Another experiment by way of popularizing orthodoxy, the copious *Histoire du peuple de Dieu*, by the Jesuit Berruyer, first published in 1728,[7] had little better fortune,

[1] Towards the close of his "poem" Polignac speaks of a defence of Christianity as a future task. He died without even completing the *Anti-Lucretius*, begun half a century before. Of him are related two classic anecdotes. Sent at the age of twenty-seven to discuss Church questions with the Pope, he earned from His Holiness the compliment: "You seem always to be of my opinion; and in the end it is yours that prevails." Louis XIV gave him a long audience, after which the King said: "I have had an interview with a young man who has constantly contradicted me without my being able to be angry for a moment." (*Éloge* prefixed to Bougainville's trans., *L'Anti-Lucrèce*, 1767, i. 131.)

[2] Cp. Duvernet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ch. i. Rivarol (*Lettres à Necker*, in *Œuvres*, ed. 1852, p. 138) wrote that under Louis XV there began a "general insurrection" of discussion, and that everybody then talked "only of religion and philosophy during half a century." But this exaggerates the beginnings, of which Rivarol could have no exact knowledge.

[3] *La vérité de la religion chrétienne prouvée par les faits: précédée d'un discours historique et critique sur la méthode des principaux auteurs qui ont écrit pour et contre le christianisme depuis son origine*, 1722. Rep. 1741, 3 vols. 4to., 4 vols. 12mo.

[4] *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique portatif*, 1771, art. HOUTEVILLE, tom. ii.

[5] Whose *Considérations sur les Mœurs* (1751) does not seem to contain a single religious sentiment. Historiographer of France, he had not escaped the suppression of his *Histoire de Louis XI*, 1745.

[6] See above, p. 130. Buffier seems to have begun an attempt at spelling reform (by dropping doubled letters), followed in 1725 by Huard and later by Prémontval.

[7] 7 vols. 4to., 10 vols. 12mo. Rep. with corrections 1733. Seconde partie, 1753, 8 vols. 12mo.

inasmuch as it scandalized the orthodox by its secularity of tone without persuading the freethinkers. Condemned by the Bishop of Montpellier in 1731, it was censured by Rome in 1734; and the second part, produced long afterwards, aroused even more antagonism.

3. There was thus no adaptation on the side of the Church to the forces which in an increasing degree menaced her rule. Under the regency of Orléans (1715–1723), the open disorder of the court on the one hand and the ruin of the disastrous financial experiment of Law on the other were at least favourable to toleration; but under the Duc de Bourbon, put in power and soon superseded by Fleury (bishop of Fréjus and tutor of Louis XV; later cardinal) there was a renewal of the rigours against the Protestants and the Jansenists; the edict of 1715 was renewed; emigration recommenced; and only public outcry checked the policy of persecution on that side. But Fleury and the king went on fighting the Jansenists; and while this embittered strife of the religious sections could not but favour the growth of freethought, it was incompatible alike with official tolerance of unbelief and with any effectual diffusion of liberal culture. Had the terrorism and the waste of Louis XIV been followed by a sane system of finance and one of religious toleration; and had not the exhausted and bankrupt country been kept for another half century—save for eight years of peace and prosperity from 1748 to 1755—on the rack of ruinous wars, alike under the regency of Orléans and the rule of Louis XV, the intellectual life might have gone fast and far. As it was, war after war absorbed its energy; and the debt of five milliards left by Louis XIV was never seriously lightened. Under such a system the vestiges of constitutional government were gradually swept away.

4. As the new intellectual movement began to find expression, then, it found the forces of resistance more and more organized. In particular, the autocracy long maintained the severest checks on printing, so that freethought could not save by a rare chance attain to open speech. Any book with the least tendency to rationalism had to seek printers, or at least publishers, in Holland. Huard, in publishing his anonymous translation of the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus (1725), is careful to say in his preface that he "makes no application of the Pyrrhonian objections to any dogma that may be called theological"; but he goes on to add that the scandalous quarrels of Christian sects are well fitted to confirm Pyrrhonists in their doubts, the sects having no solid ground on which to condemn each other. As such an assertion was rank heresy, the translation

had to be issued in Amsterdam, and even there without a publisher's name.[1] And still it remains clear that the age of Louis XIV had passed on to the next a heritage of hidden freethinking, as well as one of debt and misgovernment. What takes place thereafter is rather an evolution of and a clerical resistance to a growth known to have begun previously, and always feared and hated, than any new planting of unbelief in orthodox soil. As we have seen, indeed, a part of the early work of skepticism was done by distinguished apologists. Huet, dying in 1722, left for posthumous publication his *Traité philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain* (1723). It was immediately translated into English and German; and though it was probably found somewhat superfluous in deistic England, and supersubtle in Lutheran Germany, it helped to prepare the ground for the active unbelief of the next generation in France.

5. A continuous development may be traced throughout the century. MONTESQUIEU, who in his early *Persian Letters* (1721) had revealed himself as "fundamentally irreligious"[2] and a censor of intolerance,[3] proceeded in his masterly little book on the *Greatness and Decadence of the Romans* (1734) and his famous *Spirit of Laws* (1748) to treat the problems of human history in an absolutely secular and scientific spirit, making only such conventional allusions to religion as were advisable in an age in which all heretical works were suppressible.[4] The attempts of La Harpe and Villemain[5] to establish the inference that he repented his youthful levity in the *Persian Letters*, and recognized in Christianity the main pillar of society, will not bear examination. The very passages on which they found[6] are entirely secular in tone and purpose, and tell of no belief.[7] So late as 1751 there appeared a work, *Les Lettres Persanes convaincues d'impiété*, by the Abbé Gaultier. The election of Montesquieu was in fact the beginning of the struggle between the *Philosophe* party in the Academy and their opponents;[8] and in

[1] A reprint in 1735 bears the imprint of London, with the note "Aux dépens de la Compagnie."

[2] Lanson, p. 702. The *Persian Letters*, like the *Provincial Letters* of Pascal, had to be printed at Rouen and published at Amsterdam. Their freethinking expressions put considerable difficulties in the way of his election (1727) to the Academy. See E. Edwards, *Chapters of the Biog. Hist. of the French Academy*, 1864, pp. 34-35, and D. M. Robertson, *Hist. of the French Academy*, 1910, p. 92, as to the mystification about the alleged reprint without the obnoxious passages.

[3] Lettre 86.

[4] "Au point de vue religieux, Montesquieu tirait poliment son coup de chapeau au christianisme" (Lanson, p. 714). *E.g.* in the *Esprit des Lois*, liv. xxiv, chs. i, ii, iii, iv, vi, and the footnote to ch. x of liv. xxv. Montesquieu's letter to Warburton (16 mai, 1754), in acknowledgment of that prelate's attack on the posthumous works of Bolingbroke, is a sample of his social make-believe. But no religious reader could suppose it to come from a religious man.

[5] Also of E. Edwards, as cited above.

[6] See the notes cited on pp. 405, 407 of Garnier's variorum ed. of the *Esprit des Lois*, 1871.

[7] La Harpe and Villemain seem blind to irony.

[8] The flings at Bayle (liv. xxiv, chs. ii, vi) are part of a subtly ironical vindication of Ideal as against ecclesiastical Christianity, and they have no note of faith.

[8] Paul Mesnard, *Hist. de l'académie française*, 1857, pp. 61-63.

his own day there was never much doubt about Montesquieu's deism. In his posthumous *Pensées* his anti-clericalism is sufficiently emphatic. "Churchmen," he writes, "are interested in keeping the people ignorant." He expresses himself as a convinced deist, and, with no great air of conviction, as a believer in immortality. But there his faith ends. "I call piety," he says, "a malady of the heart, which plants in the soul a malady of the most ineradicable kind." "The false notion of miracles comes of our vanity, which makes us believe we are important enough for the Supreme Being to upset Nature on our behalf." "Three incredibilities among incredibilities: the pure mechanism of animals [the doctrine of Descartes]; passive obedience; and the infallibility of the Pope."[1] His heresy was of course divined by the guardians of the faith, through all his panegyric of it. Even in his lifetime, Jesuits and Jansenists combined to attack the *Spirit of Laws*, which was denounced at an assembly of the clergy, put on the Roman Index, and prohibited by the censure until Malesherbes came into office in 1750.[2] The Count de Cataneo, a Venetian noble in the service of the King of Prussia, published in French about 1751 a treatise on *The Source, the Strength, and the True Spirit of Laws*,[3] in which the political rationalism and the ethical utilitarianism of Cumberland and Grotius were alike repelled as irreconcilable with the doctrine of revelation. It was doubtless because of this atmosphere of hostility that on the death of Montesquieu at Paris, in 1755, Diderot was the only man of letters who attended his funeral,[4] though the Académie performed a commemorative service.[5] Nevertheless, Montesquieu was throughout his life a figure in "good society," and suffered no molestation apart from the outcry against his books. He lived under a tradition of private freethinking and public clericalism, even as did Molière in the previous century; and where the two traditions had to clash, as at interment, the clerical dominion affirmed itself. But even in the Church there were always successors of Gassendi, to wit, philosophic unbelievers, as well as quiet friends of toleration. And it was given to an obscure Churchman to show the way of freethought to a generation of lay combatants.

[1] *Pensées Diverses: De la religion.* [2] Lanson, p. 714, *note.*

[3] Tr. in English, 1753. It is noteworthy that Cataneo formally accepts Montesquieu's professions of orthodoxy.

[4] *Correspondance littéraire de Grimm et Diderot*, ed. 1829–31, i. 273. See the footnote for an account of the indecent efforts of the Jesuits to get at the dying philosopher. The curé of the parish who was allowed entry began his exhortation with: "Vous savez, M. le Président, combien Dieu est grand." "Oui, monsieur," returned Montesquieu, "et combien les hommes sont petits."

[5] Mesnard, *Hist. de l'académie française*, p. 63.

6. One of the most comprehensive freethinking works of the century, the *Testament* of JEAN MESLIER, curé of Etrépigny, in Champagne (d. 1723, 1729, or 1733), though it inspired numbers of eighteenth-century freethinkers who read it in manuscript, was never printed till 1861–64. It deserves here some special notice.[1] At his death, by common account, Meslier left two autograph copies of his book, after having deposited a third copy in the archives of the jurisdiction of Sainte-Menehould. By a strange chance one was permitted to circulate, and ultimately there were some hundred copies in Paris, selling at ten louis apiece. As he told on the wrapper of the copy he left for his parishioners, he had not dared to speak out during his life; but he had made full amends. He is recorded to have been an exceptionally charitable priest, devoted to his parishioners, whose interests he indignantly championed against a tyrannous lord of the manor;[2] apropos of Descartes's doctrine of animal automatism, which he fiercely repudiates, he denounces with deep feeling all cruelty to animals, at whose slaughter for food he winces; and his book reveals him as a man profoundly impressed at once by the sufferings of the people under heartless kings and nobles, and the immense imposture of religion which, in his eyes, maintained the whole evil system. Some men before him had impugned miracles, some the gospels, some dogma, some the conception of deity, some the tyranny of kings. He impugns all; and where nearly all the deists had eulogized the character of the Gospel Jesus, the priest envelops it in his harshest invective.

He must have written during whole years, with a sombre, invincible patience, dumbly building up, in his lonely leisure, his unfaltering negation of all that the men around him held for sacred, and that he was sworn to preach—the whole to be his testament to his parishioners. In the slow, heavy style—the style of a cart horse, Voltaire called it—there is an indubitable sincerity, a smouldering passion, but no haste, no explosion. The long-drawn, formless, prolix sentences say everything that can be said on their theme; and when the long book was done it was slowly copied, and yet again copied, by the same heavy, unwearying hand. He had read few books, it seems—only the Bible, some of the Fathers, Montaigne, the "Turkish Spy," Naudé, Charron, Pliny, Tournémine on atheism, and Fénelon on the existence of God, with some history, and Moreri's

[1] A full analysis is given by Strauss in the second Appendix to his *Voltaire: Sechs Vorträge*, 2te Aufl. 1870.

[2] The details are dubious. See the memoir compiled by "Rudolf Charles" (R. C. D'Ablaing van Giessenburg), the editor of the *Testament*, Amsterdam, 3 tom. 1861–64. It draws chiefly on the *Mémoires secrets de Bachaumont*, under date Sept. 30, 1764.

Dictionary; but he had re-read them often. He does not cite Bayle; and Montaigne is evidently his chief master. But on his modest reading he had reached as absolute a conviction of the untruth of the entire Judæo-Christian religion as any freethinker ever had. Moved above all by his sense of the corruption and misrule around him, he sets out with a twofold indictment against religion and government, of which each part sustains the other, and he tells his parishioners how he had been "hundreds of times"[1] on the point of bursting out with an indignant avowal of his contempt for the rites he was compelled to administer, and the superstitions he had to inculcate. Then, in a grimly-planned order, he proceeds to demolish, section by section, the whole structure.

Religions in general he exhibits as tissues of error, illusion, and imposture, the endless sources of troubles and strifes for men. Their historical proofs and documentary bases are then assailed, and the gospels in particular are ground between the slow mill-stones of his dialectic; miracles, promises, and prophecies being handled in turn. The ethic and the doctrine are next assailed all along the line, from their theoretic bases to their political results; and the kings of France fare no better than their creed. As against the theistic argument of Fénelon, the entire theistic system is then oppugned, sometimes with precarious erudition, generally with cumbrous but solid reasoning; and the eternity of matter is affirmed with more than Averroïstic conviction, the Cartesians coming in for a long series of heavy blows. Immortality is further denied, as miracles had been; and the treatise ends with a stern affirmation of its author's rectitude, and, as it were, a massive gesture of contempt for all that will be said against him when he has passed into the nothingness which he is nearing. "I have never committed any crime," he writes,[2] "nor any bad or malicious action: I defy any man to make me on this head, with justice, any serious reproach"; but he quotes from the Psalms, with grim zest, phrases of hate towards workers of iniquity. There is not even the hint of a smile at the astonishing bequest he was laying up for his parishioners and his country. He was sure he would be read, and he was right. The whole polemic of the next sixty years, the indictment of the government no less than that of the creed, is laid out in his sombre treatise.

To the general public, however, he was never known save by the "Extract"—really a deistic adaptation—made by Voltaire,[3] and the

[1] *Testament*, as cited, i. 25. [2] iii. 396.

[3] First published in 1762 [or 1764? See Bachaumont, Oct. 30], with the date 1742; and reprinted in the *Evangile de la Raison*, 1764. It was no fewer than four times ordered to be destroyed in the Restoration period.

re-written summary by d'Holbach and Diderot entitled *Le Bon Sens du Curé Meslier* (1772).[1] Even this publicity was delayed for a generation, since Voltaire, who heard of the Testament as early as 1735, seems to have made no use of it till 1762. But the entire group of fighting freethinkers of the age was in some sense inspired by the old priest's legacy.

7. Apart from this direct influence, too, others of the cloth bore some part in the general process of enlightenment. A good type of the agnostic priest of the period was the Abbé Terrasson, the author of the philosophic romance *Sethos* (1732), who died in 1750. Not very judicious in his theory of human evolution (which he represented as a continuous growth from a stage of literary infancy, seen in Homer), he adopted the Newtonian theory at a time when the entire Academy stood by Cartesianism. Among his friends he tranquilly avowed his atheism.[2] He died "without the sacraments," and when asked whether he believed all the doctrine of the Church, he replied that for him that was not possible.[3] Another anti-clerical Abbé was Gaidi, whose poem, *La Religion à l'Assemblé du Clergé de France* (1762), was condemned to be burned.[4]

Among or alongside of such disillusioned Churchmen there must have been a certain number who, desiring no breach with the organization to which they belonged, saw the fatal tendency of the spirit of persecution upon which its rulers always fell back in their struggle with freethought, and sought to open their eyes to the folly and futility of their course. Freethinkers, of course, had to lead the way, as we have seen. It was the young Turgot who in 1753 published two powerful *Lettres sur la tolérance*, and in 1754 a further series of admirable *Lettres d'un ecclésiastique à un magistrat*, pleading the same cause.[5] But similar appeals were anonymously made, by a clerical pen, at a moment when the Church was about to enter on a new and exasperating conflict with the growing band of freethinking writers who rallied round Voltaire. The small book of *Questions sur la tolérance*, ascribed to the Abbé Tailhé or Tailhié and the canonist Maultrot (Geneva, 1758), is conceived in the very spirit of rationalism, yet with a careful concern to persuade the clergy to sane courses, and is to this day worth reading as a utilitarian argument. But the

[1] Probably Diderot did the most of the adaptation. "Il y a plus que du bon sens dans ce livre," writes Voltaire to D'Alembert; "il est terrible. S'il sort de la boutique du *Système de la Nature*, l'auteur s'est bien perfectionné" (Lettre de 27 Juillet, 1775).

[2] "Il leur faut un Être à ces messieurs; pour moi, je m'en passe." Grimm, *Correspondance Littéraire*, ed. 1829-31, iv, 186.

[3] Grimm, as cited, i, 235. Grimm tells a delightful story of his reception of the confessor.

[4] "Cet ouvrage, dont les vers sont grands et bien tournés, est une satire des plus licencieuses contre les mœurs de nos évêques." Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, Juin 15, 1762.

[5] Bonet-Maury, *Hist. de la lib. de conscience en France*, 1900, p. 68.

Church was not fated to be led by such light. The principle of toleration was left to become the watchword of freethought, while the Church identified herself collectively with that of tyranny.

Anecdotes of the time reveal the coincidence of tyranny and evasion, intolerance and defiance. Of Nicolas Boindin (1676–1751), procureur in the royal Bureau des Finances, who was received into the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres in 1706, it is told that he "would have been received in the French Academy if the public profession he made of being an atheist had not excluded him."[1] But the publicity was guarded. When he conversed with the young Marmontel[2] and others at the Café Procope, they used a conversational code in which the soul was called *Margot*, religion *Javotte*, liberty *Jeanneton*, and the deity *Monsieur de l'Être*. Once a listener of furtive aspect asked Boindin who might be this Monsieur de l'Être who behaved so ill, and with whom they were so displeased? "Monsieur," replied Boindin, "he is a police spy"—such being the avocation of the questioner.[3] "The morals of Boindin," says a biographical dictionary of the period, "were as pure as those of an atheist can be; his heart was generous; but to these virtues he joined presumption and the obstinacy which follows from it, a *bizarre* humour, and an unsociable character."[4] Other testimonies occur on the first two heads, not on the last. But he was fittingly refused "Christian" interment, and was buried by night, "sans pompe."

8. With the ground prepared as we have seen, freethought was bound to progress in France in the age of Louis XV; but it chanced that the lead fell into the hands of the most brilliant and fecund of all the writers of the century. VOLTAIRE[5] (1694–1778) was already something of a freethinker when a mere child. So common was deism already become in Paris at the end of the seventeenth century that his godfather, an abbé, is said to have taught him, at the age of three, a poem by J. B. ROUSSEAU,[6] then privately circulated, in which Moses in particular and religious revelations in general are derided as fraudulent.[7] Knowing this poem by heart in his child-

[1] *Nouveau dictionnaire historique-portatif*.....par une Société de Gens de Lettres, ed. 1771, i, 314.

[2] Marmontel does not relate this in his *Mémoires*, where he insists on the decorum of the talk, even at d'Holbach's table.

[3] Chamfort, *Caractères et Anecdotes*.

[4] *Nouveau dictionnaire*, above cited, i, 315.

[5] Name assumed for literary purposes, and probably composed by anagram from the real name AROUET, with "le jeune" (junior) added, thus: A. R. O. V. E. T. L(e). I(eune).

[6] Not to be confounded with the greater and later Jean Jacques Rousseau. J. B. Rousseau became Voltaire's bitter enemy—on the score, it is said, of the young man's epigram on the elder poet's "Ode to Posterity," which, he said, would not reach its address. Himself a rather ribald freethinker, Rousseau professed to be outraged by the irreligion of Voltaire.

[7] See the poem in note 4 to ch. ii of Duvernet's *Vie de Voltaire*. Duvernet calls it "one of the first attacks on which philosophy in France had ventured against superstition" (*Vie de Voltaire*, ed. 1797, p. 19).

hood, the boy was well on the way to his life's work. It is on record that many of his school-fellows were, like himself, already deists, though his brother, a juvenile Jansenist, made vows to propitiate the deity on the small unbeliever's behalf.[1] It may have been a general reputation for audacious thinking that led to his being charged with the authorship of a stinging philippic published in 1715, after the death of Louis XIV. The unknown author, a young man, enumerated the manifold abuses and iniquities of the reign, concluding: "I have seen all these, and I am not twenty years old." Voltaire was then twenty-two; but D'Argenson, who in the poem had been called "the enemy of the human race," finding no likelier author for the verses, put him under surveillance and exiled him from Paris; and on his imprudent return imprisoned him for nearly a year in the Bastille (1716), releasing him only when the real author of the verses avowed himself. Unconquerable then as always, Voltaire devoted himself in prison to his literary ambitions, planning his *Henriade* and completing his *Œdipe*, which was produced in 1718 with signal success.

Voltaire was thus already a distinguished young poet and dramatist when, in 1726, after enduring the affronts of an assault by a nobleman's lacqueys, and of imprisonment in the Bastille for seeking amends by duel, he came to England, where, like Deslandes before him, he met with a ready welcome from the freethinkers.[2] Four years previously, in the powerful poem, *For and Against*,[3] he had put his early deistic conviction in a vehement impeachment of the immoral creed of salvation and damnation, making the declaration, "I am not a Christian." Thus what he had to learn in England was not deism, but the physics of Newton and the details of the deist campaign against revelationism; and these he mastered.[4] Not only was he directly and powerfully influenced by Bolingbroke, who became his intimate friend, but he read widely in the philo-

[1] Duvernet, ch. ii. The free-hearted NINON DE L'ENCLOS, brightest of old ladies, is to be numbered among the pre-Voltairean freethinkers, and to be remembered as leaving young Voltaire a legacy to buy books. She refused to "sell her soul" by turning dévote on the invitation of her old friend Madame de Maintenon. Madame D'Épinay, Voltaire's "belle philosophe et aimable Habacuc," Madame du Deffand, and Madame Geoffrin were among the later freethinking *grandes dames* of the Voltairean period; and so, presumably, was the Madame de Créqui, quoted by Rivarol, who remarked that "Providence" is "the baptismal name of Chance." As to Madame Geoffrin see the *Œuvres Posthumes de D'Alembert*, 1799, i. 240, 271; and the *Mémoires de Marmontel*, 1804, ii, 102 *sq*. If Marmontel is accurate, she went secretly at times to mass (p. 104).

[2] Deslandes wrote some new chapters of his *Réflexions* in London, for the English translation. Eng. tr. 1713, p. 99.

[3] *Pour et Contre, ou Épitre à Uranie*. It was of course not printed till long afterwards. Diderot, writing his *Promenade du Sceptique* in 1747, says: "C'est, je crois, dans l'allée des fleurs [of his allegory] entre le champagne et le tokay, que l'épitre à Uranie prit naissance." (*L'Allée des Marronniers*, ad init.) This seems unjust.

[4] He has been alternately represented as owing everything and owing very little to England. Cp. Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit*, Eng. tr. p. 58. Neither view is just.

sophic, scientific, and deistic English literature of the day,[1] and went back to France, after three years' stay, not only equipped for his ultimate battle with tyrannous religion, but deeply impressed by the moral wholesomeness of free discussion.[2] Not all at once, indeed, did he become the mouthpiece of critical reason for his age: his literary ambitions were primarily on the lines of *belles lettres*, and secondarily on those of historical writing. After his *Pour et Contre*, his first freethinking production was the not very heretical *Lettres philosophiques* or *Lettres anglaises*, written in England in 1728, and, after circulating in MS., published in five editions in 1734; and the official burning of the book by the common hangman, followed by the imprisonment of the bookseller in the Bastille,[3] was a sufficient check on such activity for the time. Save for the jests about Adam and Eve in the *Mondain* (1736), a slight satire for which he had to fly from Paris; and the indirect though effective thrusts at bigotry in the *Ligue* (1723; later the *Henriade*); in the tragedy of *Mahomet* (1739; printed in 1742), in the tales of *Memnon* and *Zadig* (1747–48), and in the *Idées de La Mothe le Vayer* (1751) and the *Défense de Milord Bolingbroke* (1752), he produced nothing else markedly deistic till 1755, when he published the "Poem to the King of Prussia," otherwise named *Sur la loi naturelle* (which appears to have been written in 1751, while he was on a visit to the Margravine of Bayreuth), and that on the Earthquake of Lisbon. So definitely did the former poem base all morality on natural principles that it was ordered to be burned by the Parlement of Paris, then equally alarmed at freethinking and at Molinism.[4] And so impossible was it still in France to print any specific criticism of Christianity that when in 1759 he issued his verse translations of the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes they also were publicly burned, though he had actually softened instead of heightening the eroticism of the first and the "materialism" of the second.[5]

9. It is thus a complete mistake on the part of Buckle to affirm that the activity of the French reformers up to 1750 was directed

[1] In his *Essay upon the Civil Wars of France, and.....upon Epick Poetry* (2nd ed. 1728, "corrected by himself"), written and published in English, he begins his "Advertisement" with the remark: "It has the appearance of too great a presumption in a traveller who hath been but eighteen months in England, to attempt to write in a language which he cannot pronounce at all, and which he hardly understands in conversation." As the book is remarkably well written, he must have read much English.

[2] Lord Morley (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 40) speaks of the English people as having then won "a full liberty of thought and speech and person." This, as we have seen, somewhat overstates the case. But discussion was much more nearly free than in France.

[3] Probably as much on political as on religious grounds. The 8th letter, *Sur le Parlement*, must have been very offensive to the French Government; and in 1739, moved by angry criticisms, Voltaire saw fit to modify its language. See Lanson's ed. of the *Lettres*, 1909, i, 92, 110.

[4] Condorcet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ed. 1792, p. 92. In reprints the poem was entitled *Sur la religion naturelle*, and was so commonly cited.

[5] Condorcet, p. 99.

against religion, and that it was thereafter turned against the State. Certainly there was much freethinking among instructed men and others, but it proceeded, as under Louis XIV, mainly by way of manuscripts and conversation, or at best by the circulation of English books and a few translations of these; and only guardedly before 1745 by means of published French books.[1] The Abbé Ranchon, in his MS. Life of Cardinal Fleury, truly says that "the time of the Regency was a period of the spirit of dissoluteness and irreligion"; but when he ascribes to "those times" many "licentious and destructive writings" he can specify only those of the English deists. "Precisely in the time of the Regency a multitude of those offensive and irreligious books were brought over the sea: France was deluged with them."[2] It is incredible that multitudes of Frenchmen read English in the days of the Regency. French freethinkers like Saint Evremond and Deslandes, who visited or sojourned in London before 1715, took their freethought there with them; and the only translations then in print were those of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking* and Shaftesbury's essays on the Use of Ridicule and on Enthusiasm. Apart from these, the only known French freethinking book of the Regency period was the work of Vroes, a councillor at the court of Brabant, on the *Spirit of Spinoza*, reprinted as *Des trois imposteurs*. Meslier died not earlier than 1729; the *Histoire de la philosophie payenne* of Burigny belongs to 1724; the *Lettres philosophiques* of Voltaire to 1734; the earlier works of d'Argens to 1737–38; the *Nouvelles libertés de penser*, edited by Dumarsais, to 1743; and the militant treatise of De la Serre, best known as the *Examen de la Religion*, to 1745.

The ferment thus kept up was indeed so great that about 1748 the ecclesiastical authorities decided on the remarkable step of adopting for their purposes the apologetic treatise adapted by Jacob Vernet, professor of *belles lettres* at Geneva, from the works of Jean-Alphonse Turrettin,[3] not only a Protestant but a substantially Socinian professor of ecclesiastical history at the same university. The treatise is itself a testimony to the advance of rationalism in the Protestant world; and its adoption, even under correction, by the Catholic Church in France tells of a keen consciousness of

[1] See above, pp. 213–14, as to the works of Boulainvilliers, Tyssot de Patot, Deslandes, and others who wrote between 1700 and 1715.

[2] Cited by Schlosser, *Hist. of the Eighteenth Century*, Eng. tr. i. 146–47.

[3] *Traité de la verité de la religion chrétienne*, tiré en partie du latin de M. J. Alphonse Turrettin, professeur.....en l'académie de Génève, par M. J. Vernet, professeur de belles-lettres en la même Académie. Revue et corrigé par un Théologien Catholique. 1e éd. Genève, 1730. Rep. in 2 tom. 1753. Ecclesiastical approbation given 15 janv. 1749; privilège, juillet, 1751.

need. But the dreaded advance, as we have seen, was only to a small extent yet traceable by new literature. The *Examen critique des apologistes de la religion chrétienne* of Lévesque de Burigny was probably written about 1732, and then and thereafter circulated in manuscript, but it was not published till 1766; and even in manuscript its circulation was probably small, though various apologetic works had testified to the increasing uneasiness of the orthodox world. Such titles as *La religion chrétienne demontrée par la Resurrection* (by Armand de la Chapelle, 1728) and *La religion chrétienne prouvée par l'accomplissement des prophéties* (by Père Baltus, 1728) tell of private unbelief under the Regency. In 1737 appeared the voluminous treatise (anonymous) of the Abbé de la Chambre, *Traité de la véritable religion contre les athées, les déistes, etc.* (5 vols.). In 1747, again, there appeared a learned, laborious, and unintelligent work in three volumes (authorized in 1742), *Le Libertinage combattu par la témoignage des auteurs profanes*, by an unnamed Benedictine[1] of the Congregation of St. Vanne. It declares that, between atheism and deism, there has never been so much unbelief as now; but it cites no modern books, and is devoted to arraying classic arguments in support of theism and morals. Part of the exposition consists in showing that Epicurus, Lucian, and Euripides, whom modern atheists are wont to cite as their masters, were not and could not have been atheists; and the pious author roundly declares in favour of paganism as against atheism.

So much smoke tells of fire; but only in 1745 and 1746 did the printed *Examen* of De la Serre and the *Pensées philosophiques* of Diderot begin to build up in France the modern school of critical and philosophic deism. When in 1751 the Abbé Gauchat began his series of *Lettres critiques*, he set out by attacking Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques*, Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques*, the anonymous *Discours sur la vie heureuse* (1748), *Les Mœurs*[2] (1748), and Pope's *Essay on Man*; taking up in his second volume the *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu (1721), and other sets of *Lettres* written in imitation of them. In the third volume he has nothing more aggressive of Voltaire's to deal with than *La Henriade*, the *Mahomet*, and some of his fugitive pieces. And the Bishop of Puy, writing in 1754 his *La Dévotion conciliée avec l'esprit*, could say to the faithful: "You live in an age fertile in pretended *esprits forts*, who, too weak nevertheless to attack in front an invincible religion, skirmish lightly around it, and in default of the reasons they lack,

[1] Dom Remi Desmonts, according to Barbier.
[2] "Par Panage" (=Toussaint?). Rep. 1755 and 1767 (Berlin).

employ raillery."[1] The chivalrous bishop knew perfectly well that had a serious attack been published author and publisher would have been sent if possible to the Bastille, if not to the scaffold. But his evidence is explicit. There is here no recognition of any literary bombardment, though there was certainly an abundance of unbelief.[2]

Buckle has probably mistaken the meaning of the summing up of some previous writer to the effect that up to 1750 or a few years later the political opposition to the Court was religious, in the sense of ecclesiastical or sectarian (Jansenist),[3] and that it afterwards turned to matters of public administration.[4] It would be truer to say that the early *Lettres philosophiques*, the reading of which later made the boy Lafayette a republican at nine, were a polemic for political and social freedom, and as such a more direct criticism of the French administrative system than Voltaire ever penned afterwards, save in the *Voix du Sage et du Peuple* (1750). In point of fact, as will be shown below, only some twenty scattered freethinking works had appeared in French up to 1745, almost none of them directly attacking Christian beliefs; and, despite the above-noted sallies of Voltaire, Condorcet comes to the general conclusion that it was the hardihood of Rousseau's deism in the "Confession of a Savoyard Vicar" in his *Émile* (1762) that spurred Voltaire to new activity.[5] This is perhaps not quite certain; there is some reason to believe that his "Sermon of the Fifty," his "first frontal attack on Christianity,"[6] was written a year before; but in any case that and other productions of his at once left Rousseau far in the rear. Even now he had no fixed purpose of continuous warfare against so powerful and cruel an enemy as the Church, which in 1757 had actually procured an edict pronouncing the death penalty against all writers of works attacking religion; though the fall of the Jesuits in 1764 raised new hopes of freedom. But when, after that hopeful episode, there began a new movement of Jansenist fanaticism; and when, after the age of religious savagery had seemed to be over, there began a new series of religious atrocities in France

[1] Work cited, ed. 1755, p. 252.

[2] A glimpse of old Paris before or about 1750 is afforded by Fontenelle's remark that the prevailing diseases might be known from the *affiches*. At every street corner were to be seen two, of which one advertised a *Traité sur l' incrédulité*. (Grimm, *Corr. litt.* iii. 373.)

[3] Thus Duruy had said in his *Histoire de France* (1st ed. 1852) that in the work of the Jansenists of Port Royal "l'esprit d'opposition politique se cacha sous l'opposition religieuse" (ed. 1880, ii. 298).

[4] The case has been thus correctly put by M. Rocquain, who, however, decides that "de religieuse qu'elle était, l'opposition devient politique" as early as about 1724–1733. *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1878; *table des matières*, liv. 2e. Duruy (last note) puts the tendency still earlier.

[5] "Cette hardiesse étonna Voltaire, et excita son émulation" (ed. cited, p. 118).

[6] *Avertissement des éditeurs*, in Basle ed. of 1792, vol. xlv, p. 92.

itself (1762–66), he girded on a sword that was not to be laid down till his death.

Even so late as 1768, in his last letter to Damilaville (8 fév.), Voltaire expresses a revulsion against the aggressive freethought propaganda of the time which is either one of his epistolary stratagems or the expression of a nervous reaction in a time of protracted bad health. "Mes chagrins redoublent," he writes, "par la quantité incroyable d'écrits contre la religion chrétienne, qui se succédent aussi rapidement en Hollande que les gazettes et les journaux." His enemies have the barbarism to impute to him, at his age, "une partie de ces extravagances composées par de jeunes gens et par des moines défroqués." His immediate ground for chagrin may have been the fact that this outbreak of anti-Christian literature was likely to thwart him in the campaign he was then making to secure justice to the Sirven family as he had already vindicated that of Calas. Sirven barely missed the fate of the latter.

The misconception of Buckle, above discussed, has been widely shared even among students. Thus Lord Morley, discussing the "Creed of the Savoyard Vicar" in Rousseau's *Émile* (1762), writes that "Souls weary of the fierce mockeries that had so long been flying like fiery shafts against the far Jehovah of the Hebrews, and the silent Christ of the later doctors and dignitaries," may well have turned to it with ardour (*Rousseau*, ed. 1886, ii, 266). He further speaks of the "superiority of the sceptical parts of the Savoyard Vicar's profession.....over the biting mockeries which Voltaire had made the fashionable method of assault" (p. 294). No specifications are offered, and the chronology is seen to be astray. The only mockeries which Voltaire could be said to have made fashionable before 1760 were those of his *Lettres philosophiques*, his *Mondain*, his *Défense de Milord Bolingbroke*, and his philosophically humorous tales, as *Candide*, *Zadig*, *Micromégas*, etc.: all his distinctive attacks on Judaism and Christianity were yet to come. [The Abbé Guyon, in his *L'Oracle des nouveaux philosophes* (Berne, 1759–60, 2 tom.), proclaims an attack on doctrines taught "dans les livres de nos beaux esprits" (*Avert.* p. xi); but he specifies only denials of (1) revelation, (2) immortality, and (3) the Biblical account of man's creation; and he is largely occupied with Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques*, though his book is written at Voltaire. The second volume is devoted to *Candide* and the *Précis* of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon—not very fierce performances.] Lord Morley, as it happens, does not make this chronological mistake in his earlier work on Voltaire, where he rightly represents him as beginning his attack on "the Infamous" after he had settled at Ferney (1758). His "fierce mockeries" begin at the earliest

in 1761. The mistake may have arisen through taking as true the fictitious date of 1736 for the writing of the *Examen Important de Milord Bolingbroke*. It belongs to 1767. Buckle's error, it may be noted, is repeated by so careful a student as Dr. Redlich, *Local Government in England*, Eng. tr. 1903, i, 64.

10. The rest of Voltaire's long life was a sleepless and dexterous warfare, by all manner of literary stratagem,[1] facilitated by vast literary fame and ample acquired wealth, against what he called "the Infamous"—the Church and the creed which he found still swift to slay for mere variation of belief, and slow to let any good thing be wrought for the bettering of men's lives. Of his prodigious literary performance it is probably within the truth to say that in respect of rapid influence on the general intelligence of the world it has never been equalled by any one man's writing; and that, whatever its measure of error and of personal misdirection, its broader influence was invariably for peace on earth, for tolerance among men, and for reason in all things. His faults were many, and some were serious; but to no other man of his age, save possibly Beccaria, can be attributed so much beneficent accomplishment. He can perhaps better be estimated as a force than as a man. So great was the area of his literary energy that he is inevitably inadequate at many points. Lessing could successfully impugn him in drama; Diderot in metaphysic; Gibbon in history; and it is noteworthy that all of these men[2] at different times criticized him with asperity, testing him by the given item of performance, and disparaging his personality. Yet in his own way he was a greater power than any of them; and his range, as distinguished from his depth, outgoes theirs. In sum, he was the greatest mental fighter of his age, perhaps of any age: in that aspect he is a "power-house" not to be matched in human history; and his polemic is mainly for good. It was a distinguished English academic who declared that "civilization owes more to Voltaire than to all the Fathers of the Church put

[1] It has been counted that he used no fewer than a hundred and thirty different pseudonyms; and the perpetual prosecution and confiscation of his books explains the procedure. As we have seen, the *Lettres philosophiques* (otherwise the *Lettres anglaises*) were burned on their appearance, in 1734, and the bookseller put in the Bastille; the *Recueil des pièces fugitives* was suppressed in 1739; the *Voix du Sage et du Peuple* was officially and clerically condemned in 1751; the poem on *Natural Law* was burned at Paris in 1758; *Candide* at Geneva in 1759; the *Dictionnaire philosophique* at Geneva in 1764, and at Paris in 1765; and many of his minor pseudonymous performances had the same advertisement. But even the *Henriade*, the *Charles XII*, and the first chapters of the *Siècle de Louis XIV* were prohibited; and in 1785 the thirty volumes published of the 1784 edition of his works were condemned *en masse*.

[2] Diderot, critique of *Le philosophe ignorant* in Grimm's *Corr. Litt.* 1 juin 1766; Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, Stück 10-12, 15; Gibbon, ch. i, note near end; ch. li, note on siege of Damascus. Rousseau was as hostile as any (see Morley's *Rousseau*, ch. ix, § 1). But Rousseau's verdict is the least important, and the least judicial. He had himself earned the detestation of Voltaire, as of many other men. In a moment of pique, Diderot wrote of Voltaire: "Cet homme n'est que le second dans tous les genres" (Lettre 71 à Mdlle. Voland, 12 août, 1762). He forgot wit and humour!

together."[1] If in a literary way he hated his personal foes, much more did he hate cruelty and bigotry; and it was his work more than any that made impossible a repetition in Europe of such clerical crimes as the hanging of the Protestant pastor, La Rochette; the execution of the Protestant, Calas, on an unproved and absurdly false charge; the torture of his widow and children; the beheading of the lad La Barre for ill-proved blasphemy.[2] As against his many humanities, there is not to be charged on him one act of public malevolence. In his relations with his fickle admirer, FREDERICK THE GREAT, and with others of his fellow-thinkers, he and they painfully brought home to freethinkers the lesson that for them as for all men there is a personal art of life that has to be learned, over and above the rectification of opinion. But he and the others wrought immensely towards that liberation alike from unreason and from bondage which must precede any great improvement of human things.

Voltaire's constant burden was that religion was not only untrue but pernicious, and when he was not dramatically showing this of Christianity, as in his poem *La Ligue* (1723), he was saying it by implication in such plays as *Zaïre* (1732) and *Mahomet* (1742), dealing with the fanaticism of Islam; while in the *Essai sur les mœurs* (1756), really a broad survey of general history, and in the *Siècle de Louis XIV*, he applied the method of Montesquieu, with pungent criticism thrown in. Later, he added to his output direct criticisms of the Christian books, as in the *Examen important de Milord Bolingbroke* (1767), and the *Recherches historiques sur le Christianisme* (? 1769), continuing all his former lines of activity. Meanwhile, with the aid of his companion the MARQUISE DU CHATELET, an accomplished mathematician, he had done much to popularize the physics of Newton and discredit the scientific fallacies of the system of Descartes; all the while preaching a Newtonian but rather agnostic deism. This is the purport of his *Philosophe Ignorant*, his longest philosophical essay.[3] The destruction of Lisbon by the earthquake

[1] Prof. Jowett, of Balliol College. See L. A. Tollemache, *Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol*, 4th ed. pp. 27–28.

[2] See details in Lord Morley's *Voltaire*, 4th ed. pp. 165–70, 257–58. The erection by the French freethinkers of a monument to La Barre in 1905, opposite the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Montmartre, Paris, is an expression at once of the old feud with the Church and the French appreciation of high personal courage. La Barre was in truth something of a scapegrace, but his execution was an infamy, and he went to his death as to a bridal. The erection of the monument has been the occasion of a futile pretence on the clerical side that for La Barre's death the Church had no responsibility, the movers in the case being laymen. Nothing, apparently, can teach Catholic Churchmen that the Church's past sins ought to be confessed like those of individuals. It is quite true that it was a Parlement that condemned La Barre. But what a religious training was it that turned laymen into murderous fanatics!

[3] M. Lanson seems to overlook it when he writes (p. 747) that "the affirmation of God, the denial of Providence and miracles, is the whole metaphysic of Voltaire."

of 1755 seems to have shaken him in his deistic faith, since the upshot of his poem on that subject is to leave the moral government of the universe an absolute enigma; and in the later *Candide* (1759) he attacks theistic optimism with his matchless ridicule. Indeed, as early as 1749, in his *Traité de la Métaphysique*, written for the Marquise du Chatelet, he reaches virtually pantheistic positions in defence of the God-idea, declaring with Spinoza that deity can be neither good nor bad. But, like so many professed pantheists, he relapsed, and he never accepted the atheistic view; on the contrary, we find him arguing absurdly enough, in his *Homily on Atheism* (1765), that atheism had been the destruction of morality in Rome;[1] on the publication of d'Holbach's *System of Nature* in 1770 he threw off an article *Dieu : réponse au Système de la Nature*, where he argued on the old deistic lines; and his tale of *Jenni; or, the Sage and the Atheist* (1775), is a polemic on the same theme. By this time the inconsistent deism of his youth had itself been discredited among the more thoroughgoing freethinkers; and for years it had been said in one section of literary society that Voltaire after all "is a bigot; he is a deist!"[2]

But for freethinkers of all schools the supreme service of Voltaire lay in his twofold triumph over the spirit of religious persecution. He had contrived at once to make it hateful and to make it ridiculous; and it is a great theistic poet of our own day that has pronounced his blade the

> sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed
> To death Imposture through the armour joints.[3]

To be perfect, the tribute should have noted that he hated cruelty much more than imposture; and such is the note of the whole movement of which his name was the oriflamme. Voltaire personally was at once the most pugnacious and the most forgiving of men. Few of the Christians who hated him had so often as he fulfilled their own precept of returning good for evil to enemies; and none excelled him in hearty philanthropy. It is notable that most of the humanitarian ideas of the latter half of the century—the demand for the reform of criminal treatment, the denunciation of war and slavery, the insistence on good government, and toleration of all creeds—are

[1] Lord Morley writes (p. 209): "We do not know how far he ever seriously approached the question.....whether a society can exist without a religion." This overlooks both the *Homélie sur l'Athéisme* and the article ATHÉISME in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, where the question is discussed seriously and explicitly.

[2] Horace Walpole, Letter to Gray, Nov. 19, 1765. Compare the mordant criticism of Grimm (*Corr. litt.* vii. 54 *sq.*) on his tract *Dieu* in reply to d'Holbach. "Il raisonne là-dessus comme un enfant," writes Grimm, "mais comme un joli enfant qu'il est."

[3] Browning, *The Two Poets of Croisic*, st. cvii.

more definitely associated with the freethinking than with any religious party, excepting perhaps the laudable but uninfluential sect of Quakers.

The character of Voltaire is still the subject of chronic debate; but the old deadlock of laudation and abuse is being solved in a critical recognition of him as a man of genius flawed by the instability which genius so commonly involves. Carlyle (that model of serenity), while dwelling on his perpetual perturbations, half-humanely suggests that we should think of him as one constantly hag-ridden by maladies of many kinds; and this recognition is really even more important in Voltaire's case than in Carlyle's own. He was "a bundle of nerves," and the clear light of his sympathetic intelligence was often blown aside by gusts of passion—often enough excusably. But while his temperamental weaknesses exposed him at times to humiliation, and often to sarcasm; and while his compelled resort to constant stratagem made him more prone to trickery than his admirers can well care to think him, the balance of his character is abundantly on the side of generosity and humanity.

One of the most unjustifiable of recent attacks upon him (one regrets to have to say it) came from the pen of the late Prof. Churton Collins. In his book on *Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in England* (1908) that critic gives in the main an unbiassed account of Voltaire's English experience; but at one point (p. 39) he plunges into a violent impeachment with the slightest possible justification. He in effect adopts the old allegation of Ruffhead, the biographer of Pope—a statement repeated by Johnson—that Voltaire used his acquaintance with Pope and Bolingbroke to play the spy on them, conveying information to Walpole, for which he was rewarded. The whole story collapses upon critical examination. Ruffhead's story is, in brief, that Pope purposely lied to Voltaire as to the authorship of certain published letters attacking Walpole. They were by Bolingbroke; but Pope, questioned by Voltaire, said they were his own, begging him to keep the fact absolutely secret. Next day at court everyone was speaking of the letters as Pope's; and Pope accordingly knew that Voltaire was a traitor. For this tale there is absolutely nothing but hearsay evidence. Ruffhead, as Johnson declared, knew nothing of Pope, and simply used Warburton's material. The one quasi-confirmation cited by Mr. Collins is Bolingbroke's letter to Swift (May 18, 1727) asking him to "insinuate" that Walpole's only ground for ascribing the letters to Bolingbroke "is the authority of one of his spies.....who reports, *not what he hears .....but what he guesses.*" This is an absolute contradiction of the Pope story, at two points. It refers to a *guess* at Bolingbroke, and tells of no citation from Pope. To put it as confirming the charge is to exhibit a complete failure of judgment.

After this irrational argument, Mr. Collins offers a worse. He admits (p. 43) that Voltaire always remained on friendly terms with both Pope and Bolingbroke; but adds that this "can scarcely be alleged as a proof of his innocence, for neither Pope nor Bolingbroke would, for such an offence, have been likely to quarrel with a man in a position so peculiar as that of Voltaire. *His flattery was pleasant.....*" Such an argument is worse than nugatory. That Bolingbroke spoke ill in private of Voltaire on general grounds counts for nothing. He did the same of Pope and of nearly all his friends. Mr. Collins further accuses Voltaire of baseness, falsehood, and hypocrisy on the mere score of his habit of extravagant flattery. This was notoriously the French mode in that age; but it had been just as much the mode in seventeenth-century England, from the Jacobean translators of the Bible to Dryden—to name no others. And Mr. Collins in effect charges systematic hypocrisy upon both Pope and Bolingbroke.

Other stories of Ruffhead's against Voltaire are equally improbable and ill-vouched—as Mr. Collins incidentally admits, though he forgets the admission. They all come from Warburton, himself convicted of double-dealing with Pope; and they finally stand for the hatred of Frenchmen which was so common in eighteenth-century England, and is apparently not yet quite extinct. Those who would have a sane, searching, and competent estimate of Voltaire, leaning humanely to the side of goodwill, should turn to the *Voltaire* of M. Champion. A brief estimate was attempted by the present writer in the *R. P. A. Annual* for 1912.

11. It is difficult to realize how far the mere demand for tolerance which sounds from Voltaire's plays and poems before he has begun to assail credences was a signal and an inspiration to new thinkers. Certain it is that the principle of toleration, passed on by Holland to England, was regarded by the orthodox priesthood in France as the abomination of desolation, and resisted by them with all their power. But the contagion was unquenchable. It was presumably in Holland that there were printed in 1738 the two volumes of *Lettres sur la religion essentielle à l'homme, distinguée de ce qui n'en est que l'accessoire*, by Marie Huber, a Genevese lady living in Lyons; also the two following parts (1739), replying to criticisms on the earlier. In its gentle way, the book stands very distinctly for the "natural" and ethical principle in religion, denying that the deity demands from men either service or worship, or that he can be wronged by their deeds, or that he can punish them eternally for their sins. This was one of the first French fruits,

after Voltaire, of the English deistic influence;[1] and it is difficult to understand how the authoress escaped molestation. Perhaps the memory of the persecution inflicted on the mystic Madame Guyon withheld the hand of power. As it was, four Protestant theologians opened fire on her, regarding her doctrine as hostile to Christianity. One pastor wrote from Geneva, one from Amsterdam, and two professors from Zurich—the two last in Latin.[2]

From about 1746 onwards, the rationalist movement in eighteenth-century France rapidly widens and deepens. The number of rationalistic writers, despite the press laws which in that age inflicted the indignity of imprisonment on half the men of letters, increased from decade to decade, and the rising prestige of the *philosophes* in connection with the *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) gave new courage to writers and printers. At once the ecclesiastical powers saw in the *Encyclopédie* a dangerous enemy; and in January, 1752, the Sorbonne condemned a thesis "To the celestial Jerusalem," by the Abbé de Prades. It had at first (1751) been received with official applause, but was found on study to breathe the spirit of the new work,[3] to which the Abbé had contributed, and whose editor, Diderot, was his friend. Sooth to say, it contained not a little matter calculated to act as a solvent of faith. Under the form of a vindication of orthodox Catholicism, it negated alike Descartes and Leibnitz; and declared that the science of Newton and the Dutch physiologists was a better defence of religion than the theses of Clarke, Descartes, Cudworth, and Malebranche, which made for materialism. The handling, too, of the question of natural *versus* revealed religion, in which "theism" is declared to be superior to all religions *si unam excipias veram*, "if you except the one true," might well arouse distrust in a vigilant Catholic reader.[4] The whole argument savours far more of the scientific comparative method than was natural in the work of an eighteenth-century seminarist; and the principle, "Either we are ocular witnesses of the facts or we know them only by hearsay,"[5] was plainly as dangerous to the Christian creed as to any other. According to Naigeon,[6] the treatise was wholly the work of de Prades

[1] Cp. Ständlin, *Gesch. des Rationalismus und Supernaturalismus*, 1826, pp. 287–90; Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, 2te Aufl. 1848, i. 218–20.

[2] Zimmerman, *De causis magis magisque invalescentis incredulitatis, et medela huic malo adhibenda*, Tiguri, 1739, 4to. Prof. Breitinger of Zurich wrote a criticism afterwards tr. (1741) as *Examen des Lettres sur la religion essentielle*. De Roches, pastor at Geneva, published in letter-form 2 vols. entitled *Défense du Christianisme*, as "préservatif contre" the *Lettres* of Mdlle. Huber (1740); and Bouillier of Amsterdam also 2 vols. of *Lettres* (1741).

[3] Cp. Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartés.* ii. 624–25; D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv. 63.

[4] See the thesis (*Jerusalem Cœlesti*) as printed in the *Apologie de M. l'Abbé De Prades*, "Amsterdam," 1752, pp. 4, 6.

[5] *Id.* p. 10.

[6] *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de Diderot*, 1821, p. 160.

and another Abbé, Yvon;[1] but it remains probable that Diderot inspired not a little of the reasoning; and the clericals, bent on putting down the *Encyclopédie*, professed to have discovered that he was the real author of the thesis. Either this belief or a desire to strike at the *Encyclopédie* through one of its collaborators[2] was the motive of the absurdly belated censure. Such a fiasco evoked much derision from the philosophic party, particularly from Voltaire; and the Sorbonne compassed a new revenge. Soon after came the formal condemnation of the first two volumes of the *Encyclopédie*, of which the second had just appeared.[3]

D'Argenson, watching in his vigilant retirement the course of things on all hands, sees in the episode a new and dangerous development, "the establishment of a veritable inquisition in France, of which the Jesuits joyfully take charge," though he repeatedly remarks also on the eagerness of the Jansenists to outgo the Jesuits.[4] But soon the publication of the *Encyclopédie* is resumed; and in 1753 D'Argenson contentedly notes the official bestowal of "tacit permissions to print secretly" books which could not obtain formal authorization. The permission had been given first by the President Malesherbes; but even when that official lost the king's confidence the practice was continued by the lieutenant of police.[5] Despite the staggering blow of the suppression of the *Encyclopédie*, the *philosophes* speedily triumphed. So great was the discontent even at court that soon (1752) Madame de Pompadour and some of the ministry invited D'Alembert and Diderot to resume their work, "observing a necessary reserve in all things touching religion and authority." Madame de Pompadour was in fact, as D'Alembert said at her death, "in her heart one of ours," as was D'Argenson. But D'Alembert, in a long private conference with D'Argenson, insisted that they must write in freedom like the English and the Prussians, or not at all. Already there was talk of suppressing the philosophic works of Condillac, which a few years before had gone uncondemned; and freedom must be preserved at any cost. "I acquiesce," writes the ex-Minister, "in these arguments."[6]

Curiously enough, the freethinking Fontenelle, who for a time (the dates are elusive) held the office of royal censor, was more rigorous

[1] Cp. Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, 4 fév. 1762; 22 avril, 1768. In the latter entry, Yvon is described as "poursuivi comme infidèle, quoique le plus croyant de France." In 1768, after the *Bélisaire* scandal, he was refused permission to proceed with the publication of his *Histoire ecclésiastique*.

[2] This was de Prades's own view of the matter (*Apologie*, as cited, p. v); and D'Argenson repeatedly says as much. *Mémoires*, iv, 57, 65, 66, 74, 77.

[3] Rocquain, *L'esprit revolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1878, pp. 149-51; Morley, *Diderot*, ch. v; D'Argenson, iv, 78. The decree of suppression was dated 13 fév. 1752.

[4] *Mémoires*, iv, 64, 74. [5] *Id.* iv, 129, 140. [6] *Id.* iv, 92-93.

than other officials who had not his reputation for heterodoxy. One day he refused to pass a certain manuscript, and the author put the challenge: "You, sir, who have published the *Histoire des Oracles*, refuse me this?" "If I had been the censor of the *Oracles*," replied Fontenelle, "I should not have passed it."[1] And he had cause for his caution. The unlucky Tercier, who, engrossed in "foreign affairs," had authorized the publication of the *De l'Esprit* of Helvétius, was compelled to resign the censorship, and severely rebuked by the Paris Parlement.[2] But the culture-history of the period, like the political, was one of ups and downs. From time to time the philosophic party had friends at court, as in the persons of the Marquis D'Argenson, Malesherbes, and the Duc de Choiseul, of whom the last-named engineered the suppression of the Jesuits.[3] Then there were checks to the forward movement in the press, as when, in 1770, Choiseul was forced to retire on the advent of Madame Du Barry. The output of freethinking books is after that year visibly curtailed. But nothing could arrest the forward movement of opinion.

12. A new era of propaganda and struggle had visibly begun. In the earlier part of the century freethought had been disseminated largely by way of manuscripts[4] and reprints of foreign books in translation; but from the middle onwards, despite denunciations and prohibitions, new books multiply. To the policy of tacit toleration imposed by Malesherbes a violent end was temporarily put in 1757, when the Jesuits obtained a proclamation of the death penalty against all writers who should attack the Christian religion, directly or indirectly. It was doubtless under the menace of this decree that Deslandes, before dying in 1757, caused to be drawn up by two notaries an *acte* by which he disavowed and denounced not only his *Grands hommes morts en plaisantant* but all his other works, whether printed or in MS., in which he had "laid down principles or sustained sentiments contrary to the spirit of religion."[5] But in 1764, on the suppression of the Jesuits, there was a vigorous resumption of propaganda. "There are books," writes Voltaire in 1765, "of which forty years ago one would not have trusted the manuscript to one's friends, and of which there are now published six editions in eighteen months."[6]

[1] Maury. *Hist. de l'ancienne Académie des Inscriptions*, 1864, pp. 312-13.

[2] *Journal historique de Barbier*, 1847-56, iv. 304.

[3] Astruc, we learn from D'Alembert, connected their decline with the influence of the new opinions. "Ce ne sont pas les jansenistes qui tuent les jésuites, c'est l'Encyclopédie." "Le marouflé Astruc," adds D'Alembert, "est comme Pasquin, il parle quelquefois d'assez bon sens." Lettre à Voltaire, 4 mai, 1762.

[4] Cp. pref. (*La Vie de Salvien*) to French tr. of Salvian, 1734, p. lxix. I have seen MS. translations of Toland and Woolston.

[5] MS. statement, in eighteenth-century hand, on flyleaf of a copy of 1755 ed. of the *Grands hommes*, in the writer's possession.

[6] Lettre à D'Alembert, 16 Octobre, 1765.

Voltaire single-handed produced a library; and d'Holbach is credited with at least a dozen freethinking treatises, every one remarkable in its day. But there were many more combatants. The reputation of Voltaire has overshadowed even that of his leading contemporaries, and theirs and his have further obscured that of the lesser men; but a list of miscellaneous freethinking works by French writers during the century, up to the Revolution, will serve to show how general was the activity after 1750. It will be seen that very little was published in France in the period in which English deism was most fecund. A noticeable activity of publication begins about 1745. But it was when the long period of chronic warfare ended for France with the peace of Paris (1763); when she had lost India and North America; when she had suppressed the Jesuit order (1764); and when England had in the main turned from intellectual interests to the pursuit of empire and the development of manufacturing industry, that the released French intelligence[1] turned with irresistible energy to the rational criticism of established opinions. The following table is thus symbolic of the whole century's development:—

1700. *Lettre d'Hypocrate à Damagète*, attributed to the Comte de Boulainvilliers. (Cologne.) Rep. in *Bibliothèque Volante*, Amsterdam, 1700.

,, [Claude Gilbert.] *Histoire de Calejava, ou de l'isle des hommes raisonnables, avec le parallèle de leur morale et du Christianisme.* Dijon. Suppressed by the author: only one copy known to have escaped.

1704. [Gueudeville.] *Dialogues de M. le Baron de la Houtan et d'un sauvage dans l'Amérique.* (Amsterdam.)

1709. *Lettre sur l'enthousiasme* (Fr. tr. of Shaftesbury, by Samson). La Haye.

1710. [Tyssot de Patot, Symon.] *Voyages et Avantures de Jaques Massé.* (Bourdeaux.)

,, *Essai sur l'usage de la raillerie* (Fr. tr. of Shaftesbury, by Van Effen). La Haye.

1712. [Deslandes, A. F. B.] *Reflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant.*[2] (Amsterdam.)

1714. *Discours sur la liberté de penser* [French tr. of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking*], traduit de l'anglois et augmenté d'une Lettre d'un Médecin Arabe. (Tr. by Henri Scheurléer and Jean Rousset.) [Rep. 1717.][3]

[1] Of the works noted below, the majority appear or profess to have been printed at Amsterdam, though many bore the imprint *Londres*. All the freethinking books and translations ascribed to d'Holbach bore it. The *Arétin* of Abbé Dulaurens bore the imprint: "Rome, aux dépens de la Congrégation de l'Index." Mystifications concerning authorship have been as far as possible cleared up in the present edition.

[2] Given by Brunet, who is followed by Wheeler, as appearing in 1732, and as translated into English, under the title *Dying Merrily*, in 1745. But I possess an English translation of 1713 (pref. dated March 25), entitled *A Philological Essay: or, Reflections on the Death of Freethinkers*.....By Monsieur D——, of the Royal Academy of Sciences in France, and author of the *Poetae Rusticantis Literatum Otium*. Translated from the French by Mr. B——, with additions by the author, now in London, and the translator. [A note in a contemporary hand makes "B" Boyer.] Barbier gives 1712 for the first edition, 1732 for the second. Rep. 1755 and 1776.

[3] There is no sign of any such excitement in France over the translation as was aroused in England by the original; but an *Examen du traité de la liberté de penser*, by De Crousaz, was published at Amsterdam in 1718.

1719. [Vroes.] *La Vie et l'Esprit de M. Benoît de Spinoza.*
1720. Same work rep. under the double title: *De tribus impostoribus: Des trois imposteurs.* Frankfort on Main.
1724. [Lévesque de Burigny.] *Histoire de la philosophie payenne.* La Haye, 2 tom.
1730. [Bernard, J.-F.] *Dialogues critiques et philosophiques.* "Par l'Abbé de Charte-Livry." (Amsterdam.) Rep. 1735.
1731. *Réfutation des erreurs de Benoît de Spinoza,* par Fénelon, le P. Laury, benédictin, et Boulainvilliers, avec la vie de Spinoza.....par Colerus, etc. (collected and published by Lenglet du Fresnoy). Bruxelles (really Amsterdam). The treatise of Boulainvilliers is really a popular exposition.
1732. Re-issue of Deslandes's *Réflexions.*
1734. [Voltaire.] *Lettres philosophiques.* 4 edd. within the year. [Condemned to be burned. Publisher imprisoned.]
" [Longue, Louis-Pierre de.] *Les Princesses Malabares, ou le Célibat Philosophique.* [Deistic allegory. Condemned to be burned.]
1737. Marquis D'Argens. *La Philosophie du Bon Sens.* (Berlin: 8th edition, Dresden, 1754.)
1738. ——, *Lettres Juives.* 6 tom. (Berlin.)
" [Marie Huber.] *Lettres sur la religion essentielle à l'homme, distingue de ce qui n'en est que l'accessoire.* 2 tom. (Nominally London.) Rep. 1739 and 1756.
1739. ——, *Suite* to the foregoing, "servant de réponse aux objections," etc. Also *Suite de la troisième partie.*
1741. [Deslandes.] *Pigmalion, ou la Statue animée.* [Condemned to be burnt by Parlement of Dijon, 1742.]
" ——, *De la Certitude des connaissances humaines.....*traduit de l'anglais par F. A. D. L. V.
1743. *Nouvelles libertés de penser.* Amsterdam. [Edited by Dumarsais. Contains the first print of Fontenelle's *Traité de la Liberté,* Dumarsais's short essays *Le Philosophe* and *De la raison,* Mirabaud's *Sentimens des philosophes sur la nature de l'âme,* etc.]
1745. [Lieut. De la Serre.] *La vraie religion traduite de l'Ecriture Sainte, par permission de Jean, Luc, Marc, et Matthieu.* (Nominally Trévoux, "aux dépens des Pères de la Société de Jésus.") [Appeared later as *Examen,* etc. Condemned to be burnt by Parlement of Paris.]

[This book was republished in the same year with "demontrée par" substituted in the title for "traduite de," and purporting to be "traduit de l'Anglais de Gilbert Burnet," with the imprint "Londres, G. Cock, 1745." It appeared again in 1761 as *Examen de la religion dont on cherche l'éclaircissement de bonne foi. Attribué à M. de Saint-Evremont, traduit,* etc., with the same imprint. It again bore the latter title when reprinted in 1763, and again in the *Évangile de la Raison* in 1764. Voltaire in 1763 declared it to be the work of Dumarsais, pronouncing it to be assuredly not in the style of Saint-Evremond (Grimm, iv, 85–88; Voltaire, Lettre à Damilaville, 6 déc. 1763), adding "mais il est fort tronqué et détestablement imprimé." This is true of the reprints in the *Évangile de la Raison* (1764, etc.), of one of which the present writer possesses a copy to which there has been appended in MS. a long section which had been lacking. The *Évangile* as a whole purports to be "Ouvrage posthume de M. D. M.....y."[1]

[1] This was probably meant to point to the Abbé de Marsy, who died in 1763.

But its first volume includes four pieces of Voltaire's, and his abridged *Testament de Jean Meslier*. Further, De la Serre is recorded to have claimed the authorship in writing on the eve of his death. Barbier, *Dict. des Anonymes*, 2e éd, No. 6158. He is said to have been hanged as a spy at Maestricht, April 11, 1748.]

1745. [La Mettrie.] *Histoire naturelle de l'âme.* [Condemned to be burnt, 1746.] Rep. as *Traité de l'Âme.*

1746. [Diderot.] *Pensées philosophiques.* [Condemned to be burnt.]

1748. [P. Estève.] *L'Origine de l'Univers expliquée par un principe de matière.* (Berlin.)

,, [Benoît de Maillet.] *Telliamed, ou Entretiens d'un philosophe indien avec un missionaire français.* (Printed privately, 1735; rep. 1755.)

,, [La Mettrie.] *L'Homme Machine.*

1750. *Nouvelles libertés de penser.* Rep.

1751. [Mirabaud, J. B. de.] *Le Monde, son origine et son antiquité.* [Edited by the Abbé Le Mascrier (who contributed the preface and the third part) and Dumarsais.]

,, De Prades. *Sorbonne Thesis.*

1752. [Gouvest, J. H. Maubert de.] *Lettres Iroquoises.* "Irocopolis, chez les Vénérables." 2 tom. (Rep. 1769 as *Lettres cherakésiennes.*)

,, [Génard, F.] *L'École de l'homme, ou Parallèle des Portraits du siècle et des tableaux de l'écriture sainte.*[1] Amsterdam, 3 tom. [Author imprisoned.]

1753. [Baume-Desdossat, Canon of Avignon.] *La Christiade.* [Book suppressed. Author fined.][2]

,, Maupertuis. *Système de la nature.*

,, Astruc, Jean. *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il parait que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse.* Bruxelles.

1754. Prémontval, A. I. le Guay de. *Le Diogène de d'Alembert, ou Pensées libres sur l'homme.* Berlin. (2nd ed. enlarged, 1755.)

,, Burigny, J. L. *Théologie payenne.* 2 tom. (New ed. of his *Histoire de la philosophie*, 1724.)

,, [Diderot.] *Pensées sur l'interpretation de la nature.*

,, Beausobre, L. de (the younger). *Pyrrhonisme du Sage.* Berlin. (Burned by Paris Parlement.)

1755. *Recherches philosophiques sur la liberté de l'homme.* Trans. of Collins's Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty.

,, [Voltaire.] Poème *Sur la loi naturelle.*

,, *Analyse raisonnée de Bayle.* 4 tom. [By the Abbé de Marsy. Suppressed.[3] Continued in 1773, in 4 new vols., by Robinet.]

,, Morelly. *Code de la Nature.*

,, [Deleyre.] *Analyse de la philosophie de Bacon.* (Largely an exposition of Deleyre's own views.)

1757. Prémontval. *Vues Philosophiques.* (Amsterdam.)

[In this year—apparently after one of vigilant repression—was pronounced the death penalty against all writers attacking religion. Hence a general suspen-

[1] The Abbé Sepher ascribed this book to one Dupuis, a Royal Guardsman.

[2] This "prose poem" was not an intentional burlesque, as the ecclesiastical authorities alleged; but it did not stand for orthodoxy. See Grimm's *Correspondance*, i. 113.

[3] "A eu les honneurs de la brûlure, et toutes les censures cumulées des Facultés de Théologie, de la Sorbonne et des évêques." Bachaumont, déc. 23, 1763. Marsy, who was expelled from the Order of Jesuits, was of bad character, and was hotly denounced by Voltaire.

sion of publication. In 1764 the Jesuits were suppressed, and the policy of censorship was soon paralysed.]

1758. Helvétius. *De l'Esprit.* (Authorized. Then condemned.)

1759. [Voltaire.] *Candide.* ("Genève.")

,, Translation of Hume's *Natural History of Religion* and Philosophical Essays. (By Mérian.) Amsterdam.

1761. [N.-A. Boulanger.[1]] *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental, et des superstitions.* "Ouvrage posthume de Mr. D. J. D. P. E. C."

,, Rep. of De la Serre's *La vraie religion* as *Examen de la religion*, etc.

,, [D'Holbach.] *Le Christianisme dévoilé.* [Imprint: "Londres, 1756." Really printed at Nancy in 1761. Wrongly attributed to Boulanger and to Damilaville.] Rep. 1767 and 1777.

[Grimm (*Corr. inédite*, 1829, p. 194) speaks in 1763 of this book in his notice of Boulanger, remarking that the title was apparently meant to suggest the author of *L'Antiquité dévoilée*, but that it was obviously by another hand. The *Antiquité*, in fact, was the concluding section of Boulanger's posthumous *Despotisme Oriental* (1761), and was not published till 1766. Grimm professed ignorance as to the authorship, but must have known it, as did Voltaire, who by way of mystification ascribed the book to Damilaville. See Barbier.]

1762. Rousseau. *Émile.* [Publicly burned at Paris and at Geneva. Condemned by the Sorbonne.]

,, Robinet, J. B. *De la nature.* Vol. i. (Vol. ii in 1764; iii and iv in 1766.)

1763. [Voltaire.] *Saül.* Genève.

,, —— *Dialogue entre un Caloyer et un honnête homme.*

,, Rep. of De la Serres' *Examen.*

1764. *Discours sur la liberté de penser.* (Rep. of trans. of Collins.)

,, [Voltaire.] *Dictionnaire philosophique portatif.*[2] [First form of the *Dictionnaire philosophique.* Burned in 1765.]

,, *Lettres secrètes de M. de Voltaire.* [Holland. Collection of tracts made by Robinet, against Voltaire's will.]

,, [Voltaire.] *Mélanges*, 3 tom. Genève.

,, [Dulaurens, Abbé H. J.] *L'Arétin.*

,, *L'Evangile de la Raison.* Ouvrage posthume de M. D. M——y. [Ed. by Abbé Dulaurens; containing the *Testament de Jean Meslier* (greatly abridged and adapted by Voltaire); Voltaire's *Catéchisme de l'honnête homme*, *Sermon des cinquante*, etc.; the *Examen de la religion, attribué à M. de St. Evremond*; Rousseau's *Vicaire Savoyard*, from *Émile*; Dumarsais's *Analyse de la religion chrétienne*, etc. Rep. 1765 and 1766.]

1765. *Recueil Nécessaire, avec L'Évangile de la Raison*, 2 tom. [Rep. of parts of the *Évangile*. Rep. 1767,[3] 1768, with Voltaire's *Examen important de Milord Bolingbroke* substituted for that of De la Serre (*attribué à M. de St. Evremond*), and with a revised set of extracts from Meslier.]

,, Castillon, J. L. *Essai de philosophie morale.*

1766. Boulanger, N. A. *L'Antiquité dévoilée.*[4] 3 tom. [Recast by d'Holbach. Life of author by Diderot.]

[1] See Grimm, *Corr.* v, 15.

[2] A second edition appeared within the year. "Quoique proscrit presque partout, et même en Hollande, c'est de là qu'il nous arrive." Bachaumont, déc. 27, 1764.

[3] Bachaumont, mai 7, 1767.

[4] "Se repand à Paris avec la permission de la police." Bachaumont, 13 fév. 1766.

1766. *Voyage de Robertson aux terres australes.* Traduit sur le Manuscrit Anglois. Amsterdam.

[Barbier (*Dict. des Ouvr. Anon.*, 2e éd. iii, 437) has a note concerning this *Voyage* which pleasantly illustrates the strategy that went on in the issue of freethinking books. An ex-censor of the period, he tells us, wrote a note on the original edition pointing out that it contains (pp. 145–54) a tirade against "Parlements." This passage was "suppressed to obtain permission to bring the book into France," and a new passage attacking the Encyclopédistes under the name of *Pansophistes* was inserted at another point. The ex-censor had a copy of an edition of 1767, in 12mo, better printed than the first and on better paper. In this, at p. 87, line 30, begins the attack on the Encyclopédistes, which continues to p. 93.

If this is accurate, there has taken place a double mystification. I possess a copy dated 1767, in 12mo, in which no page has so many as 30 lines, and in which there has been no typographical change whatever in pp. 87–93, where there is no mention of Encyclopédistes. But pp. 145–54 are clearly a typographical substitution, in different type, with fewer lines to the page. Here there is a narrative about the *Pansophistes* of the imaginary "Australie"; but while it begins with enigmatic satire it ends by praising them for bringing about a great intellectual and social reform.

If the censure was induced to pass the book as it is in this edition by this insertion, it was either very heedless or very indulgent. There is a sweeping attack on the papacy (pp. 91–99), and another on the Jesuits (pp. 100–102); and it leans a good deal towards republicanism. But on a balance, though clearly anti-clerical, it is rather socio-political than freethinking in its criticism. The words on the title-page, *traduit sur le manuscrit anglois*, are of course pure mystification. It is a romance of the *Utopia* school, and criticizes English conditions as well as French.]

1766. De Prades. *Abrégé de l'histoire ecclésiastique de Fleury.* (Berlin.) Pref. by Frederick the Great. (Rep. 1767.)

" [Burigny.] *Examen critique des Apologistes de la religion chrétienne.* Published (by Naigeon?) under the name of Freret.[1] [Twice rep. in 1767. Condemned to be burnt, 1770.]

" [Voltaire.] *Le philosophe ignorant.*

" [Abbé Millot.] *Histoire philosophique de l'homme.* [Naturalistic theory of human beginnings.]

1767. Castillon. *Almanach Philosophique.*

" *Doutes sur la religion* (attributed to Gueroult de Pival), *suivi de l'Analyse du Traité théologique-politique de Spinoza* (by Boulainvilliers). [Rep. with additions in 1792 under the title *Doutes sur les religions révélées, adressés à Voltaire*, par Émilie du Chatelet. Ouvrage posthume.]

" [Dulaurens.] *L'antipapisme révélé.*

" *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe.* [Published under the name of Freret (d. 1749). Written or edited by Naigeon.[2]]

[1] "Il est facile de se convaincre que les parties les plus importantes et les plus solides de cet ouvrage sont empruntées aux travaux de Burigny." L.-F. Alfred Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des Inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1864, p. 316. Maury leaves it an open question whether the compilation was made by Burigny or by Naigeon. The Abbé Bergier accepted it without hesitation as the work of Freret, who was known to hold some heretical views. (Maury, p. 317.) Barbier confidently ascribes the work to Burigny.

[2] The mystification in regard to this work is elaborate. It purports to be translated from an English version, declared in turn by its translator to be made "from the Greek."

1767. [D'Holbach.] *L'Imposture sacerdotale, ou Recueil de pièces sur la clergé, traduites de l'anglois.*

,, [Voltaire.] *Collection des lettres sur les miracles.*

,, —— *Examen important de milord Bolingbroke.*

,, Marmontel. *Bélisaire.* (Censured by the Sorbonne.)

,, [Damilaville.] *L'honnêteté théologique.*

,, Reprint of *Le Christianisme dévoilé.* [Condemned to be burnt, 1768 and 1770.]

,, [Voltaire.] *Questions sur les Miracles.* Par un Proposant.

,, *Seconde partie* of the *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme.*

1768. Meister, J. H. *De l'origine des principes religieux.* [Author banished from his native town, Zurich, "in perpetuity" (decree rescinded in 1772), and book publicly burned there by the hangman.[1] Meister published a modified edition at Zurich in 1769. Orig. rep. in the *Recueil Philosophique*, 1770.]

1768. *Catalogue raisonné des esprits forts, depuis le curé Rabelais jusqu'au curé Meslier.*

,, [D'Holbach.] *La Contagion sacrée, ou histoire naturelle de la superstition.* [Condemned to be burnt, 1770.]

,, —— *Lettres philosophiques sur l'origine des préjugés*, etc., *traduites de l'anglois* (of Toland).

,, —— *Lettres à Eugénie, ou preservatif contre les préjugés.* 2 tom.

,, —— *Théologie Portative.* "Par l'abbé Bernier." [Also burnt, 1776.]

,, *Traité des trois Imposteurs.* (See 1719 and 1720.) Rep. 1775, 1777, 1793.

,, Naigeon, J. A. *Le militaire philosophe.* [Adaptation of a MS. The last chapter by d'Holbach.]

,, D'Argens. *Œuvres complètes*, 24 tom. Berlin.

,, *Examen des prophéties qui servent de fondement à la religion chrétienne* (tr. from Collins by d'Holbach).

,, Robinet. *Considérations philosophiques.*

1769-1780. *L'Évangile du jour.* 18 tom. Series of pieces, chiefly by Voltaire.

1769. [Diderot. Also ascribed to Castillon.] *Histoire générale des dogmes et opinions philosophiques.....tirée du Dictionnaire encyclopédique.* Londres, 3 tom.

,, [Mirabaud.] *Opinions des anciens sur les juifs*, and *Réflexions impartiales sur l'Évangile*[2] (rep. in 1777 as *Examen critique du Nouveau Testament*).

,, [Isoard-Delisle, otherwise Delisle de Sales.] *De la Philosophie de la Nature.* 6 tom. [Author imprisoned. Book condemned to be burnt, 1775.]

,, [Seguier de Saint-Brisson.] *Traité des Droits de Génie, dans lequel on examine si la connoissance de la verité est avantageuse aux hommes et possible au philosophe.* "Carolsrouhe," 1769. [A strictly naturalistic-ethical theory of society. Contains an attack on the doctrine of Rousseau, in *Émile*, on the usefulness of religious error.]

It is now commonly ascribed to Naigeon. (Maury, as cited, p. 317.) Its machinery, and its definite atheism, mark it as of the school of d'Holbach, though it is alleged to have been written by Freret as early as 1722. It is however reprinted, with the *Examen critique des Apologistes*, in the 1796 edition of Freret's works without comment; and Barbier was satisfied that it was the one genuine "philosophic" work ascribed to Freret, but that it was redacted by Naigeon from imperfect MSS.

[1] *Notice sur Henri Meister*, pref. to *Lettres inédites de Madame de Staël à Henri Meister*, 1903, p. 17.

[2] "Deux nouveaux livres infernaux.....connus comme manuscrits depuis longtemps et gardés dans l'obscurité des portefeuilles....." Bachaumont, 22 mars, 1769.

1769. *L'enfer détruit*, traduit de l'Anglois [by d'Holbach.]
1770. [D'Holbach.] *Histoire critique de Jésus Christ.*
,, —— *Examen critique de la vie et des ouvrages de Saint Paul* (tr. from English of Peter Annet).
,, —— *Essai sur les Préjugés.* (Not by Dumarsais, whose name on the title-page is a mystification.)
,, —— *Système de la Nature.* 2 tom.
,, *Recueil Philosophique.* 2 tom. [Edited by Naigeon. Contains a rep. of Dumarsais's essays *Le Philosophe* and *De la raison*, an extract from Tindal, essays by Vauvenargues and Freret (or Fontenelle), three by Mirabaud, Diderot's *Pensées sur la religion*, several essays by d'Holbach, Meister's *De l'origine des principes religieux*, etc.]
,, *Analyse de Bayle.* Rep. of the four vols. of De Marsy, with four more by Robinet.
,, *L'Esprit du Judaisme.* (Trans. from Collins by d'Holbach.)
,, Raynal (with Diderot and others). *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes.* (Containing atheistic arguments by Diderot. Suppressed, 1772.)

[In this year there were condemned to be burned seven freethinking works: d'Holbach's *Contagion Sacrée*; Voltaire's *Dieu et les Hommes;* the French translation (undated) of Woolston's *Discourses on the Miracles of Jesus Christ;* Freret's (really Burigny's) *Examen critique de la religion chrétienne;* an *Examen impartial des principales religions du monde*, undated; d'Holbach's *Christianisme dévoilé;* and his *Système de la Nature.*]

1772. *Le Bon Sens.* [Adaptation from Meslier by Diderot and d'Holbach. Condemned to be burnt, 1774.]
,, *De la nature humaine.* [Trans. of Hobbes by d'Holbach.]
1773. Helvétius. *De l'Homme.* Ouvrage posthume. 2 tom. [Condemned to be burnt, Jan. 10, 1774. Rep. 1775.]
,, Carra, J. L. *Système de la Raison, ou le prophète philosophe.*
,, [Burigny (?).] *Recherches sur les miracles.*
,, [D'Holbach.] *La politique naturelle.* 2 tom.
,, ——. *Système Sociale.* 3 tom.
1774. Abauzit, F. *Réflexions impartiales sur les Évangiles, suivies d'un essai sur l'Apocalypse.* (Abauzit died 1767.)
,, [Condorcet.] *Lettres d'un Théologien.* (Atheistic.)
,, New edition of *Theologie Portative.* 2 tom. [Condemned to be burnt.]
1775. [Voltaire.] *Histoire de Jenni, ou Le Sage et l'Athée.* [Attack on atheism.]
1776. [D'Holbach.] *La morale universelle.* 3 tom.
,, ——. *Ethocratie.*
1777. *Examen critique du Nouveau Testament*, "par M. Freret." [Not by Freret. A rep. of Mirabaud's *Réflexions impartiales sur l'Évangile*, 1769, which was probably written about 1750, being replied to in the *Réfutation du Celse moderne* of the Abbé Gautier, 1752 and 1765.]
,, Carra. *Esprit de la morale et de la philosophie.*
1778. Barthez, P. J. *Nouveaux éléments de la science de l'homme.*
1779. *Vie d'Apollonius de Tyane par Philostrate*, avec les commentaires donnés en anglois par Charles Blount sur les deux premiers livres. [Trans. by J.-F. Salvemini de Castillon, Berlin.] Amsterdam, 4 tom. (In addition to Blount's pref. and notes there is a scoffing dedication to Pope Clement XIV.)

1780. Duvernet, Abbé Th. J. *L'Intolérance religieuse.*
" Clootz, Anacharsis. *La Certitude des preuves du Mahométisme.* [Reply by way of parody to Bergier's work, noted on p. 250.]
" Second ed. of Raynal's *Histoire philosophique*, with additions. (Condemned to be burnt, 1781.)
1781. Maréchal, Sylvain. *Le nouveau Lucrèce.*
1783. Brissot de Warville. *Lettres philosophiques sur S. Paul.*
1784. Doray de Longrais. *Faustin, ou le siècle philosophique.*
" Pougens, M. C. J. de. *Récréations de philosophie et de morale.*
1785. Maréchal. *Livre échappé au Déluge.* [Author dismissed.]
1787. Marquis Pastoret. *Zoroastre, Confucius, et Mahomet.*
1788. Meister. *De la morale naturelle.*
" Pastoret. *Moïse considéré comme legislateur et comme moraliste.*
" Maréchal. *Almanach des honnêtes gens.* [Author imprisoned; book burnt.]
1789. Volney. *Les Ruines des Empires.*
" Duvernet, Abbé. *Les Dévotions de Madame de Betzamooth.*
" Cerutti (Jesuit Father). *Bréviaire Philosophique, ou Histoire du Judaisme, du Christianisme, et du Déisme.*
1791–3. Naigeon. *Dictionnaire de la philosophie ancienne et moderne.*
1795. Dupuis. *De l'origine de tous les Cultes.* 5 tom.
" *La Fable de Christ dévoilée; ou Lettre du muphti de Constantinople à Jean Ange Braschy, muphti de Rome.*
1797. Rep. of d'Holbach's *Contagion sacrée*, with notes by Lemaire.
1798. Maréchal. *Pensées libres sur les prêtres.* A Rome, et se trouve à Paris, chez les Marchands de Nouveautés. L'An Ier de la Raison, et VI de la République Française.

13. It will be noted that after 1770—coincidently, indeed, with a renewed restraint upon the press—there is a notable falling-off in the freethinking output. Rationalism had now permeated educated France; and, for different but analogous reasons, the stress of discussion gradually shifted as it had done in England. France in 1760 stood to the religious problem somewhat as England did in 1730, repeating the deistic evolution with a difference. By that time England was committed to the new paths of imperialism and commercialism; whereas France, thrown back on the life of ideas and on her own politico-economic problems, went on producing the abundant propaganda we have noted, and, alongside of it, an independent propaganda of economics and politics. At the end of 1767, the leading French diarist[1] notes that "there is formed at Paris a new sect, called the Economists," and names its leading personages, Quesnay, Mirabeau the elder, the Abbé Baudeau, Mercier de la Rivière, and Turgot. These developed the doctrine of agricultural or "real" production which so stimulated and influenced Adam Smith. But immediately afterwards[2] the diarist notes a rival sect, the school

[1] Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, déc. 20, 1767. [2] *Id.* Jan. 18, 1768.

of Forbonnais, who founded mainly on the importance of commerce and manufactures. Each "sect" had its journal. The intellectual ferment had inevitably fructified thought upon economic as upon historical, religious, and scientific problems; and there was in operation a fourfold movement, all tending to make possible the immense disintegration of the State which began in 1789. After the Economists came the "Patriots," who directed towards the actual political machine the spirit of investigation and reform. And the whole effective movement is not unplausibly to be dated from the fall of the Jesuits in 1764.[1] Inevitably the forces interacted: Montesquieu and Rousseau alike dealt with both the religious and the social issues; d'Holbach in his first polemic, the *Christianisme dévoilé*, opens the stern impeachment of kings and rulers which he develops so powerfully in the *Essai sur les Préjugés*; and the *Encyclopédie* sent its search-rays over all the fields of inquiry. But of the manifold work done by the French intellect in the second and third generations of the eighteenth century, the most copious and the most widely influential body of writings that can be put under one category is that of which we have above made a chronological conspectus.

Of these works the merit is of course very various; but the total effect of the propaganda was formidable, and some of the treatises are extremely effective. The *Examen critique* of Burigny,[2] for instance, which quickly won a wide circulation when printed, is one of the most telling attacks thus far made on the Christian system, raising as it does most of the issues fought over by modern criticism. It tells indeed of a whole generation of private investigation and debate; and the Abbé Bergier, assuming it to be the work of Freret, in whose name it is published, avows that its author "has written it in the same style as his academic dissertations: he has spread over it the same erudition; he seems to have read everything and mastered everything."[3] Perhaps not the least effective part of the book is the chapter which asks: "Are men more perfect since the coming of Jesus Christ?"; and it is here that the clerical reply is most feeble. The critic cites the claims made by apologists as to the betterment of life by Christianity, and then contrasts with those claims the thousand-and-one lamentations by Christian writers over the utter badness of all the life around them. Bergier in reply follows the tactic habitually employed in the same difficulty to-day: he ignores

[1] So Pidansat de Mairobert in his preface to the first ed. (1777) of the *Mémoires Secrets* of Bachaumont, continued by him. See pref. to the abridged ed. by Bibliophile Jacob.
[2] As to the authorship see above, p. 241.
[3] *La Certitude des preuves du Christianisme* (1767), 2e édit. 1768, *Avertissement*.

the fact that his own apologists have been claiming a vast betterment, and contends that religion is not to be blamed for the evils it condemns. Not by such furtive sophistry could the Church turn the attack, which, as Bergier bitterly observes, was being made by Voltaire in a new book every year.

As always, the weaker side of the critical propaganda is its effort at reconstruction. As in England, so in France, the faithful accused the critics of "pulling down without building up," when in point of fact their chief error was to build up—that is, to rewrite the history of human thought—before they had the required materials, or had even mastered those which existed. Thus Voltaire and Rousseau alike framed à priori syntheses of the origins of religion and society. But there were closer thinkers than they in the rationalistic ranks. Fontenelle's essay *De l'origine des fables*, though not wholly exempt from error, admittedly lays aright the foundations of mythology and hierology; and De Brosses in his treatise *Du Culte des dieux fétiches* (1760) does a similar service on the side of anthropology. Meister's essay *De l'origine des principes religieux* is full of insight and breadth; and, despite some errors due to the backwardness of anthropology, essentially scientific in temper and standpoint. His later essay, *De la morale naturelle*, shows the same independence and fineness of speculation, seeming indeed to tell of a character which missed fame by reason of over-delicacy of fibre and lack of the driving force which marked the foremost men of that tempestuous time. Vauvenargues's essay *De la suffisance de la religion naturelle* is no less clinching, granted its deism. So, on the side of philosophy, Mirabaud, who was secretary of the Académie from 1742 to 1755, handles the problem of the relation of deism to ethics—if the posthumous essays in the *Recueil philosophique* be indeed his—in a much more philosophic fashion than does Voltaire, arguing unanswerably for the ultimate self-dependence of morals. The *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe*, ascribed to Freret, again, is a notably skilful attack on theism.

14. One of the most remarkable of the company in some respects is NICOLAS-ANTOINE BOULANGER (1722–1759), of whom Diderot gives a vivid account in a sketch prefixed to the posthumous *L'Antiquité dévoilée par ses usages* (1766). At the Collège de Beauvais, Boulanger was so little stimulated by his scholastic teachers that they looked for nothing from him in his maturity. When, however, at the age of seventeen, he began to study mathematics and architecture, his faculties began to develop; and the life, first of a military engineer in 1743–44, and later in the service

of the notable department of Roads and Bridges—the most efficient of all State services under Louis XV—made him an independent and energetic thinker. The chronic spectacle of the *corvée*, the forced labour of peasants on the roads, moved him to indignation; but he sought peace in manifold study, the engineer's contact with nature arousing in him all manner of speculations, geological and sociological. Seeking for historic light, he mastered Latin, which he had failed to do at school, reading widely and voraciously; and when the Latins failed to yield him the light he craved he systematically mastered Greek, reading the Greeks as hungrily and with as little satisfaction. Then he turned indefatigably to Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic, gleaning at best verbal clues which at length he wrought into a large, loose, imaginative yet immensely erudite schema of ancient social evolution, in which the physicist's pioneer study of the structure and development of the globe controls the anthropologist's guesswork as to the beginnings of human society. The whole is set forth in the bulky posthumous work *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental* (1761), and in the further treatise *L'antiquité dévoilée* (3 tom. 1766), which is but the concluding section of the first-named.

It all yields nothing to modern science; the unwearying research is all carried on, as it were, in the dark; and the sleepless brain of the pioneer can but weave webs of impermanent speculation from masses of unsifted and unmanageable material. Powers which to-day, on a prepared ground of ascertained science, might yield the greatest results, were wasted in a gigantic effort to build a social science out of the chaos of undeciphered antiquity, natural and human. But the man is nonetheless morally memorable. Diderot pictures him with a head Socratically ugly, simple and innocent of life, gentle though vivacious, reading Rabbinical Hebrew in his walks on the high roads, suffering all his life from "domestic persecution," "little contradictory though infinitely learned," and capable of passing in a moment, on the stimulus of a new idea, into a state of profound and entranced absorption. Diderot is always enthusiastically generous in praise; but in reading and reviewing Boulanger's work we can hardly refuse assent to his friend's claim that "if ever man has shown in his career the true characters of genius, it was he." His immense research was all compassed in a life of thirty-seven years, occupied throughout in an active profession; and the diction in which he sets forth his imaginative construction of the past reveals a constant intensity of thought rarely combined with scholarly knowledge. But it was

an age of concentrated energy, carrying in its womb the Revolution. The perusal of Boulanger is a sufficient safeguard against the long-cherished hallucination that the French freethinking of his age was but a sparkle of raillery.

Even among some rationalists, however, who are content to take hearsay report on these matters, there appears still to subsist a notion that the main body of the French freethinkers of the eighteenth century were mere scoffers, proceeding upon no basis of knowledge and with no concern for research. Such an opinion is possible only to those who have not examined their work. To say nothing more of the effort of Boulanger, an erudition much more exact than Voltaire's and a deeper insight than his and Rousseau's into the causation of primitive religion inspires the writings of men like Burigny and Freret on the one hand, and Fontenelle and Meister on the other. The philosophic reach of Diderot, one of the most convinced opponents of the ruling religion, was recognized by Goethe. And no critic of the "*philosophes*" handled more uncompromisingly than did Dumarsais[1] the vanity of the assumption that a man became a philosopher by merely setting himself in opposition to orthodox belief. Dumarsais, long scholastically famous for his youthful treatise *Des Tropes*, lived up to his standard, whatever some of the more eminent *philosophes* may have done, being found eminently lovable by pietists who knew him; while for D'Alembert he was "the La Fontaine of the philosophers" in virtue of his lucid simplicity of style.[2] The *Analyse de la religion chrétienne* printed under his name in some editions of the *Évangile de la Raison* has been pronounced supposititious. It seems to be the work of at least two hands[3] of different degrees of instruction;

[1] In the short essay *Le Philosophe*, which appeared in the *Nouvelles Libertés de Penser*, 1743 and 1750, and in the *Recueil Philosophique*, 1770. In the 1793 rep. of the *Essai sur les préjugés* (again rep. in 1822) it is unhesitatingly affirmed, on the strength of its title-page and the prefixed letter of Dumarsais, dated 1750, that that book is an expansion of the essay *Le Philosophe*, and that this was published in 1760. But *Le Philosophe* is an entirely different production, which to a certain extent criticizes *les philosophes* so-called. The *Essai sur les préjugés* published in 1770 is not the work of Dumarsais; it is a new work by d'Holbach. This was apparently known to Frederick, who in his rather angry criticism of the book writes that, whereas Dumarsais had always respected constituted authorities, others had "put out in his name, two years after he was dead and buried, a libel of which the veritable author could only be a schoolboy as new to the world as he was puzzle-headed." (*Mélanges en vers et en prose de Frederic II*, 1792, ii, 215). Dumarsais died in 1754, but I can find no good evidence that the *Essai sur les préjugés* was ever printed before 1770. As to d'Holbach's authorship see the *Œuvres de Diderot*, ed. 1821, xii, 115 *sq.*—passage copied in the 1829–31 ed. of the *Correspondance littéraire* of Grimm and Diderot, xiv, 293 *sq.* In a letter to D'Alembert dated Mars 27, 1773, Voltaire writes that in a newly-printed collection of treatises containing his own *Lois de Minos* is included "*le philosophe* de Dumarsais, qui n'a jamais été imprimé jusqu'à present." This seems to be a complete mistake.

[2] Grimm (iv, 86) has some good stories of him. He announced one day that he had found twenty-five fatal flaws in the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, the first being that the dead do not rise. His scholarly friend Nicolas Boindin (see above, p. 222) said: "Dumarsais is a Jansenist atheist; as for me, I am a Molinist atheist."

[3] On two successive pages the title Messiah is declared to mean "simply one sent" and simply "anointed."

but, apart from some errors due to one of these, it does him no discredit, being a vigorous criticism of Scriptural contradictions and anomalies, such as a "Jansenist atheist" might well compose, though it makes the usual profession of deistic belief.

Later polemic works, inspired by those above noticed, reproduce some of their arguments, but with an advance in literary skill, as in the anonymous *Bon Sens* given forth (1772) by Diderot and d'Holbach as the work of Jean Meslier, but really an independent compilation, embodying other arguments with his, and putting the whole with a concision and brilliancy to which he could make no approach. Prémontval, a bad writer,[1] contrives nonetheless to say many pungent things of a deistic order in his *Diogène de d'Alembert*, and, following Marie Huber, puts forward the formula of religion *versus* theology, which has done so much duty in the nineteenth century. Of the whole literature it is not too much to say that it covered cogently most of the important grounds of latter-day debate, from the questions of revelation and the doctrine of torments to the bases of ethics and the problem of deity; and it would be hard to show that the nineteenth century has handled the main issues with more sincerity, lucidity, or logic than were attained by Frenchmen in the eighteenth. To-day, no doubt, in the light of a century and a-half of scientific, historic, and philosophic accumulation, the rationalist case is put with more profundity and accuracy by many writers than it could be in the eighteenth century. But we have to weigh the freethinkers of that age against their opponents, and the French performers against those of other countries, to make a fair estimate. When this is done their credit is safe. When German and other writers say with Tholuck that "unbelief entered Germany not by the weapons of mere wit and scoffing as in France; it grounded itself on learned research,"[2] they merely prove their ignorance of French culture-history. An abundance of learned research in France preceded the triumphant campaign of Voltaire, who did most of the witty writing on the subject; and whose light artillery was to the last reinforced by the heavier guns of d'Holbach. It is only in the analysis of the historical problem by the newer tests of anthropology and hierology, and in the light of latterly discovered documents, that our generation has made much advance on the strenuous pioneers of the age of Voltaire. And even in the

[1] Like Buffier and Huard, however, he strives for a reform in spelling, dropping many doubled letters, and writing *home, bone, acuse, fole, apelle, honête, afreux*, etc.

[2] *Abriss einer Geschichte der Umwälzung welche seit 1750 auf dem Gebiete der Theologie in Deutschland statt gefunden*, in Tholuck's *Vermischte Schriften*, 1839, ii, 5. The proposition is repeated pp. 24, 33.

field of anthropology the sound thinking of Fontenelle and De Brosses long preceded any equally valid work by rationalists in Germany; though Spencer of Cambridge had preceded them in his work of constructive orthodoxy.

15. Though the bibliographers claim to have traced the authorship in most cases, such works were in the first instance generally published anonymously,[1] as were those of Voltaire, d'Holbach, and the leading freethinkers; and the clerical policy of suppression had the result of leaving them generally unanswered, save in anonymous writings, when they nevertheless got into private circulation. It was generally impolitic that an official answer should appear to a book which was officially held not to exist; so that the orthodox defence was long confined mainly to the classic performances of Pascal, Bossuet, Huet, Fénelon, and some outsiders such as the Protestant Abbadie, who settled first in Berlin and later in London. The polemic of every one of the writers named is a work of ability; even that of Abbadie (*Traité de la Vérité de la religion chrétienne*, 1684), though now little known, was in its day much esteemed.[2] In the age of Louis XIV those classic answers to unbelief were by believers held to be conclusive; and thus far the French defence was certainly more thorough and philosophical than the English. But French freethought, which in Herbert's day had given the lead to English, now drew new energy from the English growth; and the general arguments of the old apologists did not explicitly meet the new attack. Their books having been written to meet the mostly unpublished objections of previous generations, the Church through its chosen policy had the air of utter inability to confute the newer propaganda, though some apologetic treatises of fair power did appear, in particular those of the Abbé Bergier.[3] By the avowal of a Christian historian, "So low had the talents of the once illustrious Church of France fallen that in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when Christianity itself was assailed, not one champion of note appeared in its ranks; and when the convocation of the clergy, in 1770, published their famous anathema against the dangers of unbelief, and offered rewards for the best

[1] The exceptions were books published outside of France.

[2] Madame de Sévigné, for instance, declared that she would not let pass a year of her life without re-reading the second volume of Abbadie.

[3] *Le Déisme refuté par lui-même* (largely a reply to Rousseau), 1765; 1770, *Apologie de la religion chrétienne*; 1773, *La certitude des preuves du christianisme*. In 1759 had appeared the *Lettres sur le Déisme* of the younger Salchi, professor at Lausanne. It deals chiefly with the English deists, and with D'Argens. As before noted, the Abbé Gauchat began in 1751 his *Lettres Critiques*, which in time ran to 15 volumes (1751–61). There were also two journals, Jesuit and Jansenist, which fought the *philosophes* (Lanson, p. 721); and sometimes even a manuscript was answered—*e.g.* the *Réfutation du Celse moderne* of the Abbé Gautier (1752), a reply to Mirabaud's unpublished *Examen critique*.

essays in defence of the Christian faith, the productions called forth were so despicable that they sensibly injured the cause of religion."[1]

The freethinking attack, in fact, had now become overwhelming. After the suppression of the Jesuit Order (1764)[2] the press grew practically more and more free; and when, after the accession of Pope Clement XIV (1769), the freethinking books circulated with less and less restraint, Bergier extended his attack on deism, and deists and clerics joined in answering the atheistic *Système de la Nature* of d'Holbach. But by this time the deistic books were legion, and the political battle over the taxation of Church property had become the more pressing problem, especially seeing that the mass of the people remained conforming. The manifesto of the clergy in 1770 was accompanied by an address to the king "On the evil results of liberty of thought and printing," following up a previous appeal by the pope;[3] and in consideration of the donation by the clergy of sixteen million livres the Government recommended the Parlement of Paris to proceed against impious books. There seems accordingly to have been some hindrance to publication for a year or two; but in 1772 appeared the *Bon Sens* of d'Holbach and Diderot; and there was no further serious check, the Jesuits being disbanded by the pope in 1773.

The English view that French orthodoxy made a "bad" defence to the freethinking attack as compared with what was done in England (Sir J. F. Stephen, *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, 2nd. ser. p. 281; Alison, as cited above) proceeds on some misconception of the circumstances, which, as has been shown, were substantially different in the two countries. Could the English clergy have resorted to official suppression of deistic literature, they too would doubtless have done so. Swift and Berkeley bitterly desired to. But the view that the English defence was relatively "good," and that Butler's in particular was decisive, is also, as we have seen, fallacious. In Sir Leslie Stephen's analysis, as apart from his preamble, the orthodox defence is exhibited as generally weak, and often absurd. Nothing could be more futile than the three "Pastoral Letters" published by the Bishop of London (1728, 1730, 1731) as counterblasts to the freethinking books of this period. In France the defence began sooner, and was more profound and even more methodical. Pascal at least went deeper, and Bossuet (in his *Discours sur*

[1] Alison, *History of Europe*, ed. 1849, i, 180-81.

[2] The Jesuits were expelled from Portugal in 1759; from Bohemia and Denmark in 1766; from the whole dominions of Spain in 1767; from Genoa and Venice in the same year; and from Naples, Malta, and Parma in 1768. Officially suppressed in France in 1764, they were expelled thence in 1767. Pope Clement XIII strove to defend them; but in 1773 the Society was suppressed by papal bull by Clement XIV; whereafter they took refuge in Prussia and Russia, ruled by the freethinking Frederick and Catherine.

[3] See the *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. 1829-31, vii, 51 *sq.*

l'Histoire Universelle) more widely, into certain inward and outward problems of the controversy than did any of the English apologists; Huet produced, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, one of the most methodical of all the defensive treatises of the time; Abbadie, as before noted, gave great satisfaction, and certainly grappled zealously with Hobbes and Spinoza; Allix, though no great dialectician, gave a lead to English apologetics against the deists (above, p. 97), and was even adapted by Paley; and Fénelon, though his *Traité de l'Existence et des Attributs de Dieu* (1712) and *Lettres sur la Religion* (1716) are not very powerful processes of reasoning, contributed through his reproduced conversations (1710) with Ramsay a set of arguments at least as plausible as anything on the English side, and, what is more notable, marked by an amenity which almost no English apologist attained.

The ground had been thus very fully covered by the defence in France before the main battle in England began; and when a new French campaign commenced with Voltaire, the defence against that incomparable attack, so far as the system allowed of any, was probably as good as it could have been made in England, save insofar as the Protestants gave up modern miracles, while most of the Catholics claimed them for their Church. Counterblasts such as the essay of Linguet, *Le Fanatisme des Philosophes* (1764), were but general indictments of rationalism; and other apologetic treatises, as we saw, handled only the most prominent books on the other side. It should be noted, too, that as late as 1764 the police made it almost impossible to obtain in Paris works of Voltaire recently printed in Holland (Grimm, vii, 123, 133, 434). But, as Paley admitted with reference to Gibbon ("Who can refute a sneer?"), the new attack was in any case very hard to meet. A sneer is not hard to refute when it is unfounded, inasmuch as it implies a proposition, which can be rebutted or turned by another sneer. The Anglican Church had been well enough pleased by the polemic sneers of Swift and Berkeley; but the other side had the heavier guns, and of the mass of defences produced in England nothing remains save in the neat compilation of Paley. Alison's whole avowal might equally well apply to anything produced in England as against Voltaire. The skeptical line of argument for faith had been already employed by Huet and Pascal and Fénelon, with visibly small success; Berkeley had achieved nothing with it as against English deism; and Butler had no such effect in his day in England as to induce French Catholics to use him. (He does not appear to have been translated into French till 1821.)

An Oratorian priest, again, translated the anti-deistic essays of President Forbes; and the *Pensées Theologiques relatives aux erreurs du temps* of Père Jamin (1768; 4e édit. 1773) were

thought worthy of being translated into German, poor as they were. With their empty affirmation of authority they suggest so much blank cartridge, which could avail nothing with thinking men; and here doubtless the English defence makes a better impression. But, on the other hand, Voltaire circulated widely in England, and was no better answered there than in France. His attack was, in truth, at many points peculiarly baffling, were it only by its inimitable wit. The English replies to Spinoza, again, were as entirely inefficient or deficient as the French; the only intelligent English answers to Hume on Miracles (the replies on other issues were of no account) made use of the French investigations of the Jansenist miracles; and the replies to Gibbon were in general ignominious failures.

Finally, though the deeper reasonings of Diderot were over the heads alike of the French and the English clergy, the *Système de la Nature* of d'Holbach was met skilfully enough at many points by G. J. Holland (1772), who, though not a Frenchman, wrote excellent French, and supplied for French readers a very respectable rejoinder;[1] whereas in England there was practically none. In this case, of course, the defence was deistic; as was that of Voltaire, who criticized d'Holbach as Bolingbroke attacked Spinoza and Hobbes. But the *Examen du Matérialisme* of the Abbé Bergier (1771), who was a member of the Academy of Sciences, was at least as good as anything that could then have been done in the Church of England; and the same may be said of his reply to Freret's (really Burigny's) *Examen*. It is certainly poor enough; but Bishop Watson used some of its arguments for his reply to Paine. Broadly speaking, as we have said, much more of French than of English intelligence had been turned to the dispute in the third quarter of the century. In England, political and industrial discussion relieved the pressure on creed; in France, before the Revolution, the whole habit of absolutism tended to restrict discussion to questions of creed; and the attack would in any case have had the best of it, because it embodied all the critical forces hitherto available. The controversy thus went much further than the pre-Humian issues raised in England; and the English orthodoxy of the end of the century was, in comparison, intellectually as weak as politically and socially it was strong. In France, from the first, the greater intellectual freedom in social intercourse, exemplified in the readiness of women to declare themselves freethinkers (cp. Jamin, as cited, ch. xix, § 1), would have made the task of the apologists harder even had they been more competent.

16. Above the scattered band of minor combatants rises a group

[1] This apologetic work, after having been praised by the censor and registered with *privilège du roi* in November, 1772, was officially suppressed on Jan. 17, 1773, and, it would appear, reissued in that year.

of writers of special power, several of whom, without equalling Voltaire in ubiquity of influence, rivalled him in intellectual power and industry. The names of DIDEROT, D'HOLBACH, D'ALEMBERT, HELVÉTIUS, and CONDORCET are among the first in literary France of the generation before the Revolution; after them come VOLNEY and DUPUIS; and in touch with the whole series stands the line of great mathematicians and physicists (to which also belongs D'Alembert), LAPLACE, LAGRANGE, LALANDE, DELAMBRE. When to these we add the names of MONTESQUIEU, BUFFON, CHAMFORT, RIVAROL, VAUVENARGUES; of the materialists LA METTRIE and CABANIS; of the philosophers CONDILLAC and DESTUTT DE TRACY; of the historian RAYNAL; of the poet ANDRÉ CHÉNIER; of the politicians TURGOT, MIRABEAU, DANTON, DESMOULINS, ROBESPIERRE—all (save perhaps Raynal) deists or else pantheists or atheists—it becomes clear that the intelligence of France was predominantly rationalistic before the Revolution, though the mass of the nation certainly was not.

It is necessary to deprecate Mr. Lecky's statement (*Rationalism in Europe*, i, 176) that "Raynal has taken, with Diderot, a place in French literature which is probably permanent"—an estimate as far astray as the declaration on the same page that the English deists are buried in "unbroken silence." Raynal's vogue in his day was indeed immense (cp. Morley, *Diderot*, ch. xv); and Edmond Scherer (*Études sur la litt. du 18e Siècle*, 1891, pp. 277–78) held that Raynal's *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes* had had more influence on the French Revolution than even Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. But the book has long been discredited (cp. Scherer, pp. 275–76). A biographical Dictionary of 1844 spoke of it as "cet ouvrage ampoulé qu'on ne lit pas aujourd'hui." Although the first edition (1770) passed the censure only by means of bribery, and the second (1780) was publicly burned, and its author forced to leave France, he was said to reject, in religion, "only the pope, hell, and monks" (Scherer, p. 286); and most of the anti-religious declamation in the first edition of the *Histoire* is said to be from the pen of Diderot, who wrote it very much at random, at Raynal's request.

No list of orthodox names remotely comparable with these can be drawn from the literature of France, or indeed of any other country of that time. JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712–1778), the one other pre-eminent figure, though not an anti-Christian propagandist, is distinctly on the side of deism. In the *Contrat Social*,[1]

[1] Liv. i, ch. viii.

writing with express approbation of Hobbes, he declares that "the Christian law is at bottom more injurious than useful to the sound constitution of the State"; and even the famous *Confession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar* in the *Émile* is anti-revelationist, and practically anti-clerical. He was accordingly anathematized by the Sorbonne, which found in *Émile* nineteen heresies; the book was seized and burned both at Paris and at Geneva within a few weeks of its appearance,[1] and the author decreed to be arrested; even the *Contrat Social* was seized and its vendors imprisoned. All the while he had maintained in *Émile* doctrines of the usefulness of religious delusion and fanaticism. Still, although his temperamental way of regarding things has a clear affinity with some later religious philosophy of a more systematic sort, he undoubtedly made for freethought as well as for the revolutionary spirit in general. Thus the cause of Christianity stood almost denuded of intellectually eminent adherents in the France of 1789; for even among the writers who had dealt with public questions without discussing religion, or who had criticized Rousseau and the *philosophes*—as the Abbés Mably, Morellet, Millot—the tone was essentially rationalistic.

It has been justly enough argued, concerning Rousseau (see below, p. 287), that the generation of the Revolution made him its prophet in his own despite, and that had he lived twenty years longer he would have been its vehement adversary. But this does not alter the facts as to his influence. A great writer of emotional genius, like Rousseau, inevitably impels men beyond the range of his own ideals, as in recent times Ruskin and Tolstoy, both anti-Socialists, have led thousands towards Socialism. In his own generation and the next, Rousseau counted essentially for criticism of the existing order; and it was the revolutionaries, never the conservatives, who acclaimed him. De Tocqueville (*Hist. philos. du règne de Louis XV*, 1849, i, 33) speaks of his "impiété dogmatique." Martin du Theil, in his *J. J. Rousseau apologiste de la religion chrétienne* (2e édit. 1840), makes out his case by identifying emotional deism with Christianity, as did Rousseau himself when he insisted that "the true Christianity is only natural religion well explained." Rousseau's praise of the gospel and of the character of Jesus was such as many deists acquiesced in. Similar language, in the mouth of Matthew Arnold, gave rather more offence to Gladstone, as a believing Christian, than did the language of simple unbelief; and a recent Christian polemist, at the close of a copious monograph, has repudiated the association of Rousseau with the faith (see J. F. Nourrisson, *J. J. Rousseau et le Rousseauisme*, 1903, p. 497 *sq.*). What is true of him is

[1] Bachaumont, juin 22; juillet 9, 20, 27; novembre 14, 1762.

that he was more religiously a theist than Voltaire, whose impeachment of Providence in the poem on the Earthquake of Lisbon he sought strenuously though not very persuasively to refute in a letter to the author. But, with all his manifold inconsistencies, which may be worked down to the neurosis so painfully manifest in his life and in his relations to his contemporaries, he never writes as a believer in the dogmas of Christianity or in the principle of revelation ; and it was as a deist that he was recognized by his Christian contemporaries. A demi-Christian is all that Michelet will call him. His compatriot the Swiss pastor Roustan, located in London, directed against him his *Offrande aux Autels et à la Patrie, ou Défense du Christianisme* (1764), regarding him as an assailant. The work of the Abbé Bergier, *Le Déisme refuté par lui-même* (1765, and later), takes the form of letters addressed to Rousseau, and is throughout an attack on his works, especially the *Émile*. When, therefore, Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 475) speaks of him as not having attacked Christianity, and Lord Morley (*Rousseau*, ch. xiv) treats him as creating a religious reaction against the deists, they do not fully represent his influence on his time. As we have seen, he stimulated Voltaire to new audacities by his example.

17. An interlude in the critical campaign, little noticed at the time, developed importance a generation later. In 1753 JEAN ASTRUC, doctor of medicine, published after long hesitation his *Conjectures on the original documents which Moses seems to have used in composing the book of Genesis*. Only in respect of his flash of insight into the composite structure of the Pentateuch was Astruc a freethinker. His hesitation to publish was due to his fear that *les pretendus esprits forts* might make a bad use of his work ; and he was quite satisfied that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch as it stands. The denial of that authorship, implied in the criticisms of Hobbes and Spinoza, he described as "the disease of the last century." This attitude may explain the lack of interest in Astruc's work shown by the freethinkers of the time.[1] Nonetheless, by his perception of the clue given by the narrative use of the two names Yahweh and Elohim in Genesis, he laid a new foundation of the Higher Criticism of the Bible in modern times, advancing alike on Spinoza and on Simon. For freethought he had "builded better than he knew."

[1] Grimm notices Astruc's *Dissertations sur l'immortalité, l'immaterialité, et la liberté de l'âme*, published in 1755 (*Corr.* i, 438), but not his *Conjectures*. At his death (1766) he pronounces him "un des hommes les plus decriés de Paris," "Il passait pour fripon, fourbe, méchant, en un mot pour un très-malhonnête homme." "Il était violent et emporté, et d'une avarice sordide." Finally, he died "sans sacremens" after having "fait le dévot" and attached himself to the Jesuits in their day of power. *Corr.* v, 28. But Grimm was a man of many hates, and not the best of historians.

18. In the select Parisian arena of the Académie, the intellectual movement of the age is as it were dramatized; and there more clearly than in the literary record we can trace the struggle of opinions, from the admission of Voltaire (1746) onwards. In the old days the Académie had been rather the home of convention, royalism, and orthodoxy than of ideas, though before Voltaire there were some freethinking members of the lesser Académies, notably Boindin.[1] The admission of Montesquieu (1728), after much opposition from the court, preludes a new era; and from the entrance of Voltaire, fourteen years after his first attempt,[2] the atmosphere begins perceptibly to change. When, in 1727, the academician Bonamy had read a memoir *On the character and the paganism of the emperor Julian*, partly vindicating him against the aspersions of the Christian Fathers, the Academy feared to print the paper, though its author was a devout Catholic.[3] When the Abbé La Bletterie, also orthodox, read to the Academy portions of his *Vie de Julien*, the members were not now scandalized, though the Abbé's Jansenism moved the King to veto his nomination. So, when Blanchard in 1735 read a memoir on *Les exorcismes magiques* there was much trepidation among the members, and again the Secretary inserted merely an analysis, concluding with the words of Philetas, "Believe and fear God; beware of questioning."[4] Even such a play of criticism as the challenging of the early history of Rome by Lévesque de Pouilly (brother of Lévesque de Burigny) in a dissertation before the Académie in 1722, roused the fears and the resentment of the orthodox; the Abbé Sallier, in undertaking to refute him, insinuated that he had shown a spirit which might be dangerous to other beliefs; and whispers of atheism passed among the academicians.[5] Pouilly, who had been made a freethinker by English contacts, went again to England later, and spent his last years at Rheims.[6] His thesis was much more powerfully sustained in 1738 by Beaufort, in the famous dissertation *Sur l'incertitude des cinq premiers siècles de l'histoire romaine;* but Beaufort was of a refugee-Huguenot stock; his book was published, under his initials, at Utrecht; and not till 1753 did the Académie award him a medal—on the score of an earlier treatise. And in 1748 the *Religio veterum Persarum* of the English Orientalist Hyde, published as long before as 1700, found a

[1] Cp. Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1864, pp. 55–56.
[2] Voltaire's various stratagems to secure election are not to his credit. See Paul Mesnard, *Histoire de l'académie française*, 1857, pp. 68–74. But even Montesquieu is said to have resorted to some questionable devices for the same end. *Id.* p. 62.
[3] Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des inscriptions*, pp. 54–55, 94, 308.
[4] *Id.* p. 93. [5] *Id.* pp. 116–20.
[6] Where he was lieutenant-général, and died in 1750.

vehement assailant within the Academy in the Abbé Foucher, who saw danger in a favourable view of any heathen religion.

Yet even in the time of Louis XIV the Abbé Mongault, tutor of the son of the Regent, and noted alike for his private freethinking and for the rigid orthodoxy which he instilled into his pupil, treated the historic subject of the divine honours rendered to Roman governors with such latitude as to elicit from Freret, in his *éloge* of Mongault, the remark that the tutor had reserved to himself a liberty of thought which he doubtless felt to be dangerous in a prince.[1] And after 1750 the old order can be seen passing away. D'Argenson notes in his diary in 1754: "I observe in the Académie de belles-lettres, of which I am a member, that there begins to be a decided stir against the priests. It began to show itself at the death of Boindin, to whom our bigots refused a service at the Oratory and a public commemoration. Our deist philosophers were shocked, and ever since, at each election, they are on guard against the priests and the bigots. Nowhere is this division so marked, and it begins to bear fruits."[2] The old statesman indicates his own sympathies by adding: "Why has a bad name been made of the title of *deist?* It is that of those who have true religion in their hearts, and who have abjured a superstition that is destructive to the whole world." It was in this year that D'Alembert, who took nearly as much pains to stay out as Voltaire had done to enter,[3] was elected a member; and with two leading *encyclopédistes* in the forty, and a friendly abbé (Duclos) in the secretaryship (1755), and another zealous freethinker, Lévesque de Burigny, admitted in 1756,[4] the fortunes of freethought were visibly rising. Its influence was thrown on the side of the academic orator Thomas, a sincere believer but a hater of all persecution, and as such offensive to the Church party.[5]

19. In 1759 there came a check. The *Encyclopédie*, which had been allowed to resume publication after its first suppression in 1752, was again stopped; and the battle between *philosophes* and fanatics, dramatized for the time being in Palissot's comedy *Les Philosophes* and in Voltaire's rejoinder to Fréron, *L'Écossaise*, came to be fought out in the Academy itself. The poet Lefranc de Pompignan,[6] elected in 1759 without any opposition from the freethinkers, had in his youth translated Pope's "Deist's Prayer," and had suffered for it to the extent of being deprived by D'Aguesseau of

[1] Maury, pp. 53, 86-87.
[2] *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv. 181.
[3] Cp. Mesnard, as cited, pp. 79-80.
[4] Maury, p. 315.
[5] *Id.* pp. 82-84. It is noteworthy that the orthodox Thomas, and not any of the *philosophes*, was the first to impeach the Government in academic discourses. Mesnard, pp. 82-84, 100 *sq.*
[6] "L'excellent Pompignan," M. Lanson calls him, p. 723.

his official charge[1] for six months. With such a past, with a keen concern for status, and with a character that did not stick at tergiversation, Pompignan saw fit to signalize his election by making his *discours de réception* (March, 1760) a violent attack on the whole philosophic school, which, in his conclusion, he declared to be undermining "equally the throne and the altar." The academicians heard him out in perfect silence, leaving it to the few pietists among the audience to applaud; but as soon as the reports reached Ferney there began the vengeance of Voltaire. First came a leaflet of stinging sentences, each beginning with *Quand*: "*When* one has translated and even exaggerated the 'Deist's Prayer' composed by Pope....," and so on. The maddened Pompignan addressed a fatuous memorial to the King (who notoriously hated the *philosophes*, and had assented only under petticoat influence to Voltaire's election[2]); and, presuming to print it without the usual official sanction, suffered at the hands of Malesherbes the blow of having the printer's plant smashed. Other combatants entered the fray. Voltaire's leaflet "les *quand*" was followed by "les *si*, les *pour*, les *qui*, les *quoi*, les *car*, les *ah!*"—by him or others—and the master-mocker produced in swift succession three satires in verse,[3] all accompanied by murderous prose annotations. The speedy result was Pompignan's retirement into provincial life. He could not face the merciless hail of rejoinders; and when at his death, twenty-five years later, the Abbé Maury had to pronounce his *éloge*, the mention of his famous humiliation was hardly tempered by compassion.[4]

20. Voltaire could not compass, as he for a time schemed, the election of Diderot; but other *philosophes* of less note entered from time to time;[5] Marmontel was elected in 1763; and when in 1764 the Academy's prize for poetry was given to Chamfort for a piece which savoured of what were then called "the detestable principles of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Helvétius," and in 1768 its prize for eloquence went to the same writer, the society as a whole had acquired a certain character for impiety.[6] In 1767 there had occurred the famous ecclesiastical explosion over Marmontel's philosophic romance *Bélisaire*, a performance in which it is somewhat difficult to-day to detect any exciting quality. It was by a chapter in praise of toleration that the "universal and mediocre

[1] "Les provisions de sa charge pendant six mois en 1736." Voltaire, Lettre à Mme. D'Épinay, 13 juin, 1760. "Je le servis dans cette affaire," adds Voltaire.
[2] Mesnard, pp. 67, 71, 73, 89.
[3] *Le Pauvre Diable, ouvrage en vers aisés de feu M. Vadé, mis en lumière par Catherine Vadé, sa cousine* (falsely dated 1758); *La Vanité*; and *Le Russe à Paris*.
[4] Mesnard, pp. 86-92. [5] *Id.* pp. 93-94. [6] *Id.* pp. 95-96.

Marmontel "[1] secured from the Sorbonne the finest advertisement ever given to a work of fiction, the ecclesiastics of the old school being still too thoroughly steeped in the past to realize that a gospel of persecution was a bad warcry for a religion that was being more and more put on the defensive. Only an angry fear before the rising flood of unlicensed literature, combining with the long-baffled desire to strike some blow at freethinking, could have moved the Sorbonne to select for censure the duly licensed work[2] of a popular academician and novelist; and it should be remembered that it was at a time of great activity in the unlicensed production of freethinking literature that the attack was made. The blow recoiled signally. The book was of course promptly translated into all the languages of Europe, selling by tens of thousands;[3] and two sovereigns took occasion to give it their express approval. These were the Empress Catherine (who caused the book to be translated by members of her court while she was making a tour of her empire, she herself taking a chapter), and the Empress Maria-Theresa. From Catherine, herself a freethinker, the approbation might have been expected; but the known orthodoxy and austerity of Maria-Theresa made her support the more telling. In France a small literary tempest raged for a year. Marmontel published his correspondence with the syndic of the Sorbonne and with Voltaire; and in all there appeared some dozen documents *pro* and *con*, among them an anonymous satire by Turgot, *Les xxxvii verités opposées aux xxxvii impiétés de Bélisaire*, "Par un Bachelier Ubiquiste,"[4] which, with the contributions of Voltaire, gave the victim very much the best of the battle.

21. Alongside of the more strictly literary or humanist movement, too, there went on one of a scientific kind, which divided into two lines, a speculative and a practical. On the former the free-lance philosopher JULIEN OFFRAY LA METTRIE gave a powerful initial push by his materialistic theses, in which a medical knowledge that for the time was advanced is applied with a very keen if unsystematic reasoning faculty to the primary problem of mind and body; and others after him continued the impulse. La Mettrie produced his *Natural History of the Mind* in 1745;[5] and in 1746

[1] Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 725.

[2] The formal approval of a Sorbonnist was necessary. One refused it; another gave it. Marmontel, *Mémoires*, 1804, iii, 35–36.

[3] Marmontel mentions that while he was still discussing a compromise with the syndic of the Sorbonne, 40,000 copies had been sold throughout Europe. *Mémoires*, iii, 39.

[4] This satire was taken by the German freethinker Eberhard, in his *New Apology for Socrates*, as the actual publication of the Sorbonne. Barbier, *Dict. des Ouvr. anon. et Pseud.*, 2d edit. i, 468.

[5] Published pseudonymously as a translation from the English: *Histoire naturelle de l'âme*, traduite de l'Anglais de M. Charp, par feu M. H——, de l'Académie des Sciences. A La Haye, 1745. Republished under the title *Traité de l'Âme*.

appeared the *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* of the Abbé CONDILLAC, both essentially rationalistic and anti-theological works, though differing in their psychological positions, Condillac being a non-materialist, though a strong upholder of "sensism." La Mettrie followed up his doctrine with the more definitely materialistic but less heedfully planned works, *L'Homme Plante* and *L'Homme Machine* (1748), the second of which, published at Leyden[1] and wickedly dedicated to the pious Baron von Haller, was burned by order of the magistrates, its author being at the same time expelled from Holland. Both books are remarkable for their originality of thought, biological and ethical. Though La Mettrie professed to think the "greatest degree of probability" was in favour of the existence of a personal God,[2] his other writings gave small support to the hypothesis; and even in putting it he rejects any inference as to worship. And he goes on to quote very placidly an atheist who insists that only an atheistic world can attain to happiness. It is notable that he, the typical materialist of his age, seems to have been one of its kindliest men, by the consent of all who knew him,[3] though heedless in his life to the point of ending it by eating a monstrous meal out of bravado.

The conventional denunciation of La Mettrie (endorsed by Lord Morley, *Voltaire*, p. 122) proceeds ostensibly upon those of his writings in which he discussed sexual questions with absolute scientific freedom. He, however, insisted that his theoretic discussion had nothing whatever to do with his practice; and there is no evidence that he lived otherwise than as most men did in his age, and ours. Still, the severe censure passed on him by Diderot (*Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron*, ed. 1782, ii, 22–24) seems to convict him of at least levity of character. Voltaire several times holds the same tone. But Diderot writes so angrily that his verdict incurs suspicion.

As Lange notes, there has been much loose generalization as to the place and bearing of La Mettrie in the history of French thought. Hettner, who apparently had not thought it worth while to read him, has ascribed his mental movement to the influence of Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques* (1746), whereas it had begun in his own *Histoire naturelle de l'âme*, published a year before. La Mettrie's originality and influence in general

[1] By Elie Luzac, to whom is ascribed the reply entitled *L'Homme plus que Machine* (1748 also). This is printed in the *Œuvres philosophiques* of La Mettrie as if it were his; and Lange (i, 420) seems to think it was. But the bibliographers ascribe it to Luzac, who was a man of culture and ability.

[2] *L'Homme Machine*, ed. Assézat, 1865, p. 97; *Œuv. philos.* ed. 1774, iii, 51.

[3] Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 362 *sq.* (Eng. tr. ii, 78-80); Soury, *Bréviaire de l'hist. du matérialisme*, pp. 663, 666-68; Voltaire, *Homélie sur l'athéisme*, end. Frederick the Great, who gave La Mettrie harbourage, support, and friendship, and who was not a bad judge of men, wrote and read in the Berlin Academy the funeral éloge of La Mettrie, and pronounced him "une âme pure et un cœur serviable." By "pure" he meant sincere.

have been underestimated as a result of the hostility set up by disparagement of his character. The idea of a fundamental unity of type in nature—an idea underlying all the successive steps of Lamarck, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Goethe, and others, towards the complete conception of evolution—is set forth by him in *L'Homme Plante* in 1748, the year in which appeared De Maillet's *Telliamed*. Buffon follows in time as in thought, only beginning his great work in 1749; Maupertuis, with his pseudonymous dissertation on the *Universal system of Nature*, applies La Mettrie's conception in 1751; and Diderot's *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*, stimulated by Maupertuis, appeared only in 1754. La Mettrie proceeded from the classification of Linnæus, but did not there find his idea. In the words of Lange, "these forgotten writings are in nowise so empty and superficial as is commonly assumed." *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 328–29. Lange seems to have been the first to make a judicial study of La Mettrie's work, as distinguished from the scandals about his character.

22. A more general influence, naturally, attached to the simple concrete handling of scientific problems. The interest in such questions, noticeable in England at the Restoration and radiating thence, is seen widely diffused in France after the publication of Fontenelle's *Entretiens*, and thenceforward it rapidly strengthens. Barren theological disputations set men not merely against theology, but upon the study of Nature, where real knowledge was visibly possible. To a certain extent the study took openly heretical lines. The Abbé Lenglet du Fresnoy, who was four times imprisoned in the Bastille, supplied material of which D'Argens made much use, tending to overthrow the Biblical chronology and to discredit the story of the Flood.[1] Benoît de Maillet (1656–1738), who had been for fifteen years inspector of the French establishments in Egypt and Barbary, left for posthumous publication (1748) a work of which the first title was an anagram of his name, *Telliamed, ou Entretiens d'un philosophe indien avec un missionaire français*. Of this treatise the thesis is that the shell deposits in the Alps and elsewhere showed the sea to have been where land now was; and that the rocks were gradually deposited in their different kinds in the fashion in which even now are being formed mud, sand, and shingle. De Maillet had thus anticipated the central conception of modern geology, albeit retaining many traditional delusions. His abstention from publication during his lifetime testifies to his sense of the danger he underwent, the treatise having been printed by him only in 1735, at the

[1] Salchi, *Lettres sur le Déisme*, 1759, pp. 177, 197, 239, 283 *sq.*

age of seventy-nine; and not till ten years after his death was it given to the world, with "a preface and dedication so worded as, in case of necessity, to give the printer a fair chance of falling back on the excuse that the work was intended for a mere *jeu d'esprit*."[1]

The thesis was adopted, indeed plagiarized,[2] by Mirabaud in his *Le Monde, son origine et son antiquité* (1751). Strangely enough, Voltaire refused to be convinced, and offered amazing suggestions as to the possible deposit of shells by pilgrims.[3] It is not unlikely that it was Voltaire's opposition rather than any orthodox argumentation that retarded in France the acceptance of an evolutionary view of the origin of the earth and of life. It probably had a more practical effect on scientific thought in England[4]—at least as regards geology: its speculations on the modification of species, which loosely but noticeably anticipate some of the inferences of Darwin, found no acceptance anywhere till Lamarck. In the opinion of Huxley, the speculations of Robinet, in the next generation, "are rather behind than in advance of those of De Maillet";[5] and it may be added that the former, with his pet theory that all Nature is "animated," and that the stars and planets have the faculty of reproducing themselves like animals, wandered as far from sound bases as De Maillet ever did. The very form of De Maillet's work, indeed, was not favourable to its serious acceptance; and in his case, as in those of so many pioneers of new ideas, errors and extravagances and oversights in regard to matters of detail went to justify "practical" men in dismissing novel speculations. Needless to say, the common run of scientific men remained largely under the influence of religious presuppositions in science even when they had turned their backs on the Church. Nonetheless, on all sides the study of natural fact began to play its part in breaking down the dominion of creed. Even in hidebound Protestant Switzerland, the sheer ennui of Puritanism is seen driving the descendants of the Huguenot refugees to the physical sciences for an interest and an occupation, before any free-thinking can safely be avowed; and in France, as Buckle has shown in abundant detail, the study of the physical sciences became for many years before the Revolution almost a fashionable mania. And at the start the Church had contrived that such study should rank as unbelief, and so make unbelievers.

[1] Huxley, essay on *Darwin on the Origin of Species*; R. P. A. ed. of *Twelve Lectures and Essays*, p. 94.

[2] See the parallel passages in the *Lettres Critiques* of the Abbé Gauchat, vol. xv (1761), p. 192 *sq.*

[3] See his essay *Des Singularités de la Nature*, ch. xii, and his *Dissertation sur les changements arrivés dans notre globe.* [4] Eng. tr. 1750.

[5] Essay cited, p. 96. The criticism ignores the greater comprehensiveness of Robinet's survey of nature.

When Buffon[1] in 1749–50 published his *Histoire Naturelle*, the delight which was given to most readers by its finished style was paralleled by the wrath which its *Théorie de la Terre* aroused among the clergy. After much discussion Buffon received early in 1751 from the Sorbonne an official letter specifying as reprehensible in his book fourteen propositions which he was invited to retract. He stoically obeyed in a declaration to the effect that he had "no intention to contradict the text of Scripture," and that he believed "most firmly all there related about the creation," adding: "I abandon everything in my book respecting the formation of the earth."[2] Still he was attacked as an unbeliever by the Bishop of Auxerre in that prelate's pastoral against the thesis of de Prades.[3] During the rest of his life he outwardly conformed to religious usage, but all men knew that in his heart he believed what he had written; and the memory of the affront that the Church had thus put upon so honoured a student helped to identify her cause no less with ignorance than with insolence and oppression. For all such insults, and for the long roll of her cruelties, the Church was soon to pay a tremendous penalty.

23. But science, like theology, had its schisms, and the rationalizing camp had its own strifes. MAUPERTUIS, for instance, is remembered mainly as one of the victims of the mockery of Voltaire (which he well earned by his own antagonism at the court of Frederick); yet he was really an energetic man of science, and had preceded Voltaire in setting up in France the Newtonian against the Cartesian physics. In his *System of Nature*[4] (not to be confused with the later work of d'Holbach under the same title) he in 1751 propounded a new version of the hylozoisms of ancient Greece; developed the idea of an underlying unity in the forms of natural life, already propounded by La Mettrie in his *L'Homme Plante;* connected it with Leibnitz's formula of the economy of nature ("minimum of action"—the germ of the modern "line of least resistance"), and at the same time anticipated some of the special philosophic positions of Kant.[5] Diderot, impressed by but professedly dissenting from Maupertuis's *Système* in his *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature* (1754), promptly pointed out that the conception

[1] George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707–1788.
[2] Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 12th ed. 1875, i, 57–58.
[3] *Suite de l'Apologie de M. l'Abbé De Prades*, 1752, p. 37 *sq*.
[4] *Dissertatio inauguralis metaphysica de universali naturæ systemate*, published at Göttingen as the doctoral thesis of an imaginary Dr. Baumann, 1751. In French, 1753.
[5] Sourry, p. 379. The later speculations of Maupertuis by their extravagance discredited the earlier.

of a primordially vitalized atom excluded that of a Creator, and for his own part thereafter took that standpoint.[1]

In 1754 came the *Traité des Sensations* of Condillac, in which is most systematically developed the physio-psychological conception of man as an "animated statue," of which the thought is wholly conditioned by the senses. The mode of approach had been laid down before by La Mettrie, by Diderot, and by Buffon; and Condillac is rather a developer and systematizer than an originator;[2] but in this case the process of unification was to the full as important as the first steps;[3] and Condillac has an importance which is latterly being rediscovered by the school of Spencer on the one hand and by that of James on the other. Condillac, commonly termed a materialist, no more held the legendary materialistic view than any other so named; and the same may be said of the next figure in the "materialistic" series, J. B. ROBINET, a Frenchman settled at Amsterdam, after having been, it is said, a Jesuit. His *Nature* (4 vols. 1761–1768) is a remarkable attempt to reach a strictly naturalistic conception of things.[4] But he is a theorist, not an investigator. Even in his fixed idea that the universe is an "animal" he had perhaps a premonition of the modern discovery of the immense diffusion of bacterial life; but he seems to have had more deriders than disciples. He founds at once on Descartes and on Leibnitz, but in his *Philosophical Considerations on the natural gradation of living forms* (1768) he definitely sets aside theism as illusory, and puts ethics on a strictly scientific and human footing,[5] extending the arguments of Hume and Hutcheson somewhat on the lines of Mandeville.[6] On another line of reasoning a similar application of Mandeville's thesis had already been made by HELVÉTIUS in his *Traité de l'Esprit*[7] (1758), a work which excited a hostility now difficult to understand, but still reflected in censures no less surprising.

> One of the worst misrepresentations in theological literature is the account of Helvétius by the late Principal Cairns (*Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 158) as appealing to government "to promote luxury, and, through luxury, public good, by abolishing all those laws that cherish a false modesty and restrain

[1] "Scheinbar bekämpft er Maupertuis desswegen, aber im geheimen stimmt er ihm bei" (Rosenkranz, i. 144).

[2] It should be noted that by Condillac's avowal he was much aided by his friend Mdlle. Ferrand.

[3] Cp. Réthoré, *Condillac, ou l'empirisme et le rationalisme*, 1864, ch. i.

[4] Lange, ii. 27, 29; Soury, pp. 603–44. [5] Soury, pp. 596–600; Lange, ii. 27.

[6] Oddly enough he became ultimately press censor! He lived till 1820, dying at Rennes at the age of 85.

[7] This may best be translated *Treatise on the Mind*. The English translation of 1759 (rep. 1807) is entitled *De l'Esprit: or, Essays on the Mind*, etc.

libertinage." Helvétius simply pressed the consequences of the existing theory of luxury, which for his own part he disclaimed. *De l'Esprit*, Disc. ii, ch. xv. Dr. Pünjer (i, 462) falls so far below his usual standard as to speak of Helvétius in a similar fashion. As against such detraction it is fitting to note that Helvétius, like La Mettrie, was one of the most lovable and most beloved men of his time, though, like him, sufficiently licentious in his youth.

It was at once suppressed by royal order as scandalous, licentious, and dangerous, though Helvétius held a post at court as *maître d'hôtel* to the Queen. Ordered to make a public retractation, he did so in a letter addressed to a Jesuit; and this being deemed insufficient, he had to sign another, "so humiliating," wrote Grimm,[1] "that one would not have been astonished to see a man take refuge with the Hottentots rather than put his name to such avowals." The wits explained that the censor who had passed the book, being an official in the Bureau of Foreign Affairs, had treated *De l'Esprit* as belonging to that department.[2] A swarm of replies appeared, and the book was formally burnt, with Voltaire's poem *Sur la loi naturelle*, and several obscure works of older standing.[3] The *De l'Esprit*, appearing alongside of the ever-advancing *Encyclopédie*,[4] was in short a formidable challenge to the powers of bigotry.

Its real faults are lack of system, undue straining after popularity, some hasty generalization, and a greater concern for the air of paradox than for persuasion; but it abounds in acuteness and critical wisdom, and it definitely and seriously founds public ethics on utility. Its most serious error, the assumption that all men are born with equal faculties, and that education is the sole differentiating force, was repeated in our own age by John Stuart Mill; but in Helvétius the error is balanced by the thoroughly sound and profoundly important thesis that the general superiorities of *nations* are the result of their culture-conditions and politics.[5] The overbalance of his stress on self-interest[6] is an error easily soluble. On the other hand, we have the memorable testimony of BECCARIA that it was the work of Helvétius that inspired him to his great effort for the humanizing of penal laws and policy;[7] and the only

[1] *Correspondance*, ii, 262. [2] *Id.* p. 263. [3] *Id.* p. 293.

[4] At the time the pietists declared that Diderot had collaborated in *De l'Esprit*. This was denied by Grimm, who affirmed that Diderot and Helvétius were little acquainted, and rarely met; but his Secretary, Meister, wrote in 1786 that the finest pages in the book were Diderot's. *Id.* p. 294, *note*. In his sketch *A la mémoire de Diderot* (1786, app. to Naigeon's *Mémoires*, 1821, p. 425, *note*), Meister speaks of a number of "belles pages," but does not particularize.

[5] Cp. Morley's criticism, *Diderot*, ed. 1884, pp. 331–32. [6] *De l'Esprit*, Disc. iii, ch. 30.

[7] Beccaria's Letter to Morellet, cited in ch. i of J. A. Farrer's ed. of the *Crimes and Punishments*, p. 6. It is noteworthy that the partial reform effected earlier in England

less notable testimony of Bentham that Helvétius was *his* teacher and inspirer.[1] It may be doubted whether any such fruits can be claimed for the teachings of the whole of the orthodox moralists of the age. For the rest, Helvétius is not to be ranked among the great abstract thinkers; but it is noteworthy that his thinking went on advancing to the end. Always greatly influenced by Voltaire, he did not philosophically harden as did his master; and though in his posthumous work, *Les Progrès de la Raison dans la recherche du Vrai* (published in 1775), he stands for deism against atheism, the argument ends in the pantheism to which Voltaire had once attained, but did not adhere.

24. Over all of these men, and even in some measure over Voltaire, DIDEROT (1713–1784) stands pre-eminent, on retrospect, for variety of power and depth and subtlety of thought; though for these very reasons, as well as because some of his most masterly works were never printed in his lifetime, he was less of a recognized popular force than some of his friends. In his own mental history he reproduces the course of the French thought of his time. Beginning as a deist, he assailed the contemporary materialists; in the end, with whatever of inconsistency, he was emphatically an atheist and a materialist. One of his most intimate friends was Damilaville, of whom Voltaire speaks as a vehement anti-theist;[2] and his biographer Naigeon, who at times overstated his positions but always revered him, was the most zealous atheist of his day.[3]

Compare, as to Diderot's position, Soury's contention (p. 577) that we shall never make an atheist and a materialist out of "this enthusiastic artist, this poet-pantheist" (citing Rosenkranz in support), with his own admissions, pp. 589–90, and with Lord Morley's remarks, pp. 33, 401, 418. See also Lange, i, 310 *sq.*; ii, 63 (Eng. tr. ii, 32, 256). In the affectionate *éloge* of his friend Meister (1786) there is an express avowal that "it had been much to be desired for the reputation of Diderot, perhaps even for the honour of his age, that he had not been an atheist, or that he had been so with less zeal." The fact is thus put beyond reasonable doubt. In the *Correspondance Littéraire* of Grimm and Diderot, under date September 15, 1765 (vii, 366), there is a letter in criticism of Descartes, thoroughly atheistic in its reasoning, which is almost certainly by Diderot. And if the criticism of Voltaire's *Dieu*, above referred to (p. 231), be not by him, he was certainly in entire agreement with it, as with Grimm in general. Rosenkranz

by Oglethorpe, on behalf of imprisoned debtors (1730-32), belongs to the time of propagandist deism there.

[1] Morley, *Diderot*, p. 329.

[2] Lettre à d'Alembert, 9 janvier, 1773.

[3] Cp. Rosenkranz, *Vorbericht*, p. vi.

finally (ii, 421) sums up that "Diderot war als Atheist Pantheist," which is merely a way of saying that he was scientifically monistic in his atheism. Lange points out in this connection (i, 310) that the Hegelian schema of philosophic evolution, "with its sovereign contempt for chronology," has wrought much confusion as to the real developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

It is recorded that Diderot's own last words in serious conversation were: "The beginning of philosophy is incredulity"; and it may be inferred from his writings that his first impulses to searching thought came from his study of Montaigne, who must always have been for him one of the most congenial of spirits.[1] At an early stage of his independent mental life we find him turning to the literature which in that age yielded to such a mind as his the largest measure both of nutriment and stimulus—the English. In 1745 he translated Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning Virtue and Merit*; and he must have read with prompt appreciation the other English freethinkers then famous. Ere long, however, he had risen above the deistical plane of thought, and grappled with the fundamental issues which the deists took for granted, partly because of an innate bent to psychological analysis, partly because he was more interested in scientific problems than in scholarly research. The *Pensées philosophiques*, published in 1746, really deserve their name; and though they exhibit him as still a satisfied deist, and an opponent of the constructive atheism then beginning to suggest itself, they contain abstract reasonings sufficiently disturbing to the deistic position.[2] The *Promenade du Sceptique* (written about 1747, published posthumously) goes further, and presents tentatively the reply to the design argument which was adopted by Hume.

In its brilliant pages may be found a conspectus of the intellectual life of the day, on the side of the religious problem. Every type of thinker is there tersely characterized—the orthodox, the deist, the atheist, the sheer skeptic, the scoffer, the pantheist, the solipsist, and the freethinking libertine, the last figuring as no small nuisance to the serious unbeliever. So drastic is the criticism of orthodoxy that the book was unprintable in its day;[3] and it was little known even in manuscript. But ere long there appeared the *Letter on the Blind, for the use of those who see* (1749), in which a logical rebuttal alike of the ethical and the cosmological assumptions of theism, developed from hints in the *Pensées*, is put in the mouth of the blind English

[1] Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, ed. 1884, p. 32.
[2] *E.g.* § 21.
[3] A police agent seized the MS. in Diderot's library, and Diderot could not get it back. Malesherbes, the censor, kept it safe for him!

mathematician, Sanderson. It is not surprising that whereas the *Pensées* had been, with some other books, ordered by the Paris Parlement to be burnt by the common hangman, the *Lettre sur les Aveugles* led to his arrest and an imprisonment of six months[1] in the Château de Vincennes. Both books had of course been published without licence;[2] but the second book was more than a defiance of the censorship: it was a challenge alike to the philosophy and the faith of Christendom; and as such could not have missed denunciation.[3]

But Diderot was not the kind of man to be silenced by menaces. In the famous Sorbonne thesis of the Abbé de Prades (1751) he probably had, as we have seen, some share; and when De Prades was condemned and deprived of his licence (1752) Diderot wrote the third part of the *Apologie* (published by De Prades in Holland), which defended his positions; and possibly assisted in the other parts.[4] The hand of Diderot perhaps may be discovered in the skilful allusions to the skeptical *Demonstratio Evangelica* of Huet, which De Prades professes to have translated when at his seminary, seeking there the antidote to the poison of the deists. The entire handling of the question of pagan and Christian miracles, too, suggests the skilled dialectician, though it is substantially an adaptation of Leslie's *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*. The alternate eulogy and criticism of Locke are likely to be his, as is indeed the abundant knowledge of English thought shown alike in the thesis and in the *Apologie*. Whether he wrote the passage which claims to rebut an argument in his own *Pensées philosophiques*[5] is surely doubtful. But his, certainly, is the further reply to the pastoral of the Jansenist Bishop of Auxerre against de Prades's thesis, in which the perpetual disparagement of reason by Catholic theologians is denounced[6] as the most injurious of all procedures against religion. And his, probably, is the peroration[7] arraigning the Jansenists and

[1] According to Naigeon (*Mémoires*, 1821, p. 131), three months and ten days.

[2] The *Lettre* purports, like so many other books of that and the next generation, to be published "A Londres."

[3] Diderot's daughter, in her memoir of him, speaks of his imprisonment in the Bastille as brought about through the resentment of a lady of whom he had spoken slightingly; and her husband left a statement in MS. to the same effect (printed at the end of the *Mémoires* by Naigeon). The lady is named as Madame Dupré de Saint-Maur, a mistress of the King, and the offence is said to have been committed in the story entitled *Le Pigeon blanc*. Howsoever this may have been, the prosecution was quite in the spirit of the period, and the earlier *Pensées* were made part of the case against him. See Delort, *Hist. de la détention des philosophes*, 1829, ii, 208–16. M. de Vandeul-Diderot testifies that the Marquis Du Chatelet, Governor of Vincennes, treated his prisoner very kindly. Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 425) does not seem to have fully read the *Lettre*, which he describes as merely discussing the differentiation of thought and sensation among the blind.

[4] His friend Meister (*A la mémoire de Diderot*, 1786, app. to Naigeon's *Mémoires de Diderot*, 1821, p. 424) writes as if Diderot had written the whole *Apologie* "in a few days." The third part, a reply to the pastoral of the Bishop of Auxerre, appeared separately as a *Suite* to the others.

[5] *Apologie*, as cited, 2e partie, p. 87 *sq.*

[6] *Observations sur l'instruction pastorale de Mons. l'Évêque d'Auxerre*, Berlin, 1752, p. 17.

[7] *Id.* p. 102 *sq.*

imputing to their fanaticism and superstition, their miracle-mongering and their sectarian bitterness, the discredit which among thinking men had latterly fallen upon Church and creed alike.[1]

De Prades, who in his thesis and *Apologie* had always professed to be a believing Christian, was not a useful recruit to rationalism. Passing from Holland to Berlin, he was there appointed, through the influence of Voltaire, reader and amanuensis to the King,[2] who in 1754 arranged for him an official reconciliation with the Church. A formal retractation was sent to the Pope, the Sorbonne, and the Bishop of Montauban;[3] and Frederick in due course presented him to a Catholic canonry at Glogau. In 1757, however, he was put under arrest on the charge, it is commonly said, of supplying military information to his countrymen;[4] and thereafter, returning to France in 1759, he obtained a French benefice. Diderot, who was now a recognized champion of freethought, turned away with indignation.

Thenceforward he never faltered on his path. It is his peculiar excellence to be an original and innovating thinker not only in philosophy but in psychology, in æsthetics, in ethics, in dramatic art; and his endless and miscellaneous labours in the *Encyclopédie*, of which he was the most loyal and devoted producer, represent an extraordinary range of interests. He suffered from his position as a hack writer and as a forced dissembler in his articles on religious matters; and there is probably a very real connection between his compulsory insincerities[6] in the *Encyclopédie*—to say nothing of the official prosecution of that and of others of his works—and his misdeeds in the way of indecent fiction. When organized society is made to figure as the heartless enemy of thinking men, it is no great wonder if they are careless at times about the effect of their writings on society. But it stands to his lasting honour that his sufferings at the hands of priests, printers, and *parlements* never soured his natural goodness of heart.[7] Having in his youth known a day's unrelieved hunger, he made a vow that he would never refuse help to any human being; and, says his daughter, no vow was ever more faithfully kept. No one in trouble was ever turned away from his

[1] Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, pp. 98–99.
[2] Carlyle, *Frederick*, bk. xviii, ch. ix, *end*
[3] D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, iv, 188.
[4] Carlyle, as cited.
[5] "Quelle abominable homme!" he writes to Mdlle. Voland (15 juillet, 1759); and Lord Morley pronounces de Prades a rascal (*Diderot*, p. 98). Carlyle is inarticulate with disgust—but as much against the original heresy as against the treason to Frederick. As to that, Thiébault was convinced that de Prades was innocent and calumniated. Everybody at court, he declares, held the same view. *Mes Souvenirs de vingt ans de séjour à Berlin*, 2e édit. 1805, v. 402–404.
[6] It is not clear how these are to be distinguished from the mutilations of the later volumes by his treacherous publisher Le Breton. Of this treachery the details are given by Grimm, *Corr. litt.* ed. 1829, vii, 144 *sq.*
[7] Buckle's account of him (1-vol. ed. p. 426) as "burning with hatred against his persecutors" after his imprisonment is overdrawn. He was a poor hater.

door; and even his enemies were helped when they were base enough to beg of him. It seems no exaggeration to say that the bulk of his life was given to helping other people; and the indirect effect of his work, which is rather intellectually disinterested than didactic, is no less liberative and humanitarian. "To do good, and to find truth," were his mottoes for life.

His daughter, Madame de Vandeul, who in her old age remained tranquilly divided between the religion instilled into her by her pious mother and the rationalism she had gathered from her father and his friends, testified, then, to his constant goodness in the home;[1] and his father bore a similar testimony, contrasting him with his pious brother.[2] He was, in his way, as beneficent as Voltaire, without Voltaire's faults of private malice; and his life's work was a great ministry of light. It was Goethe who said of him in the next generation that "whoever holds him or his doings cheaply is a Philistine." His large humanity reaches from the planes of expert thought to that of popular feeling; and while by his *Letter on the Blind* he could advance speculative psychology and pure philosophy, he could by his tale *The Nun* (*La Religeuse*,[3] written about 1760, published 1796) enlist the sympathies of the people against the rule of the Church. It belonged to his character to be generously appreciative of all excellence; he delighted in other men's capacity as in pictures and poetry; and he loved to praise. At a time when Bacon and Hobbes were little regarded in England he made them newly famous throughout Europe by his praises. In him was realized Bacon's saying, *Admiratio semen scientiae*, in every sense, for his curiosity was as keen as his sensibility.

25. With Diderot were specially associated, in different ways, D'ALEMBERT, the mathematician, for some years his special colleague on the *Encyclopédie*, and Baron D'HOLBACH. The former, one of the staunchest friends of Voltaire, though a less invincible fighter than Diderot, counted for practical freethought by his miscellaneous articles, his little book on the Jesuits (1765), his *Pensées philosophiques*, his physics, and the general rationalism of his Preliminary

[1] Madame Diderot, says her daughter, was very upright as well as very religious, but her temper, "éternellement grondeur, faisait de notre intérieur un enfer, dont mon père était l'ange consolateur" (Letter to Meister, in *Notice* pref. to *Lettres Inédites de Mme. de Staël à Henri Meister*, 1903, p. 62).

[2] "Hélas! disait mon excellent grand-père, j'ai deux fils: l'un sera sûrement un saint, et je crains bien que l'autre ne soit damné; mais je ne puis vivre avec le saint, et je suis très heureux du temps que je passe avec le damné" (Letter of Mme. de Vandeul, last cited). Freethinker as he was, his fellow-townsmen officially requested in 1780 to be allowed to pay for a portrait of him for public exhibition, and the bronze bust he sent them was placed in the hôtel de ville (MS. of M. de Vandeul-Diderot, as cited).

[3] Madame de Vandeul states that this story was motived by the case of Diderot's sister, who died mad at the age of 27 or 28 (Letter above cited; Rosenkranz, i. 9).

Discourse to the *Encyclopédie*. It is noteworthy that in his intimate correspondence with Voltaire he never avows theism, and that his and Diderot's friend, the atheist Damilaville, died in his arms.[1] On Dumarsais, too, he penned an éloge of which Voltaire wrote: "Dumarsais only begins to live since his death; you have given him existence and immortality."[2] And perpetual secretary as he was of the Academy, the fanatical daughter of Madame Geoffrin could write to him in 1776: "For many years you have set all respectable people against you by your indecent and imprudent manner of speaking against religion."[3] Baron d'Holbach, a naturalized German of large fortune, was on the other hand one of the most strenuous propagandists of freethought in his age. Personally no less beloved than Helvétius,[4] he gave his life and his fortune to the work of enlightening men on all the lines on which he felt they needed light. Much of the progress of the physical sciences in pre-revolutionary France was due to the long series—at least eleven in all—of his translations of solid treatises from the German; and his still longer series of original works and translations from the English in all branches of freethought—a really astonishing movement of intellectual energy despite the emotion attaching to the subject-matter—was for the most part prepared in the same essentially scientific temper. Of all the freethinkers of the period he had perhaps the largest range of practical erudition;[5] and he drew upon it with unhasting and unresting industry. Imitating the tactic of Voltaire, he produced, with some assistance from Diderot, Naigeon, and others, a small library of anti-Christian treatises under a variety of pseudonyms;[6] and his principal work, the famous *System of Nature* (1770), was put out under the name of Mirabaud, an actual person, then dead. Summing up as it does with stringent force the whole anti-theological propaganda of the age, it has been described as a "thundering engine of revolt and destruction."[7]

[1] Lettre de Voltaire à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1774.
[2] Lettre de 2 décembre, 1757.
[3] *Œuvres posthumes de D'Alembert*, 1799, i, 240.
[4] D'Holbach was the original of the character of Wolmar in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, of whom Julie says that he "does good without recompense." "I never saw a man more simply simple" was the verdict of Madame Geoffrin. *Corr. litt de Grimm* (notice probably by Meister), ed. 1829-31, xiv, 291.
[5] Marmontel says of him that he "avoit tout lu et n'avoit jamais rien oublié d'intéressant." *Mémoires*, 1804, ii, 312.
[6] See a full list of his works (compiled by Julian Hibbert after the list given in the 1821 ed. of Diderot's Works, xii, 115, and rep. in the 1829-31 ed. of Grimm and Diderot's *Correspondance*, xiv, 293), prefixed to Watson's ed. (1834 and later) of the English translation of the *System of Nature*.
[7] Morley, *Diderot*, p. 341. The chapter gives a good account of the book. Cp. Lange, i, 364 *sq.* (Eng. trans. ii, 26 *sq.*) as to its materialism. The best pages were said to be by Diderot (*Corr. de Grimm*, as cited, p. 289; the statement of Meister, who makes it also in his *Éloge*). Naigeon denied that Diderot had any part in the *Système*, but in 1820 there was published an edition with "notes and corrections" by Diderot.

It was the first published atheistic[1] treatise of a systematic kind, if we except that of Robinet, issued some years before; and it significantly marks the era of modern freethought, as does the powerful *Essai sur les préjugés*, published in the same year,[2] by its stern impeachment of the sins of monarchy—here carrying on the note struck by Jean Meslier in his manuscript of half-a-century earlier. Rather a practical argument than a dispassionate philosophic research, its polemic against human folly laid it open to the regulation retort that on its own necessarian principles no such polemic was admissible. That retort is, of course, ultimately invalid when the denunciation is resolved into demonstration. If, however, it be termed "shallow" on the score of its censorious treatment of the past,[3] the term will have to be applied to the Hebrew books, to the Gospel Jesus, to the Christian Fathers, to Pascal, Milton, Carlyle, Ruskin, and a good many other prophets, ancient and modern. The synthesis of the book is really emotional rather than philosophic, and hortatory rather than scientific; and it was all the more influential on that account. To the sensation it produced is to be ascribed the edict of 1770 condemning a whole shelf of previous works to be burnt along with it by the common hangman.

26. The death of d'Holbach (1789) brings us to the French Revolution. By that time all the great freethinking propagandists and non-combatant deists of the Voltairean group were gone, save CONDORCET. Voltaire and Rousseau had died in 1778, Helvétius in 1771, Turgot in 1781, D'Alembert in 1783, Diderot in 1784. After all their labours, only the educated minority, broadly speaking, had been made freethinkers; and of these, despite the vogue of the *System of Nature*, only a minority were atheists. Deism prevailed, as we have seen, among the foremost revolutionists; but atheism was relatively rare. Voltaire, indeed, impressed by the number of cultured men of his acquaintance who avowed it, latterly speaks[4] of them as very numerous; and Grimm must have had a good many among the subscribers to his correspondence, to permit of his

[1] It is to be noted that the English translation (3 vols. 3rd ed. 1817; 4th ed. 1820) deliberately tampers with the language of the original to the extent of making it deistic. This perversion has been by oversight preserved in all the reprints.

[2] Mirabeau spoke of the *Essai* as "le livre le moins connu, et celui qui mérite le plus l'être." Even the reprint of 1793 had become "extremely rare" in 1822. The book seems to have been specially disquieting to orthodoxy, and was hunted down accordingly.

[3] So Morley, p. 347. It does not occur to Lord Morley, and to the Comtists who take a similar tone, that in thus disparaging past thinkers they are really doing the thing they blame.

[4] *Lettres de Memmius à Cicéron* (1771); *Histoire de Jenni* (1775). In the earlier article, ATHÉE, in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, he speaks of having met in France very good physicists who were atheists. In his letter of September 26, 1770, to Madame Necker, he writes concerning the *Système de la Nature*: "Il est un peu honteux à notre nation que tant de gens aient embrassé si vite une opinion si ridicule." And yet Prof. W. M. Sloane, of Columbia University, still writes of Voltaire, in the manner of English bishops, as "atheistical" (*The French Revolution and Religious Reform*, 1901, p. 26).

penning or passing the atheistic criticism there given of Voltaire's first reply to d'Holbach. Nevertheless, there was no continuous atheistic movement; and after 1789 the new freethinking works run to critical and ethical attack on the Christian system rather than on theism. VOLNEY combined both lines of attack in his famous *Ruins of Empires* (1791); and the learned DUPUIS, in his voluminous *Origin of all Cults* (1795), took an important step, not yet fully reckoned with by later mythologists, towards the mythological analysis of the gospel narrative. After these vigorous performances, the popular progress of French freethought was for long practically suspended[1] by the tumult of the Revolution and the reaction which followed it, though LAPLACE went on his way with his epoch-making theory of the origin of the solar system, for which, as he told Napoleon, he had "no need of the hypothesis" of a God. The admirable CONDORCET had died, perhaps by his own hand, in 1794, when in hiding from the Terrorists, leaving behind him his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*, in which the most sanguine convictions of the rationalistic school are reformulated without a trace of bitterness or of despair.

27. No part of the history of freethought has been more distorted than that at which it is embroiled in the French Revolution. The conventional view in England still is that the Revolution was the work of deists and atheists, but chiefly of the latter; that they suppressed Christianity and set up a worship of a Goddess of Reason, represented by a woman of the town; and that the bloodshed of the Terror represented the application of their principles to government, or at least the political result of the withdrawal of religious checks.[2] Those who remember in the briefest summary the records of massacre connected with the affirmation of religious beliefs—the internecine wars of Christian sects under the Roman Empire; the vast slaughters of Manichæans in the East; the bloodshed of the period of propagation in Northern Europe, from Charlemagne onwards; the story of the Crusades, in which nine millions of human beings are estimated to have been destroyed; the generation of wholesale murder of the heretics of Languedoc by the papacy; the protracted savageries of the Hussite War; the early holocaust of Protestant heretics in France; the massacres of

[1] Though in 1797 we have Maréchal's *Code d'une Société d'hommes sans Dieu*, and in 1798 his *Pensées libres sur les prêtres*.

[2] Thus Dr. Cairns (*Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 165) gravely argues that the French Revolution proves the inefficacy of theism without a Trinity to control conduct. He has omitted to compare the theistic bloodshed of the Revolution with the Trinitarian bloodshed of the Crusades, the papal suppression of the Albigenses, the Hussite wars, and other orthodox undertakings.

German peasants and Anabaptists; the reciprocal persecutions in England; the civil strifes of sectaries in Switzerland; the ferocious wars of the French Huguenots and the League; the long-drawn agony of the war of thirty years in Germany; the annihilation of myriads of Mexicans and Peruvians by the conquering Spaniards in the name of the Cross—those who recall these things need spend no time over the proposition that rationalism stands for a removal of restraints on bloodshed. But it is necessary to put concisely the facts as against the legend in the case of the French Revolution.

(*a*) That many of the leading men among the revolutionists were deists is true; and the fact goes to prove that it was chiefly the men of ability in France who rejected Christianity. Of a number of these the normal attitude was represented in the work of Necker, *Sur l'importance des idées religieuses* (1787), which repudiated the destructive attitude of the few, and may be described as an utterance of pious theism or Unitarianism.[1] Orthodox he cannot well have been, since, like his wife, he was the friend of Voltaire.[2] But the majority of the Constituent Assembly was never even deistic; it professed itself cordially Catholic;[3] and the atheists there might be counted on the fingers of one hand.[4]

The Abbé Bergier, in answering d'Holbach (*Examen du Matérialisme*, ii, ch. i, § 1), denies that there has been any wide spread of atheistic opinion. This is much more probable than the statement of the Archbishop of Toulouse, on a deputation to the king in 1775, that "le monstrueux athéisme est devenu l'opinion dominante" (Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI*, iii, 16; cited by Buckle, 1-vol. ed. p. 488, *note*). Joseph Droz, a monarchist and a Christian, writing under Louis Philippe, sums up that "the atheists formed only a small number of adepts" (*Histoire du Règne de Louis XVI*, éd. 1839, p. 42). And Rivarol, who at the time of writing his *Lettres à M. Necker* was substantially an atheist, says in so many words

[1] The book was accorded the Monthyon prize by the French Academy. In translation (1788) it found a welcome in England among Churchmen by reason of its pro-Christian tone and its general vindication of religious institutions. The translation was the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. See Kegan Paul's *William Godwin*, 1876, i, 193. Mrs. Dunlop, the friend of Burns, recommending its perusal to the poet, paid it a curious compliment: "He does not write like a sectary, *hardly like a Christian*, but yet while I read him, I like better my God, my neighbour, Monsieur Necker, and myself." *Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop*, ed. by W. Wallace, 1898, p. 258.

[2] See Voltaire's letters to Madame Necker, *Corr. de Grimm*, ed. 1829, vii. 23, 118. Of the lady, Grimm writes (p. 118): "Hypathie Necker passe sa vie avec des systématiques, mais elle est devote à sa manière. Elle voudrait être sincèrement hugenote, ou socinienne, ou déistique, ou plutôt, pour être quelque chose, elle prend le parti de ne se rendre compte sur rien." "Hypathie" was Voltaire's complimentary name for her.

[3] Cp. Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison et le Culte de l'Être Suprême*, 1892, pp. 17-19. M. Gazier (*Études sur l'histoire religieuse de la révolution française*, 1877, pp. 48, 173, 189 *sq.*) speaks somewhat loosely of a prevailing anti-Christian feeling when actually citing only isolated instances, and giving proofs of a general orthodoxy. Yet he points out the complete misconception of Thiers on the subject (p. 202).

[4] Cp. Prof. W. M. Sloane, *The French Revolution and Religious Reform*, p. 43.

that, while Rousseau's "Confession of a Savoyard Vicar" was naturally very attractive to many, such a book as the *Système de la Nature*, "were it as attractive as it is tedious, would win nobody" (*Œuvres*, éd. 1852, p. 134). Still, it ran into seven editions between 1770 and 1780.

Nor were there lacking vigorous representatives of orthodoxy: the powerful Abbé Grégoire, in particular, was a convinced Jansenist Christian, and at the same time an ardent democrat and anti-royalist.[1] He saw the immense importance to the Church of a good understanding with the Revolution, and he accepted the constitution of 1790. With him went a very large number of priests. M. Léonce de Lavergne, who was pious enough to write that "the philosophy of the eighteenth century had had the audacity to lay hands on God; and this impious attempt has had for punishment the revolutionary expiation," also admits that, "of the clergy, it was not the minority but the majority which went along with the Tiers État."[2] Many of the clergy, however, being refractory, the Assembly pressed its point, and the breach widened. It was solely through this *political* hostility on the part of the Church to the new constitution that any civic interference with public worship ever took place. Grégoire was extremely popular with the advanced types,[3] though his piety was conspicuous;[4] and there were not a few priests of his way of thinking,[5] among them being some of the ablest bishops.[6] On the flight of the king, he and they went with the democracy; and it was the obstinate refusal of the others to accept the constitution that provoked the new Legislative Assembly to coerce them. Though the new body was more anti-clerical than the old, however, it was simply doing what successive Protestant monarchs had done in England and Ireland; and probably no Government in the world would then have acted otherwise in a similar case.[7] Patience might perhaps have won the day; but the Revolution was fighting for its life; and the conservative Church, as all men knew, was eager to strangle it. Had the clergy left politics alone, or simply accepted the constitutional action of the State, there would have been no religious question. To speak of such a body of priests, who had at all times been eager to put men to death for heresy, as vindicating "liberty of conscience" when they refused fealty to the constitution,[8] is somewhat to strain the terms.

[1] Gazier, as cited, pp. 2, 4, 12, 19–21, 71, etc.
[2] *Les Assemblées Provinciales sous Louis XVI.* 1864, pref. pp. viii–ix.
[3] Gazier, L. ii. ch. i. [4] *Id.* p. 67. [5] *Id.* p. 69. [6] Léonce de Lavergne, as cited.
[7] The authority of Turgot himself could be cited for the demand that the State clergy should accept the constitution of the State. Cp. Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison*, p. 12; Tissot, *Étude sur Turgot*, 1878, p. 160. [8] Gazier, p. 113.

The expulsion of the Jesuits under the Old Régime had been a more coercive measure than the demand of the Assembly on the allegiance of the State clergy. And all the while the reactionary section of the priesthood was known to be conspiring with the royalists abroad. It was only when, in 1793, the conservative clergy were seen to be the great obstacle to the levy of an army of defence, that the more radical spirits began to think of interfering with their functions.[1]

(*b*) An à priori method has served alike in freethinkers' and in pietists' hands to obscure the facts. When Michelet insists on the "irreconcilable opposition of Christianity to the Revolution"—a thesis in which he was heartily supported by Proudhon[2]—he means that the central Christian dogmas of salvation by sacrifice and faith exclude any political ethic of justice[3]—any doctrine of equality and equity. But this is only to say that Christianity as an organization is in perpetual contradiction with some main part of its professed creed; and that has been a commonplace since Constantine. It does not mean that either Christians in multitudes or their churches as organizations have not constantly proceeded on ordinary political motives, whether populist or anti-populist. In Germany we have seen Lutheranism first fomenting and afterwards repudiating the movement of the peasants for betterment; and in England in the next century both parties in the civil war invoke religious doctrines, meeting texts with texts. Jansenism was in constant friction with the monarchy from its outset; and Louis XIV and Louis XV alike regarded the Jansenists as the enemies of the throne. "Christianity" could be as easily "reconciled" with a democratic movement in the last quarter of the eighteenth century as with the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day in the sixteenth. If those Christians who still charge "the bloodshed of the French Revolution" on the spirit of incredulity desire to corroborate Michelet to the extent of making Christianity the bulwark of absolute monarchy, the friend of a cruel feudalism, and the guardian genius of the Bastille, they may be left to the criticism of their fellow-believers who have embraced the newer principle that the truth of the Christian religion is to be proved by connecting it in practice with the spirit of social reform. To point out to either party, as did Michelet, that *evangelical* Christianity is a religion of submission and preparation for the end of all things, and has nothing to do with rational political reform,

[1] Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 19–20.
[2] Michelet, *Hist. de la révolution française*, ed. 8vo 1868 and later, i. 16. Cp. Proudhon's *De la justice*, 1858.
[3] "Tout jugement religieux ou politique est une contradiction flagrante dans une religion uniquement fondée sur un dogme étranger à la justice." Ed. cited, introd. p. 60.

is to bestow logic where logic is indomiciliable. While rationalism undoubtedly fosters the critical spirit, professed Christians have during many ages shown themselves as prone to rebellion as to war, whether on religious or on political pretexts.

(*c*) For the rest, the legend falsifies what took place. The facts are now established by exact documentary research. The Government never substituted any species of religion for the Catholic.[1] The Festival of Reason at Nôtre Dame was an act not of the Convention but of the Commune of Paris and the Department; the Convention had no part in promoting it; half the members stayed away when invited to attend; and there was no Goddess of Reason in the ceremony, but only a Goddess of Liberty, represented by an actress who cannot even be identified.[2] Throughout, the devoutly theistic Rousseau was the chief literary hero of the movement. The two executive Committees in no way countenanced the dechristianization of the Churches, but on the contrary imprisoned persons who removed church properties; and these in turn protested that they had no thought of abolishing religion. The acts of irresponsible violence did not amount to a hundredth part of the "sacrilege" wrought in Protestant countries at the Reformation, and do not compare with the acts charged on Cromwell's troopers. The policy of inviting priests and bishops to abdicate their functions was strictly political; and the Archbishop Gobel did *not* abjure Catholicism, but only surrendered his office. That a number of priests did gratuitously abjure their religion is only a proof of what was well known—that a good many priests were simple deists. We have seen how many abbés fought in the freethought ranks, or near them. Diderot in a letter of 1769 tells of a day which he and a friend had passed with two monks who were atheists. "One of them read the first draft of a very fresh and very vigorous treatise on atheism, full of new and bold ideas; I learned with edification that this doctrine was the current doctrine of their cloisters. For the rest, these two monks were the 'big bonnets' of their monastery; they had intellect, gaiety, good feeling, knowledge."[3] And a priest of the cathedral of Auxerre, whose recollections went back to the revolutionary period, has confessed that at that time "philosophic"

[1] The grave misstatement of Michelet on this head is exposed by Aulard, *Culte*, p. 60.

[2] Yet it is customary among Christians to speak of this lady in the most opprobrious terms. The royalist (but malcontent) Marquis de Villeneuve, who had seen the Revolution in his youth, claimed in his old age to have afterwards "conversed with the Goddess Reason of Paris and with the Goddess Reason of Bourges" (where he became governor); but, though he twice alludes to those women, he says nothing whatever against their characters (*De l'Agonie de la France*, 1835, i. 3, 19). Prof. W. M. Sloane, with all his religious prejudice, is satisfied that the women chosen as Goddesses of Reason outside of Paris were "noted for their spotless character." Work cited, p. 198.

[3] *Mémoires*, ed. 1841, ii. 166.

opinions prevailed in most of the monasteries. His words even imply that in his opinion the unbelieving monks were the majority.[1] In the provinces, where the movement went on with various degrees of activity, it had the same general character. "Reason" itself was often identified with deity, or declared to be an emanation thereof. Hébert, commonly described as an atheist for his share in the movement, expressly denied the charge, and claimed to have exhorted the people to read the gospels and obey Christ.[2] Danton, though at his death he disavowed belief in immortality, had declared in the Convention in 1793 that "we have not striven to abolish superstition in order to establish the reign of atheism."[3] Even Chaumette was not an atheist;[4] and the Prussian Clootz, who probably was, had certainly little or no doctrinary influence; while the two or three other professed atheists of the Assembly had no part in the public action.

(*d*) Finally, Robespierre was all along thoroughly hostile to the movement; in his character of Rousseauist and deist he argued that atheism was "aristocratic"; he put to death the leaders of the Cult of Reason; and he set up the Worship of the Supreme Being as a counter-move. Broadly speaking, he affiliated to Necker, and stood very much at the standpoint of the English Unitarianism of the present day. Thus the bloodshed of the Reign of Terror, if it is to be charged on any species of philosophic doctrine rather than on the unscrupulous policy of the enemies of the Revolution in and out of France, stands to the credit of the belief in a God, the creed of Frederick, Turgot, Necker, Franklin, Pitt, and Washington. The one convinced and reasoning atheist among the publicists of the Revolution, the journalist SALAVILLE,[5] opposed the Cult of Reason with sound and serious and persuasive argument, and strongly blamed all forcible interference with worship, while at the same time calmly maintaining atheism as against theism. The age of atheism had not come, any more than the triumph of Reason.

Mallet du Pan specifies, as among those who "since 1788 have pushed the blood-stained car of anarchy and atheism," Chamfort, Gronvelle, Garat, and Cerutti. Chamfort was as high-minded a man as Mallet himself, and is to-day so recognized by every unprejudiced reader. The others are forgotten.

[1] Père F.-J.-F. Fortin, *Souvenirs*, Auxerre, 1867, ii. 41.
[2] See the speech in Aulard, *Culte*, p. 240; and cp. pp. 79–85.
[3] "Le peuple aura des fêtes dans lesquelles il offrira de l'encens à l'Être Suprême, au maître de la nature, car nous n'avons pas voulu anéantir la superstition pour établir le règne de l'athéisme." Speech of Nov. 26, 1793, in the *Moniteur*. (*Discours de Danton*, ed. André Fribourg, 1910, p. 599.)
[4] Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 81–82.
[5] Concerning whom see Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 86–96.

Gronvelle, who as secretary of the executive council read to Louis XVI his death-sentence, wrote *De l'autorité de Montesquieu dans la révolution présente* (1789). Garat was Minister of Justice in 1792 and of the Interior in 1793, and was ennobled by Napoleon. He had published *Considérations sur la Révolution* (1792) and a *Mémoire sur la Révolution* (1795). Cerutti, originally a Jesuit, became a member of the Legislative Assembly, and was the friend of Mirabeau, whose funeral oration he delivered.

28. The anti-atheistic and anti-philosophic legend was born of the exasperation and bad faith of the dethroned aristocracy, themselves often unbelievers in the day of their ascendancy, and, whether unbelievers or not, responsible with the Church and the court for that long insensate resistance to reform which made the revolution inevitable. Mere random denunciation of new ideas as tending to generate rebellion was of course an ancient commonplace. Medieval heretics had been so denounced; Wiclif was in his day; and when the Count de Cataneo attacked Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, he spoke of all such reasonings as "attempts which shake the sacred basis of thrones."[1] But he and his contemporaries knew that freethinkers were not specially given to mutiny; and when, later, French Churchmen had begun systematically to accuse the philosophers of undermining alike the Church and the throne,[2] the unbelieving nobles, conscious of entire political conservatism, had simply laughed. Better than anyone else they knew that political revolt had other roots and motives than incredulity; and they could not but remember how many French kings had been rebelled against by the Church, and how many slain by priestly hands. Their acceptance of the priestly formula came later. In the life of the brilliant Rivarol, who associated with the noblesse while disdained by many of them because of his obscure birth, we may read the intellectual history of the case. Brilliant without patience, keen without scientific coherence,[3] Rivarol in 1787 met the pious deism of Necker with a dialectic in which cynicism as often disorders as illuminates the argument. With prompt veracity he first rejects the

[1] *The Source, the Strength, and the True Spirit of Laws*, Eng. tr. 1753, p. 6.

[2] *E.g.*, in the Arrêt du Parlement of 9 juin, 1762, denouncing Rousseau's *Émile* as tending to make the royal authority odious and to destroy the principle of obedience; and in the *Examen du Bélisaire de M. Marmontel*, by Coger (Nouv. éd. augm. 1767, p. 45 *sq.* Cp. Marmontel's *Mémoires*, 1804, iii. 46, as to his being called *ennemi du trône et de l'autel*). This kind of invective was kept up against the *philosophes* to the moment of the Revolution. See for instance *Le vrai religieux*, Discours dédié à Madame Louise de France, par le R. P. C. A. 1787, p. 4: "Une philosophie orgueilleuse a renversé les limites sacrées que la main du Très-Haut avoit elle-même élevées. La raison de l'homme a osé sonder les décrets de Dieu.....Dans les accès de son ivresse, n'a-t-elle pas sapé les fondemens du trône et des lois," etc.

[3] Cp. the admissions of Curnier (*Rivarol, sa vie et ses œuvres*, 1858, p. 149) in deprecation of Burke's wild likening of Rivarol's journalism to the Annals of Tacitus.

ideal of a beneficent reign of delusion, and insists that religion is seen in all history powerless alike to overrule men's passions and prejudices, and to console the oppressed by its promise of a reversal of earthly conditions in another world. But in the same breath, by way of proving that the atheist is less disturbing to convention than the deist, he insists that the unbeliever soon learns to see that "irreverences are crimes against society"; and then, in order to justify such conformity, asserts what he had before denied. And the self-contradiction recurs.[1] The underlying motive of the whole polemic is simply the grudge of the upper class diner-out against the serious and conscientious *bourgeois* who strives to reform the existing system. Conscious of being more enlightened, the wit is eager at once to disparage Necker for his religiosity and to discredit him politically as the enemy of the socially useful ecclesiastical order. Yet in his second letter *Sur la morale* (1788) he is so plainly an unbeliever that the treatise had to be printed at Berlin. The due sequence is that when the Revolution breaks out Rivarol sides with the court and the noblesse, while perfectly aware of the ineptitude and malfeasance of both;[2] and, living in exile, proceeds to denounce the philosophers as having caused the overturn by their universal criticism. In 1787 he had declared that he would not even have written his Letters to Necker if he were not certain that "the people does not read." Then the people had read neither the philosophers nor him. But in exile he must needs frame for the *émigrés* a formula, true or false. It is the falsity of men divided against themselves, who pay themselves with recriminations rather than realize their own deserts.[3] And in the end Rivarol is but a deist.

29. If any careful attempt be made to analyse the situation, the stirring example of the precedent revolution in the British American colonies will probably be recognized as counting for very much more than any merely literary influence in promoting that of France. A certain "republican" spirit had indeed existed among educated men in France throughout the reign of Louis XV: D'Argenson noted it in 1750 and later.[4] But this spirit, which D'Argenson in large measure shared, while holding firmly by monarchy,[5] was simply the spirit of *constitutionalism*, the love of law and good government, and it derived

[1] *Œuvres*, ed. cited, pp. 136–40, 147–55.

[2] Cp. the critique of Sainte-Beuve, prefixed to ed. cited, pp. 14–17, and that of Arsène Houssaye, *id.* pp. 31–33. Mr. Saintsbury, though biassed to the side of the royalist, admits that "Rivarol hardly knows what sincerity is" (*Miscellaneous Essays*, 1892, p. 67).

[3] Charles Comte is thus partly inaccurate in saying (*Traité de Législation*, 1835, i. 72) that the charge against the philosophers began "on the day on which there was set up a government in France that sought to re-establish the abuses of which they had sought the destruction." What is true is that the charge, framed at once by the backers of the Old Régime, has always since done duty for reaction.

[4] *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iii, 313; iv, 70; v, 346, 348.

[5] *Id.* iii, 346–47.

from English example and the teachings of such Englishmen as Locke,[1] insofar as it was not spontaneous. If acceptance of the doctrine of constitutional government can lead to anarchy, let it be avowed; but let not the cause be pretended to be deism or atheism. The political teaching for which the Paris Parlement denounced Rousseau's *Émile* in 1762, and for which the theologians of the Sorbonne censured Marmontel's *Bélisaire* in 1767, was the old doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. But this had been maintained by a whole school of English Protestant Christians before Bossuet denounced the Protestant Jurieu for maintaining it. Nay, it had been repeatedly maintained by Catholic theologians, from Thomas Aquinas to Suarez,[2] especially when there was any question of putting down a Protestant monarch. Protestants on their part protested indignantly, and reciprocated. The recriminations of Protestants and Catholics on this head form one of the standing farces of human history. Coger, attacking Marmontel, unctuously cites Bayle's censure of his fellow Protestants in his *Avis aux Réfugiéz*[3] for their tone towards kings and monarchy, but says nothing of Bayle's quarrel with Jurieu, which motived such an utterance, or of his *Critique Générale* of Maimbourg's *Histoire du Calvinisme*, in which he shows how the Catholic historian's principles would justify the rebellion alike of Catholics in every Protestant country and of Protestants in every Catholic country,[4] though all the while it is assumed that true Christians never resort to violence. And, unless there has been an error as to his authorship, Bayle himself, be it remembered, had in his letter *Ce que c'est que la France toute catholique sous le règne de Louis le Grand* passed as scathing a criticism on Louis XIV as any Protestant refugee could well have compassed. Sectarian hypocrisies apart, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people—for opposing which the freethinker Hobbes has been execrated by generations of Christians—is the professed political creed of the very classes who, in England and the United States, have so long denounced French freethinkers for an alleged "subversive" social teaching which fell far short of what English and American Protestants had actually practised. The revolt of the American colonies, in fact, precipitated demo-

[1] D'Argenson, noting in his old age how "on n'a jamais autant parlé de *nation* et d'*État* qu'aujourd'hui," how no such talk had been heard under Louis XIV, and how he himself had developed on the subject, adds, "cela vient du parlement et des Anglois." He goes on to speak of a reissue of the translation of Locke on Civil Government, originally made by the Jansenists (*Mémoires*, iv. 189-90).

[2] Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ed. 1872, iii. 160-63.

[3] *Œuvres diverses de Pierre Bayle*, La Haye, 4 vols. fol. 1737, ii. 564 *sq.*

[4] This *Critique* appears in the very volume to which Coger refers for the *Avis aux Réfugiés*. See Lett. viii, xiii, xvii, etc., vol. and ed. cited, pp. 36, 54, 71, etc.

cratic feeling in France in a way that no writing had ever done. Lafayette, no freethinker, declared himself republican at once on reading the American declaration of the Rights of Man.[1] In all this the freethinking propaganda counted for nothing directly and for little indirectly, inasmuch as there was no clerical quarrel in the colonies. And if we seek for even an indirect or general influence, apart from the affirmation of the duty of kings to their people, the thesis as to the activity of the *philosophes* must at once be restricted to the cases of Rousseau, Helvétius, Raynal, and d'Holbach, for Marmontel never passed beyond "sound" generalities.

As for the pretence that it was freethinking doctrines that brought Louis XVI to the scaffold, it is either the most impudent or the most ignorant of historical imputations. The "right" of tyrannicide had been maintained by Catholic schoolmen before the Reformation, and by both Protestants and Catholics afterwards, times without number, even as they maintained the right of the people to depose and change kings. The doctrine was in fact not even a modern innovation, the theory being so well primed by the practice—under every sort of government, Jewish and pagan in antiquity, Moslem in the Middle Ages, and Christian from the day of Pepin to the day of John Knox—that a certain novelty lay on the side of the "divine right of kings" when that was popularly formulated. And on the whole question of revolution, or the right of peoples to recast their laws, the general doctrine of the most advanced of the French freethinkers is paralleled or outgone by popes and Church Councils in the Middle Ages, by Occam and Marsiglio of Padua and Wiclif and more than one German legist in the fourteenth century, by John Major and George Buchanan in Scotland, by Goodman in England, and by many Huguenots in France, in the sixteenth; by Hotman in his *Francogallia* in 1574; by the author of the *Soupirs de la France Esclave*[2] in 1689; and by the whole propagandist literature of the English and American Revolutions in the seventeenth and eighteenth. So far from being a specialty of freethinkers, "sedition" was in all these and other cases habitually grounded on Biblical texts and religious protestations; so that Bacon, little given as he was to defending rationalists, could confidently avow that "Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation.....but superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men. Therefore atheism did never perturb states.....

[1] Cp. the survey of Aulard, *Hist. polit. de la rév. française*, 2e édit. 1903, pp. 2-23.
[2] Probably the work of a Jansenist.

But superstition hath been the confusion of many states." For "superstition" read "sectarianism," "fanaticism," and "ecclesiasticism." Bacon's generalization is of course merely empirical, atheism being capable of alliance with revolutionary passion in its turn; but the historical summary holds good. Only by men who had not read or had forgotten universal history could the ascription of the French Revolution to rationalistic thought have been made.[1]

30. A survey of the work and attitude of the leading French freethinkers of the century may serve to settle the point once for all. Voltaire is admittedly out of the question. Mallet du Pan, whose resistance to the Revolution developed into a fanaticism hardly less perturbing to judgment[2] than that of Burke, expressly disparaged him as having so repelled men by his cynicism that he had little influence on their feelings, and so could not be reckoned a prime force in preparing the Revolution.[3] "Mably," the critic adds, "whose republican declamations have intoxicated many modern democrats, was religious to austerity: at the first stroke of the tocsin against the Church of Rome, he would have thrown his books in the fire, excepting his scathing apostrophes to Voltaire and the atheists. Marmontel, Saint-Lambert, Morellet, Encyclopedists, were adversaries of the revolution."[4] On the other hand, Barante avows that Mably, detesting as he did the freethinking philosophers of his day, followed no less than others "a destructive course, and contributed, without knowing it, to weaken the already frayed ties which still united the parts of an ancient society."[5] As Barante had previously ascribed the whole dissolution to the autocratic process under Louis XIV,[6] even this indictment of the orthodox Mably is invalid. Voltaire, on the other hand, Barante charges with an undue leaning to the methods of Louis XIV. Voltaire, in fact, was in things political a conservative, save insofar as he fought for toleration, for lenity, and for the most necessary

[1] On the whole question of the growth of abstract revolutionary doctrine in politics cp. W. S. McKechnie on the *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* in the "George Buchanan" vol. of Glasgow Quatercentenary Studies, 1906, pp. 256-76; Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, Maitland's tr. 1900, p. 37 *sq.*

[2] Mallet actually reproaches the *philosophes* in the mass—while admitting the hostility of many of them to the Revolution—with "having accelerated French degeneration and depravation.....by rendering the conscience argumentative (*raisonneuse*), by substituting for duties inculcated by sentiment, tradition, and habit, the *uncertain rules of the human reason* and sophisms adapted to passions," etc., etc. (B. Mallet, as cited, p. 360). With all his natural vigour of mind, Mallet du Pan thus came to talk the language of the ordinary irrationalist of the Reaction. Certainly, if the stimulation of the habit of reasoning be a destructive course, the philosophes stand condemned. But as Christians had been reasoning as best they could, in an eternal series of vain disputes, for a millennium and a-half before the Revolution, with habitual appeal to the passions, the argument only proves how vacuous a Christian champion's reasoning can be.

[3] Art. in *Mercure Britannique*, No. 13, Feb. 21, 1799; cited by B. Mallet in *Mallet du Pan and the French Revolution*, 1902, App. p. 357.

[4] *Id.* p. 359.

[5] *Tableau littéraire du dix-huitième siècle*, 8e édit. pp. 112, 113.

[6] *Id.* p. 72.

reforms. And if Voltaire's attack on what he held to be a demoralizing and knew to be a persecuting religion be saddled with the causation of the political crash, the blame will have to be carried back equally to the English deists and the tyranny of Louis XIV. To such indictments, as Barante protests, there is no limit: every age pivots on its predecessor; and to blame for the French Revolution everybody but a corrupt aristocracy, a tyrannous and ruinously spendthrift monarchy, and a cruel church, is to miss the last semblance of judicial method. It may be conceded that the works of Meslier and d'Holbach, neither of whom is noticed by Barante, are directly though only generally revolutionary in their bearing. But the main works of d'Holbach appeared too close upon the Revolution to be credited with generating it; and Meslier, as we know, had been generally read only in abridgments and adaptations, in which his political doctrine disappears.

Mallet du Pan, striking in all directions, indicts alternately Rousseau, whose vogue lay largely among religious people, and the downright freethinkers. The great fomenter of the Revolution, the critic avows, was Rousseau. "He had a hundred times more readers than Voltaire in the middle and lower classes.....No one has more openly attacked the right of property in declaring it a usurpation.....It is he alone who has inoculated the French with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, and with its most extreme consequences."[1] After this "he alone," the critic obliviously proceeds to exclaim: "Diderot and Condorcet: there are the true chiefs of the revolutionary school," adding that Diderot had "proclaimed equality before Marat; the Rights of Man before Siéyès; sacred insurrection before Mirabeau and Lafayette; the massacre of priests before the Septembrists."[2] But this is mere furious declamation. Only by heedless misreading or malice can support be given to the pretence that Diderot wrought for the violent overthrow of the existing political system. Passages denouncing kingly tyranny had been inserted in their plays by both Corneille and Voltaire, and applauded by audiences who never dreamt of abolishing monarchy. A phrase about strangling kings in the bowels of priests is expressly put by Diderot in the mouth of an *Éleuthéromane* or Liberty-maniac;[3] which shows that the type had arisen in his lifetime in opposition to his own bias. This very poem he read to

[1] Work cited, p. 358.
[2] *Id.* p. 359.
[3] Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, p. 407. Lord Morley points to the phrase in another form in a letter of Voltaire's in 1761. It really derives from Jean Meslier, who quotes it from an unlettered man (*Testament*, i, 19).

the Prince von Galitzin, the ambassador of the Empress Catherine and his own esteemed friend.[1] The tyranny of the French Government, swayed by the king's mistresses and favourites and by the Jesuits, he did indeed detest, as he had cause to do, and as every man of good feeling did with him; but no writing of his wrought measurably for its violent overthrow.[2] D'Argenson in 1751 was expressing his fears of a revolution, and noting the "désobeissance constante" of the Parlement of Paris and the disaffection of the people, before he had heard of "*un* M. Diderot, qui a beaucoup d'esprit, mais qui affecte trop l'irreligion." And when he notes that the Jesuits have secured the suppression of the *Encyclopédie* as being hostile "to God and the royal authority," he does not attach the slightest weight to the charge. He knew that Louis called the pious Jansenists "enemies of God and of the king."[3]

Mallet du Pan grounds his charge against Diderot almost solely on "those incendiary diatribes intercalated in the *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes* which dishonour that work, and which Raynal, in his latter days, excised with horror from a new edition which he was preparing." But supposing the passages in question to be all Diderot's[4]—which is far from certain—they are to be saddled with responsibility for the Reign of Terror only on the principle that it was more provocative in the days of tyranny to denounce than to exercise it. To this complexion Mallet du Pan came, with the anti-Revolutionists in general; but to-day we can recognize in the whole process of reasoning a *reductio ad absurdum*. The school in question came in all seriousness to ascribe the evils of the Revolution to everything and everybody save the men and classes whose misgovernment made the Revolution inevitable.

Some of the philosophers, it is true, themselves gave colour to the view that they were the makers of the Revolution, as when D'Alembert said to Romilly that "philosophy" had produced in his time that change in the popular mind which exhibited itself in the indifference with which they received the news of the birth of the dauphin.[5] The error is none the less plain. The *philosophes* had done nothing to promote anti-monarchism among the common people, who did not read.[6] It was the whole political and social

[1] Rosenkranz, *Diderot's Leben und Werke*, 1866, ii, 380–81.
[2] As Lord Morley points out, Henri Martin absolutely reverses the purport of a passage in order to convict Diderot of justifying regicide.
[3] *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv, 44, 51, 68, 69, 74, 91, 93, 101, 103.
[4] Mallet du Pan says he saw the MS., and knew Diderot to have received 10,000 *livres tournois* for his additions. This statement is incredible. But Meister is explicit, in his *éloge*, as to Diderot having written for the book much that he thought nobody would sign, whereas Raynal was ready to sign anything.
[5] *Memoirs of Sir Samuel Romilly*, 3rd ed. 1841, i, 46.
[6] When D'Argenson writes in 1752 (*Mémoires*, éd. Jannet, iv, 103) that he hears "only

evolution of two generations that had wrought the change; and the people were still for the most part believing Catholics. Frederick the Great was probably within the mark when in 1769 he privately reminded the more optimistic philosophers that their entire French public did not number above 200,000 persons. The people of Paris, who played the chief part in precipitating the Revolution, were spontaneously mutinous and disorderly, but were certainly not in any considerable number unbelievers. "While Voltaire dechristianized a portion of polite society the people remained very pious, even at Paris. In 1766 Louis XV, so unpopular, was acclaimed because he knelt, on the Pont Neuf, before the Holy Sacrament."[1]

And this is the final answer to any pretence that the Revolution was the work of the school of d'Holbach. Bergier the priest, and Rivarol the conservative unbeliever, alike denied that d'Holbach's systematic writings had any wide public. Doubtless the same men were ready to eat their words for the satisfaction of vilifying an opponent. It has always been the way of orthodoxy to tell atheists alternately that they are an impotent handful and that they are the ruin of society. But by this time it ought to be a matter of elementary knowledge that a great political revolution can be wrought only by far-reaching political forces, whether or not these may concur with a propaganda of rationalism in religion.[2] If any "philosopher" so-called is to be credited with specially promoting the Revolution, it is either Rousseau, who is so often hailed latterly as the engineer of a religious reaction, and whose works, as has been repeatedly remarked, "contain much that is utterly and irreconcilably opposed" to the Revolution,[3] or Raynal, who was only anti-clerical, not anti-Christian, and who actually censured the revolutionary procedure. When he published his first edition he must be held to have acquiesced in its doctrine, whether it were from Diderot's pen or his own. Rousseau and Raynal were the two most popular writers of their day who dealt with social as apart from religious or philosophical issues, and to both is thus imputed a general subversiveness. But here too the charge rests upon a sociological fallacy. The Parlement of Paris, composed of rich bourgeois and aristocrats, many of them Jansenists, very few

philosophes say, as if convinced, that even anarchy would be better" than the existing misgovernment, he makes no suggestion that they teach this. And he declares for his own part that everything is drifting to ruin: "nulle réformation.....nulle amélioration. .....Tout tombe, par lambeaux."

[1] Aulard, *Hist. polit. de la révol.* p. 24.

[2] This is the sufficient comment on a perplexing page of Lord Morley's second monograph on Burke (pp. 110–11), which I have never been able to reconcile with the rest of his writing.

[3] Lecky, *Hist. of England in the Eighteenth Century*, small ed. vi, 263.

of them freethinkers, most of them ready to burn freethinking books, played a "subversive" part throughout the century, inasmuch as it so frequently resisted the king's will.[1] The stars in their courses fought against the old despotism. Rousseau was ultimately influential towards change because change was inevitable and essential, not because he was restless. The whole drift of things furthered his ideas, which at the outset won no great vogue. He was followed because he set forth what so many felt; and similarly Raynal was read because he chimed with a strengthening feeling. In direct contradiction to Mallet du Pan, Chamfort, a keener observer, wrote while the Revolution was still in action that "the priesthood was the first bulwark of absolute power, and Voltaire overthrew it. Without this decisive and indispensable first step nothing would have been done."[2] The same observer goes on to say that Rousseau's political works, and particularly the *Contrat Social*, "were fitted for few readers, and caused no alarm at court.....That theory was regarded as a hollow speculation which could have no further consequences than the enthusiasm for liberty and the contempt of royalty carried so far in the pieces of Corneille, and applauded at court by the most absolute of kings, Louis XIV. All that seemed to belong to another world, and to have no connection with ours; .....in a word, Voltaire above all has made the Revolution, because he has written for all; Rousseau above all has made the Constitution because he has written for the thinkers."[3] And so the changes may be rung for ever. The final philosophy of history cannot be reached by any such artificial selection of factors;[4] and the ethical problem equally evades such solutions. If we are to pass any ethico-political judgment whatever, it must be that the evils of the Revolution lie at the door not of the reformers, but of the men, the classes, and the institutions which first provoked and then resisted it.[5] To describe the former as the authors of the process is as intelligent as it was to charge upon Sokrates the decay of orthodox tradition in Athens, and to charge upon that the later downfall of the Athenian empire. The wisest men of the age, notably the great Turgot, sought a gradual transformation, a peaceful and harmless transition from unconstitutional to constitutional government.

[1] D'Argenson notes this repeatedly, though in one passage he praises the Parlement as having alone made head against absolutism (déc. 1752; ed. cited, iv, 116).

[2] *Maximes et Pensées*, ed. 1856, p. 72. [3] *Id.* pp. 73–74.

[4] Chamfort in another passage maintains against Soulavie that the *Academy* did much to develop the spirit of freedom in thought and politics. *Id.* p. 107. And this too is arguable, as we have seen.

[5] On this complicated issue, which cannot be here handled at any further length, see Prof. P. A. Wadia's essay *The Philosophers and the French Revolution* (Social Science Series, 1904), which, however, needs revision; and compare the argument of Nourrisson, *J.-J. Rousseau et le Rousseauisme*, 1903, ch. xx.

Their policy was furiously resisted by an unteachable aristocracy. When at last fortuitous violence made a breach in the feudal walls, a people unprepared for self-rule, and fought by an aristocracy eager for blood, surged into anarchy, and convulsion followed on convulsion. That is in brief the history of the Revolution.

31. While the true causation of the Revolution is thus kept clear, it must not be forgotten, further, that to the very last, save where controlled by disguised rationalists like Malesherbes, the tendency of the old régime was to persecute brutally and senselessly wherever it could lay hands on a freethinker. In 1788, only a year before the first explosion of the Revolution, there appeared the *Almanach des Honnêtes Gens* of SYLVAIN MARÉCHAL, a work of which the offence consisted not in any attack upon religion, but in simply constructing a calendar in which the names of renowned laymen were substituted for saints. Instantly it was denounced by the Paris Parlement, the printer prosecuted, and the author imprisoned; and De Sauvigny, the censor who had passed the book, was exiled thirty leagues from Paris.[1]

> Some idea of the intensity of the tyranny over all literature in France under the Old Régime may be gathered from Buckle's compendious account of the books officially condemned, and of authors punished, during the two generations before the Revolution. Apart from the record of the treatment of Buffon, Marmontel, Morellet, Voltaire, and Diderot, it runs: "The..... tendency was shown in matters so trifling that nothing but the gravity of their ultimate results prevents them from being ridiculous. In 1770, Imbert translated Clarke's *Letters on Spain*, one of the best works then existing on that country. This book, however, was suppressed as soon as it appeared; and the only reason assigned for such a stretch of power is that it contained some remarks respecting the passion of Charles III for hunting, which were considered disrespectful to the French crown, because Louis XV himself was a great hunter. Several years before this La Bletterie, who was favourably known in France by his works, was elected a member of the French Academy. But he, it seems, was a Jansenist, and had moreover ventured to assert that the Emperor Julian, notwithstanding his apostasy, was not entirely devoid of good qualities. Such offences could not be overlooked in so pure an age; and the king obliged the Academy to exclude La Bletterie from their society. That the punishment extended no further was an instance of remarkable leniency; for Fréret, an eminent critic and scholar, was confined in the Bastille because he stated,

[1] *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. cited, xiv. 5-6. Lettre de janv. 1788.

in one of his memoirs, that the earliest Frankish chiefs had received their titles from the Romans. The same penalty was inflicted four different times upon Lenglet du Fresnoy. In the case of this amiable and accomplished man, there seems to have been hardly the shadow of a pretext for the cruelty with which he was treated; though on one occasion the alleged offence was that he had published a supplement to the History of De Thou.

"Indeed, we have only to open the biographies and correspondence of that time to find instances crowding upon us from all quarters. Rousseau was threatened with imprisonment, was driven from France, and his works were publicly burned. The celebrated treatise of Helvétius on the Mind was suppressed by an order of the Royal Council; it was burned by the common hangman, and the author was compelled to write two letters retracting his opinions. Some of the geological views of Buffon having offended the clergy, that illustrious naturalist was obliged to publish a formal recantation of doctrines which are now known to be perfectly accurate. The learned *Observations on the History of France*, by Mably, were suppressed as soon as they appeared: for what reason it would be hard to say, since M. Guizot, certainly no friend either to anarchy or to irreligion, has thought it worth while to republish them, and thus stamp them with the authority of his own great name. *The History of the Indies*, by Raynal, was condemned to the flames, and the author ordered to be arrested. Lanjuinais, in his well-known work on Joseph II, advocated not only religious toleration, but even the abolition of slavery; his book, therefore, was declared to be 'seditious'; it was pronounced 'destructive of all subordination,' and was sentenced to be burned. The *Analysis of Bayle*, by Marsy, was suppressed, and the author was imprisoned. The *History of the Jesuits*, by Linguet, was delivered to the flames; eight years later his journal was suppressed; and, three years after that, as he still persisted in writing, his *Political Annals* were suppressed, and he himself was thrown into the Bastille. Delisle de Sales was sentenced to perpetual exile and confiscation of all his property on account of his work on the *Philosophy of Nature*. The treatise by Mey, on French Law, was suppressed; that by Boncerf, on Feudal Law, was burned. *The Memoirs of Beaumarchais* were likewise burned; the *Éloge on Fénelon*, by La Harpe, was merely suppressed. Duvernet, having written a *History of the Sorbonne*, which was still unpublished, was seized and thrown into the Bastille, while the manuscript was yet in his own possession. The celebrated work of De Lolme on the English constitution was suppressed by edict directly it appeared. The fate of being suppressed or prohibited also awaited the Letters of Gervaise in 1724; the Dissertations of Courayer in 1727; the Letters of Montgon in 1732; the *History of Tamerlane*, by Margat, also in 1732; the

Essay on Taste, by Cartaud, in 1736; The *Life of Domat*, by Prévost de la Jannès, in 1742; the *History of Louis XI*, by Duclos, in 1745; the Letters of Bargeton in 1750; the *Memoirs on Troyes*, by Grosley, in the same year; the *History of Clement XI*, by Reboulet, in 1752; The *School of Man*, by Génard, also in 1752; the *Therapeutics* of Garlon in 1756; the celebrated thesis of Louis, on *Generation*, in 1754; the treatise on *Presidial Jurisdiction*, by Jousse, in 1755; the *Ericie* of Fontenelle in 1768; the *Thoughts of Jamin* in 1769; the *History of Siam*, by Turpin, and the *Éloge of Marcus Aurelius*, by Thomas, both in 1770; the works on Finance by Darigrand, in 1764, and by Le Trosne in 1779; the *Essay on Military Tactics*, by Guibert, in 1772; the Letters of Boucquet in the same year; and the *Memoirs of Terrai*, by Coquereau, in 1776. Such wanton destruction of property was, however, mercy itself compared to the treatment experienced by other literary men in France. Desforges, for example, having written against the arrest of the Pretender to the English throne, was, solely on that account, buried in a dungeon eight feet square and confined there for three years. This happened in 1749; and in 1770, Audra, professor at the College of Toulouse, and a man of some reputation, published the first volume of his *Abridgement of General History*. Beyond this the work never proceeded; it was at once condemned by the archbishop of the diocese, and the author was deprived of his office. Audra, held up to public opprobrium, the whole of his labours rendered useless, and the prospects of his life suddenly blighted, was unable to survive the shock. He was struck with apoplexy, and within twenty-four hours was lying a corpse in his own house."

32. Among many other illustrations of the passion for persecution in the period may be noted the fact that after the death of the atheist Damilaville his enemies contrived to deprive his brother of a post from which he had his sole livelihood.[1] It is but one of an infinity of proofs that the spirit of sheer sectarian malevolence, which is far from being eliminated in modern life, was in the French Church of the eighteenth century the ruling passion. Lovers of moderate courses there were, even in the Church; but even among professors of lenity we find an ingrained belief in the virtue of vituperation and coercion. And it is not until the persecuted minority has developed its power of written retaliation, and the deadly arrows of Voltaire have aroused in the minds of persecutors a new terror, that there seems to arise on that side a suspicion that there can be any better way of handling unbelief than by invective and imprisonment. After they had taught the heretics to defend themselves, and

[1] Lettre de Voltaire à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1774.

found them possessed of weapons such as orthodoxy could not hope to handle, we find Churchmen talking newly of the duty of gentleness towards error; and even then clinging to the last to the weapons of public ostracism and aspersion. So the fight was of necessity fought on the side of freethought in the temper of men warring on incorrigible oppression and cruelty as well as on error. The wonder is that the freethinkers preserved so much amenity.

33. This section would not be complete even in outline without some notice of the attitude held towards religion by Napoleon, who at once crowned and in large measure undid the work of the Revolution. He has his place in its religious legend in the current datum that he wrought for the faith by restoring a suppressed public worship and enabling the people of France once more to hear church-bells. In point of fact, as was pointed out by Bishop Grégoire in 1826, "it is materially proved that in 1796, before he was Consul, and four years before the Concordat, according to a statement drawn up at the office of the Domaines Nationaux, there were in France 32,214 parishes where the culte was carried on."[1] Other commonplaces concerning Napoleon are not much better founded. On the strength of a number of oral utterances, many of them imperfectly vouched for, and none of them marked by much deliberation, he has been claimed by Carlyle[2] as a theist who philosophically disdained the "clatter of materialism," and believed in a Personal Creator of an infinite universe; while by others he is put forward as a kind of expert in character study who vouched for the divinity of Jesus.[3] In effect, his verdict that "this was not a man" would tell, if anything, in favour of the view that Jesus is a mythical construction. He was, indeed, by temperament quasi-religious, liking the sound of church bells and the atmosphere of devotion; and in his boyhood he had been a rather fervent Catholic. As he grew up he read, like his contemporaries, the French deists of his time, and became a deist like his fellows, recognizing that religions were human productions. Declaring that he was "loin d'être athée," he propounded to O'Meara all the conventional views—that religion should be made a support to morals and law; that men need to believe in marvels; that religion is a great consolation to those who believe in it; and that "no one

[1] *Histoire du mariage des prêtres en France*, par. M. Grégoire, ancien évêque de Blois, 1826, p. v. Compare the details in the *Appendice* to the *Etudes* of M. Gazier, before cited. That writer's account is the more decisive seeing that his bias is clerical, and that, writing before M. Aulard, he had to a considerable extent retained the old illusion as to the "decreeing of atheism" by the Convention (p. 313). See pp. 230–260 as to the readjustment effected by Grégoire, while the conservative clergy were still striving to undo the Revolution.

[2] *Heroes and Hero-Worship: Napoleon.*

[3] See the *Sentiments de Napoléon sur le Christianisme: conversations recueillies à Sainte-Hélène par le Comte de Montholon*, 1841. Many of the utterances here set forth are irreconcilable with Napoleon's general tone.

can tell what he will do in his last moments."[1] The opinion to which he seems to have adhered most steadily was that every man should die in the religion in which he had been brought up. And he himself officially did so, though he put off almost to the last the formality of a deathbed profession. His language on the subject is irreconcilable with any real belief in the Christian religion: he was "a deist *à la* Voltaire who recalled with tenderness his Catholic childhood, and who at death reverted to his first beliefs."[2] For the rest, he certainly believed in religion as a part of the machinery of the State, and repeated the usual platitudes about its value as a moral restraint. He was candid enough, however, not to pretend that it had ever restrained him; and no freethinker condemned more sweepingly than he the paralysing effect of the Catholic system on Spain.[3] To the Church his attitude was purely political; and his personal liking for the Pope never moved him to yield, where he could avoid it, to the temporal pretensions of the papacy. The Concordat of 1802, that "brilliant triumph over the genius of the Revolution,"[4] was purely and simply a political measure. If he had had his way, he would have set up a system of religious councils in France, to be utilized against all disturbing tendencies in politics.[5] Had he succeeded, he was capable of suppressing all manifestations of freethought in the interests of "order."[6] He had, in fact, no disinterested love of truth; and we have his express declaration, at St. Helena, on the subject of Molière's *Tartufe*: "I do not hesitate to say that if the piece had been written in my time, I would not have permitted its representation."[7] Freethought can make no warm claim to the allegiance of such a ruler; and if the Church of Rome is concerned to claim him as a son on the score of his deathbed adherence, after a reign which led the Catholic clergy of Spain to hold him up to the faithful as an incarnation of the devil,[8] she will hardly gain by the association. Napoleon's ideas on religious questions were in fact no more noteworthy than his views on economics, which were thoroughly conventional.

[1] O'Meara, *Napoléon en Exil*, ed. Lacroix, 1897, ii, 39.
[2] Ph. Gonnard, *Les origines de la légende Napoléonienne*, 1906, p. 258.
[3] *Id.* p. 260.
[4] Pasquier, cited by Rose, *Life of Napoleon*, ed. 1913, i, 282. The Concordat was bitterly resented by the freethinkers in the army. *Id.* p. 281.
[5] See Jules Barni's *Napoléon Ier*, ed. 1870, p. 83, as to the amazing Catechism imposed by Napoleon on France in 1811. For the history of its preparation and imposition see De Labone, *Paris sous Napoléon: La Religion*, 1907, p. 100 *sq.*
[6] As to the Napoleonic censorship of literature, cp. Madame de Staël, *Considérations sur la révolution française*, ptie. iv, ch. 16; *Dix Années d'Exil*, préf.; Welschinger, *La Censure sous le premier Empire*, 1882.
[7] Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, 19 août, 1816.
[8] Mignet, *Hist. de la révolution française*, 4e édit. ii, 340.

Chapter XVIII

GERMAN FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

1. When two generations of Protestant strife had turned to naught the intellectual promise of the Reformation, and much of the ground first won by it had lapsed to Catholicism, the general forward movement of European thought availed to set up in Germany as elsewhere a measure of critical unbelief. There is abundant evidence that the Lutheran clergy not only failed to hold the best intelligence of the country with them, but in large part fell into personal disrepute.[1] "The scenes of clerical immorality," says an eminently orthodox historian, "are enough to chill one's blood even at the distance of two centuries."[2] A Church Ordinance of 1600 acknowledges information to the effect that a number of clergymen and schoolmasters are guilty of "whoredom and fornication," and commands that "if they are *notoriously* guilty they shall be suspended." Details are preserved of cases of clerical drunkenness and ruffianism; and the women of the priests' families do not escape the pillory.[3] Nearly a century later, Arnold resigned his professorship at Giessen "from despair of producing any amendment in the dissolute habits of the students."[4] It is noted that "the great moral decline of the clergy was confined chiefly to the Lutheran Church. The Reformed [Calvinistic] was earnest, pious, and aggressive"[5]—the usual result of official hostility.

In such circumstances, the active freethought existing in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century could not fail to affect Germany; and even before the date of the polemic of Garasse and Mersenne there appeared (1615) a counterblast to the new thought in the *Theologia Naturalis* of J. H. Alsted, of Frankfort, directed *adversus atheos, Epicureos, et sophistas hujus temporis*. The preface to this solid quarto (a remarkable sample of good printing for the period) declares that "there are men in this diseased (*exulcerato*)

[1] Cp. Pusey, *Histor. Enquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalist Character..... of the Theology of Germany*, 1828, p. 79.
[2] Bishop Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, ed. 1867, p. 56.
[3] *Id.* pp. 57–58 (last ed. pp. 74–76), citing Tholuck, *Deutsche Universitäten*, i. 145–48, and Dowding, *Life of Calixtus*, pp. 132–33.
[4] Pusey, p. 113. [5] Hurst, p. 59.

age who dare to oppose science to revelation, reason to faith, nature to grace, the creator to the redeemer, and truth to truth"; and the writer undertakes to rise argumentatively from nature to the Christian God, without, however, transcending the logical plane of De Mornay. The trouble of the time, unhappily for the faith, was not rationalism, but the inextinguishable hatreds of Protestant and Catholic, and the strife of economic interests dating from the appropriations of the first reformers. At length, after a generation of gloomy suspense, came the explosion of the hostile ecclesiastical interests, and the long-drawn horror of the Thirty Years' War, which left Germany mangled, devastated, drained of blood and treasure, decivilized, and well-nigh destitute of the machinery of culture. No such printing as that of Alsted's book was to be done in the German world for many generations. But as in France, so in Germany, the exhausting experience of the moral and physical evil of religious war wrought something of an antidote, in the shape of a new spirit of rationalism.

Not only was the Peace of Westphalia an essentially secular arrangement, subordinating all religious claims to a political settlement,[1] but the drift of opinion was markedly freethinking. Already in 1630 one writer describes "three classes of skeptics among the nobility of Hamburg: first, those who believe that religion is nothing but a mere fiction, invented to keep the masses in restraint; second, those who give preference to no faith, but think that all religions have a germ of truth; and third, those who, confessing that there must be one true religion, are unable to decide whether it is papal, Calvinist, or Lutheran, and consequently believe nothing at all." No less explicit is the written testimony of Walther, the court chaplain of Ulrich II of East Friesland, 1637: "These infernal courtiers, among whom I am compelled to live against my will, doubt those truths which even the heathen have learned to believe."[2] In Germany as in France the freethinking which thus grew up during the religious war expanded after the peace. As usual, this is to be gathered from the orthodox propaganda against it, setting out in 1662 with a *Preservative against the Pest of Present-day Atheists*,[3] by one Theophilus Gegenbauer. So far was this from attaining its end that there ensued ere long a more positive and aggressive development of freethinking than any other country had yet seen. A wandering

[1] Cp. Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 308-309. "The result of the Thirty Years' War was indifference, not only to the Confession, but to religion in general. Ever since that period, secular interests decidedly occupythe foreground" (Kahnis, *Internal History of German Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856, p. 21).

[2] Quoted by Bishop Hurst, ed. cited, p. 60 (78).

[3] *Preservatio wider die Pest der heutigen Atheisten.*

scholar, MATTHIAS KNUTZEN of Holstein (b. 1645), who had studied philosophy at Königsberg, went about in 1674 teaching a hardy Religion of Humanity, rejecting alike immortality, God and Devil, churches and priests, and insisting that conscience could perfectly well take the place of the Bible as a guide to conduct. His doctrines are to be gathered chiefly from a curious Latin letter,[1] written by him for circulation, headed *Amicus Amicis Amica;* and in this the profession of atheism is explicit: "*Insuper Deum negamus.*" In two dialogues in German he set forth the same ideas. His followers, as holding by conscience, were called *Gewissener;* and he or another of his group asserted that in Jena alone there were seven hundred of them.[2] The figures were fantastic, and the whole movement passed rapidly out of sight—hardly by reason of the orthodox refutations, however. Germany was in no state to sustain such a party; and what happened was a necessarily slow gestation of the seed of new thought thus cast abroad.

Knutzen's Latin letter is given in full by a Welsh scholar settled in Germany, Jenkinus Thomasius (Jenkin Thomas), in his *Historia Atheismi* (Altdorf, 1692), ed. Basel, 1709, pp. 97–101; also by La Croze in his (anon.) *Entretiens sur divers sujets*, 1711, p. 402 *sq.* Thomasius thus codifies its doctrine:—"1. There is neither God nor Devil. 2. The magistrate is nothing to be esteemed; temples are to be condemned, priests to be rejected. 3. In place of the magistrate and the priest are to be put knowledge and reason, joined with conscience, which teaches to live honestly, to injure none, and to give each his own. 4. Marriage and free union do not differ. 5. This is the only life: after it, there is neither reward nor punishment. 6. The Scripture contradicts itself." Knutzen admittedly wrote like a scholar (Thomasius, p. 97); but his treatment of Scripture contradictions belongs to the infancy of criticism; though La Croze, replying thirty years later, could only meet it with charges of impiety and stupidity. As to the numbers of the movement see Trinius, *Freydenker Lexicon*, 1759, s. v. KNUTZEN. Kurtz (*Hist. of the Christian Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, i, 213) states that a careful academic investigation proved the claim to a membership of 700 to be an empty boast (citing H. Rossel, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1844, iv). This doubtless refers to the treatise of Musæus, Jena, 1675, cited by La Croze, p. 401. Some converts Knutzen certainly made; and as only the hardiest would dare to avow themselves, his influence may have been considerable. "Examples of total unbelief come only singly to knowledge," says Tholuck; "but total unbelief had still to the end of the

[1] Dated from Rome; but this was a mystification.
[2] Kahnis, p. 125; La Croze, *Entretiens*, 1711, p. 401.

century to bear penal treatment." He gives the instances (1) of the Swedish Baron Skytte, reported in 1669 by Spener to the Frankfort authorities for having said at table, before the court preacher, that the Scriptures were not holy, and not from God but from men; and (2) "a certain minister" who at the end of the century was prosecuted for blasphemy. (*Das kirchliche Leben des 17ten Jahrhunderts*, 2 Abth. pp. 56–57.) Even Anabaptists were still liable to banishment in the middle of the century. *Id.* 1 Abth. 1861, p. 36. As to clerical intolerance see pp. 40–44. On the merits of the Knutzen movement cp. Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christian Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. i, 437–8.

2. While, however, clerical action could drive such a movement under the surface, it could not prevent the spread of rationalism in all directions; and there was now germinating a philosophic unbelief[1] under the influence of Spinoza. Nowhere were there more prompt and numerous answers to Spinoza than in Germany,[2] whence it may be inferred that within the educated class he soon had a good many adherents. In point of fact the Elector Palatine offered him a professorship of philosophy at Heidelberg in 1673, promising him "the most ample freedom in philosophical teaching," and merely stipulating that he should not use it "to disturb the religion publicly established."[3] On the other hand, Professor Rappolt, of Leipzig, attacked him as an atheist, in an *Oratio contra naturalistas* in 1670; Professor Musæus, of Jena, assailed him in 1674;[4] and the Chancellor Kortholt, of Kiel, grouped him, Herbert, and Hobbes as *The Three Great Impostors* in 1680.[5] After the appearance of the *Ethica* the replies multiplied. On the other hand, Cuffelaer vindicated Spinoza in 1684; and in 1691 F. W. STOSCH, a court official, and son of the court preacher, published a stringent attack on revelationism, entitled *Concordia rationis et fidei*, partly on Spinozistic lines, which created much commotion, and was forcibly suppressed and condemned to be burnt by the hangman at Berlin,[6] as it denied not only the immateriality but the immortality of the soul and the historical truth of the Scriptural narratives. This seems to have been the first work of modern freethought published by a German,[7] apart from Knutzen's letter; but a partial list of the apologetic works

[1] Even Knutzen seems to have been influenced by Spinoza. Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christ. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. i. 437. Pünjer, however, seems to have exaggerated the connection.

[2] Cp. Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i. 318 (Eng. tr. ii. 35).

[3] *Epistolæ ad Spinozam et Responsiones*, in Gfrörer, liii.

[4] Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of the *Opera*, 1830, pp. lv, lvi.

[5] Pünjer, as cited, i. 434–36; Lange, last cit. Lange notes that Genthe's *Compendium de impostura religionum*, which has been erroneously assigned to the sixteenth century, must belong to the period of Kortholt's work.

[6] Pünjer, p. 439; Lange, last cit.; Tholuck, *Kirch. Leben*, 2 Abth. pp. 57–58.

[7] It was nominally issued at Amsterdam, really at Berlin.

of the period, from Gegenbauer onwards, may suffice to suggest the real vogue of heterodox opinions:—

1662. Th. Gegenbauer. *Preservatio wider die Pest der heutigen Atheisten.* Erfurt.
1668. J. Musæus. *Examen Cherburianismi. Contra E. Herbertum de Cherbury.*
,, Anton Reiser. *De origine, progressu, et incremento Antitheismi seu Atheismi.*[1] Augsburg.
1670. Rappolt. *Oratio contra Naturalistas.* Leipzig.
1672. J. Müller. *Atheismus devictus* (in German). Hamburg.
,, J. Lassen. *Arcana-Politica-Atheistica* (in German).
1673. —— *Besiegte Atheisterey.*
,, Chr. Pfaff. *Disputatio contra Atheistas.*
1674. J. Musæus. *Spinozismus.* Jena.
1677. Val. Greissing. *Corona Transylvani; Exerc. 2, de Atheismo, contra Cartesium et Math. Knutzen.* Wittemberg.
,, Tobias Wagner. *Examen.....atheismi speculativi.* Tübingen.
,, K. Rudrauff, Giessen. *Dissertatio de Atheismo.*
1680. Chr. Kortholt. *De tribus impostoribus magnis liber.* Kiloni.
1689. Th. Undereyck. *Der Närrische Atheist in seiner Thorheit ueberzeugt.* Bremen.
1692. Jenkinus Thomasius. *Historia Atheismi.* Altdorf.
1696. J. Lassen. *Arcana-Politica-Atheistica.* Reprint.
1697. A. H. Grosse. *An Atheismus necessario ducat ad corruptionem morum.* Rostock.
,, Em. Weber. *Beurtheilung der Atheisterei.*
1700. Tribbechov. *Historia Naturalismi.* Jena.
1708. Loescher. *Prænotiones Theologicæ contra Naturalistarum et Fanaticorum omne genus, Atheos, Deistas, Indifferentistas,* etc. Wittemberg.
,, Schwartz. *Demonstrationes Dei.* Leipzig.
,, Rechenberg. *Fundamenta veræ religionis Prudentum, adversus Atheos,* etc.
1710. J. C. Wolfius. *Dissertatio de Atheismi falso suspectis.* Wittemberg.
1713. J. N. Fromman. *Atheus Stultus.* Tübingen.
,, Anon. *Widerlegung der Atheisten, Deisten, und neuen Zweifeler.* Frankfort.

[Later came the works of Buddeus (1716) and Reimmann and Fabricius, noted above, vol. i, ch. i, § 2.]

3. For a community in which the reading class was mainly clerical and scholastic, the seeds of rationalism were thus in part sown in the seventeenth century; but the ground was not yet propitious. LEIBNITZ (1646–1716), the chief thinker produced by Germany before Kant, lived in a state of singular intellectual isolation;[2] and showed his sense of it by writing his philosophic treatises chiefly in French. One of the most widely learned men of his age, he was wont from his boyhood to grapple critically with every system of thought that came in his way; and, while claiming to be

[1] This writer gives (p. 12) a notable list of the forms of atheism: *Atheismus directus, indirectus, formalis, virtualis, theoreticus, practicus, inchoatus, consummatus, subtilis, crassus, privativus, negativus,* and so on, *ad lib.*
[2] Cp. *Buckle and his Critics,* pp. 171–72; Pünjer, i. 515.

always eager to learn,[1] he was as a rule strongly concerned to affirm his own powerful bias. Early in life he writes that it horrifies him to think how many men he has met who were at once intelligent and atheistic;[2] and his propaganda is always dominated by the desire rather to confute unbelief than to find out the truth. As early as 1668 (aet. 22) he wrote an essay to that end, which was published as a *Confessio naturæ contra Atheistas*. Against Spinoza he reacted instantly and violently, pronouncing the *Tractatus* on its first (anonymous) appearance an "unbearably bold (*licentiosum*) book," and resenting the Hobbesian criticism which it "dared to apply to sacred Scripture."[3] Yet in the next year we find him writing to Arnauld in earnest protest against the hidebound orthodoxy of the Church. "A philosophic age," he declares, "is about to begin, in which the concern for truth, flourishing outside the schools, will spread even among politicians. Nothing is more likely to strengthen atheism and to upset faith, already so shaken by the attacks of great but bad men [a pleasing allusion to Spinoza], than to see on the one side the mysteries of the faith preached upon as the creed of all, and on the other hand become matter of derision to all, convicted of absurdity by the most certain rules of common reason. The worst enemies of the Church are in the Church. Let us take care lest the latest heresy—I will not say atheism, but—naturalism, be publicly professed."[4] For a time he seemed thus disposed to liberalize. He wrote to Spinoza on points of optics before he discovered the authorship; and he is represented later as speaking of the *Tractatus* with respect. He even visited Spinoza in 1676, and obtained a perusal of the manuscript of the *Ethica;* but he remained hostile to him in theology and philosophy. To the last he called Spinoza a mere developer of Descartes,[5] whom he also habitually resisted.

This was not hopeful; and Leibnitz, with all his power and originality, really wrought little for the direct rationalization of religious thought.[6] His philosophy, with all its ingenuity, has the common stamp of the determination of the theist to find reasons for the God in whom he believed beforehand; and his principle that all is for the best is the fatal rounding of his argumentative circle. Thus his doctrine that that is true which is clear was turned to the

[1] Letter cited by Dr. Latta, *Leibniz*, 1898, p. 2, *note*.
[2] *Philos. Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, i. 26; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, p. 77.
[3] Letter to Thomas, December 23, 1670.
[4] Quoted by Tholuck, as last cited, p. 61. Spener took the same tone.
[5] *Philos. Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, i. 34; ii. 563; Latta, p. 24; Martineau, p. 75. Cp. *Refutation of Spinoza by Leibnitz*, ed. by Foucher de Careil, Eng. tr. 1855.
[6] His notable surmise as to gradation of species (see Latta, pp. 38-39) was taken up among the French materialists, but did not then modify current science.

account of an empiricism of which the "clearness" was really predetermined by the conviction of truth. His *Theodicée*,[1] written in reply to Bayle, is by the admission even of admirers[2] a process of begging the question. Deity, a mere "infinition" of finite qualities, is proved à priori, though it is expressly argued that a finite mind cannot grasp infinity; and the necessary goodness of necessary deity is posited in the same fashion. It is very significant that such a philosopher, himself much given to denying the religiousness of other men's theories, was nevertheless accused among both the educated and the populace of being essentially non-religious. Nominally he adhered to the entire Christian system, including miracles, though he declared that his belief in dogma rested on the agreement of reason with faith, and claimed to keep his thought free on unassailed truths;[3] and he always discussed the Bible as a believer; yet he rarely went to church;[4] and the Low German nickname *Lövenix* (= *Glaubet nichts*, "believes nothing") expressed his local reputation. No clergyman attended his funeral; but indeed no one else went, save his secretary.[5] It is on the whole difficult to doubt that his indirect influence not only in Germany but elsewhere had been and has been for deism and atheism.[6] He and Newton were the most distinguished mathematicians and theists of the age; and Leibnitz, as we saw, busied himself to show that the philosophy of Newton[7] tended to atheism, and that that of their theistic predecessor Descartes would not stand criticism.[8] Spinoza being, according to him, in still worse case, and Locke hardly any sounder,[9] there remained for theists only his cosmology of monads and his ethic of optimism—all for the best in the best of all possible worlds—which seems at least as well fitted as any other theism to make thoughtful men give up the principle.

4. Other culture-conditions concurred to set up a spirit of rationalism in Germany. After the Thirty Years' War there arose a religious movement, called *Pietism* by its theological opponents, which aimed at an emotional inwardness of religious

[1] The only lengthy treatise published by him in his lifetime.
[2] M. A. Jacques, intr. to *Œuvres de Leibniz*, 1846, i, 54–57.
[3] Cp. Tholuck, *Das kirchliche Leben*, as cited, 2 Abth. pp. 52–55. Kahnis, coinciding with Erdmann, pronounces that, although Leibnitz "acknowledges the God of the Christian faith, yet his system assigned to Him a very uncertain position only" (*Int. Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, p. 26). [4] Cp. Pünjer, i, 509, as to his attitude on ritual.
[5] Latta, as cited, p. 16; *Vie de Leibnitz*, par De Jaucourt, in ed. 1747 of the *Essais de Théodicée*, i. 235–39.
[6] As to his virtual deism see Pünjer, i, 513–15. But he proposed to send Christian missionaries to the heathen. Tholuck, as last cited, p. 55.
[7] *Lettres entre Leibnitz et Clarke*.
[8] *Discours de la conformité de la foi avec la raison*, §§ 68–70; *Essais sur la bonté de Dieu*, etc., §§ 50, 61, 164, 180, 292–93.
[9] The *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement humain*, refuting Locke, appeared posthumously in 1765. Locke had treated his theistic critic with contempt. (Latta, p. 13.)

life as against what its adherents held to be an irreligious orthodoxy around them.[1] Contending against rigid articles of credence, they inevitably prepared the way for less credent forms of thought.[2] Though the first leaders of Pietism grew embittered with their unsuccess and the attacks of their religious enemies,[3] their impulse went far, and greatly influenced the clergy through the university of Halle, which in the first part of the eighteenth century turned out 6,000 clergymen in one generation.[4] Against the Pietists were furiously arrayed the Lutherans of the old order, who even contrived in many places to suppress their schools.[5] Virtues generated under persecution, however, underwent the law of degeneration which dogs all intellectual subjection; and the inner life of Pietism, lacking mental freedom and intellectual play, grew as cramped in its emotionalism as that of orthodoxy in its dogmatism. Religion was thus represented by a species of extremely unattractive and frequently absurd formalists on the one hand, and on the other by a school which at its best unsettled religious usage, and otherwise tended alternately to fanaticism and cant.[6] Thus "the rationalist tendencies of the age were promoted by this treble exhibition of the aberrations of belief."[7] "How sorely," says Tholuck, "the hold not only of ecclesiastical but of Biblical belief on men of all grades had been shaken at the beginning of the eighteenth century is seen in many instances."[8] Orthodoxy selects that of a Holstein student who hanged himself at Wittemberg in 1688, leaving written in his New Testament, in Latin, the declaration that "Our soul is mortal; religion is a popular delusion, invented to gull the ignorant, and so govern the world the better."[9] But again there is the testimony of the mint-master at Hanover that at court there all lived as "free atheists." And though the name "freethinker" was not yet much used in discussion, it had become current in the form of *Freigeist*—the German equivalent still used. This, as we have noted,[10] was probably a survival from the name of the old sect of the "Free Spirit," rather than an adaptation from the French *esprit fort* or the English "freethinker."

[1] Amand Saintes, *Hist. crit. du Rationalisme en Allemagne*, 1841, ch. vi; Heinrich Schmid, *Die Geschichte des Pietismus*, 1863, ch. ii.

[2] Saintes, p. 51; cp. Pusey, p. 105, as to "the want of resistance from the school of Pietists to the subsequent invasion of unbelief."

[3] Hagenbach, *German Rationalism*, Eng. tr. 1865, p. 9.

[4] *Id.* p. 39; Pusey, *Histor. Enquiry into the Causes of German Rationalism*, 1828, pp. 88, 97; Tholuck, *Abriss einer Geschichte des Umwälzung.....seit 1750 auf dem Gebiete der Theologie in Deutschland*, in *Vermischte Schriften*, 1839, ii. 5.

[5] Pusey, pp. 86, 87, 98.

[6] Cp. Pusey, pp. 37-38, 45, 48, 49, 53-54, 79, 101-109; Saintes, pp. 28, 79-80; Hagenbach, pp. 41, 72, 105.

[7] Pusey, p. 110. Cp. Saintes, ch. vi.

[8] *Das kirchliche Leben*, as cited, 2 Abth. p. 58.

[9] *Id.* pp. 56-57.

[10] Vol. i, p. 6.

5. After the collapse of the popular movement of Matthias Knutzen, the thin end of the new wedge may be seen in the manifold work of CHRISTIAN THOMASIUS (1655–1728), who in 1687 published a treatise on "Divine Jurisprudence," in which the principles of Pufendorf on natural law, already offensive to the theologians, were carried so far as to give new offence. Reading Pufendorf in his nonage as a student of jurisprudence, he was so conscious of the conflict between the utilitarian and the Scriptural view of moral law that, taught by a master who had denounced Pufendorf, he recoiled in a state of theological fear.[1] Some years later, gaining self-possession, he recognized the rationality of Pufendorf's system, and both expounded and defended him, thus earning his share in the hostility which the great jurist encountered at clerical hands. Between that hostility and the naturalist bias which he had acquired from Pufendorf, there grew up in him an aversion to the methods and pretensions of theologians which made him their lifelong antagonist.[2] Pufendorf had but guardedly introduced some of the fundamental principles of Hobbes, relating morals to the social state, and thus preparing the way for utilitarianism.[3] This sufficed to make the theologians his enemies; and it is significant that Thomasius, heterodox at the outset only thus far forth, becomes from that point onwards an important pioneer of freethought, toleration, and humane reform. Innovating in all things, he began, while still a *Privatdocent* at Leipzig University, a campaign on behalf of the German language; and, not content with arousing much pedantic enmity by delivering lectures for the first time in his mother tongue, and deriding at the same time the bad scholastic Latin of his compatriots, he set on foot the first vernacular German periodical,[4] which ran for two years (1688–90), and caused so much anger that he was twice prosecuted before the ecclesiastical court of Dresden, the second time on a charge of contempt of religion. The periodical was in effect a crusade against all the pedantries, the theologians coming in for the hardest blows.[5] Other satirical writings, and a

[1] H. Luden, *Christian Thomasius nach seinen Schicksalen und Schriften dargestellt*, 1805, p. 7.

[2] Cp. Schmid, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, pp. 486–88.

[3] Pufendorf's bulky treatise *De Jure Naturæ et Gentium* was published at Lund, where he was professor, in 1672. The shorter *De Officio hominis et civis* (also Lund, 1673) is a condensation and partly a vindication of the other, and this it was that convinced Thomasius. As to Pufendorf's part in the transition from theological to rational moral philosophy, see Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iv. 171–78. He is fairly to be bracketed with Cumberland; but Hallam hardly recognizes that it was the challenge of Hobbes that forced the change.

[4] *Freimüthige, lustige und ernsthafte, jedoch vernunft- und gesetzmässige Gedanken, oder Monatgespräche über allerhand, vornehmlich über neue Bücher.* There had been an earlier *Acta Eruditorum*, in Latin, published at Leipzig, and a French *Ephemerides savantes*, Hamburg, 1686. Other German and French periodicals soon followed that of Thomasius. Luden, p. 162.

[5] Schmid, pp. 488–92, gives a sketch of some of the contents.

defence of intermarriage between Calvinists and Lutherans,[1] at length put him in such danger that, to escape imprisonment, he sought the protection of the Elector of Brandenburg at Halle, where he ultimately became professor of jurisprudence in the new university, founded by his advice. There for a time he leant towards the Pietists, finding in that body a concern for natural liberty of feeling and thinking which was absent from the mental life of orthodoxy; but he was "of another spirit" than they, and took his own way.

In philosophy an unsystematic pantheist, he taught, after Plutarch, Bayle, and Bacon, that "superstition is worse than atheism"; but his great practical service to German civilization, over and above his furthering of the native speech, was his vigorous polemic against prosecutions for heresy, trials for witchcraft, and the use of torture, all of which he did more than any other German to discredit, though judicial torture subsisted for another half-century.[2] It was by his propaganda that the princes of Germany were moved to abolish all trials for sorcery.[3] In such a battle he of course had the clergy against him all along the line; and it is as an anti-clerical that he figures in clerical history. The clerical hostility to his ethics he repaid with interest, setting himself to develop to the utmost, in the interest of lay freedom, the Lutheran admission of the divine right of princes.[4] This he turned not against freedom of opinion but against ecclesiastical claims, very much in the spirit of Hobbes, who may have influenced him.

The perturbed Mosheim, while candidly confessing that Thomasius is the founder of academic freedom in Germany, pronounces that the "famous jurists" who were led by Thomasius "set up a new fundamental principle of church polity—namely, the supreme authority and power of the civil magistrate," so tending to create the opinion "that the ministers of religion are not to be accounted ambassadors of God, but vicegerents of the chief magistrates. They also weakened not a little the few remaining prerogatives and advantages which were left of the vast number formerly possessed

[1] Pusey, p. 86, *note*. It is surprising that Pusey does not make more account of Thomasius's naturalistic treatment of polygamy and suicide, which he showed to be not criminal in terms of natural law.

[2] Compare Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Lit.* § 81 (ed. 1880, pp. 90-91); Pusey, as cited, p. 114, *note*; Enfield's *Hist. of Philos.* (abst. of Brucker's *Hist. crit. philos.*), 1840, pp. 610-612; Ueberweg, ii, 115; and Schlegel's note in Reid's Mosheim, p. 790, with Karl Hillebrand, *Six Lect. on the Hist. of German Thought*, 1880, pp. 64-65. There is a modern monograph by A. Nicoladoni, *Christian Thomasius; ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Aufklärung*, 1888.

[3] Baron de Bielfeld, *Progrès des Allemands*, 3e éd. 1767, i. 24. "Before Thomasius," writes Bielfeld, "an old woman could not have red eyes without running the risk of being accused of witchcraft and burned at the stake."

[4] Schmid, pp. 493-97. Thomasius's principal writings on this theme were: *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten in theologischen Streitigkeiten* (1692); *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten in Mitteldingen* (1692); *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten gegen Ketzer* (1697).

by the clergy; and maintained that many of the maxims and regulations of our churches which had come down from our fathers were relics of popish superstition. This afforded matter for long and pernicious feuds and contests between our theologians and our jurists.....It will be sufficient for us to observe, what is abundantly attested, that they diminished much in various places the respect for the clergy, the reverence for religion, and the security and prosperity of the Lutheran Church."[1] Pusey, in turn, grudgingly allows that "the study of history was revived and transformed through the views of Thomasius."[2]

6. A personality of a very different kind emerges in the same period in Johann Conrad Dippel (1673–1734), who developed a system of rationalistic mysticism, and as to whom, says an orthodox historian, "one is doubtful whether to place him in the class of pietists or of rationalists, of enthusiasts or of scoffers, of mystics or of freethinkers."[3] The son of a preacher, he yet "exhibited in his ninth year strong doubts as to the catechism." After a tolerably free life as a student he turned Pietist at Strasburg, lectured on astrology and palmistry, preached, and got into trouble with the police. In 1698 he published under the pen-name of "Christianus Democritus" his book, *Gestäuptes Papstthum der Protestirenden* ("The Popery of the Protestantizers Whipped"), in which he so attacked the current Christian ethic of salvation as to exasperate both Churches.[4] The stress of his criticism fell firstly on the unthinking Scripturalism of the average Protestant, who, he said, while reproaching the Catholic with setting up in the crucifix a God of wood, was apt to make for himself a God of paper.[5] In his repudiation of the "bargain" or "redemption" doctrine of the historic Church he took up positions which were as old as Abailard, and which were one day to become respectable; but in his own life he was much of an Ishmaelite, with wild notions of alchemy and gold-making; and after predicting that he should live till 1808, he died suddenly in 1734, leaving a doctrine which appealed only to those constitutionally inclined, on the lines of the earlier English Quakers, to set the inner light above Scripture.[6]

[1] *Ec. Hist.* 17 Cent. sect. ii, pt. ii, ch. i, §§ 11, 14. It is noteworthy that the Pietists at Halle did not scruple to ally themselves for a time with Thomasius, he being opposed to the orthodox party. Kahnis, *Internal Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, p. 114.

[2] Pusey, as cited, p. 121. Cp. p. 113.

[3] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrh.* 2te Aufl. i, 164. (This matter is not in the abridged translation.)

[4] See the furious account of him by Mosheim, 17 C. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. i, § 33.

[5] Hagenbach, last cit. p. 169.

[6] Noack, *Die Freidenker in der Religion*, Th. iii, Kap. 1; Bruno Bauer, *Einfluss des englischen Quäkerthums auf die deutsche Cultur und auf das englisch-russische Projekt einer Weltkirche*, 1878, pp. 41–44.

7. Among the pupils of Thomasius at Halle was Theodore Louis Lau, who, born of an aristocratic family, became Minister of Finances to the Duke of Courland, and after leaving that post held a high place in the service of the Elector Palatine. While holding that office Lau published a small Latin volume of *pensées* entitled *Meditationes Theologicæ-Physicæ*, notably deistic in tone. This gave rise to such an outcry among the clergy that he had to leave Frankfort, only, however, to be summoned before the consistory of Königsberg, his native town, and charged with atheism (1719). He thereupon retired to Altona, where he had freedom enough to publish a reply to his clerical persecutors.[1]

8. While Thomasius was still at work, a new force arose of a more distinctly academic cast. This was the adaptation of Leibnitz's system by CHRISTIAN WOLFF, who, after building up a large influence among students by his method of teaching,[2] came into public prominence by a rectorial address[3] at Halle (1721) in which he warmly praised the ethics of Confucius. Such praise was naturally held to imply disparagement of Christianity; and as a result of the pietist outcry Wolff was condemned by the king to exile from Prussia, under penalty of the gallows,[4] all "atheistical" writings being at the same time forbidden. Wolff's system, however, prevailed so completely, in virtue of its lucidity and the rationalizing tendency of the age, that in the year 1738 there were said to be already 107 authors of his cast of thinking. Nevertheless, he refused to return to Halle on any invitation till the accession (1740) of Frederick the Great, one of his warmest admirers, whereafter he figured as *the* German thinker of his age. His teaching, which for the first time popularized philosophy in the German language, in turn helped greatly, by its ratiocinative cast, to promote the rationalistic temper, though orthodox enough from the modern point of view. Under the new reign, however, pietism and Wolffism alike lost prestige,[5] and the age of anti-Christian and Christian rationalism began. Thus the period of free-thinking in Germany follows close upon one of religious revival. The 6,000 theologians trained at Halle in the first generation of the century had "worked like a leaven through all Germany."[6] "Not since the time of the Reformation had Germany such a large number of truly pious preachers and laymen as towards the end of the first

[1] Pref. to French tr. of the *Meditationes*, 1770, pp. xii-xvii. Lau died in 1740.
[2] Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 10. [3] Trans. in English, 1750.
[4] Hagenbach, tr. pp. 35-36; Saintes, p. 61; Kahnis, as cited, p. 114.
[5] Hagenbach, pp. 37-39. It is to be observed (Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 23) that the Wolffian philosophy was reinstated in Prussia by royal mandate in 1739, a year before the accession of Frederick the Great. But we know that Frederick championed him.
[6] Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 5.

half of the eighteenth century."[1] There, as elsewhere, religion intellectually collapsed.

As to Wolff's rationalistic influence see Cairns, *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 173; Pusey, pp. 115–19; Pünjer, p. 529; Lechler, pp. 448–49. "It cannot be questioned that, in his philosophy, the main stress rests upon the rational" (Kahnis, as cited, p. 28). "Francke and Lange (pietists)..... saw atheism and corruption of manners springing up from Wolff's school" (before his exile). *Id.* p. 113. Wolff's chief offence lay in stressing natural religion, and in indicating, as Tholuck observes, that that could be demonstrated, whereas revealed religion could only be believed (*Abriss*, p. 18). He greatly pleased Voltaire by the dictum that men ought to be just even though they had the misfortune to be atheists. It is noted by Tholuck, however (*Abriss*, as cited, p. 11, *note*), that the decree for Wolff's expulsion was inspired not by his theological colleagues but by two military advisers of the king. Tholuck's own criticism resolves itself into a protest against Wolff's predilection for logical connection in his exposition. The fatal thing was that Wolff accustomed German Christians to reason.

9. Even before the generation of active pressure from English and French deism there were clear signs that rationalism had taken root in German life. On the impulse set up by the establishment of the Grand Lodge at London in 1717, Freemasonic lodges began to spring up in Germany, the first being founded at Hamburg in 1733.[2] The deism which in the English lodges was later toned down by orthodox reaction was from the first pronounced in the German societies, which ultimately passed on the tradition to the other parts of the Continent. But the new spirit was not confined to secret societies. Wolffianism worked widely. In the so-called *Wertheim Bible* (1735) Johann Lorenz Schmid, in the spirit of the Leibnitz-Wolffian theology, "undertook to translate the Bible, and to explain it according to the principle that in revelation only that can be accepted as true which does not contradict the reason."[3] This of course involved no thorough-going criticism; but the spirit of innovation was strong enough in Schmid to make him undermine tradition at many points, and later carried him so far as to translate Tindal's *Christianity as old as Creation*. So far was he in advance of his time that when his Wertheim Bible was officially condemned throughout Germany he found no defenders.[4] The Wolffians were

[1] Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 6. [2] Kahnis, p. 55.
[3] Pünjer, i. 544. Cp. Tholuck, *Abriss*, pp. 19–22.
[4] Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 22. Schmid was for a time supposed to be the author of the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* of Reimarus (below, p. 327).

in comparison generally orthodox; and another writer of the same school, Martin Knutzen, professor at Königsberg (1715–1751), undertook in a youthful thesis *De æternitate mundi impossibili* (1735) to rebut the old Averroïst doctrine, revived by modern science, of the indestructibility of the universe. A few years later (1739) he published a treatise entitled *The Truth of Christianity Demonstrated by Mathematics*, which succeeded as might have been expected.

10. To the same period belong the first activities of JOHANN CHRISTIAN EDELMANN (1698–1767), one of the most energetic freethinkers of his age. Trained philosophically at Jena under the theologian Budde, a bitter opponent of Wolff, and theologically in the school of the Pietists, he was strongly influenced against official orthodoxy through reading the *Impartial History of the Church and of Heretics*, by Gottfried Arnold, an eminently anti-clerical work, which nearly always takes the side of the heretics.[1] In the same heterodox direction he was swayed by the works of Dippel. At this stage Edelmann produced his *Unschuldige Wahrheiten* ("Innocent Truths"), in which he takes up a pronouncedly rationalist and latitudinarian position, but without rejecting "revelation"; and in 1736 he went to Berleburg, where he worked on the Berleburg translation of the Bible, a Pietist undertaking, somewhat on the lines of Dippel's mystical doctrine, in which a variety of incredible Scriptural narratives, from the six days' creation onwards, are turned to mystical purpose.[2] In this occupation Edelmann seems to have passed some years. Gradually, however, he came more and more under the influence of the English deists; and he at length withdrew from the Pietist camp, attacking his former associates for the fanaticism into which their thought was degenerating. It was under the influence of Spinoza, however, that he took his most important steps. A few months after meeting with the *Tractatus* he began (1740) the first part of his treatise *Moses mit aufgedecktem Angesichte* ("Moses with unveiled face"), an attack at once on the doctrine of inspiration and on that of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The book was intended to consist of twelve parts; but after the appearance of three it was prohibited by the imperial fisc, and the published parts burned by the hangman at Hamburg and elsewhere. Nonetheless, Edelmann continued his propaganda, publishing in 1741 or 1742 *The Divinity*

[1] *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 1699–1700, 2 tom. fol.—fuller ed. 3 tom. fol. 1740. Compare Mosheim's angry account of it with Murdock's note in defence: Reid's ed. p. 804. Bruno Bauer describes it as epoch-making (*Einfluss des englischen Quäkerthums*, p. 42). This history had a great influence on Goethe in his teens, leading him, he says, to the conviction that he, like so many other men, should have a religion of his own, which he goes on to describe. It was a re-hash of Gnosticism. (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. viii; *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi. 344 *sq.*)

[2] Cp. Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i. 171; Pünjer, i. 279.

of Reason,[1] and in 1741 *Christ and Belial*. In 1749 or 1750 his works were again publicly burned at Frankfurt by order of the imperial authorities; and he had much ado to find anywhere in Germany safe harbourage, till he found protection under Frederick at Berlin, where he died in 1767.

Edelmann's teaching was essentially Spinozist and pantheistic,[2] with a leaning to the doctrine of metempsychosis. As a pantheist he of course entirely rejected the divinity of Jesus, pronouncing inspiration the appanage of all; and the gospels were by him dismissed as late fabrications, from which the true teachings of the founder could not be learned; though, like nearly all the freethinkers of that age, he estimated Jesus highly.[3] A German theologian complains, nevertheless, that he was "more just toward heathenism than toward Judaism; and more just toward Judaism than toward Christianity"; adding: "What he taught had been thoroughly and ingeniously said in France and England; but from a German theologian, and that with such eloquent coarseness, with such a mastery in expatiating in blasphemy, such things were unheard of."[4] The force of Edelmann's attack may be gathered from the same writer's account of him as a "bird of prey" who rose to a "wicked height of opposition, not only against the Lutheran Church, but against Christianity in general."

11. Even from decorous and official exponents of religion, however, there came "naturalistic" and semi-rationalistic teaching, as in the *Reflections on the most important truths of religion*[5] (1768–1769) of J. F. W. Jerusalem, Abbot of Marienthal in Brunswick, and later of Riddagshausen (1709–1789). Jerusalem had travelled in Europe, and had spent two years in Holland and one in England, where he studied the deists and their opponents. "In England alone," he declared, "is mankind original."[6] Though really written by way of defending Christianity against the freethinkers, in par-

[1] *Die Göttlichkeit der Vernunft.*

[2] Noack, Th. iii. Kap. 2: Saintes, pp. 85-86; Pünjer, p. 442. It is interesting to find Edelmann supplying a formula latterly utilized by the so-called "New Theology" in England—the thesis that "the reality of everything which exists is God," and that there can therefore be no atheists, since he who recognizes the universe recognizes God.

[3] Naigeon, by altering the words of Diderot, caused him to appear one of the exceptions: but he was not. See Rosenkranz, *Diderot's Leben und Werke*, Vorb. p. vii.

[4] Kahnis, pp. 128-29. Edelmann's Life was written by Pratje, *Historische Nachrichten von Edelmann's Leben*, 1755. It gives a list of replies to his writings (p. 205 *sq.*). Apropos of the first issue of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, a volume of *Erinnerungen* of Edelmann was published at Clausthal in 1839 by W. Elster; and Strauss in his *Dogmatik* avowed the pleasure with which he had made the acquaintance of so interesting a writer. A collection of extracts from Edelmann's works, entitled *Der neu eröffnete Edelmann*, was published at Bern in 1847; and the *Unschuldige Wahrheiten* was reprinted in 1846. His Autobiography, written in 1752, was published in 1849.

[5] *Betrachtungen über die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der Religion.* Another apologetic work of the period marked by rational moderation and tolerance was the *Vertheidigte Glauben der Christen* of the Berlin court-preacher A. W. F. Sack (1754).

[6] Art. by Wagenmann in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie.*

ticular against Bolingbroke and Voltaire,[1] the very title of his book is suggestive of a process of disintegration; and in it certain unedifying Scriptural miracles are actually rejected.[2] It was probably this measure of adaptation to new needs that gave it its great popularity in Germany and secured its translation into several other languages. Goethe called him a "freely and gently thinking theologian"; and a modern orthodox historian of the Church groups him with those who "contributed to the spread of Rationalism by sermons and by popular doctrinal and devotional works."[3] Jerusalem was, however, at most a semi-rationalist, taking a view of the fundamental Christian dogmas which approached closely to that of Locke.[4] It was, as Goethe said later, the epoch of common sense; and the very theologians tended to a "religion of nature."[5]

12. Alongside of home-made heresy there had come into play a new initiative force in the literature of English deism, which began to be translated after 1740,[6] and was widely circulated till, in the last third of the century, it was superseded by the French. The English answers to the deists were frequently translated likewise, and notoriously helped to promote deism[7]—another proof that it was not their influence that had changed the balance of activity in England. Under a freethinking king, even clergymen began guardedly to accept the deistic methods; and the optimism of Shaftesbury began to overlay the optimism of Leibnitz;[8] while a French scientific influence began with La Mettrie,[9] Maupertuis, and Robinet. Even the Leibnitzian school, proceeding on the principle of immortal monads, developed a doctrine of the immortality of the souls of animals[10]—a position not helpful to orthodoxy. There was thus a general stirring of doubt among educated people,[11] and we find mention in Goethe's Autobiography of an old gentleman of Frankfort who

[1] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 355. [2] Pünjer, i, 542.

[3] Kurz, *Hist. of the Christian Church from the Reformation*, Eng. tr. ii. 274. A Jesuit, A. Merz, wrote four replies to Jerusalem. One was entitled *Frag ob durch die biblische Simplicität allein ein Freydenker oder Deist bekehret.....werden könne* ("Can a Freethinker or Deist be converted by Biblical Simplicity alone?"), 1775.

[4] Cp. Hagenbach, i, 353; tr. p. 120. Jerusalem was the father of the gifted youth whose suicide (1775) moved Goethe to write *The Sorrows of Werther*, a false presentment of the real personality, which stirred Lessing (his affectionate friend) to publish a volume of the dead youth's essays, in vindication of his character. The father had considerable influence in purifying German style. Cp. Goethe, *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. ii, B. vii; *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 272; and Hagenbach, i, 354.

[5] Goethe, as last cited, pp. 268–69.

[6] Lechler, *Gesch. des englischen Deismus*, pp. 447–52. The translations began with that of Tindal (1741), which made a great sensation.

[7] Pusey, pp. 125, 127, citing Twesten; Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, p. 36, citing Ernesti. Thorschmid's *Freidenker Bibliothek*, issued in 1765–67, collected both translations and refutations. Lechler, p. 451.

[8] Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 405 (Eng. tr. ii, 146–47).

[9] Lange, i, 347, 399 (Eng. tr. ii, 76, 137). [10] Lange, i, 396–97 (ii, 134–35).

[11] Goethe tells of having seen in his boyhood, at Frankfort, an irreligious French romance publicly burned, and of having his interest in the book thereby awakened. But this seems to have been during the French occupation. (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. iv; *Werke*, xi, 146.)

avowed, as against the optimists, "Even in God I find defects (*Fehler*)."[1]

On the other hand, there were instances in Germany of the phenomenon, already seen in England in Newton and Boyle, of men of science devoting themselves to the defence of the faith. The most notable cases were those of the mathematician Euler and the biologist von Haller. The latter wrote Letters (to his Daughter) *On the most important Truths of Revelation* (1772)[2] and other apologetic works. Euler in 1747 published at Berlin, where he was professor, his *Defence of Revelation against the Reproaches of Freethinkers*;[3] and in 1769 his *Letters to a German Princess*, of which the argument notably coincides with part of that of Berkeley against the free-thinking mathematicians. Haller's position comes to the same thing. All three men, in fact, grasped at the argument of despair—the inadequacy of the human faculties to sound the mystery of things; and all alike were entirely unable to see that it logically cancelled their own judgments. Even a theologian, contemplating Haller's theorem of an incomprehensible omnipotence countered in its merciful plan of salvation by the set of worms it sought to save, comments on the childishness of the philosophy which confidently described the plans of deity in terms of what it declared to be the blank ignorance of the worms in question.[4] Euler and Haller, like some later men of science, kept their scientific method for the mechanical or physical problems of their scientific work, and brought to the deepest problems of all the self-will, the emotionalism, and the irresponsibility of the ignorant average man. Each did but express in his own way the resentment of the undisciplined mind at attacks upon its prejudices; and Haller's resort to poetry as a vehicle for his religion gives the measure of his powers on that side. Thus in Germany as in England the "answer" to the freethinkers was a failure. Men of science playing at theology and theologians playing at science alike failed to turn the tide of opinion, now socially favoured by the known deism of the king. German orthodoxy, says a recent Christian apologist, fell "with a rapidity reminding one of the capture of Jericho."[5] Goethe, writing of the general attitude to Christianity about 1768, sums up that "the Christian religion wavered between its own historic-positive base and a pure deism, which, grounded on morality, was in turn to re-establish ethics."[6]

[1] *Id.* B. iv, *end.*

[2] Translated into English 1780; 2nd ed. 1793. The translator claims for Haller great learning (2nd ed. p. xix). He seems in reality to have had very little, as he represents that Jesus in his day "was the only teacher who recommended chastity to men" (p. 82).

[3] *Rettung der Offenbarung gegen die Einwürfe der Freigeister.* Haller wrote under a similar title, 1775–76.

[4] Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, iv. 599.

[5] Gostwick, p. 15.

[6] *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. viii; *Werke*, xi. 329.

Frederick's attitude, said an early Kantian, had had "an almost magical influence" on popular opinion (Willich, *Elements of the Critical Philosophy*, 1798, p. 2). With this his French teachers must have had much to do. Lord Morley pronounces (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 123) that French deism "never made any impression on Germany," and that "the teaching of Leibnitz and Wolff stood like a fortified wall against the French invasion." This is contradicted by much German testimony; in particular by Lange's (*Gesch. des Mater.* i, 318), though he notes that French materialism could not get the upper hand. Laukhard, who expressed the highest admiration for Tindal, as having wholly delivered him from dogmatism, avowed that Voltaire, whom everybody read, had perhaps done more harm to priest religion than all the books of the English and German deists together (*Leben*, 1792–1802, Th. i, p. 268).

Tholuck gravely affirms (*Abriss*, p. 33) that the acquaintance with the French "deistery and frivolity" in Germany belongs to a "somewhat later period than that of the English." Naturally it did. The bulk of the English deistic literature was printed before the printing of the French had begun! French MSS. would reach German princes, but not German pastors. But Tholuck sadly avows that the French deism (of the serious and pre-Voltairean portions of which he seems to have known nothing) had a "frightful" influence on the upper classes, though not on the clergy (p. 34). Following him, Kahnis writes (*Internal History*, p. 41) that "English and French Deism met with a very favourable reception in Germany —the latter chiefly in the higher circles, the former rather among the educated middle classes." (He should have added, "the younger theologians.") Baur, even in speaking disparagingly of the French as compared with the English influence, admits (*Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2te Aufl. p. 347) that the former told upon Germany. Cp. Tennemann, Bohn. tr. pp. 385, 388. Hagenbach shows great ignorance of English deism, but he must have known something of German; and he writes (tr. p. 57) that "the imported deism," both English and French, "soon swept through the rifts of the Church, and gained supreme control of literature." Cp. pp. 67–68. See Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, pp. 225–26, as to the persistence of a succession of Hobbes and Locke in Germany in the teeth of the Wolffian school, which soon lost ground after 1740. It is further noteworthy that Brucker's copious *Historia Critica Philosophiæ* (1742–44), which as a mere learned record has great merit, and was long the standard authority in Germany, gives great praise to Locke and little space to Wolff. (See Enfield's abstract, pp. 614, 619 *sq.*) The Wolffian philosophy, too, had been rejected and disparaged by both Herder and Kant—who were alike deeply influenced by Rousseau—in the

third quarter of the century; and was generally discredited, save in the schools, when Kant produced the *Critique of Pure Reason*. See below, pp. 337, 345.

13. Frederick, though reputed a Voltairean freethinker *par excellence*, may be claimed for Germany as partly a product of the rationalizing philosophy of Wolff. In his first letter to Voltaire, written in 1736, four years before his accession, he promises to send him a translation he has had made of the "accusation and the justification" of Wolff, "the most celebrated philosopher of our days, who, for having carried light into the darkest places of metaphysics, and for having treated the most difficult matters in a manner no less elevated than precise and clear, is cruelly accused of irreligion and atheism"; and he speaks of getting translated Wolff's *Treatise of God, the Soul, and the World*. When he became a thoroughgoing freethinker is not clear, for Voltaire at this time had produced no explicit anti-Christian propaganda. At first the new king showed himself disposed to act on the old maxim that freethought is bad for the common people. In 1743–44 he caused to be suppressed two German treatises by one Gebhardi, a contributor to Gottsched's magazines, attacking the Biblical miracles; and in 1748 he sent a young man named Rüdiger to Spandau for six months' confinement for printing an anti-Christian work by one Dr. Pott.[1] But as he grew more confident in his own methods he extended to men of his own way of thinking the toleration he allowed to all religionists, save insofar as he vetoed the mutual vituperation of the sects, and such proselytizing as tended to create strife. With an even hand he protected Catholics, Greek Christians, and Unitarians, letting them have churches where they would;[2] and when, after the battle of Striegau, a body of Protestant peasantry asked his permission to slay all the Catholics they could find, he answered with the gospel precept, "Love your enemies."[3]

Beyond the toleration of all forms of religion, however, he never went; though he himself added to the literature of deism. Apart from his verses we have from him the posthumous treatise *Pensées sur la Religion*, probably written early in his life, where the rational case against the concepts of revelation and of miracles is put with a calm and sustained force. Like the rest, he is uncritical in his deism; but, that granted, his reasoning is unanswerable. In talk he was wont to treat the clergy with small respect;[4] and he wrote

[1] Schlosser, *Hist. of Eighteenth Cent.*, Eng. tr. 1843, i, 150; Hagenbach, tr. p. 66.
[2] Hagenbach, tr. p. 63. [3] *Id.*, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 232.
[4] Kahnis, p. 43; Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 34.

more denunciatory things concerning them than almost any freethinker of the century.[1] Bayle, Voltaire, and Lucretius were his favourite studies; and as the then crude German literature had no attraction for him, he drew to his court many distinguished Frenchmen, including La Mettrie, Maupertuis, D'Alembert, D'Argens, and above all Voltaire, between whom and him there was an incurable incompatibility of temper and character, and a persistent attraction of force of mind, which left them admiring without respecting each other, and unable to abstain from mutual vituperation. Under Frederick's vigorous rule all speech was free save such as he considered personally offensive, as Voltaire's attack on Maupertuis; and after a stormy reign he could say, when asked by Prince William of Brunswick whether he did not think religion one of the best supports of a king's authority, "I find order and the laws sufficient. .....Depend upon it, countries have been admirably governed when your religion had no existence."[2] Religion certainly had no part in his personality in the ordinary sense of the term. Voltaire was wont to impute to him atheism; when La Mettrie died, the mocker, then at Frederick's court, remarked that the post of his majesty's atheist was vacant, but happily the Abbé de Prades was there to fill it. In effect, Frederick professed Voltaire's own deism; but of all the deists of the time he had least of the religious temperament and most of sheer cynicism.

The attempt of Carlyle to exhibit Frederick as a practical believer is a flagrant instance of that writer's subjective method. He tells (*Hist. of Friedrich*, bk. xviii, ch. x) that at the beginning of the battle of Leuthen a column of troops near the king sang a hymn of duty (which Carlyle calls "the sound of Psalms"); that an officer asked whether the singing should be stopped, and that the king said "By no means." His "hard heart seems to have been touched by it. Indeed, there is in him, in those grim days, a tone (!) as of trust in the Eternal, as of real religious piety and faith, scarcely noticeable elsewhere in his history. His religion—and *he had in withered forms a good deal of it, if we will look well*—being almost always in a strictly voiceless state, nay, ultra voiceless, or voiced the wrong way, as is too well known." Then comes the assertion that "a moment after" the king said "*to someone, Ziethen probably*, 'With men

[1] See the extracts of Büchner, *Zwei gekrönte Freidenker*, 1890, pp. 45–47.

[2] Thiébault, *Mes Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin*, 2e édit. 1805, i. 126–28. See i. 355–56, ii. 78–82, as to the baselessness of the stories (*e.g.*, Pusey, *Histor. Inq. into Ger. Rationalism*, p. 123) that Frederick changed his views in old age. Thiébault, a strict Catholic, is emphatic in his negation: "The persons who assert that [his principles] became more religious.....have either lied or been themselves mistaken." Carlyle naturally detests Thiébault. The rumour may have arisen out of the fact that in his *Examen critique du Système de la Nature* Frederick counter-argues d'Holbach's impeachment of Christianity. The attack on kings gave him a fellow-feeling with the Church.

like these, don't you think I shall have victory this day!'" Here, with the very spirit of unveracity at work before his eyes, Carlyle plumps for the fable. Yet the story, even if true, would give no proof whatever of religious belief.

In point of fact, Frederick was a much less "religious" deist than Voltaire. He erected no temple to his unloved God. And a perusal of his dialogue of Pompadour and the Virgin (*Dialogues des morts*) may serve to dispose of the thesis that the German mind dealt reverently and decently with matters which the French mind handled frivolously. That performance outgoes in ribaldry anything of the age in French.

As the first modern freethinking king, Frederick is something of a test case. Son of a man of narrow mind and odious character, he was himself no admirable type, being neither benevolent nor considerate, neither truthful nor generous; and in international politics, after writing in his youth a treatise in censure of Machiavelli, he played the old game of unscrupulous aggression. Yet he was not only the most competent, but, as regards home administration, the most conscientious king of his time. To find him a rival we must go back to the pagan Antonines and Julian, or at least to St. Louis of France, who, however, was rather worsened than bettered by his creed.[1] Henri IV of France, who rivalled him in sagacity and greatly excelled him in human kindness, was far his inferior in devotion to duty.

The effect of Frederick's training is seen in his final attitude to the advanced criticism of the school of d'Holbach, which assailed governments and creeds with the same unsparing severity of logic and moral reprobation. Stung by the uncompromising attack, Frederick retorts by censuring the rashness which would plunge nations into civil strife because kings miscarry where no human wisdom could avoid miscarriage. He who had wantonly plunged all Germany into a hell of war for his sole ambition, bringing myriads to misery, thousands to violent death, and hundreds of his own soldiers to suicide, could be virtuously indignant at the irresponsible audacity of writers who indicted the whole existing system for its imbecility and injustice. But he did reason on the criticism; he did ponder it; he did feel bound to meet argument with argument; and he left his arguments to the world. The advance on previous regal practice is noteworthy: the whole problem of politics is at once brought to the test of judgment and persuasion. Beside the Christian Georges and the Louis's of his century, and beside his Christian father, his superiority in

[1] Cp. the argument of Faure, *Hist. de Saint Louis*, 1866, i, 242-43; ii, 597.

judgment and even in some essential points of character is signal. Such was the great deist king of the deist age; a deist of the least religious temper and of no very fine moral material to begin with.

The one contemporary monarch who in any way compares with him in enlightenment, Joseph II of Austria, belonged to the same school. The main charge against Frederick as a ruler is that he did not act up to the ideals of the school of Voltaire. In reply to the demand of the French deists for an abolition of all superstitious teaching, he observed that among the 16,000,000 inhabitants of France at most 200,000 were capable of philosophic views, and that the remaining 15,800,000 were held to their opinions by "insurmountable obstacles."[1] This, however, had been said by the deists themselves (*e.g.*, d'Holbach, préf. to *Christianisme dévoilé*); and such an answer meant that he had no idea of so spreading instruction that all men should have a chance of reaching rational beliefs. This attitude was his inheritance from the past. Yet it was under him that Prussia began to figure as a first-rate culture force in Europe.

14. The social vogue of deistic thought could now be traced in much of the German *belles-lettres* of the time. The young JAKOB VON MAUVILLON (1743–1794), secretary of the King of Poland and author of several histories, in his youth translated from the Latin into French Holberg's *Voyage of Nicolas Klimius* (1766), which made the tour of Europe, and had a special vogue in Germany. Later in life, besides translating and writing abundantly and intelligently on matters of economic and military science—in the latter of which he had something like expert status—Mauvillon became a pronounced heretic, though careful to keep his propaganda anonymous.

The most systematic dissemination of the new ideas was that carried on in the periodical published by CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH NICOLAI (1733–1811) under the title of *The General German Library* (founded 1765), which began with fifty contributors, and at the height of its power had a hundred and thirty, among them being Lessing, Eberhard, and Moses Mendelssohn. In the period from its start to the year 1792 it ran to 106 volumes; and it has always been more or less bitterly spoken of by later orthodoxy as the great library of that movement. Nicolai, himself an industrious and scholarly writer, produced among many other things a satirical romance famous in its day, the *Life and Opinions of Magister Sebaldus Nothanker*, ridiculing the bigots and persecutors the type of Klotz, the antagonist of Lessing, and some of Nicolai's less

[1] *Examen de l'Essai sur les préjugés*, 1769. See the passage in Lévy-Bruhl, *L'Allemagne depuis Leibniz*, p. 89.

unamiable antagonists,[1] as well as various aspects of the general social and literary life of the time. To Nicolai is fully due the genial tribute paid to him by Heine,[2] were it only for the national service of his "Library." Its many translations from the English and French freethinkers, older and newer, concurred with native work to spread a deistic rationalism, labelled *Aufklärung*, or enlightenment, through the whole middle class of Germany.[3] Native writers in independent works added to the propaganda. ANDREAS RIEM (1749–1807), a Berlin preacher, appointed by Frederick a hospital chaplain,[4] wrote anonymously against priestcraft as no other priest had yet done. "No class of men," he declared, in language perhaps echoed from his king, "has ever been so pernicious to the world as the priesthood. There were laws at all times against murderers and bandits, but not against the assassin in the priestly garb. War was repelled by war, and it came to an end. The war of the priesthood against reason has lasted for thousands of years, and it still goes on without ceasing."[5] GEORG SCHADE (1712–1795), who appears to have been one of the believers in the immortality of animals, and who in 1770 was imprisoned for his opinions in the Danish island of Christiansœ, was no less emphatic, declaring, in a work on Natural Religion on the lines of Tindal (1760), that "all who assert a supernatural religion are godless impostors."[6] Constructive work of great importance, again, was done by J. B. BASEDOW (1723–1790), who early became an active deist, but distinguished himself chiefly as an educational reformer, on the inspiration of Rousseau's *Émile*,[7] setting up a system which "tore education away from the Christian basis,"[8] and becoming in virtue of that one of the most popular writers of his day. It is latterly admitted even by orthodoxy that school education in Germany had in the seventeenth century become a matter of learning by rote, and that such reforms as had been set up in some of the schools of the Pietists had in Basedow's day come to nothing.[9] As Basedow was the first to set up vigorous reforms, it is not too much to call him an instaurator of rational education, whose chief fault was to be too far ahead of his age. This, with the personal flaw of an unamiable habit of wrangling in all companies, caused the failure of his "Philanthropic Institute," established in 1771, on the invitation of

[1] G. Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, 11te Aufl. p. 99.
[2] *Zur Gesch. der Relig. und Philos. in Deutschland—Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 63–64. Goethe's blame (*W. und D.*, B. vii) is passed on purely literary grounds.
[3] Hagenbach, tr. pp. 103–104; Cairns, p. 177.
[4] This post he left to become secretary of the Academy of Painting.
[5] Cited by Pünjer, i, 545–46. [6] *Id.* p. 546.
[7] Hagenbach, tr. pp. 100–103; Saintes, pp. 91–92; Pünjer, p. 536; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 7.
[8] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 298, 351. [9] *Id.* i, 294 *sq.*

the Prince of Dessau, to carry out his educational ideals. Quite a number of other institutions, similarly planned, after his lead, by men of the same way of thinking, as Canope and Salzmann, in the same period, had no better success.

Goethe, who was clearly much impressed by Basedow, and travelled with him, draws a somewhat antagonistic picture of him on retrospect (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. xiv). He accuses him in particular of always obtruding his anti-orthodox opinions; not choosing to admit that religious opinions were being constantly obtruded on Basedow. Praising Lavater for his more amiable nature, Goethe reveals that Lavater was constantly propounding *his* orthodoxy. Goethe, in fine, was always lenient to pietism, in which he had been brought up, and to which he was wont to make sentimental concessions. He could never forget his courtly duties towards the established convention, and so far played the game of bigotry. Hagenbach notes (i, 298, *note*), without any deprecation, that after Basedow had published in 1763–1764 his *Philalethie*, a perfectly serious treatise on natural as against revealed religion, one of the many orthodox answers, that by Pastor Goeze, so inflamed against him the people of his native town of Hamburg that he could not show himself there without danger. And this is the man accused of "obtruding his views." Baur is driven, by way of disparagement of Basedow and his school, to censure their self-confidence—precisely the quality which, in religious teachers with whom he agreed, he as a theologian would treat as a mark of superiority. Baur's attack on the moral utilitarianism of the school is still less worthy of him. (*Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, iv, 595–96). It reads like an echo of Kahnis (as cited, p. 46 *sq.*).

Yet another influential deist was JOHANN AUGUST EBERHARD (1739–1809), for a time a preacher at Charlottenburg, but driven out of the Church for the heresy of his *New Apology of Sokrates; or the Final Salvation of the Heathen* (1772).[1] The work in effect placed Sokrates on a level with Jesus,[2] which was blasphemy.[3] But the outcry attracted the attention of Frederick, who made Eberhard a Professor of Philosophy at Halle, where later he opposed the idealism of both Kant and Fichte. Substantially of the same school was the less pronouncedly deistic cleric STEINBART,[4] author of a utilitarian *System of Pure Philosophy, or Christian doctrine of Happiness*, now forgotten, who had been variously influenced by Locke and Voltaire.[5] Among the less heterodox but still rationalizing

[1] The book is remembered in France by reason of Eberhard's amusing mistake of treating as a serious production of the Sorbonne the skit in which Turgot derided the Sorbonne's findings against Marmontel's *Bélisaire*.
[2] Hagenbach, tr. p. 109.
[3] Eberhard, however, is respectfully treated by Lessing in his discussion on Leibnitz's view as to eternal punishment.
[4] Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 8.
[5] Saintes, pp. 92–93.

clergy of the period were J. J. Spalding, author of a work on *The Utility of the Preacher's Office*, a man of the type labelled "Moderate" in the Scotland of the same period, and as such antipathetic to emotional pietists;[1] and Zollikofer, of the same school—both inferribly influenced by the deism of their day. Considerably more of a rationalist than these was the clergyman W. A. Teller (1734–1804), author of a New Testament Lexicon, who reached a position virtually deistic, and intimated to the Jews of Berlin that he would receive them into his church on their making a deistic profession of faith.[2]

15. If it be true that even the rationalizing defenders of Christianity led men on the whole towards deism,[3] much more must this hold true of the new school who applied rationalistic methods to religious questions in their capacity as theologians. Of this school the founder was JOHANN SALOMO SEMLER (1725–1791), who, trained as a Pietist at Halle, early thought himself into a more critical attitude,[4] albeit remaining a theological teacher. Son of a much-travelled army chaplain, who in his many campaigns had learned much of the world, and in particular seen something of religious frauds in the Catholic countries, Semler started with a critical bias which was cultivated by wide miscellaneous reading from his boyhood onwards. As early as 1750, in his doctoral dissertation defending certain texts against the criticism of Whiston, he set forth the view, developed a century later by Baur, that the early Christian Church contained a Pauline and a Petrine party, mutually hostile. The merit of his research won him a professorship at Halle; and this position he held till his death, despite such heresy as his rejection from the canon of the books of Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, the Song of Solomon, the two books of Chronicles, and the Apocalypse, in his *Freie Untersuchung des Canons* (1771–1774)—a work apparently inspired by the earlier performance of Richard Simon.[5] His intellectual life was for long a continuous advance, always in the direction of a more rationalistic comprehension of religious history; and he reached, for his day, a remarkably critical

[1] Cp. Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 348, 363.

[2] *Id.* i, 367; tr. pp. 124–25; Saintes, p. 94; Kahnis, p. 45. Pusey (150–51, *note*) speaks of Teller and Spalding as belonging, with Nicolai, Mendelssohn, and others, to a "secret institute, whose object was to remodel religion and alter the form of government." This seems to be a fantasy.

[3] So Steffens, cited by Hagenbach, tr. p. 124.

[4] P. Gastrow, *Joh. Salomo Semler*, 1905, p. 45. See Pusey, 140–41, *note*, for Semler's account of the rigid and unreasoning orthodoxy against which he reacted. (Citing Semler's *Lebenschreibung*, ii, 121–61.) Semler, however, records that Baumgarten, one of the theological professors at Halle, would in expansive moods defend theism and make light of theology (*Lebenschreibung*, i, 108). Cp. Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, pp. 12, 18. Pusey notes that "many of the principal innovators had been pupils of Baumgarten" (p. 132, citing Niemeyer).

[5] Cp. Dr. G. Karo, *Johann Salomo Semler*, 1905, p. 25; Saintes, pp. 129–31.

view of the mythical element in the Old Testament.[1] Not only did he recognize that Genesis must have pre-Mosaic origins, and that such books as the Proverbs and the Psalms were of later date and other origin than those traditionally assigned:[2] his historical sense worked on the whole narrative. Thus he recognized the mythical character of the story of Samson, and was at least on the way towards a scientific handling of the New Testament.[3] But in his period and environment a systematic rationalism was impossible; he was always a "revelation-believing Christian"; his critical intelligence was always divided against itself;[4] and his powers were expended in an immense number of works,[5] which failed to yield any orderly system, while setting up a general stimulus, in despite of their admitted unreadableness.[6]

In his latter days he strongly opposed and condemned the more radical rationalism of his pupil Bahrdt, and of the posthumous work of Reimarus, here exemplifying the common danger of the intellectual life, for critical as well as uncritical minds. After provoking many orthodox men by his own challenges, he is roused to fury alike by the genial rationalism of Bahrdt and by the cold analysis of Reimarus; and his attack on the Wolfenbüttel Fragments published by Lessing is loaded with a vocabulary of abuse such as he had never before employed[7]—a sure sign that he had no scientific hold of his own historical conception. Like the similarly infuriated semi-rational defenders of the historicity of Jesus in our own day, he merely "followed the tactic of exposing the lack of scientific knowledge and theological learning" of the innovating writer. Always temperamentally religious, he died in the evangelical faith. But his own influence in promoting rationalism is now obvious and unquestioned,[8] and he is rightly to be reckoned a main founder of "German rationalism"—that is, academic rationalism on theologico-historical lines[9]—although he always professed to be merely rectifying orthodox conceptions. In the opinion of Pusey "the revival of historical interpretation by Semler became the most extensive instrument of the degradation of Christianity."

Among the other theologians of the time who exercised a similar influence to the Wolffian, TÖLLNER attracts notice by the comparative courage with which, in the words of an orthodox critic, he "raised, as

[1] Cp. Gostwick, p. 51; Pünjer, i, 561.
[2] Karo, p. 44.
[3] Cp. Saintes, p. 132 *sq.*
[4] Cp. Karo, pp. 3, 8, 16, 28.
[5] Over a hundred and seventy in all. Pünjer, i, 560; Gastrow, p. 537.
[6] Karo, pp. 5–6.
[7] Gastrow, p. 223.
[8] Pusey, p. 142; A. S. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, p. 313.
[9] Cp. Karo, p. 5 *sq.*; Stäudlin, cited by Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 39.

much as possible, natural religion to revelation," and, "on the other hand, lowered Scripture to the level of natural light."[1] First he published (1764) *True Reasons why God has not furnished Revelation with evident proofs*,[2] arguing for the modern attenuation of the idea of revelation; then a work on *Divine Inspiration* (1771) in which he explicitly avowed that "God has in no way, either inwardly or outwardly, dictated the sacred books. The writers were the real authors"[3]—a declaration not to be counterbalanced by further generalities about actual divine influence. Later still he published a *Proof that God leads men to salvation even by his revelation in Nature*[4] (1766)—a form of Christianity little removed from deism. Other theologians, such as Ernesti, went far with the tide of illuminism; and when the orthodox Chr. A. Crusius died at Leipzig in 1781, Jean Paul Richter, then a student, wrote that people had become "too much imbued with the spirit of illuminism" to be of his school. "Most, almost all the students," adds Richter, incline to heterodoxy; and of the professor Morus he tells that "wherever he can explain away a miracle, the devil, etc., he does so." Of this order of accommodators, a prominent example was MICHAELIS (1717–1791), whose reduction of the Mosaic legislation to motives of every-day utility is still entertaining.

16. Much more notorious than any other German deist of his time was CARL FRIEDRICH BAHRDT (1741–1792), a kind of raw Teutonic Voltaire, and the most popularly influential German freethinker of his age. In all he is said to have published a hundred and twenty-six books and tracts,[5] thus approximating to Voltaire in quantity if not in quality. Theological hatred has so pursued him that it is hard to form a fair opinion as to his character; but the record runs that he led a somewhat Bohemian and disorderly life, though a very industrious one. While a preacher in Leipzig in 1768 he first got into trouble—"persecution" by his own account; "disgrace for licentious conduct," by that of his enemies. In any case, he was at this period quite orthodox in his beliefs.[6] That there was no serious disgrace is suggested by the fact that he was appointed Professor of Biblical Antiquities at Erfurt; and soon afterwards, on the recommendation of Semler and Ernesti, at Giessen (1771). While holding that post he published his "modernized" translation of the New Testament, done from the point of view of belief in

[1] Kahnis, p. 116.
[2] *Wahre Gründe warum Gott die Offenbarung nicht mit augenscheinlichen Beweisen versehen hat.* [3] *Die Göttliche Eingebung*, 1771.
[4] *Beweis das Gott die Menschen bereits durch seine Offenbarung in der Natur zur Seligkeit führe.* [5] Gostwick, p. 53; Pünjer, i. 546, *note*.
[6] Cp. Kahnis, pp. 132-36, as to Bahrdt's early morals.

revelation, following it up by his *New Revelations of God in Letters and Tales* (1773), which aroused Protestant hostility. After teaching for a time in a new Swiss "Philanthropin"—an educational institution on Basedow's lines—he obtained a post as a district ecclesiastical superintendent in the principality of Türkheim on the Hardt; whereafter he was enabled to set up a "Philanthropin" of his own in the castle of Heidesheim, near Worms. The second edition of his translation of the New Testament, however, aroused Catholic hostility in the district; the edition was confiscated, and he found it prudent to make a tour in Holland and England, only to receive, on his return, a missive from the imperial consistory declaring him disabled for any spiritual office in the Holy German Empire. Seeking refuge in Halle, he found Semler grown hostile; but made the acquaintance of Eberhard, with the result of abandoning the remains of his orthodox faith. Henceforth he regarded Jesus, albeit with admiration, as simply a great teacher, "like Moses, Confucius, Sokrates, Semler, Luther, and myself";[1] and to this view he gave effect in the third edition of his New Testament translation, which was followed in 1782 by his *Letters on the Bible in Popular Style* (*Volkston*), and in 1784 by his *Completion* (*Ausführung*) *of the Plan and Aim of Jesus in Letters* (1784), and his *System of Moral Religion* (1787). More and more fiercely antagonized, he duly retaliated on the clergy in his *Church and Heretic Almanack* (1781); and after for a time keeping a tavern, he got into fresh trouble by printing anonymous satires on the religious edict of 1788, directed against all kinds of heresy,[2] and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in a fortress —a term reduced by the king to one year. Thereafter he ended not very happily his troublous life in Halle in 1792.

The weakest part of Bahrdt's performance is now seen to be his application of the empirical method of the early theological rationalists, who were wont to take every Biblical prodigy as a merely perverted account of an incident which certainly happened. That method—which became identified with the so-called "rationalism" of Germany in that age, and is not yet discarded by rationalizing theologians—is reduced to open absurdity in his hands, as when he makes Moses employ fireworks on Mount Sinai, and Jesus feed the five thousand by stratagem, without miracle. But it was not by such extravagances that he won and kept a hearing throughout his life. It is easy to see on retrospect that the source of his influence as a writer lay above all things in his healthy critical ethic, his own mode of progression being by way of simple common sense and natural

[1] *Geschichte seines Lebens*, etc. 1790-91, iv. 119.

[2] See below, p. 331.

feeling, not of critical research. His first step in rationalism was to ask himself "how Three Persons could be One God"—this while believing devoutly in revelation, miracles, the divinity of Jesus, and the Atonement. Under the influence of a naturalist travelling in his district, he gave up the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, feeling himself "as if new-born" in being freed of what he had learned to see as a "pernicious and damnable error."[1] It was for such writing that he was hated and persecuted, despite his habitual eulogy of Christ as "the greatest and most venerable of mortals." His offence was not against morals, but against theology; and he heightened the offence by his vanity.

Bahrdt's real power may be inferred from the fury of some of his opponents. "The wretched Bahrdt" is Dr. Pusey's Christian account of him. Even F. C. Baur is abusive. The American translators of Hagenbach, Messrs. Gage and Stuckenberg, have thought fit to insert in their chapter-heading the phrase "Bahrdt, the Theodore Parker of Germany." As Hagenbach has spoken of Bahrdt with special contempt, the intention can be appreciated; but the intended insult may now serve as a certificate of merit to Bahrdt. Bishop Hurst solemnly affirms that "What Jeffreys is to the judicial history of England, Bahrdt is to the religious history of German Protestantism. Whatever he touched was disgraced by the vileness of his heart and the Satanic daring of his mind" (*History of Rationalism*, ed. 1867, p. 119; ed. 1901, p. 139). This concerning doctrines of a nearly invariable moral soundness, which to-day would be almost universally received with approbation. Pünjer, who cannot at any point indict the doctrines, falls back on the professional device of classing them with the "platitudes" of the *Aufklärung;* and, finding this insufficient to convey a disparaging impression to the general reader, intimates that Bahrdt, connecting ethic with rational sanitation, "does not shrink from the coarseness of laying down" a rule for bodily health, which Pünjer does not shrink from quoting (pp. 549–50). Finally Bahrdt is dismissed as "the theological public-housekeeper of Halle." So hard is it for men clerically trained to attain to a manly rectitude in their criticism of anti-clericals. Bahrdt was a great admirer of the Gospel Jesus; so Cairns (p. 178) takes a lenient view of his life. On that and his doctrine cp. Hagenbach, pp. 107–10; Pünjer, i, 546–50; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 5. Goethe satirized him in a youthful *Prolog*, but speaks of him not unkindly in the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*. As a writer he is much above the German average.

17. Alongside of these propagators of popular rationalism stood

[1] *Geschichte seines Lebens*, Kap. 22; ii, 223 *sq*.

a group of companion deists usually considered together—GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING (1729–1781), HERMANN SAMUEL REIMARUS (1694–1768), and MOSES MENDELSSOHN (1729–1786). The last-named, a Jew, "lived entirely in the sphere of deism and of natural religion,"[1] and sought, like the deists in general, to give religion an ethical structure; but he was popular chiefly as a constructive theist and a defender of the doctrine of immortality on non-Christian lines. His *Phædon* (1767), setting forth that view, had a great vogue.[2] One of his more notable teachings was an earnest declaration against any connection between Church and State; but like Locke and Rousseau he so far sank below his own ideals as to agree in arguing for a State enforcement of a profession of belief in a God[3]—a negation of his own plea. With much contemporary popularity, he had no permanent influence; and he seems to have been completely broken-hearted over Jacobi's disclosure of the final pantheism of Lessing, for whom he had a great affection.

> See the monograph of Rabbi Schreiber, of Bonn, *Moses Mendelssohn's Verdienste um die deutsche Nation* (Zürich, 1880), pp. 41–42. The strongest claim made for Mendelssohn by Rabbi Schreiber is that he, a Jew, was much more of a German patriot than Goethe, Schiller, or Lessing. Heine, however, pronounces that "As Luther against the Papacy, so Mendelssohn rebelled against the Talmud" (*Zur Gesch. der Relig. und Philos. in Deutschland: Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 65).

LESSING, on the other hand, is one of the outstanding figures in the history of Biblical criticism, as well as of German literature in general. The son of a Lutheran pastor, Lessing became in a considerable measure a rationalist, while constantly resenting, as did Goethe, the treatment of religion in the fashion in which he himself treated non-religious opinions with which he did not agree.[4] It is clear that already in his student days he had become substantially an unbeliever, and that it was on this as well as other grounds that he refused to become a clergyman.[5] Nor was he unready to jeer at

[1] Baur, *Gesch. der chr. Kirche*, iv, 597. [2] Translated into English in 1789.

[3] Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, Abschn. I—*Werke*, 1838, p. 239 (Eng. tr. 1838, pp. 50-51); Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, liv. iv, ch. viii, near end; Locke, as cited above, p. 117. Cp. Bartholmèss, *Hist. crit. des doctr. relig. de la philos. moderne*, 1855, i, 145; Baur, as last cited.

[4] See his *Werke*, ed. 1866, v, 317—*Aus dem Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend*, 49ter Brief.

[5] If Lessing's life were sketched in the spirit in which orthodoxy has handled that of Bahrdt, it could be made unedifying enough. Even Goethe remarks that Lessing "enjoyed himself in a disorderly tavern life" (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. viii); and all that Hagenbach maliciously charges against Basedow in the way of irregularity of study is true of him. On that and other points, usually glossed over, see the sketch in Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, 1830, i, 332-37. All the while, Lessing is an essentially sound-hearted and estimable personality; and he would probably have been the last man to echo the tone of the orthodox towards the personal life of the freethinkers who went further in unbelief than he.

the bigots when they chanced to hate where he was sympathetic.[1] On the side of religious problems, he was primarily and permanently influenced by two such singularly different minds as Bayle[2] and Rousseau, the first appealing to and eliciting his keen critical faculty, the second his warm emotional nature; and he never quite unified the result. From first to last he was a freethinker in the sense that he never admitted any principle of authority, and was stedfastly loyal to the principle of freedom of utterance. He steadily refused to break with his freethinking friend Mylius, and he never sought to raise odium against any more advanced freethinker on the score of his audacity.[3] In his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, indeed, dealing with a German play in which Mohammedanism in general, and one Ismenor in particular, in the time of the Crusades are charged with the sin of persecution, he remarks that "these very Crusades, which in their origin were a political stratagem of the popes, developed into the most inhuman persecutions of which Christian superstition has ever made itself guilty: the true religion had then the most and the bloodiest Ismenors."[4] In his early *Rettungen* (Vindications), again, he defends the dubious Cardan and impersonally argues the *pros* and *cons* of Christianity and Mohammedanism in a fashion possible only to a skeptical mind.[5] And in his youth, as in his last years, he maintained that "there have long been men who disregarded all revealed religions and have yet been good men.[6] In his youth, however, he was more of a Rousseauist than of an intellectual philosopher, setting up a principle of "the heart" against every species of analytic thought, including even that of Leibnitz, which he early championed against the Wolfian adaptation of it.[7] The sound principle that conduct is more important than opinion he was always apt, on the religious side, to strain into the really contrary principle that opinions which often went with good conduct were necessarily to be esteemed. So when the rationalism of the day seriously or otherwise (in Voltairean Berlin it was too apt to be otherwise) assailed the creed of his parents, whom he loved and honoured, sympathy in his case as in Goethe's always predetermined his attitude;[8] and it is not untruly said of him that he did prefer

[1] *E.g.* his fable *The Bull and the Calf* (*Fabeln*, ii, 5), apropos of the clergy and Bayle.
[2] Sime, *Life of Lessing*, 1877, i, 102.
[3] *E.g.* his early notice of Diderot's *Lettre sur les Aveugles*. Sime, i, 94.
[4] *Dramaturgie*, Stück 7. [5] Sime, i, 103–109. [6] Sime, i, 73, 107; ii, 253.
[7] In his *Gedanke über die Herrnhuter*, written in 1750. See Adolf Stahr's *Lessing, sein Leben und seine Werke*, 7te Aufl. ii, 183 *sq.*
[8] Julian Schmidt puts the case sympathetically: "He had learned in his father's house what value the pastoral function may have for the culture of the people. He was *bibelfest*, instructed in the history of his church, Protestant in spirit, full of genuine reverence for Luther, full of high respect for historical Christianity, though on reading the Fathers he could say hard things of the Church." *Gesch. der deutschen Litteratur von Leibnis bis auf unsere Zeit*, ii (1886), 326.

the orthodox to the heterodox party, like Gibbon, "inasmuch as the balance of learning which attracted his esteem was [then] on that side."[1] We thus find him, about the time when he announces to his father that he had doubted concerning the Christian dogmas,[2] rather nervously proving his essential religiousness by dramatically defending the clergy against the prejudices of popular freethought as represented by his friend Mylius, who for a time ran in Leipzig a journal called the *Freigeist*—not a very advanced organ.[3]

Lessing was in fact, with his versatile genius and his vast reading, a man of moods rather than a systematic thinker, despite his powerful critical faculty; and alike his emotional and his critical side determined his aversion to the attempts of the "rationalizing" clergy to put religion on a common-sense footing. His personal animosity to Voltaire and to Frederick would also influence him; but he repugned even the decorous "rationalism" of the theologians of his own country. When his brother wrote him to the effect that the basis of the current religion was false, and the structure the work of shallow bunglers, he replied that he admitted the falsity of the basis, but not the incompetence of those who built up the system, in which he saw much skill and address. Shallow bunglers, on the other hand, he termed the schemers of the new system of compromise and accommodation.[4] In short, as he avowed in his fragment on Bibliolatry, he was always "pulled this way and that" in his thought on the problem of religion.[5] For himself, he framed (or perhaps adopted)[6] a pseudo-theory of the *Education of the Human Race* (1780), which has served the semi-rationalistic clergy of our own day in good stead; and adapted Rousseau's catching doctrine that the true test of religion lies in feeling and not in argument.[7] Neither doctrine, in short, has a whit more philosophical value than the other "popular philosophy" of the time, and neither was fitted to have much immediate influence; but both pointed a way to the more philosophic apologists of religion, while baulking the orthodox.[8] If all this were more than a piece of defensive strategy, it was no more scientific than the semi-rationalist theology which he contemned. The "education" theorem, on its merits, is indeed a

[1] Taylor, as cited, p. 361.
[2] Sime, i, 73.
[3] See Lessing's rather crude comedy, *Der Freigeist*, and Sime's *Life*, i, 41–42, 72, 77.
[4] Cp. his letters to his brother of which extracts are given by Sime, ii, 191–92.
[5] Sime, ii, 188.
[6] As to the authorship see Saintes, pp. 101–102; and Sime's *Life of Lessing*, i, 261–62, where the counter-claim is rejected.
[7] *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, aus dem 4ten Beitr.—*Werke*, vi, 142 *sq*. See also in his *Theologische Streitschriften* the *Axiomata* written against Pastor Goeze. Cp. Schwarz, *Lessing als Theologe*, 1854, pp. 146, 151; and Pusey, as cited, p. 51, *note*.
[8] Compare the regrets of Pusey (pp. 51, 155), Cairns (p. 195), Hagenbach (pp. 89–97), and Saintes (p. 100).

discreditable paralogism; and only our knowledge of his affectional bias can withhold us from counting it a mystification. On analysis it is found to have no logical content whatever. "Christianity" Lessing made out to be a "universal principle," independent of its pseudo-historical setting; thus giving to the totality of the admittedly false tradition the credit of an ethic which in the terms of the case is simply human, and in all essentials demonstrably pre-Christian. His propaganda of this kind squares ill with his paper on *The Origin of Revealed Religion*, written about 1860. There he professes to hold by a naturalist view of religion. All "positive" or dogmatic creeds he ascribes to the arrangements that men from time to time found it necessary to make as to the means of applying "natural" religion. "Hence all positive and revealed religions are alike true and alike false; alike true, inasmuch as it has everywhere been necessary to come to terms over different things in order to secure agreement and unity in the public religion; alike false, inasmuch as that over which men came to terms does not so much stand close to the essential (*nicht sowohl.....neben dem Wesentlichen besteht*), but rather weakens and oppresses it. The best revealed or positive religion is that which contains the fewest conventional additions to natural religion; that which least limits the effects of natural religion."[1] This is the position of Tindal and the English deists in general; and it seems to have been in this mood that Lessing wrote to Mendelssohn about being able to "help the downfall of the most frightful structure of nonsense only under the pretext of giving it a new foundation."[2] On the historical side, too, he had early convinced himself that Christianity was established and propagated "by entirely natural means"[3]—this before Gibbon. But, fighter as he was, he was not prepared to lay his cards on the table in the society in which he found himself. In his strongest polemic there was always an element of mystification;[4] and his final pantheism was only privately avowed.

It was through a series of outside influences that he went so far, in the open, as he did. Becoming the librarian of the great Bibliothek of Wolfenbüttel, the possession of the hereditary Prince (afterwards Duke) of Brunswick, he was led to publish the "Anonymous Fragments" known as the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (1774–1778),

[1] *Sämmtliche Schriften*, ed. Lachmann, 1857, xi (2), 248. Sime (ii, 190) mistranslates this passage; and Schmidt (ii, 326) mutilates it by omissions. Fontanes (*Le Christianisme moderne: Étude sur Lessing*, 1867, p. 171) paraphrases it very loosely. [2] Sime, ii, 190.

[3] Stahr, ii, 239; Sime, ii, 189.

[4] See Sime, ii, 222, 233; Stahr, ii, 251. Hettner, an admirer, calls the early *Christianity of Reason* a piece of sophistical dialectic. *Litteraturgeschiche des 18ten Jahrhunderts*, ed. 1872, iii, 588–89.

wherein the methods of the English and French deists are applied with a new severity to both the Old and the New Testament narratives. It is now put beyond doubt that they were the work of REIMARUS,[1] who had in 1755 produced a defence of "Natural Religion"—that is, of the theory of a Providence—against La Mettrie, Maupertuis, and older materialists, which had a great success in its day.[2] At his death, accordingly, Reimarus ranked as an admired defender of theism and of the belief in immortality.[3] He was the son-in-law of the esteemed scholar Fabricius, and was for many years Professor of Oriental Languages in the Hamburg Academy. The famous research which preserves his memory was begun by him at the age of fifty, for his own satisfaction, and was elaborated by him during twenty years, while he silently endured the regimen of the intolerant Lutheranism of his day.[4] As he left the book it was a complete treatise entitled *An Apology for the Rational Worshipper of God;* but his son feared to have it published, though Lessing offered to take the whole risk; and it was only by the help of the daughter, Elise Reimarus,[5] Lessing's friend, that the fragments came to light. As the Berlin censor would not give official permission,[6] Lessing took the course of issuing them piecemeal in a periodical series of selections from the treasures of the Wolfenbüttel Library, which had privilege of publication. The first, *On the Toleration of Deists*, which attracted little notice, appeared in 1774; four more, which made a stir, in 1777; and only in 1778 was "the most audacious of all," *On the Aim of Jesus and his Disciples*,[7] published as a separate book. Collectively they constituted the most serious attack yet made in Germany on the current creed, though their theory of the true manner of the gospel history of course smacks of the pre-scientific period. A generation later, however, they were still "the radical book of the anti-supernaturalists" in Germany.[8]

As against miracles in general, the Resurrection in particular, and Biblical ethics in general, the attack of Reimarus was irresistible; but his historical construction is pre-scientific. The

[1] Stahr, ii. 243. Lessing said the report to this effect was a lie; but this and other mystifications appear to have been by way of fulfilling his promise of secrecy to the Reimarus family. Cairns, pp. 203, 209. Cp. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, note 29.

[2] See it analysed by Bartholmèss, *Hist. crit. des doctr. relig. de la philos. moderne*, i. 147–67; and by Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historic Jesus* (trans. of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*), 1910.

[3] Gostwick, p. 47; Bartholmèss, i. 166. His book was translated into English (*The Principal Truths of Natural Religion Defended and Illustrated*) in 1766; into Dutch in 1758; in part into French in 1768; and seven editions of the original had appeared by 1798.

[4] Stahr, ii. 241–44. [5] *Id.* ii. 245.

[6] The statement that, in Lessing's age, "in north Germany men were able to think and write freely" (Conybeare, *Hist. of N. T. Crit.*, p. 80) is thus seen to be highly misleading.

[7] *Von dem Zwecke Jesus und seiner Jünger*, Braunschweig, 1778.

[8] Taylor, *Histor. Survey of German Poetry*, i. 365.

method is, to accept as real occurrences all the non-miraculous episodes, and to explain them by a general theory. Thus the appointment of the seventy apostles—a palpable myth—is taken as a fact, and explained as part of a scheme by Jesus to obtain temporal power; and the scourging of the money-changers from the Temple, improbable enough as it stands, is made still more so by supposing it to be part of a scheme of insurrection. The method further involves charges of calculated fraud against the disciples or evangelists—a historical misconception which Lessing repudiated, albeit not on the right grounds. See the sketch in Cairns, p. 197 *sq.*, which indicates the portions of the treatise produced later by Strauss. Cp. Pünjer, i, 550–57; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 4. Schweitzer (*Von Reimarus zu Wrede*), in his satisfaction at the agreement of Reimarus with his own conception of an "eschatological" Jesus, occupied with "the last things," gives Reimarus extravagant praise. Strauss rightly notes the weakness of the indictment of Moses as a worker of fraud (*Voltaire*, 2te Ausg. p. 407).

It is but fair to say that Reimarus's fallacy of method, which was the prevailing one in his day, has not yet disappeared from criticism. As we have seen, it was employed by Pomponazzi in the Renaissance (vol. i, p. 377), and reintroduced in the modern period by Connor and Toland. It is still employed by some professed rationalists, as Dr. Conybeare. It has, however, in all likelihood suggested itself spontaneously to many inquirers. In the *Phædrus* Plato presents it as applied by empirical rationalizers to myths at that time.

Though Lessing at many points oppugned the positions of the *Fragments*, he was led into a fiery controversy over them, in which he was unworthily attacked by, among others, Semler, from whom he had looked for support; and the series was finally stopped by authority. There can now be no doubt that Lessing at heart agreed with Reimarus on most points of negative criticism,[1] but reached a different emotional estimate and attitude. All the greater is the merit of his battle for freedom of thought. Thereafter, as a final check to his opponents, he produced his famous drama *Nathan the Wise*, which embodies Boccaccio's story of *The Three Rings*, and has ever since served as a popular lesson of tolerance in Germany.[2] In the end, he seems to have become, to at least some extent, a pantheist;[3] but he never expounded any coherent and comprehensive

[1] Stahr, ii, 253–54.

[2] Cp. Introd. to Willis's trans. of *Nathan*. The play is sometimes attacked as being grossly unfair to Christianity. (*E.g.* Crouslé, *Lessing*, 1863, p. 206.) The answer to this complaint is given by Sime, ii, 252 *sq.*

[3] See Cairns, *Appendix*, Note I; Willis, *Spinoza*, pp. 149–62; Sime, ii, 299–303; and Stahr, ii, 219–30, giving the testimony of Jacobi. Cp. Pünjer, i, 564–85. But Heine laughingly adjures Moses Mendelssohn, who grieved so intensely over Lessing's Spinozism, to rest quiet in his grave: "Thy Lessing was indeed on the way to that terrible error.....

set of opinions,[1] preferring, as he put it in an oft-quoted sentence, the state of search for truth to any consciousness of possessing it.[2]

He left behind him, however, an important fragment, which constituted one of his most important services to national culture—his "*New Hypothesis* concerning the evangelists as merely human writers." He himself thought that he had done nothing "more important or ingenious"[3] of the kind; and though his results were in part unsound and impermanent, he is justly to be credited with the first scientific attempt to deduce the process of composition of the gospels[4] from primary writings by the first Christians. Holding as he did to the authenticity and historicity of the fourth gospel, he cannot be said to have gone very deep; but two generations were to pass before the specialists got any further. Lessing had shown more science and more courage than any other pro-Christian scholar of the time, and, as the orthodox historian of rationalism has it, "Though he did not array himself as a champion of rationalism, he proved himself one of the strongest promoters of its reign."[5]

18. Deism was now as prevalent in educated Germany as in France or England; and, according to a contemporary preacher, "Berliner" was about 1777 a synonym for "rationalist."[6] Wieland, one of the foremost German men of letters of his time, is known to have become a deist of the school of Shaftesbury;[7] and in the leading journal of the day he wrote on the free use of reason in matters of faith.[8] Some acts of persecution by the Church show how far the movement had gone. In 1774 we find a Catholic professor at Mayence, Lorenzo Isenbiehl, deposed and sent back to the seminary for two years on the score of "deficient theological knowledge," because he argued (after Collins) that the text Isaiah vii, 14 applied not to the mother of Jesus but to a contemporary of the prophet; and when, four years later, he published a book on the same thesis,

but the Highest, the Father in Heaven, saved him in time by death. He died a good deist, like thee and Nicolai and Teller and the Universal German Library" (*Zur Gesch. der Rel. und Philos. in Deutschland*, B. ii, near end.—*Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 69).

[1] See in Stahr, ii, 184-85, the various characterizations of his indefinite philosophy. Stahr's own account of him as anticipating the moral philosophy of Kant is as over-strained as the others. Gastrow, an admirer, expresses wonder (*Johann Salomo Semler*, p. 188) at the indifference of Lessing to the critical philosophy in general.

[2] Sime, ii, ch. xxix, gives a good survey. [3] Letter to his brother, Feb., 1778.

[4] Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu* (the second) *Einleitung*, § 14.

[5] Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 130. "It was a popular belief, as an organ of pious opinion announced to its readers, that at his death the devil came and carried him away like a second Faust." Sime, ii, 330.

[6] Cited by Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 125. Outside Berlin, however, matters went otherwise till late in the century. Kurz tells (*Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, ii, 461 *b*) that "the indifference of the learned towards native literature was so great that even in the year 1761 Abbt could write that in Rinteln there was nobody who knew the names of Moses Mendelssohn and Lessing."

[7] Karl Hillebrand, *Lectures on the Hist. of German Thought*, 1880, p. 109.

[8] *Deutsche Merkur*, Jan. and March, 1788 (*Werke*, ed. 1797, xxix, 1-144: cited by Staudlin, *Gesch. der Rationalismus und Supernaturalismus*, 1826, p. 233).

in Latin, he was imprisoned. Three years later still, a young Jesuit of Salzburg, named Steinbuhler, was actually condemned to death for writing some satires on Roman Catholic ceremonies, and, though afterwards pardoned, died of the ill-usage he had undergone in prison.[1] It may have been the sense of danger aroused by such persecution that led to the founding, in 1780, of a curious society which combined an element of freethinking Jesuitism with free-masonry, and which included a number of statesmen, noblemen, and professors—Goethe, Herder, and the Duke of Weimar being among its adherents. But it is difficult to take seriously the accounts given of the order.[2]

The spirit of rationalism, in any case, was now so prevalent that it began to dominate the work of the more intelligent theologians, to whose consequent illogical attempts to strain out by the most dubious means the supernatural elements from the Bible narratives[3] the name of "rationalism" came to be specially applied,[4] that being the kind of criticism naturally most discussed among the clergy. Taking rise broadly in the work of Semler, reinforced by that of the English and French deists and that of Reimarus, the method led stage by stage to the scientific performance of Strauss and Baur, and the recent "higher criticism" of the Old and New Testaments. Noteworthy at its outset as exhibiting the tendency of official believers to make men, in the words of Lessing, irrational philosophers by way of making them rational Christians,[5] this order of "rationalism" in its intermediate stages belongs rather to the history of Biblical scholarship than to that of freethought, since more radical work was being done by unprofessional writers outside, and deeper problems were raised by the new systems of philosophy. Within the Lutheran pale, however, there were some hardy thinkers. A striking figure of the time, in respect of his courage and thoroughness, is the Lutheran pastor J. H. SCHULZ,[6] who so strongly combated the compromises of the Semler school in regard to the Pentateuch, and argued so plainly for a severance of morals from religion as to bring about his own dismissal (1792).[7] Schulz's

[1] Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, ii. 224.
[2] T. C. Perthes, *Das Deutsche Staatsleben vor der Revolution*, 262 *sq.*, cited by Kahnis pp. 58-59.
[3] See above, pp. 321, 328.
[4] Kant distinguishes explicitly between "rationalists," as thinkers who would not deny the possibility of a revelation, and "naturalists," who did. See the *Religion innerhalb der grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iv, Th. i. This was in fact the standing significance of the term in Germany for a generation.
[5] Letter to his brother, February 2, 1774.
[6] Known as Zopf-Schulz from his wearing a pigtail in the fashion then common among the laity. "An old insolent rationalist," Kurtz calls him (ii. 270).
[7] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i. 372; Gostwick, pp. 52, 54.

Philosophical Meditation on Theology and Religion[1] (1784) is indeed one of the most pronounced attacks on orthodox religion produced in that age. But it is in itself a purely speculative construction. Following the current historical method, he makes Moses the child of the Egyptian princess, and represents him as imposing on the ignorant Israelites a religion invented by himself, and expressive only of his own passions. Jesus in turn is extolled in the terms common to the freethinkers of the age; but his conception of God is dismissed as chimerical; and Schulz finally rests in the position of Edelmann, that the only rational conception of deity is that of the "sufficient ground of the world," and that on this view no man is an atheist.[2]

Schulz's dismissal appears to have been one of the fruits of the orthodox edict (1788) of the new king, Frederick William II, the brother of Frederick, who succeeded in 1786. It announced him—in reality a "strange compound of lawless debauchery and priest-ridden superstition"[3]—as the champion of religion and the enemy of freethinking; forbade all proselytizing, and menaced with penalties all forms of heresy,[4] while professing to maintain freedom of conscience. The edict seems to have been specially provoked by fresh literature of a pronouncedly freethinking stamp, though it lays stress on the fact that "so many clergymen have the boldness to disseminate the doctrines of the Socinians, Deists, and Naturalists under the name of *Aufklärung*." The work of Schulz would be one of the provocatives, and there were others. In 1785 had appeared the anonymous *Moroccan Letters*,[5] wherein, after the model of the *Persian Letters* and others, the life and creeds of Germany are handled in a quite Voltairean fashion. The writer is evidently familiar with French and English deistic literature, and draws freely on both, making no pretence of systematic treatment. Such writing, quietly turning a disenchanting light of common sense on Scriptural incredibilities and Christian historical scandals, without a trace of polemical zeal, illustrated at once the futility of Kant's claim, in the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, to counteract "freethinking unbelief" by transcendental philosophy. And though the writer is careful to point to the frequent association of Christian fanaticism with regicide, his very explicit appeal for a

[1] *Philosophische Betrachtung über Theologie und Religion überhaupt, und über die Jüdische insonderheit*, 1784.
[2] Pünjer, i, 544–45.
[3] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ch. ix, Bohn ed. p. 71.
[4] See the details in Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 368–72; Kahnis, p. 60.
[5] *Marokkanische Briefe. Aus dem Arabischen.* Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1785. The Letters purport to be written by one of the Moroccan embassy at Vienna in 1783.

unification of Germany,[1] his account of the German Protestant peasant and labourer as the most dismal figure in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland,[2] and his charge against Germans of degrading their women,[3] would not enlist the favour of the authorities for his work. Within two years (1787) appeared, unsigned, an even more strongly anti-Christian and anti-clerical work, *The In Part Only True System of the Christian Religion*,[4] ascribed to Jakob von Mauvillon,[5] whom we have seen twenty-one years before translating the freethinking romance of Holberg. Beginning his career as a serious publicist by translating Raynal's explosive history of the Indies (7 vols. 1774–78), he had done solid work as a historian and as an economist, and also as an officer in the service of the Duke of Brunswick and a writer on military science. The *True System* is hostile alike to priesthoods and to the accommodating theologians, whose attempt to rationalize Christianity on historical lines it flouts in Lessing's vein as futile. Mauvillon finds unthinkable the idea of a revelation which could not be universal; rejects miracles and prophecies as vain bases for a creed; sums up the New Testament as planless; and pronounces the ethic of Christianity, commonly regarded as its strongest side, the weakest side of all. He sums up, in fact, in a logical whole, the work of the English and French deists.[6] To such propaganda the edict of repression was the official answer. It naturally roused a strong opposition;[7] but though it ultimately failed, through the general breakdown of European despotisms, it was not without injurious effect. The first edict was followed in a few months by one which placed the press and all literature, native and foreign, under censorship. This policy, which was chiefly inspired by the new king's Minister of Religion, Woellner, was followed up in 1791 by the appointment of a committee of three reactionaries—Hermes, Hilmer, and Woltersdorf—who not only saw to the execution of the edicts, but supervised the schools and churches. Such a regimen, aided by the reaction against the Revolution, for a time prevented any open propaganda on the part of men officially placed; and we shall see it hampering and humiliating Kant; but it left the leaven of anti-supernaturalism to work all the more effectively among the increasing crowd of university students.

[1] *Briefe*, xxi. [2] P. 49. [3] P. 232.

[4] *Das zum Theil einzige wahre System der christlichen Religion*. It had been composed in its author's youth under the title *False Reasonings of the Christian Religion;* and the MS. was lost through the bankruptcy of a Dutch publisher.

[5] Noack, Th. III, Kap. 9, p. 194.

[6] Mauvillon further collaborated with Mirabeau, and became a great admirer of the French Revolution. He left freethinking writings among his remains. They are not described by Noack, and I have been unable to meet with them.

[7] It was a test of the depth of the freethinking spirit in the men of the day. Semler justified the edict; Bahrdt vehemently denounced it. Hagenbach, i, 372.

Many minds of the period, doubtless, are typified by HERDER, who, though a practising clergyman, was clearly a Spinozistic theist, accommodating himself to popular Christianity in a genially latitudinarian spirit.[1] When in his youth he published an essay discussing Genesis as a piece of oriental poetry, not to be treated as science or theology, he evoked an amount of hostility which startled him.[2] Learning his lesson, he was for the future guarded enough to escape persecution. He was led by his own temperamental bias, however, to a transcendental position in philosophy. Originally in agreement with Kant,[3] as against the current metaphysic, in the period before the issue of the latter's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he nourished his religious instincts by a discursive reading of history, which he handled in a comparatively scientific yet above all poetic or theosophic spirit, while Kant, who had little or no interest in history, developed his thought on the side of physical science.[4] The philosophic methods of the two men thus became opposed; and when Herder found Kant's philosophy producing a strongly rationalistic cast of thought among the divinity students who came before him for examination, he directly and sharply antagonized it[5] in a theistic sense. Yet his own influence on his age was on the whole latitudinarian and anti-theological; he opposed to the apriorism of Kant the view that the concepts of space and time are the results of experience and an abstraction of its contents; his historic studies had developed in him a conception of the process of evolution alike in life, opinion, and faculty; and orthodoxy and philosophy alike incline to rank him as a pantheist.[6]

19. Meanwhile, the drift of the age of *Aufklärung* was apparent in the practically freethinking attitude of the two foremost men of letters in the new Germany—GOETHE and SCHILLER. Of the former, despite the bluster of Carlyle, and despite the æsthetic favour shown to Christianity in *Wilhelm Meister*, no religious ingenuity can make more than a pantheist,[7] who, insofar as he

[1] Cp. Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, iii. 48; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, p. 328; Willis, *Spinoza*, pp. 162–68. Bishop Hurst laments (*Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 145) that Herder's early views as to the mission of Christ "were, in common with many other evangelical views, doomed to an unhappy obscuration upon the advance of his later years by frequent intercourse with more skeptical minds."

[2] On the clerical opposition to him at Weimar on this score see Düntzer, *Life of Goethe*, Eng. tr. 1883, i. 317.

[3] Cp. Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie nach ihrem Entwickelungsgang*, 1889.

[4] Kronenberg, p. 90.

[5] Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, 1882, pp. 381–87; Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, pp. 91, 103.

[6] Kahnis, p. 78, and Erdmann, as there cited. Erdmann finds the pantheism of Herder to be, not Spinozistic as he supposed, but akin to that of Bruno and his Italian successors.

[7] The chief sample passages in his works are the poem *Das Göttliche* and the speech of Faust in reply to Gretchen in the garden scene. It was the surmised pantheism of Goethe's poem *Prometheus* that, according to Jacobi, drew from Lessing *his* avowal of a pantheistic leaning. The poem has even an atheistic ring; but we have Goethe's own

touched on Biblical questions, copied the half-grown rationalism of the school of Semler.[1] "The great Pagan" was the common label among his orthodox or conformist contemporaries.[2] As a boy, learning a little Hebrew, he was already at the critical point of view in regard to Biblical marvels,[3] though he never became a scientific critic. He has told how, in his youth, when Lavater insisted that he must choose between orthodox Christianity and atheism, he answered that, if he were not free to be a Christian in his own way *(wie ich es bisher gehegt hätte)*, he would as soon turn atheist as Christian, the more so as he saw that nobody knew very well what either signified.[4] As he puts it, he had made a Christ and a Christianity of his own.[5] His admired friend Fräulein von Klettenberg, the "Beautiful Soul" of one of his pieces, told him that he never satisfied her when he used the Christian terminology, which he never seemed to get right; and he tells how he gradually turned away from her religion, which he had for a time approached, in its Moravian aspect, with a too passionate zeal.[6] In his letters to Lavater, he wrote quite explicitly that a voice from heaven would not make him believe in a virgin birth and a resurrection, such tales being for him rather blasphemies against the great God and his revelation in Nature. Thousands of pages of earlier and later writings, he declared, were for him as beautiful as the gospel.[7] Nor did he ever yield to the Christian Church more than a Platonic amity; so that much of the peculiar hostility that was long felt for his poetry and was long shown to his memory in Germany is to be explained as an expression of the normal malice of pietism against unbelievers.[8] Such utterances as the avowal that he revered Jesus as he revered the Sun,[9] and the other to the effect that Christianity has nothing to do with philosophy, where Hegel sought to bring it—that it is simply a beneficent influence, and is not to be looked to for proof of immortality[10]—are clearly not those of a believer. To-day belief is glad to claim Goethe as a friend in respect of his many concessions to it, as well as of his occasional flings at more

account of the influence of Spinoza on him from his youth onwards (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. III, B. xiv; Th. IV, B. xvi). See also his remarks on the "natural" religion of "conviction" or rational inference, and that of "faith" (*Glaube*) or revelationism, in B. iv (*Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 134); also Kestner's account of his opinions at twenty-three, in Düntzer's *Life*, Eng. tr. i, 185; and again his letter to Jacobi, January 6, 1813, quoted by Düntzer, ii, 290.

[1] See the *Alt-Testamentliches* Appendix to the *West-Oestlicher Divan*.
[2] Heine, *Zur Gesch. der Rel. u. Phil. in Deutschland* (*Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 92).
[3] *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. I, B. iv (*Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 123).
[4] *Id.* Th. III, B. xiv, par. 20 (*Werke*, xii, 159).
[5] *Id.* pp. 165, 186.
[6] *Id.* p. 184.
[7] Cited by Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v. 50.
[8] Compare, as to the hostility he aroused, Düntzer, i, 152, 317, 329-30, 451; ii, 221 *note*, 455, 461; Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, März 6, 1830; and Heine, last cit. p. 93.
[9] Eckermann, März 11, 1832.
[10] *Id.* Feb. 4, 1829.

consistent freethinkers. But a "great pagan" he remains for the student. In the opinion of later orthodoxy his "influence on religion was very pernicious."[1] He indeed showed small concern for religious susceptibilities when he humorously wrote that from his youth up he believed himself to stand so well with his God as to fancy that he might even "have something to forgive Him."[2]

One passage in Goethe's essay on the Pentateuch, appended to the *West-Oestlicher Divan*, is worth noting here as illustrating the ability of genius to cherish and propagate historical fallacies. It runs: "The peculiar, unique, and deepest theme of the history of the world and man, to which all others are subordinate, is always the conflict of belief and unbelief. All epochs in which belief rules, under whatever form, are illustrious, inspiriting, and fruitful for that time and the future. All epochs, on the other hand, in which unbelief, in whatever form, secures a miserable victory, even though for a moment they may flaunt it proudly, disappear for posterity, because no man willingly troubles himself with knowledge of the unfruitful" (first ed. pp. 424–25). Goethe goes on to speak of the four latter books of Moses as occupied with the theme of unbelief, and of the first as occupied with belief. Thus his formula was based, to begin with, on purely fabulous history, into the nature of which his poetic faculty gave him no true insight. (See his idyllic recast of the patriarchal history in Th. I, B. iv of the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*.) Applied to real history, his formula has no validity save on a definition which implies either an equivoque or an argument in a circle. If it refer, in the natural sense, to epochs in which any given religion is widely rejected and assailed, it is palpably false. The Renaissance and Goethe's own century were ages of such unbelief; and they remain much more deeply interesting than the Ages of Faith. St. Peter's at Rome is the work of a reputedly unbelieving pope. If on the other hand his formula be meant to apply to belief in the sense of energy and enthusiasm, it is still fallacious. The crusades were manifestations of energy and enthusiasm; but they were profoundly "unfruitful," and they are not deeply interesting. The only sense in which Goethe's formula could stand would be one in which it is recognized that all vigorous intellectual life stands for "belief" —that is to say, that Lucretius and Voltaire, Paine and d'Holbach, stand for "belief" when confidently attacking beliefs. The formula is thus true only in a strained and non-natural sense; whereas it is sure to be read and to be believed, by thoughtless admirers, in its natural and false

[1] Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 150.
[2] *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. III, B. viii; *Werke*, xi, 334.

sense, though the whole history of Byzantium and modern Islam is a history of stagnant and unfruitful belief, and that of modern Europe a history of fruitful doubt, disbelief, and denial, involving new affirmations. Goethe's own mind on the subject was in a state of verbalizing confusion, the result or expression of his temperamental aversion to clear analytical thought ("Above all," he boasts, "I never thought about thinking") and his habit of poetic allegory and apriorism. "Logic was invincibly repugnant to him" (Lewes, *Life of Goethe*, 3rd ed. p. 38). The mosaic of his thinking is sufficiently indicated in Lewes's sympathetically confused account (*id.* pp. 523–27). Where he himself doubted and denied current creeds, as in his work in natural science, he was most fruitful[1] (though he was not always right—*e.g.*, his polemic against Newton's theory of colour); and the permanently interesting teaching of his *Faust* is precisely that which artistically utters the doubt through which he passed to a pantheistic Naturalism.

20. No less certain is the unbelief of Schiller (1759–1805), whom Hagenbach even takes as "the representative of the rationalism of his age." In his juvenile *Robbers*, indeed, he makes his worst villains freethinkers; and in the preface he stoutly champions religion against all assailants; but hardly ever after that piece does he give a favourable portrait of a priest.[2] He himself soon joined the *Aufklärung*; and all his æsthetic appreciation of Christianity never carried him beyond the position that it virtually had the tendency (*Anlage*) to the highest and noblest, though that was in general tastelessly and repulsively represented by Christians. He added that in a certain sense it is the only æsthetic religion, whence it is that it gives such pleasure to the feminine nature, and that only among women is it to be met with in a tolerable form.[3] Like Goethe, he sought to reduce the Biblical supernatural to the plane of possibility,[4] in the manner of the liberal theologians of the period; and like him he often writes as a deist,[5] though professedly for a time a Kantist. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to say that a healthy nature (which Goethe had said needed no morality, no *Natur-recht*,[6] and no political metaphysic) required neither deity nor immortality to sustain it.[7]

[1] Cp., however, the estimate of Krause, above, p. 207. Virchow, *Göthe als Naturforscher*, 1861, goes into detail on the biological points, without reaching any general estimate.
[2] Remarked by Hagenbach, tr. p. 238.
[3] Letter to Goethe, August 17, 1795 (*Briefwechsel*, No. 87). The passage is given in Carlyle's essay on Schiller. [4] In *Die Sendung Moses*. [5] See the *Philosophische Briefe*.
[6] Carlyle translates, "No Rights of Man," which was probably the idea.
[7] Letter to Goethe, July 9, 1796 (*Briefwechsel*, No. 188). "It is evident that he was estranged not only from the church but from the fundamental truths of Christianity" (Rev. W. Baur, *Religious Life of Germany*, Eng. tr. 1872, p. 22). F. C. Baur has a curious

21. The critical philosophy of IMMANUEL KANT (1724–1804) may be said to represent most comprehensively the outcome in German intelligence of the higher freethought of the age, insofar as its results could be at all widely assimilated. In its most truly critical part, the analytic treatment of previous theistic systems in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), he is fundamentally anti-theological; the effect of the argument being to negate all previously current proofs of the existence and cognizableness of a "supreme power" or deity. Already the metaphysics of the Leibnitz-Wolff school were discredited;[1] and so far Kant could count on a fair hearing for a system which rejected that of the schools. Certainly he meant his book to be an antidote to the prevailing religious credulity. "Henceforth there were to be no more dreams of ghost-seers, metaphysicians, and enthusiasts."[2] On his own part, however, no doubt in sympathy with the attitude of many of his readers, there followed a species of intuitional reaction. In his short essay *What is Freethinking?*[3] (1784) he defines *Aufklärung* or freethinking as "the advance of men from their self-imputed minority"; and "minority" as the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. "*Sapere aude;* dare to use thine own understanding," he declares to be the motto of freethought: and he dwells on the laziness of spirit which keeps men in the state of minority, letting others do their thinking for them as the doctor prescribes their medicine. In this spirit he justifies the movement of rational criticism while insisting, justly enough, that men have still far to go ere they can reason soundly in all things. If, he observes, "we ask whether we live in an enlightened (*aufgeklärt*) age the answer is, No, but in an age of enlightening (*aufklärung*)." There is still great lack of capacity among men in general to think for themselves, free of leading-strings. "Only slowly can a community (*Publikum*) attain to freethinking." But he repeats that "the age is the age of *aufklärung*, the age of Frederick the Great": and he pays a high tribute to the king who repudiated even the arrogant pretence of "toleration," and alone among monarchs said to his subjects, "Reason as you will; only obey!"

But the element of apprehension gained ground in the aging

page in which he seeks to show that, though Schiller and Goethe cannot be called Christian in a natural sense, the age was not made un-Christian by them to such an extent as is commonly supposed (*Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v, 46).

[1] Cp. Tieftrunk, as cited by Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, p. 225.

[2] *Id.* p. 376. In his early essay *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* (1766) this attitude is clear. It ends with an admiring quotation from Voltaire's *Candide*.

[3] *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* in the *Berliner Monatschrift*, Dec. 1784, rep. in Kant's *Vorzügliche kleine Schriften*, 1833, Bd. i.

freethinker. In 1787 appeared the second edition of the *Critique*, with a preface avowing sympathy with religious as against free-thinking tendencies; and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) he makes an almost avowedly unscientific attempt to restore the reign of theism on a basis of a mere emotional and ethical necessity assumed to exist in human nature—a necessity which he never even attempts to demonstrate. With the magic wand of the Practical Reason, as Heine has it, he reanimated the corpse of theism, which the Theoretic Reason had slain.[1] In this adjustment he was perhaps consciously copying Rousseau, who had greatly influenced him,[2] and whose theism is an avowedly subjectivist predication. But the same attitude to the problem had been substantially adopted by Lessing;[3] and indeed the process is at bottom identical with that of the quasi-skeptics, Pascal, Huet, Berkeley, and the rest, who at once impugn and employ the rational process, reasoning that reason is not reasonable. Kant did but set up the "practical" against the "pure" reason, as other theists before him had set up faith against science, or the "heart" against the "head," and as theists to-day exalt the "will" against "knowledge," the emotional nature against the logical. It is tolerably clear that Kant's motive at this stage was an unphilosophic fear that Naturalism would work moral harm[4]—a fear shared by him with the mass of the average minds of his age.

The same motive and purpose are clearly at work in his treatise on *Religion within the bounds of Pure* [*i.e. Mere*] *Reason* (1792-1794), where, while insisting on the purely ethical and rational character of true religion, he painfully elaborates reasons for continuing to use the Bible (concerning which he contends that, in view of its practically "godly" contents, no one can deny the *possibility* of its being held as a revelation) as "the basis of ecclesiastical instruction" no less than a means of swaying the populace.[5] Miracles, he in effect avows, are not true; still, there must be no carping criticism of the miracle stories, which serve a good end. There is to be no persecution; but there is to be no such open disputation as would provoke it.[6] Again and again, with a visible uneasiness, the writer

[1] For an able argument vindicating the unity of Kant's system, however, see Prof. Adamson, *The Philosophy of Kant*, 1879, p. 21 *sq.*, as against Lange. With the verdict in the text compare that of Heine, *Zur Gesch. der Relig. u. Philos. in Deutschland*, B. iii (*Werke*, as cited, iii, 81-82); that of Prof. G. Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, vol. i. 1905, p. 94 *sq.*; and that of Prof. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Philosophy of Religion in Kant and Hegel*, rep. in vol. entitled *The Philosophical Radicals and Other Essays*, 1907, pp. 264, 266.

[2] Stuckenberg, pp. 225, 332.

[3] Cp. Haym, *Herder nach seinem Leben.....dargestellt*, 1877, i, 33, 48; Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, p. 10.

[4] Cp. Hagenbach, Eng. tr. p. 223.

[5] *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iii, Abth. i, § 5; Abth. ii (ed. 1793, pp. 145-46, 188-89).

[6] Work cited, Stück ii, Abschn. ii, Allg. Anm. p. 108 *sq.*

returns to the thesis that even "revealed" religion cannot do without sacred books which are partly untrue.[1] The doctrine of the Trinity he laboriously metamorphosed, as so many had done before him, and as Coleridge and Hegel did after him, into a formula of three *modes* or aspects of the moral deity[2] which his ethical purpose required. And all this divagation from the plain path of Truth is justified in the interest of Goodness.

All the while the book is from beginning to end profoundly divided against itself. It indicates disbelief in every one of the standing Christian dogmas—Creation, Fall, Salvation, Miracles, and the supernatural basis of morals. The first paragraph of the preface insists that morality is founded on the free reason, and that it needs no religion to aid it. Again and again this note is sounded. "The pure religious faith is that alone which can serve as basis for a universal Church; because it is a pure reason-faith, in which everyone can participate."[3] But without the slightest attempt at justification there is thrown in the formula that "no religion is thinkable without belief in a future life."[4] Thus heaven and hell[5] and Bible and church are arbitrarily imposed on the "pure religion" for the comfort of unbelieving clergymen and the moralizing of life. Error is to cast out error, and evil, evil.

The process of Kant's adjustment of his philosophy to social needs as he regarded them is to be understood by following the chronology and the vogue of his writings. The first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* "excited little attention" (Stuckenberg, *Life of Kant*, p. 368); but in 1787 appeared the second and modified edition, with a new preface, clearly written with a propitiatory eye to the orthodox reaction. "All at once the work now became popular, and the praise was as loud and as fulsome as at first the silence had been profound. The literature of the day began to teem with Kantian ideas, with discussions of the new philosophy, and with the praises of its author..... High officials in Berlin would lay aside the weighty affairs of State to consider the *Kritik*, and among them were found warm admirers of the work and its author." *Id.* p. 369. Cp. Heine, *Rel. und Phil. in Deutschland*, B. iii—*Werke*, iii, 75, 82.

[1] *E.g.* Stück iv, Th. i, preamble (p. 221, ed. cited).

[2] *Id.* Stück iii, Abth. ii, Allg. Anm.: "This belief," he avows frankly enough, "involves no mystery" (p. 199). In a note to the second edition he suggests that there must be a basis in reason for the idea of a Trinity, found as it is among so many ancient and primitive peoples. The speculation is in itself evasive, for he does not give the slightest reason for thinking the Goths capable of such metaphysic.

[3] Stück iii, Abth. i, § 5; pp. 137, 139.

[4] Stück iii, Abth. ii, p. 178.

[5] Kant explicitly concurs in Warburton's thesis that the Jewish lawgiver purposely omitted all mention of a future state from the Pentateuch; since such belief must be supposed to have been current in Jewry. But he goes further, and pronounces that simple Judaism contains "absolutely no religious belief." To this complexion can philosophic compromise come.

This popularity becomes intelligible in the light of the new edition and its preface. To say nothing of the alterations in the text, pronounced by Schopenhauer to be cowardly accommodations (as to which question see Adamson, as cited, and Stuckenberg, p. 461, *note* 94), Kant writes in the preface that he had been "obliged to destroy knowledge in order to make room for faith"; and, again, that "only through criticism can the roots be cut of materialism, fatalism, atheism, freethinking unbelief (*freigeisterischen Unglauben*), fanaticism and superstition, which may become universally injurious; also of idealism and skepticism, which are dangerous rather to the Schools, and can hardly reach the general public." (Meiklejohn mistranslates: "which *are* universally injurious"—Bohn ed. p. xxxvii.) This passage virtually puts the popular religion and all philosophies save Kant's own on one level of moral dubiety. It is, however, distinctly uncandid as regards the "freethinking unbelief," for Kant himself was certainly an unbeliever in Christian miracles and dogmas.

His readiness to make an appeal to prejudice appears again in the second edition of the *Critique* when he asks: "Whence does the freethinker derive his knowledge that there is, for instance, no Supreme Being?" (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Transc. Methodenlehre*, 1 H. 2 Absch. ed. Kirchmann, 1879, p. 587; Bohn tr. p. 458.) He had just before professed to be dealing with denial of the "existence of God"—a proposition of no significance whatever unless "God" be defined. He now without warning substitutes the still more undefined expression "Supreme Being" for "God," thus imputing a proposition probably never sustained with clear verbal purpose by any human being. Either, then, Kant's own proposition was the entirely vacuous one that nobody can demonstrate the impossibility of an alleged *undefined* existence, or he was virtually asserting that no one can disprove *any* alleged supernatural existence—spirit, demon, Moloch, Krishna, Bel, Siva, Aphrodite, or Isis and Osiris. In the latter case he would be absolutely stultifying his own claim to cut the roots of "superstition" and "fanaticism" as well as of freethinking and materialism; for, if the freethinker cannot disprove Jehovah, neither can the Kantist disprove Allah and Satan; and Kant had no basis for denying, as he did with Spinoza, the existence of ghosts or spirits. From this dilemma Kant's argument cannot be delivered. And as he finally introduces deity as a psychologically and morally necessary regulative idea, howbeit indemonstrable, he leaves every species of superstition exactly where it stood before—every superstition being practically held, as against "freethinking unbelief," on just such a tenure.

If he could thus react against freethinking before 1789, he must needs carry the reaction further after the outbreak of the

French Revolution; and his *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1792–1794) is a systematic effort to draw the teeth of the *Aufklärung*, modified only by his resentment of the tyranny of the political authority towards himself. Concerning the age-long opposition between rationalism (*Verstandesaufklärung*) and intuitionism or emotionalism (*Gefühlsphilosophie*), it is claimed by modern transcendentalists that Kant, or Herder, or another, has effected a solution on a plane higher than either. (*E.g.* Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, 1889, p. 6.) The true solution certainly must account for both points of view—no very difficult matter; but no solution is really attained by either of these writers. Kant alternately stood at the two positions; and his unhistorical mind did not seek to unify them in a study of human evolution. For popular purposes he let pass the assumption that a cosmic emotion is a clue to the nature of the cosmos, as the water-finder's hazel-twig is said to point to the whereabouts of water. Herder, recognisant of evolution, would not follow out any rational analysis.

All the while, however, Kant's theism was radically irreconcilable with the prevailing religion. As appears from his cordial hostility to the belief in ghosts, he really lacked the religious temperament. "He himself," says a recent biographer, "was too suspicious of the emotions to desire to inspire any enthusiasm with reference to his own heart."[1] This misstates the fact that his "Practical Reason" was but an abstraction of his own emotional predilection; but it remains true that that predilection was nearly free from the commoner forms of pious psychosis; and typical Christians have never found him satisfactory. "From my heart," writes one of his first biographers, "I wish that Kant had not regarded the Christian religion merely as a necessity for the State, or as an institution to be tolerated for the sake of the weak (which now so many, following his example, do even in the pulpit), but had known that which is positive, improving, and blessed in Christianity."[2] He had in fact never kept up any theological study;[3] and his plan of compromise had thus, like those of Spencer and Mill in a later day, a fatal unreality for all men who have discarded theology with a full knowledge of its structure, though it appeals very conveniently to those disposed to retain it as a means of popular influence. All his adaptations, therefore, failed to conciliate the mass of the orthodox; and even after the issue of the second *Critique* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*) he had been the subject of discussion among the reac-

[1] Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, p. 329.
[2] Borowski, *Darstellung des Lebens und Charakters Immanuel Kant's*, 1804, cited by Stuckenberg, p. 357.
[3] Stuckenberg, pp. 359–60.

tionists.[1] But that *Critique*, and the preface to the second edition of the first, were at bottom only pleas for a revised ethic, Kant's concern with current religion being solely ethical;[2] and the force of that concern led him at length, in what was schemed as a series of magazine articles,[3] to expound his notion of religion in relation to morals. When he did so he aroused a resentment much more energetic than that felt by the older academics against his philosophy. The title of his complete treatise, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, is obviously framed to parry criticism; yet so drastic is its treatment of its problems that the College of Censors at Berlin under the new theological régime vetoed the second part. By the terms of the law as to the censorship, the publisher was entitled to know the reason for the decision; but on his asking for it he was informed that "another instruction was on hand, which the censor followed as his law, but whose contents he refused to make known."[4] Greatly incensed, Kant submitted the rejected article with the rest of his book to the theological faculty of his own university of Königsberg, asking them to decide in which faculty the censorship was properly vested. They referred the decision to the philosophical faculty, which duly proceeded to license the book (1793). As completed, it contained passages markedly hostile to the Church. His opponents in turn were now so enraged that they procured a royal cabinet order (October, 1794) charging him with "distorting and degrading many of the chief and fundamental doctrines of the Holy Scriptures and of Christianity," and ordering all the instructors at the university not to lecture on the book.[5] Such was the reward for a capitulation of philosophy to the philosophic ideals of the police.

Kant, called upon to render an account of his conduct to the Government, formally defended it, but in conclusion decorously said: "I think it safest, in order to obviate the least suspicion in this respect, as your Royal Majesty's most faithful subject, to declare solemnly that henceforth I will refrain altogether from all public discussion of religion, whether natural or revealed, both in lectures and in writings." After the death of Frederick William II (1797) and the accession of Frederick William III, who suspended the edict of 1788, Kant held himself free to speak out again, and published (1798) an essay on "The Strife of the [University] Faculties," wherein he argued that philosophers should be free to discuss all

[1] Stuckenberg, p. 361. [2] Cp. F. C. Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v. 63-66.
[3] The first, on "Radical Evils," appeared in a Berlin monthly in April, 1792, and was then reprinted separately.
[4] Stuckenberg, p. 361. [5] Ueberweg, ii, 141; Stuckenberg, p. 363.

questions of religion so long as they did not handle Biblical theology as such. The belated protest, however, led to nothing. By this time the philosopher was incapable of further efficient work; and when he died in 1804 the chief manuscript he left, planned as a synthesis of his philosophic teaching, was found to be hopelessly confused.[1]

The attitude, then, in which Kant stood to the reigning religion in his latter years remained fundamentally hostile, from the point of view of believing Christians as distinguished from that of ecclesiastical opportunists. What were for temporizers arguments in defence of didactic deceit, were for sincerer spirits fresh grounds for recoiling from the whole ecclesiastical field. Kant must have made more rebels than compliers by his very doctrine of compliance. Religion was for him essentially ethic; and there is no reconciling the process of propitiation of deity, in the Christian or any other cult, with his express declaration that all attempts to win God's favour save by simple right-living are sheer fetichism.[2] He thus ends practically at the point of view of the deists, whose influence on him in early life is seen in his work on cosmogony.[3] He had, moreover, long ceased to go to church or follow any religious usage, even refusing to attend the services on the installation of a new university rector, save when he himself held the office. At the close of his treatise on religion, after all his anxious accommodations, he becomes almost violent in his repudiations of sacerdotalism and sectarian self-esteem. "He did not like the singing in the churches, and pronounced it mere bawling. In prayer, whether public or private, he had not the least faith; and in his conversation as well as his writings he treated it as a superstition, holding that to address anything unseen would open the way for fanaticism. Not only did he argue against prayer; he also ridiculed it, and declared that a man would be ashamed to be caught by another in the attitude of prayer." One of his maxims was that "To kneel or prostrate himself on the earth, even for the purpose of symbolizing to himself reverence for a heavenly object, is unworthy of man."[4] So too he held that the doctrine of the Trinity had no practical value, and he had a "low opinion" of the Old Testament.

Yet his effort at compromise had carried him to positions which are the negation of some of his own most emphatic ethical teachings. Like Plato, he is finally occupied in discussing the "right fictions"

[1] Stuckenberg, pp. 304–309.
[2] *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iv, Th. 2.
[3] Cp. Stuckenberg, p. 332; Seth Pringle-Pattison, as cited.
[4] Stuckenberg, pp. 340, 346, 354, 468.

for didactic purposes. Swerving from thoroughgoing freethought for fear of moral harm, he ends by sacrificing intellectual morality to what seems to him social security. His doctrine, borrowed from Lessing, of a "conceivable" revelation which told man only what he could find out for himself, is a mere flout to reason. While he carries his "categorical imperative," or à priori conception of duty, so extravagantly far as to argue that it is wrong even to tell a falsehood to a would-be murderer in order to mislead him, he approves of the systematic employment of the pulpit function by men who do not believe in the creed they there expound. The priest, with Kant's encouragement, is to "draw all the practical lessons for his congregation from dogmas which he himself cannot subscribe with a full conviction of their truth, but which he can teach, since it is not altogether impossible that truth may be concealed therein," while he remains free as a scholar to write in a contrary sense in his own name. And this doctrine, set forth in the censured work of 1793, is repeated in the moralist's last treatise (1798), wherein he explains that the preacher, when speaking doctrinally, "can put into the passage under consideration his own rational views, whether found there or not." Kant thus ended by reviving for the convenience of churchmen, in a worse form, the medieval principle of a "twofold truth." So little efficacy is there in a transcendental ethic for any of the actual emergencies of life.

On this question compare Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iii, Abth. i, § 6; Stück iv, Th. ii, preamble and §§ i, 3, and 4; with the essay *Ueber ein vermeintes Recht aus Menschenliebe zu lügen* (1797), in reply to Constant—rep. in Kant's *Vorzügliche kleine Schriften*, 1833, Bd. ii, and in App. to Rosenkranz's ed. of *Werke*, vii, 295—given by T. K. Abbott in his tr. of the *Critique of Judgment*. See also Stuckenberg, pp. 341–45, and the general comment of Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, 1862, p. 65. "Kant's recognition of Scripture is purely a matter of expedience. The State needs the Bible to control the people; the masses need it in order that they, having weak consciences, may recognize their duty; and the philosopher finds it a convenient vehicle for conveying to the people the faith of reason. Were it rejected it might be difficult, if not impossible, to put in its place another book which would inspire as much confidence." All the while "Kant's principles of course led him to deny that the Bible is authoritative in matters of religion, or that it is of itself a safe guide in morals.....Its value consists in the fact that, owing to the confidence of the people in it, reason can use it to interpret into Scripture its own doctrines, and can thus

make it the means of popularizing rational faith. If anyone imagines that the aim of the interpretation is to obtain the real meaning of Scripture, he is no Kantian on this point" (Stuckenberg, p. 341).

22. The total performance of Kant thus left Germany with a powerful lead on the one hand towards that unbelief in religion which in the last reign had been fashionable, and on the other hand a series of prescriptions for compromise; the monarchy all the while throwing its weight against all innovation in doctrine and practice. In 1799 Fichte is found expressing the utmost alarm at the combination of the European despotisms to "rout out freethought";[1] and so strong did the official reaction become that in the opinion of Heine all the German philosophers and their ideas would have been suppressed by wheel and gallows but for Napoleon,[2] who intervened in the year 1805. The Prussian despotism being thus weakened, what actually happened was an adaptation of Kant's teaching to the needs alike of religion and of rationalism. The religious world was assured by it that, though all previous arguments for theism were philosophically worthless, theism was now safe on the fluid basis of feeling. On the other hand, rationalism alike in ethics and in historical criticism was visibly reinforced on all sides. Herder, as before noted, found divinity students grounding their unbelief on Kant's teaching. Staüdlin begins the preface to his *History and Spirit of Skepticism* (1794) with the remark that "Skepticism begins to be a disease of the age"; and Kant is the last in his list of skeptics. At the close of the century "the number of Kantian theologians was legion," and it was through the Kantian influence that "the various anti-orthodox tendencies which flourished during the period of Illumination were concentrated in Rationalism"[3]—in the tendency, that is, to bring rational criticism to bear alike on history, dogma, and philosophy. Borowski in 1804 complains that "beardless youths and idle babblers" devoid of knowledge "appeal to Kant's views respecting Christianity."[4] These views, as we have seen, were partly accommodating, partly subversive in the extreme. Kant regards Jesus as an edifying ideal of perfect manhood, "belief" in whom as such makes a man acceptable to God, because of following a good model. "While he thus treats the historical account of Jesus as of no significance, except as a shell into which the practical reason puts the kernel, his whole argument tends to destroy faith

[1] Letter of May 22, 1799, reproduced by Heine.
[2] *Zur Gesch. der Rel. u. Philos. in Deutschland.* *Werke*, as cited, iii. 96, 98.
[3] Stuckenberg, p. 311.
[4] *Id.* p. 357.

in the historic person of Jesus as given in the gospel, treating the account itself as something whose truthfulness it is not worth while to investigate."[1] In point of fact we find his devoted disciple Erhard declaring: "I regard Christian morality as something which has been falsely imputed to Christianity; and the existence of Christ does not at all seem to me to be a probable historical fact" —this while declaring that Kant had given him "the indescribable comfort of being able to call himself openly, and with a good conscience, a Christian."[2]

While therefore a multitude of preachers availed themselves of Kant's philosophic licence to rationalize in the pulpit and out of it as occasion offered, and yet others opposed them only on the score that all divergence from orthodoxy should be avowed, the dissolution of orthodoxy in Germany was rapid and general; and the anti-supernaturalist handling of Scripture, prepared for as we have seen, went on continuously. Even the positive disparagement of Christianity was carried on by Kantian students; and Hamann, dubbed "the Magician of the North" for his alluring exposition of emotional theism, caused one of them, a tutor, to be brought before a clerical consistory for having taught his pupil to throw all specifically Christian doctrines aside. The tutor admitted the charge, and with four others signed a declaration "that neither morality nor sound reason nor public welfare could exist in connection with Christianity."[3] Hamann's own influence was too much a matter of literary talent and caprice to be durable; and recent attempts to re-establish his reputation have evoked the deliberate judgment that he has no permanent importance.[4]

Against the intellectual influence thus set up by Kant there was none in contemporary Germany capable of resistance. Philosophy for the most part went in Kant's direction, having indeed been so tending before his day. Rationalism of a kind had already had a representative in Chr. A. Crusius (1712–1775), who in treatises on logic and metaphysics opposed alike Leibnitz and Wolff, and taught for his own part a kind of Epicureanism, nominally Christianized. To his school belonged Platner (much admired by Jean Paul Richter, his pupil) and Tetens, "the German Locke," who attempted a common-sense answer to Hume. His ideal was a philosophy "at once intelligible and religious, agreeable to God and accessible to the

[1] Stuckenberg, p. 351. "It is only necessary," adds Stuckenberg (p. 468, *note* 142), "to develop Kant's hints in order to get the views of Strauss in his *Leben Jesu*."
[2] *Id.* p. 375. Erhard stated that Pestalozzi shared his views on Christian ethics.
[3] Stuckenberg, p. 358.
[4] Cp. Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, 11te Aufl. p. 119; R. Unger, *Hamann und die Aufklärung*, 1911.

people."[1] Platner on the other hand, leaning strongly towards a psychological and anthropological view of human problems,[2] opposed first to atheism[3] and later to Kantian theism[4] a moderate Pyrrhonic skepticism; here following a remarkable lead from the younger Beausobre, who in 1755 had published in French, at Berlin, a treatise entitled *Le Pyrrhonisme Raisonnable*, taking up the position, among others, that while it is hard to prove the existence of God by reason it is impossible to disprove it. This was virtually the position of Kant a generation later; and it is clear that thus early the dogmatic position was discredited.

23. Some philosophic opposition there was to Kant, alike on intuitionist grounds, as in the cases of Hamann and Herder, and on grounds of academic prejudice, as in the case of Kraus; but the more important thinkers who followed him were all as heterodox as he. In particular, JOHANN GOTTLIEB FICHTE (1762–1814), who began in authorship by being a Kantian zealot, gave even greater scandal than the Master had done. Fichte's whole career is a kind of "abstract and brief chronicle" of the movements of thought in Germany during his life. In his boyhood, at the public school of Pforta, we find him and his comrades already influenced by the new currents. "Books imbued with all the spirit of free inquiry were secretly obtained, and, in spite of the strictest prohibitions, great part of the night was spent in their perusal. The works of Wieland, Lessing, and Goethe were positively forbidden; yet they found their way within the walls, and were eagerly studied."[5] In particular, Fichte followed closely the controversy of Lessing with Goeze; and Lessing's lead gave him at once the spirit of freethought, as distinct from any specific opinion. Never a consistent thinker, Fichte in his student and tutorial days is found professing at once determinism and a belief in "Providence," accepting Spinoza and contemplating a village pastorate.[6] But while ready to frame a plea for Christianity on the score of its psychic adaptation to "the sinner," he swerved from the pastorate when it came within sight, declaring that "no purely Christian community now exists."[7] About the age of twenty-eight he became an enthusiastic convert to the Kantian philosophy, especially to the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and threw over determinism on what appear to be grounds of empirical utilitarianism, failing to face the philosophical issue. Within a

[1] Bartholmèss, *Hist. crit. des doctr. relig. de la philos. moderne*, 1855, i. 136–40.
[2] In demanding a "history of the human conscience" (*Neue Anthropologie*, 1790) Platner seems to have anticipated the modern scientific approach to religion.
[3] *Gespräche über den Atheismus*, 1781. [4] *Lehrbuch der Logik und Metaphysik*, 1795.
[5] W. Smith, *Memoir of Fichte*, 2nd ed. p. 10.
[6] *Id.* pp. 12, 13, 20, 23, 25, etc. [7] *Id.* pp. 34–35.

year of his visit to Kant, however, he was writing to a friend that "Kant has only indicated the truth, but neither unfolded nor proved it," and that he himself has "discovered a new principle, from which all philosophy can easily be deduced.....In a couple of years we shall have a philosophy with all the clearness of geometrical demonstration."[1] He had in fact passed, perhaps under Spinoza's influence, to pantheism, from which standpoint he rejected Kant's anti-rational ground for affirming a God not immanent in things, and claimed, as did his contemporaries Schelling and Hegel, to establish theism on rational grounds. Rejecting, further, Kant's reiterated doctrine that religion is ethic, Fichte ultimately insisted that, on the contrary, religion is knowledge, and that "it is only a currupt society that has to use religion as an impulse to moral action."

But alike in his Kantian youth and later he was definitely anti-revelationist, however much he conformed to clerical prejudice by attacks upon the movement of freethought. In his "wander-years" he writes with vehemence of the "worse than Spanish inquisition" under which the German clergy are compelled to "cringe and dissemble," partly because of lack of ability, partly through economic need.[2] In his *Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* ("Essay towards a Critique of all Revelation"), published with some difficulty, Kant helping (1792), he in effect negates the orthodox assumption, and, in the spirit of Kant and Lessing, but with more directness than they had shown, concludes that belief in revelation "is an element, and an important element, in the moral education of humanity, but it is not a final stage for human thought."[3] In Kant's bi-frontal fashion, he had professed[4] to "silence the opponents of positive religion not less than its dogmatical defenders"; but that result did not follow on either side, and ere long, as a professor at Jena, he was being represented as one of the most aggressive of the opponents. Soon after producing his *Critique of all Revelation* he had published anonymously two pamphlets vindicating the spirit as distinguished from the conduct of the French Revolution; and upon a young writer known to harbour such ideas enmity was bound to fall. Soon it took the form of charges of atheism. It does not appear to be true that he ever told his students at Jena: "In five years there will be no more Christian religion: reason is our religion";[5] and it would seem that the first

[1] Smith, p. 94. [2] *Id.* p. 34.
[3] Adamson, *Fichte*, 1881, p. 32; Smith, as cited, pp. 64-65.
[4] Letter to Kant, cited by Smith, p. 63.
[5] Asserted by Stuckenberg, *Life of Kant*, p. 386.

charges of atheism brought against him were purely malicious.[1] But his career henceforth was one of strife and friction, first with the student-blackguardism which had been rife in the German universities ever since the Thirty Years' War, and which he partly subdued; then with the academic authorities and the traditionalists, who, when he began lecturing on Sunday mornings, accused him of attempting to throw over Christianity and set up the worship of reason. He was arraigned before the High Consistory of Weimar and acquitted; but his wife was insulted in the streets of Jena; his house was riotously attacked in the night; and he ceased to reside there. Then, in his *Wissenschaftslehre* ("Doctrine of Knowledge," 1794–95) he came into conflict with the Kantians, with whom his rupture steadily deepened on ethical grounds. Again he was accused of atheism in print; and after a defence in which he retorted the charge on the utilitarian theists he resigned.

In Berlin, where the new king held the old view that the wrongs of the Gods were the Gods' affair, he found harbourage; and sought to put himself right with the religious world by his book *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* ("The Vocation of Man," 1800), wherein he speaks of the Eternal Infinite Will as regulating human reason so far as human reason is right—the old counter-sense and the old evasion. By this book he repelled his rationalistic friends Schelling and the Schlegels; while his religious ally Schleiermacher, who chose another tactic, wrote on it a bitter and contemptuous review, and "could hardly find words strong enough to express his detestation of it."[2] A few years later Fichte was writing no less contemptuously of Schelling; and in his remaining years, though the Napoleonic wars partly brought him into sympathy with his countrymen, from whom he had turned away in angry alienation, he remained a philosophic Ishmael, warring and warred upon all round. He was thus left to figure for posterity as a religionist "for his own hand," who rejected all current religion while angrily dismissing current unbelief as "freethinking chatter."[3] If his philosophy be estimated by its logical content as distinguished from its conflicting verbalisms, it is fundamentally as atheistic as that of Spinoza.[4] That he was conscious of a vital sunderance between his

[1] Cp. Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pt. i. pp. 132–33; Adamson, *Fichte*, pp. 50–67; W. Smith, *Memoir of Fichte*, pp. 106–107.

[2] Adamson, pp. 71, 73.

[3] *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, 16te Vorles. ed. 1806, pp. 509–510.

[4] Compare the complaints of Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. pp. 136–37, and of Coleridge (after praising him as the destroyer of Spinozism), "degenerated into a crude *egoismus*, a boastful and hyperstoic hostility to Nature, as lifeless, godless, and altogether unholy, Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Bohn ed. p. 72. Fichte's theory, says

thought and that of the past is made clear by his answer, in 1805, to the complaint that the people had lost their "religious feeling" (*Religiosität*). His retort is that a new religious feeling has taken the place of the old;[1] and that was the position taken up by the generation which swore by him, in the German manner, as the last had sworn by Kant.

But the successive philosophies of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, all rising out of the "Illumination" of the eighteenth century, have been alike impermanent. Nothing is more remarkable in the history of thought than the internecine strife of the systems which insisted on "putting something in the place" of the untenable systems of the past. They have been but so many "toppling spires of cloud." Fichte, like Herder, broke away from the doctrine of Kant; and later became bitterly opposed to that of his former friend Schelling, as did Hegel in his turn. Schleiermacher, hostile to Kant, was still more hostile to Fichte; and Hegel, detesting Schleiermacher[2] and developing Fichte, give rise to schools arrayed against each other, of which the anti-Christian was by far the stronger. All that is permanent in the product of the age of German Rationalism is the fundamental principle upon which it proceeded, the confutation of the dogmas and legends of the past, and the concrete results of the historical, critical, and physical research to which the principle and the confutation led.

24. It is true that the progressive work was not all done by the Rationalists so-called. As always, incoherences in the pioneers led to retorts which made for rectification. One of the errors of bias of the early naturalists, as we have noted, was their tendency to take every religious document as genuine and at bottom trustworthy, provided only that its allegations of miracles were explained away as misinterpretations of natural phenomena. So satisfied were many of them with this inexpensive method that they positively resisted the attempts of supernaturalists, seeking a way out of *their* special dilemma, to rectify the false ascriptions of the documents. Bent solely on one solution, they were oddly blind to evidential considerations which pointed to interpolation, forgery, variety of source, and error of literary tradition; while scholars bent on saving "inspiration" were often ready in some measure for such recognitions. These arrests of insight took place alternately on both sides, in the normal way of intellectual progress by alternate movements.

while his religion consisted in the assumption of a mere *ordo ordinans*, which we were permitted *ezoterice* to call God." Heine (as last cited, p. 75) insists that Fichte's Idealism is "more Godless than the crassest Materialism."

[1] *Grundzüge*, as cited, p. 502.

[2] Cp. Seth Pringle-Pattison, as cited, p. 280, *note*.

All the while, it is the same primary force of reason that sets up the alternate pressures, and the secondary pressures are generated by, and are impossible without, the first.

25. The emancipation, too, was limited in area in the German-speaking world. In Austria, despite a certain amount of French culture, the rule of the Jesuits in the eighteenth century was too effective to permit of any intellectual developments. Maria Theresa, who knew too well that the boundless sexual licence against which she fought had nothing to do with innovating ideas, had to issue a special order to permit the importation of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois;* and works of more subversive doctrine could not openly pass the frontiers at all. An attempt to bring Lessing to Vienna in 1774, with a view to founding a new literary Academy, collapsed before the opposition; and when Prof. Jahn, of the Vienna University—described as "freethinking, latitudinarian, anti-supernaturalistic"—developed somewhat anti-clerical tendencies in his teaching and writing, he was forced to resign, and died a simple Canon.[1] The Emperor Joseph II in his day passed for an unbeliever;[2] but there was no general movement. "Austria, in a time of universal effervescence, produced only musicians, and showed zest only for pleasure."[3] Yet among the music-makers was the German-born BEETHOVEN, the greatest master of his age. Kindred in spirit to Goethe, and much more of a revolutionist than he in all things, Beethoven spent the creative part of his life at Vienna without ceasing to be a freethinker.[4] "Formal religion he apparently had none." He copied out a kind of theistic creed consisting of three ancient formulas: "I am that which is": "I am all that is, that was, that shall be": "He is alone by Himself; and to Him alone do all things owe their being." Beyond this his beliefs did not go. When his friend Moscheles at the end of his arrangement of *Fidelio* wrote: "*Fine*, with God's help," Beethoven added, "O man, help thyself."[5] His reception of the Catholic sacraments *in extremis* was not his act. He had left to mankind a purer and a more lasting gift than either the creeds or the philosophies of his age.

[1] Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, ii, 225. Jahn was well in advance of his age in his explanation of Joshua's cosmic miracle as the mistaken literalizing of a flight of poetic phrase. See the passage in his Introduction to the Book of Joshua, cited by Rowland Williams, *The Hebrew Prophets*, ii (1871), 31, note 33.

[2] R. N. Bain, *Gustavus Vasa and his Contemporaries*, 1894, i, 265–68.

[3] A. Sorel, *L'Europe et la révolution française*, i (1885), p. 458.

[4] See articles on Beethoven by Macfarren in *Dictionary of Universal Biography*, and by Grove in the *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

[5] Grove, art. cited, ed. 1904, i, 224.

Chapter XIX

FREETHOUGHT IN THE REMAINING EUROPEAN STATES

§ 1. *Holland*

Holland, so notable for relative hospitality to freethinking in the seventeenth century, continued to exhibit it in the eighteenth, though without putting forth much native response. After her desperate wars with Louis XIV, the Dutch State, now monarchically ruled, turned on the intellectual side rather to imitative *belles lettres* than to the problems which had begun to exercise so much of English thought. It was an age of "retrogression and weakness."[1] Elizabeth Wolff, *née* Bekker, one of the most famous of the numerous Dutch women-writers of the century (1738–1804), is notable for her religious as well as for her political liberalism;[2] but her main activity was in novel-writing; and there are few other signs of freethinking tendencies in popular Dutch culture. It was impossible, however, that the influences at work in the neighbouring lands should be shut out; and if Holland did not produce innovating books she printed many throughout the century.

In 1708 there was published at Amsterdam a work under the pseudonym of "Juan di Posos," wherein, by way of a relation of imaginary travels, something like atheism was said to be taught; but the pastor Leenhof had in 1703 been accused of atheism for his treatise, *Heaven on Earth*, which was at most Spinozistic.[3] Even as late as 1714 a Spinozist shoemaker, Booms, was banished for his writings; but henceforth liberal influences, largely traceable to the works of Bayle, begin to predominate. Welcomed by students everywhere, Bayle must have made powerfully for tolerance and rationalism in his adopted country, which after his time became a centre of culture for the States of northern Europe rather than a source of original works. Holland in the eighteenth century was receptive alike of French and English thought and literature,

[1] Jonckbloet, *Beknopte Geschiedenis der nederl. Letterkunde*, ed. 1880, p. 282.
[2] *Id.* pp. 315–16.
[3] Cp. Trinius, *Freydenker-Lexicon*, pp. 336–37; Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, as cited, p. lviii.

especially the former;[1] and, besides reprinting many of the French deists' works and translating some of the English, the Dutch cities harboured such heretics as the Italian Alberto Radicati, Count PASSERANO, who, dying at Rotterdam in 1736, left a collection of deistic treatises of a strongly freethinking cast to be posthumously published.

The German traveller Alberti,[2] citing the *London Magazine*, 1732, states that Passerano visited England and published works in English through a translator, Joseph Morgan, and that both were sentenced to imprisonment. This presumably refers to his anonymous *Philosophical Dissertation upon Death*, "by a friend to truth," published in English in 1732.[3] It is a remarkable treatise, being a hardy justification of suicide, "composed for the consolation of the unhappy," from a practically atheistic standpoint. Two years earlier he had published in English, also anonymously, a tract entitled *Christianity set in a True Light, by a Pagan Philosopher newly converted;* and it may be that the startling nature of the second pamphlet elicited a prosecution which included both. The pamphlet of 1730, however, is a eulogy of the ethic of Jesus, who is deistically treated as a simple man, but with all the amenity which the deists usually brought to bear on that theme. Passerano's *Recueil des pièces curieuses sur les matières les plus interessants*, published with his name at Rotterdam in 1736,[4] includes a translation of Swift's ironical *Project* concerning babies, and an *Histoire abregée de la profession sacerdotale*, which was published in a separate English translation.[5] Passerano is noticeable chiefly for the relative thoroughness of his rationalism.[6] In the *Recueil* he speaks of deists and atheists as being the same, those called atheists having always admitted a first cause under the names God, Nature, Eternal Germs, movement, or universal soul.[7]

In 1737 was published in French a small mystification consisting of a *Sermon prêché dans la grande Assemblée des Quakers*

[1] See Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit*, Eng. tr. p. 29.
[2] *Briefe*, 1732, p. 451.
[3] This is the basis of Pope's reference to "illustrious Passeran" in his *Epilogue to the Satires*, 1738, ii. 124. The Rev. J. Bramstone's satire, *The Man of Taste* (1733), spells the name "Pasaran," whence may be inferred the extent of the satirist's knowledge of his topic.
[4] Reprinted, in French, at London in 1749, in a more complete and correct edition, published by J. Brindley.
[5] The copy in the British Museum is dated 1737, and the title-page describes Passerano as "a Piemontæse exile *now in Holland*, a Christian Freethinker." It is presumably a re-issue.
[6] Warburton in a note on Pope (*Epilogue*, as cited) characteristically alleges that Passerano had been banished from Piedmont "for his impieties, and lived in the utmost misery, yet feared to practise his own precepts; and at last died a penitent." The source of these allegations may serve as warrant for disbelieving them. Warburton, it will be observed, says nothing of an imprisonment in England.
[7] London ed. 1749, pp. 24-25.

de Londres, par le fameux Frère E. E., and another little tract, *La Religion Muhamedane comparée à la païenne de l'Indostan, par Ali-Ebn-Omar.* "E. E." stood for Edward Elwall, a well-known Unitarian of the time, who, as we saw, was tried at Stafford Assizes in 1726 for publishing a Unitarian treatise, and who in 1742 published another, entitled *The Supernatural Incarnation of Jesus Christ proved to be false.....and that our Lord Jesus Christ was the real son of Joseph and Mary.* The two tracts are both by Passerano, and are on deistic lines, the text of the *Sermon* being (in English) "The Religion of the Gospel is the true Original Religion of Reason and Nature." The proposition is of course purely ethical in its bearing.

The currency given in Holland to such literature tells of growing liberality of thought as well as of political freedom. But the conditions were not favourable to such general literary activity as prevailed in the larger States, though good work was done in medicine and the natural sciences. Not till the nineteenth century did Dutch scholars again give a lead to Europe in religious thought.

§ 2. *The Scandinavian States*

1. Traces of new rationalistic life are to be seen in the Scandinavian countries at least as early as the times of Descartes. There, as elsewhere, the Reformation had been substantially a fiscal or economic revolution, proceeding on various lines. In Denmark the movement, favoured by the king, began among the people; the nobility rapidly following, to their own great profit; and finally Christian III, who ruled both Denmark and Norway, acting with the nobles, suppressed Catholic worship, and confiscated to the crown the "castles, fortresses, and vast domains of the prelates."[1] In Sweden the king, Gustavus Vasa, took the initiative, moved by sore need of funds, and a thoroughly anti-ecclesiastical temper,[2] the clergy having supported the Danish rule which he threw off. The burghers and peasants promptly joined him against the clergy and nobles, enabling him to confiscate the bishops' castles and estates, as was done in Denmark; and he finally secured himself with the nobles by letting them reclaim lands granted by their ancestors to monasteries.[3] His anti-feudal reforms having stimulated new life in many ways, further evolution followed.

In Sweden the stimulative reign of Gustavus Vasa was followed

[1] Koch, *Histor. View of the European Nations*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. p. 103. Cp. Crichton and Wheaton, *Scandinavia*, 1837, i. 383-96; Otté, *Scandinavian History*, 1874, pp. 232-34; Villiers, *Essay on the Reformation*, Eng. tr. 1836, p. 105. But cp. Allen, *Histoire de Danemark*, Fr. tr. i. 298-300.

[2] Otté, pp. 232-36; Crichton-Wheaton, i. 398-400; Geijer, *Hist. of the Swedes*, Eng. tr. i. 128.

[3] Koch, p. 104; Geijer, i. 129.

by a long period of the strife which everywhere trod on the heels of the Reformation. The second successor of Gustavus, his son John, had married a daughter of the Catholic Sigismund of Poland, and sought to restore her religion to power, causing much turmoil until her death, whereafter he abandoned the cause. His Catholic son Sigismund recklessly renewed the effort, and was deposed in consequence; John's brother Charles becoming king. In Denmark, meanwhile, Frederick II (d. 1588) had been a bigoted champion of Lutheranism, expelling a professor of Calvinistic leanings on the Eucharist, and refusing a landing to the Calvinists who fled from the Netherlands. On the other hand he patronized and pensioned Tycho Brahé, who, until driven into banishment by a court cabal during the minority of Christian IV, did much for astronomy, though unable to accept Copernicanism.

In 1611 there broke out between Sweden and Denmark the sanguinary two-years' "War of Calmar," their common religion availing nothing to avert strife. Thereafter Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, as Protestant champion in the Thirty Years' War, in succession to Christian IV of Denmark, fills the eye of Europe till his death in 1632; eleven years after which event Sweden and Denmark were again at war. In 1660 the latter country, for lack of goodwill between nobles and commoners, underwent a political revolution whereby its king, whose predecessors had held the crown on an elective tenure, became absolute, and set up a hereditary line. The first result was a marked intellectual stagnation. "Divinity, law, and philosophy were wholly neglected; surgery was practised only by barbers; and when Frederick IV and his queen required medical aid, no native physician could be found to whom it was deemed safe to entrust the cure of the royal patients.....The only name, after Tycho Brahé, of which astronomy can boast, is that of Peter Horrebow, and with him the cultivation of the science became extinct."[1]

2. For long, the only personality making powerfully for culture was HOLBERG,[2] certainly a host in himself. Of all the writers of his age, the only one who can be compared with him in versatility of power is Voltaire, whom he emulated as satirist, dramatist, and historian; but all his dramatic genius could not avail to sustain against the puritanical pietism which then flourished, the Danish

[1] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 322.

[2] Ludwig Holberg, Baron Holberg, born at Bergen, Norway, 1684. After a youth of poverty and struggle he settled at Copenhagen in 1718, as professor of metaphysics, and attained the chair of eloquence in 1720. Made Baron by King Frederick V of Denmark at his accession in 1747. D. 1754.

drama of which he was the fecund creator. After producing a brilliant series of plays (1722–1727) he had to witness the closing of the Copenhagen Theatre, and take to general writing, historical and didactic. In 1741 he produced in Latin his famous *Subterranean Journey of Nicolas Klimius*,[1] one of the most widely famous performances of its age.[2] He knew English, and must have been influenced by Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which his story frequently recalls. The hero catastrophically reaches a "subterranean" planet, with another social system, and peopled by moving trees and civilized and socialized animals. With the tree-people, the Potuans, the tale deals at some length, giving a chapter on their religion,[3] after the manner of Tyssot de Patot in *Jacques Massé*. They are simple deists, knowing nothing of Christianity; and the author makes them the mouthpieces of criticisms upon Christian prayers, Te Deums, and hymn-singing in general. They believe in future recompenses, but not in providential government of this life; and at various points they improve upon the current ethic of Christendom.[4]

There is a trace of the tone of Frederick alike in the eulogy of tolerance and in the intimation that anyone who disputes about the character of the deity and the properties of spirits or souls is "condemned to phlebotomy" and to be detained in the general hospital (*nosocomium*).[5] It was probably by way of precaution that in the closing paragraph of the chapter the Potuans are alleged to maintain that, though their creed "seemed mere natural religion, it was all revealed in a book which was sent from the sky some centuries ago"; but the precaution is slight, as they are declared to have practically no dogmas at all. It is thus easy to read between the lines of the declaration of Potuan orthodoxy: "Formerly our ancestors contented themselves to live in natural religion alone; but experience has shown that the mere light of nature does not suffice, and that its precepts are effaced in time by the sloth and negligence of some and the philosophic subtleties of others, so that nothing can arrest freethinking (*libertatem cogitandi*) or keep it within just bounds. Thence came depravation; and therefore it was that God had chosen to give them a written law."[6] Such a confutation of "the error of those who pretend that a revelation is unnecessary" must have given more entertainment to those in

[1] *Nicolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum novam telluris theoriam ac historiam quinte monarchiæ.....exhibens*, etc. Dr. Gosse, in art. HOLBERG, *Encyc. Brit.*, makes the mistake of calling the book a poem. It is in Latin prose, with verse passages.

[2] It was published thrice in Danish, ten times in German, thrice in Swedish, thrice in Dutch, thrice in English, twice in French, twice in Russian, and once in Hungarian.

[3] Cap. vi, *De religione gentis Potuanæ*.

[4] Cp. pp. 75–78, ed. 1754.

[5] Cap. vi, p. 69; cp. cap. viii, *De Academia*, p. 101.

[6] *Id.* p. 77.

question than satisfaction to the defenders of the faith. But a general tone of levity and satire, maintained at the expense of various European nations, England included,[1] together with his popularity as a dramatist, saved Holberg from the imputation of heresy. His satire reached and was realized by the cultured few alone: the multitude was quite unaffected; and during the reign of Christian VI all intellectual efforts beyond the reign of science were subjected to rigorous control.[2] As a culture force, Protestantism had failed in the north lands as completely as Catholicism in the south.

3. In Sweden, meantime, there had occurred some reflex of the intellectual renascence. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century there are increasing traces of rationalism at the court of the famous Christina, who already in her youth is found much interested in the objections of "Jews, heathens, and philosophers against Christian doctrine";[3] and her invitation of Descartes to her court (1649) implies that Sweden had been not a little affected by the revulsion of popular thought which followed on the Thirty Years' War in Germany. Christina herself, however, was a remarkable personality, unfeminine, strong-willed, with a vigorous but immature intelligence; and she did much of her early skeptical thinking for herself. In the course of a few years, the new spirit had gone so far as to make church-going matter for open scoffing at the Swedish court;[4] and the Queen's adoption of Romanism, for which she prepared by abdicating the crown, appears to have been by way of revulsion from a state of mind approaching atheism, to which she had been led by her freethinking French physician, Bourdelot, after Descartes's death.[5] It has been confidently asserted that she really cared for neither creed, and embraced Catholicism only by way of conformity for social purposes, retaining her freethinking views.[6] It is certain that she was always unhappy in her Swedish surroundings. But her course may more reasonably be explained as that of a mind which could not rest in deism or face atheism, and sought in Catholicism the sense of anchorage which is craved by temperaments ill-framed for the discipline of reason. The author of the *Histoire des intrigues galantes de la reine Christine de Suède* (1697), who seems to have been one of her suite, insists that while she "loved bigots no more than atheists,"[7] and although her religion had been shaken in

[1] He had visited England in his youth.
[2] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 322. On p. 159 a somewhat contrary statement is made, which obscures the facts. Cp. Schlosser, iv, 13, as to Christian's martinet methods.
[3] Geijer, i, 324.
[4] *Id.* p. 343; Otté, p. 292.
[5] Geijer, i, 342. Cp. Ranke, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. tr. ed. 1908, ii, 399; iii, 345–46.
[6] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 88–89, and refs.
[7] Cp. Ranke, as cited, ii, 407.

her youth by Bourdelot and other freethinkers, she was regular in all Catholic observances; and that once, looking at the portrait of her father, she said he had failed to provide for the safety of his soul, and thanked God for having guided her aright.[1]

Her annotations of Descartes are of little importance; but it is noteworthy that she accorded to his orthodox adherents a declaration that he had "greatly contributed" to her "glorious conversion" to the Catholic faith.[2] Whatever favour she may have shown to liberty of thought in her youth, no important literary results could follow in the then state of Swedish culture, when the studies at even the new colleges were mainly confined to Latin and theology.[3] The German Pufendorf, indeed, by his treatises *On the Law of Nature and Nations* and *On the Duty of Man and Citizen* (published at Lund, where he was professor, in 1672–73), did much to establish the utilitarian and naturalistic tendency in ethics which was at work at the same time in England; but his latent deism had no great influence even in Germany, his Scripture-citing orthodoxy countervailing it, although he argued for a separation of Church and State.[4]

4. That there was, however, in eighteenth-century Sweden a considerable amount of unpublished rationalism may be gathered from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, himself something of a freethinker in his very supernaturalism. His frequent subacid allusions to those who "regarded Nature instead of the divine," and "thought from science,"[5] tell not merely of much passive opposition to his own prophetic claims (which he avenged by much serene malediction and the allotment of bad quarters in the next world), but of reasoned rejection of all Scriptural claims. Thus in his *Sapientia Angelica de Divina Providentia*[6] (1764) he sets himself[7] to deal with a number of the ways in which "the merely natural man confirms himself in favour of Nature against God" and "comes to the conclusion that religion in itself is nothing, but yet that it is necessary because it serves as a restraint." Among the sources of unbelief specified are ethical revolt alike against the Biblical narratives and against the lack of moral government in the world; the recognition of the success of other religions than the Christian, and of the many

[1] Work cited, pp. 288–89. This writer gives the only intelligible account of the private execution of Christina's secretary, Monaldeschi, by her orders. Monaldeschi had either passed over to other hands some of her letters to him, or kept them so carelessly as to let them be stolen. *Id.* p. 11. For her cruel act she shows no trace of religious or any other remorse. She was, in fact, a neurotic egoist. Cp. Ranke, ii, 394, 405.

[2] Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartés.*, i, 449–50.

[3] Geijer, i, 342.

[4] See his treatise, *Of the Nature and Qualification of Religion in Reference to Civil Society*, Eng. tr. by Crull, 1698.

[5] *Heaven and Hell*, 1758, §§ 353, 354, 464.

[6] Translated as *The Divine Providence*.

[7] §§ 235–264.

heresies within that; and dissatisfaction with the Christian dogmas. As Swedenborg sojourned much in other countries, he may be describing men other than his countrymen; but it is very unlikely that the larger part of his intercourse with his fellows counted for nothing in this account of contemporary rationalism.

With his odd mixture of scripturalism and innovating dogmatism, Swedenborg disposes of difficulties about Genesis by reducing Adam and Eve to an allegory of the "Most Ancient Church," tranquilly dismissing the orthodox belief by asking, "For who can suppose that the creation of the world could have been as there described?"[1] His own scientific training, which had enabled him to make his notable anticipation of the nebular theory,[2] made it also easy for him to reduce to allegory the text of what he nevertheless insisted on treating as a divine revelation; and his moral sense, active where he felt no perverting resentment of contradiction by reasoners,[3] made him reject the orthodox doctrine of salvation by faith, even as he did the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. On these points he seems to have had a lead from his father, Bishop Jasper Svedberg,[4] as he had in his overwhelming physiological bias to subjective vision-making. But a message which finally amounted to the oracular propounding of a new and bewildering supernaturalism, to be taken on authority like the old, could make for freethought only by rousing rational reaction. It was Swedenborg's destiny to establish, in virtue of his great power of orderly dogmatism, a new supernaturalist and scripturalist sect, while his scientific conceptions were left for other men to develop. In his own country, in his own day, he had little success *qua* prophet, though always esteemed for his character and his high secular competence; and he finally figured rather as a heresiarch than otherwise.[5]

5. According to one of Swedenborg's biographers, the worldliness of most of the Swedish clergy in the middle of the eighteenth century so far outwent even that of the English Church that the laity were left to themselves; while "gentlemen disdained the least taint of religion, and except on formal occasions would have been ashamed to be caught church-going."[6] But this was a matter rather of fashion than of freethought; and there is little trace of

[1] Work cited, § 241.
[2] *De cultu et amore Dei*, 1745, tr. as *The Worship and Love of God*, ed. 1885, p. 18.
[3] "When he was contradicted he kept silence." *Documents concerning Swedenborg*, ed. by Dr. Tafel, 1875–1877, ii, 564.
[4] Cp. Swedenborg's letter to Beyer, in *Documents*, as cited, ii, 279.
[5] For many years he seldom went to church, being unable to listen peacefully to the trinitarian doctrine he heard there. *Documents*, as cited, ii, 560.
[6] W. White, *Swedenborg: his Life and Writings*, ed. 1867, i, 188.

critical life in the period. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, doubtless, the aristocracies and the cultured class in the Scandinavian States were influenced like the rest of Europe by the spirit of French freethought,[1] which everywhere followed the vogue of the French language and literature. Thus we find Gustavus III of Sweden, an ardent admirer of Voltaire, defending him in company, and proposing in 1770, before the death of his father prevented it, to make a pilgrimage to Ferney.[2] It is without regard to this testimony that Gustavus, who was assassinated, is said to have died "with the fortitude and resignation of a Christian."[3] He was indeed flighty and changeable,[4] and after growing up a Voltairean was turned for a year or two into a credulous mystic, the dupe of pseudo-Swedenborgian charlatans;[5] but there is small sign of religious earnestness in his fashion of making his dying confession.[6] Claiming at an earlier date to believe more than Joseph II, who in his opinion "believed in nothing at all," he makes light of their joint parade of piety at Rome,[7] and seems to have been at bottom a good deal of an indifferentist. During his reign his influence on literature fostered a measure of the spirit of freethought in *belles lettres;* and in the poets J. H. Kjellgren and J. M. Bellman (both d. 1795) there is to be seen the effect of the German *Aufklärung* and the spirit of Voltaire.[8] Their contemporary, Tomas Thoren, who called himself Torild (d. 1812), though more of an innovator in poetic style than in thought, wrote among other things a pamphlet on *The Freedom of the General Intelligence.* But Torild's nickname, "the mad *magister*," tells of his extravagance; and none of the Swedish belletrists of that age amounted to a European influence. Finally, in the calamitous period which followed on the assassination of Gustavus III, all Swedish culture sank heavily. The desperate energies of Charles XII had left his country half-ruined in 1718; and even while Linnæus and his pupils were building up the modern science of botany in the latter half of the century the economic exhaustion of the people was a check on general culture. The University of Upsala, which at one time had over 2,000 students, counted only some 500 at the close of the eighteenth century.[9]

[1] Schweitzer, *Geschichte der skandinavischen Literatur*, ii, 175, 225; C.-F. Allen, *Histoire de Danemark*, Fr. tr. ii, 1900-1901; R. N. Bain, *Gustavus Vasa and his Contemporaries*, 1894, i, 226.

[2] *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. 1829-1831, vii, 229.

[3] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 206.

[4] Writing to his mother on his first visit to Paris, he takes her, ostensibly as a *libre esprit*, into his confidence, disparaging Marmontel and Grimm as vain. Joseph II in turn pronounced Gustavus "a conceited fop, an impudent braggart" (Bain, as cited, i, 266). Both monarchs set up an impression of want of balance, and the mother of Gustavus, who forced him to break with her, does the same.

[5] Bain, as cited, i, 224-31.

[6] *Id.* ii, 208-12.

[7] *Id.* i, 267-68.

[8] Cp. Bain, ii, 272, 287, 293-96.

[9] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 335.

6. In Denmark, on the other hand, the stagnation of nearly a hundred years had been ended at the accession of Frederick V in 1746.[1] National literature, revivified by Holberg, was further advanced by the establishment of a society of polite learning in 1763; under Frederick's auspices Danish naturalists and scholars were sent abroad for study; and in particular a literary expedition was sent to Arabia. The European movement of science, in short, had gripped the little kingdom, and the usual intellectual results began to follow, though, as in Catholic Spain, the forces of reaction soon rallied against a movement which had been imposed from above rather than evolved from within.

The most celebrated northern unbeliever of the French period was Count Struensee, who for some years (1770–72) virtually ruled Denmark as the favourite of the young queen, the king being half-witted and worthless. Struensee was an energetic and capable though injudicious reformer: he abolished torture; emancipated the enslaved peasantry; secured toleration for all sects; encouraged the arts and industry; established freedom of the press; and reformed the finances, the police, the law courts, and sanitation.[2] His very reforms, being made with headlong rapidity, made his position untenable, and his enemies soon effected his downfall and death. The young queen, who was not alleged to have been a freethinker, was savagely seized by the hostile faction and put on her trial on a charge of adultery, which being wholly unproved, the aristocratic faction proposed to try her on a charge of drugging her husband. Only by the efforts of the British court was she saved from imprisonment for life in a fortress, and sent to Hanover, where, three years later, she died. She too was a reformer, and it was on that score that she was hated by the nobles.[3] Both she and Struensee, in short, were the victims of a violent political reaction. There is an elaborate account of Struensee's conversion to Christianity in prison by the German Dr. Munter,[4] which makes him out by his own confession an excessive voluptuary. It is an extremely suspicious document, exhibiting strong political bias, and giving Struensee no credit for reforms; the apparent assumption being

[1] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 322. Cp. pp. 161–63. Schlosser, iv, 15.
[2] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 190; Otté, p. 322; C.-F. Allen, as cited, ii, 194–201; Schlosser, iv, 319 *sq.*
[3] Cp. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, 1796, Let. xviii. One of the grounds on which the queen was charged with unchastity was, that she had established a hospital for foundlings.
[4] Trans. from the German, 1774; 2nd ed. 1825. See it also in the work, *Converts from Infidelity*, by Andrew Crichton; vols. vi and vii of Constable's Miscellany, 1827. This singular compilation includes lives of Boyle, Bunyan, Haller, and others, who were never "infidels."

that the conversion of a reprobate was of more evidential value than that of a reputable and reflective type.

In spite of the reaction, rationalism persisted among the cultured class. Mary Wollstonecraft, visiting Denmark in 1795, noted that there and in Norway the press was free, and that new French publications were translated and freely discussed. The press had in fact been freed by Struensee, and was left free by his enemies because of the facilities it had given them to attack him.[1] "On the subject of religion," she added, "they are likewise becoming tolerant, at least, and perhaps have advanced a step further in freethinking. One writer has ventured to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, and to question the necessity or utility of the Christian system, without being considered universally as a monster, which would have been the case a few years ago."[2] She likewise noted that there was in Norway very little of the fanaticism she had seen gaining ground, on Wesleyan lines, in England.[3] But though the Danes had "translated many German works on education," they had "not adopted any of their plans"; there were few schools, and those not good. Norway, again, had been kept without a university under Danish rule; and not until one was established at Christiania in 1811 could Norwegian faculty play its part in the intellectual life of Europe. The reaction, accordingly, soon afterwards began to gain head. Already in 1790 "precautionary measures" had been attempted against the press;[4] and, these being found inefficient, an edict was issued in 1799 enforcing penalties against all anonymous writers—a plan which of course struck at the publishers. But the great geographer, Malte-Brun, was exiled, as were Heiberg, the dramatic poet, and others; and again there was "a temporary stagnation in literature," which, however, soon passed away in the nineteenth century. Meantime Sweden and Denmark had alike contributed vitally to the progress of European science; though neither had shared in the work of freethought as against dogma.

§ 3. *The Slavonic States*

1. In Poland, where, as we saw, Unitarian heresy had spread considerably in the sixteenth century, positive atheism is heard of in 1688–89, when Count LISZINSKI (or Lyszczynski), among whose papers, it was said, had been found the written statement that there is no God, or that man had made God out of nothing, was denounced

[1] Crichton-Wheaton, ii. 190-91.
[2] Work cited, Letter vii.
[3] *Id.* Letter viii. near end.
[4] Crichton-Wheaton, ii. 324.

by the bishops of Posen and Kioff, tried, and found guilty of denying not only the existence of God but the doctrine of the Trinity and the Virgin Birth. After being tortured, beheaded, and burned, his ashes were scattered from a cannon.[1] The first step was to tear out his tongue, "with which he had been cruel towards God"; the next to burn his hands at a slow fire. It is all told by Zulaski, the leading Inquisitionist.[2] But even had a less murderous treatment been meted out to such heresy, anarchic Poland, ridden by Jesuits, was in no state to develop a rationalistic literature. The old king, John Sobieski, made no attempt to stop the execution, though he is credited with a philosophical habit of mind, and with reprimanding the clergy for not admitting modern philosophy in the universities and schools.[3]

2. In Russia the possibilities of modern freethought emerge only in the seventeenth century, when Muscovy was struggling out of Byzantine barbarism. The late-recovered treasure of ancient folk-poesy, partly preserved by chance among the northern peasantry, tells of the complete rupture wrought in the racial life by the imposition of Byzantine Christianity from the south. As early as the fourteenth century the Strigolniks, who abounded at Novgorod, had held strongly by anti-ecclesiastical doctrines of the Paulician and Lollard type;[4] but orthodox fanaticism ruled life in general down to the age of Peter the Great. In the sixteenth century we find the usual symptom of criticism of the lives of the monks;[5] but the culture was almost wholly ecclesiastical; and in the seventeenth century the effort of the turbulent Patriarch Nikon (1605–1681), to correct the corrupt sacred texts and the traditional heterodox practices, was furiously resisted, to the point of a great schism.[6] He himself had violently denounced other innovations, destroying pictures and an organ in the manner of Savonarola; but his own elementary reforms were found intolerable by the orthodox,[7] though they were favoured by Sophia, the able and ambitious sister of

[1] He claimed that the remarks penned by him in an anti-atheistic work, challenging its argument, represented not unbelief but the demand for a better proof, which he undertook to produce. See Krasinski, *Sketch of the Religious History of the Slavonic Nations*, 1851, pp. 224–25. It is remarkable that the Pope, Innocent XI, bitterly censured the execution.

[2] Fletcher, *History of Poland*, 1831, p. 141.

[3] Fletcher, pp. 145–46.

[4] Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1853, pp. 386–87.

[5] L. Sichler, *Hist. de la litt. Russe*, 1887, pp. 88–89, 139. Cp. Rambaud, *Hist. de Russie*, 2e édit. pp. 249, 259, etc. (Eng. tr. i, 309, 321, 328).

[6] R. N. Bain, *The First Romanovs*, 1905, pp. 136–51; Rambaud, p. 333 (tr. i, 414–17). The struggle (1654) elicited old forms of heresy, going back to Manicheism and Gnosticism. In this furious schism Nikon destroyed irregular *ikons* or sacred images; and savage persecutions resulted from his insistence that the faithful should use three fingers instead of two in crossing themselves. Many resisted to the death.

[7] Prince Serge Wolkonsky, *Russian History and Literature*, 1897, pp. 98–101.

Peter.[1] The priest Kriezanitch (1617–1678), who wrote a work on "The Russian Empire in the second half of the Seventeenth Century," denounced researches in physical science as "devilish heresies";[2] and it is on record that scholars were obliged to study in secret and by night for fear of the hostility of the common people.[3] Half-a-century later the orthodox majority seems to have remained convinced of the atheistic tendency of all science;[4] and the friends of the new light doubtless included deists from the first. Not till the reforms of Peter had begun to bear fruit, however, could free-thought raise its head. The great Czar, who promoted printing and literature as he did every other new activity of a practical kind, took the singular step of actually withdrawing writing materials from the monks, whose influence he held to be wholly reactionary.[5] In 1703 appeared the first Russian journal; and in 1724 Peter founded the first Academy of Sciences, enjoining upon it the study of languages and the production of translations. Now began the era of foreign culture and translations from the French.[6] Prince Kantemir, the satirist, who was with the Russian embassy in London in 1733, pronounced England, then at the height of the deistic tide, "the most civilized and enlightened of European nations."[7] The fact that he translated Fontenelle on *The Plurality of Worlds* tells further of his liberalism.[8] Gradually there arose a new secular fiction, under Western influences; and other forms of culture slowly advanced likewise, notably under Elisabeth Petrovna. At length, in the reign of Catherine II, called the Great, French ideas, already heralded by *belles lettres*, found comparatively free headway. She herself was a deist, and a satirist of bigots in her comedies;[9] she accomplished what Peter had planned, the secularization of Church property;[10] and she was long the admiring correspondent of Voltaire, to whom and to D'Alembert and Diderot she offered warm invitations to reside at her court. Diderot alone accepted, and him she specially befriended, buying his library when he was fain to sell it, and constituting him its salaried keeper. In no country, not excepting England, was there more of practical freedom than in Russia under

[1] Morfill, *History of Russia*, 1902, p. 14; Bain, p. 201. [2] Cp. Wolkonsky, p. 101.
[3] C. E. Turner, *Studies in Russian Literature*, 1882, p. 2.
[4] *Id.* pp. 16, 17, 25, 26, 40; Sichler, p. 148.
[5] Sichler, p. 139. Peter's dislike of monks won him the repute of a freethinker. Morfill, p. 97. He was actually attacked as "Antichrist" in a printed pamphlet on the score of his innovations. Personally, he detested religious persecution, and was willing to tolerate anybody but Jews; but he had to let persecution take place; and even to consent to removing statues of pagan deities from his palace. Bain, pp. 304-309.
[6] Cp. Bain, p. 392.
[7] Turner, p. 22. Kantemir was the friend of Bolingbroke and Montesquieu in Paris.
[8] Sichler, p. 147. [9] Turner, pp. 40–41.
[10] See the passages cited by Rambaud, p. 482, from her letter to Voltaire.

her rule;[1] and if after the outbreak of the Revolution she turned political persecutor, she was still not below the English level. Her half-crazy son Paul II, whom she had given cause to hate her, undid her work wherever he could. But neither her reaction nor his rule could eradicate the movement of thought begun in the educated classes; though in Russia, as in the Scandinavian States, it was not till the nineteenth century that original serious literature flourished.

§ 4. *Italy*

1. Returning to Italy, no longer the leader of European thought, but still full of veiled freethinking, we find in the seventeenth century the proof that no amount of such predisposition can countervail thoroughly bad political conditions. Ground down by the matchless misrule of Spain, from which the conspiracy of the monk Campanella vainly sought to free her, and by the kindred tyranny of the papacy, Italy could produce in its educated class, save for the men of science and the students of economics, only triflers, whose unbelief was of a piece with their cynicism. While Naples and the south decayed, mental energy had for a time flourished in Tuscany, where, under the grand dukes from Ferdinando I onwards, industry and commerce had revived; and even after a time of retrogression Ferdinando II encouraged science, now made newly glorious by the names of Galileo and Torricelli. But again there was a relapse; and at the end of the century, under a bigoted duke, Florence was priest-ridden and, at least in outward seeming, gloomily superstitious; while, save for the better conditions secured at Naples under the viceroyalty of the Marquis of Carpi,[2] the rest of Italy was cynically corrupt and intellectually superficial.[3] Even in Naples, of course, enlightenment was restricted to the few. Burnet observes that "there are societies of men at Naples of freer thoughts than can be found in any other place of Italy"; and he admits a general tendency of intelligent Italians to recoil from Christianity by reason of Catholic corruption. But at the same time he insists that, though the laity speak with scorn of the clergy, "yet they are masters of the spirits of the people."[4] Yet it only needed the breathing time and the improved conditions under the Bourbon rule in the eighteenth century to set up a wonderful intellectual revival.

2. First came the great work of VICO, the *Principles of a New*

[1] Seume, *Ueber das Leben.....der Kaiserin Catharina II: Werke*, ed. 1839, v, 239–40; Rambaud, pp. 482–84.
[2] See Bishop Burnet's *Letters*, iv, ed. Rotterdam, 1686, pp. 187–91.
[3] Zeller, *Histoire d'Italie*, pp. 426–32, 450; Procter, *Hist. of Italy*, 2nd ed. pp. 240, 268.
[4] Burnet, as cited, pp. 195–97.

Science (1725), whereof the originality and the depth—qualities in which, despite its incoherences, it on the whole excels Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*—place him among the great freethinkers in philosophy. It was significant of much that Vico's book, while constantly using the vocabulary of faith, grappled with the science of human development in an essentially secular and scientific spirit. This is the note of the whole eighteenth century in Italy.[1] Vico posits Deity and Providence, but proceeds nevertheless to study the laws of civilization inductively from its phenomena. He permanently obscured his case, indeed, by insisting on putting it theologically, and condemning Grotius and others for separating the idea of law from that of religion. Only in a pantheistic sense has Vico's formula any validity; and he never avows a pantheistic view, refusing even to go with Grotius in allowing that Hebrew law was akin to that of other nations. But a rationalistic view, had he put it, would have been barred. The wonder is, in the circumstances, not that he makes so much parade of religion, but that he could venture to undermine so vitally its pretensions, especially after he had found it prudent to renounce the project of annotating the great work of Grotius, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, on the score that (as he puts it in his Autobiography) a good Catholic must not endorse a heretic.

Signor Benedetto Croce, in his valuable work on Vico (*The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*, Eng. tr. 1913, pp. 89–94), admits that Vico is fundamentally at one with the Naturalists: "Like them, in constructing his science of human society, he excludes with Grotius all idea of God, and with Pufendorf considers man as without help or attention from God, excluding him, that is, from revealed religion and its God." Of Vico's opposition to Grotius, Signor Croce offers two unsatisfactory explanations. First: "Vico's opposition, which he expresses with his accustomed confusion and obscurity, turns.....upon the actual conception of religion.....Religion.....means for Vico not necessarily revelation, but conception of reality." This reduces the defence to a quibble; but finally Signor Croce asks himself "Why—if Vico agreed with the natural-right school in ignoring revelation, and if he instead of it deepened their superficial immanental doctrine—why he put himself forward as their implacable enemy and persisted in boasting loudly before prelates and pontiffs of having formulated a system of natural rights different from that of the three Protestant authors and adapted to the Roman Church." The natural suggestion of "politic caution" Signor Croce rejects,

[1] Prof. Flint, who insists on the deep piety of Vico, notes that he "appears to have had strangely little interest in Christian systematic theology" (*Vico*, 1884, p. 70).

declaring that "the spotless character of Vico entirely precludes it; and we can only suppose that, *lacking as his ideas always were in clarity*, on this occasion he *indulged his tendency to confusion and nourished his illusions*, to the extent of conferring upon himself the flattering style and title of *Defensor Ecclesiæ* at the very moment when he was destroying the religion of the Church by means of humanity."

It is very doubtful whether this equivocal vindication is more serviceable to Vico's fame than the plain avowal that a writer placed as he was, in the Catholic world of 1720, could not be expected to be straightforward upon such an issue. Vico comported himself towards the Catholic Church very much as Descartes did. His own declaration as to his motives is surely valid as against a formula which combines "spotless character" with a cherished "tendency to confusion." The familiar "tendency to hedge" is a simpler conception.

3. It is noteworthy, indeed, that the "New Science," as Vico boasted, arose in the Catholic and not in the Protestant world. We might say that, genius apart, the reason was that the energy which elsewhere ran to criticism of religion as such had in Catholic Italy to take other channels. By attacking a Protestant position which was really less deeply heterodox than his own, Vico secured Catholic currency for a philosopheme which on its own merits Catholic theologians would have scouted as atheism. As it was, Vico's sociology aroused on the one hand new rationalistic speculation as to the origin of civilization, and on the other orthodox protest on the score of its fundamentally anti-Biblical character. It was thus attacked in 1749 by Damiano Romano, and later by Finetti, a professor at Padua, àpropos of the propaganda raised by Vico's followers as to the animal origin of the human race. This began with Vico's disciple, Emmanuele Duni, a professor at Rome, who published a series of sociological essays in 1763. Thenceforth for many years there raged, "under the eyes of Pope and cardinals," an Italian debate between the *Ferini* and *Antiferini*, the affirmers and deniers of the animal origin of man, the latter of course taking up their ground on the Bible, from which Finetti drew twenty-three objections to Vico.[1] Duni found it prudent to declare that he had "no intention of discussing the origin of the world, still less that of the Hebrew nation, but solely that of the Gentile nations"; but even when thus limited the debate set up far-reaching disturbance. At this stage Italian sociology doubtless owed something to Montesquieu and Rousseau; but the fact remains that the *Scienza Nuova* was a

[1] Siciliani, *Sul Rinnovamento della filosofia positiva in Italia*, 1871, pp. 37–41.

book "truly Italian; Italian *par excellence*."[1] It was Vico, too, who led the way in the critical handling of early Roman history, taken up later by Beaufort, and still later by Niebuhr; and it was he who began the scientific analysis of Homer, followed up later by F. A. Wolf.[2] By a fortunate coincidence, the papal chair was held at the middle of the century (1740–1758) by the most learned, tolerant, and judicious of modern popes, Benedict XIV,[3] whose influence was used for political peace in Europe and for toleration in Italy; and whom we shall find, like Clement XIV, on friendly terms with a freethinker. In the same age Muratori and Giannone amassed their unequalled historical learning; and a whole series of Italian writers broke new ground on the field of social science, Italy having led the way in this as formerly in philosophy and physics.[4] The Hanoverian Dr. G. W. Alberti, of Italian descent, writes in 1752 that "Italy is full of atheists";[5] and Grimm, writing in 1765, records that according to capable observers the effect of the French freethinking literature in the past thirty years had been immense, especially in Tuscany.[6]

4. Between 1737 and 1798 may be counted twenty-eight Italian writers on political economy; and among them was one, CESARE BECCARIA, who on another theme produced perhaps the most practically influential single book of the eighteenth century,[7] the treatise on *Crimes and Punishments* (1764), which affected penal methods for the better throughout the whole of Europe. Even were he not known to be a deist, his strictly secular and rationalist method would have brought upon him priestly suspicion; and he had in fact to defend himself against pertinacious and unscrupulous attacks,[8] though he had sought in his book to guard himself by occasionally "veiling the truth in clouds."[9] As we have seen, Beccaria owed his intellectual awakening first to Montesquieu and above all to Helvétius—another testimony to the reformative virtue of all freethought.

[1] Siciliani, p. 36.

[2] Introduction (by Mignet?) to the Princess Belgiojoso's tr. *La Science Nouvelle*, 1844, p. cxiii. Cp. Flint, *Vico*, 231.

[3] *Ganganelli, Papst Clemens XIV, seine Briefe und seine Zeit*, vom Verfasser des Römischen Briefe (Von Reumont), 1847, pp. 35–36, and p. 155, *note*.

[4] See the *Storia della economia pubblica in Italia* of G. Pecchio, 1829, p. 61 *sq.*, as to the claim of Antonio Serra (*Breve trattato*, etc. 1613) to be the pioneer of modern political economy. Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iii, 164–66. Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 122, *note*) has claimed the title for William Stafford, whose *Compendious or briefe Examination of certain ordinary Complaints* (otherwise called *A Briefe Conceipt of English Policy*) appeared in 1581. But cp. Ingram (*Hist. of Pol. Econ.* 1888, pp. 43–45) as to the prior claims of Bodin.

[5] *Briefe*, as before cited, p. 408.

[6] *Correspondance littéraire*, ed. 1829–31, vii, 331. Cp. Von Reumont, *Ganganelli*, p. 33.

[7] The *Dei delitti e delle pene* was translated into 22 languages. Pecchio, p. 144.

[8] See in the 6th ed. of the *Dei delitti* (Harlem, 1766) the appended *Risposta ad uno scritto*, etc., *Parte prima, Accuse d'empietà*.

[9] See his letter to the Abbé Morellet, cited by Mr. Farrer in ch. i of his ed. of *Crimes and Punishments*, 1880, p. 5. It describes the Milanese as deeply sunk in prejudices.

Of the aforesaid eight-and-twenty writers on economics, probably the majority were freethinkers. Among them, at all events, were Count ALGAROTTI (1712–1764), the distinguished æsthetician, one of the group round Frederick at Berlin and author of *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* (1737); FILANGIERI, whose work on legislation (put on the *Index* by the papacy) won the high praise of Franklin; the Neapolitan *abbate* FERDINANDO GALIANI, one of the brightest and soundest wits in the circle of the French *philosophes*; the other Neapolitan *abbate* ANTONIO GENOVESI (1712–1769), the "redeemer of the Italian mind,"[1] and the chief establisher of economic science for modern Italy.[2] To these names may be added those of ALFIERI, one of the strongest anti-clericalists of his age; BETTINELLI, the correspondent of Voltaire and author of *The Resurrection of Italy* (1775); Count DANDOLO, author of a French work on *The New Men* (1799); and the learned GIANNONE, author of the great anti-papal *History of the Kingdom of Naples* (1723), who, after more than one narrow escape, was thrown in prison by the king of Sardinia, and died there (1748) after twelve years' confinement.

To the merits of Algarotti and Genovesi there are high contemporary testimonies. Algarotti was on friendly terms with Cardinal Ganganelli, who in 1769 became Pope Clement XIV. In 1754 the latter writes[3] him: "My dear Count, Contrive matters so, in spite of your philosophy, that I may see you in heaven; for I should be very sorry to lose sight of you for an eternity. You are one of those rare men, both for heart and understanding, whom we could wish to love even beyond the grave, when we have once had the advantage of knowing them. No one has more reasons to be convinced of the spirituality and immortality of the soul than you have. The years glide away for the philosophers as well as for the ignorant; and what is to be the term of them cannot but employ a man who thinks. Own that I can manage sermons so as not to frighten away a *bel esprit*; and that if every one delivered as short and as friendly sermons as I do, you would sometimes go to hear a preacher. But barely hearing will not do.....the amiable Algarotti must become as good a Christian as he is a philosopher: then should I doubly be his friend and servant."[4]

In an earlier letter, Ganganelli writes: "The Pope [Benedict XIV] is ever great and entertaining for his *bons mots*. He was saying the

[1] Pecchio, p. 123.
[2] Cp. McCulloch, *Literature of Political Economy*, 1845, p. 64; Blanqui, *Hist. de l'economie politique*, 2e édit. ii. 432.
[3] As to the genuineness of the Ganganelli letters, originally much disputed, see Von Reumont's *Ganganelli, Papst Clemens XIV; seine Briefe und seine Zeit*, 1847, pp. 40–44.
[4] Lett. lvi, Eng. tr. 1777, i, 141–42. No. lxxii in Von Reumont's *Ganganelli*, 1847.

other day that he had always loved you, and that it would give him very great pleasure to see you again. He speaks with admiration of the king of Prussia.....whose history will make one of the finest monuments of the eighteenth century. See here and acknowledge my generosity! For that prince makes the greatest jest possible of the Court of Rome, and of us monks and friars. Cardinal Querini will not be satisfied unless he have you with him for some time at Brescia. He one day told me that he would invite you to come and dedicate his library.....There is no harm in preaching to a philosopher who seldom goes to hear a sermon, and who will not have become a great saint by residing at Potsdam. You are there three men whose talents might be of great use to religion if you would change their direction—viz. Yourself, Mons. de Voltaire, and M. de Maupertuis. But that is not the *ton* of the age, and you are resolved to follow the fashion."[1] Ganganelli in his correspondence reveals himself as an admirer of Newton[2] and somewhat averse to religious zeal.[3] Of the papal government he admitted that it was favourable "neither to commerce, to agriculture, nor to population, which precisely constitute the essence of public felicity," while suavely reminding the Englishman of the "inconveniences" of his own government.[4] To the learned Muratori, who suffered at the hands of the bigots, he and Pope Benedict XIV gave their sympathy.[5]

But Ganganelli's own thinking on the issues between reason and religion was entirely commonplace. "Whatever," he wrote, "departs from the account given of the Creation in the book of Genesis has nothing to support it but paradoxes, or, at most, mere hypotheses. Moses alone, as being an inspired author, could perfectly acquaint us with the formation of the world, and the development of its parts. .....Whoever does not see the truth in what Moses relates was never born to know it."[6] It was only in his relation to the bigots of his own Church that his thinking was rationalistic. "The Pope," he writes to a French marquis, "relies on Providence; but God does not perform miracles every time he is asked to do it. Besides, is he to perform one that Rome may enjoy a right of seignory over the Duchy of Parma?"[7] At his death an Italian wrote of him that "the distinction he was able to draw between dogmas or discipline and ultramontane opinions gave him the courage to take many oppor-

[1] Lett. xiii, 1749. Eng. tr. i, 44–46; No. cxiv in Von Reumont's translation.
[2] Lett. vi and xiv; Nos. ix and xxii in Von Reumont.
[3] Lett. xxx, p. 83; No. xxxiv in Von Reumont.
[4] Lett. xci; No. xcii in Von Reumont. [5] Lett. cxlvi; No. xiii in Von Reumont.
[6] Lett. lxxxii, 1753 or 1754; No. lxi in Von Reumont.
[7] Lett. cxxiv, 1769. This letter is not in Von Reumont's collection, and appears to be regarded by him as spurious—or unduly indiscreet.

tunities of promoting the peace of the State." His tolerance is sufficiently exhibited in one of his letters to Algarotti: "I hope that you will preach to me some of these days, so that each may have his turn."[1] Freethought had achieved something when a Roman Cardinal, a predestinate Pope, could so write to an avowed freethinker. Concerning Galiani we have the warm panegyric of Grimm. "If I have any vanity with which to reproach myself," he writes, "it is that which I derive in spite of myself from the fact of the conformity of my ideas with those of the two rarest men whom I have the happiness to know, Galiani and Denis Diderot."[2] Grimm held Galiani to be of all men the best qualified to write a true ecclesiastical history. But the history that would have satisfied him and Grimm was not to be published in that age.

Italy, however, had done her full share, considering her heritage of burdens and hindrances, in the intellectual work of the century; and in the names of Galvani and Volta stands the record of one more of her great contributions to human enlightenment. Under Duke Leopold II of Tuscany the papacy was so far defied that books put on the *Index* were produced for him under the imprint of London;[3] and the papacy itself at length gave way to the spirit of reform, Clement XIV consenting among other things to abolish the Order of Jesuits (1773), after his predecessor had died of grief over his proved impotence to resist the secular policy of the States around him.[4] In Tuscany, indeed, the reaction against the French Revolution was instant and severe. Leopold succeeded his brother Joseph as emperor of Austria in 1790, but died in 1792; and in his realm, as was the case in Denmark and in Spain in the same century, the reforms imposed from above by a liberal sovereign were found to have left much traditionalism untouched. After 1792, Ferdinando III suspended some of his father's most liberal edicts, amid the applause of the reactionaries; and in 1799, after the first short stay of the revolutionary French army, out of its one million inhabitants no fewer than 22,000 were prosecuted for "French opinions."[5] Certainly some of the "French opinions" were wild enough; for instance, the practice among ladies of dressing *alla ghigliottina*, with a red ribbon round the neck, a usage borrowed about 1795 from France.[6] As Quinet sums up, the revolution was too strong a medicine for the Italy of that age. The young abbate

[1] Lett. lxxxiii, 1754; No. lxxiii in Von Reumont.
[2] *Corr. Litt.* as cited, vii, 104.
[3] Zeller, p. 473.
[4] Zeller, pp. 478–79.
[5] Julien Luchaire, *Essai sur l'evolution intellectuelle de l'Italie de 1815 à 1830*, 1906, p. 3.
[6] Parini wrote a reproving Ode on the subject. (Henri Hauvette, *Littérature Italienne*, 1906, p. 371.) He was one of those disillusioned by the course of the Revolution. (*Id.* p. 375.)

Monti, the chief poet of the time, was a freethinker, but he alternated his strokes for freedom with unworthy compliances.[1] Such was the dawn of the new Italian day that has since slowly but steadily broadened, albeit under many a cloud.

§ 5. *Spain and Portugal*

1. For the rest of Europe during the eighteenth century, we have to note only traces of receptive thought. Spain under Bourbon rule, as already noted, experienced an administrative renascence. Such men as Count ARANDA (1718–99) and Aszo y del Rio (1742–1814) wrought to cut the claws of the Inquisition and to put down the Jesuits; but not yet, after the long work of destruction accomplished by the Church in the past, could Spain produce a fresh literature of any far-reaching power. When Aranda was about to be appointed in 1766, his friends the French *Encyclopédistes* prematurely proclaimed their exultation in the reforms he was to accomplish; and he sadly protested that they had thereby limited his possibilities.[2] Nonetheless he wrought much, the power of the Inquisition in Spain being already on the wane. Dr. Joaquin Villanueva, one of the ecclesiastical statesmen who took part in its suppression by the Cortes at Cadiz in 1813, tells how, in his youth, under the reign of Charles III, it was a current saying among the students at college that while the clever ones could rise to important posts in the Church, or in the law, the blockheads would be sure to find places in the Inquisition.[3] It was of course still powerful for social terrorism and minor persecution; but its power of taking life was rapidly dwindling. Between 1746 and 1759 it had burned only ten persons; from 1759 until 1781 it burned only four; thereafter none,[4] the last case having provoked protests which testified to the moral change wrought in Europe by a generation of freethought.

In Spain too, as elsewhere, freethought had made way among the upper classes; and in 1773 we find the Duke d'Alba (formerly Huescar), ex-ambassador of Spain to France, subscribing eighty louis for a statue to Voltaire. "Condemned to cultivate my reason in secret," he wrote to D'Alembert, "I see this opportunity to give a public testimony of my gratitude to and admiration for the great man who first showed me the way."[5]

[1] Hauvette, pp. 391–93.
[2] Coxe, *Memoirs of the Bourbon Kings of Spain*, ed. 1815, iv, 408.
[3] Villanueva, *Vida Literaria*, London, 1825.
[4] Buckle, iii, 547–48 (1-vol. ed. 599–600). The last victim seems to have been a woman accused of witchcraft. Her nose was cut off before her execution. See the *Marokkanische Briefe*, 1785, p. 36; and Buckle's *note* 272.
[5] Letter of D'Alembert to Voltaire, 13 mai, 1773.

2. Still all freethinking in Spain ran immense risks, even under Charles III. The Spanish admiral Solano was denounced by his almoner to the Inquisition for having read Raynal, and had to demand pardon on his knees of the Inquisition and God.[1] Aranda himself was from first to last four times arraigned before the Inquisition,[2] escaping only by his prestige and power. So eminent a personage as P. A. J. Olavidès, known in France as the Count of Pilos (1726–1803), could not thus escape. He had been appointed by Charles III prefect of Seville, and had carried out for the king the great work of colonizing the Sierra Morena,[3] of which region he was governor. At the height of his career, in 1776, he was arrested and imprisoned, "as suspected of professing impious sentiments, particularly those of Voltaire and Rousseau, with whom he had carried on a very intimate correspondence." He had spoken unwarily to inhabitants of the new towns under his jurisdiction concerning the exterior worship of deity in Spain, the worship of images, the fast days, the cessation of work on holy days, the offerings at mass, and all the rest of the apparatus of popular Catholicism.[4] Olavidès prudently confessed his error, declaring that he had "never lost his inner faith." After two years' detention he was forced to make his penance at a lesser *auto da fé* in presence of sixty persons of distinction, many of whom were suspected of holding similar opinions, and were thus grimly warned to keep their counsel. During four hours the reading of his process went on, and then came the sentence. He was condemned to pass eight years in a convent; to be banished forever from Madrid, Seville, Cordova, and the new towns of the Sierra Morena, and to lose all his property; he was pronounced incapable henceforth of holding any public employment or title of honour; and he was forbidden to mount a horse, to wear any ornament of gold, silver, pearls, diamonds, or other precious stones, or clothing of silk or fine linen. On hearing his sentence he fainted. Afterwards, on his knees, he received absolution. Escaping some time afterwards from his convent, he reached France. After some years more, he cynically produced a work entitled *The Gospel Triumphant, or the Philosopher Converted*, which availed to procure a repeal of his sentence; and he returned into favour.[5] In his youth he "had not the talent to play the hypocrite." In the end he mastered the art as few had done.

3. Another grandee, Don Christophe Ximenez de Gongora, Duke of Almodobar, published a free and expurgated translation of

[1] Grimm, *Corr. Litt.* x, 393. [2] Llorente, ii, 534. [3] As to which see Buckle, p. 607.
[4] Llorente, ii, 544. [5] *Id.* ii, 544–47.

Raynal's *History of the Indies* under another title;[1] and though he put upon the book only an anagram of his name, he presented copies to the king. The inquisitors, learning as much, denounced him as "suspected of having embraced the systems of unbelieving philosophers"; but this time the prosecution broke down for lack of evidence.[2] A similar escape was made by Don Joseph Nicholas d'Azara, who had been minister of foreign affairs, minister plenipotentiary of the king at Rome, and ambassador extraordinary at Paris, and was yet denounced at Saragossa and Madrid as an "unbelieving philosopher."[3] Count Ricla, minister of war under Charles III, was similarly charged, and similarly escaped for lack of proofs.[4]

4. In another case, a freethinking priest skilfully anticipated prosecution. Don Philip de Samaniego, "priest, archdeacon of Pampeluna, chevalier of the order of St. James, counsellor of the king and secretary-general, interpreter of foreign languages," was one of those invited to assist at the *auto da fé* of Olavidès. The impression made upon him was so strong that he speedily prepared with his own hand a confession to the effect that he had read many forbidden books, such as those of Voltaire, Mirabeau, Rousseau, Hobbes, Spinoza, Montesquieu, Bayle, D'Alembert, and Diderot; and that he had been thus led into skepticism; but that after serious reflection he had resolved to attach himself firmly and forever to the Catholic faith, and now begged to be absolved. The sentence was memorable. He was ordered first to confirm his confession by oath; then to state how and from whom he had obtained the prohibited books, where they now were, with what persons he had talked on these matters, what persons had either refuted or adopted his views, and which of those persons had seemed to be aware of such doctrines in advance; such a detailed statement being the condition of his absolution. Samaniego obeyed, and produced a long declaration in which he incriminated nearly every enlightened man at the court, naming Aranda, the Duke of Almodobar, Ricla, and the minister Florida Blanca; also General Ricardos, Count of Truillas, General Massones, Count of Montalvo, ambassador at Paris and brother of the Duke of Sotomayor; and Counts Campomanes, Orreilly, and Lascy. Proceedings were begun against one and all; but the undertaking was too comprehensive, and the proofs were avowed to be

[1] Grimm is evidently in error in his statement (*Correspondance*, ed. 1829-31, x. 394) that one of the main grievances against Olavidès was his having caused to be made a Spanish translation of Raynal's book, which was never published. No such offence is mentioned by Llorente. The case of Almodobar had been connected in French rumour with that of Olavidès.

[2] Llorente, ii. 532. [3] *Id.* ii. 534-35. [4] *Id.* pp. 547-48.

insufficient.[1] What became of Samaniego, history saith not. A namesake of his, Don Felix-Maria de Samaniego, one of the leading men of letters of the reign of Charles IV, was arraigned before the Inquisition of Logrogno as "suspected of having embraced the errors of modern philosophers and read prohibited books," but contrived, through his friendship with the minister of justice, to arrange the matter privately.[2]

5. Out of a long series of other men of letters persecuted by the Inquisition for giving signs of enlightenment, a few cases are preserved by its historian, Llorente. Don Benedict Bails, professor of mathematics at Madrid and author of a school-book on the subject, was proceeded against in his old age, towards the end of the reign of Charles III, as suspected of "atheism and materialism." He was ingenuous enough to confess that he had "had doubts on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul," but that after serious reflection he was repentant and ready to abjure all his errors. He thus escaped, after an imprisonment. Don Louis Cagnuelo, advocate, was forced to abjure for having written against popular superstition and against monks in his journal *The Censor*, and was forbidden to write in future on any subject of religion or morals. F. P. Centeno, one of the leading critics of the reigns of Charles III and Charles IV, was an Augustinian monk; but his profession did not save him from the Inquisition when he made enemies by his satirical criticisms, though he was patronized by the minister Florida Blanca. To make quite sure, he was accused at once of atheism and Lutheranism. He had in fact preached against ceremonialism, and as censor he had deleted from a catechism for the free schools of Madrid an article affirming the existence of the Limbo of children who had died unbaptized. Despite a most learned defence, he was condemned as "violently suspected of heresy" and forced to abjure, whereafter he went mad and in that state died.[3]

6. Another *savant* of the same period, Don Joseph de Clavijo y Faxardo, director of the natural history collection at Madrid, was in turn arraigned as having "adopted the anti-Christian principles of modern philosophy." He had been the friend of Buffon and Voltaire at Paris, had admirably translated Buffon's Natural History, with notes, and was naturally something of a deist and materialist. Having the protection of Aranda, he escaped with a secret penance and abjuration.[4] Don Thomas Iriarte, chief of the archives in the

[1] Llorente, ii. 549-50. [2] *Id.* ii. 472-73. [3] *Id.* pp. 436-40.
[4] *Id.* ii. 440-42. Llorente mentions that Clavijo edited a journal named *The Thinker*, "at a time when hardly anyone was to be found who thought." A Frenchman, Langle

ministry of foreign affairs, was likewise indicted towards the end of the reign of Charles III, as "suspected of anti-Christian philosophy," and escaped with similarly light punishment.[1]

7. Still in the same reign, the Jesuit Francisco de Ista, author of an extremely popular satire against absurd preachers, the *History of the famous preacher Fray Gerondif*, published under the pseudonym of Don Francisco Lobon de Salazar—a kind of ecclesiastical *Don Quixote*—so infuriated the preaching monks that the Holy Office received "an almost infinite number of denunciations of the book." Ista, however, was a Jesuit, and escaped, through the influence of his order, with a warning.[2] Influence, indeed, could achieve almost anything in the Holy Office, whether for culprits or against the uninculpable. In 1796, Don Raymond de Salas, a professor at Salamanca, was actually prosecuted by the Inquisition of Madrid as being suspected of having adopted the principles of Voltaire, Rousseau, and other modern philosophers, he having read their works. The poor man proved that he had done so only in order to refute them, and produced the theses publicly maintained at Salamanca by his pupils as a result of his teachings. The prosecution was a pure work of personal enmity on the part of the Archbishop of Santiago (formerly bishop of Salamanca) and others, and Salas was acquitted, with the statement that he was entitled to reparation. Again and again did his enemies revive the case, despite repeated acquittals, he being all the while in durance, and at length he had to "abjure," and was banished the capital. After a time the matter was forced on the attention of the Government, with the result that even Charles IV was asked by his ministers to ordain that henceforth the Inquisition should not arrest anyone without prior intimation to the king. At this stage, however, the intriguing archbishop successfully intervened, and the ancient machinery for the stifling of thought remained intact for the time.[3]

8. It is plain that the combined power of the Church, the orders, and the Inquisition, even under Charles III, had been substantially unimpaired, and rested on a broad foundation of popular fanaticism and ignorance. The Inquisition attacked not merely freethought but heresy of every kind, persecuting Jansenists and Molinists as of old it had persecuted Lutherans, only with less power of murder.

having asserted, in his *Voyage d'Espagne*, that the *Thinker* was without merit, the historian comments that if Langle is right in the assertion, it will be the sole verity in his book, but that, in view of his errors on all other matters, it is probable that he is wrong there also.

[1] Llorente, p. 449.

[2] *Id.* ii. 450-51. The book was prohibited, but a printer at Bayonne reissued it with an additional volume of the tracts written for and against it.

[3] *Id.* ii. 469-72.

That much the Bourbon kings and their ministers could accomplish, but no more. The trouble was that the enlightened administration of Charles III in Spain did not build up a valid popular education, the sole security for durable rationalism. Its school policy, though not without zeal, was undemocratic, and so left the priests in control of the mind of the multitude; and throughout the reign the ecclesiastical revenues had been allowed to increase greatly from private sources.[1] Like Leopold of Tuscany, he was in advance of his people, and imposed his reforms from above. When, accordingly, the weak and pious Charles IV succeeded in 1788, three of the anti-clerical Ministers of his predecessor, including Aranda, were put under arrest,[2] and clericalism resumed full sway, to the extent even of vetoing the study of moral philosophy in the universities.[3] Mentally and materially alike, Spain relapsed to her former state of indigence; and the struggle for national existence against Napoleon helped rather traditionalist sentiment than the spirit of innovation.

9. Portugal in the same period, despite the anti-clerical policy of the famous Marquis of Pombal, made no noticeable intellectual progress. Though that powerful statesman in 1761 abolished slavery in the kingdom,[4] he too failed to see the need for popular education, while promoting that of the upper classes.[5] His expulsion of the Jesuits, accordingly, did but raise up against him a new set of enemies in the shape of the *Jacobeos*, "the Blessed," a species of Catholic Puritan, who accused him of impiety. His somewhat forensic defence[6] leaves the impression that he was in reality a deist; but though he fought the fanatics by imprisoning the Bishop of Coimbra, their leader, and by causing Molière's *Tartufe* to be translated and performed, he does not seem to have shown any favour to the deistical literature of which the Bishop had composed a local *Index Expurgatorius*.[7] In Portugal, as later in Spain, accordingly, a complete reaction set in with the death of the enlightened king. Dom Joseph died in 1777, and Pombal was at once disgraced and his enemies released, the pious Queen Maria and her Ministers subjecting him to persecution for some years. In 1783, the Queen, who became a religious maniac, and died insane,[8] is found establishing new nunneries, and so adding to one of the main factors in the impoverishment, moral and financial, of Portugal.

[1] Buckle, p. 618. [2] *Id.* p. 612. [3] *Id.* p. 613.
[4] Carnota, *The Marquis of Pombal*, 2nd ed. 1871, p. 242.
[5] *Id.* p. 240. [6] *Id.* pp. 261–62. [7] *Id.* p. 262. [8] *Id.* p. 375.

§ 6. *Switzerland*

During the period we have been surveying, up to the French Revolution, Switzerland, which owed much of new intellectual life to the influx of French Protestants at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes,[1] exhibited no less than the other European countries the inability of the traditionary creed to stand criticism. Calvinism by its very rigour generated a reaction within its own special field; and the spirit of the slain Servetus triumphed strangely over that of his slayer. Genevan Calvinism, like that of the English Presbyterians, was transmuted first into a modified Arminianism, then into "Arianism" or Socinianism, then into the Unitarianism of modern times. In the eighteenth century Switzerland contributed to the European movement some names, of which by far the most famous is Rousseau; and the potent presence of Voltaire cannot have failed to affect Swiss culture. Before his period of influence, indeed, there had taken place not a little silent evolution of a Unitarian and deistic kind; Socinianism, as usual, leading the way. Among the families of Italian Protestant refugees who helped to invigorate the life of Switzerland, as French Protestants did later that of Germany, were the Turrettini, of whom Francesco came to Geneva in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. One of his sons, Benedict, made a professor at twenty-four, became a leading theologian and preacher of orthodox Calvinism, and distinguished himself as an opponent of Arminianism.[2] Still more distinguished in his day was Benedict's son François (1623–1687), also a professor, who repeated his father's services, political and controversial, to orthodoxy, and combated Socinianism, as Benedict had done Arminianism. But François's son Jean-Alphonse, also a professor (whose Latin work on Christian evidences, translated into French by a colleague, we have seen adopted and adapted by the Catholic authorities in France), became a virtual Unitarian[3] (1671–1737), and as such is still anathematized by Swiss Calvinists. Against the deists, however, he was industrious, as his grandfather, a heretic to Catholicism, had been against the Arminians, and his father against the Socinians. The family evolution in some degree typifies the theological process from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century; and the apologetics of Jean-Alphonse

[1] Cp. P. Godet, *Hist. litt. de la suisse française*, 1900.

[2] E. de Budé, *Vie de François Turrettini*, 1871, pp. 12–18. B. Turrettini was commissioned to write a history of the Reformation at Geneva, which however remains in MS. He was further commissioned in 1621 to go to Holland to obtain financial help for the city, then seriously menaced by Savoy; and obtained 30,000 florins, besides smaller sums from Hamburg and Bremen.

[3] Cp. Budé, as cited, pp. 24 (birth-date wrong), 294; and the *Avis de l'Éditeur* to the *Traité de la Verité de la Religion Chrétienne* of J. A. Turretin, Paris, 1753.

testify to the vogue of critical deism among the educated class at Geneva in the days of Voltaire's nonage. He (or his translator) deals with the "natural" objections to the faith, cites approvingly Locke, Lardner, and Clarke, and combats Woolston, but names no other English deist. The heresy, therefore, would seem to be a domestic development from the roots noted by Viret nearly two centuries before. One of Turrettini's annotators complacently observes[1] that though deists talk of natural religion, none of them has ever written a book in exposition of it, the task being left to the Christians. The writer must have been aware, on the one hand, that any deist who in those days should openly expound natural religion as against revealed would be liable to execution for blasphemy in any European country save England, where, as it happened, Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Toland, Collins, Shaftesbury, and Tindal had all maintained the position, and on the other hand he must have known that the *Ethica* of Spinoza was naturalistic. The false taunt merely goes to prove that deists could maintain their heresy on the Continent at that time without the support of books. But soon after Turrettini's time they give literary indication of their existence even in Switzerland; and in 1763 we find Voltaire sending a package of copies of his treatise on Toleration by the hand of "a young M. Turretin of Geneva," who "is worthy to see the brethren, though he is the grandson of a celebrated priest of Baal. He is reserved, but decided, as are most of the Genevese. Calvin begins in our cantons to have no more credit than the pope."[2] For this fling there was a good deal of justification. When in 1763 the Council of Geneva officially burned a pamphlet reprint of the *Vicaire Savoyard* from Rousseau's *Émile* there was an immediate public protest by "two hundred persons, among whom there were three priests";[3] and some five weeks later "a hundred persons came for the third time to protest.....They say that it is permissible to every citizen to write what he will on religion; that he should not be condemned without a hearing; and that the rights of men must be respected."[4] All this was not a sudden product of the freethinking influence of Voltaire and Rousseau, which had but recently begun. An older leaven had long been at work. The *Principes du Droit Naturel* of J. J. Burlamaqui (1748), save for its

[1] Work cited, i, 8, *note*.
[2] Lettre à Damilaville, 6 décembre, 1763. The reserved youth may have been either Jean-Alphonse, grandson of the Socinian professor, who was born in 1735 and died childless, or some other member of the numerous Turrettini clan.
[3] Voltaire to Damilaville, 12 juillet, 1763. "Il faut que vous sachiez," explains Voltaire "que Jean Jacques n'a été condamné que parce qu'on n'aime pas sa personne."
[4] Voltaire to Damilaville, 21 auguste, 1763.

subsumption of deity as the originator of all human tendencies, is strictly naturalistic and utilitarian in its reasoning, and clearly exhibits the influence of Hobbes and Mandeville.[1] Voltaire, too, in his correspondence, is found frequently speaking with a wicked chuckle of the Unitarianism of the clergy of Geneva,[2] a theme on which D'Alembert had written openly in his article *Genève* in the *Encyclopédie* in 1756.[3] So early as 1757, Voltaire roundly affirms that there are only a few Calvinists left: "tous les honnêtes gens sont déistes par Christ."[4] And when the younger Salchi, professor at Lausanne, writes in 1759 that "deism is become the fashionable religion.....Europe is inundated with the works of deists; and their partisans have made perhaps more proselytes in the space of eighty years than were made by the apostles and the first Fathers of the Church,"[5] he must be held to testify in some degree concerning Switzerland. The chief native service to intellectual progress thus far, however, was rendered in the field of the natural sciences, Swiss religious opinion being only passively liberalized, mainly in a Unitarian direction.

[1] Cp. i. 2, 16, 56, 58, 65, 68, 70, 71, 73, 94; ii. 290, etc.

[2] For instance: "Je me recommande contr'eux [les prêtres] à Dieu le père, car pour le *fils*, vous savez qu'il a aussi peu de crédit que sa mère à Genève" (Lettre à D'Alembert, 25 mars, 1758).....Une république où tout le monde est ouvertement socinien, excepté ceux qui font anabaptistes ou moraves. Figurez-vous, mon cher ami, qu'il n'y a pas actuellement un chrétien de Genève à Berne; cela fait frémir!" (To the same, 8 fév. 1776.)

[3] On this see the correspondence of Voltaire and D'Alembert, under dates 8, 28, and 29 janvier, 1757.

[4] Lettre à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1757.

[5] *Lettres sur le Déisme*, 1759, p. 6. Cp. pp. 84, 94, 103, 105, 412.

Chapter XX

EARLY FREETHOUGHT IN THE UNITED STATES

1. Perhaps the most signal of all the proofs of the change wrought in the opinion of the civilized world in the eighteenth century is the fact that at the time of the War of Independence the leading statesmen of the American colonies were deists. Such were Benjamin Franklin, the diplomatist of the Revolution; Thomas Paine, its prophet and inspirer; Washington, its commander; and Jefferson, its typical legislator. But for these four men the American Revolution probably could not have been accomplished in that age; and they thus represent in a peculiar degree the power of new ideas, in fit conditions, to transform societies, at least politically. On the other hand, the fashion in which their relation to the creeds of their time has been garbled, alike in American and English histories, proves how completely they were in advance of the average thought of their day; and also how effectively the mere institutional influence of creeds can arrest a nation's mental development. It is still one of the stock doctrines of religious sociology in England and America that deism, miscalled atheism, wrought the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution; when as a matter of fact the same deism was at the head of affairs in the American.

2. The rise of rationalism in the colonies must be traced in the main to the imported English literature of the eighteenth century; for the first Puritan settlements had contained at most only a fraction of freethought; and the conditions, so deadly for all manner even of devout heresy, made avowed unbelief impossible. The superstitions and cruelties of the Puritan clergy, however, must have bred a silent reaction, which prepared a soil for the deism of the next age.[1] "The perusal of Shaftesbury and Collins," writes Franklin with reference to his early youth, "had made me a skeptic," after being "previously so as to many doctrines of Christianity."[2]

[1] John Wesley in his Journal, dating May, 1737, speaks of having everywhere met many more "converts to infidelity" than "converts to Popery," with apparent reference to Carolina.

[2] Such is the wording of the passage in the *Autobiography* in the Edinburgh edition of 1803, p. 25, which follows the French translation of the original MS. In the edition of the *Autobiography and Letters* in the Minerva Library, edited by Mr. Bettany (1891, p. 11), which follows Mr. Bigelow's edition of 1879, it runs: "Being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine....."

This was in his seventeenth or eighteenth year, about 1720, so that the importation of deism had been prompt.[1] Throughout life he held to the same opinion, conforming sufficiently to keep on fair terms with his neighbours,[2] and avoiding anything like critical propaganda; though on challenge, in the last year of his life, he avowed his negatively deistic position.[3]

3. Similarly prudent was JEFFERSON, who, like Franklin and Paine, extolled the Gospel Jesus and his teachings, but rejected the notion of supernatural revelation.[4] In a letter written so late as 1822 to a Unitarian correspondent, while refusing to publish another of similar tone, on the score that he was too old for strife, he declared that he "should as soon undertake to bring the crazy skulls of Bedlam to sound understanding as to inculcate reason into that of an Athanasian."[5] His experience of the New England clergy is expressed in allusions to Connecticut as having been "the last retreat of monkish darkness, bigotry, and abhorrence of those advances of the mind which had carried the other States a century ahead of them"; and in congratulations with John Adams (who had written that "this would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it"), when "this den of the priesthood is at last broken up."[6] John Adams, whose letters with their "crowd of skepticisms" kept even Jefferson from sleep,[7] seems to have figured as a member of a Congregationalist church, while in reality a Unitarian.[8] Still more prudent was Washington, who seems to have ranked habitually as a member of the Episcopal church; but concerning whom Jefferson relates that, when the clergy, having noted his constant abstention from any public mention of the Christian religion, so penned an address to him on his withdrawal from the Presidency as almost to force him to some declaration, he answered every part of the address but that, which he entirely ignored. It is further noted that only in his valedictory letter to the governors of the States, on resigning his commission, did he speak of the "benign influence of the Christian religion"[9]—the common tone of the American deists of that day. It is further

[1] Only in 1784, however, appeared the first anti-Christian work published in America, Ethan Allen's *Reason the only Oracle of Man*. As to its positions see Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii. 192-93.

[2] *Autobiography*, Bettany's ed. pp. 56, 65, 74, 77, etc.

[3] Letter of March 9, 1790. *Id.* p. 636.

[4] Cp. J. T. Morse's *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 339-40.

[5] MS. cited by Dr. Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii. 310-11.

[6] *Memoirs of Jefferson*, 1829, iv. 300-301. The date is 1817. These and other passages exhibiting Jefferson's deism are cited in Rayner's *Sketches of the Life*, etc., *of Jefferson*, 1832, pp. 513-17.

[7] *Memoirs of Jefferson*, iv. 331.

[8] Dr. Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii. 310.

[9] Extract from Jefferson's Journal under date February 1, 1800, in the *Memoirs*, iv. 512. Gouverneur Morris, whom Jefferson further cites as to Washington's unbelief, is not a very good witness; but the main fact cited is significant.

established that Washington avoided the Communion in church.[1] For the rest, the broad fact that all mention of deity was excluded from the Constitution of the United States must be historically taken to signify a profound change in the convictions of the leading minds among the people as compared with the beliefs of their ancestors. At the same time, the fact that they as a rule dissembled their unbelief is a proof that, even where legal penalties do not attach to an avowal of serious heresy, there inheres in the menace of mere social ostracism a power sufficient to coerce the outward life of public and professional men of all grades, in a democratic community where faith maintains and is maintained by a competitive multitude of priests. With this force the freethought of our own age has to reckon, after Inquisitions and blasphemy laws have become obsolete.

4. Nothing in American culture-history more clearly proves the last proposition than the case of THOMAS PAINE, the virtual founder of modern democratic freethought in Great Britain and the States.[2] It does not appear that Paine openly professed any heresy while he lived in England, or in America before the French Revolution. Yet the first sentence of his *Age of Reason*, of which the first part was written shortly before his imprisonment, under sentence of death from the Robespierre Government, in Paris (1793), shows that he had long held pronounced deistic opinions.[3] They were probably matured in the States, where, as we have seen, such views were often privately held, though there, as Franklin is said to have jesuitically declared in his old age, by way of encouraging immigration: "Atheism is unknown; infidelity rare and secret, so that persons may live to a great age in this country without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an atheist or an infidel." Paine did an unequalled service to the American Revolution by his *Common Sense* and his series of pamphlets headed *The Crisis*: there is, in fact, little question that but for the intense stimulus thus given by him at critical moments the movement might have collapsed at an early stage. Yet he seems to have had no thought there and then of avowing his deism. It was in part for the express purpose of resisting the ever-strengthening attack of atheism in France on deism

[1] Compare the testimony given by the Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Albany, in 1831, as cited by R. D. Owen in his *Discussion on the Authenticity of the Bible* with O. Bacheler (London, ed. 1840, p. 231), with the replies on the other side (pp. 233-34). Washington's death-bed attitude was that of a deist. See all the available data for his supposed orthodoxy in Sparks's *Life of Washington*, 1852, app. iv.

[2] So far as is known, Paine was the first writer to use the expression, "the religion of Humanity." See Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 206. To Paine's influence, too, appears to be due the founding of the first American Anti-Slavery Society. *Id.* i, 51-52, 60, 80, etc.

[3] Cp. Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 205-207.

itself that he undertook to save it by repudiating the Judæo-Christian revelation; and it is not even certain that he would have issued the *Age of Reason* when it did appear, had he not supposed he was going to his death when put under arrest, on which score he left the manuscript for publication.[1]

5. Its immediate effect was much greater in Britain, where his *Rights of Man* had already won him a vast popularity in the teeth of the most furious reaction, than in America. There, to his profound chagrin, he found that his honest utterance of his heresy brought on him hatred, calumny, ostracism, and even personal and political molestation. In 1797 he had founded in Paris the little "Church of Theo-philanthropy," beginning his inaugural discourse with the words: "Religion has two principal enemies, Fanaticism and Infidelity, or that which is called atheism. The first requires to be combated by reason and morality; the other by natural philosophy."[2] These were his settled convictions; and he lived to find himself shunned and vilified, in the name of religion, in the country whose freedom he had so puissantly wrought to win.[3] The Quakers, his father's sect, refused him a burial-place. He has had sympathy and fair play, as a rule, only from the atheists whom he distrusted and opposed, or from thinkers who no longer hold by deism. There is reason to think that in his last years the deistic optimism which survived the deep disappointments of the French Revolution began to give way before deeper reflection on the cosmic problem,[4] if not before the treatment he had undergone at the hands of Unitarians and Trinitarians alike. The Butlerian argument, that Nature is as unsatisfactory as revelation, had been pressed upon him by Bishop Watson in a reply to the *Age of Reason;* and though, like most deists of his age, he regarded it as a vain defence of orthodoxy, he was not the man to remain long blind to its force against deistic assumptions. Like Franklin, he had energetically absorbed and given

[1] A letter of Franklin to someone who had shown him a freethinking manuscript, advising against its publication (Bettany's ed. p. 620), has been conjecturally connected with Paine, but was clearly not addressed to him. Franklin died in 1790, and Paine was out of America from 1787 onwards. But the letter is in every way inapplicable to the *Age of Reason*. The remark: "If men are so wicked *with* religion, what would they be *without* it?" could not be made to a devout deist like Paine.

[2] Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 254-55.

[3] See Dr. Conway's chapter, "The American Inquisition," vol. ii, ch. xvi; also pp. 361-62, 374, 379. The falsity of the ordinary charges against Paine's character is finally made clear by Dr. Conway, ch. xix, and pp. 371, 383, 419, 423. Cp. the author's pamphlet, *Thomas Paine: An Investigation* (Bonner). The chronically revived story of his death-bed remorse for his writings—long ago exposed (Conway, ii, 420)—is definitively discredited in the latest reiteration. That occurs in the *Life and Letters of Dr. R. H. Thomas* (1905), the mother of whose stepmother was the Mrs. Mary Hinsdale, née Roscoe, on whose testimony the legend rests. Dr. Thomas, a Quaker of the highest character, accepted the story without question, but incidentally tells of the old lady (p. 13) that "*her wandering fancies* had all the charm of a present fairy-tale to us." No further proof is needed, after the previous exposure, of the worthlessness of the testimony in question.

[4] Conway, ii, 371.

out the new ideals of physical science; his originality in the invention of a tubular iron bridge, and in the application of steam to navigation,[1] being nearly as notable as that of Franklin's great discovery concerning electricity. Had the two men drawn their philosophy from the France of the latter part of the century instead of the England of the first, they had doubtless gone deeper. As it was, temperamental optimism had kept both satisfied with the transitional formula; and in the France of before and after the Revolution they lived pre-occupied with politics.

6. The habit of reticence or dissimulation among American public men was only too surely confirmed by the treatment meted out to Paine. Few stood by him; and the vigorous deistic movement set up in his latter years by Elihu Palmer soon succumbed to the conditions,[2] though Palmer's book, *The Principles of Nature* (1802, rep. by Richard Carlile, 1819), is a powerful attack on the Judaic and Christian systems all along the line. George Houston, leaving England after two years' imprisonment for his translation of d'Holbach's *Ecce Homo*, went to New York, where he edited the *Minerva* (1822), reprinted his book, and started a freethought journal, *The Correspondence*. That, however, lasted only eighteen months. All the while, such statesmen as Madison and Monroe, the latter Paine's personal friend, seem to have been of his way of thinking,[3] though the evidence is scanty. Thus it came about that, save for the liberal movement of the Hicksite Quakers,[4] the American deism of Paine's day was decorously transformed into the later Unitarianism, the extremely rapid advance of which in the next generation is the best proof of the commonness of private unbelief. The influence of Priestley, who, persecuted at home, went to end his days in the States, had doubtless much to do with the Unitarian development there, as in England; but it seems certain that the whole deistic movement, including the work of Paine and Palmer, had tended to move out of orthodoxy many of those who now, recoiling from the fierce hostility directed against the outspoken freethinkers, sought a more rational form of creed than that of the orthodox churches. The deistic tradition in a manner centred in the name of Jefferson, and the known deism of that leader would do much to make fashionable a heresy which combined his views with a decorous attitude to the Sacred Books.

[1] See the details in Conway's *Life*, ii, 280-81, and *note*. He had also a scheme for a gunpowder motor (*id.* and i, 240), and various other remarkable plans.
[2] Conway, ii, 362-71.
[3] Testimonies quoted by R. D. Owen, as cited, pp. 231-32.
[4] Conway, ii, 422.

Chapter XXI

FREETHOUGHT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Reaction

All over the civilized world, as we have seen, the terrors of the French Revolution evoked an intellectual no less than a political reaction, its stress being most apparent and most destructive in those countries in which there had been previously the largest measure of liberty. Nowhere was it more intense or more disastrous than in England. In countries such as Denmark and Spain, only lately and superficially liberalized, there was no great progress to undo: in England, though liberty was never left without an indomitable witness, there was a violent reversal of general movement, not to be wholly rectified in half a century. Joined in a new activity with the civil power for the suppression of all innovating thought, the Church rapidly attained to an influence it had not possessed since the days of Sacheverel and a degree of wealth it had not before reached since the Reformation. The wealth of the upper class was at its disposal to an unheard-of extent, there being apparently no better way of fighting the new danger of democracy; and dissent joined hands with the establishment to promote orthodoxy.

The average tone in England in the first quarter of the century may be gathered from the language held by a man so enlightened, comparatively speaking, as Sydney Smith, wit, humourist, Whig, and clergyman. In 1801 we find him, in a preface never reprinted, prescribing various measures of religious strategy in addition "to the just, necessary, and innumerable invectives which have been levelled against Rousseau, Voltaire, D'Alembert, and the whole pandemonium of those martyrs to atheism, who toiled with such laborious malice, and suffered odium with such inflexible profligacy, for the wretchedness and despair of their fellow creatures."[1] That this was not jesting may be gathered from his daughter's account of his indignation when a publisher sent him "a work of irreligious tendency," and when Jeffrey admitted "irreligious

[1] *Memoir of Sydney Smith*, by his daughter, Lady Holland, ed. 1860, p. 49. Lady Holland remarks on the same page that her father's religion had in it "nothing intolerant."

opinions" to the *Edinburgh Review*. To the former he writes that "every principle of suspicion and fear would be excited in me by a man who professed himself an infidel"; and to Jeffrey: "Do you mean to take care that the Review shall not profess infidel principles? Unless this is the case I must absolutely give up all connection with it."[1] All the while any semblance of "infidelity" in any article in the Review must have been of the most cautious kind.

In the Catholic countries, naturally, the reaction was no less violent. In Italy, as we saw, it began in Tuscany almost at once. The rule of Napoleon, it is true, secured complete freedom of the Press as regarded translation of freethinking books, an entire liberty of conscience in religious matters, and a sharp repression of clericalism, the latter policy going to the length of expelling all the religious orders and confiscating their property.[2] All this counted for change; but the Napoleonic rule all the while choked one of the springs of vital thought—to wit, the spirit of political liberty; and in 1814–15 the clerical system returned in full force, as it did all over Italy. Everywhere freethought was banned. All criticism of Catholicism was a penal offence; and in the kingdom of Naples alone, in 1825, there were 27,612 priests, 8,455 monks, 8,185 nuns, 20 archbishops, and 73 bishops, though in 1807 the French influence had caused the dissolution of some 250 convents.[3] At Florence the Censure forbade, in 1817, the issue of a new edition of the translated work of Cabanis on *Les Rapports du physique et du moral*; and Mascagni, the physiologist, was invited to delete from his work a definition of man in which no notice was taken of the soul.[4] It was even proclaimed that the works of Voltaire and Rousseau were not to be read in the public libraries without ecclesiastical permission; but this veto was not seriously treated.[5] All native energy, however, was either cowed or cajoled into passivity. If, accordingly, the mind of Italy was to survive, it must be by the assimilation of the culture of freer States; and this culture, reinforced by the writings of Leopardi, generated a new intellectual life, which was a main factor in the ultimate achievement of Italian liberation from Austrian rule.

Spain, under Charles IV, became so thoroughly re-clericalized at the very outbreak of the Revolution that no more leeway seemed possible; but even in Spain, early in the nineteenth century, the government found means to retrogress yet further, and the minister Caballero sent an order to the universities forbidding the study of

[1] *Memoir of Sydney Smith*, p. 142.
[2] Julien Luchaire, *Essai sur l'évolution intellectuelle de l'Italie*, 1906, pp. 5-7.
[3] Dr. Ramage, *Nooks and Byeways of Italy*, 1868, pp. 76, 105-13. Ramage describes the helplessness of the better minds before 1830.
[4] Luchaire, pp. 35, 36.
[5] *Id.* p. 30.

moral philosophy. The king, he justly declared, did not want philosophers, but good and obedient subjects.[1]

In France, where the downfall of Napoleon meant the restoration of the monarchy, the intellectual reaction was really less powerful than in England. The new spirit had been too widely and continuously at work, from Voltaire onwards, to be politically expelled; and the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 gave the proof that even on the political side the old spirit was incapable of permanent recovery. In Germany, where freethinking was associated not with the beaten cause of the Revolution but in large measure with the national movement for liberation from the tyranny of Napoleon,[2] the religious reaction was substantially emotional and unintellectual, though it had intellectual representatives, notably Schleiermacher. Apart from his culture-movement, the revival consisted mainly in a new Pietism, partly orthodox, partly mystical;[3] and on those lines it ran later to the grossest excesses. But among the educated classes of Germany there was the minimum of arrest, because there the intellectual life was least directly associated with the political, and the ecclesiastical life relatively the least organized. The very separateness of the German States, then and later so often deplored by German patriots, was really a condition of relative security for freedom of thought and research; and the resulting multiplicity of universities meant a variety of intellectual effort not then paralleled in any other country.[4] What may be ranked as the most important effect of the reaction in Germany—the turning of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel in succession to the task of reconciling rational philosophy with religion in the interests of social order—was in itself a rationalistic process as compared with the attitude of orthodoxy in other lands. German scholarship, led by the re-organized university of Berlin, was in fact one of the most progressive intellectual forces in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century; and only its comparative isolation, its confinement to a cultured class, prevented it from affecting popular thought as widely as deism had done in the preceding century. Even in the countries in which popular and university culture were less sharply divided, the German influence was held at bay like others.

[1] Doblado (Blanco White), *Letters from Spain*, 1822. p. 358.

[2] Thus the traveller and belletrist J. G. Seume, a zealous deist and opponent of atheism, and a no less zealous patriot, penned many fiercely freethinking maxims, as: "Where were the most so-called positive religions, there was always the least morality"; "Grotius and the Bible are the best supports of despotism"; "Heaven has lost us the earth"; "The best apostles of despotism and slavery are the mystics." *Apokryphen*, 1806-1807, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 1839, iv. 157, 173, 177, 219.

[3] C. H. Cottrell, *Religious Movements of Germany*, 1849, p. 12 *sq.*

[4] Cp. the author's *Evolution of States*, pp. 138-39.

But in time the spirit of progress regained strength, the most decisive form of recovery being the new development of the struggle for political liberty from about 1830 onwards. In England the advance thenceforward was to be broadly continuous on the political side. On the Continent it culminated for the time in the explosions of 1848, which were followed in the Germanic world by another political reaction, in which freethought suffered; and in France, after a few years, by the Second Empire, in which clericalism was again fostered. But these checks have proved impermanent.

The Forces of Renascence

As with the cause of democracy, so with the cause of rationalism, the forward movement grew only the deeper and more powerful through the check; and the nineteenth century closed on a record of freethinking progress which may be said to outbulk that of all the previous centuries of the modern era together. So great was the activity of the century in point of mere quantity that it is impossible, within the scheme of a "Short History," to treat it on even such a reduced scale of narrative as has been applied to the past. A detailed history on national lines from the French Revolution onwards would mean another book as large as the present. On however large a scale it might be written, further, it would involve a recognition of international influences such as had never before been evolved, save when on a much smaller scale the educated world all round read and wrote Latin. Since Goethe, the international aspect of culture upon which he laid stress has become ever more apparent; and scientific and philosophical thought, in particular, are world-wide in their scope and bearing. It must here suffice, therefore, to take a series of broad and general views of the past century's work, leaving adequate critical and narrative treatment for separate undertakings.[1] The most helpful method seems to be that of a conspectus (1) of the main movements and forces that during the century affected in varying degrees the thought of the civilized world, and (2) of the main advances made and the point reached in the culture of the nations, separately considered. At the same time,

[1] When I thus planned the treatment of the nineteenth century in the first edition of this book, it was known to me that Mr. Alfred W. Benn had in hand a work on *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century;* and the knowledge made me the more resolved to keep my own record condensed. Duly published in 1906 (Longmans, 2 vols.), Mr. Benn's book amply fulfilled expectations; and to it I would refer every reader who seeks a fuller survey than the present. Its freshness of thought and vigour of execution will more than repay him. Even Mr. Benn's copious work, however—devoting as it does a large amount of space to a preliminary survey of the eighteenth century—leaves room for various English monographs on the nineteenth, to say nothing of the culture history of a dozen other countries.

the forces of rationalism may be discriminated into Particular and General. We may then roughly represent the lines of movement, in non-chronological order, as follows :—

I.—*Forces of criticism and corrective thought bearing expressly on religious beliefs.*

1. In Great Britain and America, the new movements of popular freethought begun by Paine, and lasting continuously to the present day.

2. In France and elsewhere, the reverberation of the attack of Voltaire, d'Holbach, Dupuis, and Volney, carried on most persistently in Catholic countries by the Freemasons, as against official orthodoxy after 1815.

3. German "rationalism," proceeding from English deism, moving towards naturalist as against supernaturalist conceptions, dissolving the notion of the miraculous in both Old and New Testament history, analysing the literary structure of the sacred books, and all along affecting studious thought in other countries.

4. The literary compromise of Lessing, claiming for all religions a place in a scheme of "divine education."

5. In England, the neo-Christianity of the school of Coleridge, a disintegrating force, promoting the "Broad Church" tendency, which in Dean Milman was so pronounced as to bring on him charges of rationalism.

6. The utilitarianism of the school of Bentham, carried into moral and social science.

7. Comtism, making little direct impression on the "constructive" lines laid by the founder, but affecting critical thought in many directions.

8. German philosophy, Kantian and post-Kantian, in particular the Hegelian, turned to anti-Christian and anti-supernaturalist account by Strauss, Vatke, Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, and Marx.

9. German atheism and scientific "materialism"—represented by Feuerbach and Büchner (who, however, rejected the term "materialism" as inappropriate).

10. Revived English deism, involving destructive criticism of Christianity, as in Hennell, F. W. Newman, R. W. Mackay, W. R. Greg, Theodore Parker, and Thomas Scott, partly in co-operation with Unitarianism.

11. American transcendentalism or pantheism—the school of Emerson.

12. Colenso's preliminary attack on the narrative of the Pentateuch, a systematized return to Voltairean common-sense, rectifying the unscientific course of the earlier "higher criticism" on the historical issue.

13. The later or scientific "higher criticism" of the Old Testament—represented by Kuenen, Wellhausen, and their successors.

14. New historical criticism of Christian origins, in particular the work of Strauss and Baur in Germany, Renan and Havet in France, and their successors.

15. Exhibition of rationalism within the churches, as in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland generally; in England in the *Essays and Reviews;* later in multitudes of essays and books, and in the ethical criticism of the Old Testament; in America in popular theology.

16. Association of rationalistic doctrine with the Socialist movements, new and old, from Owen to Bebel.

17. Communication of doubt and moral questioning through poetry and *belles-lettres*—as in Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Clough, Tennyson, Carlyle, Arnold, Browning, Swinburne, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Victor Hugo, Leconte de Lisle, Leopardi, and certain French and English novelists.

II.—*Modern Science, physical, mental, and moral, sapping the bases of all supernaturalist systems.*

1. Astronomy, newly directed by Laplace.
2. Geology, gradually connected (as in Britain by Chambers) with
3. Biology, made definitely non-deistic by Darwin.
4. The comprehension of all science in the Evolution Theory, as by Spencer, advancing on Comte.
5. Psychology, as regards localization of brain functions.
6. Comparative mythology, as yet imperfectly applied to Christism.
7. Sociology, as outlined by Comte, Buckle, Spencer, Winwood Reade, Lester Ward, Giddings, Tarde, Durkheim, and others, on strictly naturalistic lines.
8. Comparative Hierology; the methodical application of principles insisted on by all the deists, and formulated in the interests of deism by Lessing, but latterly freed of his implications.
9. Above all, the later development of Anthropology (in the wide English sense of the term), which, beginning to take shape in the eighteenth century, came to new life in the latter part of the nineteenth; and is now one of the most widely cultivated of all the sciences—especially on the side of religious creed and psychology.

On the other hand, we may group somewhat as follows the general forces of retardation of freethought operating throughout the century:—

1. Penal laws, still operative in Britain and Germany against popular freethought propaganda, and till recently in Britain against any endowment of freethought.
2. Class interests, involving in the first half of the century a social conspiracy against rationalism in England.
3. Commercial pressure thus set up, and always involved in the influence of churches.
4. In England, identification of orthodox Dissent with political Liberalism—a sedative.
5. Concessions by the clergy, especially in England and the United States—to many, another sedative.
6. Above all, the production of new masses of popular ignorance in the industrial nations, and continued lack of education in the others.
7. On this basis, business-like and in large part secular-minded organization of the endowed churches, as against a freethought propaganda hampered by the previously named causes, and in England by laws which veto all direct endowment of anti-Christian heresy.

It remains to make, with forced brevity, the surveys thus outlined.

Section 1.—Popular Propaganda and Culture

1. If any one circumstance more than another differentiates the life of to-day from that of older civilizations, or from that of previous centuries of the modern era, it is the diffusion of rationalistic views among the "common people." In no other era is to be found the

phenomenon of widespread critical skepticism among the labouring masses: in all previous ages, though chronic complaint is made of *some* unbelief among the uneducated, the constant and abject ignorance of the mass of the people has been the sure foothold of superstitious systems. Within the last century the area of the recognizably civilized world has grown far vaster; and in the immense populations that have thus arisen there is a relative degree of enlightenment, coupled with a degree of political power never before attained. Merely to survey, then, the broad movement of popular culture in the period in question will yield a useful notion of the dynamic change in the balance of thought in modern times, and will make more intelligible the special aspects of the culture process.

This vital change in the distribution of knowledge is largely to be attributed to the written and spoken teaching of a line of men who made popular enlightenment their great aim. Their leading type among the English-speaking races is THOMAS PAINE, whom we have seen combining a gospel of democracy with a gospel of critical reason in the midst of the French Revolution. Never before had rationalism been made widely popular. The English and French deists had written for the middle and upper classes. Peter Annet was practically the first who sought to reach the multitude; and his punishment expressed the special resentment aroused in the governing classes by such a policy. Of all the English freethinkers of the earlier deistical period he alone was selected for reprinting by the propagandists of the Paine period. Paine was to Annet, however, as a cannon to a musket, and through the democratic ferment of his day he won an audience a hundredfold wider than Annet could have dreamt of reaching. The anger of the governing classes, in a time of anti-democratic panic, was proportional. Paine would have been at least imprisoned for his *Rights of Man* had he not fled from England in time; and the sale of all his books was furiously prohibited and ferociously punished. Yet they circulated everywhere, even in Protestant Ireland,[1] hitherto affected only under the surface of upper-class life by deism. The circulation of Bishop Watson's *Apology* in reply only served to spread the contagion, as it brought the issues before multitudes who would not otherwise have heard of them.[2] All the while, direct propaganda was carried on by translations and reprints as well as by fresh English tractates. Diderot's *Thoughts on Religion*, and Fréret's *Letter from Thrasybulus to*

[1] Lecky, *Hist. of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. 1892, iii, 382.
[2] Cp. Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 252-53.

Leucippus, seem to have been great favourites among the Painites, as was Elihu Palmer's *Principles of Nature;* and Volney's *Ruins of Empires* had a large vogue. Condorcet's *Esquisse* had been promptly translated in 1795; the translation of d'Holbach's *System of Nature* reached a third edition in 1817;[1] that of Raynal's History had been reprinted in 1804; and that of Helvétius *On the Mind* in 1810; while an English abridgment of Bayle in four volumes, on freethinking lines, appeared in 1826.

2. Meantime, new writers arose to carry into fuller detail the attacks of Paine, sharpening their weapons on those of the more scholarly French deists. A *Life of Jesus, including his Apocryphal History*,[2] was published in 1818, with such astute avoidance of all comment that it escaped prosecution. Others, taking a more daring course, fared accordingly. George Houston translated the *Ecce Homo* of d'Holbach, first publishing it at Edinburgh in 1799, and reprinting it in London in 1813. For the second issue he was prosecuted, fined £200, and imprisoned for two years in Newgate. Robert Wedderburn, a mulatto calling himself "the Rev.," in reality a superannuated journeyman tailor who officiated in Hopkins Street Unitarian Chapel, London, was in 1820 sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Dorchester Jail for a "blasphemous libel" contained in one of his pulpit discourses. His Letters to the Rev. Solomon Herschell (the Jewish Chief Rabbi) and to the Archbishop of Canterbury show a happy vein of orderly irony and not a little learning, despite his profession of apostolic ignorance; and at the trial the judge admitted his defence to be "exceedingly well drawn up." His publications naturally received a new impetus, and passed to a more drastic order of mockery.

3. As the years went on, the persecution in England grew still fiercer; but it was met with a stubborn hardihood which wore out even the bitter malice of piety. One of the worst features of the religious crusade was that it affected to attack not unbelief but "vice," such being the plea on which Wilberforce and others prosecuted, during a period of more than twenty years, the publishers and booksellers who issued the works of Paine.[3] But even that dissembling device did not ultimately avail. A name not to be

[1] This translation, issued by "Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Paternoster Row, and all booksellers," purports to be "with additions." The translation, however, has altered d'Holbach's atheism to deism.

[2] By W. Huttman. The book is "embellished with a head of Jesus"—a conventional religious picture. Huttman's opinions may be divined from the last sentence of his preface, alluding to "the high pretentions and inflated stile of the lives of Christ which issue periodically from the English press."

[3] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 208-209.

forgotten by those who value obscure service to human freedom is that of RICHARD CARLILE, who between 1819 and 1835 underwent nine years' imprisonment in his unyielding struggle for the freedom of the Press, of thought, and of speech.[1] John Clarke, an ex-Methodist, became one of Carlile's shopmen, was tried in 1824 for selling one of his publications, and "after a spirited defence, in which he read many of the worst passages of the Bible," was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and to find securities for good behaviour during life. The latter disability he effectively anticipated by writing, while in prison, *A Critical Review of the Life, Character, and Miracles of Jesus*, wherein Christian feelings were treated as Christians had treated the feelings of freethinkers, with a much more destructive result. Published first, strangely enough, in the *Newgate Magazine*, it was republished in 1825 and 1839, with impunity. Thus did a brutal bigotry bring upon itself ever a deadlier retaliation, till it sickened of the contest. Those who threw up the struggle on the orthodox side declaimed as before about the tone of the unbeliever's attack, failing to read the plain lesson that, while noisy fanaticism, doing its own worst and vilest, deterred from utterance all the gentler and more sympathetic spirits on the side of reason, the work of reason could be done only by the harder natures, which gave back blow for blow and insult for insult, rejoicing in the encounter. Thus championed, freethought could not be crushed. The propagandist and publishing work done by Carlile was carried on diversely by such free lances as ROBERT TAYLOR (ex-clergyman, author of the *Diegesis*, 1829, and *The Devil's Pulpit*, 1830), CHARLES SOUTHWELL (1814–1860), and William Hone,[2] who ultimately became an independent preacher. Southwell, a disciple of Robert Owen, who edited *The Oracle of Reason*, was imprisoned for a year in 1840 for publishing in that journal an article entitled "The Jew Book"; and was succeeded in the editorship by GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE (1817–1906), another Owenite missionary, who met a similar sentence; whereafter George Adams and his wife, who continued to publish the journal, were imprisoned in turn. Matilda Roalfe and Mrs. Emma Martin about

[1] See Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*, ed. 1877, ii, 87, and Mrs. Carlile Campbell's *The Battle of the Press* (Bonner, 1899), passim, as to the treatment of those who acted as Carlile's shopmen. Women were imprisoned as well as men—*e.g.* SUSANNA WRIGHT, as to whom see Wheeler's *Dictionary*, and last ref. Carlile's wife and sister were likewise imprisoned with him; and over twenty volunteer shopmen in all went to jail.

[2] Hone's most important service to popular culture was his issue of the *Apocryphal New Testament*, which, by co-ordinating work of the same kind, gave a fresh scientific basis to the popular criticism of the gospel history. As to his famous trial for blasphemy on the score of his having published certain parodies, political in intention, see bk. i, ch. x (by Knight) of Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*.

the same period underwent imprisonment for like causes.[1] In this fashion, by the steady courage of a much-enduring band of men and women, was set on foot a systematic Secularist propaganda—the name having relation to the term "Secularism," coined by Holyoake.

4. In this evolution political activities played an important part. Henry Hetherington (1792–1849), the strenuous democrat who in 1830 began the trade union movement, and so became the founder of Chartism, fought for the right of publication in matters of free-thought as in politics. After undergoing two imprisonments of six months each (1832), and carrying on for three and a half years the struggle for an untaxed Press, which ended in his victory (1834), he was in 1840 indicted for publishing *Haslam's Letters to the Clergy of all Denominations*, a freethinking criticism of Old Testament morality. He defended himself so ably that Lord Denman, the judge, confessed to have "listened with feelings of great interest and sentiments of respect too"; and Justice Talfourd later spoke of the defence as marked by "great propriety and talent." Nevertheless, he was punished by four months' imprisonment.[2] In the following year, on the advice of Francis Place, he brought a test prosecution for blasphemy against Moxon, the poet-publisher, for issuing Shelley's complete works, including *Queen Mab*. Talfourd, then Serjeant, defended Moxon, and pleaded that there "must be some alteration of the law, or some restriction of the right to put it in action"; but the jury were impartial enough to find the publisher guilty, though he received no punishment.[3] Among other works published by Hetherington was one entitled *A Hunt after the Devil*, "by Dr. P. Y." (really by Lieutenant Lecount), in which the story of Noah's ark was subjected to a destructive criticism.[4]

5. Holyoake had been a missionary and martyr in the movement of Socialism set up by ROBERT OWEN, whose teaching, essentially scientific on its psychological or philosophical side, was the first effort to give systematic effect to democratic ideals by organizing industry. It was in the discussions of the "Association of all Classes of all Nations," formed by Owen in 1835, that the word "Socialism" first became current.[5] Owen was a freethinker in all things;[6] and his whole movement was so penetrated by an anti-theological spirit that the clergy as a rule became its bitter enemies, though such publicists as Macaulay and John Mill also combined

[1] Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, i, 100–10. See p. 111 as to other cases.
[2] Art. by Holyoake in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* Cp. *Sixty Years*, per index.
[3] Articles in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* [4] Holyoake, *Sixty Years*, i, 47.
[5] Kirkup, *History of Socialism*, 1892, p. 64.
[6] "From an early age he had lost all belief in the prevailing forms of religion" (Kirkup, p. 59).

with them in scouting it on political and economic grounds.[1] Up till the middle of 1817 he had on his side a large body of "respectable" and highly-placed philanthropists, his notable success in his own social and commercial undertakings being his main recommendation. His early *Essays on the Formation of Character*, indeed, were sufficient to reveal his heterodoxy; but not until, at his memorable public meeting on August 21, 1817, he began to expatiate on "the gross errors that have been combined with the fundamental notions of every religion that has hitherto been taught to men"[2] did he rank as an aggressive freethinker. It was in his own view the turning-point of his life. He was not prosecuted; though Brougham declared that if any politician had said half as much he would have been "burned alive"; but the alienation of "moderate" opinion at once began; and Owen, always more fervid than prudent, never recovered his influence among the upper classes. Nonetheless, "his secularistic teaching gained such influence among the working classes as to give occasion for the statement in the *Westminster Review* (1839) that his principles were the actual creed of a great portion of them."[3]

Owen's polemic method—if it could properly be so called—was not so much a criticism of dogma as a calm impeachment of religion in a spirit of philanthropy. No reformer was ever more entirely free from the spirit of wrath: on this side Owen towers above comparison. "There is no place found in him for scorn or indignation. He cannot bring himself to speak or think evil of any man. He carried out in his daily life his own teaching that man is not the proper object of praise or blame. Throughout his numerous works there is hardly a sentence of indignation—of personal denunciation never. He loves the sinner, and can hardly bring himself to hate the sin."[4] He had come by his rationalism through the influence rather of Rousseau than of Voltaire; and he had assimilated the philosophic doctrine of determinism—of all ideals the most difficult to realize in conduct—with a thoroughness of which the flawed Rousseau was incapable. There was thus presented to the world the curious case of a man who on the side of character carried rationalism to the perfection of ideal "saintliness," while in the general application of rational thought to concrete problems he was virtually unteachable. For an absolute and immovable conviction

[1] Reformers of almost all schools, indeed, from the first regarded Owen with more or less genial incredulity, some criticizing him acutely without any ill-will. See Podmore's *Robert Owen*, 1906, i, 238–42. Southey was one of the first to detect his lack of religious belief. *Id.* p. 222, *n.*

[2] Podmore, i, 246.

[3] Kirkup, as cited, p. 64.

[4] Podmore, ii, 640.