

‘THEIR GROSSER DEGREES OF INFIDELITY’:
DEISTS, POLITICS, NATURAL PHILOSOPHY,
AND THE POWER OF GOD IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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Abstract

In this dissertation I demonstrate that the political views and use of natural philosophy by deists—heretics who denied revelation, active providence, and the authority of priests—in early-modern England were not as subversive as past scholarship suggests. Like other erudite endeavours in the period, a deist conception of God was the foundation for their interpretation of contemporary natural philosophy and political writings. Though many scholars have noted that deists employed contemporary natural philosophy in many of their works, the way deists actually used these writings has not been explored in a comprehensive manner. Moreover, when many historians engage deism, they frequently stop at one deist in particular, John Toland. My dissertation reveals how theology informed deist natural philosophy which in turn was inseparably joined to their political works. The two goals of this study are to remove deists from the sidelines of intellectual debates in early-modern England and place them squarely in the centre alongside other political and natural philosophical authors and to demonstrate that deism cannot be reduced to or encapsulated in the person of John Toland.

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List of Abbreviations

Add.	Additional Manuscript
A S Cod.	All Souls, Codrington Library, Oxford
BL	British Library, London
Bod.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Ch Ch L	Christ Church College Library, Oxford
CUL	Cambridge University Library, Cambridge
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> (1 st Edition)
KSRL	Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
MS	Manuscript
MSS	Manuscripts
PRO	Public Records Office, London
RS	Royal Society of London

Chapter One:

Introduction: William Whiston's Worries

During his Presidency of the Royal Society, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) visited a “Club of Unbelievers, at the Grecian Coffee-house.” He advised the company that the Christian religion was a demonstrable fact and could not be refuted or defeated by their books and pamphlets.¹ Newton, thus, confronted some deists—those heretics who denied contemporary active providence and the authority of priests—who frequented the Grecian.² This gathering underscores the close connection between theology and natural philosophy in early-modern England. As one late seventeenth-century commentator put it in a letter concerning the Royal Society, “two of the most glorious subjects Since the Reformation is one for Learning, the other for Religion....”³ The Scottish mathematician Colin Maclaurin (1698-1746) agreed in his *An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries, in Four Books* (1748): “natural philosophy is subservient to purposes of a higher kind, and is chiefly to be valued as it lays a sure foundation for natural religion and moral philosophy; by leading us, in a satisfactory manner, to the knowledge of the Author and Governor of the universe.” However, he warned that “False schemes of natural philosophy may lead to atheism, or suggest false opinions, concerning the Deity and the universe....”⁴

Modern scholarship confirms that natural philosophy was as much about images of God as it was about facts of nature. Edward B. Davis concludes that “[h]ow God had made the world, how he continued to uphold it, and how the human mind was related to the divine all had implications for natural philosophy.”⁵ The strongest advocate, among many, of this position is currently Andrew Cunningham

who, in several books and articles, convincingly demonstrates that we cannot speak of natural philosophy without at least a tacit nod to the conception of God which supported it. Different confessional allegiances held different pictures of God and hence produced unique natural philosophies.⁶

Early-modern English coffeehouses like the Grecian were the sites of more than warm drink; they also specialised in conversation, debate, and dispute. The informal atmosphere and large open tables with benches, rather than private booths, encouraged discussion of the day's most pressing issues be they political, theological, or natural philosophical.⁷ Certain houses were amiable to specific types of conversation, associations or professions. Beginning in the mid-1660s fellows of the Royal Society frequented the Grecian where they might surround themselves with those who shared an interest in the natural world.⁸ Coffeehouses were also the sites of public lectures on, and demonstrations of, natural philosophical theories. Public science, as the phenomenon of disseminating natural philosophy is known, involved both presenters and authors who created a commodity for witnesses and readers.⁹ Regarding this symbiotic relationship, Steven Shapin argues that science "always bears a relation to the culture of which it is part, and culture demands for its understanding careful attention to the social context. As the audience for science is part of its cultural definition, ... the nature of the audience arises from the particular social context..." in which both exist.¹⁰

Those who held an interest in, or sought to understand, natural philosophy often did so within profound assumptions about the natural world and God. While much attention has been focused on philosophers and those who distributed accounts of natural philosophy the same cannot be said of those who purchased these efforts. On this Roger Cooter and Stephen Pumfrey conclude that we know very little about how these audiences used the knowledge gained from participation in the phenomena of public science. As they put it, our ignorance in this matter is "staggering" and "still cause for widespread concern."¹¹ If a defined audience could be found, then we would be better positioned to comment upon the reception and use of natural philosophy in eighteenth-century England. To find this group, we

return to the Grecian where its nexus of public science, theology, and political debate imprinted itself on one group in particular: the deists.

“When I wrote my treatise about our Systeme I had an eye upon such Principles as might work with considering men for the believe of a Deity & nothing can rejoyce me more then to find it usefull for that purpose.”¹² Newton wrote these words in 1692 to Richard Bentley (1662-1742), classical scholar and future Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. That someone had found the apologetic purpose which was encoded within his *Principia Mathematica* (1687) pleased Newton greatly. As Margaret C. Jacob, John Gascoigne, among others, have demonstrated, the discovery that Newton’s dense mathematical writings might aid the cause of religion provided an impetus for many contemporary sermons and theological writings.¹³ However, as his visit to the Grecian demonstrated, not all those who saw theology lurking among the geometrical diagrams and formulas were as friendly to religion as Newton might have wished. The natural philosopher, and ousted successor to the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics at Cambridge, William Whiston (1667-1752) believed Newton’s writings could be dangerous in the wrong hands suggesting that deists had unfortunately found much support in these “wonderful Discoveries.”¹⁴ In a later work, Whiston named the specific deists he found to be most troubling in this regard. These “unlearned Writers” were “*Collins, Tindal, Toland, Morgan, and Chubb.*”¹⁵ The deists identified by a disciple of Newton as misusing natural philosophy to serve their seemingly irreligious purposes were: John Toland (1670-1722), Anthony Collins (1676-1729), Matthew Tindal (1656-1733), Thomas Morgan (d. 1743), and Thomas Chubb (1679-1747). Before outlining my argument, I will briefly sketch the biographies of the deists about whom Whiston worried and whom we will investigate.

The Cast of Characters:

John Toland

John Toland was born in Ireland in 1670, likely to an Irish priest and his mistress. When he was seventeen Toland entered the University of Glasgow remaining there two years before taking an MA from the University of Edinburgh on 30 June 1690. During his schooling, Toland associated with various Dissenters.

His religious activism continued when he went to London where it impressed Dr Daniel Williams, a leading and wealthy Nonconformist. Williams arranged a stipend of £8 for Toland's travel to Leiden so that he might study with the Protestant scholar Friedrich Spandem, the younger, with the goal of training Toland as a Dissenting minister. Toland returned to England in 1693 when he lost the desire to become a minister. But, he also carried letters of recommendation from Philippus van Limborch and Benjamin Furly, men with whom John Locke was associated during his self-imposed exile after attempts to exclude James II from the crown had failed. After turning his back on Williams, Toland journeyed to Oxford to compose an Irish dictionary. During his time in Oxford (1694-5) Toland became "eminent for railing in coffee houses against all communities in religion, and monarch."¹⁶ He also was known as a "man of fine parts, great learning and little religion," who was writing a book "to show, that there is no such thing as Mystery in our Religion."¹⁷ The result was his most famous book *Christianity not Mysteriorous* (1696), written when Toland was twenty-five years old. The book argued that no mysteries existed in Christianity and that any person who claimed otherwise did so for personal gain. Toland spent the next few years defending the book from the many attacks it generated. He also attempted to secure political patrons, namely Robert Harley and Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury took pity on Toland providing him "an annual stipend, tho' he never had any great opinion of him...."¹⁸ Political events captured Toland's attention and he wrote in support of the Act of Settlement (1701) which secured a Protestant succession to the English Crown by passing the line to the House of Hanover. Toland's support earned him a place—likely at the request of Harley—in the mission led by Lord Macclesfield, to present the Act in person to Sophia, Electress of Hanover and mother of the future George I. While in Hanover, Toland attempted to endear himself to Sophia and her daughter Sophia Charlotte, Queen of Prussia. Through the royal family, Toland met and began a philosophical correspondence with Newton's greatest rival, the natural philosopher and privy counsellor Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716). Between 1701 and 1707 Toland would travel at least three more times to the Continent and Hanover. Upon his return to England in 1702, Toland started work on his *Letters to*

Serena (1704) which resulted from the discussions with the Queen and her philosopher. *Letters* contained Toland's account of matter and motion among other topics. Also in 1704 Harley, now Secretary of State, briefly employed Toland's skill as a writer, but refused his request for permanent patronage. Toland remained in Holland through 1708, during Harley's fall. He returned after the election of 1710 when Harley regained his position, though Harley continued to ignore Toland. The death of Queen Anne in 1714 temporarily buoyed Toland's hope for political appointment when the Electress Sophia was poised to become Queen of England. Toland believed that his frequent praise for the Hanoverians would be rewarded by the Electress. However, Sophia's death, also in 1714, dashed Toland's dream. After 1715 his literary output declined, though he still commented upon the day's politics in an assortment of pamphlets. By 1720 Toland's most unique work *Pantheisticon* circulated in manuscript. It contained an account of Creation, and the operation of the world. Toland's final years were spent in poverty, resulting from his losses in the South Sea Company Bubble, although he was partially supported by his fellow Irishman Robert Molesworth (1656-1725).¹⁹

Anthony Collins

Anthony Collins was born outside of London on 21 June 1676 into a family of lawyers. His namesake grandfather was a Bencher and Treasurer of Middle Temple and his father, Henry Collins, was called to the bar in 1667 but never practiced. Collins' early schooling took place at Eton before he advanced to King's College, Cambridge in 1693. He moved to Middle Temple in 1694, but never practiced as a lawyer. In 1698 Collins married Martha Child, daughter of Sir Francis Child, Lord Mayor of London and Member of Parliament. That same year Collins came to control some of his father's land, an estate producing £1800 per year. The couple's first child, Henry, died in infancy. In 1701 their second son, Anthony, was born. Before Martha died in April 1703, she and Collins had two daughters: Elizabeth and Martha. After his wife's death, Collins spent much time in the Essex countryside. He moved there permanently in 1715 and held the post of Justice of the Peace until his death in 1729. He also entertained England's elite; Richard Dighton, Collins' former servant, recalled that Collins "was visited several

times by Queen Ann[e's] Noblemen and Ladies of Quality who took delight in walking in his fine gardens....”²⁰ While in Essex, Collins befriended the famed philosopher John Locke (1632-1704). Around 1704 Collins began a friendship and correspondence with Tindal and with Toland who stayed at Collins’ estate on at least two occasions. Collins entered the literary and theological scene of his age in 1706 in a pamphlet war with the Newtonian and theologian Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) after Henry Dodwell (1641-1711) suggested in print that the soul was naturally mortal. Confrontations with Newton’s disciples continued throughout Collins’ life. He and Whiston would have a dozen personal meetings in coffeehouses and would challenge one another in print during the 1720s over the meaning of prophecy. In 1711 Collins and Tindal met Whiston and Clarke to discuss theology at the home of Lady Caverly and her common-law husband Sir John Hubern. According to Whiston the four had “friendly debates about the truth of the Bible and the Christian Religion.”²¹ Although he would continue to publish, Collins produced his most famous book in 1713: *A Discourse of Free-Thinking*.²²

Matthew Tindal

Mathew Tindal was possibly born in 1653, or even as late as 1657. His parents were both wealthy, and his father, John Tindal, was a minister. Though we know little of his early life, he entered Oxford in the 1670s and studied with George Hickes, who became a Nonjuror when he refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary after 1689. Tindal received a law Fellowship to All Souls College in 1678 (which he held until his death in 1733) earning a BCL in 1679 before proceeding DCL in 1685. The same year as his doctorate, James II sent emissaries to Oxford in an attempt to convert the fellows to Catholicism. Tindal was convinced by the arguments, though critics suspected that his conversion was a matter of convenience and a means to become Warden of the college. However, Tindal failed in his bid to become Warden of All Souls in 1687. He also seems to have lost his Catholic enthusiasm as he converted to Anglicanism in 1688 taking the sacrament on 15 April 1688, the earliest occasion. In addition to his legal responsibilities in Oxford, Tindal had a civil law practice in London. On 7 November 1685 he was “admitted One of the Advocates of yor Grace’s Arches Court of Canterbury,”²³ a society for

civil lawyers. Tindal served the new Protestant government acting as Deputy Judge Advocate of their Majesties' Fleet from 30 May to 8 November 1689. His performance on this and other duties earned him a yearly pension of £200. Tindal's initial publications were political and described the duties of both government and citizens. He entered the day's theological debates in 1706 with his *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted*, which was an attack on rights and privileges enjoyed in the English Church. Tindal's writings on religion culminated in his *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730), a work often described as the deists' bible. Tindal died on 16 August 1733, after an attack of gallstones.²⁴ An epitaph which appeared in *The Bee* claimed that despite Tindal's seemingly irreligious writings "he was possessed in the highest degree of the most valuable virtues—namely, The Love of his Country, the Love of Merit, and the Hatred of Oppression."²⁵

Thomas Morgan

Of all our deists, we know the least about Thomas Morgan who was born in Wales and educated at the Dissenting Bridgewater Academy. He was ordained a Dissenting minister (Presbyterian) on 6 September 1716 and would later take a post with a congregation in Marlborough. During the debates over the Trinity among Dissenters held in 1719 at Salter's Hall, initiated by enthusiasm for the Arian writings of Samuel Clarke, Morgan sided with those who advocated a unitarian view.²⁶ Sometime around 1720, and perhaps earlier, he studied medicine and served as provincial physician, which accounts for the MD designation on many of his publications. He contributed to contemporary debates over medical theory in two publications: *Philosophical Principles of Medicine* (1725) and *Mechanical Practice of Physick* (1735). Both works employed Newtonian mechanics. Around 1726 or 1727 Morgan lost his congregation due to his publications in favour of Arianism. He then moved to Bristol before settling in London. Morgan's solidified his position as a deist with a three volume work entitled *The Moral Philosopher*, which appeared in 1737, 1738, and 1740.²⁷

Thomas Chubb

Thomas Chubb was born to a family of artisans in Salisbury. According to a contemporary, "Mr. Chubb's Person was not stately, he was both short and fat."

Through his father Henry, Chubb received basic instruction in mathematics. The necessities of money meant that Chubb had no other formal education before starting an apprenticeship with a glover in 1694 at age fifteen. After completing his training, Chubb remained with his master, until his diminishing eyesight provoked a change of profession. In 1705 Chubb worked as a tallow-chandler with John Lawrence, a family friend. Around 1711 the debating society, which Chubb initiated in 1705 among his friends, discussed Whiston's *Primitive Christianity Revived*. The Arianism presented in the book held a great attraction for Chubb who then wrote *The Supremacy of the Father Asserted*, in support of Arianism in 1714. Whiston himself was impressed with the work and ensured it saw publication over the winter of 1714/15. Based on the reception of the work, Whiston brought Chubb to London and introduced him to Clarke (perhaps Newton's greatest disciple). Whiston also secured a place for Chubb with his patron Sir Joseph Jekyll (1663-1738), MP and Master of the Rolls, who "allow'd him an annual Salary." As Chubb became more deistical in his thought and writings, Whiston withdrew from him and advised Jekyll to do the same. Whiston cautioned Jekyll "against procuring himself a Blot, by openly supporting [Chubb]; (tho' I never desired him to diminish his Assistance to him in private:) He was not willing to believe my Representation; which yet Time has too certainly verified." Chubb had, Whiston feared, gone from "one of the most judicious *Christians*, without a learned Education, that I had then met with, ... [and] seems to have degenerated in the directly opposite Character of one of the most foolish and injudicious of our modern Unbelievers...." When Jekyll died in 1738, Whiston wrote with approval that "Mr. Chubbe is not in the will which I am not sorry for."²⁸ After two years in London, Chubb longed for the slower pace of Salisbury and returned to the place of his birth. He continued to write theological tracts, which became more deistical as he aged. Chubb never married because he believed that his sparse financial situation could not support a family. When he died Chubb was buried in the "Church-yard in St. Edmond's" next to his friend Lawrence. Chubb did have supporters. Upon his death, one contemporary commented that "So died Mr. Thomas Chubb, in the Sixty-eighth Year of his Age. A Man of profound Judgement, of uncommon Perspicuity, of

unblemished Honesty and Simplicity of Life, of courteous Manners and benevolent Dispositions to his Fellow-Creatures.”²⁹

Recent Deism Historiography

As a topic of historical inquiry, deism has attracted substantial attention. The heresy has been explored recently in theatre performance, literary influences, and in natural law theories among other topics.³⁰ The few works that have attempted to deal with deists collectively have addressed rhetoric, natural religion, and historical argument.³¹ These works have increased our understanding of deists, yet no comprehensive examination of their use of, and in some cases contributions to, contemporary natural philosophy exists. Through a detailed examination of how this specific group in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England read and wrote natural philosophy, we can begin to fill the historical void that Cooter and Pumfrey demonstrate exists. What is more, we are able to paint a more complete picture of deists and deism. Aside from a nod in the direction of Newton, scholars have paid little attention to the extent deists actually used natural philosophy in their writings. Moreover, when historians of science engage deism, they frequently stop at one deist in particular, John Toland.³² This is a trend that transcends histories of science. Toland is the most studied of all deists having four recent biographies in English and numerous articles dedicated to his massive corpus of writings.³³

Modern historians concur with Whiston’s assessment; it has become accepted by many scholars that natural philosophy, Newtonian philosophy specifically, is linked to deism in England.³⁴ This is undoubtedly due to the association of Newton (at the apex of the so-called Scientific Revolution) and deism (traditionally defined as the religion of reason) as the twin pillars of the Enlightenment and the modern world. Peter Gay suggested that “for most of his recorded history man has been a religious animal. After deism, and partly because of it, he was no longer.” This secular revolt had a scientific basis: “The philosophical and the scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century were one and the same, and it was essentially this great revolution, though not led by deists, that gave rise to modern deism.”³⁵ Richard S. Westfall agreed that deism was the inevitable outcome of Newtonian philosophy and the Scientific Revolution, which

“prepared the ground for the deists of the Enlightenment.” Others suggest that we may draw a straight “line of connection from Newton ... through the Enlightenment and the evolution of deism....”³⁶

We may trace the foundation of most current approaches taken towards deists and natural philosophy to Margaret C. Jacob and her path-breaking articles and, more explicitly, to her books *The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689-1720* (1976) and *The Radical Enlightenment* (1981, 2003). Jacob argues that English deists (she calls them Freethinkers)³⁷ were hostile to the established political order supported by Latitudinarian Churchmen and Newtonian philosophy. In order to subvert this system deists constructed alternative schemes of nature to dismantle Newton’s philosophy and the society upon which it rested.³⁸ The key figure in her account is Toland. Jacob’s thesis has gained such widespread acceptance that it has become orthodoxy.³⁹ John H. Brooke and Geoffrey Cantor repeat that Toland and Collins used Newton’s work in a manner that “appeared subversive.” Moreover, Peter N. Miller supports Jacob’s claim that “the antagonism between the freethinkers and the Newtonians stands as one of the main themes in the intellectual history of the early eighteenth century.” The clearest articulation of this position is offered by Paul Russell who concludes that “the members of this circle were very active and hostile critics of Newtonian philosophy and theology in general....”⁴⁰ However, when we read the writings of the deists, both published and unpublished, rather than relying solely on Jacob as our guide, many of the assumed truisms of deism, politics, and natural philosophy do not withstand close scrutiny. This is not to suggest we disregard Jacob’s work. She is to be commended for first bringing to light many of the topics in this present study.

The Importance of Deist Theology

Since natural philosophy was intimately linked to conceptions of God and assumptions regarding His providence, I will emphasise theology to a greater extent than has been the case in previous studies of deists. A deist conception of God and His relationship to humanity may seem counterintuitive for a group of people who, as we will see, are frequently described as Godless. This should not be so, however. The age of deism in England was saturated with views of God that informed the

day-to-day lives of all people, including deists. As J. C. D. Clark argues, early-modern English society was a confessional state and remained so until the mid-1800s. Justin Champion likewise urges historians to be sensitive to the importance of theology as a “destabilising factor” in the political and social lives of Britons because politics and religion “were inherently intertwined projects.” Linda Colley further suggests that religion—specifically a shared sense of Protestantism—was critical in forming early-modern British identities.⁴¹

Recently, James A. Herrick has proposed that the view of deism “as theological rationalism centred on a God who set the universe in motion and then stepped away—though persistent, is no longer tenable.” Yet it remains a common assessment that deists believed God had abandoned the world.⁴² What is more, historians have often presented deists as at best indifferent to religion, or at worst atheists. As Caroline Roberts succinctly put it, deists “certainly paid nothing but lip service to any religious belief.”⁴³ Moreover, David Berman contends that Anthony Collins, John Toland, and other deists were really atheists.⁴⁴ Michael Hunter, and most recently S. J. Barnett, wisely remind us that any discussion of “atheism” is problematic because contemporary theologians agreed neither on the meaning nor characteristics of atheism and as a result early-modern atheists were more shadow than substance.⁴⁵

Commencing with Edward Stillingfleet’s *A Letter to a Deist* in 1677, and perhaps even earlier, competing conceptions of God lay at the heart of disputes between deists and their critics, even if some modern scholars do not always recognise this. Stillingfleet (1635-1699), the future Bishop of Worcester, outlined points of agreement between himself and deists concerning God. The divine being was perfect, the creator of all, and worthy of our prayers. Where Stillingfleet parted ways with deists was that he accepted the New Testament as coming from God via the Apostles and that it was predicted in the Old Testament.⁴⁶ Deists accepted neither prophecy, nor the active God who imparted it. Two decades later Matthias Earbery (ca.1688-1740), Nonjuror and Jacobite, agreed that deists denied God the ability to intervene in the Creation.⁴⁷ By the early eighteenth century, Charles Gildon (1665-1724), himself a reformed deist, claimed that “if the true Notion of

GOD, and his *Attributes* were spread, and fix'd, this Bane of Humane Society wou'd Vanish..."⁴⁸ Thus, correct conceptions of God would apparently halt the heresy. In the *Rehearsal* for 12 February 1707 the editor Charles Leslie (1650-1722), a Nonjuror minister whose anti-deist work Gildon claimed had converted him from the heresy, commented that deists evaluated God's power in terms of human reason and in so doing constrained God's omnipotence.⁴⁹ After the deist controversy had peaked in the mid-1740s, writers who looked back upon it concurred with their predecessors. The anonymous author of *A Letter to the Deists* (1751) told deists their heresy "obviously results from the relation you stand in to God" that separated them from the rest of religion.⁵⁰ John Leland, DD (1691-1766), a nonconformist minister in Dublin, who produced a history of deism, also identified conflicting notions of God as one of deism's key elements.⁵¹

The Argument

When challenges to deism are stripped of their rhetoric, only incompatible notions of God remain.⁵² Because it lay at the root of all aspects of English society, and formed the basis of many intellectual endeavours, including natural philosophy, I place great emphasis on the theology held by each of our deists. In so doing I draw on their respective images of God, notions of human understanding, divine communication via miracles and prophecy, and the role played by priests in religion.

We may usefully describe the forum of public science, political debate, and deism as Jürgen Habermas' public sphere. That is, these discourses took place within an open domain composed of books and pamphlets.⁵³ Though it was in theory an egalitarian arena, in practice some contributions were more praised than others. Because the public sphere in eighteenth-century England contained politics, theology, and natural philosophy, a contribution to any area would have some bearing for the other two. Any faithful account of deists' comments on natural philosophy, therefore, must be sensitive to their observations on politics and theology. Our deists certainly acted in these realms as Edmund Burke's much later account of the French Revolution confirms. He repeated Whiston's list of deists when he happily wrote that they were relegated to "lasting oblivion" but had once been politically troublesome.⁵⁴

The first part (Chapters 2-5) of this dissertation follows a chronological account of our deists within English politics during the period which defines the deist controversy, roughly from 1696 and the appearance of *Christianity not Mystrious* to 1742, with the fall of Robert Walpole's ministry. Each chapter is preceded by a brief account of that era's political issues as a means of introduction and as a reminder that deists lived within these events. Indeed, like others of their age our deists addressed problems of contemporary importance: Jacobites, Whig/Tory divisions, succession of the Crown, the Sacheverell affair, War of the Spanish Succession, split of Whigs in 1718, the Bangorian Controversy, and the South Sea Bubble. Amid these events I consider our deists' theologies and political theories. Further context for our consideration of deists will be taken from the popular depiction of politics and theology found in newspapers, periodicals, and polemics. We will see that deists did not exist solely in a radical subculture, as Jacob argues; nor can their writings be dismissed as mere political ridicule as John Redwood contends.⁵⁵ None of our deists wished to overthrow the institutions of government. Rather, they urged the nation to operate within the tenets of deism.

In the second part (Chapters 6-8) I demonstrate how our five deists understood and incorporated natural philosophy as part of their larger programme of reform based on the theological and political outlook we built in the first part. As in part one, our context will be the public understanding of contemporary natural philosophy. Deists lived within an age fascinated with Newtonian natural philosophy. Like others in eighteenth-century England, deists attempted to understand what Newton had written. To this end, we focus on the products of public science, books, lectures, and sermons, as the yardstick against which to consider deists' writings on this topic. When considering Newton directly, we will be concerned with the contents of the *Opticks*, especially the queries, which had a much greater impact on the learned discourse of the age, due to its English prose composition, than did the more famed *Principia*. We will see that deists did not differ greatly from what their contemporaries had to say about matter, motion, and Newton.

While it is not my intention to provide a comprehensive study of deism, its roots, influence, or fate, I will challenge several assumptions in the historiography of English deism. My aim is to remove deists from the sidelines of intellectual debates in early-modern England and place them where they belong: squarely in the centre alongside other political and natural philosophical authors. While Justin Champion has recently done this for Toland with regard to politics, he did not address natural philosophy. Moreover, by confining scholarly study of deism solely to the writings of Toland, historians are ignoring other figures whom their contemporaries found just as troublesome. An accurate account of deism cannot be found within the writings of one man. It is with these two goals in mind—a desire to set deists in the midst of, not beside, their culture and to demonstrate that deism cannot be reduced to or encapsulated in Toland—that I proceed.

Notes

¹ Newton's visit is described in *The Grub-Street Journal*, 28 August 1735. N.B. All dates are given with the assumption that the year began on 1 January rather than 25 March, correspondence from the Continent is left unaltered. Where possible I have provided dates for the people in this study at their first appearance.

² James H. Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley*, 2 vols. (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1833), 1: 243; James O' Higgins, *Anthony Collins: The Man and His Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 12, 77; Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England 1688-1791* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1986), 260; Frank H. Ellis, "What Swift Did to Collins's Discourse of Free-Thinking and Why," in *Eighteenth-Century Contexts: Historical Inquiries in Honour of Philip Harth*, ed. Howard D. Weinbrot, Peter J. Schakel and Stephen E. Karian (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 85; J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 335.

³ Bod. Tanner MS 21 f. 146. White Kennett to Thomas Tanner, 26 August 1699.

⁴ Colin Maclaurin, *An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries*, in *Four Books* (London, 1748), 3, 4; Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 830-1.

⁵ Edward B. Davis, "Creation, Contingency, and Early Modern Science: The Impact of Voluntaristic Theology on Seventeenth Century Natural Philosophy: An Essay in the History of Scientific Ideas" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1984), 236. This is seen most readily in the work of Isaac Newton. See James E. Force, "Newton's God of Dominion: The Unity of Newton's Theological, Scientific and Political Thought" in *Essays on the Context, Nature, and Influence of Isaac Newton's Theology*, ed. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 75-102.

⁶ Andrew Cunningham, "How the *Principia* Got Its Name; or, Taking Natural Philosophy Seriously," *History of Science* 29 (1991): 388-89; idem, "Getting the Game Right: Some Plain Words on the Identity and Invention of Science," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 19 (1988): 365-89. Not all scholars agree with Cunningham. See the debate between him and Edward Grant in *Early Science and Medicine* 5 (2000): 259-298.

⁷ James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 240-3, 247; Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 553-5; Joad Raymond, "The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere in the Seventeenth Century," in *News, Newspapers and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Joad Raymond (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 120-30.

⁸ Aytoun Ellis, *The Penny Universities: A History of the Coffee-Houses* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1956), 23-4, 82; Larry Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science: Rhetoric, Technology, and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 143, 145.

⁹ Larry Stewart, "Other Centres of Calculation, or, Where the Royal Society Didn't Count: Commerce, Coffee-Houses and Natural Philosophy in Early Modern London," *British Journal for the History of Science* 32 (1999): 133-53; Jan Golinski, *Science as Public Culture: Chemistry and Enlightenment in Britain, 1760-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3; Jan C. C. Rupp, "The New Science and the Public Sphere in the Premodern Era," *Science in Context* 8 (1995): 499, 502; Paul Elliott, "The Birth of Public Science in the English Provinces: Natural Philosophy in Derby, C. 1690-1760," *Annals of Science* 57 (2000): 63.

¹⁰ Steven Shapin, "The Audience for Science in Eighteenth Century Edinburgh," *History of Science* 12 (1974): 95.

¹¹ Roger Cooter and Stephen Pumfrey, "Separate Spheres and Public Places: Reflections on the History of Science Popularization and Science in Popular Culture," *History of Science* 32 (1994): 237, 244.

¹² Isaac Newton to Richard Bentley, 10 December 1692 in *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, ed. H. W. Turnbull vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 233.

¹³ Margaret C. Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976); John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹⁴ William Whiston, *Astronomical Principles of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (London, 1717), 243, 244.

¹⁵ William Whiston, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston* (London, 1749), 109.

¹⁶ Lhwyd to Lister, 6-16 June, 1695 in *Early Science in Oxford*, ed. R. T. Gunther vol. 14, *Life and Letters of Edward Lhwyd*, rpt. ed. (London, 1968), 278. See also Bod. Ballard MS 5 f. 27r. Gibson to Charlett, 9 April 1694.

¹⁷ A_A_ to John Toland, 4 May 1694; For Mr. Toland, 30 May 1694 in *A Collection of Several Pieces of John Toland*, 2 vols. (1729; facsimile reprint, New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1977), 2: 295,312.

¹⁸ BL Add. 4254, f. 188r.

¹⁹ Gavina Luigia Cherchi, "Atheism, Dissimulation and Atomism in the Philosophy of John Toland" (Ph.D. diss., Warburg Institute, 1994), 1-28; Stephen H. Daniel, *John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 5-13.

²⁰ BL Add. 4282, f. 242r. Richard Dighton to Pierre Des Maizeaux, 14 March 1731.

²¹ Whiston, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston*, 182. Whiston stopped attending dinner not because of the company of Collins and Tindal, but because he learned that Caverly and Hubern were not married and could not condone their actions.

²² The modern biography of Collins is O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins*. This should be supplemented with David Berman, "Anthony Collins: Aspects of His Thought and Writings," *Hermathena* 119 (1975): 49-70. There are manuscript lives of Collins in BL Add. 4282 ff. 242r-234v, 244r; BL Add. 4313 ff. 72r-73r.

²³ Bod. Tanner MS 32 f. 229.

²⁴ There is no modern biography of Tindal. A contemporary account, if somewhat critical, is found in Thomas Hearne, *The Remains of Thomas Hearne*, ed. John Buchanan-Brown (London: Centaur Press Ltd., 1966), 48 [30 April 1706], 395 [28 January 1733], 402 [20 August 1733]. Another is found in *The Grub Street Journal*, 23 January 1735. John Andrew Kavcic, "English Deism and Natural Law: The Case of Matthew Tindal" (master's thesis, University of Victoria, 1997), 23-9; John Valdimir Price, "Introduction," in *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730; facsimile reprint, London: Thoemmes Press, 1995), vi-ix; Charles Edward Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford*, 3 vols. (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1924), 3: 72-3, 105; Stephen Nantlais Williams, "Reason Judges Revelation: A Case Study in Buddeus, Tindal and Locke" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1981), 98-147.

²⁵ Quoted in "Stray Notes on Edmund Curll, His Life, and Publication. No. 10—Curll, Budgell, and Pope" *Notes and Queries* 2nd ser. 5 (1858): 489.

²⁶ R. K. Webb, "The Emergence of Rational Dissent," in *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 27-8. On the debates more generally see Roger Thomas, "The Non-Subscription Controversy Amongst Dissenters in 1719," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 4 (1953): 162-186.

²⁷ There is no biography, either contemporary or modern, of Morgan. Our sources come from biographical notes appended to Morgan's publications and from what

contemporaries had to say about him. David Patrick, "Two English Forerunners of the Tübingen School: Thomas Morgan and John Toland," *The Theological Review* 14 (1877): 56; Jan Van den Berg, "Thomas Morgan versus William Warburton: A Conflict the Other Way Round," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 42 (1991): 82-3; Robert E. Schofield, *Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in an Age of Reason* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 128n.28.

²⁸ Leicestershire Record Office, Barker MSS: Whiston Papers f. 125v. Whiston to George Whiston, 30 September 1738.

²⁹ The modern biography of Chubb is T. L. Bushell, *The Sage of Salisbury: Thomas Chubb (1679-1747)* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1967), 4-13. Bushell's main source is Chubb's autobiography *The Author's Account of Himself* in *Posthumous Works of Mr. Thomas Chubb*, 2 vols. (London, 1748), 1: i-viii. Another contemporary account of Chubb is found in the anonymous *A Short and Faithful Account of the Life and Character of the Celebrated Mr. Thomas Chubb* (London, 1747), 1-25. Whiston's comments are found in his *Memoirs*, 276-7.

³⁰ Lawrence Alan Dooley, "Enthusiasts, Jacobites, and Deists: Religion Nonconformity and English Comic Drama, 1700-1737" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2000); Andreas J. Virkus, "Deism and 18th Century Realism" (Ph.D. diss., John Hopkins University, 1997); Kavcic, "English Deism and Natural Law."

³¹ John Byrne, *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion: The Legacy of Deism* (London: Routledge, 1989); James A. Herrick, *The Radical Rhetoric of the English Deists: The Discourse of Skepticism, 1680-1750* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997); J. A. I. Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and Its Enemies, 1660-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). C. J. Betts has studied French deists collectively but I am here concerned exclusively with English deists. See his *Early Deism in France: From the So-Called 'Deistes' of Lyon (1564) to Voltaire's 'Lettres Philosophiques' (1734)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984).

³² Thomas L. Hankins, *Science and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 6; John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 168, 170; Margaret C. Jacob and Larry Stewart, *Practical Matter: Newton's Science in the Service of Industry and Empire 1687-1851* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 19.

³³ Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Study in Adaptations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Daniel, *John Toland*; Robert Rees Evans, *Pantheisticon: The Career of John Toland* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991); Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

³⁴ See James E. Force, "The Newtonians and Deism," in *Essays on the Context, Nature and Influence of Isaac Newton's Theology*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 45-46; Herrick, *The Radical Rhetoric of the English Deists*, 5-6; Peter Harrison, *'Religion' and Religions in the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2; Roland N. Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 56; Gerald R. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22; William Lane Craig, *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 92-101; Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of The Modern World* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 235.

³⁵ Peter Gay, ed., *Deism: An Anthology* (Princeton: D. Van Norstrand Company, Inc., 1963), 10, 21. Recently S. J. Barnett has challenged such an interpretation. See *The Enlightenment and Religion: The Myths of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

³⁶ Richard S. Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 219. In a later work Westfall concluded that Newton himself might be a deist. See “Isaac Newton’s *Theologiae Gentilis Origines Philosophicae*” in *The Secular Mind: Transformation of Faith in Modern Europe*, ed. W. Warren Wager (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982); A. B. Arons, “Newton and the American Political Tradition,” *American Journal of Physics* 43, no. 3 (1975): 209. A recent assessment of this view and an attempt to offer a corrective is found in J. B. Shank, “Before Voltaire: Newtonianism and the Origins of the Enlightenment in France, 1687-1734” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2000).

³⁷ It is important to note that in this study “deist” refers only to English deists and not the more radical French variety. Failure to distinguish between English and French deism is one of the leading causes of confusion and permits unfounded depictions of the people we will be discussing as more radical and godless than the evidence bears. On the terms “free-thinker” and “deist” see James Dybikowski, “Free-Thinkers and Their Enemies: An Introduction,” in *Scepticism, Clandestinity and Free Thinking*, ed. G. Paganini (Paris: Éditions Champion, 2002), 215-217.

³⁸ Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution*, 201-50. See also “John Toland and the Newtonian Ideology,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 307-31.

³⁹ Jacob’s influence is clear in Philip McGuinness, “‘The Hue and Cry of Heresy’: John Toland, Isaac Newton and the Social Context of Scientists,” *History Ireland* 4, no. 4 (1996): 22-27; David Kubrin, “Newton Inside Out!: Magic, Class Struggle, and the Rise of Mechanism in the West,” in *The Analytic Spirit*, ed. Harry Woolf (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*; Daniel, *John Toland*.

⁴⁰ John Hedley Brooke and Geoffrey Cantor, *Reconstructing Nature: The Engagement of Science and Religion, Glasgow Gillford Lectures* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 151; Peter N. Miller, “‘Freethinking’ and ‘Freedom of Thought’ in Eighteenth Century Britain,” *The Historical Journal* 36 (1993): 602; Paul Russell, “Hume’s Treaties and the Clarke-Collins Controversy,” *Hume Studies* 21 (1995): 99. Russell’s source for this conclusion is Jacob.

⁴¹ Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*, 318-361; Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, 18; idem, *Republican Learning*, 251; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 11-54.

⁴² Herrick, *The Radical Rhetoric of the English Deists*, 23. Cf. J. A. Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England 1660-1750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 30; Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29; Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*, 325; Ray Billington, *Religion without God* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 18.

⁴³ Caroline Roberts, “Faith and Freedom (C. 1677-1729),” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1975): 48.

⁴⁴ David Berman, “Disclaimers and Offence Mechanisms in Charles Blount and John Toland,” in *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, ed. Michael Hunter and David Wootton (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1992); idem, “Anthony Collins and the Question of Atheism in the Early Part of the Eighteenth Century,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 75C (1975): 85-102; idem, *A History of Atheism in Britain: From Hobbes to Russell* (London: Routledge, 1990). In the case of Toland, Rhonda Rappaport casts serious doubt on Berman’s assertion. She suggests that the book which Berman used to demonstrate Toland’s supposed atheism is likely not authored by Toland. See her “Questions of Evidence: An Anonymous Tract Attributed to John Toland,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 68 (1997): 339-48.

⁴⁵ Michael Hunter, “The Problem of ‘Atheism’ in Early Modern England,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 35 (1985): 135, 138, 146, 156; “Science and Heterodoxy: An Early Modern Problem Reconsidered,” in *Reappraisals of the Scientific*

Revolution, ed. David C. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 440-3. S. J. Barnett refers specifically to Berman when he refutes this claim in *The Enlightenment and Religion*, 11-12, 68. Other historians, such as Frank E. Manuel and John Byrne, acknowledge that deists believed in God, but pass quickly over this important point. Frank E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 64; Byrne, *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion*, 53.

⁴⁶ DNB, 18: 1263; Edward Stillingfleet, *A Letter to a Deist, In Answer to several Objections Against the Truth and Authority of the Scriptures* (London, 1677), 10-11, 12, 15.

⁴⁷ Alexander Pettit, "Earbery, Matthias (1688?-1740)," in *Britain in the Hanoverian Age 1714-1837: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1997), 211; Matthias Earbery, *Deism Examined and Confuted. In An Answer to a Book Intituled, Tractatus Theologico Politicus* (London, 1697), 187-188.

⁴⁸ Charles Gildon, *The Deist's Manual: or, A Rational Enquiry into the Christian Religion* (1705; facsimile reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), "Epistle Dedicatory."

⁴⁹ DNB, 11: 956, 960; *The Rehearsal*, 12 February 1706/07.

⁵⁰ Anonymous, *A Letter to the Deists, by the Author of God's Universal Goodness Displayed* (London, 1751), 3-4.

⁵¹ DNB, 11: 896; John Leland, *A View of the Principal Deistical Writers That Have Appeared in England in the Last and Present Century*, 3rd ed. 3 vols. (London, 1757), 3: 353; see also his *Serious Reflections on the Present State of Things in these Nations. Being the conclusion of Dr. Leland's View of the Deistical Writers* (London, 1758).

⁵² Stephen Snobelen has recently reminded us of this fact in his study of Newton's "General Scholium" which had been added to the second edition of the *Principia* in 1713. Snobelen argues that Newton's protracted discussion of God's being was included, in part, to distance his view of God from that of deists. See "'God of gods, and Lord of lords': The Theology of Isaac Newton's General Scholium to the *Principia*," *Osiris* 16 (2001): 174, 176, 202.

⁵³ Steven Seidman, ed., *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 231-3; Harold Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Science: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians," *The Journal of Modern History* 72 (2000): 165-6; Thomas Broman, "The Habermasian Public Sphere and 'Science in the Enlightenment'," *History of Science* 36 (1998): 127.

⁵⁴ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France: A Critical Edition*, ed. J. C. D. Clark (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 253.

⁵⁵ Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheism, Freemasons and Republicans* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981); Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion*.

Chapter Two:

Deist Politics and Theology, 1694-1700

England in the 1690s was a nation recovering from the struggle of the Restoration and the turbulent political events of 1688-1689. When James II was deemed by Parliament to have abdicated the crown and William Prince of Orange and his wife Mary Stuart, daughter of James, were installed as King and Queen, many issues regarding the governance of England remained at best unsettled and at worst divisive. The immediate concern related to what form the new government would take: constitutional or divine right monarchy, Low or High Church. Moreover, James did not fade away quietly. He made a last stab to hold his throne in 1690 with the support of the French King Louis XIV to whose court James had fled. The Battle of Boyne, in late August, was a decisive victory for William and marked the end of James' best chances to retain the English crown. Religion was perhaps an even more pressing issue. James' steadfast Catholicism had thrown the nation into revolution, but the securing of Protestantism under William and Mary did not end the debate. It is against this backdrop of religious uncertainty that our deists wrote and in their own way attempted to help England chart a new course in politics and theology. Because many of their critics took issue with the theology held by our deists and since theology was intimately related to politics, we will examine the theological views of our deists in some depth as we proceed to outline their political views against those of their contemporaries.

The Act of Toleration (1689) secured some rights for Dissenters but these were few because the Test and Corporation Acts, banning them for any public office, remained enforced. Those Tories who reluctantly had turned their backs on

the Stuarts remained firm in their demands that England enforce the terms of the Coronation Oath Act especially that portion describing the confession of England as “the protestant religion *established by law*.” Toleration meant that Dissenters were granted “relief from the penalties imposed” upon them, which exempted them from the punishments of the Clarendon Code even though, legally, the Code was still in effect. For Dissenters and moderate Churchmen alike, though in strong opposition to High Churchmen, the Church of England ought to include all Protestants and not be used as a tool of separation and exclusion in society. Some refused to participate in the new religious arrangement and would not swear allegiance to William and Mary claiming that while James lived the oaths given to him could not be abrogated. These nonjurors, though relatively small in number, will frequently appear in this history of deism.¹ The fear of High Churchmen who believed that too much religious tolerance posed both political and religious threats to England was confirmed in 1693 when a young John Toland sailed for England.

Toland Attracts Interest in Oxford

Before Toland returned from his studies at Leiden in August 1693, he had solicited letters of introduction to the philosopher John Locke from Philippus van Limborch (1633-1712), theologian at the Remonstrant Seminary in Amsterdam, and Benjamin Furly (1636-1714), a Quaker who conducted a learned salon at his home.² These were men with whom Locke had associated during his self-imposed exile (1683-88) after attempts to exclude James II from the crown had failed. Toland also spent time with these two, though perhaps not with the closeness he claimed, as Limborch remembered in a letter to Locke sent years later. Toland had “boast[ed] of an intimate friendship contracted with me. I wonder what moves a man whom I have never seen, and about whom I know nothing, to boast falsely of having had familiar conversations with me.”³ Toland also declared a friendship with Jean LeClerc (1657-1736), theologian and literary critic at the Remonstrant Seminary and editor of the literary journal, *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*.⁴ Limborch revealed to Locke that Toland had met LeClerc only twice and at one of those meetings Toland had been rebuffed in attempts at conversation. Despite his misgivings, Limborch obliged Toland and wrote, with a touch of irony, to Locke in

1693 that “If perchance you meet him you will find him, frank, gentlemanly, and not at all a servile Character.”⁵ Furly too recommended Toland to Locke:

I find him to be a free spirited ingenious man; that quitted the Papacy in Jameses time when al men, of no principles were looking towards it, and having once cast off the yোক of Spiritual Authority, that great bugbear, and bane of ingenuity, he could never be perswaded to bow his neck to that yোক again, by whom soever claymed; this has rendred it somewhat difficult to him, to find a way of subsistence in the world, and made him ask my counsell in the case: I told him I know no way for him, but to find out some free ingenious English Gentleman that might have occasion for a Tutor in his family....⁶

Locke did not act on Furly’s request to find employment for Toland who, with the intent of composing an Irish dictionary, then left for Oxford where he would spend much time in the Bodleian and surrounding coffeehouses. To his contemporaries Toland seemed a promising young scholar, though he exhibited some unorthodox views. However, this promise went unfulfilled because impolite behaviour coloured many of Toland’s interactions.⁷

Edmund Gibson (1669-1748), the future Bishop of London (1720-1748), kept a close eye on Toland in Oxford in early 1694 sending frequent assessments to Arthur Charlett (1665-1722), Master of University College, Oxford and soon to be chaplain to William III (1697). Gibson was a constant critic of deism during his life and his correspondence acts as a lens through which to assess the perceived threat deists posed in England.⁸ Persistent accounts of Toland’s irreligious actions troubled Gibson: how “Toland was arraign’d and convicted, in the Coffee-House for burning a Common-Prayer-book, you must have heard.”⁹ A few weeks later in late May or early June, Gibson sent Charlett some biographical details on Toland: while he lived in Scotland, in 1688-9 during his studies for an MA, Toland “was very liberal in his abuses not only of the Arch. Bp but of the Whole Order. He got a rable together, and at the Head of them in the Market place burn’t the Pope; upon wch occasion he made a formal Speech against the then Magistrates o’ the Town for being Episcopal.”¹⁰ Toland thus appeared anti-bishop, if not anti-priest. More curiously perhaps, Toland had reportedly “pretended to work Wonders by some

Secret arts, and so seduced a number of Young Students.” Gibson stated he would “Enquire further into” this unsubstantiated claim of Toland’s magic.

Gibson continued his epistolary narrative to Charlett by outlining how Toland, as a young man, had travelled from Edinburgh to London and endeared himself to the wealthy Dissenter Dr. Daniel Williams (c.1643-1716), who arranged for Toland to study in Leiden to train as a Presbyterian minister. Gibson suggested that the reason why Toland returned to England shortly after arriving in Leiden was that it had been “too long for him to continue in one place, so at the end of the year, he fairly return’d...”¹¹ Toland so intrigued Gibson that he dispatched several persons to collect information to supplement what he already knew. He advised Charlett, “What you have at present is only,” the result of “sudden recollection: I am encouraged to expect Several other particulars from second thoughts and a little enquiry.” Whatever Charlett felt best to do with the information and what action might be taken against Toland, Gibson was confident would be for the best: “I leave this whole matter to you to make what use of it and in what manner you please.”¹²

Charlett, in turn, described Toland’s conduct in Oxford to Archbishop of Canterbury Tenison (1636-1715) in October 1695. As Gibson had hoped, action was taken against Toland whose behaviour had become “so publick and notorious here, that the late Vice-Chancellor ordered him to depart this place, w^{ch} he accordingly promised to do, and did for some time, but afterwards in y^e V-Cr’s absence returned.” During his second stay in Oxford, Toland retained his past positions. Witnesses described “upon Oath, of [his] Trampling on y^e Common prayer book, talking against the Scriptures, commending Commonwealths, justifying the murder of K[ing] C[harles] 1st, railing against Priests in general, with a Thousand other Extravagancys...” What was worse, Toland claimed friendships with “great men” and “pretended to great Intrigues and correspondencys, and by that means abused the names of some very great Men.” This “insolent carriage” left Toland “contemptible, both to y^e Scholars and Townsmen.” Moreover, Toland reportedly prophesied that “he should be a member of Parliament, and then he should have an opportunity of being revenged on Priests....”¹³ Thus, even before he

began a career as polemic author, Toland was well-known, though perhaps not in a manner he would have wished.

Others, in and outside of Oxford, also attempted to trace the origins of Toland whose presence in that city was the source of much speculation. One correspondent, identified only as Mr Anderson, provided the following account to George Ashe, Bishop of Derry (1658-1718) in September 1694. Anderson had been in the company of one Coll Hamill who had heard Toland called Bryan Tolan. Moreover, Toland was possibly the “Bastard sone of Knoughton Tolan’d a priest in the Parish of Devagh [and] Left this County about ten years agoe” who had a light complexion, dark hair, and spoke fluent French. Regarding Toland’s religion, Anderson claimed that “he was a great Searcher after Religion and that he said he tried all Sorts...”¹⁴ Within days of receiving this letter, Ashe passed the information to the Nonjuror Henry Dodwell whose future writings on the soul would cause great controversy: “I have inquired about our Countryman you mentioned, & Received y^e following history.” Toland’s first name purportedly was “Bryan, alias John, alias Tool Tolan, bastard son to Cornelius Tolan a Popish Priest of Enishowen near Dury,...” He goes on to describe him as “black, tall, slender ... with full black eyes, he was sent to Glasgow, has been in Rome & Leyden & Esteamed a very airy talkative man; I can procure you several other particulars relating to him, if there be occasion.”¹⁵ Dodwell seemed satisfied with this account and Ashe sent him no more letters regarding Toland.

Tindal’s Belief in God

In 1694, while Toland was causing concern and frustration in Oxford, Mathew Tindal, another Oxford resident and future deist, described the conditions he believed necessary for holding any truth. As part of his anti-Trinitarian writings, Tindal argued that one cannot believe anything which is beyond one’s intellect. As he put it, any person “obliged to believe a thing, must first know what it is before he can believe it, otherwise he may be obliged to believe he knows not what.” This condition of belief extended to God about whom we cannot believe more than “we can conceive of him ... because Belief is nothing else but the supposing the Idea’s we have of any thing are true; and where we have no Idea’s there is no Subject for

us to exercise our Belief upon.”¹⁶ We are, Tindal noted, able to form an idea of God as a perfect and eternal being. However, to suggest this notion of God applied simultaneously to three beings was something Tindal viewed as blasphemous. Despite outlining these rules of belief, Tindal revealed that many orthodox theologians “thunder it from their Pulpits, that Matters of Faith are above Reason, and that God has a Right to require of us to believe on his Word what we do not apprehend or understand; that is we must believe those Idea’s we have of a Mystery to be true,…” Stephen Nye (c.1648-1719), a notorious Socinian in Oxford, reacted to Tindal’s assertions in 1695. While Nye supported Tindal’s unitarian leanings, he rejected Tindal’s apparent reliance on human reason: “for there are some things which will never be explain’d while the World stands...”¹⁷ This view confirmed the opinion of Jonas Proast, High-Churchman, former chaplain of All Souls College, Oxford, and companion of Nonjurors, who claimed to have overheard Tindal once say “that there neither is, nor can be, any revealed religion,” indicating that reason was all one needed in matters of religion.¹⁸

Tindal maintained that people cannot believe what they do not understand. “The Ideas’ we have,” he wrote, “of God’s Eternity, Infinity, Omnipresence, Omniscience, and all that we are required to believe concerning them, ... [God] has made us capable of having a clear and distinct Idea’s of...”¹⁹ This stance was continued in his characterisation of God’s nature.

For God, who is infinitely happy in himself, could have no other motive in creating man, but to make him happy in this Life, as well as that which is to come; and accordingly if mankind would follow those Rules that are prescribed by God in order to their behaviour towards one another, in what happy, blessed, and flourishing State would they be in?

Thus, God did not demand anything for Himself.²⁰ As we will see this view had strong political and religious implications.

Tindal on the Rights of Political Subjects and the Jacobite Threat

In addition to the theological tracts of 1694, Tindal wrote two books which outlined his political theory while articulating the duties citizens bore to one another.²¹ With *An Essay Concerning the Laws of Nations, and the Rights of Sovereigns*, Tindal characterised the general laws of nations as the rules “observed

by Nations in the intercourse with one another.” These rules allowed for the mutual prosperity of nations; it was the spirit of co-operation codified.²² The laws had their origins in a more basic relationship: “the Law of Nations and Nature, is in effect the same.” As Tindal explained, “[t]he Law of Nature (I mean that part of it which concerns the Duty of Man to Man) is nothing else but that mutual Aid and Assistance, which by reason of their common Necessities one Man owes to another, without the observance of which Mankind could not well subsist.” The welfare of individuals brought forth the advancement of nations. When one spoke of these individuals collectively, Tindal suggested the term “Bodies Politick” and their relations as the “Law of Nations.”²³

While in the book Tindal discussed political obligations in the abstract, its origins lay in a concern which was very real. Ever since the Revolution of 1688-89, the nation had an exiled king in James II. The threat of his return remained a constant fear during the reign of William and Mary. It was no idle worry. In the winter of 1691-2 (Ailesbury Plot) and again in 1694 (Lancashire Plot) two schemes to restore James II were discovered and thwarted.²⁴ To loyal Jacobites who refused to accept the legitimacy of another ruler of England while a Stuart monarch lived, James II still held authority. Tindal attempted to undermine this position by explaining that there was no “instance, where a deposed Prince was allowed to erect a Court of Judication in another King’s Dominion....” Once a ruler had been deposed by the inhabitants of a nation who acted for the collective good that ruler ceased to wield any power in his former kingdom. Monarchs ruled by consent of those over whom they ruled.²⁵ He “that loseth his Empire, and can no longer protect People, or administer Justice, dwindles into a Robber or Pirate, if he grants Commission to take the Goods or Ships or any Nation; and they that accept Commission from him, ... cannot be reckon’d as Members of a Civil Society....”²⁶ This statement was particularly relevant because in late 1692 James II had commissioned ships to attack English vessels in a failed attempt to undermine the nation’s commerce. Tindal spoke with authority on the subject of maritime law. In addition to holding a DCL from All Souls, he had served as Deputy Judge Advocate of their Majesties’ Fleet from 30 May to 8 November 1689. Siding with other civil

lawyers who argued in favour of prosecuting the crews of these Jacobite ships as pirates, Tindal concluded that any actions taken in support of the former ruler were illegal and contrary to the law of nature.²⁷

The second political work Tindal produced in 1694 continued his arguments in favour of William III and the religious settlement. *An Essay Concerning Obedience to the Supreme Powers, and the Duty of Subjects in all Revolutions* attempted to “persuade People to act for the Good and Prosperity of the Community they are Members of, and in which their own is included.”²⁸ Collective good was to take priority over personal prejudice. The role of government, like the providence of God, was “*The Care of other Peoples Safety.*”²⁹ In so doing governments were to bind the individuals into a kind of commonwealth composed of the “Body Politick” made up of “Members of a Civil Society” who act for the best interest of that society. In Tindal’s phrase “Governments will have all the Power which is necessary for the Ends of Government, by the Peoples giving them that Power which by the Law of Nature they had over the lives of one another....”³⁰ Those who are governed hold the real power in society; they are active participants in the nation.

In his political writings Tindal was indebted to John Locke. Indeed, in early 1697 Tindal would send Locke a copy of *An Essay Concerning Obedience to the Supreme Powers* along with a letter advising the famed philosopher that “I have got more tru[e] and useful knowledge by your writings than all the books I ever read.”³¹ Of particular interests for Tindal, who sought a precedent for supporting William III while shunning James II, was Locke’s position that government by consent of the people was a natural consequence of the law of nature.³² To conduct one’s self in compliance with this regulation, Locke argued, meant acting in a manner which best preserved the common good. As he put it, the “Law, teaches all Mankind, who will but consult it, that being equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his Life, Health, Liberty, or Possessions.”³³ Moreover, Tindal agreed with Locke that lingering support for James II and support for passive obedience threatened the stability of England after 1689. To not accept the present state of government,

which came into being by the collective will of those who are governed, was, Tindal argued, to be at war with the monarch.³⁴

Tindal specifically set his position against alternative forms of governance, such as Tory-promoted passive obedience. It was “very evident, That whatever Rights or Liberties men did not part with to their Governors, those they have still retained in themselves; and no person can have a right to their Obedience in those things wherein they have given him no right to command....”³⁵ What was more, “Had the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience been all-along practised, Mankind would have been in a more slavish condition than any now are, that live under the most Tyranical Governments.” Subjects may only acquiesce their rights where it improved the public good, and not for the benefit of one particular group (or political party), or the monarch.³⁶

The Jacobites were Tindal’s target. It was they who wished to install a deposed monarch who threatened to enslave the nation in Catholicism. The return of the Stuarts would bring a return of Popish religion and the destruction of Protestant freedom. Since, the restoration of Charles II in 1660, which had brought with it the Clarendon Code of religious legislation, was Tindal explained “(as I think no Protestant can doubt it) to the disadvantage, and against the good and interest of the Nation, it must be a sin.”³⁷ As Jacobites acted against the law of nature and had to be fought at every opportunity, so too did any doctrine that threatened the public good. Timely political events like the fear of Jacobite rising and actual Jacobite plots were often the impetus for deists’ writings.

Politics and Mystery in Religion

As Tindal challenged Jacobites, Toland too was writing in Oxford. Aside from cultivating a reputation as a braggart, Toland became known to some around the university as a “man of fine parts, great learning and little religion,” who was composing a book “to show, that there is no such thing as Mystery in our Religion.”³⁸ Others too knew of the forthcoming work. Shortly after returning to England Toland sent some papers to an unknown correspondent, whom Toland desired to pass them to John Freke (c.1652-c.1714), lawyer, Whig pamphleteer, friend to both Locke and the late first Earl of Shaftesbury. Perhaps Toland was

attempting to secure Whig party employment by alerting Freke to his talent with the pen. Freke, however, was not impressed with what he read and in late March 1695 brought Toland's papers to the attention of Locke.³⁹ After considering the manuscript pages, Locke replied: "I thank you for the packet you sent me and the character in it of the gentleman I enquired after." Locke then discussed Toland's apparent involvement, while Toland was on the Continent, in an abridged version of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. He ended with resignation over Toland's use of his philosophy in the forthcoming work: "he that buys it, and when he has it may do with it as he pleases."⁴⁰ Freke had anticipated a more detailed critique and penned another letter to Locke in an attempt to draw this out of him.

Accept my thanks for yours of the 8th which I received together with Mr T[oland]'s Papers but give me leave to tell you that I hoped you would have said something to me of your opinion both of his Tract (I mean as much as you have seen of it) and of the man with respect to the Resolutions he seems by his Letters to have taken for my own part I confess I have noe great satisfaction in either.⁴¹

Locke, it seems, thought silence the best answer concerning Toland.

There is much to consider in Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious, or a Treatise Shewing That There is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor above it that no Christian Doctrine can be Properly Call'd A Mystery* (1696). The following focuses on theology and natural philosophy with an eye to Justin Champion's recent characterisation of Toland as a politician "first and foremost."⁴² Toland first released the work anonymously in late 1695. However, wishing to capitalise on the notoriety generated by the book, which anonymity prevented, Toland affixed his name on the title page and in advertisements, for the second edition, which appeared in June 1696.⁴³

Toland began by describing the atmosphere of religious tolerance as he saw it. Such was "the deplorable Condition of our Age, that a Man dares not openly and directly own what he thinks of Divine Matters, tho it never so true and beneficial, if it but very slightly differs from what is receiv'd by any party, or that is establish'd by Law." Despite the promises of religious peace following the Revolution of 1689, Toland believed that things had not improved in spite of the fact the Toleration Act

should have signalled a Protestant victory over the tyranny of Catholicism and ushered in an era of individual rights versus collective obedience.⁴⁴ It was unfortunate, wrote Toland, that official doctrine and party allegiances coloured the religious canvas of the nation and prevented the spirit of the Act from flourishing. These forces of conformity were so restricting that, Toland claimed, all Dissenters must “keep perpetual Silence” regarding their beliefs.⁴⁵ This was nowhere more evident than in the question of mysteries in religion, which Toland charged had been created by priests in an attempt to secure their privileged position in society as the sole interpreters of God’s words. In order to protect their status, priests opposed all honest inquiry into religion, branding all those who attempted to do so as atheists. Toland identified such clerical actions as priestcraft and assured his readers that it was this that he combated and not Christianity itself.⁴⁶ Indeed, like our other deists Toland would frequently identify himself as a Protestant Dissenter. In turn priests were supported by a certain political element which viewed deviation from orthodoxy as dangerous to the welfare of the nation, which secured only through conformity.

Toland hoped to reveal that mysteries had no rightful place in religion and in so doing allow people to think for themselves and become, in Tindal’s phrase, the body politic.⁴⁷ Religious and political divisions harmed the country and hindered individual freedom: “If you be Orthodox to those, you are a Heretick to these. He that sides with a Party is adjudg’d to Hell by the Rest; and if he declares for none, he receives no milder Sentence from all.”⁴⁸ This atmosphere of conformity had forced Britons to accept mysteries in religion for fear of being an outcast. Forced belief, however, was not true belief.

The God described in *Christianity not Mysterious* and indeed the God that underlies Toland’s entire corpus reveals Himself and His plan, in a manner which is reasonable to humanity. Such a conception of God was likely a reaction against opinions expressed to the contrary by the Anglican apologist, and canon of Christ Church, Oxford, Robert South (1634-1716). Prior to the composition of *Christianity not Mysterious*, South had preached a sermon entitled “Christianity Mysterious, and the Wisdom of God in Making it so,” which argued that God

delivered “to mankind a religion so full of mysteries as the Christian religion certainly is, and was ever accounted to be.”⁴⁹ For South, God and Christianity are mysterious; there are things that people must believe even if they do not understand them. It was a matter of faith over reason; it was also a matter of priestly assistance versus personal, private experience in religion.

Conversely, Toland claimed that God “who has enabled us to perceive Things, and form judgments of them, has also endu’d us with the power of suspending our judgment about whatever is uncertain, and of never assenting but to clear Perceptions.”⁵⁰ What cannot be known with certainty need not be known; it is unimportant. God does not trick or lie He is bound by His goodness not to deceive.⁵¹ Thus, “Whoever reveals anything, that is, whoever tells us something we did not know before, his words must be intelligible, and the Matter possible. This rule holds good, let God or Man be the revealer.” This constraint does not diminish God’s power; it is an acknowledgement of divine righteousness. God may indeed act in a contrary manner, but His love for humanity prevents it. As Toland phrased it, “I demand to what end should God require us to believe what we cannot understand?”⁵² This epistemology extended to knowledge of God: “what I don’t conceive,” wrote Toland, could not provide “right Notions of God....”⁵³

Lockean Epistemology in Toland’s Theology

Toland differentiated between important and unimportant knowledge in religion, politics, and as we will see natural philosophy, by borrowing terms from Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which he lauded as “the most useful Book towards attaining universal Knowledge....”⁵⁴ He claimed to have distinguished in the model of “an excellent modern Philosopher, the *Nominal* from the *Real Essence* of a thing.”⁵⁵ The unnamed philosopher was indeed Locke according to whom real essences made a thing what it was by virtue of its internal structure. Real essences, however, could never be known; neither human senses nor microscopes were powerful enough to penetrate into the microstructure of things and reveal real essences.⁵⁶ As Locke put it: our knowledge comes “short of the reality of things.” He hypothesised, and Toland accepted, that ideas, and hence our knowledge, comes from sensation and reflection upon it. One’s reason was the

mental contemplation of the agreement or disagreement of ideas.⁵⁷ All that could be studied therefore were nominal essences, names representing observed properties; concepts used to group things, not necessarily corresponding to the unknown real essences.⁵⁸ Toland concurred that God provided humanity the capacity to know only nominal essences (necessary knowledge); God did not command the understanding of real essences (needless knowledge). An adequate idea of anything, therefore, was knowledge of nominal essences. “[N]othing can be said to be a mystery,” Toland claimed, “because we are ignorant of its Real Essence, because, since it is no more knowable in one thing than in the other, and it is never conceiv’d or included in the ideas we have of things.”⁵⁹ Thus, all necessary knowledge communicated by God through the Bible or the book of nature would be in plain language. Mysteries were unknowable real essences and therefore needless knowledge.

The same reasoning extended to natural philosophical investigations. As Toland explained: “I understand nothing better than this Table upon which I am now writing: I conceive it divisible into Parts beyond all imagination; but shall I say it is above my Reason because I cannot count these parts not distinctly perceive their Quantity and Figures?”⁶⁰ Toland believed that his table was composed of tiny particles of matter in spite the fact he had never seen them. “The reason,” he clarified, “is because knowing nothing of Bodies but their properties, God has wisely provided we should understand no more of these than are useful and necessary for us; which is all our present condition needs.” In the same way that he had never seen God, Toland was confident he knew some divine attributes because God never deceived him: “As for God, we comprehend nothing better than his attributes. We know not, it’s true, the Nature of that eternal Subject or Essence wherein infinite Goodness, love, knowledge, power and Wisdom coexist; but we are not better acquainted with the real Essence of any of his creatures.”⁶¹ People knew as much about the structure of tables as they did about God who ensured that all necessary knowledge of Himself and of nature would be within the intellectual capacity of those who sought it. This picture of God contrasts sharply with that offered by theologians such as South and other High Churchmen who characterised

God “as an infinite being, ... inconceivable in his purposes, and inexpressible in his attributes; ... He is another world in himself, too high for our speculations, and too great for our descriptions.”⁶² Their God was not bound to aid humanity in learned endeavours in the way that Toland and our other deists believed.

For Toland, whenever God provided a revelation, it conformed to human understanding. Regarding the Bible Toland wrote that the New Testament is thought to contain many things which we cannot know without revelation. Moreover, even if things were revealed, they might exceed the limits of our faculties. Toland replied that the Bible contained nothing “but what is fully discovered to us, and what we fully comprehend.”⁶³ We know God by our reason, so too do we know His revelation. In cases where the meaning of revelation was obscure, Toland believed it must be dismissed because “all matters reveal’d by god or man, must be equally intelligible and possible....” God was immutable and His words self-consistent.⁶⁴ This axiom included miracles, which, as Toland explained, must not be contrary to reason, which was a bright light dispelling “all Darkness,” and exploding “forged Miracles, [and] unreasonable Mysteries.” God only did miraculous things that benefited humanity.⁶⁵

Toland’s Suspected Socinianism

Toland’s views drew many refutations. Critics, such as Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), Peter Browne (d. 1735), Francis Atterbury (1663-1732), Edward Stillingfleet, and others, believed he was guilty of Socinianism, a heresy founded in Poland during the Radical Reformation by Laelius Socinus (1525-1562) and his nephew Faustus Socinus (1538-1604).⁶⁶ It was a unitarian religion that proposed nothing in the Bible contradicted reason, though aspects of it may be above reason. What is more, the Bible contained no real mysteries. Difficult and obscure passages were tests of the reader’s faith, only a true believer would be able to penetrate the dense text. Socinians also denied the doctrine of predestination, arguing that it made God the author of sin. Rather, they believed that God offered salvation to all people. The heresy established itself in England during the 1640s quickly becoming a feared spectre among the orthodox. Denials of predestination threatened the Calvinist theology of the English Church. Moreover, their depiction of Christ as originally a

human and not a divine being denied the doctrine of the Trinity.⁶⁷ Opponents were not, however, consistent in their use of the term. There were at least seven different meanings of “Socinian” in England. In the case of the deists, critics seemed most concerned with the application of reason to religion and the denial of biblical mysteries as deism’s key Socinian traits.⁶⁸ Considering the words of John Biddle (1615-1662), one of the earliest Socinians in England, we see the similarity between Toland’s and the Socinian position on mysteries:

God, who has all Men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of His Truths, has made his Revelations so intelligible, as to make it plain and easy to all Men, as well to idiots, as to the most subtle Philosophers. Therefore it is, God never uses any Term to teach us his Mysteries, but what we have a clear and distinct idea of.⁶⁹

Critics could also point to Toland’s associations during his time in Oxford as further evidence of his Socinian sympathies. It is likely that around 1694 Toland had met with Stephen Nye, the most notorious Socinian in Oxford. However, Nye’s criticism of Toland’s later works, and those of Tindal, makes it unlikely that the two were close.⁷⁰

The Bishop of Worcester, Edward Stillingfleet, also coloured Toland as a Socinian. He asserted that Toland had demonstrated how Locke’s philosophy led to a denial of belief where one could not form clear ideas. Stillingfleet further argued that Toland and Locke were allies in this endeavour. Toland did agree with Locke that ideas came from sensation and the reflection upon it, and that we cannot know real essences. In the case of substance, it was “we know not what,” which caused our sensations of nominal essences. In denying certain knowledge of substance, Stillingfleet believed that Toland, and hence Locke, were denying the Trinity. Peter Browne, the future Bishop of Cork and Ross (1710), who first came to notice for his answer to *Christianity not Mysteriorious*, agreed with Stillingfleet when he noted that we know God is spirit and not material. If one accepted the outcome of Toland’s work and denied an ability to know substances, then this assertion would not hold true.⁷¹ Alternatively, Stillingfleet retorted that we must be able to form some ideas that do not come from the senses. As he put it:

I desire it may be consider'd that this Doctrine supposes, that we must have *clear and distinct Ideas* of whatever we pretend to any certainty of in our Minds, and that the only Way to attain this certainty, is by comparing these *Ideas* together. Which excludes all certainty of Faith and Reason, where we cannot have such *clear and distinct Ideas*. But if there are many things of which we may be certain, and yet can have no *clear and distinct Ideas* of them ... then this cannot be the *Means of Certainty*....⁷²

Locke's method, Stillingfleet stated, led only to knowledge of appearances, not of reality. The Bishop and Locke exchanged several pamphlets on the issue as Locke attempted to distance himself from Toland.⁷³

Toland's use of Locke would, in later years, bring him into conflict with the reverend Francis Hare (1671-1740), DD, Whig, and future Bishop of Chichester (1731-1740). Despite his past actions, which expressed some sympathy for deviation in orthodoxy—namely Hare's attempts to shelter the Arian Samuel Clarke from Convocation in 1714—Hare believed that Toland's writings were dangerous. In 1720 Hare challenged Toland in the postscript to the fourth edition of his *Church Authority Vindicated* by claiming that "Mr. Toland ... has some resemblance to ... Mr. Locke, (who ... is often quoted to support Notions he never dreamed of)."⁷⁴ Toland answered the accusation in a letter published in the *Post Man* on 2 February 1720. There he responded that "I have never named Mr. *Locke* in any Edition of that Book; and that far from *often quoting him*. I have not as much brought one Quotation out of him to *support notions he never dream'd of*." Toland also hoped that Locke's own denials of partnership with him would be sufficient to dispel any thoughts to the contrary.⁷⁵

The platonist, John Norris (1657-1711) stated that Toland was a Socinian and that *Christianity not Mysterious* demonstrated the slippery slope from Socinianism to deism ending in atheism. Indeed, in 1698 Norris explicitly identified those who denied religious mysteries as "practical atheists."⁷⁶ According to Norris, people like Toland either "*Humanize* God, or *Deify* themselves and their own Rational Abilities." As a way to cure his errors, Norris suggested that Toland read and reflect upon Robert Boyle's *Things Above Reason* (1681).⁷⁷

Though now known mainly for his natural and experimental philosophy, in his day Boyle (1627-1691) was an admired lay-theologian. As Stillingfleet wrote to

Boyle, “Your greate Name is deservedly placed, not onely for Your deepe search into nature, but your successful pains in vindicating the Honour of Religion.”⁷⁸ Boyle’s apologetic reputation continued to increase after his death through his bequeathing money to “Preach Eight Sermons in the yeare for proveing the Christian Religion ag^t notorious infidels (*viz*) Atheists, Theists...,” known as the Boyle Lectures.⁷⁹ Among his many religiously-minded books were *Of the High Veneration Man’s Intellect Owes to God* (1685) and *Some Physico-Theological Consideration About the Possibility of the Resurrection* (1675). In these works Boyle repeatedly described human understanding as severely limited and totally unable to comprehend God. Foretelling some of Norris’ arguments against Toland, Boyle claimed that “how great an effect and mark of ignorance, as well as presumption, it is, for us Mortals to talk to God’s Nature and the Extent of His Knowledge, as of other things we are able to look through, and to Measure.”⁸⁰ In an unpublished work, Boyle commented specifically on deists stating that they must “swallow greater improbabilities, than Christians ... they must think it fitter to believe, that chance, or nature, or superstitions, should perform wonderful and hardly credible things, than that the great author of nature, God, should be able to do so.”⁸¹ Boyle had composed *Things Above Reason* to challenge Socinians by demonstrating the many things that are above human reason, which must be accepted entirely on faith. Humanity’s inability to understand the entirety of Scripture, and indeed the entirety of nature, Boyle argued, emphasised our absolute dependence on divine revelation.⁸² If we cannot understand what God has revealed, the fault lies with us and not with God. Norris agreed with Boyle’s position by claiming that opponents of Christianity placed their intellectual limitation upon God and “go about to comprehend and determine what God can, and ought to do.”⁸³

Jean Gailhard, author of *The Complete Gentleman* (1678), agreed that Toland was Socinian in his thinking and mistaken in his conclusions. Gailhard too emphasised the weakness of human reason: “We do not destroy our Reason when we submit and make it subordinate to Scripture, for humans must depend upon divine reason, or else ‘tis blasphemously to deny there is more of and better Reason in God than in Man.” The limits of human reason, Gailhard proposed, invariably

made some thing mysteries and Toland's conclusions false. "Certainly the finite cannot know the infinite," Gailhard wrote in frustration, "but as much, and in such a degree, and the Infinite is pleased to communicate himself; ... so in a Spiritual Light and Life 'tis only as God is pleased to reveal, and as Man is capable to receive...."⁸⁴ For Gailhard the question was one of limitations. As a finite being in his thinking and understanding, Toland could not possibly know anything about the infinite mind of God.⁸⁵

Not everyone approved of Gailhard's approach with Toland. The country parson and Whig propagandist, William Stephens (c.1647-1718) rebuffed what he viewed as "a Flourish of wild Rhetoric ungovernably sallying into sundry Metaphors." In Stephens' opinion, Gailhard had greatly exaggerated the dangers of Socinianism because "[n]o one of a hundred ... knows any thing of *Socinus*." He also found the link between Socinianism and deism highly dubious.⁸⁶ While Stephens was no friend of deism, he and Toland had a relationship. In 1717 Stephens trusted Toland to ensure that his book was published. While there is no record of Stephens publishing any work around this date, we may glean a hint of its contents from the letter of inquiry he sent to Toland. The work was a political one, which addressed the rights of Protestants at the hands of Parliament. Perhaps Toland had, Stephens surmised, waited to print the work until Parliament was ready to deal with the issue. If Toland felt it appropriate to deliver the manuscript to the printer, Stephens requested "two dozen copies to give to my acquaintances."⁸⁷ That Stephens entrusted Toland with the publication of his work suggests that the two were at least acquaintances, though the extent of their friendship remains speculative.

In 1696 Stephens composed his own anti-deist tract, *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England*, in which he linked the growth of deism in England to foreign travel among young men such as Toland. It was, however, the prevalence of prejudice in religion which prevented toleration of Protestant sects under the banner of an English Church, that allowed deism to gain a foothold in the nation. Rigid definitions of Church and doctrine encouraged radical dissenters, like deists. Writers like Gailhard who would not allow difference of opinion to exist in religion,

were a particular target. Stephens submitted that an elimination of prejudice within the Church of England would halt deism.⁸⁸

Non-Socinian Criticisms and Toland's Responses

Critics who did not identify Toland as Socinian nevertheless wrote critiques similar to those who did. Thomas Beverley (fl. 1670-1701) in *Christianity the Great Mystery* (1696) countered Toland's suggestion that whenever God reveals anything it must be entirely comprehensible. He maintained that "*Revelation* is a Manifestation of God to his Intellectual Creatures from the Secret of his own Purpose, and Deeps of his Council towards them, or any of them, above what was made known to them...."⁸⁹ Ironically, Beverley's admonishments to Toland came during his own explorations (from 1689 to 1700) into the mysteries of prophecy in which Beverley had repeatedly tried and failed to determine the coming of Christ.⁹⁰ Edmund Elys (fl. 1707), a Nonjuror, who had formerly been imprisoned in 1659 under suspicion of being an enemy to the Commonwealth, attacked Toland's assumption that we know God's attributes. He alleged that Toland's views were created in conceit: "[A] due Reflexion upon the true IDEA OF GOD in his [Toland's] own Soul, and in the Soul of all Men, in the Contemplation whereof we may easily discern this Truth, that the several divine Attributes are several Significations or Manifestations of the one Being absolutely Infinite and incomprehensible."⁹¹

Beginning in early November 1697, Toland responded to his critics.⁹² Where God's demands on humanity were concerned, Toland remained unrepentant. Any person, he argued, who "employs his Reason to the best of his Ability to find out Religious Truth, in order to practise it, does all that God desires: for God, ... will not command Impossibilities...."⁹³ This was true because God provided human reason as the only means to "distinguish Truth from Falshood, that alone must be the way to find the one, and avoid the other." The use of reason—and reason without priestly guidance—must lead to truth in religion.

Against charges of Socinianism, Toland made specific answers. Referring to himself in the third person, he claimed "I cannot forbear admiring how Mr. Toland should be deem'd ... Socinian," because *Christianity not Mysterious* contained a

refutation of Socinian Christology. Moreover, Toland denied the existence of actual Socinians in England arguing that those who call themselves such are “*Unitarians*, who vulgarly pass under that name,” and that their theology is “very different from that of Socinus.”⁹⁴ As final proof of his innocence, Toland quoted a paragraph from *The Agreement of the Unitarians with the Catholick Church*, a recent unitarian work, which referred specifically to Stillingfleet’s characterisation of Toland.

I know not what it was to his Lordship’s purpose to fall upon Mr. Toland’s Book ... if he would needs attack the Book, he should have dealt fairly’. ... I dare to affirm Mr. Toland does not know his own Book in the Bishop’s Representation of it’. ... *Do we offer this Book against the Trinity of the Realists? Was it written with Intention to serve us? Does it contain any of our Allegations from Reason, against the Trinity ...* We desire him to answer to the Reason in our own Books against the *Trinity* of the *Tritheists*. But to these he says not a word, but only falls upon Mr. Toland’s Book; *in which, or for which we are not in the least concern’d*.⁹⁵

We know that Toland found some measure of satisfaction in this passage because he included it in two more publications in an attempt to refute charges of Socinianism.⁹⁶ When persistent denials did not satisfy his opponents, Toland belittled their definition of Socinianism suggesting it was an empty characterisation.⁹⁷ While he still denied being one, Toland noted the irony that suspected Socinians “have been juster to me than my pretended Orthodox appeasers [sic].” It was perhaps this treatment that prompted Toland to write a tract advocating toleration towards and fair treatment of Socinians.⁹⁸ Despite Toland’s best efforts, he would be plagued by charges of Socinianism throughout his life.

In *Vindicius Liberius* (1702), written in response to the Lower House of Convocation proceeding (unsuccessfully) against *Christianity not Mysterious*, Toland defended his argument that we know as much about God as we do about any other part of the Creation. He repeated that his purpose was merely in

showing that we knew not the real Essence of anything in the World, let alone of GOD: that Things were only known to us by their Properties, yet that we had not a distinct View even of all the Properties of any Thing at once: that every Pebble and Spire of Glass being in many of their Properties, and altogether in their Essence, above our Understanding, nothing ought to be peculiarly call’d a *Mystery* on this Account, since every Thing was so: and that therefore when we knew as many of the Properties of any Thing as made us understand the Name of it, and as were useful and necessary for us,

this was enough for our present Condition, and we might be reasonably said to comprehend it.

Moreover,

I conclude that nothing is a *Mystery* because we know not its Essence, since it appears that it is neither knowable in it self, nor ever thought by us. In a word that it was too general a Notion, making all Things Mysteries alike; whereas something more particular was intended by the Word, since one Thing was a *Mystery* and not another. So I declar'd my self fixt in the Opinion that *what infinite Goodness has not bin pleas'd to reveal to us, we are sufficiently capable to discover our selves, or need not understand it all.*⁹⁹

Toland maintained that everything being equally mysterious, we have the same level of knowledge concerning God as we have of the Creation. This was not a defect in human reason; rather, it is what God intended. People must recognise that those things God wishes known (nominal essences) will be known and that some things will remain unknowable (real essences). What is more, things that seem above human reason are neither important nor necessary for this life or a proper Christian existence.

Unfulfilled Expectations of *Christianity not Mysterious*

Toland returned to Ireland in early March 1697 eager to capitalise on the fame (or infamy) which *Christianity not Mysterious* brought him. His aim was to become secretary to John Methuen (c.1650-1706), the new Whig Lord Chancellor.¹⁰⁰ Not waiting to be offered a job from Methuen, Toland boasted of his expected position. He chose a volatile time in which to insert himself into the midst of Anglo-Irish politics. In 1697 the Irish Parliament would ratify the Treaty of Limerick which had ended William III's campaigns in the nation. What is more, cheaper woollen exports, which competed with those from England were soon to cause political tensions as the English Parliament raised the spectre of punitive duties.¹⁰¹ A month after Toland's arrival, William Simpson, a baron of the Exchequer, advising him that

Mr. Methien as well as all your other Friends agree in censuring your Conduct Since you come to Dublin. They say you have acted a part very different from what was given you to be & that it was no way fit for a private man who tho no public employment, ... to pretend to any at present,

nor to own any hopes or Expectation of any, to make visible in form, as you have done, to all the Ministers & persons in any considerable pay.

Toland's claims to political employment, Simpson scolded him, drew "Censure upon your self," but more importantly cast suspicion upon all Whigs.¹⁰² In this case discretion would be the better part of valour. According to Simpson, several people had complained directly to Methuen regarding Toland.¹⁰³ An anonymous letter sent in June 1697 also warned Toland that his actions bore on both him and those with whom he wished to become associated. Toland's boastful behaviour and unfounded claims of political favour ensured Methuen provided him nothing.¹⁰⁴

In 1697, the Dublin philosopher and Member of the Irish Parliament, William Molyneux (1656-1698) advised Locke that Toland had been in that city for a short while.¹⁰⁵ However, it was unclear as to Toland's reason for being in Ireland: "all here are mightily at a Losse in Guessing what might be the Occasion of Mr. T[oland] coming at this time into Ireland. He is know[n] to be of no fortune or [employment]..."¹⁰⁶ While Methuen, Simpson, and others were dismayed by Toland's public actions, they may have been partially supporting him. Their letters allude to some debt repayment on Toland's behalf. Molyneux's comments, however, demonstrate that this was kept tightly under wraps. Soon after dispatching his initial letter, Molyneux enjoyed a visit from Toland who spoke at great length of his intimate friendship with Locke. "I propose a great Deal of Satisfaction," Molyneux wrote Locke, "in [Toland's] Conversation; I take him to be a Candid Free Thinker, and a Good Scholar." Others did not appreciate Toland's scholarship. Molyneux noted that he was "Harangued against out of the Pulpit by a Prelate of this Country."¹⁰⁷

Locke replied with thanks for Molyneux's account of Toland and the news of Toland's goodwill towards him replying that he had done nothing to expect otherwise. There was reason for caution, however. Toland, Locke feared, had an "exceeding great value of himself," which the philosopher hoped did not prevent Toland's scholarship from becoming useful. In detail, he advised prudence when dealing with this young man who held either great promise or great danger.

[I]f vanity increased with age, I always fear whither it will lead a man. I say this to you because you are my friend for whom I have no reserves, and think I ought to talk freely where you enquire, and possibly may be concerned; but I say it to you alone, and desire it may go no further. For the man [Toland] I wish very well, and could give you, if it needed, proofs that I do so. And therefore I desire you to be kind to him; but I must leave it to your prudence, in what way, and how far. If his carriage with you give you the promises of a steady useful man, I know you will be forward enough of your self, and I shall be very glad of it. For it will be his fault alone, if he proves not a very valuable man, and have you not for his friend.¹⁰⁸

After receiving this assessment from Locke and having spent more time with Toland, Molyneux concurred with Locke: “I do not think His management since he came this Citty has been so prudent; He has raised against the Clamours of all Partys; and this not so much by his Difference of Opinions, as by his Unreasonable Way of Discoursing, propagating, and Maintaining it.” Toland’s views were only part of the issue; it was also his manner. Partly, Toland’s problem lay in his choice of venue to pontificate his ideas. Molyneux explained that “Coffee-house and Publick Tables are not proper Places for serious Discourse relating to the Most Important Truths.” Moreover, Toland had shown the tendency about which Locke warned. When “a Tincture of Vanity appear in the Whole Course of a Mans Conversations, it disgusts many that many otherwise have a due Value for his Parts and Learning.” What was worse, Toland “takes here great Liberty on all occasions to vouch your Patronage and Friendship, which makes many that rail at him, rail also at You. I believe you will not approve of this.”¹⁰⁹

Despite Molyneux’s request that Locke correct Toland’s impudent behaviour in Dublin, the aged philosopher refused and opined that Toland would ignore “my friendly admonishments.” He continued that “I must tell you, that he is a man to whom I have never writ in my life, and, I think, I shall not now begin. And, as to his conduct, ‘tis what I never so much as spoke to him of. This is a liberty to be only taken with friends....” Moreover, if Molyneux believed that he owed some kindness to Toland based on a perceived obligation to Locke, he was mistaken. “For, if I did recommend him, ” Locke told Molyneux, “you will find it was only as a man of parts and learning for his age, but without any intention that that should be of any other consequence ... And therefore, whatsoever you shall, or shall not do for

him, I shall no way interest my self in.”¹¹⁰ Thus, Locke washed his hands of Toland and urged his compatriot to do the same.

The Irish authorities were also keenly interested in Toland. Rumours concerning the contents of his book raised the suspicions of the Committee of Religion. An investigation soon followed. Toland recounted the events in a later publication referring to himself in the third person. The title alone of *Christianity not Mysterious* was enough in many cases, Toland argued, to convict him of heresy. He was surprised at this treatment because, as he repeated, the Revolution of 1689 had guaranteed the freedom to inquire into religion. As Toland explained in a brief history lesson:

James the Second was justly abdicated according to this Saying, because he was an Enemy to the *People* for whom he was made a King; and our most Glorious Hero William the Third, the Restorer of Universal Peace and Liberty, was invested with the Supreme Power by the honest *People* of *Great Britain*, for whose good he has indefatigably employ'd it ever since, in vindicating, settling, and enlarging their Civil and Religious Rights.¹¹¹

These arguments, however, did not halt the investigation.

On 14 August 1697 “it was mov’d in the *Committee of Religion*, that the Book entitl’d *Christianity not Mysterious*, should be brought before them, and accordingly it was order’d that the said Book should the Saturday following be brought into the *Committee*.” After deliberating for three weeks, the Committee ruled that the book contained “*Several Heretical Doctrines contrary to the Christian Religion and the establish’d Church of Ireland, [and will] be publickly burnt by the hands of the Common Hangman.*” This sentence was carried out on 11 September in two locations: “the *Parliament-House* Gate, and also in the open Street before the *Town-hose*.” Moreover, it was ruled that Toland himself be taken into custody and prosecuted by “*for Writing and publishing the Said Book.*” Toland noted that he “took care to prevent” capture and fled to England.¹¹² Others on the Committee urged more drastic punishments. One moved that “Mr. Toland himself should be burnt, as by another that he should be made to burn his Book with his own hands; and third desir’d it should be done before the Door of the House, that he might have the pleasure of treading the Ashes under his feet.”¹¹³ On 14 September politicians

in England were alerted to Toland's flight from Ireland. The Irish peer Sir Richard Coxe outlined Toland's Dublin experiences in a letter sent to the Whig MP Robert Harley (1661-1724) and advised him that "Toland made his escape to England, where he had best stay."¹¹⁴ While Toland would travel much during his remaining days, he never returned to his native land.

Atterbury on Political Control of Religion

Defenders of a strong English church were much troubled by the implications of Toland's and Tindal's description of government and religion. One of these authors was Francis Atterbury, High-Church Tory, Jacobite, future Bishop of Rochester, and mastermind behind the Atterbury Plot (1720-2) to return the Stuart monarchy.¹¹⁵ In 1697 he argued that at no time since the beginning of Christianity had there been greater need for Convocation, the ecclesiastical court of England. The reason was the perceived growth of heresy in the nation especially the denial of mysteries in religion.¹¹⁶ Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* revealed the need for corrective action in religion because it embodied all the heresies about which Atterbury worried.

An Author [Toland] I have, lately mention'd, had not else in publick Conversations dispers'd his pernicious Notions of one of 'em so long as he did, unublish'd; nor chosen to leave it at last rather tir'd with the successlesness of his Endeavours, than scar'd with any ill Consequence that might attend them. It is so far from that, that I am told, he has entertain'd new Resolutions of returning thither, and of entring the Town in Triumph, upon his late fancied Defeat of Mysteries.¹¹⁷

Just as those in Oxford found Toland's actions unacceptable, so too did Atterbury. Irreligious words were bad enough to bring discord to England, but irreligious behaviour required immediate action.

For too long, Atterbury suggested, heresies had existed under the mistaken "Cover of unbounded Toleration..." which succeeded only in diluting the Church of England. Convocation, meeting at regular intervals, would halt the foreboding spread of unbelief by acting as a "great fence against these Mischeifs." What was more, legislative elimination of deism would save the souls of the laity and restore belief in revelation which Atterbury believed to be in decline.¹¹⁸ The Revolution of 1689 had, Atterbury advised readers, brought a mistaken notion of the role of the

king in matters of religion. There were some who were “pleas’d in all Companies to admire and celebrate a Prince of no Religion, as the best of Governours....” This was especially critical because the Church of England and its religion took priority over that of the nation’s rulers. While monarchs came and went, the religion of England must remain uncorrupted. Atterbury noted further that the Church of England contained the men of best quality even if a heretical sect might boast larger numbers.¹¹⁹ Therefore, William III must call Convocation, as often as Parliament, to defend the Church from its enemies.

Despite Atterbury’s best hopes, Convocation failed when it attempted to bring charges against Toland in 1701. Edmund Gibson related the events in another letter to Dr Charlett. On 9 April the Lower House had asked the Bishops in the Upper House to consider their request to censure Toland for composing *Christianity not Mysterious*. A disappointed Gibson, mimicking the mood of the Lower House, related the response to the query. “As to Mr. Toland’s Book,” the Bishops’, “Answer was, that they had consulted Learned Council about y^e power of Convo^{cn}. to censure Books in ~~particulars~~ general and that in particulars, without y^e Kg’s Licence first obtain’d; and were told that if y^e Cg attempted it, ‘twould put y^m in danger of y^e Penalties.” Since the expiration of the Licensing Act in 1695, authors, printers, and booksellers no longer needed permission to sell books. The Upper House concluded that no legal precedent existed to censure Toland or his book.¹²⁰

Tindal on the Power of Magistrates

The same year as Atterbury wrote his defence of religious unity enforced by governmental law Tindal composed *An Essay Concerning the Power of Magistrates, and the Rights of Mankind, in Matters of Religion*. This likely only served to confirm Atterbury’s fear. Tindal submitted that “Government is from the People, who had a Right to invest the Magistrate with a Power in those Matters of Religion which have an Influence on Humane Societies, but not in others that are merely Religious, or have no such Influence.” The right to implement religious legislation must be granted from the people of the nation and not imposed from the rulers. As Tindal explained, “a Power in the Magistrate to use Force in Matters of meer Religion, tends to Mens Eternal Ruin.” Members of a nation must be free to

choose the form of worship which seems best to them and their conscience because “the Doctrine of Compulsion is directly contrary to the Honour of God.”¹²¹ Since the welfare of society is built upon the welfare of its individuals, no one person may impose views on another, be they religious or political. The only true law of nations was the protection of individual happiness.

Only God was a legitimate dispenser of laws. This was the God Tindal had described in his past works: a God happy in himself wishing only to impart this happiness to humanity. What was more, God “has not given the Magistrate a Right to interpret for others his Law, or to impose on them in what sense they must understand it.” Like Toland, Tindal submitted that reason was the only yardstick with which to judge the merits of any particular belief or position. To do otherwise and blindly submit to authority “highly offends God.”¹²² This ran directly counter to Atterbury’s Tory sensibilities.

Based on the above conditions of natural law and the providence of God, Tindal concluded that no Dissenter should be forced to take a Sacramental Test, by occasionally conforming to Church of England, in order to maintain an office.¹²³ He explained that if Dissenters held “no Opinions destructive to the Government, disown all Foreign Power, acknowledge the King to be Rightful and Lawful, and contribute equally to the support of the Government” then what right did any government have to “deprive them of the Privileges of their Country” because “their Consciences will not permit them to receive the Sacrament after the manner of the Established Church...?”¹²⁴ So long as Dissenters, including our deists, observed the laws of the nation and acted in the best interest of their fellow countrymen, it did not matter what their heart held true regarding religion. He also reminded readers that in the eyes of Parliament, Dissenting Churches were legal and ought to have the same rights as the Church of England. To restrict or regulate one’s relationship with God, Tindal stated was to act tyrannically.¹²⁵ Just as God does not impose His will on the Creation, so too must rulers or governments not impose beliefs on political subjects.

The Liberty of Nations Through Liberty of the Press

During the late 1690s Toland composed many defences of his *Christianity not Mysterious*. He held fast to his belief that reason was the only guide in intellectual matters, including those of religion. People come to a religion by use of their reason which compared ideas about it gained by reading. Therefore, Toland noted that absolute freedom of the press was the only way to allow for differing opinions about religion to circulate. In the model offered by theologians such as Atterbury, such variety of religious thought would be halted by legislation. Alternatively, Toland submitted, that it was, “wholly owing to *Printing*, that Knowledge is become, not only much more diffusive, but that a great deal of more useful Knowledge has been discovered in a short time since that Invention, than in many Ages before.”¹²⁶ Toland illustrated this position by means of historical example. Martin Luther, and subsequent Protestant leaders, effectively employed the printed word to advance their calls for religious reform. Indeed, “The Reformation is wholly owing to the Press.” A free press, Toland continued, “depends on this single Question, Whether we ought to be free, or Slaves in our Understandings?”¹²⁷

A restrained press created only passive recipients of doctrine not users of reason as God wished. This was the case “Because it tends to make Men blindly submit to the Religion they chance to be educated in: for if ‘tis once suppos’d unlawful to publish any Arguments against that Religion, it cannot be denied but that ‘tis as unlawful to read and examine those Arguments....”¹²⁸ Political subjects were not passive before religion. Toland continued, “It’s not only in Popish, but in Protestant Countries too, that according to the Restraint Men lay under, Ignorance, Superstition, and Bigotry does more or less abound.” People must realise that God desired them to use reason to determine truth in religion.¹²⁹ Those who opposed an unrestricted press, Toland believed, erroneously concluded that it encouraged “Atheism, Profaneness, and Immorality, as well as Sedition and Treason.” However, as we saw earlier, Toland dismissed these labels as the accusations of priests who wished to maintain their illegitimate hold on religion. In contrast, Toland claimed that printing was “design’d by Providence to free Men from that

Tyranny of the Clergy they then groan'd under.”¹³⁰ Freedom of the press also improved knowledge in natural philosophy. For example, “an excellent Discovery in Nature may be hindred from being publish'd, on pretence that 'tis inconsistent with Religion.” Such a case was found in the example of Galileo and the Earth's motion, a favourite episode recounted by our five deists.¹³¹

Proposals for complete liberty of publishing proved worrisome for critics of deism. In late 1728 William Wake (1657-1737), then Archbishop of Canterbury, in his only recorded criticism of deism, commented to Jean-Alphonse Turretini (1671-1737), professor at the Academy in Geneva, on the most efficient way to halt the heresy. Wake suggested the reason why deism had seemingly gained such a foothold in England was due to the manner of composition employed by deists. Their “way of writing is exceedingly pleasing to the younger sort of Atheists, who have neither piety, nor judgement to restrain them...” Books therefore lay at the root of the controversy. More exactly, it was books written to inflame prejudices rather than to persuade with sound arguments. The solution was obvious and Wake concluded that polemical replies were not a proper response. More effective would be action taken against authors “some which are legally prosecuted, their books suppressed, and who privately disperse them in such a manner that it is hard to discover it, or make a legal proof against either the printers or sellers of them.”¹³² No doubt Wake had in mind the fate suffered in Ireland by Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious*.

Toland on Parliaments and Standing Armies

In July 1698 Parliament was dissolved in accordance with the Triennial Act (1694). During the ensuing election, and prior to the resumption of Parliament in December of the same year, Toland composed a pamphlet urging voters to choose “fit and proper” representatives. Chief among Toland's worries was the danger of re-electing “Members that are in Places.”¹³³ The election of 1698 came on the heels of the Treaty of Ryswick which ended the Nine Years' War (1689-1697) and the recognition of William III as the rightful King of England by Louis XIV thereby temporarily easing worries over Jacobites. Questions of financing the war had dominated sessions of Parliament and allowed those who voted to support William's

war effort to hold favour with the monarch. Among these politicians were the Whig MPs of the so-called Junto—John Somers, Edward Russell, Thomas Wharton, and Charles Montagu—who controlled the purse strings of the nation by controlling the Commons and the Lords.¹³⁴ As J. H. Plumb has argued, these Whigs left behind their former collective experience of the Exclusion Crisis and replaced Lockean style republican theories of governance with methods to consolidate their hold on power.¹³⁵

Opposed to the Junto Whigs was a coalition led by the MP Robert Harley, himself a Whig (now part of the “Old Whigs” and soon to be Tory) who wished to limit the discretionary power of government and make it accountable to taxpayers. Joined in this cause of opposition were Tories and some radical Whigs who hung true to the republican political philosophies of their predecessors including Locke, James Harrington (1611-1677), and Algernon Sidney (1622-1683). Thus, when Toland composed *Dangers of Mercenary Parliaments* (1698), he did so to challenge the Junto Whigs while assisting Harley who was undoubtedly supporting Toland under the table.¹³⁶

Toland proposed that restoring place-men (MPs who held Crown offices or “places”) to the House of Commons would undermine the original intent of the institution. Parliament had been historically “the best Security imaginable to his Majesty’s Honour and Royal Dignities, and the Subjects Liberties, Estates, and Lives. This being the nature and true design of a Parliament, let us now see whether a House of Commons, full of Officers and Court-Pensioners, will answer those noble and laudable Ends....”¹³⁷ Members of Parliament were to be faithful to the interests of those who elected them, not to the crown, nor their party leaders. What was more, Toland asked “Whether a House of Commons” filled with place-men “can vote freely...?”¹³⁸ Independence of elected officials was the only way to defend the liberty of the English people.

As proof of the dangers involved in a Commons filled with place-men, Toland turned to the nation’s history. First, he cited the example of King Charles II who, with Parliamentary support, tied England to French interests in the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-4) against Continental Protestants. “By this means the

Honour of *England* was prostituted,” Toland asserted, “and our Natural and Naval Strength betray’d with which, like Samson, we should easily have broken all the Cords that Europe, or the whole World could have made to bind and enslave us, had not this Parliament made a Sacrifice of all to the Charms of a *French Dalilah*.” Why did this happen? Toland argued that it was the “slavish Doctrine of Passive Obedience and Nonresistance,” which superseded the reason and consciences of men who knew better than to support a popish king in a popish cause. Men must be free to vote and act in the best interest of Protestant England.¹³⁹

In the following year (1699) Toland contributed to the standing army controversy with *The Militia Reform’d: or, an Easy Scheme of Furnishing England with a Constant Land-Force, capable of prevent or to subdue any Forein Power*. William III’s desire for halting French ambitions from the Continent had turned England into a military nation with all the necessities this entailed.¹⁴⁰ While the need for an army during the Nine Years War was obvious, the usefulness of maintaining it in the post-1698 era raised concerns. Further complications arose from the Declaration of Rights to which William agreed in 1689. By the terms of the document, an English monarch could not raise a standing army without Parliamentary support. The Whig Junto stood shoulder to shoulder with William who believed that any decrease in a peacetime army would encourage French aggression.¹⁴¹ The opposition of financially conservative MPs was again led by Harley who argued that standing armies raised the power of the King at the expense of Parliament and threatened the liberty of the people who would be forced to live alongside soldiers on active duty. Following Harley’s lead, Parliament reduced the army to 10,000 in 1697 and then to 7,000 in 1698. And, in 1699 William’s own Dutch Guard was sent home. Opponents suggested that for an island nation, the Royal Navy and a militia of Englishmen, rather than foreigners, was a more than sufficient safeguard. This too was the line adopted by Toland.¹⁴²

Toland entered this latest political debate by noting the advantages of living in England: “To employ one’s Thoughts on what he pleases, and to speak as freely as he thinks....”¹⁴³ This freedom stood in sharp relief against conditions in Continental kingdoms such as France. There, Toland suggested, one dares not

confide even in “his dearest Friend” for fear of official retribution. However, in England where the “Laws secure the Rights of the Subject, with the same Care as the Privileges of the Magistrate,” one has the duty to decry oppression.¹⁴⁴ Within this context, Toland felt duty bound to publish his thoughts regarding a standing army. In spite of this promise of total freedom, the political scene in England was perpetually polarised. As he had commented in *Christianity not Mysterious*, party divisions harmed the nation: “he’s a Whig whom you love, and he that you hate’s a Tory; and so on the contrary, as you happen to be engag’d in either Party.”¹⁴⁵ Toland countered that “a true Patriot can be of no Faction, nor consequently for excluding any from sharing the Blessings of that Liberty they are willing to support.”¹⁴⁶ It was under this guise that Toland composed his political works generally and his assessment of standing armies specifically.

To make a national militia a useful body, Toland proposed a scheme from antiquity.¹⁴⁷ He agreed with Harley that a properly maintained fleet provided much of the nation’s security. Nevertheless, English ambitions necessitated a more complicated system of defence: “a Government for Encrease, such as ours, its Situation naturally leading it to Trade and planting of Colonies; and if it has the noble Ambition of holding the Balance steady between other Governments, of succouring the Distress’d, and grudging Liberty to none, then it must be always provided with a considerable *Land-force*.”¹⁴⁸ Participation in international relations required a kind of standing army. Toland advocated a model based on his reading of Cicero’s outline of the Roman militia: a body composed of citizen landowners.¹⁴⁹ With this scheme Toland hoped to empower the English people in their defence of Protestant sensibilities against the aggressive French and their Catholicism. The literary support for Harley’s position earned Toland his further, but covert, patronage.¹⁵⁰

The Harrington Edition and Advancement Unfulfilled

In late March 1700 readers of the *Post Man* were alerted to a forthcoming publication by Toland which again concerned the political climate:

The OCEANA of James Harrington and his other works, some whereof are now first published from his own Manuscripts. The whole collected, methodiz’d, and review’d, with an exact account of his life prefix’d. By

John Toland. Printed on extra-ordinary Paper, and adorn'd with useful cuts. Sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster.¹⁵¹

The finished book lived up to the advanced billing. It was, however, personally expensive for Toland, who paid £30 to have it published. This was hardly a trifling sum, if £1 in 1700 is worth roughly £100 today.¹⁵² Toland covered this amount through the sale of the publication rights from his other political works. For example, the bookseller Bernard Lintott paid Toland the following amounts for the right to print several books: *Art of governing by Parties* (£20), *Anglia Libera* (£10.15), *Vindicus Liberior* (£5.5) all appeared in 1701 or early 1702.¹⁵³ Despite the cost of the Harrington edition, Toland hoped to use the book to advance his political career by dedicating it to London's government.¹⁵⁴ Toland was willing to mortgage his present for potential future political gain. As we will see, this strategy failed.¹⁵⁵

James Harrington had come to prominence in 1656, during Oliver Cromwell's rule, with a depiction of the ideal commonwealth of Oceana in the book of the same name. The intent of the work was to demonstrate that in a true republic—where the power is held by the people or their elected representatives—military power belonged to the citizens. A militia of citizens, argued Harrington, created, in the phrase of J. G. A. Pocock, a “commonwealth of participatory virtue” in the nation. This ideal had found a home in Toland's arguments for a standing militia.¹⁵⁶ Clearly articulating support for views held by Harley, who was in a position to enact them, Toland advanced his desire for the commonwealth described by Harrington.

Toland's dedication to “The Lord Mayor, Aldermen, Sherifs, and Common Council of London” reminded them that “every Society is in a languishing or flourishing condition, answerable to the particular Constitution of its Government.” The happiness of any society, in this case of Londoners, was a direct reflection of the goodness of the laws which govern them. That the inhabitants of this great city express satisfaction in their present condition, Toland asserted, was proof of the righteousness of London's government.¹⁵⁷ The key to all this was the propagation of liberty, which was “the true Spring of [London's] prodigious Trade and

Commerce with all the known parts of the Universe....”¹⁵⁸ Total freedom, like the kind advocated in his other works, led to economic prosperity. Thus, any philosopher who promotes such a stance must promote the good of the nation. Here Toland attempts to advance his own usefulness to the Aldermen and Mayor. He praised the climate of religious freedom in London. Toleration in the city allowed people to follow their reason in religion and worship God as they thought fit. By not enforcing conformity, Toland believed that London encouraged its citizens to focus their attentions on wealth and commerce, rather than issues of doctrine. Religious freedom, such as Toland advocated in his political works, had financial benefits.¹⁵⁹

At least one Alderman was impressed with Toland’s praise. The episode is preserved in a letter sent by Thomas Tanner to Dr. Charlett. Sir Robert Clayton (1629-1707), Director of the Bank of England, and former Mayor of London, entered a motion in May 1700 to reward Toland for the kindness shown the “Mayor & Alderman in dedicating Harrington’s Works to them.” Toland had corresponded previously with Clayton over the death of Clayton’s nephew, whom Toland knew during his days in Oxford.¹⁶⁰ Another Alderman retorted that similar motions in the past had come to nought because “the City was poor, and had no money for such uses.” Furthermore, it was objected that why should Toland a man who “had printed a very bad book” be rewarded when other authors, who had written “a good sermon,” received nothing. The sticking point seemed to be *Christianity not Mystrious*, which continued to plague Toland’s efforts at overt political reward. The Alderman did, however, note that Clayton himself “had enough of his own, and he was willing to join in recommending Mr T case to Sir R. own generosity.” Not surprisingly, “the Matter was dropped, and Mr. T has got nothing for his dedication.”¹⁶¹ Toland would now have to seek other avenues of advancing his desires for a political career, which he hoped *Christianity not Mystrious* would spark.¹⁶² Alternatively, Tindal’s Fellowship and pension ensured that he was not as dependent on the sale of his works or the generosity of patrons to continue his writings on politics and theology.

Conclusion

There were concerns of greater national interest when Toland attempted to gain the favour of London's government. Princess Anne, daughter of James II, and successor to the English throne buried her last child in July 1700. That Anne suffered another loss was not surprising, but the premature passing of her only living offspring set questions of succession into the foreground of political discussions. While William now had to determine the line of succession which would follow the death of Anne, he also was worried over the health of another monarch: Carlos II of Spain. Carlos was childless and had willed his kingdom to the Duke of Anjou, grandson to Louis XIV. War with France over their ambitions in Spain seemed certain when Carlos died on 21 October. Once again, deists would insert themselves into these impending political events.

Notes

¹ J. R. Jones, "The Revolution on Context," in *Liberty Secured? Britain before and after 1688*, ed. J. R. Jones (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 30; Gordon J. Schochet, "From Persecution to Toleration," in *Liberty Secured?*, 122, 127, 152; Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, Religion and War* (London: Blackwell, 1999); Shelly Burt, *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 18-22.

² Lois G. Schworer, "Locke, Lockean Ideas, and the Glorious Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51 (1990): 533.

³ Philippus van Limborch to John Locke, 24 July/3 August 1699 in *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. De Beer 8 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967-1989), 6: 661; Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Study in Adaptations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 4.

⁴ Martin I. Klauber, "Between Protestant Orthodoxy and Rationalism: Fundamental Articles in the Early Career of Jean LeClerc," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54 (1993): 611, 613.

⁵ Philippus van Limborch to Locke, 25 July/4 August 1693 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 4: 704-5.

⁶ Benjamin Furly to Locke, 9/19 August 1693 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 4: 710-1.

⁷ See Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 158, 165.

⁸ Norman Sykes, *Edmund Gibson: Bishop of London 1669-1748* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 248-53; Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714*, Vol. 1, A-D (Oxford: Parker and Co., 1891), 263.

⁹ Bod. Ballard MS 5 f. 27. Edmund Gibson to Dr. Charlett, 9 April 1694.

¹⁰ Bod. Rawlinson MS D. 923 f. 314r. Gibson to Charlett, n.d.

¹¹ Bod. Rawlinson MS D. 923 f. 314r.

¹² Bod. Ballard MS 5 f. 47r. Gibson to Charlett, 13 June 1694. One week later Gibson revised previous information.

The account I had of the Irish Refugee is something Improv'd Since. When I told you he was all Irish, I was in an error: He was born in France of an Irish Father and French Mother: brought up a Papist to 11n or 12 years of age: Came to his friends in Ireland to see what could be had there, but finding nothing that answered expectation, came to Glasgow ... After he had play'd his pranks about the Revolution, and made his speeches at the head of the Rable ... he moved to Edinburgh, ... An acquaintance of his tells me, he has heard him express a very favourable opinion of popery.

Not entirely satisfied with this vastly different biography, Gibson told Charlett that he soon expected more information. See Bod. Ballard MS 5 f. 48r. Gibson to Charlett, 21 June 1697. F. H. Heinemann, "John Toland, France, Holland, and Dr. Williams," *Review of English Studies* 25 (1949): 346-49. Heinemann was very intrigued with this letter, but subsequent scholarship accepts that Toland was Irish born and raised.

¹³ Dr. Charlett to Archbishop Tenison, 25 October 1695 in S. R. Maitland, "Toland," *Notes and Queries*, 3rd ser. 4 January (1862): 7. For an account of Toland's impressions of the learned atmosphere around Oxford see Charles Edward Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3, *Modern Oxford* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1924), 105.

¹⁴ Bod. MS English Letters C 28 ff. 27r-v. "Mr. Anderson to Bp. Ash concerning Mr. Toland," 18 September 1694.

¹⁵ Bod. MS Eng. Letters C 29 f. 23. Ashe to Henry Dodwell, 25 September 1694.

¹⁶ Matthew Tindal, *A Letter To the Reverend the Clergy of both Universities, Concerning the Trinity and the Athanasian Creed* (London, 1694), 3. James E. Force, "Biblical

Interpretation, Newton, and Deism,” in *Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Richard H. Popkin and Arjo Vanderjagt (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 293.

¹⁷ DNB, 14: 727; Stephen Nye, *A Reply to the Second Defence of the XXVIII Propositions, Said to be Wrote in Answer to a Socinian Manuscript* (London, 1695), 3.

¹⁸ Quoted in Mark Goldie, “John Locke, Jonas Proast and Religious Toleration 1688-1692,” in *The Church of England c. 1689—c. 1833*, ed. John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 156.

¹⁹ Tindal, *Letter To the Reverend the Clergy*, 32, 33.

²⁰ Matthew Tindal, *An Essay Concerning Obedience to the Supreme Powers, and the Duty of Subjects in all Revolutions* (London, 1694), 22. See also Matthew Tindal, *The Reflections on the XXVIII Propositions Touching the Doctrine of the Trinity* (London, 1695); Matthew Tindal, *A Second Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church*, 76-7.

²¹ Though it is perhaps unwarranted to call Tindal a deist in 1694, his political views remain unaltered during his life and I have, therefore, chosen not to separate them into any kind of pre- or post-deist phase.

²² Matthew Tindal, *An Essay Concerning the Laws of Nations, and the Rights of Sovereigns* (London, 1694), 2.

²³ Tindal, *Laws of Nations*, 3.

²⁴ Mark Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1996), 289; Daniel Szechi, *The Jacobites: Britain and Europe, 1688-1788* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), xiv, 54-5; Paul Monod, “Jacobitism and Courtly Principles in the Reign of William III,” *The Historical Journal* 30 (1987): 289-310.

²⁵ Tindal, *Laws of Nations*, 16.

²⁶ Tindal, *Laws of Nations*, 19.

²⁷ John Andrew Kavcic, “English Deism and Natural Law: The Case of Matthew Tindal” (master’s thesis, University of Victoria, 1997), 30; Olive Anderson, “British Governments and Rebellion at Sea,” *The Historical Journal* 3 (1960): 59; Mark Goldie, “John Locke, Jonas Proast and Religious Toleration 1688-1692,” 155.

²⁸ Tindal, *Obedience to the Supreme Powers*, 1.

²⁹ Tindal, *Obedience to the Supreme Powers*, 1-2.

³⁰ Tindal, *Obedience to the Supreme Powers*, 3, 6.

³¹ Tindal to Locke, 10 January 1697, in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 5: 749. For the classic early assessment of the role Locke played in English deism see S. G. Hefelbower, *The Relation of John Locke to English Deism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1918).

³² Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 576 n. 223, 589 n. 259.

³³ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government: A Critical Edition*, ed. Peter Laslett. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), bk 2: 289; Richard Ashcraft, “The Politics of Locke’s Two Treatises of Government,” in *John Locke's Two Treatises of Government: New Interpretations*, ed. Edward J. Harpham (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 7, 22-3.

³⁴ Richard Ashcraft, *Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 101, 119, 191; Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics*, 598; Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, bk 2: 343

³⁵ Tindal, *Obedience to the Supreme Powers*, 8.

³⁶ Tindal, *Obedience to the Supreme Powers*, 12-3, 15.

³⁷ Tindal, *Obedience to the Supreme Powers*, 21.

³⁸ A_A_ to John Toland, 4 May 1694; For Mr. Toland, 30 May 1694 in *A Collection of Several Pieces of John Toland*, 2 vols. (1729; facsimile reprint, New York, 1977), 1: 295, 312.

³⁹ John Toland to ***, January 1694 in *Several Pieces of John Toland*, 2: 294; John Freke to Locke, 29 March 1695 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 5: 318.

⁴⁰ Locke to Freke, 2 April 1695 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 5: 324.

⁴¹ Freke to Locke, 9 April 1695 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 5: 326.

⁴² Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 6. Much of what follows regarding Toland is indebted to Champion's analysis. See also Frederick C. Beiser, *The Sovereignty of Reason: The Defence of Rationality in the Early English Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 233.

⁴³ *Post Man*, 19-21 November 1695 to 11-14 January 1696; 27-30 June 1696.

⁴⁴ Stephen H Daniel, "The Subversive Philosophy of John Toland," in *Irish Writing: Exile and Subversion*, ed. Paul Hyland and Neil Sammells (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 5.

⁴⁵ John Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious, or a Treatise Shewing That There is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor above it that no Christian Doctrine can be Properly Call'd a Mystery* (London, 1696), iv.

⁴⁶ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 70-1, 168; idem, *A Defence of Mr. Toland, In a Letter to Himself* (London, 1697), 16; idem, *Pantheisticon: or the Form of Celebrating the Socratic-Society* (1751; facsimile reprint, New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976), 64; idem, *Clito: A Poem on the Force of Eloquence* (London, 1700), 16; idem, *Clidophorus*, 64 and *Mangoneutes: being a Defence of Nazarenus*, 142, in idem, *Tetradymus* (London, 1720). The most obvious publication in this regard is Toland's *An Appeal to Honest People Against Wicked Priests* (London, 1713). Champion makes this last point explicit in his "'May the Last King Be Strangled in the Bowels of the Last Priest': Irreligion and the English Enlightenment, 1649-1789," in *Radicalism in British Literary Culture, 1650-1830*, ed. Timothy Morton and Nigel Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 41. On priestcraft see Peter Harrison, *'Religion' and Religions in the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 73-77; Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, passim; Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 137.

⁴⁷ See Pierre Lurbe, "John Toland, Cosmopolitanism, and the Concept of Nation," in *Nations and Nationalisms: France, Britain, Ireland and the Eighteenth-Century Context*, ed. Michael O'Dea and Kevin Whelan (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1995).

⁴⁸ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 2.

⁴⁹ Robert South, "Christianity Mysterious, and the Wisdom of God in Making it so: Proved in a Sermon Preached at Westminster Abbey, 29 April 1694" in Robert South, *Sermons Preached on Several Occasions* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1833), 381; Gerard Reedy, *Robert South (1634-1716): An Introduction to His Life and Sermons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁵⁰ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 20.

⁵¹ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 33, 43.

⁵² Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 143, 145; Gerard Reedy, "Socinians, John Toland, and the Anglican Rationalists," *Harvard Theological Review* 70 (1977): 293.

⁵³ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 28; H. F. Nicholl, "John Toland: Religion without Mystery," *Hermathena* 100 (1965): 64; Justin Champion, "John Toland: The Politics of Pantheism," *Revue de Synthèse* 116 (1995): 266.

⁵⁴ John Toland, *Letters to Serena* (1704; facsimile reprint, Stuttgart-Bad-Cannstatt: Fredrich Frommann Verlag, 1964), 226. There were three editions of the *Essay* by 1696; I have used the first. References to the *Essay* are by page number followed by Book, Chapter, and Section.

⁵⁵ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 84.

⁵⁶ Cf. Robert Hooke, *Micrographia or Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made by Magnifying Glasses* (1665; facsimile reprint, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1961), "preface"

⁵⁷ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London, 1690), 269 (4. 3. 1; 4. 3. 2.) 345, 347 (4. 17. 1; 4. 17. 14).

⁵⁸ Robert A. Wilson, "Locke's Primary Qualities," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 (2002), 203; Locke, *Essay*, 269 (4. 3. 6), 195 (3. 3. 15); James P. Danaher, "Real Essences," *The Locke News Letter* 23 (1992): 83-4, 96-7, 102.

⁵⁹ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 85.

⁶⁰ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 76

⁶¹ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 88.

⁶² South, "Christianity Mysterious," 382.

⁶³ Toland, *A Defence of Mr. Toland*, 4-5, quote on 5.

⁶⁴ Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 41, 130, 132.

⁶⁵ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 62; Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 150, 151.

⁶⁶ Daniel Defoe, *An Argument Proving that the Design of Employing and Enobling Foreigners, is a Treasonable Conspiracy ... With an Appendix; Wherein an insolent Pamphlet, Entitled, The Anatomy of Great Britain in Anatomiz'd* (London, 1717) 74; Peter Browne, *A Letter in Answer to a Book Entitled Christianity not Mysterious* (Dublin, 1697), 205; Francis Atterbury, *A Letter to a Convocation-Man Concerning the Rights, Powers, and Priviledges of that Body* (London, 1697), 6; Edward Stillingfleet, *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity: with an Answer to the Late Socinian Objections*, 2nd ed. (London, 1697), 231; Anonymous, *Remarks on the Life of Mr. Milton, As Publish'd by J. T. with a Character of the Author and his Party. In a Letter to a Member of Parliament* (London, 1699), 5, 12, 19, 50, 59.

⁶⁷ Jan Wojcik, *Robert Boyle and Limits of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 42-55.

⁶⁸ Stephen Snobelen, "Isaac Newton and Socinianism: Associations with a Greater Heresy," in *Socinianism and Cultural Exchange: The European Dimension of Antitrinitarian and Arminian Networks, 1650-1720*, ed. Florian Mühlegger and Martin Mulsow, forthcoming (page number are to typescript), 1-2, 6, 12; Wojcik, *Robert Boyle and Limits of Reason*, 44, 46-7, 50. On deism and Socinianism more generally see Beiser, *The Sovereignty of Reason*, 221, 249; Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*, 328; Gerard Reedy, *The Bible and Reason: Anglicans and Scripture in Late Seventeenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 26; Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Study in Adaptations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 20, 210.

⁶⁹ John Biddle, *An impartial Account of the Word Mystery, as it is Taken in the Scripture in The Faith of One God, Who is Only the Father; and of One Mediator between God and Men, Who is only the Man Christ Jesus* (London, 1691), 23. On the similarity of Toland and Socinians see Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*, 274-6.

⁷⁰ Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*, 106-7; Margaret C. Jacob, *Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 208; Champion, *Republican Learning*, 204-07.

⁷¹ Browne, *A Letter in Answer to a Book*, 42.

⁷² Stillingfleet, *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, 232-3. Richard H. Popkin, "The Philosophy of Bishop Stillingfleet," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 9 (1971): 311, 313; John Marshall, *John Locke: Resistance, Religion and Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 347.

⁷³ Though he denied it in his public writings, it is perhaps ironic that modern scholarship has proven that Locke was indeed Socinian in much of his theology, and certainly in his Christology. See Marshall, *John Locke*, 415-27; Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., "Socinianism, Justification by Faith, and the Sources of John Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1984): 49-66; Nicholas Jolley, "Leibniz on Locke and Socinianism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 39 (1978): 233-50. Isaac Newton too seems to have been Socinian in some aspects of his theology. See Snobelen, "Isaac Newton and Socinianism," passim; idem "The Theology of Isaac Newton's General Scholium," 191-196.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Eugene English Dyche, “The Life and Works, and Philosophical Relations, of John (Janus Junius) Toland 1670-1722” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1944), 110.

⁷⁵ *Post Man*, 30 January to 2 February 1720. See also BL Add. 4465 ff. 57r-58r. Toland’s other criticisms of Hare are found in BL Add. 4295 f. 44r. There he states that Hare’s method is to “to write Scandal” in his books. Hare replied in the *Daily Courant* (3 February 1720) but did not alter his position.

⁷⁶ John Norris, *Practical Discourses Upon Several Divine Subjects* (London, 1698), 157-8.

⁷⁷ Redwood, *Reason, Ridicule and Religion*, 57, 59; John Norris, *An Account of Reason and Faith: In Relation to the Mysteries of Christianity* (London, 1697), 7, 10, 102-3, 106, 109.

⁷⁸ Edward Stillingfleet to Robert Boyle, 6 October 1662 in *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, ed. Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio and Lawrence M. Principe 6 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), 2: 50.

⁷⁹ “Boyle’s Will” in R. E. W. Maddison, *The Life of Robert Boyle* (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 1969), 274. Jacob, *Newtonians and the English Revolution*, 143-61.

⁸⁰ Robert Boyle, *Of the High Veneration Man’s Intellect Owes to God; Peculiarly for His Wisdom and Power* (London, 1685), 112.

⁸¹ Robert Boyle, *The Works of Robert Boyle*, ed. Michael Hunter and Edward B. Davis 14 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), 12: 380.

⁸² Wojcik, *Robert Boyle*, passim, esp. 100-108

⁸³ Norris, *An Account of Reason and Faith*, 9.

⁸⁴ Champion, *Republican Learning*, 71-72; Jean Gailhard, *The Blasphemous Socinian Heresie Disproved and Confuted with Animadversions upon a Late Book Call’d Christianity not Mysterious* (London, 1697), 316, 323. The work appeared 29 April 1697, see the *Post Boy*, 29 April 1697.

⁸⁵ This was a well-worn early-modern axiom. Pierre Gassendi levied this same claim in his critique of Descartes’ *Meditations*. Gassendi maintained that “the human intellect is not capable of conceiving of infinity, and hence it neither has nor can contemplate any idea representing an infinite thing.” Quoted in Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies*, ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 81.

⁸⁶ William Stephens *An Apology for the Parliament, Humbly Representing to Mr. John Gailhard* (London, 1697), 18, 19.

⁸⁷ BL Add. 4465 f. 12. William Stephens, Archdeacon of Surrey to Toland, 27 May 1717. See also Jacob, *Newtonians and the English Revolution*, 202-5; James E. Force, “Introduction,” in *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England (1696) [William Stephens]* The Augustan Reprint Society Publication, 261 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1990), viii-ix.

⁸⁸ William Stephens, *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England* (London, 1696), 5, 10, 31.

⁸⁹ Thomas Beverley, *Christianity the Great Mystery: In Answer to a late Treatise, Christianity not Mysterious* (London, 1696), 28.

⁹⁰ Thomas Beverley, *The Prophetic History of the Reformation; or the Reformation to be Reformed in that Great Re-Reformation: That is to be 1697* (London, 1689), 80; *A Most Humble Representation in a Further Review* (London, 1698); *The Good Hope Through Grace* (London, 1700), preface.

⁹¹ DNB, 6: 768-9; Edmund Elys, *A Letter to the Honourable Sir Robert Howard: Together with some Animadversions Upon a Book Entituled, Christianity not Mysterious* (London, 1696), 10-11.

⁹² Advertisement for Toland’s *A Defence of Mr. Toland* appeared first in *Post Man*, 9-11 November 1697.

⁹³ John Toland, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament, Shewing, that a Restraint on the Press Is Inconsistent with Protestant Religion, and dangerous to the Liberty of Nation* (London, 1698), 3.

⁹⁴ John Toland, *An Apology for Mr. Toland, In a Letter from Himself to a Member of the House of Commons in Ireland; written the day before his Book was resolv'd to be burnt by the Committee of Religion* (London, 1697), 26, 41.

⁹⁵ Toland, *An Apology for Mr. Toland*, 42-3.

⁹⁶ John Toland, *Vindicius Liborius: or, M. Toland's Defence of himself, Against the late Lower House of Convocation* (London, 1702), xix; John Toland, *The Second Part of the State Anatomy, &c* (London, 1717), 23.

⁹⁷ Toland, *A Defence of Mr. Toland*, 11; Toland, *Vindicius Liborius*, xix.

⁹⁸ John Toland, *Socinianism Truly Stated; being An Example of fair Dealing in All Theological Controversys. To which is prefixt, Indifference in Disputes: Recommended by a Pantheist to an Orthodox Friend* (London, 1705).

⁹⁹ Toland, *Vindicius Liborius*, xix. On this work see Pierre Lurbe, "A Free-Thinker Strikes Back against His Detractors: John Toland's *Vindicius Liborius* and the 1701 Convocation Controversy," in *Scepticism, Clandenstinity and Free Thinking*, ed. G. Paganini (Paris: Éditions Champion, 2002), 257-268.

¹⁰⁰ Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*, 8.

¹⁰¹ Patrick Kelly, "Recasting Tradition: William Molyneux and the Sources of the *Case of Ireland ... Stated* (1698)," in *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Kingdom or Colony*, ed. Jane H. Ohlmeyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 84-6.

¹⁰² BL Add. 4292 f. 27r. William Simpson to John Toland, 20 April 1697.

¹⁰³ BL Add. 4292 f. 27v.

¹⁰⁴ BL Add. 4292 ff. 28r-v. Aristodemon to John Toland, June 1697. J. G. Simms, "John Toland (1670-1722), a Donegal Heretic," *Irish Historical Studies* 16 (1968/69): 309; Stephen H. Daniel, *John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 151.

¹⁰⁵ William Molyneux to Locke, 16 March 1697 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 6: 40-1.

¹⁰⁶ Molyneux to Locke, 27 May 1697 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 6: 133.

¹⁰⁷ Molyneux to Locke, 6 April 1697 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 6: 83.

¹⁰⁸ Locke to Molyneux, 3 May 1697 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 6: 105-6.

¹⁰⁹ Molyneux to Locke, 27 May 1697 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 6: 132, 133.

¹¹⁰ Locke to Molyneux, 15 June 1696 in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 6: 143, 144.

¹¹¹ Toland, *An Apology for Mr. Toland*, 14.

¹¹² Toland, *An Apology for Mr. Toland*, 22, 24.

¹¹³ Toland, *An Apology for Mr. Toland*, 24-5.

¹¹⁴ Sir Richard Cox [in Dublin] to Robert Harley, 14 September 1697 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland, K. G., Preserved at Welbeck Abbey*, 8 vols. (London: Ben Johnson & Co, 1907), 3: 586.

¹¹⁵ On Atterbury see G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688-1730: The Career of Francis Atterbury Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

¹¹⁶ Francis Atterbury, *A Letter to a Convocation-Man Concerning the Rights, Powers, and Priviledges of that Body* (London, 1697), 2, 6.

¹¹⁷ Atterbury, *A Letter to a Convocation-Man*, 11.

¹¹⁸ Atterbury, *A Letter to a Convocation-Man*, 5, 7.

¹¹⁹ Atterbury, *A Letter to a Convocation-Man*, 22, 23, 26, 33.

¹²⁰ Bod. Ballard MS 6 ff. 51r-v. Gibson to Charlett, 9 April 1701; Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*, 334; Robert Rees Evans, *Pantheisticon: The Career of John Toland* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 93; Lurbe, "A Free-thinker Strikes Back."

- ¹²¹ Matthew Tindal, *An Essay Concerning the Power of Magistrates, and the Rights of Mankind*, in *Matters of Religion* (London, 1697), 1, 3, 5.
- ¹²² Tindal, *An Essay Concerning the Power of Magistrates*, 18.
- ¹²³ John Flaningam, "The Occasional Conformity Controversy: Ideology and Party Politics, 1697-1711," *Journal of British Studies* 17 (1977): 38-9, 41, 58-9.
- ¹²⁴ Tindal, *An Essay Concerning the Power of Magistrates*, 168.
- ¹²⁵ Tindal, *An Essay Concerning the Power of Magistrates*, 170, 171.
- ¹²⁶ John Toland, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament, Shewing, that a Restraint on the Press Is Inconsistent with Protestant Religion, and dangerous to the Liberty of Nation* (London, 1698), 4.
- ¹²⁷ Toland, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament*, 11, 12. On Toland's use of history to support his positions, see Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, passim.
- ¹²⁸ Toland, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament*, 5.
- ¹²⁹ Toland, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament*, 9.
- ¹³⁰ Toland, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament*, 18, 22.
- ¹³¹ Toland, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament*, 30.
- ¹³² William Wake to Prof. Turretini, 28 November 1728 in Norman Sykes, *William Wake: Archbishop of Canterbury 1657-1737*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 2: 170-1.
- ¹³³ John Toland, *The Danger of Mercenary Parliaments* (London, 1698), 1.
- ¹³⁴ Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1600-1715* (London: Longman, 1993), 151, 188-9.
- ¹³⁵ J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675-1725* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 134-5, 137.
- ¹³⁶ J. A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 36; Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts*, 164-5; Kishlansky, *Monarchy Transformed*, 303; Plumb, *Growth of Political Stability*, 133. On Harley's patronage of Toland see Champion, *Republican Learning*, 55-65.
- ¹³⁷ Toland, *Mercenary Parliaments*, 1.
- ¹³⁸ Toland, *Mercenary Parliaments*, 2.
- ¹³⁹ Toland, *Mercenary Parliaments*, 2-3, 6. Toland's views on Parliament impressed at least one reader. In his copy, with reading notes dated 1722, one James Bell heavily underlined the following passage on page two: "Whether a House of Commons can vote freely, who are either prepossessed with the hopes and promises of enjoying Places, or the lavish fears of losing them?" See the copy held at the University of Calgary Library, Special Collections, ACC# 11931.
- ¹⁴⁰ On this see John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (New York: A. Knopf, 1989); Paul Langford, "Manners and the Eighteenth-Century State: The Case of the Unsociable Englishman," in *Rethinking Leviathan: The Eighteenth-Century State in Britain and Germany*, ed. John Brewer and Hellmuth Eckhart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 282.
- ¹⁴¹ Plumb, *Growth of Political Stability*, 121, 134; Lois G. Schwoerer, "The Role of King William III of England in the Standing Army Controversy 1697-1699," *Journal of British Studies* 5 (1966): 75-6.
- ¹⁴² Schwoerer, "Standing Army Controversy," 77-8; Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press*, 30-1.
- ¹⁴³ John Toland, *The Militia Reform'd: or, an Easy Scheme of Furnishing England with a Constant Land-Force, capable of prevent or to subdue any Forein Power; and to maintain perpetual Quiet at Home, without endangering the Public Liberty*, 2nd ed. (London, 1699), 4.
- ¹⁴⁴ Toland, *The Militia Reform'd*, 5.
- ¹⁴⁵ Toland, *The Militia Reform'd*, 8.

- ¹⁴⁶ Toland, *The Militia Reform'd*, 9; Champion, *Republican Learning*, 126.
- ¹⁴⁷ Toland, *The Militia Reform'd*, 19; Daniel, *John Toland*, 130.
- ¹⁴⁸ Toland, *The Militia Reform'd*, 17.
- ¹⁴⁹ Toland, *The Militia Reform'd*, 18-84.
- ¹⁵⁰ Evans, *Pantheisticon*, 47.
- ¹⁵¹ *The Post Man*, 23 - 26 March 1700.
- ¹⁵² On the value of eighteenth-century money see Stephen D. Snobelen, "William Whiston: Natural Philosopher, Prophet, Primitive Christian" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2000), 121 n. 240.
- ¹⁵³ "Lintot and his Authors," in *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. John Nichols 9 vols. (London, 1812), 8: 302-3. Other works produced by Lintott are *Letters to Serena* (£10) and *Art of Restoring* (£10). Toland's contracts with other booksellers are found in BL Add. 4295 ff. 4r, 6r-v, 10r-v, 21, 24r, 25r-v, 26, 35r. See also Champion, *Republican Learning*, 32, 50, 52, 98-100, 130; Edmund Ludlow, *A Voyce from the Watch Tower*, Part Five: 1660-1662, in *Camden Fourth Series Volume 21*, ed. A. B. Worden (London: The Royal Historical Society, 1978), 26. See also Blair Worden, "Whig History and Puritan Politics: The *Memoirs* of Edmund Ludlow Revisited," *Historical Research* 75 (2002): 209-37.
- ¹⁵⁴ John Toland, *The Oceana and Other Works of James Harrington Esq*, 3rd ed. (London, 1747), i, iii-iv.
- ¹⁵⁵ I discuss Toland's experience with the book trade and the financial details of the Harrington edition in greater detail in "John Toland's Economic Imperative to Print and Financing the Harrington Edition: A Brief Assessment," *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, forthcoming.
- ¹⁵⁶ J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 113-4, idem., *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition: With a New Afterword by the Author*, Second ed. (1975; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 432, 442; Paul Kleber Monod, *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589-1715* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 197; H. T. Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 177.
- ¹⁵⁷ Toland, *The Oceana*, i.
- ¹⁵⁸ Toland, *The Oceana*, ii.
- ¹⁵⁹ Toland, *The Oceana*, iii-iv.
- ¹⁶⁰ Champion, *Republican Learning*, 99-100; Daniel, *John Toland*, 213; Evans, *Pantheisticon*, 47.
- ¹⁶¹ Bod. Ballard MS 4 f. 54. Thomas Tanner to Dr. Charlett, 6 May 1700.
- ¹⁶² Toland did receive some posthumous recognition. A review of his edition of *The Oceana* appeared in *The History of the Works of the Learned* (Vol. 2, July 1737, 172), which claimed "It would be wrong, in a Journal of Literature, to take no notice of so beautiful an Edition as this is of the Works of a very eminent Writer, upon a Subject of the highest Dignity...."

Chapter Three:

Deist Politics and Theology, 1701-1709

Though William III had been seen as a providential gift from God to secure Protestantism in England upon his arrival in 1688, he was never a much loved monarch. His death in 1702, though tragic at age fifty-one, did not stir the nation into a collective outpouring of grief. William's final years had been marked by anticipating war with France—over the succession in Spain—and determining a method to finance it. As per the Act of Settlement (1701) Queen Anne, daughter of James II, came to the throne after a lifetime as a princess who harboured no expectation of the crown. Events had propelled her to a position which had seemed entirely out of reach. Her marriage to Prince George of Denmark, though resulting in many pregnancies, failed to produce a surviving heir. Thus, the question of succession had occupied William's last months and would be a constant worry for many during Anne's reign. It was this uncertainty, during the rage of party characteristic of the period 1702-1714, which provided John Toland his best opportunity for political advancement.¹ Our other deists too commented on and attempted to find a place within the fast moving events of the day through their political works.

Political Parties and Succession of the English Crown

February 1701 saw yet another tract from Toland.² *The Art of Governing by Parties* took up themes which had permeated his previous works, specifically the division in the political landscape caused by Whig and Tory allegiances. Such a perpetual separation of persons was, Toland asserted, the first step towards the establishment of a tyrannical government in England. He noted that William III had

attempted to create a kingdom of political cohesion with one party not promoted at the expense of the other, but, nevertheless, “a Spirit of Faction too much prevailed.”³ This divisiveness ran counter to the true duties of the English subject, who was to assist the nation by “Advice, as well as his Purse, or the use of his Arm.”⁴

Toland stated that this combined effort of citizens working towards the betterment of the nation had existed in England until the Stuart monarchy. Under Charles II, however, the political division and “Names or Distinction, Parties, Factions, Clubs, and Cabals, which have ever since distracted, torn, and very nigh consumed us” fully entrenched themselves in England.⁵ Toland further suggested that political parties were based upon religious exclusivity and the maintenance of fear and prejudice. However, this arrangement contradicted the natural constitution of people who “desire a Liberty of Worshipping in a Way which they believe to be the most acceptable to the Deity.” Consequently, to overcome the nature of humanity, political parties depicted themselves as guardians of the true religion, the one most pleasing to God.⁶

When naked theological differences did not work for the Stuarts to create fear and intolerance in the nation, Toland continued, they had linked supposed heretical theology to supposedly subversive political ideologies such as those of commonwealthism. Thus, all those who deviated in their worship of God, even slightly, from the Church of England were made into commonwealthmen with all the implied negative connotations which went with the characterisation: regicides and limiters of monarchical power.⁷ Despite the irony that Parliament existed to secure English rights, Toland noted that in this body, one finds the same “political Factions” which divide the nation. To remedy the situation where sitting ministers were susceptible to coercion from the other members of their party, Toland proposed annual Parliaments. As a result, there would be no incentive to act in party interests, rather than those of their constituents, because every year MPs would have to return to the electorate and account for their votes in the Commons.⁸ He ended the book with a call to abolish “those fatal Distinctions of Whig and

Tory” and for tolerating “one another in Religion, where we cannot agree.”⁹ This was the ideal condition in which to live and be governed.

Later the same year, in the third week of June, Toland published a book which would change his life and redirect the focus of his political ambitions.¹⁰ In *Anglia Libera: or the Limitation and Succession of the Crown of England Explain'd and Asserted*, Toland articulated his support for the Act of Settlement (1701) and for the House of Hanover as the heirs to the English crown. He began by briefly defining the ideal of society: all persons abided by the “Rules and Laws, which are the Measure and Standard of every Man’s Actions.” Without this arrangement, a ruler would have no checks on their actions because the monarch “can abolish tomorrow what has bin solemnly establisht to day.”¹¹ There could be no rules of behaviour in a nation where the ruler could not only “change his own Decrees, but also dispense with the very Laws of God, and oppose the clearest Dictates of Nature.”¹² Conversely, predictable government, acting in accordance with the common good, in the model of Toland’s God, was the best way to ensure the nation’s health.

Toland then described the events by which England ceased to be the free nation he advocated and had drifted dangerously close to the alternative he feared. He placed the blame at the feet of James II who had “forfeited his Right to the regal Government of these Nations by a notorious Neglect of his Declaration when he ascended the Throne, ... of the natural Relation or original Compact between all Kings and their Subjects....”¹³ Chief among James II’s crimes had been the impending imposition of Catholicism. In so doing, James had not acted in the best interest of those whom he governed and thus had forfeited his claim to the throne. To prevent a repeat of this unfortunate episode in England’s past, Toland pointed to the importance of the Act of Succession, which would “prevent all Possibility of introducing the *Roman* Idolatry” by stating that “*all who were ... reconcil’d to, or hold Communion with the See or Church or Rome, or marry a Papist, shall be for ever excluded and made incapable to hold, posses, or enjoy the Crown and Government of these Kingdoms....*”¹⁴ Toland further wrote that those who opposed the succession were agents of popery even if they did not recognise themselves as

such. The Act was the logical continuation of the Revolution of 1689 in which William and Mary had brought peace to England by securing Protestantism and which would be continued by the Hanoverians.¹⁵

Political theory too supported the implication of the Act. This was confirmed by the action of many English nobles in 1689 who were, Toland stated, “heartly Friends to the Liberty of the People, so zealous for preserving the *Protestant Religion* on both Home and Abroad....”¹⁶ Such behaviour had been described a generation earlier by James Harrington who, Toland reminded readers, had outlined in *Oceana* how a force might be raised to defend the rights of citizens: “*An Army, says He, may as well consist of Soldiers without Officers, or of Officers without Soldiers, as a Commonwealth (especially such a one as is capable of Greatness) consists of a People without a Gentry, or of a Gentry without a People.*”¹⁷ This was also the model advocated by Toland a few years earlier: a militia of free Englishmen united in the common defence of their liberty. This, he contended, was the only desire of those who call themselves republicans. A successful succession settlement secured this hope. Toland concluded by urging goodwill towards the House of Hanover: “I think is highly necessary that the Names of the Princess Sophia and her Issue be inserted in our public Prayers, with the rest of the Royal Family.”¹⁸ Passing the governance of England to Protestants from Hanover, Toland suggested, “restor[ed] and preserv[ed] to *England* her ancient Privileg’d Greatness of holding the Balance of *Europe*...” by acting as a buffer against France and the Pope.¹⁹ Therefore, Toland submitted that the Act of Succession did more than secure Protestantism in England; it secured the safety of all Europe.

Toland’s Trip to Hanover and the Death of William III

Based on the contents of *Anglia Libera* and at the urging of his secret benefactor Robert Harley, Toland accompanied the mission in July 1701, led by Lord Macclesfield (1660-1732), to present the Act of Settlement to the Electress Sophia.²⁰ Before arriving on the Continent, Toland’s reputation had preceded him. The famed natural philosopher and privy counsellor at Hanover, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) received a warning from Baron Schütz, envoy to Queen Anne, that English bishops hated Toland as did many ministers of state. Furthermore,

Schütz hoped Leibniz would encourage Sophia to keep her distance from this controversial figure.²¹ Despite this caution, Toland was able to gain access to Sophia, her family, and to Leibniz himself.

Prior to arriving in Hanover Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) feared that Toland might display the same impolite behaviour shown in Oxford. Shaftesbury was grandson to the famed first Earl of Shaftesbury (1621-1683) who had taken a lead role during the unsuccessful attempt to exclude James II from the throne. The new earl too had a predilection for politics and served as an MP from 1695 until ill health forced his retirement in 1698. He frequently supported young men with promise and did so for Toland even though, according to Thomas Birch's later recollections, Shaftesbury "never had any great opinion of him..."²² It was through Shaftesbury that Toland had originally met Harley.²³ Any friendship between Toland and Shaftesbury became strained in 1699 when Toland published a draft of his patron's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* without permission. Shaftesbury reacted by buying all copies and temporarily withdrawing himself from Toland. As Birch described the incident, Toland had "treated him so thou unhandsomly" and "made this ungrateful Return for the many favours, which he had need."²⁴ Though the two would eventually break, Shaftesbury had not yet abandoned Toland.²⁵ He reminded the impetuous young man that "You are now in a great Scene of Affaires and Providence has assign'd you a great Part in them." Now that Toland was participating in national politics, Shaftesbury advised him to abandon the conduct which had ended his ambitions with Methuen in Ireland. Indeed, more than Toland's personal reputation depended on his actions.

I hope you will remember that as you are the more rais'd, you are the more bound to preserve a Character such as becomes a Man who supports the Cause of Religion, Liberty and Vertue, and that it is not only your own and a few Friends' Reputation that is hazzarded but that your Native Country and the Lovers of it as well as all those of right Principles whome you represent to persons abroad, all these are engag'd with you and their Fame and Reputation in the Protestant World and amongst that Free People where you are known, does in a great manner depend on your Behaviour.²⁶

The advice went unheeded.

Toland used the opportunity in Hanover to discuss his philosophy and politics with the royal family. Such matters received notice in England. Sophia herself related to the Duke of Newcastle that Toland had “made me a faithful representation” of the role Newcastle had played in securing the Act.²⁷ Newcastle, a close friend to Shaftesbury, was a Whig and great land magnate; he would become Lord Privy Seal under Queen Anne. This mention of Newcastle to Sophia was likely an attempt to gain the Duke’s favour as was the dedication to him in *Anglia Libera*. Both attempts failed. Prior to leaving Hanover, Toland provided a copy of that book to Sophia who enjoyed Toland’s conversations and thanked him with some paintings of the Hanoverian family and other items.²⁸

Toland returned to England with great admiration for the Hanoverians and a new target for his political ambitions. After the Lower House of Convocation failed in their attempt to bring action against *Christianity not Mysterious* in 1701, Toland responded to his depiction by that body in *Vindicius Liberi*. The book was also a platform from which Toland praised the Hanoverian court. He began by decrying the accusations that he was the “Atheist and detestable Person,” which critics had made him out to be. Furthermore, he readily acknowledged that he was a commonwealthman, but not in the subversively negative manner alleged by the clergy. Rather, Toland claimed that as a defender of commonwealth ideals, he was “wholly devoted to the self-evident Principle of *Liberty*, and a profest Enemy to *Slavery* and *arbitrary Power*.”²⁹ What was more, Toland stated, in the manner of Matthew Tindal, that the power of government truly comes from society and, therefore, governments must earn the trust of those whom they govern. To those who accused Toland of advocating a democracy in England, he was unambiguous in his reply: “in every Thing I ever wrote, having never bin for a *Democracy*, which I think to be the worst Form of a *Common-wealth*, tho a thousand Times better than any Sort of a *Tyranny*.”³⁰ Toland portrayed himself as a Whig and a commonwealthman. Indeed, he claimed that all true Whigs shared his beliefs. Both he and Whigs supported Sophia and the House of Hanover because she and her kin would enact the descriptions of government Toland desired. As a companion piece, Toland had also issued a brief pamphlet urging William to invite the Hanoverians to

England so that they might become acclimatised to the nation they would potentially rule.³¹ This was especially important should some unfortunate accident befall the sitting monarch. When a riding accident claimed the life of William III, Queen Anne, the last Stuart monarch, ascended the English throne in March 1702.

On 10 March 1702, two days after William's death, Toland dispatched a letter to Shaftesbury requesting an introduction to Lord Halifax (Charles Montagu) (1661-1715) who had recently been acquitted by the Lords for his part in the Partition Treaties with France over the fate of Spain following the immanent death of Carlos II. Halifax had been a member of the Whig Junto under William and served as Chancellor of the Exchequer 1697-1699; he would repeat this duty under George I during October 1714-May 1715.³² Despite siding against the Junto during the 1698 election and the debates over the standing army, Toland desired that Shaftesbury recommend him to Halifax and that Shaftesbury present the peer a copy of an unnamed book, perhaps *Anglia Libera* or *Vindicus Liberior*. Anticipating a prompt reply to his request, Toland advised Shaftesbury that he would wait for Halifax outside of his Lordship's home or at the Grecian Coffeehouse.³³ The turbulent events of the day caused Shaftesbury to delay acting upon Toland's request. As he put it in an undated, but belated letter to Halifax: "I promised the person who sent this enclos'd to me, that I would present his Book to your Lordship and afterwards himself: but in this confusion of affaires I forgot both: so chose to send you this, as a less trouble to you than a visit on this account."³⁴ Once again Toland's attempts at advancement met with little success and failed to secure any permanent position. Toland then left for the Continent where he would spend much of the next decade.

The Whig *Observer* and The First Challenge of Sacheverell

Deists were not the only critics of High-Church politics. On the first day of April 1702 and less than one week into the reign of Queen Anne, Whig supporters launched a political periodical in the form of a twice-weekly newspaper, the *Observer*. While the day's news occasionally found a place in the *Observer*, it was mainly concerned with advancing a Whig programme and attacking Tory positions like those held by Henry Sacheverell.³⁵

The High-Church Tory and political sparkplug in 1709-10, Henry Sacheverell, DD (1674-1724) worried about Whigs and their seemingly too lenient stance toward Dissenters such as Toland and Tindal. In a speech given at Oxford in 1702 and subsequently published as *True Character of the Low-Churchman*, Sacheverell argued that Low-Churchmen, particularly the Whig Latitudinarian variety, might claim “to be of the Communion of the Church of *England*,” but they have “tender regard to weak Brethren....”³⁶ Such brethren include the deists, who held their reason in high regard at the expense of pious behaviour. What was more, Sacheverell submitted that such men believed “very Little or no Revelation, and had rather lay [their] Faith upon the Substantial Evidence of [their] Own Reason, then the precarious Authority of Divine Testimony.”³⁷ Passive-obedience toward God and monarchs was, Sacheverell suggested, the best way to ensure the peace of England. Otherwise, people would see themselves as “Judges of the Legality of Princes Actions, and every slip or misconduct a Forfeiture of their Crowns....” Monarchs ruled by the desire of God, not by the whim of those over whom they govern.³⁸ The divine right of kings and passive obedience found a powerful advocate in Sacheverell as did those who wished to end what they saw as the widespread heresy of deism. By rejecting obedience towards authority and replacing it with belief measured against reason, Sacheverell urged readers to see deists, and all those who did not explicitly challenge them, as a destabilising force in England.³⁹

In late September, the *Observer* considered the supposed threat and dangers of allowing the continuation of religious diversity in England. “The Religious Differences of the People of England, are so small,” the editor concluded that, “Pride on one hand and stubbornness on the other are the chief causes or our Religious Feuds and Animosities....” Failure to permit freedom of conscience and force one’s beliefs upon another lay at the heart of the matter. Even in the case of Catholics, their confession was not the real issue. Rather, the reason why they were excluded from government positions was that their “Opinions were contrary to the well Being of Humane Societies.”⁴⁰ The Catholic disposition to religious exclusion,

suggested the paper, threatened the religious freedom upon which England's constitution was supposed to rest.

Turning to the mind's operation, the *Observer* argued that

Persecution is a forcing the Mind to a Consent, to what the mind has an utter Aversion to comply withal: Now who ever considers the nature of Mans Mind, as also of a Rational Soul, must conclude, that it cannot be forc'd by External Instruments: Spiritual Intellectual Beings, as they subsist without the Accidents peculiar to Corporeal Substances, cannot be affected by Material Objects. How vain then is it for Men to endeavour to force the Mind by punishments of the Body.⁴¹

The nature of the mind rendered any means to cajole people into a certain belief ineffective. Just as Toland and Tindal had asserted, one cannot force belief upon another person. Like our deists, the paper claimed that the blame for such attempts to undermine religious freedom in England lay in the practise of priestcraft. In a mock dialogue, an analysis of priestcraft began by noting its "Mischiefs" which had done more damage to England "than the Powers of France and Rome." However, unlike the "Oafs" who inhabited popish countries and permitted themselves to be led by scheming priests, Englanders employed their reason and would not believe priestly lies.⁴² Reason, therefore, was the best defence against the imposition of priestcraft. To readers acquainted with deist writings, all this sounded familiar. It is also evidence of deists not being out of step with contemporary political debates.

Referring specifically to Sacheverell, the paper's editors addressed the conception of passive-obedience that seemed to be all the rage in Tory coffeehouses. After debating the issue for several paragraphs, the *Observer* concluded that "Passive-Obedience and Non-resistance are Synonymous Terms, and are quaint Expressions of Slavery, introduc'd by the Priests of the Order of Tyranny, in order to introduce Popery into the Church, and Slavery into the State." The ambition of devious priests lay behind this political doctrine. What was more, the paper suggested that if any person were to accept passive obedience as a way of life, that person would have the same rights before the king that animals have on the estates of country gentlemen. Certainly, as Tindal had argued, English subjects wished more for themselves than existing as voiceless possessions of a monarch.⁴³

The Dangers of Political Favours

After his attempts to secure government patronage had failed, Toland sailed to the Continent. His timing was certainly influenced by the potential for changes in England's attitude towards Dissent that occurred in 1702: the coronation of Queen Anne ushered in a new political and religious climate, and the future Archbishop of Canterbury William Wake urged England's divines to "write and preach" until the waters of religion were "calm again."⁴⁴ Toland eventually turned up in Utrecht in mid-August of 1703 and his claims of association with important men travelled with him. This came to a head soon after his arrival. Toland's alliance with Harley and the positions he supported, raised the suspicions of the latter's political rivals such as the Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722) and Sidney Godolphin (1645-1712). Marlborough dispatched agents to Utrecht to assault Toland who described the attack as occurring after a prolonged "Sickness, and passing over the brutal violence that was us'd against me in Such a Condition, either shows their gross partiality, or that I need not apprehend any Blemish to my Reputation from their Judgements." The beating did not have the intended effect of keeping Toland out of English politics. Indeed, Toland viewed his bruises as badges of honour and proof that his work was worrying those who would limit personal freedom and institute governments based on religious exclusion.

What happen'd to me might befall the greatest Man on Earth, tho in Perfect Health; and I have done nothing but what had bin often practis'd by men of unquestionable worth and Courage: for such attempts not being on the Square, as in ordinary quarrels, have bin always treated after a very different manner; and I believe none was ever heard to be challenged a man fairly yt wou'd assassinate him, attack him unaware, or take any other Advantage.⁴⁵

True to his words of defiance, Toland returned to England when the Tory ministry of Nottingham and Rochester failed in 1704, and a Whig triumvirate, composed of Harley, Godolphin, and Marlborough, took its place. He arrived expecting Harley's patronage, only to be dismayed when he found Harley employing Daniel Defoe's literary skills.⁴⁶ Harley, who was then Secretary of State, learned of Toland's arrival from an anonymous informant. What troubled the author of the letter was the rumour that "John Toland is in England and hard at work at his pen."⁴⁷ William

Nicolson (1655-1727), Bishop of Carlisle (1702-1718), learned of Toland's return during a supper conversation with Edmund Gibson. Afterwards Nicolson met with the Archbishop of Canterbury who "assured [him] of Mr Toland's being out of Countenance at Hanover" due mainly to "his Knavery."⁴⁸ The news eased the three men's worries over Toland's potential political influence, albeit only temporarily.

Collins' Fortune and Tindal's Freedom of the Press

While Toland was a political irritant and covert champion of Harley, Anthony Collins lived above such squabbles. In 1704, the same year as Toland returned to England, Collins purchased Hunters' Comb, a country estate. During the three years he lived there, Richard Dighton a onetime servant, recalled that Collins "was visited several times by Queen Ann[e's] Noblemen and Ladies of Quality who took delight in walking in his fine gardens." What was more, several "Gentlemen of the County" urged Collins "to represent them in Parliament as the Knight of the Shire (but would not be prevailed on)."⁴⁹ Where Toland coveted government patronage, Collins declined it. However, Collins still took interest in the political issues of the day.

Also in 1704, Tindal re-entered the public sphere with a treatise encouraging freedom of the press. Restraint on publishing, Tindal argued, had been mistakenly defended on religious grounds. It had been argued, by those who supported controls on the press, that people needed to be protected from heretical publications which might lead them astray. Against this claim, Tindal reminded readers that God desired Christians to use their reason to arrive at the truth of religion: God does not demand impossibilities and is perfectly happy in Himself. Restriction on the publication of theological works was based on the view that humanity was unable to find its own way to God.⁵⁰ "What can be more inconsistent with this Duty of Examination," Tindal questioned, "than a Restraint on the Press, since there can be no other Cause assigned why 'tis unlawful to publish Arguments against the State Religion, but because 'tis unlawful to read them, that being the sole reason of forbidding the publishing of them?"⁵¹ Reason, not regulations, would allow readers to determine truth and reject falsehood. Moreover, he asserted that any religion which feared honest investigation cannot be the true faith because the foundation of

Protestantism itself “is built on the natural Right every one has of judging for himself in matters of Religion,” and demands total freedom of the press.⁵² The reason control existed in England, Tindal submitted, was due to the persistence of such doctrines as passive obedience, which seemed to have convinced many that they have no right to question “what relates to Religion and Government, to see what can be said on all sides, in order to form his Judgement aright.”⁵³ Even if one accepted such a principle in matters of religion, it had to be rejected when matters turned to government actions because the “liberty of the Press must keep a Ministry within some tolerable Bounds, by exposing their ill Designs to the People, with whom if they once lose their credit, they will be very unfit Tools for a Court to work with.” Tindal concluded by noting that in England, unlike other nations where it was a “Crime to talk, much more to write about State-Matters,” people had the right—perhaps even the duty—if they did not deny it, not to be enslaved by government.⁵⁴

Toland, Praise of Hanover, and Repairs to a Reputation

Having failed to find government patronage—covert or otherwise—Toland turned his attention to England’s potential future rulers in the Hanoverian court. His *Letters to Serena* contained, as we will see, a natural philosophy based on self-moving matter—derived in part from Isaac Newton—which was also tied to a political goal.⁵⁵ By composing the work for Sophia Charlotte, Queen of Prussia, whose intellect received constant praise in his accounts of Hanover, Toland attempted to establish a position next to persons of inevitable political importance by presenting himself as an authority in the natural philosophy of the nation Sophia and her family would rule. Indeed, when the Electress Sophia died in 1714 Toland lamented that his chance for a life of ease at court died with her.⁵⁶

In the preface to *Letters to Serena*, Toland urged people of all political stripes to read the book: “*Whig or Torys, Latitudinarian ... Occasional Conformists or Nonjurants Schismatics: for there is nothing in this Pacquet relating to the Disputes which divide ‘em at present either in Religion or politics...*”⁵⁷ Toland then waded into disputes in both these arenas by confronting Sacheverell’s recent characterisation of Low Churchmen. He cautioned Serena, (Sophia Charlotte) “As

for the Reflections you may be willing to hear against me from any of your Angry Friends, I have often advis'd you not to trouble your self about such Trifles no more than I do." Until all members of Church and government can "*secure themselves from the Slander and Calumny of those*" who spread bigotry among people, she ought to ignore their accusations against him.⁵⁸ Toland then turned his attentions to Sacheverell's book which Sophia Charlotte had sent him. He decried the attempts to draw him into religious disputes and referred the Queen to "*the Satisfaction I gave in Vindicus Liberius concerning the Exceptions taken at Christianity not Mysterious ...*" Toland here attempts to rescue his reputation from its English characterisation, specifically that found in Sacheverell's and similar Tory writings, and to present himself to Sophia Charlotte as one who has suffered at the hands of others.⁵⁹

Toland's zeal to act as a kind of English spokesperson for the Hanoverians led him to publish a further account of the potential benefits their Protestant rule would bring to Britain. Though it was published in 1705, *An Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover* contained letters composed in late 1702 which described Toland's impressions of Hanoverian governance.⁶⁰ He began by describing the laws by which a king ought to preside over the nation. Monarchs guide their subjects the same way that "God himself preserves the World by the Oppositions of Heat and Cold, of Gravity and Levity, of Hard and fluid Bodys, whence proceeds the admirable Harmony of all things." Just as Tindal had argued a decade earlier, Toland agreed that God's immutable laws of nature applied to governments and the motion of planets.⁶¹ God established order and did not arbitrarily interfere; rather He guided and directed the world to achieve the goal of human happiness—so too should earthly monarchs. In Europe there was no more ideal place than Hanover and the same condition could also exist in England should Hanoverians succeed to the crown.⁶² Key to their enviable management was "the intire Liberty of Conscience which all good Christians enjoy in this place, and throout ... all Territorys..." There was, Toland believed, no forced religious conformity in Prussia: people were permitted the use of their reason to find their own way to God and the form of religion which seemed best to them.⁶³ Prussia, therefore, promoted

the religion advocated in *Christianity not Mysterious*. This commitment to religious freedom was personified in “Sophia Charlotte, the most beautiful Princess of her Time, and who is second to no Person in the Justness of her Thoughts...”⁶⁴ Toland then went on at some length lauding Sophia Charlotte’s erudition. Her desire for learning influenced Sophia’s choice of political advisors, a practise Toland admired. “I need but name Monsieur Leibniz for an Example, who is here a Privy Counsellor...,” although, Toland conceded “I cannot agree to his Metaphysical Notions...”⁶⁵ This subtle challenge to the advice provided Sophia Charlotte by Leibniz is perhaps another attempt by Toland to obtain a court position for himself. Through the claimed association between his work and Newton, who was then engaged in the priority dispute with Leibniz over the calculus, Toland may have been attempting to drive a wedge between Leibniz and the Hanoverian court by asserting that he was a philosopher at home in English learned circles and not the divisive force Leibniz would be.

Not entirely certain of Hanoverian favour, Toland’s desire to find employment forced him to consider alternatives. This is evidenced by two notes he sent the third Earl Shaftesbury in late October 1705. Toland opened the first by referring to the letter Shaftesbury had sent prior to Toland’s trip to Hanover with the Act of Settlement delegation in 1701. He assured the Earl that “your Lordship’s frank manner for chideing me for real or imaginary faults, has not diminisht, but rather increast that Confidence.” Attempting to distance himself from his past reputation, Toland alerted Shaftesbury to the fact that he was “not sauntering any longer in Coffeeshouses...” Alluding to his tenuous connection with Harley, Toland noted with amusement that he had been characterised as a Tory by some observers. He hoped that Shaftesbury would consider the source of the accusations. These coffeehouse politicians “who (as I am inform’d by no mean person) report that I am become a Tory; when it is impossible for ‘em to know any thing of a man that w[as] perfectly retir’d in the Country, and frequents no publick places in the Town.”⁶⁶ As he had done with past critics, Toland dismissed them with the claim that they did not know the real Toland.

Following this letter, Toland dispatched another to Shaftesbury. He boasted that “I am now in some manner altering my Circumstances: for what my Lord Somer’s Ministry, wou’d not give me, and what I wou’d not ask my Lord Nottingham’s Ministry, the present Ministry unsought has offer’d, and I am willing to accept.” As to the exact nature of the appointment with Harley,⁶⁷ Toland would not reveal it, but he promised Shaftesbury a complete account if he agreed to a meeting. At the very least Toland hoped that this new status would allow him to “begin on clear ground” in the opinions of others.⁶⁸

There was some truth in Toland’s boasts to Shaftesbury. In early January 1707, the Jacobite and frequent correspondent to St. Germain, John Netterville wrote Harley to advise him that Toland’s claims of service to the minister were a frequent topic of discussion in political circles. Netterville related a meeting he had with a Nonjuror who “asked me if I had an interest in serving Toland.” The Nonjuror continued that to serve Harley was to serve Toland who “*is Secretary Harley’s champion or penman to write as he desires as to the subject matter.*”⁶⁹ Later that month, Harley admitted to Lord Raby, English Ambassador in Berlin, that he had indeed employed Toland on various occasions because Toland seemed to have “read much.”⁷⁰

Toland’s acquaintances further attempted to repair his damaged reputation. One Elisha Smith wrote to Thomas Hearne (1678-1735), antiquarian, Nonjuror, and at this time Assistant Keeper of the Bodleian, in early 1706 with just such a goal. After relating the many conversations he had with Toland, Smith advised Hearne that perhaps the public had been too harsh in condemning Toland as a heretic.

I think myself oblig’d to vindicate him from y^e mistaken prejudices y^e [world] has received concerning his Religion Since y^e Publication of his first Book Xtianity not Mysterious he is very sensible of it & has confessed to me that those were only his Juvenile Thots at 25 & waits only for an opportunity to Convince Y^e world how much they have mistaken him from that Book.

What was more, Smith assured Hearne that “I firmly believe him to be a man of Rel. & of y^e Faith of Y^e Church of Engl.”⁷¹ Hearne was unmoved and described Smith in later correspondence as “a Clergyman and an acquaintance of Toland,” and characterised Toland as a “Sorry Wretch.”⁷² First impressions of Toland remained

lasting impressions. Indeed, in his recollections Hearne described him as a man of “vile principles, which he took all opportunities of instilling into young Gentlemen...”⁷³

Newspapers and Further Whig / Tory Conflict

As might be expected, the Tories did not reply with silence to the Whig *Observator* or to the growth of apparent irreligious literature such as that authored by Toland and Tindal. They answered one newspaper with another and the *Rehearsal* was launched on 5 August 1704, edited by the High-Church Nonjuror Charles Leslie. The paper conducted its political polemic as a dialogue frequently pitting the Tory “Countryman” character against the Whig “Observator” character.⁷⁴ In an early February 1705 issue, “Countryman” lobbied for legal action against those who advanced heresy, both secular and sacred: “no Christian Government ought to suffer CHRIST our LORD, to be Ridicul’d or Blashem’d.” Both God and monarchs demanded loyalty from their subjects. When irreligious thinkers or Whigs refused this expectation, the government was right to enact punishment. The paper noted that “even in Scotland, since this Revolution, one Mr. Aikinhead was put to Death for Blasphemy.” England too ought to follow this example with heretics who seemed to threaten the established political and religious order.⁷⁵ Tories were clear in stating which group of heretics they found most troubling. In the guise of the “Observator” character, the paper characterised the position of their opponents: “We Whiggs, who are Deists, must have a care how We let the Presbyterians into the Saddle. Tho, at present, We agree, as to our Common Designs against the Church and Crown.” The Tory view was that deists were Whigs and Whigs were deists; both groups threatened the nation and religion Tories sought to cultivate. The Observator figure encouraged the presentation of deists and Whigs as a danger by provocatively stating that if they could not find a place in the existing order “Then we’ll have a Government all of Deists, and have no Religion at all.”⁷⁶

Whig authors replied to these Tory accusations in a like manner with rebuttals in the *Observator*. The editor asked his adversaries “pray, Gentlemen, when has the Church been in Danger since Her Majesties Happy Accession to the

Throne?” If Tories continued to point in the direction of Dissenters generally or deists specifically as a danger, they must, the *Observer* demanded, provided more than empty rhetoric as proof. The English Church was, since 1689, the paper reminded its readers, “the Church of Christ, and then it is a Church of Peace, of Love, of Union and Moderation...”⁷⁷ It was not the Church of the Tories: exclusive and intolerant.

Later that same year, the *Observer* drew a comparison which many readers, not to mention the editor of the *Rehearsal*, would have found distasteful. Was there, the paper asked, any difference between Dissenters and members of the English Church? The only difference, the paper responded, “betwixt the Church and Dissenters, in Point of Religion, was concerning some Rituals and Modes of Worship, which they esteem’d as Humane Ceremonies, and which the Church impos’d as Terms of Communion.” Therefore, Whigs seemed to argue that no important doctrinal issues separated Dissenters from communicants in the Church of England. Only in acceptance of some ceremonial practices did the two confessions deviate. This outward expression of faith ought not to be used as a weapon to divide the nation. It then inquired about differences between Nonjurors and Dissenters: “Now, the Case of the Dissenters and that of the nonjurors is as different as any two contraries can be. The Dissenters disagree only in a Religious capacity; the Nonjurors deny both the Civil and Religious Authority of the Kingdom; they are Enemies both to Church and State.”⁷⁸ Whereas Dissenters were true English subjects who accepted the legitimacy of the current monarch and the future succession, Nonjurors accepted neither the religious settlement nor the current monarch. This point received further support in a later edition of the *Observer*, which copied the dialogue style of its rival by using the Countryman name to refer to Tories. “Master, what you say is true,” Countryman confessed to *Observer*, “The Nonjurors are all of ‘em Papists, and [Charles] Lesley in his last *Rehearsal* has declar’d himself to be so.”⁷⁹ Despite their pleas to the contrary, it was Nonjurors rather than Dissenters, who posed the real threat to English religious and political stability. Attacks on Dissenters and deists, it seemed, were merely a diversionary tactic.

Higgins and Increasing Fear of Deist Politics

During the early eighteenth century, Tories and High-churchmen formed a chorus cry of “Church in Danger” to alert the nation to their belief that Dissenters, and especially deists, were irrevocably damaging the English Church with their calls for tolerance and comprehension. Francis Higgins (1669-1728), an Irish preacher, was a particularly strong supporter of halting the writings of deists and other heretics.⁸⁰ On 26 February 1707 Higgins preached a sermon at White-Hall addressing this issue. He began by attacking the deist doctrine of following one’s conscience in matters of religion and not accepting anything by virtue of tradition. Against this proposition, Higgins replied “a great many Actions, flowing from the Dictates of an erroneous Conscience, tho’ performed with the warmest Zeal, and heartiest Sincerity, will be found not perfect before God.”⁸¹ Taking a common line of response, Higgins cautioned readers that God’s demands upon them were not open to interpretation, only compliance. Fearful of heretics further propagating irreligion in England, Higgins hoped to warn the unwary to be suspicious of certain books which promoted atheism under the guise of sincere inquiry into religion.

Chief among such books were Henry Dodwell’s work on the soul, which we will examine shortly, and Toland’s *Christianity not Mysterious*.⁸² Indeed, Higgins noted that Toland’s book was so heretical that it was burned in Ireland. If England failed to take similar actions with such blasphemy the nation risked divine retribution. He cautioned: “Don’t let us foolishly imagine because God is pleas’d to give us Glorious Success against our Enemies Abroad; and to Bless us with a Pious Queen at Home ... that therefore he is at Peace with us....” The same providence which secured Protestantism in England would, Higgins suggested, exact a hard lesson upon people who did nothing to stop deism.⁸³ A simple reason existed as to why deism went unpunished in England. Higgins revealed, and Sacheverell would repeat in 1709, that deists hid behind “Great Men, who may be thought ... Abettors of Such Doctrines and Practices.” These unnamed politicians “can easily be imagined the Reason why Her Majesty, the Parliament, the Judges, the Magistrates of the Land are not zealous ... to put a full, speedy and effectual stop to such thriving, and fatal Mischiefs.”⁸⁴ Though he mentioned no one by name, this

accusation may be a reference to Toland's relationship with Harley and was certainly against the stance Whigs were believed to be taking with Dissenters in such publications as the *Observer*. Thus, deists were fully integrated in contemporary political discourse.

The reaction against Higgins' polemic was swift. S. White replied that "Mr. *Higgins*, and the Party he expouses, would make the World believe they are the only Respecters of Majesty." He continued that Tories' desired passive obedience not only to the monarch and church, but also to any doctrine their party holds as truth.⁸⁵ While White did not defend the present state of the English Church, he refused to believe it was as rife with unbelief as Higgins had claimed. He did, however, agree that Toland was one of the "Contagious Plagues of the Church of England..."⁸⁶ In spite of their shared hatred of Toland, White and Higgins parted company over the influence they believed Toland and other deists had in matters of religion in England. Toland, as White characterised him, frequently dispensed blasphemy but was "not own'd by our Church as a Member, and I believe lays claim to none." Toland was an non-associated polemical writer who spoke for himself; and, "upon Examination, I believe it would be found, that not one in a Thousand every heard of [his] Name, [or] saw [his] books." Thus, White submitted that Toland was more ghost than substance and ought to be ignored with silence, not used to fan the flames of division in English politics or religion.⁸⁷

Another reply to Higgins, issued anonymously, had a similar thesis. The author wrote that Queen Anne's design "has been to render all her People *Easy, Safe, and Happy*, as well as in their Religious as Temporal concerns." In this atmosphere of official tolerance, it was "no less amazing than horrible, to think there should be any such vile and ungrateful Men found among us..." Higgins and his fellow Tories were, the author claimed, a prime example of this group.⁸⁸ Under the seemingly benign task of "instilling into the people's minds, the true Principles of Religion," Higgins instead was among the "Promoters of Scandal, Sedition and Discord."⁸⁹ This was most true in the characterisation of Toland.

How industrious Mr. *Higgins* is, to rake up other Mens *Faults*, and lay them at the Government's Door; ... What does *Toland's Crime Committed in Ireland*, relate to the Preacher's Design, or is it another Argument of the

churches being in Danger, because he is caress'd by Men of Quality here. If Mr. *Higgins* knows that *Toland* has offended since he came to *England*, he would do well to prosecute him, for I hope he does not expect that the Government should punish Men for faults it was never appriz'd of....⁹⁰

Unsubstantiated accusations carried no weight even among those who did not support deism.

As we saw with William Stephens, attempts to drive a religious wedge among the English people were met with same strong replies that Tories used to tie deism to a Whig platform. At least a few nonjurors and Tories saw the partial failure of this approach. The 12 February 1707 edition of the *Rehearsal* changed tactics and focussed its agenda on refuting “The Men of Rights” who argued for government by consent rather than divine right. “They are,” the paper continued, “such Dissenters as the Atheists. Not so Good as the Deists or Heathen, as I have before shew'd. For no Deist or Heathen ever had so Contemptible a Notion of God, as to set the People above Him, and make him Govern by an Authority DERIV'D from Them. The Men of the Rights are Dissenters from God, and all Reveal'd Religion.” While deists were bad, republicans were worse and Tories now sought to identify Whigs with these political extremists.⁹¹ Whigs were equally skilled at political mudslinging. The headline of a mid-April edition of the *Observer* claimed that “The High-Churchmen are Papists.”⁹²

While England's newspapers debated deism, Toland had travelled to the Continent in early 1707 with the intent of meeting again with Sophia and her family. While abroad, he wrote Harley to express his disappointment at having not obtained a permanent position within the English government: “this time two years I made sure of some preferment before now, not only because my Lord Treasurer was pleased to promise I should be taken care of....” What was more, as Toland attempted to persuade Harley, “I think I may without fearing the least imputation of vanity, look on myself as much more deserving ... and great deal more capable in all respects, than several in the long list of such as have been employed in that space of time.”⁹³ As to the rumours of his planned actions during his trip, Toland assured Harley that “I am not going nor shall go either to Berlin or Hanover, nor upon any

account or errand whatsoever relating to these Courts, as some foolish people might insinuate to you after my departure....”⁹⁴

Not one to let a promise stand in the way of his personal political advancement, Toland did not keep his word. After spending a few weeks in September in Dusseldorf at the court of John William (r. 1690-1716), Elector Palatine, Toland requested a letter of recommendation to Sophia, Electress of Hanover so that he might be welcomed again at her court. William asked his cousin “without any delay, to receive the said Toland into your mighty protection and powerful patronage.” If she did this service, William predicted Sophia would not regret it because “in return of all the distinction and kindness at any time show’d him, [he] will imploy all, possible care and zeal to render your Dilection and to your Electoral family such valuable Services as may most amply deserve your Favour.”⁹⁵

Harley soon learned that Toland was indeed in Berlin and, what was worse, claimed to be acting on behalf of the English government and Secretary Harley specifically. Erasmus Lewis (1670-1754), MP and under Secretary of State, dispatched a brief account in October 1707 of Toland’s latest actions. An acquaintance related to Lewis, who passed it along to Harley, that “Toland has come here from the Court at Dusseldorf, where the Elector made him considerable presents. He went yesterday to Herrenhausen ... when he paid his respects to the Electress.”⁹⁶ Sophia herself was suspicious of Toland’s unexpected arrival and requested further information. The Bishop of Spiga (1655-1728) obliged her and related “in what way the person who calls himself Toland succeeded in getting from his E. H. my master the letter which he has present[ed] to you on his part.”⁹⁷ At some length, the Bishop detailed how Toland

went and looked out this friend of his, and told him that, having been in England the greatest and the first promoter of the succession, and the man who drew out the deduction of the rights of your E. H., he had since been at the Court of Hanover, where he had been regaled with I do not know how many medals of high price; but that, being extremely well received by your E. H. (as one might well believe), he had had long and secret conferences with your Highness, and had taken long walks with you. This had made him a great many enemies, as well in Hanover as in England, where they had taken him for a Hanoverian spy, on account of his attachment to the Serene House; so that in fact he would not dare to return again to Hanover without

some pretext ... and that the said pretext might be given him by a letter from his E. H. to your Serene Highness,--a letter of simple civility, and which should mean no more than that his E. H. is well satisfied with him, and has received good service from him.⁹⁸

It seems Toland's claims of favour with politically great persons were as boastful now as they had been thirteenth years earlier in Oxford and were bringing him the same results.

Leibniz too composed a description of Toland's arrival in Hanover and why the Elector of Palatine might wish to support Toland, which Leibniz dispatched to Ambassador Raby at the end of December. The philosopher opined that the "Elector had an object of his own to serve, which was to get something published that might help to disabuse the English who have looked upon him as a persecutor of the Protestants." William belonged to the Catholic House of Palatinate-Neuburg and under his rule and that of his brother Charles III Philip (r. 1716-1742) Calvinists were increasingly being exiled and barred from participating in government.⁹⁹ By sponsoring Toland to the potential future ruler of England, Leibniz believed that the Elector of Palatine was attempting to appear friendly to Protestants. This hypothesis was seconded from Berlin in a letter written by William Ayerst, D.D. (1683-1765) who held various diplomatic positions on the Continent, to Arthur Charlett in Oxford which advised him that "Mr. Toland I mean has lately been here coming from y^e Palatine Court whose proceedings against y^e Protestants we hear Mr. Toland has ... defended & receiv'd great gifts for his pains."¹⁰⁰ For Toland and William it was a mutually beneficial relationship of patron and penman, a simple business agreement. Like others, Leibniz related that Toland asserted a close relationship with Harley and had "insinuated to us here that since the change of Ministry in England he is in favour at Court, that he is employed by the Ministers, and that he has relations with even the Duke of Marlborough; but as he has given us no proofs of this credit of his...." The one positive item which Leibniz found during his latest conversation with Toland was the claim "that he has made it up with the Theologians: all the better for him. This is what I advised him to do the first time I saw him, on occasion of my Lord Macclesfield's embassy."¹⁰¹ However, Leibniz believed it to be unlikely.

Tindal and the Rights of the Church

While Ayerst related his dismay over Toland's actions in Berlin, he also lamented the work of another deist telling Charlett that "The noise [of] Mr. Tyndal's Book has reach'd hither & one of the King's chaplains has been talking to me about it." He continued that Oxford seemed to do little to curtail Tindal, whom Ayerst described as "Another of y^e Same race" as Toland.¹⁰² The book in question, *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted*, was perhaps Tindal's most infamous, at least until 1730 and the release of *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. His decision to publish *The Rights* anonymously did little to prevent him being identified as the author. Bernard Gardiner (1668-1726), Warden of All Souls College, Oxford (since 1702) was particularly irritated with the contents of the work. He wrote to Archbishop Tenison on 3 November 1708 to advise him "I hear there is proof offer'd by a person who transcrib'd y^m, y^t many pages of y^e Rights of y^e Church were written by Dr. Tindal: if my power will reach to take [it] upon Oath I will hear it."¹⁰³ Moreover, in a letter of 1709 the third Earl Shaftesbury agreed that Tindal was the most likely author and that despite reservations about some of its contents, claimed it "gave me great satisfaction."¹⁰⁴

Gardiner was as good as his word. During the composition of the book, Tindal had employed John Silke as a copyist. Under examination on 28 October 1710, Silke painted a more sinister picture and related the main arguments of the book. Silke advised his examiners in part that Tindal argued that the church ought to have no more power than that wielded by "other Private Companys, and Clubs." Moreover, "all Ecclesiastical Power has no other foundation than the Consent of the Society" and "Among Christians no one more than another can be reckon'd a Priest from Scripture." The ambition of priests was limitless "which cou'd only be Satisfied with an Absolute Power...."¹⁰⁵ The process of transcription encompassed the years 1699-1702 when Silke was "then Servitor of All Souls College Oxon." He hinted at having little choice in the matter.

He did several times Inscribe every chapter together with the Preface & contents of Each Chapter of a Book now publish'd & Entitl'd The Rights of the Christian Asserted; except some few Additions /and Alterations/ w^{ch} as he believes were made since that time: and this Deponent further saith that

he transcribed it by the order of Dr. Matthew Tindal Fellow of the sd College.

Before the book appeared in print, Silke “did Copy the Whole Book as the prepar’d for the Press; particularly the Propositions above written by the Order of the Doctor, part of Which were dictated to the s[ai]d deponent from the Doctor’s own mouth; and part was transcrib’d from original Papers which the s[ai]d Deponent well knows to be written by the hand of the s[ai]d Doctor Matthew Tindal.”¹⁰⁶ This accusation confirmed what opponents of deists believed: these heretics were bent on corrupting those around them, through their books. In the present case, Tindal appeared to use his position as Fellow of All Souls to nurse heresy in a servitor, a student who depended upon the funds provided by his social superiors.¹⁰⁷ Silke published his own account of the episode in 1735—two years after Tindal’s death—as *The Religious, Rational and Moral Conduct of Matthew Tindal*. In the book Silke attempted to distance himself from a man whom he described as “that great Apostate and Corrupter of the Principles and Morals of the Youth of the present Age” and an atheist.¹⁰⁸ This episode may have been what reverend Thomas Tanner (1674-1735), former chaplain of All Souls and future Bishop of St. Asaph, had in mind when he complained in 1717 about All Souls’ sullied reputation. The college had, he lamented, “furnish’d” the nation with “all sorts of Freethinking.” Nevertheless he hoped that people would realise “that we are not all quite corrupted—.”¹⁰⁹ Despite Gardiner’s dismay over All Souls having provided the location in which Tindal composed his book, no official action was taken against him. Tindal’s former tutor at Oxford, the Nonjuror George Hickes, no doubt spoke for many when he wrote “I am sorry to understand ... there is no disposition at Oxford to prosecute the Deist scribe Dr Tindal ... to convict him of being the author of the Rights.”¹¹⁰

Rights of the Christian Church began by taking up the debates over the safety of the English Church. Tindal went over the well-worn ground of who were the best churchmen: High or Low. His conclusion, which he would elaborate in the body of the work, was that “they who raise the greatest Noise about the Danger of the Church, are the greatest Enemies to it, ... and are in direct opposition to the

Principles of the Reformation....” Authority over the church, Tindal argued, began with “her Majesty’s Goodness and Tenderness” and not with doctrines which confronted this authority. In other words, he characterised the constitution of the Church as that enshrined by the monarch and not an independent document guided by the bigotry and intolerance of High-Churchmen.¹¹¹

The monarch’s duty to provide an atmosphere free of prosecution for his subjects was a frequent theme in Tindal’s past works on government and continued here. In exchange for this promise of protection, the ruler received the consent of those over whom he or she governed. This was certainly the case in 1689. With the same Lockean language he employed previously, Tindal explained that “the only Right a Conqueror has, is built on the Consent of those, who by their former Governor’s being no longer able to protect ‘em, were reduc’d to a State of Nature, and consequently at liberty to pay Obedience to the Conqueror, upon his taking ‘em into his Protection....”¹¹² Thus, when James II’s Catholicism abrogated his duty to safeguard Protestantism in England, his right to rule was forfeit. William and Mary’s promise to allow Protestantism to flourish provided them the consent of the body politic.

Jacobites threatened the stability of England because “never did any Men more grossly and notoriously sacrifice the Ends of Both Civil and Ecclesiastical Government to very Unfit, rather No Means, than those Protestants who were in the Interest of the Abdicated King; and are now in that of his Pretended Son, nurs’d up in Popery, *French* Tyranny, and a settled Hated to the *English* Nation....”¹¹³ Support for James II was the same as support for Louis XIV, the Pope, and encouraged the cloud of Catholicism to increase its shadow of darkness over Europe. Any true lover of England, Tindal stated, must support the Protestant succession and religious settlement. Moreover, the clergy ought not “to pretend to any Privileges or Powers they receive not from the People or their Representatives.”¹¹⁴ Nonjurors and Jacobites were therefore one and the same; both groups refused to accept the legacy of 1689. Turning further back in history for support, Tindal related that “In Queen *Elizabeth’s* Reign there was no Notion of Passive Obedience” to hinder the nation from viewing itself at the head of, and

protector for, a European Protestant community. In this same tradition was Queen Anne who extended “her Favour to all her People [and was] ... happy in her Government at home....” This was also the model found in Tindal’s notion of God. What was more, Anne “can distinguish True Religion from Priestcraft, and will not suffer her Power to be made subservient to the ill Purposes of a Party [The Tories], whose restless Malice is never to be satisfy’d, without treading on the Necks of all who are not as bigotted as themselves.”¹¹⁵

Defences of this work continued along the same lines. Tindal replied to critics like the reverend William Law (1686-1761), himself a High-Church Tory, who had refused to swear allegiance to George I, and who had stated that “we can have no notions of God, but such that are mysterious and inconceivable.”¹¹⁶ Tindal countered that he believed it was very near to atheism to worship a God whom one did not understand and about whom one could not form a clear idea. People must be free to worship God as they saw fit.¹¹⁷ Since God created humanity with the power to know Him, Tindal expected all people would come to hold the correct view of God if given the chance to explore their beliefs. What prevented the propagation of correct views was precisely those who depicted God as mysterious and unknowable. As proof of his thesis that God would not impose Himself on humanity, Tindal noted the experiences of early Jewish governments: “God, after he had accepted the Political Government of the Jews, wou’d reign no longer over ‘em than they were willing....”¹¹⁸ Humanity was free to find their way to God because “God wou’d not reign over the *Jews*, till they had agreed to the Covenant ... because, by his Law of Nature having allow’d Mankind a Right of chusing their own Governors, he wou’d not as King deprive ‘em of a Right which he had before as God given ‘em in common with the rest of the World....”¹¹⁹

Daniel Waterland, DD (1683-1740), was Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, Anglican theologian and champion of Trinitarianism. He disputed Tindal’s assertion by arguing that “God does not want our *leave* for the making of a law, neither needs he to wait for our *acceptance*, to render it valid. For though he enacts laws for the *good* only of his subjects, yet he will be the *judge* of what is for their good: and I presume, his infinite wisdom, and his superiority over us, are

sufficient to support his title.”¹²⁰ For Waterland it was not up to humanity to accept or reject God’s laws. People have an unwavering obligation to obey God, not to enter into a contractual relationship with the creator of the universe. To do as Tindal advocated would “bring down the laws of God to the lusts and passion of corrupt man, and to find some pretext or other for taking off religious restraints, that they may be at liberty to follow their pleasures, and to do only what is right in their own eyes, instead of attending to the voice of God.”¹²¹

Tindal’s book received many further refutations and challenges. Even Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) considered a response but it never came to fruition.¹²² Tindal replied to numerous rebuttals with *A Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church*. The chief target of the apology was William Wotton, FRS (1666-1727), spokesperson for the “moderns” in the famed Battle of the Books, who had composed *The Rights of the Clergy in the Christian Church* to persuade readers that Tindal’s notions were empty words composed by a deist. In response Tindal mostly repeated his arguments and further revealed his indebtedness to Locke. Governments as Tindal described them, were encouraged by their subjects to oppose tyranny and arbitrary power in all its forms. Just as God does not act arbitrarily and outside the bounds of established laws of nature, earthly rulers may not act outside the laws of nations.¹²³ Turning to the *Second Treatise on Government* (sec. 240), Tindal wrote that there are two Laws which ought to govern humanity: “the Honour of God and the Good of Mankind, which are in effect the same: and the last Rule must guide us in all our Actions with relation to those intrusted by their Fellows with Power to act for their good, as well as to others.”¹²⁴ Once consent has been removed, any person who clings to the dictates of a past government becomes a barrier to the current happiness of a nation. Such was the plight of Jacobites, Nonjurors, and those High-Churchmen who refused to permit any diversity of religion in England. Tindal argued that the events of 1689 had made their views obsolete.

Twenty-two years after the fact Francis Fox, Vicar of St. Mary’s, Reading, wrote to Edmund Gibson in 1730 detailing the recollections of Jonas Proast, a fellow Oxford resident and opponent of deism. Fox reported that Tindal’s book had

been criticised by some who feared its potential subversive nature but “others had not so bad an opinion of them.” What was more, Fox recalled that “I believe there are but few in these Parts, who have been hurt by the late endeavours to promote Infidelity. I do not know of any one.”¹²⁵ While it might seem, by reading Wotton’s account, that deism was a rampant and immediate danger, perhaps it was not perceived so by all contemporaries.

Irreligion at All Souls

In early 1708 Bernard Gardiner, still Warden of All Souls College, Oxford had written to Edmund Gibson about the disruptive activities of one of the Law Fellows, namely Tindal.¹²⁶ After apologising to Gibson for troubling him with a matter, which was, at this time, of little importance outside of Oxford, Gardiner proceeded. There were, he explained, “new attempts w^{ch} are daily made upon y^e Statutes” of the university. The chief worry over this movement by some of the younger faculty was the proposition to remove the holy order requirement for the Fellows. The Warden advised Gibson that “Dr. Tindal shelters himself in y^e Band.” Gardiner then sought advice on how best to deal with the problem and requested that Gibson keep this matter close to his chest because he did “not desire it may goe farther. You w^d be very kind in giving me some [hints?] sometimes of w^{ch} comes to y^r knowledge.”¹²⁷

The issue of Fellows’ regarding the Oxford residency and order requirements at All Souls lasted from 1702 to 1720. It became more than a local concern in 1709 when Gardiner attempted to compel William Blencowe, (All Souls Fellow, 1703, d. 1711) decipherer to the Queen who was living in London, to take orders. Blencowe, who was the grandson of famed mathematician and statesman John Wallis, asked for assistance from Lord Sunderland (1674-1722) who then interceded with Gardiner. Archbishop of Canterbury Tenison also worked on behalf of Blencowe in Sunderland’s name. The correspondences of Archbishop William Wake and of Tenison hold many letters from Gardiner who lamented governmental interference with his operation of All Souls. What is more, these letters also contain accounts of other Fellows who refused to take orders following Blencowe’s example. Gardiner stood firm in his demands. That same year the Fellows who

wished the statutes changed had a bill introduced in the House of Commons which would eliminate orders for the Fellows at All Souls. There was outcry and fear, even from moderate Churchmen, that the removal of such a requirement would undermine theology at Oxford. Queen Anne herself became involved when she stated that Blencowe's duties as a decipherer did not prevent him from taking orders. The bill failed in the Commons and Blencowe committed suicide in 1711 when it seemed that he would never be exempt from the statutes following the Tory resurgence in 1710.¹²⁸

By March 1709 Warden Gardiner's frustration over Tindal's participation in the movement reached a new level. He received a letter from William Bromley (1664-1732), former Tory MP for Oxford, who advised the Warden that the "design has been in agitation this 3 years, for about that time, Dr. Tindal came to me with those fallacious arguments, which are now urged as reasons." Bromley's reaction is hardly surprising from the man who had introduced all three Occasional Conformity Bills into Parliament.¹²⁹ Shortly after this letter, Tindal, like other Fellows who wished to protest the residency requirement, applied for and was granted a temporary leave of absence from the college. We know Tindal continued his work with the Fellows in their mission because his name is included in a surviving role call taken at one of their meetings. Indeed, both he and Blencowe took leaves from All Souls on the same day on at least two occasions.¹³⁰

Toland's Continuing Political Boasting

At the same time as All Souls faced the Fellows' challenge, Lord Raby wrote Leibniz. The subject remained Toland's behaviour. Raby related to Leibniz that Toland claimed to be in possession of a "letter from Madame the Electress" and that he used it to give "himself no small airs." Toland also continued to claim "that he was employed by the English Ministry." Frustrated by this perpetual boasting, Raby advised Leibniz that he had initiated an end to it by dispatching a report to Harley. Erasmus Lewis passed the letter to Harley and related that Raby had strongly urged Lewis to "acquaint [Harley] with the great injustice done you by Mr. Toland."¹³¹ In reply to Raby's reports, Harley had

written to me that so far from having any commission from him, he made difficulties in giving him a passport to leave England, not knowing what business he could possibly have abroad; that it is true that for some time he suffered him in his company, as a man reputed to have a good deal of reading, but that he was far from ever having had any friendship for or confidence in him.¹³²

Raby hoped, no doubt with Leibniz's support, that Harley's disavowal of Toland would finally halt his vanity and self-promotion. Better still, perhaps Toland would return to England. As Raby wrote to Leibniz, their adversary had "more impudence than all his countrymen put together...."¹³³

Toland's manners also placed him in further ill standing. In another letter to Charlett, Ayerst described Toland's brief stop in Berlin at the end of March. Toland arrived with the "thought to have got some medals for a Book he intends to write in praise of this court," however his service to the Elector Palatine cast him in a suspicious light. The Hanoverian court "despis'd so mercenary a Pen y^t cou'd write in favour of y^e Elector Palatin's Persecuting ye Protestants, & put him off...."¹³⁴ Toland's practise of supporting himself as a quill-for-hire had cost him seriously in this case. Despite Margaret C. Jacob's characterisation of John William, Elector Palatine, as a "powerful Protestant leader," and Toland's service to him as signifying an involvement in a pan-Protestant movement, the Ayerst letter suggests a different interpretation.¹³⁵ Toland, it seems, was motivated by self-gain and willing to compose tracts for the highest bidder, rather than Protestant altruism. This episode also marked the end of his association, limited though it was, with the Hanoverians. Indeed, when George I succeeded to the English throne in 1714, he and his advisors explicitly prohibited Toland from attending court.¹³⁶

Toland's perpetual statements about Harley's patronage and political favour raised the suspicions of other English politicians especially those who sparred with Harley for position. During August 1708, when Toland was in Holland, Marlborough and Godolphin kept close tabs on him because if he was indeed in Harley's service, it behoved them to keep abreast of their rival's overseas activities. Marlborough reported that "Mr. Toland, you know who supports him, [Robert Harley] is so very free in all his discourses against [Godolphin] and [Marlborough],

that some of the honest men in [Holland] have a mind to send him out of their country.” He continued that should the information prove accurate, it was a “very unreasonable and ungentlemanlike proceeding of” Harley to take against them.¹³⁷ By November 1708 Godolphin was worried over rumours that Toland was coming home and had been amassing material for another book. Purportedly the incomplete manuscript attacked Marlborough, but nothing substantive could be obtained on this account. Should it be true, Godolphin pressed Marlborough “to judg whether you could not take some measures ... for watching him, and for seizing his book, and papers, or finding out his printer, so as that you may bee master of what villany he is doing there.”¹³⁸ In the last letter between the two politicians regarding Toland, Marlborough wrote “Mr. Toland does no ways surprise me, for I know him to be a villian, and governed by a very mallicious man, [Robert Harley] and is maintained by him in Holand as a spye. I have had an account of his behaviour in the courts of Jarmany [Germany] this last winter....”¹³⁹ It seems that some took Toland’s asserted political connections at face value.

Back in England, during March and April, the *Observer* began describing party allegiances in the same language Toland had used years earlier. “The Denominations of Whig and Tory, ... have quite,” the paper noted, “lost the original idea which gave rise to them,....” Whereas during the Exclusion Crisis and the formation of party loyalty, the Whigs and Tories had explicit goals and positions, which one might use to characterise the members, current party labels had lost their original definitions. This blurring made it impossible to “know who are real friends to the Protestant Religion, British Liberties, and the Protestant Succession, but to observe Mens Actions....”¹⁴⁰ The position was carried further in a later edition which stated “Good Christians and Patriots not to be known now by the names of Whig and Tory.”¹⁴¹ The strongest admonishment carried by the paper was directed at the Whigs many of whom had abandoned their founding ideals. Too “many of those who call themselves Whigs, [have] gone off from those honest Principles, and yet they are very angry with us for saying they are Whigs of a modern Stamp, and they are guilty of the same Practices for which they justly accus’d the Tories.”¹⁴²

Conclusion

The fragile religious peace in England would not last another year. We now turn to the tumultuous events following 1709 and locate our deists in these disputes. As one witness to the events of that year recalled, decades after the fact: “in 1709 we looked forward with Pleasure; Peace; ... and in Safety from the Disturbers of Europe, were what we thought ours: lives probably secured of, and what we might certainly have depended upon, had we been worth those Blessings; but how Sudden was that bright scene changed.”¹⁴³ Like others who found themselves awash in these happenings, our deists sought to help England chart a course into smoother political and theological waters which avoided the waves caused by High-Church policies.

Notes

¹ Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2000), 164-165. The classic account of the era remains Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne*, rev. ed. (London: Macmillan, 1987).

² *The Post Man* 13 – 15 February 1701.

³ John Toland, *The Art of Governing by Parties*. (London, 1701), iii, v.

⁴ Toland, *The Art of Governing*, 2.

⁵ Toland, *The Art of Governing*, 6, 7.

⁶ Toland, *The Art of Governing*, 8.

⁷ Toland, *The Art of Governing*, 18, 21, 23.

⁸ Toland, *The Art of Governing*, 45, 46.

⁹ Toland, *The Art of Governing*, 103, 110. The book may also have been another attempt by Toland to act as spokesperson for Harley's Country alliance. See J. A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 43.

¹⁰ *The Post Boy* 19 June 1701; *The Post Man* 19 – 21 June 1701.

¹¹ John Toland, *Anglia Libera: or the Limitation and Succession of the Crown of England Explain'd and Asserted* (London, 1701), 1, 2, 6.

¹² Toland, *Anglia Libera*, 7, 13.

¹³ Toland, *Anglia Libera*, 22-3.

¹⁴ Toland, *Anglia Libera*, 29.

¹⁵ Toland, *Anglia Libera*, 47.

¹⁶ Toland, *Anglia Libera*, 56.

¹⁷ Toland, *Anglia Libera*, 59.

¹⁸ Toland, *Anglia Libera*, 106.

¹⁹ Toland, *Anglia Libera*, 141, 144.

²⁰ Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Study in Adaptations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 16; Stephen H. Daniel, *John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 9.

²¹ E. J. Aiton, *Leibniz: A Biography* (Bristol: Adam Hilger Ltd., 1985), 260.

²² Birch's recollections are in BL Add. 4254 f. 188r; Stanley Grean, *Shaftesbury's Philosophy of Religion and Ethics: A Study in Enthusiasm* (Ohio University Press, 1967), xiii; Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 14; Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 32-3.

²³ Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy*, 12.

²⁴ BL Add. 4254 f. 187r. See also f. 186v. Toland also published more of Shaftesbury's papers without permission. In 1721 he produced an edition of Shaftesbury's letters to Molesworth concerning Shaftesbury's failed attempt at love in 1707 and 1708. This was done to make Shaftesbury appear less bookish and introverted than was the general assessment of him, though it won Toland no friends among Shaftesbury's colleagues. Brian Cowan, "Reasonable Ecstasies: Shaftesbury and the Languages of Libertinism," *Journal of British Studies* 37 (1998): 111-112. The original letters are in Benjamin Rand, ed. *The Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury* (1900; reprint, London: Thoemmes Press, 1995), 383-384, 389-394.

²⁵ David Walford ed., *Anthony Ashley Cooper Third Earl of Shaftesbury: An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit, with an Introduction, a Selection of Material from Toland's 1699 Edition and Bibliography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), ix, passim. On the episode see Grean, *Shaftesbury's Philosophy*, 60; R. L. Brett, *The Third Earl of Shaftesbury: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory* (New York: Hutchinson's University Library,

1951), 42; Lawrence E. Klein, "Liberty, Manners, and Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England," *The Historical Journal* 32 (1989): 588; idem, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness*, 16, 48, 138.

²⁶ PRO 30/24/21, f. 231. Shaftesbury to Toland, 21 July 1701.

²⁷ Sophia, Electress of Hanover, to the Duke of Newcastle, 10 October 1701 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 2: 180.

²⁸ F. H. Heinemann, "John Toland and the Age of Enlightenment," *Review of English Studies* 20 (1944): 134; Champion, *Republican Learning*, 99, 117.

²⁹ John Toland, *Vindicius Liberi: or, M. Toland's Defence of himself, Against the late Lower House of Convocation* (London, 1702), 2, 28.

³⁰ Toland, *Vindicius Liberi*, 28.

³¹ John Toland, *Reasons for Addressing His Majesty to Invite into England Their Highnesses the Electress Dowager and the Electoral Prince of Hanover* (London, 1702), 1, 7.

³² Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1600-1715* (London: Longman, 1993), 151; Mark Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1996), 306-7.

³³ BL Add. 7121 f. 61. Toland to Shaftesbury, 10 March 1702.

³⁴ BL Add. 7121 f. 59. Shaftesbury to Halifax, post-10 March 1710. Ironically it was Halifax with whom Shaftesbury competed, and ultimately lost, to win the heart of a young woman in 1707-1708. See note 26 above and Shaftesbury to Molesworth, 23 October 1708 in *Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, 392.

³⁵ John C. Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 124-5.

³⁶ Henry Sacheverell, *Dr. Sacheverell's True Character of the Low-Churchman* (London, 1710), 3. On the original date of the work see Geoffrey Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), 55.

³⁷ Sacheverell, *True Character of the Low-Churchman*, 5.

³⁸ Sacheverell, *True Character of the Low-Churchman*, 4.

³⁹ J. A. I. Champion, "'The Men of Matter': Spirits, Matter and the Politics of Priestcraft, 1701-1709," in *Scepticism, Clandestinity and Free Thinking*, ed. G. Paganini et al. (Paris: Éditions Champion, 2002), 116-117; idem, "'May the Last King Be Strangled in the Bowels of the Last Priest': Irreligion and the English Enlightenment, 1649-1789," in *Radicalism in British Literary Culture, 1650-1830*, ed. Timothy Morton and Nigel Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 38, 41; Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell*, 27, 32-3; Frederick C. Beiser, *The Sovereignty of Reason: The Defence of Rationality in the Early English Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 264.

⁴⁰ *Observer*, 23 September to 26 September 1702.

⁴¹ *Observer*, 26 September to 30 September 1702.

⁴² *Observer*, 20 September to 2 October 1702.

⁴³ *Observer*, 15 September to 18 September 1703.

⁴⁴ Bod. Ballard MS 3 f. 21. William Wake to Arthur Charlett, ca. 14 February 1703. Wake's devotion to the security of the English Church extended back to the arrival of William and Mary. "For my part, if my Dependence on God's Providence and Fanatical Confidence of the flourishing State of the Church, which I neither can nor will Suffer my self to be reason'd out of..." See Bod. Rawl. MS A. 275 f. 1. Wake to Charlett, 19 June 1688.

⁴⁵ BL Add. 4465 f. 3r. Utrecht 17 August 1703. See also Edmund Ludlow, "A Voyce from the Watch Tower, Part Five: 1660-1662," in *Camden Fourth Series*, vol. 21, ed. A. B. Worden (London: The Royal Historical Society, 1978), 45. On Harley and Marlborough see Brian W. Hill, *Robert Harley: Speaker, Secretary of State and Premier Minister* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 92-5. Toland's beating is also mentioned in a letter from Dr. William Stratford to Edward Harley, the 2nd Earl of Oxford, 14 July 1726. Stratford recalled

that in 1703 Toland was “cudgelled most severely by some of Marlborough’s ruffians.” See *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 7: 441.

⁴⁶ Robert Rees Evans, *Pantheisticon: The Career of John Toland* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 99. On Harley and Defoe see Brian W. Hill, *Robert Harley: Speaker, Secretary of State and Premier Minister* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 86-7, 89; Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press*, passim.

⁴⁷ ? to Robert Harley, 5 July 1704 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 4: 98.

⁴⁸ Clyve Jones and Geoffrey Holmes, ed. *The London Diaries of William Nicolson Bishop of Carlisle 1702-1718* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1985), 215 [26 October 1704].

⁴⁹ BL Add. 4282 f. 242r. Richard Dighton to Pierre Desmaizeaux, 14 March 1730/1.

⁵⁰ Matthew Tindal, *Reasons Against Restraining the Press* (London, 1704). 3.

⁵¹ Tindal, *Reasons Against Restraining the Press*, 4-5.

⁵² Tindal, *Reasons Against Restraining the Press*, 8.

⁵³ Tindal, *Reasons Against Restraining the Press*, 9.

⁵⁴ Tindal, *Reasons Against Restraining the Press*, 13.

⁵⁵ J. G. Simms, “John Toland (1670-1722), a Donegal Heretic,” *Irish Historical Studies* 16 (1968/69): 315; Champion, *Republican Learning*, 169.

⁵⁶ Toland, *Collection*, 2: 431-432.

⁵⁷ John Toland, *Letters to Serena* (1704; facsimile reprint, Stuttgart-Bad-Cannstatt: Fredrich Formmann Verlag, 1964), preface § 15.

⁵⁸ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, preface § 16.

⁵⁹ I discuss this in “John Toland’s Creation of Post-Christianity not Mysterious Identities,” in *Anglo-Irish Identities, 1600-1800*, ed. David Valone and Jill Bradbury (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press), Forthcoming.

⁶⁰ John Toland, *An Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover* 2nd ed. (London, 1706), 1.

⁶¹ Toland, *An Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover*, 10.

⁶² Toland, *An Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover*, 18.

⁶³ Toland, *An Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover*, 56.

⁶⁴ Toland, *An Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover*, 23, 32.

⁶⁵ Toland, *An Account of the Courts of Prussia and Hanover*, 55.

⁶⁶ PRO 30/24/20, f. 105. Toland to Shaftesbury, 22 October 1705.

⁶⁷ Harley scholars suggest that Toland acted as a pamphleteer. Angus McInnes, *Robert Harley, Puritan Politician* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1970), 83n; Hill, *Robert Harley*, 98.

⁶⁸ PRO 30/24/21, f. 237. Toland to Shaftesbury, nd, post-1705.

⁶⁹ John Netterville to Robert Harley, 14 January 1707 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 8: 279. On Netterville see Daniel Szechi, *Jacobitism and Tory Party Politics 1710-14* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd., 1984), 7, 9, 14-17.

⁷⁰ Harley to Lord Raby, 1707 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 4: 289-90; Evans, *Pantheisticon*, 123; Daniel, *John Toland*, 142.

⁷¹ Bod. Rawlinson MS C. 146 f. 47.

⁷² Bod. Rawlinson MS D. 401 f. 30.

⁷³ Thomas Hearne, *The Remains of Thomas Hearne*, ed. John Buchanan-Brown (London: Centaur Press Ltd., 1966), 440 [23 November 1734].

⁷⁴ Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England*, 124-5, 141.

⁷⁵ *The Rehearsal*, no. 28, 3 – 10 February 1704/5. On Aikinhead see Michael Hunter, “‘Aikinhead the Atheist’: The Context and Consequence of Articulate Irreligion in the Late Seventeenth Century,” in *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, ed. Michael Hunter and David Wootton (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1992), 221-54.

⁷⁶ *The Rehearsal*, no. 28, 3 – 10 February 1704/5.

⁷⁷ *The Observator*, 20 – 23 June 1705.

- ⁷⁸ *The Observator*, 26 – 29 September 1705.
- ⁷⁹ *The Observator*, 2 – 6 March 1706.
- ⁸⁰ Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell*, 45.
- ⁸¹ Francis Higgins, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Royal Chappel at White-Hall; on Ash-Wednesday, Febr. 26, 1706/07* (London, 1707), 7.
- ⁸² Higgins, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Royal Chappel*, 10-11.
- ⁸³ Higgins, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Royal Chappel*, 13, 20.
- ⁸⁴ Higgins, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Royal Chappel*, 24.
- ⁸⁵ S. White, *A Vindication of the Church of England; From the General Imputation of Corruption ... Deliver'd in a Sermon, by Mr. Higgins* (London, 1707), 3.
- ⁸⁶ White, *A Vindication of the Church of England*, 7, 9.
- ⁸⁷ White, *A Vindication of the Church of England*, 10, 14.
- ⁸⁸ Anonymous, *The Church not in Danger: or, A Serious Answer to Several false and Seditious Suggestions, deliver'd by Mr. Higgins* (London, 1707), 3.
- ⁸⁹ Anonymous, *The Church not in Danger*, 4.
- ⁹⁰ Anonymous, *The Church not in Danger*, 12.
- ⁹¹ *The Rehearsal*, 12 February 1706/7.
- ⁹² *The Observator*, 9 – 12 April 1707.
- ⁹³ Toland to Harley, 16 May 1707 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 4: 408.
- ⁹⁴ *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 4: 410.
- ⁹⁵ BL Add. 4295 f. 15. [Elector Palatine] to Sophia Dowager Electress of Hanover, 27 September 1707.
- ⁹⁶ Erasmus Lewis to Secretary Harley, 11 October 1707 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 4: 456.
- ⁹⁷ Agostino, Bishop of Spiga, to Electress Sophia, 22 October 1707 in *State Papers and Correspondence Illustrative of the Social and Political State of Europe from the Revolution to the Accession of the House of Hanover*, ed. John M. Kemble (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857), 459.
- ⁹⁸ Kemble ed., *State Papers and Correspondence*, 460.
- ⁹⁹ Joachim Whaley, "A Tolerant Society? Religious Toleration in the Holy Roman Empire, 1648-1806," in *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 181; Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 32-3.
- ¹⁰⁰ Bod. Ballard MS 27 ff. 37v-38r. Ayerst to Charlett, 26 November 1707. In consultation with Greg Colley, Assistant Librarian at the Bodleian, I am certain that this letter is from Ayerst even though the signature is "Ayers" with a small line by the final "s." At various times during his life Ayerst was Canon of Canterbury, English agent in Paris, Secretary of the Embassy at The Hague, and Chaplain to Sir Robert Surron, Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte. On Ayerst see Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714*, Vol. 1, A-D (Oxford: Parker and Co., 1891), 47; *Bibliotheca Britannica*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1824), 1: 58w.
- ¹⁰¹ Leibniz to Lord Raby, 29 December 1707 in Kemble ed., *State Papers and Correspondence*, 462-3.
- ¹⁰² Bod. Ballard MS 27 ff. 37v.
- ¹⁰³ A S Cod. Appeals and Visitors' Injunctions Vol. 1 f. 72r, item 87a. Gardiner to Archbishop Tenison, 3 November 1708. A second draft of the letter is item 87b.
- ¹⁰⁴ Shaftesbury to Michael Ainsworth, 3 June 1709, in *The Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, ed. Benjamin Rand (facsimile reprint, London: Thoemmes Press, 1995), 403; Stanley Grean, *Shaftesbury's Philosophy of Religion and Ethics: A Study in Enthusiasm* (Ohio University Press, 1967), 114-115.

- ¹⁰⁵ BL Add. 22083 ff. 3r-4r.
- ¹⁰⁶ BL Add. 22083 f. 4r.
- ¹⁰⁷ Graham Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 6-14.
- ¹⁰⁸ [John Silke] *The Religious, Rational and Moral Conduct of Mathew Tindal, L.L.D. late Fellow of All Souls College in Oxford* (London 1735), 1. On Silke's book see Justin Champion, "'The Men of Matter': Spirits, Matter and the Politics of Priestcraft, 1701-1709," 142-143.
- ¹⁰⁹ Bod. Ballard MS 4 f. 134r. Thomas Tanner to Charlett, 16 September 1717, written from All Souls.
- ¹¹⁰ Bod. Ballard MS 12 f. 105r. George Hickee to Charlett, 10 August 1708. See also f. 95r. Hickee to Charlett, 3 June 1707.
- ¹¹¹ Matthew Tindal, *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted, against the Romish, and All Other Priests Who Claim an Independent Power over It. The Third Edition Corrected* (London, 1707), iii, lxxxi, lxxxii.
- ¹¹² Tindal, *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted*, 9.
- ¹¹³ Tindal, *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted*, 145.
- ¹¹⁴ Tindal, *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted*, 250.
- ¹¹⁵ Tindal, *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted*, 272.
- ¹¹⁶ DNB, 11: 672; William Law, *The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, Fairly and Fully Stated. In answer to a Book, entitled, Christianity as old as the Creation* (London, 1731) in *The Works of the Reverend William Law, M. A.* 9 vols. (London, 1892), 2: 100.
- ¹¹⁷ Matthew Tindal, *A Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church*. In Two Parts. 2nd ed. cor. (London, 1709), 5, 10.
- ¹¹⁸ Matthew Tindal, *A Second Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church, Occasion'd by two late Indictments against a Bookseller and his Servant, for selling one of the said Books in A Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church*, 112.
- ¹¹⁹ Tindal, *A Second Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church*, 118-119.
- ¹²⁰ Daniel Waterland, *Scripture Vindicated*, 3 Parts (1730-33) in *The Works of The Rev. Daniel Waterland, D.D.*, ed., William Van Mildert, D.D. vol. 4, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1843), Part 2, 262; B. W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debates from Locke to Burke* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1998), 35-8
- ¹²¹ Waterland, *Scripture Vindicated*, Part 1, 169.
- ¹²² Jonathan Swift to Charles Ford, 8 March 1709 in *The Letters of Jonathan Swift to Charles Ford*, ed. David Nichol Smith (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1935), 5.
- ¹²³ Matthew Tindal, *A Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church*. In Two Parts. 2nd ed. cor. (London, 1709), 165.
- ¹²⁴ Tindal, *A Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church*, 168.
- ¹²⁵ LPL MS 1741 f. 63r. F. Fox to Edmund Gibson, 12 May 1730. Fox also discussed Tindal's book in f. 62r. Fox to Gibson, 30 April 1730.
- ¹²⁶ On Gardiner see Midgley, *University Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford*, 41, 116. Tindal discusses his Fellowship in Bod. Tanner MS 24 f. 208r. in a letter to Thomas Tanner.
- ¹²⁷ Bod. All Souls MS DD b. 16 f. 13v. Warden Gardiner, of All Souls, to Dr. Gibson, 12 January 1707/08. Gibson may not have done as Gardiner wished because according to an entry in William Wake's dairy for 10 May 1708 Gibson visited Wake and the two "had a long Conference ab[ou]t the present state of the Ch[urch]." See LPL MS 1770 f. 61r.
- ¹²⁸ The other manuscript sources for these events are found in Ch Ch L, William Wake Correspondence vol. 15 ff. 71r.-141v. and vol. 16 ff. 114-195; A S Cod. Warden's MSS 7 and 9. W. R. Ward, *Georgian Oxford: University Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958), 34-5; G. V. Bennett, "University, Society and Church 1688-1714," in

The History of the University of Oxford, vol. 5 *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1986), 391; Foster, *Alumni Oronienses*, 139.

¹²⁹ A S Cod. Appeals and Visitors' Injunctions Vol. 2 f. 15, item 214. Hoppit, *Land of Liberty?*, 289, 293.

¹³⁰ A S Cod. Appeals and Visitors' Injunctions Vol. 2 f. 26, item 234; f. 84, item 102. Tindal and Blencowe's leaves are recorded in A S Cod. Warden's MS 9, no folios, entries for 29 January 1708 and 13 November 1710.

¹³¹ Erasmus Lewis to Harley, 29 May 1708 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 4: 491.

¹³² Lord Raby to Leibniz, 17 January 1708 in Kemble ed., *State Papers and Correspondence*, 464-5.

¹³³ Lord Raby to Leibniz, 24 April 1708 in Kemble ed., *State Papers and Correspondence*, 466.

¹³⁴ Bod. Ballard MS 27 f. 41v. Ayerst to Charlett, 31 March 1708 Berlin.

¹³⁵ Margaret C. Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 226.

¹³⁶ Gavina Luigia Cherchi, "Atheism, Dissimulation and Atomism in the Philosophy of John Toland" (Ph.D. diss., Warburg Institute, 1994), 21.

¹³⁷ Marlborough to Godolphin, 2/13 August 1708 in Henry L. Snyder ed., *The Marlborough—Godolphin Correspondence*, 3vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), 3: 1059.

¹³⁸ Godolphin to Marlborough, 30 November 1708 in *The Marlborough—Godolphin Correspondence*, 3: 1165.

¹³⁹ Marlborough to Godolphin, 9/20 December 1708 in *The Marlborough—Godolphin Correspondence*, 3: 1171.

¹⁴⁰ *The Observer*, 20 - 24 March 1708.

¹⁴¹ *The Observer*, 7 - 10 April 1708.

¹⁴² *The Observer*, 24 - 28 April 1708.

¹⁴³ Bod. MS Eng. C. 3191 f. 22r. Jo Worcester to Edmund Gibson, 9 December 1741.

Chapter Four:

Deist Politics and Theology, 1709-1719

Queen Anne's husband Prince George of Denmark died in October 1708. For the Queen, whose health had never been robust, the added strain left her susceptible to manoeuvring on the part of her ministers—Whigs temporarily regained the royal ear. Whig resurgence, however, was short-lived as the continuing expense of participating in the War of the Spanish Succession frustrated both Anne and tax-hating Tories such as Robert Harley. Tories saw encouragement for the Whig-supported war and the financing of it as tied to support for Dissenters because the Whigs seemed to embrace a Latitudinarian stance towards religion that sought a wide comprehension within the Church of England. Many High-Church Tories feared that such a religious policy would mean encouragement for more radical heresies like deism. As an example of this political changing of the guard, Harley, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, replaced the Whig Lord Treasurer Sidney Godolphin in early 1710. The elections following the upsurge of Tory sentiments after the Sacheverell affair secured Harley's position until Anne's last days in 1714. It is amid these events that our deists wrote and in some cases attempted to advance themselves.¹

Sacheverell and the Sermon of 1709

Without question the most important and dramatic event of 1709 for both politics and religion in England was Henry Sacheverell's sermon delivered on 5 November before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London.² *The Perils of False Brethren, both in Church, and State* was a venomous attack on Whigs and those whom Sacheverell believed allowed too great toleration in religion. Fear was

sparked by rumours throughout 1709 that the Whigs planned to revoke the Test Act and allow Dissenters, perhaps even deists, to hold government and university positions.³ This fear was no doubt fuelled by the recent events at All Souls College. As had Francis Higgins two years earlier, Sacheverell hoped to halt “Dangerous, and Encroaching Mischief, *that now with Impunity walks up and down thro’ this Distracted Kingdom,*” by opening “*the Eyes of the Deluded People, in this Our Great Metropolis...*” to the danger caused by appeasing heresy rather than crushing it. Sacheverell chose his venue as a direct challenge to those who claimed the “Pulpit is not a Place for Politicks.” Such persons, he argued, were attempting to deceive the pious into thinking that religion had no place in the governance of England.⁴ A prayer scribbled by Sacheverell around this same time reveals the importance that he placed on removing deviance from the Church. Christians, he wrote, lived inside the being of God and as such owed Him correct worship.⁵

Sacheverell sensed conspiracies against the Church of England and warned against the “FALSE BRETHREN, *from whom we must always expect the utmost perils...*”⁶ These persons, he proclaimed, will “*Believe, Maintain, or Propagate any False, or Heterodox Tenet, or Doctrine, Repugnant to the Express Declarations of Scripture, and the Decress, or Sense of the Church...*” Not only did this include deists and their calls for a “*Neutrality in Religion*” but also proponents of natural philosophy, whom Sacheverell believed “*explain the Great Credendi of Our Faith in New-fangl’d Terms of Modern Philosophy...*”⁷ What was more, false brethren destroyed the integrity of the Church of England by eroding its exclusive membership and doctrine. It was, he suggested “*evident that this Latitudinarian, Heterogenous Mixture of all Persons of what different Faith soever, Uniting in Protestancy ... would render it the most Absurd, Contradictory, and self-inconsistent Body in the World.*” Sacheverell feared that the Church of England would become a “heterogeneous mixture” of communicants united only by their asserted Protestantism.⁸ Only High-Churchmen and those who refused differences of worship in the Church were true brethren, as were many in the Tory party who supported them.

Not surprisingly the Whig Aldermen refused to offer Sacheverell the traditional thanks for the performance. Despite not receiving the endorsement of the London city council, Sacheverell published his sermon and it was ready for sale on 25 November. Within one month some 50,000 copies had been printed and the historian Geoffrey Holmes estimates that nearly 250,000 people had read it. Sacheverell himself became a religious celebrity. With the clamour from the sermon increasing and Tories feeling heightened support from Sacheverell's followers, Whig politicians spent the winter of 1709-10 deciding on a plan to contain the groundswell of Tory enthusiasm. They concluded that legal action against both the sermon and its author was warranted. The impeachment proceedings began in March 1710 but led to a riot on the first day with the crowd shouting "High Church and Sacheverell" and threatening anyone who did not wish "God bless you" to their champion. The following morning, and lasting for the next three weeks, a patrol of guards maintained order on London's streets. The measure was ultimately successful, but the £10,000 cost of peace was widely resented.⁹

Deism and the Reaction to Sacheverell of 1710

Though reaction to the sermon was fast and furious generating scores of polemics on both sides of the debate, we are concerned with those publications bearing most directly on deism. At least one anonymous author suggested that Sacheverell had overplayed the threat posed by deists as a way to generate discord in the nation and set the stage for a Tory resurgence. "The Doctor's Pupil and young Clergymen," the author suggested, "who have neither Learning nor Merit Sufficient to advance them, seek to distinguish themselves by Ill-nature and Railing..." needed to create a smokescreen of deception in order to manufacture the conditions of their promotion.¹⁰ Similarly, the calls of the "Church's Danger from Atheists, Deists, and *Socinians*; this seems design'd to screen their Champion Doctor from the just Censures of the People, for his most undutiful and unmannerly flying in the face of majesty, her Ministry and Parliament..."¹¹ While the anonymous author agreed that deism was deplorable, he questioned why there was such an uproar over the "comparatively, few among us chargeable with" deism, when a greater threat existed in the proliferation of "Vice, Immorality, and

Prophaness, which have ruined many Flourishing Empires....”¹² The question regarding the exact threat posed by deism, and atheism more generally, was debated at the highest levels of the English Church—though behind closed doors rather than in Sacheverell’s public forum. In early January 1710 William Wake, Bishop of Lincoln (Archbishop of Canterbury 1716) had “a long Conference upon the present state of Atheism” at Lambeth with the Bishops of Norwich and Leicester. The exact nature of the discussion, however, is not known.¹³

In his response to Sacheverell, John Toland both challenged the issues raised in the sermon and defended the potential Hanoverian succession. As he explained in a letter to Leibniz, perhaps written in an attempt to smooth over the ill-feelings he had created during his previous visit to the continent, “I no where stretched [Sacheverell’s] meaning, and that his principle view has been the defeating of the Succession in the House of Hanover....”¹⁴ As he had done in earlier works, Toland noted the political divisions of Whig and Tory in England. Whigs were “*zealous Sticklers for Civil Liberty, and Sworn Enemies to Ecclesiastical Tyranny.*” On the other hand, Tories “do not willingly *admit* of any *Toleration* in matters of Religion; or of any *checks* upon the will of the *Sovereign.*”¹⁵

It was into this last group which Toland placed Sacheverell. Toland suspected that the real goal of the sermon was to “create jealousies, and make Divisions between the Subjects of the *United Kingdom,*” through false claims. Whigs offered peace through personal liberty and religious toleration, while Tories offered forced conformity. Sacheverell’s sedition brought discord to England and, as such, Toland stated his life ought to be forfeit. However, the same liberty and toleration that Toland found so commendable in the present and future government ensured that Sacheverell was in no real danger. Toland concluded by pledging “I shall ever be a *good Whig in England*” and a constant opponent of passive obedience.¹⁶ To men like Sacheverell, Charles Leslie, and readers of the *Rehearsal*, such a statement only confirmed what they already believed to be true: deists were Whigs and Whigs encouraged heresy.

In his contribution to the Sacheverell controversy, Matthew Tindal argued that High-Churchmen were becoming Presbyterian in their principles and

arguments. That is, the same High-Churchmen who had previously preached passive obedience to the monarch were now seemingly advocates of an ecclesiastical government based on a system of presbyteries. Tindal was amazed that this seemed to be the case, because if “any thing had been fix’d, one would have thought it had been the Aversion of *High-Church* to *Presbyterian* Principles, both with relation to Church and State....”¹⁷ Following the Revolution of 1689, “the Clergy have sworn to defend and assist; and consequently without direct Perjury, can’t claim any Power but what is deriv’d from the Crown.” However, in what was likely only the first sortie in the form of Sacheverell’s sermon, this promise had been abandoned by many High-Churchmen who wished a government in which “the Magistrates as well as the People were as much subject in all Church Matters to the Jurisdiction of the Clergy, as they were to him in all Temporal Things.”¹⁸ Thus, Tindal asserted that High-Churchmen—among those he included his former Oxford tutor George Hickes (1642-1715)—were traitors to the peace delivered by William and Mary.¹⁹

Sacheverell himself responded to both the clamour his sermon had caused and his impeachment by the House of Lords in March 1710. He called himself “an *Insignificant Tool of a Party...*,” specifically of the Whigs who had used his words for their own gain against the Tories. Moreover, Sacheverell defended his sermon by claiming that it was no different than those spoken by “Our *First Reformers*” who wished to correct what they viewed as a Church that had lost its way.²⁰ His apology also replied to critics, like the anonymous writer mentioned earlier. No sincere Christian, Sacheverell wrote, could have taken offence at what he directed “against *Hypocrites, Socinians, Deists*, and such as, under the Umbrage of That *Act*, which *permits Protestant Dissenters*, and those Only to serve God, every Man in his Own way, think themselves at Liberty to be of no *Protestant Congregation*, of no *Religion* at all.”²¹ The spectre of deism was indeed troubling to men like Sacheverell.

Anthony Collins’ Freethinking God

Anthony Collins likewise entered into the political and religious debates during this year of controversy. In *A Vindication of Divine Attributes* (1710)

Collins—no doubt one of the authors Sacheverell had in mind when he composed his sermon—claimed the nature of God and providence was “one of the most difficult Questions in all Philosophy.” Nevertheless, he believed that a “clear and distinct Method of Reasoning introduc’d by the new Philosophy, has quite alter’d the face of things....” God was known through his attributes from which Collins derived the following description: “*an Eternal, Immaterial, infinitely Perfect Being; and more particularly that he is infinitely Wise, Powerful, Just and Good.*” One knew that this was the nature of God not from Scripture but from observing “the Parts of the Universe.”²² For Collins, the Creation demonstrated the being of God through an argument from design: our idea of God must be agreeable with the “Truth of things, and conformable to the real Nature of the Being whose Existence is propos’d to be prov’d.”²³ Deists and their critics referred to this version of natural theology taken to the extreme as Natural Religion. Through Natural Religion one knew all the dictates of Christianity and the demands of God from reason and the operation of nature. If we have an idea of God as just and good, as Collins believed is evident from Creation, God must actually be just and good. Because the predictable natural order of things reveals a consistent God, there is no need of priests, or divine revelation.²⁴

Critics of Collins like the philosopher and future Bishop of Cloyne, George Berkeley (1685-1753) challenged Collins’ picture of a benevolent God by arguing that it belittled “the being of God,” and denied “Him to be an observer, Judge, and rewarder of human actions....”²⁵ For Berkeley, God as a dispenser of rewards or punishments, was the foundation of correct Christian behaviour because one would not live a moral life without fear of divine retribution. An anonymous review of Collins’ work in later years appearing in the *Grub Street Journal*, a weekly paper of political satire, described Collins as “a man of incredible self-love, and proneness to write; and full of petulance, which somewhat enlivens his writings, and many mistake for wit....” What is more, the author saw Collins’ purpose as none other than “a means to settle infidelity upon a sure and lasting basis.”²⁶

Though not precisely connected to the Sacheverell affair, Collins’ *Priestcraft in Perfection* and its subsequent defence, both composed in 1710, must be seen as

part of the reaction to it. Indeed, the tone of the two works closely parallels that taken by Toland and Tindal. Collins used *Priestcraft in Perfection* to attack those who claimed that the Church of England and its priests held the final say in controversies of faith. Against this position, Collins accused them of following the dubious pattern set by Continental papists.²⁷ Restriction of faith and enforcement of official doctrine was, Collins asserted, something one expected in Catholic countries and not Protestant ones, certainly not in a nation which saw itself at the head of Protestantism.

This Catholic behaviour had, Collins suggested, crept into the Church through deliberate forgery and subterfuge by inserting a false article into the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church.²⁸ Exposing this ill-founded article, Collins proudly stated, “cannot be a nobeler Service to our most excellent and pure Church ... nor a greater honour done to the memory of our glorious Reformers...”²⁹ He then proceeded to remind readers that the Articles were established during Convocation in 1562 and subsequently revised at Convocation held in London in 1571. After relating the content of the true Articles, Collins questioned the legitimacy of the Twentieth Article: “the Church hath a power to decree Rites and Ceremonys, and Authority in Controversys of Faith.” In spite of the fact that it had been included in all printed editions of the Articles since 1617, Collins called it “a perfect Forgery,” which had “never pas’d either the Convocation of 1562 or the Convocation of 1571 nor was it ... ratify’d by Parliament.”³⁰ For Collins who argued the necessity of government by the consent of those who were governed, the insertion of an arbitrary article which was not accepted by the people of England, through their elected representatives, was a sure sign of a design to limit freedom in the nation.

As proof of his accusations, Collins claimed to be in possession of two different editions of the Articles from the sixteenth-century neither of which contained the infamous Twentieth Article. Supported by these documents, which likely were copies of the articles actually passed by Convocation, Collins concluded: “how uncertain *Tradition* is...” in matters of religion. Any appeal to tradition alone was the refuge of those who wished to control the belief of another:

“If Priests are capable of venturing to forge an Article or Religion, and mankind are so stupid as to let them have success, how can we receive Books of Bulk (such as the *Fathers* and *Councils*) that have gone thro their hands...?” Reason and free-thinking, as Collins would later argue, were thus the only rightful tools one ought to use to determine the truth of a religious doctrine; anything else must be discarded.³¹ As he explained, “Let Religion (which signifys Man’s Duty to God) stand on those Reasons which must of Course occur to every body, without the assistance of Forgery from the Priests....” There was only one theologian from England’s past whom Collins believed had advanced a true notion of religion: William Chillingworth (1602-1644).³² In 1638 Chillingworth had published *The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation*, in which he anticipated an approach to faith which our deists embraced some seventy years later: God communicated all doctrines needed for salvation in clear terms, which are understandable by everyone.³³ Collins believed his work followed this same path.

The backlash against *Priestcraft in Perfection* was severe. Many refutations asserted that Collins’ goal was to demonstrate that the Church of England was founded on neither recorded tradition nor God’s providence. In the face of this reaction, Collins composed *Reflections on a Late Pamphlet, Intituled Priestcraft in Perfection* (in the third person) to silence his critics. As he explained “The Author ... has taken a great deal of pains to prove that the clause of the *Churches Power* was not contained in the *imprinted Books of Articles*....” What was more, English law recognised only those Articles which were “agreed by the Archbishops, and Bishops ... in the year of our Lord God 1562....”³⁴ The only doctrines contained in the legitimate Articles were those addressing “*the true Christian Faith and the Doctrine of the Sacraments*,” and no “Articles relation to such Doctrines as were not Fundamental or the Essence of Christian Faith....”³⁵ Nothing in the Articles sanctioned by Parliament, submitted Collins, contained any statements regarding the supposed authority of the Church over the faith held by individuals in England and their consciences.

Atterbury and the Nonjuror Response to Collins

Following the release of these two works by Collins there was an orchestrated Nonjuror and High-Church response.³⁶ The architect of the challenge was Francis Atterbury who had dedicated many hours to a reply. Also involved were a circle of Nonjurors associated with Sir Thomas Thynne, First Viscount of Weymouth (d. 1714). Though the work was never published, the events surrounding it remain important because they are closely associated with the aftermath of the Sacheverell affair and reveal the eagerness of Nonjurors to answer deists. After the trial in which Sacheverell was found guilty but given a lenient punishment, he toured England and encouraged many addresses which asserted Tory passive obedience.³⁷ Fresh from his frustration with Tindal's actions in Oxford, William Bromley wrote enthusiastically to Atterbury on the resurgence of High-Church sentiment around the University: "Our ringing of bells in this neighbourhood, and particularly at Coventry, began yesterday, and has continued all this day and evening. Lord Leigh has fired his guns three times ... as part of Dr. Sacheverell's entertainment." Bromley himself benefited from the change of political climate. He would be elected again to Commons and subsequently (on 23 November 1710) to the post of Speaker.³⁸

During the autumn of 1710 Atterbury wrote to George Harbin (fl. 1713), author of several pro-jacobite tracts, in addition to being chaplain and librarian to Viscount Weymouth,³⁹ to make initial plans for the reply to Collins: "If you shall be within, Saturday in y^e Even, about 7 a Clock, or if You will be so kind as to call ... Ill either wayt upon you at my Ld Weymouth's, or meet ... as You shall Appoint; being very desirous of a quarter of an hour Conversation with You."⁴⁰ After the meeting, Harbin wrote to Atterbury relating his support for the project. Atterbury replied with thanks and continued, "There is no good man I believe in y^e Kingdom that has not a feeling sense of my Lord Weymouth's Afflictions."⁴¹ Weymouth, who owned an estate at Longleat, Wiltshire, had sworn an oath to William and Mary, but nevertheless supported many Nonjurors. Upon the accession of Anne he was made a privy Councillor and on 12 June 1702 appointed joint Commissioner of the Board of Trade and Plantations. He retired from the Board in 1707, but

continued in politics behind the scenes by supporting High-Church Tories.⁴² Though not explicitly involved in the work, Weymouth provided a location for several of the planning sessions. In the letter, Atterbury requested that Harbin contact Mr Walton, Rector of Polster in Wiltshire, for “y^e printed book of y^e Articles in Latin A.D. 1571 as he supposes. It may [be] of great use towards clearing matters” brought about by “ye Reflections on Priestcraft &c.” The challenge issued by Collins would require “The Helps from all Hands ... & shall be then fully acknowledg’d.” To wit Atterbury advised Harbin that he was waiting “upon Dr. Jenkins for y^r Books.”⁴³ Robert Jenkin, DD (1656-1727), Fellow of St. John’s Cambridge, was a nonjuror who received a DD around 1709 and shortly thereafter, was living in the home of Weymouth.⁴⁴

The reply continued to take shape, though not always smoothly. Atterbury wrote in frustration to Harbin, “I intend to wayt upon my Lord on Thursday at Noon. If that Time should happen to be improper, y^e Fault will be Yours & not mine. W^{ch} all there have y^e pleasure of seeing You & till then shall add no more....”⁴⁵ A short time later, Atterbury related that advertisements for the forthcoming refutation were composed and ready for the press: “After w^{ch} no Delay shall be used, but y^e Work immediately set about.” Eager to finish the book, Atterbury told Harbin that “Any Saturday, or Monday (except y^e next.) I will meet You....”⁴⁶ Unfortunately for Atterbury, life interrupted his zeal for retribution: his wife and other family members had “been dangerously ill.”⁴⁷

The end of the project came due to lethargy and with the appearance of Hilkieh Bedford’s *The Hereditary Right of the British Crown* (1710) which defended the Nonjuror position. Atterbury was keen to see Bedford’s book and requested Harbin determine when it “will certainly come out.” Harbin seemed to have lost his initial enthusiasm for the reply to Collins. Atterbury wrote him to question why “I have called more than once at Lord Weymouth’s without finding You. I should be glad to learn from you, or Dr. Jenkyns, how long tis expected the Books” detailing the sixteenth-century Convocations will arrive and “when I may be allowed to take them into my hands.” Until this occurred, the reply to Collins would be stalled. Moreover, should Harbin perchance meet Bedford, Atterbury

would be pleased to enjoy a visit from him and to see “an old Book or two w^{ch} he cites...”⁴⁸ Harbin did obliged Atterbury with a visit. However, the design had not proceeded and was to end shortly.⁴⁹ In the last letter concerning the matter, Atterbury related to Harbin that he had shown Bedford all the material gathered thus far. After a discussion with Bedford, who was about to be tried and ultimately imprisoned for *The Hereditary Right*,⁵⁰ and noting some similarities in argument between that book and his forthcoming one, Atterbury had second thoughts about proceeding. Though he did advise Harbin that he still would like to see the “y^e 2 Books of 1571” and, hoped after his trip to Cambridge to “find You in S. James’s Square at my Return towards y^e Close of next Week. If not, I could wish for a few hours with you some time in Saturday, or Sunday; & perhaps on y^t former of those days I may call upon you. I will, if I can.”⁵¹ Thus, the reply to Collins simply faded away.

Toland’s Attempt to Restore His Relationship with Harley

The election of 1710, which followed the Sacheverell affair, returned a Tory majority. Harley’s star was again on the rise: Queen Anne made him Chancellor of the Exchequer and later Lord Treasurer after creating him Earl of Oxford. He had gained the Queen’s ear through his new-found belief that government had to be above the party divides which had caused the Sacheverell affair. This stance, however, did not prevent the removal of Whigs from the government.⁵² While he had publicly lamented the Sacheverell affair, Toland seized the opportunity these events provided and wrote a letter of support to his former patron. From Leiden, Toland sent “Congratulations on Harley’s happy return to the management of affairs and the disgrace of his enemies, confidently predicted and wished for by the writer...”⁵³ After waiting a little less than a year with no improvement in his situation, Toland reminded Harley, now Earl of Oxford, that “It were strange if a person of my liberal education and experience in foreign Courts (to mention no other qualifications) should not be found useful in some things to so learned as well as so politic a Minister, to whom I have been gaining all the credit abroad that was possible.”⁵⁴

By December 1711 Toland wrote with a stronger tone of urgency and worry that Harley believed reports of his supposed misconduct on the Continent. Toland worried that he had been “abandoned as it were in my greatest need, makes me fear that either your Lordship has received some sinister impression against me in a town so abounding with scandal, or that you are under a necessity from some quarter or other to throw me quite off.” If this was not the case, Toland urged Harley to “rid me of these doubts this evening.”⁵⁵ Harley replied with concern over reports of Toland’s actions and associations on the Continent; specifically, the rumours that Toland was making statements against the proposed peace with France which would end the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-13).⁵⁶

In spite of Toland’s belief that Harley shared his view that government without party distraction was most desirable, events and rivalry forced Harley’s hand in another direction. From at least 1708 Tories grew tired of Marlborough’s land war and encouraged a naval policy. They also wished to scale back, if not end outright, England’s participation in the war effort even if it meant abandoning the Grand Alliance against France. Conversely, Whig politicians cried for “no peace with Spain,” meaning there should be no treaty until French troops were driven out of Spain. In addition to this pressure, Harley battled for government leadership with Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751), who was supported by the High-Church Tories and who pressed Harley into a more conservative platform.⁵⁷ As a consequence of these factors, Harley opened secret negotiations with Louis XIV in late 1711 designed to end England’s participation in the war. When details of the negotiations broke, perhaps leaked by Bolingbroke, the Duke of Marlborough became furious. The motion to support the peace without securing Spain barely passed the House of Lords. In January 1712 Anne created twelve new peers who would vote for the Treaty of Utrecht when the time came in 1713.⁵⁸

Against this background, Toland wrote to Harley on 7 December 1711. After claiming not to know who had revealed his distaste for the government’s plans with France, Toland conceded to Harley that “I am sure that all my acquaintances are unanimous in their sentiments” against the proposed peace “and much less any peace that gives up Spain and the Indies to a Prince of the house of Bourbon, or to

any French Prince whatsoever.” Toland continued that his only true friend in this matter was “the house of Hanover.” Careful not to specifically scold Harley, Toland asked him to “consider whether it be advisable in any ministry to carry on a thing so perfectly disgusting to the next successor?”⁵⁹ Among the potential members of the Grand Alliance who would be left to battle the French alone were the German allies, led by Prince George of Hanover. The prince feared that a separate peace between England and France meant an end to the Hanoverian Succession and the proclamation of James III as King of England.⁶⁰ To dissuade these fears, Toland suggested that Harley “ought to dispatch me privately this minute to Hanover; where you’ll find me as secret, as I hope to be successful ... to clear up some things there ... inseparable from that family....”⁶¹ Much to Toland’s chagrin Harley ignored his volunteer role in international diplomacy.

Reaction to Ending the War of Spanish Succession

Toland was not the only member of his circle dissatisfied with the measures the government undertook to end the War of the Spanish Succession. His fellow Irishman and part-time benefactor Robert Molesworth thought England’s actions reprehensible. Molesworth confided to his wife that “our peace, I doubt, is a bad one, as I look upon any to be, which leaves Spain and the Indies in French hands, so that I am upon all accounts very disconsolate.” To ease his melancholy, Molesworth had “invited and [was] promised the company of Dr. Tindal for 2 months.” Little less than two months later Molesworth’s expectation was fulfilled.⁶² Molesworth was, according to Caroline Robbins, “the most widely quoted and probably the most influential of the liberal Whigs, in his lifetime and for a considerable time thereafter.” He had come to notice after 1688 when he and his associates worked to ensure the promises of the Revolution came to fruition. On the request of William III, Molesworth travelled to Copenhagen to secure Danish troops for the Seven Years War against France. Political appointments continued to find Molesworth: he served in Anne’s Privy Council and with the Board of Trade and Plantations under George I. Upon his return from Denmark, Molesworth was dismayed with the lack of public engagement in political matters in England. He composed *Account of Denmark* (1694) to outline what he saw as the correct form of

a commonwealth. The similarity of his politics to that of Toland and Tindal ensured that the three men associated. Molesworth met Toland through Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl Shaftesbury and knew Tindal by reputation by at least 1697, though the letter to his wife indicates a closer relationship.⁶³

While he was in Naples to ease the strain asthma placed on his constitution, the third Earl Shaftesbury kept a close eye on events in England. He also continued his association with our deists, especially Anthony Collins. Writing on 12 January 1712 to Pierre Coste (1668-1747), Huguenot refugee and tutor of his son, Milford Ashley Cooper, Shaftesbury told Coste that the visit paid to Milford was appreciated. Shaftesbury further thanked Coste for introducing Milford to Collins: “I return him in my own and Lord Ashley’s name many kind acknowledgements and have no better wish for Lord Ashley than that he may hereafter gain him for a friend, and imitate his Vertue, Worth, and public Spirit, &c.”⁶⁴ Despite Collins’ reputation, which was soon to explode with his *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, Shaftesbury viewed him as a suitable companion for his son. Indeed, in another letter also sent in 1712, Shaftesbury referred to Collins as “my worthy friend.”⁶⁵

Toland began 1712 the same way he had ended 1711, with repeated requests for Harley’s patronage. He asserted that Harley’s reputation as a supporter of the Hanoverian succession was being eroded by enemies. After suggesting a model for the composition of board members for Harley’s recently commissioned South Sea Company (an equal division of Whigs and Tories to “silence all clamours”), Toland offered to secure Harley’s character abroad.

Yet there are a thousand ways, to which I am no stranger, whereby you may provide for me, and make me not a little useful to your Lordship, as well as easy to myself. Two hundred pounds a year, quarterly paid, is the utmost I expect, and for which I want nothing but your commands to do acceptable service. Besides anything of this nature by my tongue or pen at home, I observe you are in many things very ill served abroad. Do but order me, and I shall soon convince you what I can draw from the Hague, from Hanover, from Berlin, Dusseldorf, and Vienna; and what in all those places I can diffuse.⁶⁶

Also volunteering to spy in his name, Toland hoped that this would finally secure the position from Harley he coveted. The outcome was predictable: Harley ignored Toland and ended whatever relationship still existed between them.

Toland's political posturing attracted Jonathan Swift's satirical pen. *Toland's Invitation to DISMAL, to Dine with the Calves-Head Club* was a single sheet polemical poem composed on 29 January 1712. It began, "If, dearest *Dismal*, you for once can Dine / Upon a single Dish, and Tavern Wine, / T—l—nd to you Invitation sends, / To eat the Calves-Head with your trusty Friends." Swift continued with a communion metaphor "The Meat shall represent the TYRANT's Head, / The Wine, his Blood, *our Predecessors* shed: / Whilst an *alluding* Hymn some Artist sings, / We toast Confusion to the Race of Kings: / At Monarchy we nobly shew our Spight, / And talk *what Fools call Treason* all the Night." Included among the members of this club were famous Whigs, whom Swift presented as Toland-like republicans in an attempt to colour the entire party as radicals.⁶⁷ As the poem makes clear, Whigs were to be seen as deists and the Tories for whom Swift wrote were the only party devoted to England's best interest both religious and secular.

The Discourse of Free-Thinking

In 1713, England signed the Treaty of Utrecht, William Wake hoped for peace in the Church of England, and Anthony Collins released his most famous book, *A Discourse of Free-Thinking*.⁶⁸ This was likely no coincidence with the Tories feeling confident and Sacheverell having escaped with a slap on the wrist. To a thinker like Collins it seemed the religious climate in England was about to become very cool indeed to notions of toleration and freedom of thought. He reminded readers of the dangers that resulted from repressive control of religion; the cure for which was free thinking: "Free-Thinking is upon experience the only proper means to destroy the Devil's Kingdom among Men; whose Dominion and Power is ever more or less extensive, as Free-Thinking is discourag'd or allow'd..."⁶⁹ Collins argued that the perception of Satan's activity in the world increased proportionally to the decline in freethinking. He then turned to history to encourage readers to bear in mind that during the reign of Charles I it was common to think

“that many People ... were obsess’d and posses’d by the Devil....” This acceptance of supernatural corruption in England could be proven since “great numbers of Witches have been almost annually executed in *England* ... when upon the *Liberty* given and taken to *think freely*, the Devil’s Power visibly declin’d....”⁷⁰ The rise in reason and the decline in superstition had lasted in the nation until very recently. Collins thought political events conspired to bring demons, witches, and Satan back into the collective mind of Britons in order to fortify the declining position of bigoted priests. Since “the *Reign* of Dr. Sacheverel, when the Clamour against *Free-Thinking* began to be loudest, the Devil has again resum’d his Empire, and appears in the shape of Cats, and enters into confederacy with old Women....”⁷¹ Collins also noted that, in Sacheverell’s speech delivered at his trial, he stated that passive obedience to authority was the only way to remain consistent and in good standing with the Church of England.⁷² Such a view was the very antithesis of the deist position.

The *Discourse of Free-Thinking* further articulated Collins’ thoughts on God and divine nature. Like Toland, he believed that if “the Knowledge of some Truths be requir’d of us by God; ... then we have a *right* to know, or may lawfully know any Truth.”⁷³ Divine goodness, according to Collins, ensured that people would have access to these things. This was the case because “God being incapable of having any addition made either to his Power or Happiness, and wanting nothing, can require nothing of Men for his own sake, but only for Man’s sake....”⁷⁴ God acted only for the benefit of humanity though not everyone accepted or acknowledged this. Some, whom Collins identified as “Superstitious men,” were not content with this description of God preferring instead to believe in “God as demanding.”⁷⁵ Free-Thinking sought to correct this view. In his criticism of Collins, William Whiston took issue with this characterisation. Whiston claimed that “We have here *Superstition* and *Religion* perpetually confounded; nay, *Timor Deorum* is rendered *The Fear of God*, and is made the Definition of Superstition.”⁷⁶ Like Berkeley, Whiston countered that fear of God led to morality because where no fear existed, one had no motive for morality. What is more, Whiston argued that Collins’ broad label of Superstitious believers coloured in a poor light “Embracers

of true Religion, which consists in the Love and Fear of God, the Dependence on his Providence, the Hopes of his Rewards, and the Dread of his Punishments in this and the other World....”⁷⁷

God asked only that people sought truth, which He did not cloak in mystery. That people did not know this to be the case was the fault of priests, whom Collins, like Toland, accused of creating confusion and mystery in religion. Priests could not, Collins claimed, lead people to truth in religion because it would undermine their authority. As further defence of their place in institutional religion, priests decried as heretics and atheists those who attempted to determine for themselves a true path in religion.⁷⁸ Robert Wodrow (d. 1734), Scottish minister and Kirk historian, though he did not endorse Collins’ philosophy, partially approved of *Discourse of Free-Thinking* arguing that it exposed those who sought to impose religious conformity.⁷⁹ Conversely, Richard Steele, Whig propagandist, used his own political newspaper, the *Guardian*, to take Collins to task. Steele argued that Collins had “the most apparent Prejudice against a Body of Men, Whom of all other a good man would have been most careful not to violate, I mean Men in Holy Orders. Persons who have devoted themselves to the Service of God....”⁸⁰ It was just this sort of admiration that Collins sought to eliminate.

Free-Thinking and Natural Philosophy

In his *Discourse of Free-thinking*, Collins suggested that new philosophical methods and discoveries heralded the beginning of an age in which the true nature of God as good, just, and a dispenser of knowledge, would be accepted. The “Restoration of Learning” encouraged Collins’ optimism. Before this instauration when

Men were subject to the Impositions of Priests, a prodigious Ignorance prevail’d. And when they began to think, their first Notions were rude and imperfect, and Time and Pains were necessary to bring them to that degree of Justness they are at Present. It was by gradual Progress in *Thinking*, that Men got so much knowledge in *Astronomy*, as to know that the Earth was of an *ordicular Figure*, and that it moves about the Sun. It was by that means, that we arriv’d at a Demonstration of the Existence of but one God, and at that strict and Philosophical Notion of him, as a Being destitute of all Parts and Passions. And thus it has been with respect to all our other Discoveries.⁸¹

The true nature of the universe became known when people were able to cast aside superstition; the true nature of God would similarly be known. Natural philosophy served as an example of what a freethinking mind might accomplish. Collins asked what “Absurditys prevail’d in Morality, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, and every other Science,” prior to the advance of freethinking? In one of the earliest articulations of conflict between science and religion, Collins considered the case of Galileo who “in the last Age, was imprison’d for asserting the Motion of the Earth. In short, for a Picture of antient Absurditys, a Man need but examine any one now-a-days who has never *thought freely* of things, and he will ever find him unable to advance one word of Truth in any matter of Science whatsoever...”⁸² For asserting something that Collins and his contemporaries knew to be a fact, namely the orbit of the Earth, the Italian mathematician was placed under house arrest. The fate of Galileo was a prime example of freethought restricted by priests.

At least one critic, however, saw Collins’s linking of freethinking to natural philosophy as “a most dangerous piece” which had much in common with alchemy. A generation earlier alchemy had once informed the natural philosophies of Boyle and Newton. By the eighteenth century alchemy was something to ridicule. A correspondent wrote to Robert Wodrow to suggest that freethinking was “nothing better than the delusions of the pretenders to seek the philosopher’s-stone...”⁸³

Richard Bentley, the classical scholar, chaplain to Stillingfleet, and promoter of an apologetic purpose in Newton’s work, strongly refuted Collins’ description of freethinking and its supposed benefits. Bentley argued that the “free” in freethinking was thinly veiled cover for what Collins had really meant: “Which in fact will be found to carry much the same Notion as *Bold, Rash, Arrogant, Presumptions*, together with a strong Propension to the *Paradox* and the *Perverse*.” Like critics of Toland, Bentley believed that Collins had equated the human mind with God’s. As Bentley put it, Collins was attempting to “decide about Matters beyond the reach of [his] Studies, in *opposition* to the rest of Mankind.”⁸⁴ What was more, Bentley defined what he viewed as the true dictates of freethinking: “Christianity an imposture, the Scripture a forgery, the Worship of God superstition,

Hell a fable, and Heaven a dream, our Life without providence....”⁸⁵ For his efforts, Bentley received several letters of thanks and a special Grace from the University of Cambridge. In part the certificate stated that he performed as “eminent service to the Christian Religion, and the Clergy of England, by refuting the objections and exposing the ignorance of an impious set of writers, that call themselves Freethinkers—May it please you that the said Dr. Bentley, for his good service already done, have the public thanks of the University.”⁸⁶

Despite the charges of theologians like William Carroll, rabid critic of Locke’s philosophy, who argued that Collins’ view of God undermined divine power and choice,⁸⁷ Collins continued to explore God’s nature. Collins also identified the ability to obtain knowledge of God as analogous to gaining knowledge in natural philosophy. The key in both enterprises was distinct ideas, a position no doubt gained from his frequent contact and correspondence with his friend Locke.⁸⁸ “When we use the term GOD,” Collins wrote, “the Idea signify’d thereby, ought to be as distinct and determinate in us, as the Idea of a triangle or a square is, when we discourse of either of them; otherwise, the term GOD is an empty sound.”⁸⁹ This was not easy. Collins conceded, “I would not hereby be thought to suppose, that the Idea of GOD is an adequate Idea, and exhausts the subject it refers to ... or that it is easy to form in our Minds ... or that it does not require a great comprehension of Mind to bring together the various Idea’s that relate to GOD ... All these I grant.”⁹⁰ Despite the difficulty, a correct notion of God was possible; one achieved this notion by thinking freely. Collins asked why thinkers who depicted God as a mystery even bothered to write about Him: “For why did he write before he had a meaning; or before he was able to express to others what he meant?”⁹¹ As he had done before, Collins turned to natural philosophy:

When such great men as GASENDUS, CARTESIUS, CUDWORTH, LOCKE ... Sir ISAAC NEWTON ... treat of the most profound questions in metaphysicks, mathematicks, and other parts of philosophy; they by handling them as far as their clear and distinct ideas reach’d, have written with no less perspicuity to their proper readers, than other authors have done about historical matters....⁹²

Each of the philosophers was able to make their respective advancements by first obtaining “clear and distinct” ideas of their subjects. In the same way, the nature of God remained unknowable to those who refused to accept that distinct ideas of God were possible: God never hid from those who sought Him.⁹³

The Dangers of Publishing *Discourse of Free-Thinking*

Collins was abroad prior to, and immediately after, the publication of *A Discourse of Free-Thinking*. Some contemporaries suggested that Collins feared the reception of the book and made himself scarce as result. In an anonymous manuscript life of Collins it is claimed that he “went into Holland [at] y^e beginning of y^e year 1712 ... because of his enemies” who would be angered by the impending publication.⁹⁴ This story must have gained much currency in England because after Collins died his friend of twenty-six years, the Huguenot refugee Pierre Desmaizeaux (c.1673-1745), sent a corrective account to Thomas Birch in an attempt to defend his late friend’s reputation. Having recently come across a “Memorandum among my papers” which explained Collins’ travel motives, Desmaizeaux sent this account to Birch. Collins had been to Holland twice, once in “March 1711, and became acquainted with Mr. Le Clerc, and other learned men.— He returned to London in November following ... with a promise to his friends in Holland, that he would pay them a second visit in a short time.” This promise and the fulfilment of it on “Jan. 2d, 1712” “shews how incredulous is the story that he went into Holland for fear, &c.”⁹⁵

Though it turned out that Collins had nothing to fear from publishing his book, the same could not be said for some others who were involved in the printing and selling of the work. The philosopher George Berkeley noted in a letter of 26 January 1713 that “There is lately published a very bold and pernicious book entitled a *Discourse of Free Thinking*. I hear the printer of it is put into Newgate....”⁹⁶ The fallout from the book reached a bookseller on 10 April 1713 when one John Baker was questioned among others “as to their knowledge of the authorship of certain pamphlets.” *A Discourse of Free Thinking* figured prominently in the inquiry.⁹⁷ Proceedings began on 4 June 1713 against Baker who claimed to have received the “Copy of the Book Intituled a discourse of ffree

Thinking” after it was “left at this Deponents house by a strange Porter.” Baker believed “Mr. Collins is the Author of the same” and therefore sought a second opinion on the book and its contents. After receiving a favourable review of the book, Baker proceeded as he would with any other work.⁹⁸ Despite Baker’s plea of ignorance as to the inflammatory nature of the *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, he lost the case. A bid for clemency failed but the exact punishment Baker received is unknown.⁹⁹

Collins’ acknowledged the trouble his book might cause to those who sold it. In early 1717 he sent Desmaizeaux to London with some 130 copies of *Discourse of Free-thinking* to be sold by a bookseller whom he identified as Mr. Robinson. Desmaizeaux was to agree upon a price with Robinson and then what percentage would be reserved for Collins. However, the author had an idea of what his book was worth. “I think,” Collins counselled Desmaizeaux, that the bookseller, “ought to give me a shilling a piece for all he sells; and he may sell them for 15 pence a piece. If you think both prices too dear for a book of ten sheets, you may set them lower.”¹⁰⁰ Baker’s fate did not escape Collins’ notice because he cautioned Robinson “never to have above 3 or 4 of my Books of Freethinking to lye in his Shop at a time, and not to publish them in any publick manner.”¹⁰¹

Freethinking and Party Politics

When he did return to England in October 1713, Collins found himself attacked for his work and satirised by Swift. As he had done with Toland, Swift presented Collins as spokesperson for the Whigs and the *Discourse of Free-Thinking* as piece of Whig propaganda.¹⁰² Swift wrote in the persona of Collins and claimed to have simplified the original text so that it might be easily understood by all readers. The result was a biting satirical account of both deism and politics. “*Our party,*” wrote Swift wrapped in his Whig guise, “*having failed, by all their political arguments, to re-establish their power; the wise leaders have determined,*” that the best strategy for gaining political power was through an attack on the established religion defended by the Tories.¹⁰³

Swift continued that “clergy, who are so impudent to teach the people the doctrines of faith, are all either cunning knaves or mad fools; for none but artificial,

designing men, and crack-brained enthusiasts, presume to be guides to others in matters of speculation, which all the doctrines of Christianity are....”¹⁰⁴ Emphasising the extremity of Collins’ position, Swift noted that in opposition to knowing religion through the assistance of priests, “there ought to be no restraint at all on thinking freely upon any proposition, however impious or absurd.” What was more, restricting any thought created the devil: “If you are apt to be afraid of the devil, think freely of him, and you destroy him and his kingdom.” In the same way that free-thinking destroyed the prince of darkness and his armies, Sacheverell “has given him commission to appear in the shape of a cat, and carry old women about on broomsticks....”¹⁰⁵ The devil was, therefore, a Tory creation and the tool by which they instilled fear and reliance upon priests in the English populace. This was a particular sticking point for Swift who wished to defend the clergy from such perceived sedition. He was also mindful of the charge Archbishop King had given him in 1711 that it was Swift’s duty as a DD to make useful contributions to his profession.¹⁰⁶ Swift ended the book by claiming that the best freethinker, and by implication Whig, was he who denied the greatest number of these doctrines; thus, Swift painted Collins and Whigs as atheists.¹⁰⁷

Start of the Hanoverian Age

The year 1714 witnessed the start of the Hanoverian age in England and also the end of whatever relationship still existed between Toland and Harley. In *The Grand Mystery Laid Open* (1714), Toland wrote that the Protestant Succession was secured through the efforts of the entire nation. The biggest threat to preserving Protestantism in England was the potential return of the Stuarts at the hands of the Jacobites. Queen Anne’s promise to reward anyone who brought the “Pretender to Justice” demonstrated the seriousness of the risk. The MPs in Commons and the peers in the House of Lords offered similar incentives to prevent a Stuart resurrection.¹⁰⁸ Related to this worry were the efforts of High-Churchmen to divide Protestants and prevent them from offering a united front against the popish ambitions of the Pretender and a French Crown who wished to see England subsumed under a Papal see. The only remedy to this current situation was an English Church that did not exclude any Protestants regardless of minor

confessional differences. This Church would be the “*Bulwark of the Reformation*,” and as such could resist “All the Emissaries of *Rome*, and the Tools of *France*, or the *Pretender* (chuse which you will)” who encourage the creation of tensions in the nation as prelude to invasion.¹⁰⁹ Toland also stated that a real danger lay in allowing one MP, who had “the purse and the prerogative at his disposal,” to control the fate of the nation for the benefit of his party.¹¹⁰ Here Toland certainly meant Harley who had championed the peace with France in 1711-1712.

That same year (1714) Toland also published *The Art of Restoring. Or, the Piety and Probity of General Monk In bringing about the Last Restoration* in which he compared the end of the Cromwellian commonwealth with the present political situation with Harley standing in for George Monck (1608-1670). So corrupt had government become that Toland claimed only one’s attitude towards the French identified him or her as a friend or enemy of England and of the Hanoverian succession: “*Whig and Tory, High and Low Church, will often deceive you; Some of these being worse, as others are better, than the Maxims of their Party wou’d make them: but the now-mentioned Rule is ever infallible, and therefore he’s no Whig (let him call himself what he pleases) who any way consents to argue the Power or Riches of France....*”¹¹¹ The Jacobites lurked behind all current attempts to cast doubt upon the succession, Toland suggested. Indeed, they were the only party in England who stood to benefit if James III ascended the throne. For Toland the Treaty of Utrecht proved that Jacobite agents sat in the government. He certainly had in mind Harley who had been in contact with the Pretender and who had been rumoured to agreed to reverse the Act of Settlement in Parliament if only the Stuart claimant would renounce Catholicism.¹¹² Harley was showing his true Jacobite colours. To Toland the Hanoverians were true defenders of Protestantism. He further claimed the only support that Harley had for his platform was from “*Irish Papists and Scottish Jacobites....*” Against this impending Catholic usurpation, Toland urged “every wise and generous *Briton*,” to “lay aside their insignificant Piques, and all unite for the Preservation of their RELIGION and LIBERTY, which entirely depend (under God) upon maintaining the SUCCESSION, as is establishe’d by so many Laws in the serene *Electoral* House of HANOVER.”¹¹³ While Toland

abandoned Harley, his loyalty to Hanover remained strong, though ultimately without reward.

In contrast to observers like Toland, who saw the accession of the Hanoverians as desirable, others viewed George I as the end of the English Church. One Jacobite composed a poetic epitaph: “[U]nder this marble Stone Lyes Burried Mother Church / A mother truly venerable / ... Stab’d by her own Children ... She fel sick 1641 / Recover’d 1660 / Relaps’d 1688 / Expir’d 1714 Augst ye 1st / May she Lye in peace waiting / for a joyful Resurrection.”¹¹⁴ In another work the same author described the conditions by which the Church continued in its death and by which it might be saved: “How Long O ye God is’t Decreed / You’l be Deaf to my pittiful moan / That my Church and my children shall Bleed / And a fforeigner sit on my Throne.” The solution was pure Jacobitism. “The Only way to save us / And Keep our Church with Steeple / Is to Call in / our Rightful King / The father of his people / Let him come / Let him come / Let him Let him Let him come / here’s his health / here’s his health / Heaven send him quickly home.”¹¹⁵

These hopes appeared realised and then just as quickly crushed in 1715 when the Earl of Mar had raised the Royal Standard in Scotland. The English government was caught by surprise by this audacity, but then so too were English Jacobites who failed to organise into an effective rebellion. More important, perhaps, to the impotence of the ’15 was the disinterestedness of the French regency established after the death of Louis XIV that same year. Despite the military failure of the aborted attempt to secure James III on the British throne, the affair did ensure that fear of future Jacobite remained a powerful political tool for Whigs who could tar all their opponents as Jacobites.¹¹⁶

Toland’s *State Anatomy*

In the wake of the failed Jacobite coup, readers of the *Postman* in mid-January 1717 learned that Toland had produced yet another work addressing contemporary politics.¹¹⁷ *The State Anatomy of Great Britain. Containing a particular account of its several interests and parties, their bent and genius* was a description of the political landscape in England; it offered unsolicited advice to George I on which of the two parties were likely to support his reign. Remaining

true to past descriptions of Hanoverian monarchs as best embodying the characteristics of an ideal government, Toland believed that, for George I, ensuring “the Happiness, Ease, and Prosperity of his people, shall be the chief care of his life.”¹¹⁸ To fulfil this potential, George needed to choose advisors and ministers who shared this vision. The best candidates were Whigs who were “asserters of Liberty,” while the Tories were “abetors of Tyranny.”¹¹⁹ Toland then characterised the feelings that Nonjurors and many Tories held for foreigners including, of course, George I himself: “The Tories, ... are bred with such antipathy to foreigners, that they know very little of them.”¹²⁰

In explicit contrast to the Tory High-Churchmen, whom Toland argued brought divisions into the nation, he assured the new king that all variety of Dissenters, including deists, were faithful to him. In spite of this, the Test Act still prohibited all but communicant Anglicans from any civil office. Toland urged George I to consider that the Act was, in effect, “*a Political Monopoly*” designed to ban Dissenters from political office. Those who supported the Act also cried “Church in Danger,” even though Dissenters were no religious threat, if even a political one. Dissenters were Whigs and, by preventing their holding of major positions, the Tories and High-Churchmen ensured these positions for themselves.¹²¹ Ironically, Toland asked readers to consider that the real threat to England came from the very people who claimed to safeguard its religion: “Of all dangers to the Church of *England*, much the greatest arises from Forswearers and the Nonswearers [Nonjurors].”¹²² How could the monarch trust any who refused to swear allegiance to him while at the same time holding fast to oaths given to the Stuarts who would make England a Catholic state if given the chance? Toland’s arguments attracted many readers, both supporters and critics; within a month of its initial release advertisements alerted potential buyers that the eighth edition was ready for sale.¹²³

Toland’s fear over Nonjurors, Tories, and the potential spread of Catholicism was a timely one. During early 1717 government ministers received several reports concerning potential subversives. Robert Walpole (1676-1745), First Lord Treasury, heard from one correspondent that “there is mischief a working

within this Kingdom....” Walpole needed to be alerted that a group of English papists actively encouraged a Catholic government: “I humbly pray that all such wicked attempts may prove abortive and that our King and Constitution, may ever Remain in lastly under the Divine Protection.”¹²⁴ James Stanhope (c.1673-1721) too received letters in late March and early April detailing Jacobite conspiracies. An anonymous author warned him that “many Jacobites ... dayly Resort to Confere together about ye Pretender whom they call their Lawful King, I think it my Duty to inform your Honour....”¹²⁵

Critics of Toland’s *State Anatomy* included Daniel Defoe who announced that his rebuttal had “anatomiz’d” Toland’s book. Defoe, a constant opponent of deism, characterised Toland “as heterodox in Politicks, as he is in Religion.”¹²⁶ Among the dangers posed by Toland’s book, Defoe suggested the greatest was the call to open England to foreign Protestants who certainly would bring their various religions with them. Defoe also doubted Toland’s claim to be a Christian. Rather, he depicted Toland as a religious relativist who would have England allow “a *Turkish Mosque in the City of London....*”¹²⁷ While Dissenters wished toleration for all Christians, Defoe believed, Toland exceeded this goal and “desire[d] *Toleration for all Religions.*” This generosity, Defoe noted, did not extend to Catholics since Toland urged “we should *root out Popery with all imaginable Diligence.*”¹²⁸ In addition to this contradiction, Defoe feared what a “Monster of Cruelty and Injustice would this Man make the Church of *England!* The Truth is, the Differences are the *greatest Moment* that Differences not Doctrinal can be; and such as of which it must be said, they CANNOT be accommodated; no never.” Thus, the only purpose that Toland could have with this book, Defoe suggested, was to initiate “a treasonable Conspiracy against the Liberty, Safety, and Peace of the People of *Great Britain.*” Until he died, Defoe continued to oppose the writings of men like Toland and Collins.¹²⁹

Toland replied to Defoe and his other critics with a second volume of *The State Anatomy of Great Britain*, which was ready for sale in early April 1717 along with the ninth edition of volume one.¹³⁰ He claimed that the only purpose contained in the first volume was the following demonstration: “from what fallacies and

mistakes, from what wrong principles and pestilent projects, proceeded all the opposition to his Majesty and his illustrious family....” Those who challenged this goal, Toland labelled as nothing more than “Coffee-house-Politicians.”¹³¹ Ironically, this had been a frequent assessment of Toland during his early years. Against his critics’ description of him, Toland assured readers that “none is more persuaded of RELIGION. But I hate PREIESTCRAFT, and that is my crime.” While refusing to claim any denomination, and stating that everyone ought to “Safely enjoy his own,” Toland promised that a published description of his religion “what ever mine be” would appear in the near future. Despite this elusiveness, Toland maintained that he was a “member of the National Church.”¹³² When he finally declared a confessional allegiance in 1720, the result was hardly enlightening: “Religion pure and perfect, as it was originally taught, without the corrupt additions and alterations of ignorant or interested persons, I both profess and recommend....”¹³³ Even in moments of proclaimed clarity, Toland remained a mystery.

Toland’s desire to appear congenial to George I and his new ministry is also revealed in his unpublished scheme to regulate English newspapers. Though Toland had championed an unrestricted press in 1698, when it suited his purposes, defending George I—as the first Hanoverian king—was now more important. It was, he suggested, time to “put the public Newspapers under some better regulation” especially after their attacks on the government and the king’s person. As many papers seemed to conceive themselves having a “special privilege, to the damage of the King and Subject,” Toland believed that guidelines must be established, not to end freedom of press but to halt seditious journalism. To this end, he proposed an Act restricting periodical publishers to the use of licensed paper. This Act, Toland proposed, would cease the “distracting plague of those Journals, which are the Scandal of this King George’s reign, in which they all had their rise to disturb, and to the best of their powers, to destroy it.” Throughout the manuscript Toland repeated that he remained a defender of the free press, but the protection of the Protestant monarch had to come first.¹³⁴

Chubb and Newton's Theology

The early reign of George I also saw Thomas Chubb emerge as a proponent of the views advanced by Toland, Tindal, and Collins. Like Toland, Chubb too initially identified himself as “A Lay-Member of the CHURCH of *England*.” *The Supremacy of the Father Asserted* (1715), Chubb’s first publication was designed to illuminate the Scriptural foundations of a unitarian theology. The book was supported by Chubb’s then friend William Whiston who saw the manuscript through publication. Chubb began by citing John 3.16 (For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son....) and from this passage concluded “*The Son received his Being and Existence from the Father, as the first Supreme free Cause of that Being and Existence; consequently He is inferior and Subordinate to the Father....*”¹³⁵ He discussed various other biblical passages such as John 5.26 (For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to hath life in himself.) leading readers to the same conclusion that the “*Son is Inferior and Subordinate to the Father.*”¹³⁶

In later years Chubb found support for his unitarian views in the posthumous theological publications of Isaac Newton, particularly the works on chronology. In his esteem of Newton’s effort in writing history, Chubb was not alone. A contemporary review praised Newton’s work, stating that “the same judgement, accuracy and penetration, which distinguish all his other performances, are no less conspicuous in this.”¹³⁷ Although much has been written on Newton’s theology, Chubb’s use of it (and as we will see, Thomas Morgan’s too) has been overlooked.¹³⁸ After noting with admiration Newton’s “greatly *superior skill* in history, chronology, &c.,” Chubb briefly discussed Newton’s work on the context surrounding the prophecies in Daniel and concluded that nothing in the events described can support the notion of Jesus being the Messiah.¹³⁹ Such a conclusion confirmed the fears of orthodox theologians who saw in Newton’s work sympathies towards Arianism and similar heresies. As Arthur Young (1693-1759), future Prebendary of Canterbury (1746) and Vicar of Exning in Suffolk (1748) wrote of

Newton's theology: "I am so sorry to see Principles so favouring the Schemes of the Deists, with so great a name affix'd to them."¹⁴⁰

Chubb and Human Understanding

In a separate work published in 1718 Chubb described the state of human knowledge and God's demands upon it: God did not leave people in a state of debt where salvation is concerned; humanity does not have to work off divine bonds. Rather, Chubb argued, God provided that "Justification is wholly of Grace, arising from the merciful Goodness of God, the Lawgiver; so this Favour is vouchsafed to obedient Believers...."¹⁴¹ Those who believed in the one true God did all that He required. For Chubb, God would never make an impossible belief, or mysterious knowledge, necessary to religion or salvation. He also described this image of God in his private correspondence. In a letter to Dr Cox Macro, DD (1692-1752), future chaplain to George II, dated 6 October 1718, Chubb discussed this very issue. Referring to the authors of the New Testament, Chubb argued that they did not write

by Divine Inspiration, according to the Vulgar Use of that Expression, that is, that the Minds and Pens of the Writers were not under such a Divine Movements in the Writings those Histories, and Epistloary Discourses, as that God immediately reveal'd to, and impress'd upon their Minds the Subject Matter contain'd in them, but only that they were written by honest and faithful Men, who were under a firm Belief and Expectation of a future Judgement and Retribution, and had that Divine Assistance which God affords to every honest Mind, and accordingly they did to the best of their Ability give an honest and faithful Account of Matters of Fact....¹⁴²

The Apostles did not compose their histories with any special gift from God, rather they wrote with the same abilities granted everyone.¹⁴³ Chubb addressed this again writing that the "Particulars of this good News were few and short, plain and easie to be understood, and which a man of Honesty and ordinary Capacity could not easily mistake."¹⁴⁴ Chubb knew that some might take offence at his picture of an open religion. Mindful of this concern, and especially worried about what his acquaintance, the Newtonian Samuel Clarke, might think, he wrote again to Macro advising him that "if I am in any error in relation to that Subject of it I shall gladly receive information and retract it, when it appears to me. If Dr. Clark has been misinformed be pleased to do me the favour to set him right."¹⁴⁵ We do not know if

Macro pointed out any errors to Chubb, who published the letters virtually unaltered in 1734.¹⁴⁶ Whereas Toland would antagonise Clarke, Chubb was friendly with the Anglican theologian. This is yet another example of the diversity of deists.

Collins' Political Life in the Countryside

While Chubb was writing about the being of God in 1718, Collins had settled into life as a country gentleman in the County of Essex where he held the post of Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant. His decision to accept the further position of Treasurer of the County was greeted by the “great joy of Several Tradesmen,” who had been swindled by the previous Treasurer. When Collins could not secure immediate repayment, he supported the most destitute of them “with his own private cash, others he promised interest for their money, till it cou’d be raised to pay them. In the year 1722 the debts were all discharged ... by his care and management in that affair...”¹⁴⁷ The demands of public service prevented Collins from devoting more time to his public writings. He wrote to Desmaizeaux requesting that a meeting between them and another man be postponed because “I am at present, and shall be for some time, so much engaged in publick business, as Justice of Peace and Commissioner of Taxes (which are settling always during the months of April and May) and as Treasurer of the County (an office that I have accepted of at the request of the Justices met at the last quarter sessions).”¹⁴⁸

Nevertheless, dedication to County business did not divert Collins' attention entirely from the day's theological and political dramas. On 1 July 1717 he addressed the recent dispute surrounding the Bishop of Bangor, Benjamin Hoadly (1676-1761). The Bangorian controversy had begun months earlier when the Bishop preached a strongly erastian sermon “My Kingdom is not of this world” before George I. Contained in the sermon were repudiations of the claims posed by any earthly institution regulating the manner of worship most pleasing towards God and a denial of the authority of priests as sole interpreters of Christianity.¹⁴⁹ The result was a pamphlet war in which Whigs and Tories, Low and High-Churchmen disputed the proper relationship between church and state resulting in the closing of Convocation (it would not meet again until 1852), the very institution many Whigs believed had fanned the flames of the dispute.¹⁵⁰

Commenting on these events, Collins advised Desmaizeaux that the real question underlying the controversy was the laity, the “Calves and Sheep of the Priests.” Even though Hoadly had published a strong critique of his *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, Collins applauded the Bishop’s effort to remove the burden of priestly authority from England.¹⁵¹ It pleased Collins to see the clergy involved in a controversy treating one another “with y^e same vile” contempt that they “always used towards the laity.” Drawing on arguments he had made in published works, Collins hoped that these priestly actions would open the eyes of those who had doubted the arguments of his books. Moreover, at the very least, some people might be convinced “that the Priests mean nothing but wealth & power and have not the least notion of those qualities for w^{ch} the superstitious world admired them.”¹⁵²

On matters of politics, Collins relied somewhat on the reports, which Desmaizeaux sent him from London. “I return you thanks,” Collins wrote, “for your detail of Political news. In return I can send you some from hence. The country does nothing but attend business for the men of London.”¹⁵³ Like other more traditional country gentlemen of his day, Collins seems to have been suspicious of the new moneyed men of London who generated their wealth through trading of stocks and investments, rather than the ownership of land. Despite his clear Whig leanings, Collins associated with Country gentlemen. On one occasion in late February 1718, the discussion concerned the bill renewing the Mutiny Act, which was certain to pass. For his information, Collins relied on reports from Desmaizeaux and Toland, who was visiting Collins at that time.¹⁵⁴ The matter at hand seemed to be some uncertainty posed by the implementation of the Act. Chief among Tory concerns was the number of soldiers which would comprise the existing standing army and that an inserted clause making desertion punishable by death was unnecessary during peacetime.¹⁵⁵ From Collins’ manuscripts it appears that some Tories also feared that soldiers might be billeted at their estates or turn poachers: “I met yesterday with Some Gentlemen of the Tory Party at a certain Lords house; whence upon my relating to them the progress made in the bill till Saturday night, one of them said What! then soldiers may come into our Parks and steal our Deer without being liable to be prosecuted at law &c?” Eager to alleviate

such fear, Collins replied that the gentleman had misunderstood the intent of the legislation. The bill, Collins assured them, “had no relation to the matter suggested, that it repealed no law for the securing property; and then parted the case to them. My Lord did me the justice to say, he must confess the matter was as I had parted it.” There were other persistent rumours regarding the Act, which Collins advised Desmaizeaux were propagated by “Inferior people.” Speculation was rampant that “it is a bill to quarter the army upon the Tory Innkeepers.”¹⁵⁶ It is not clear if Collins was able to halt this rumour as well.

Tory and Catholic grievances again found Collins’ ear in June 1718. With the nation engaged in the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-20) military financing relied heavily upon the Land Tax. Inhabitants of south-eastern counties such as Essex felt the burden of taxation more acutely than they had under previous systems of taxation such as Ship Money. The problem was that rents derived from land did not rise as fast as did the demands of the Land Tax. Consequently, the same piece of land produced less revenue for its owner than it had done in earlier years.¹⁵⁷ Collins recorded that many Catholic Tories came to him complaining that they believed their assessments were “double according to the value entered in” past registries. Catholics were indeed taxed at twice the regular rate as a punitive measure for not refuting their allegiance to the Pope. Collins described these frustrated landowners as ready to abandon, in protest, the label of “Honest Quiet Harmless Poor Papists,” to which all Catholics had sworn following the ’15. Collins was unsure, however, what this threat to renounce the oath would actually mean for the nation.¹⁵⁸

Divisions in the Whig Party

As Collins was promoting Whig policies in the countryside, Whigs in the Commons were becoming divided. In 1718 the party split badly over the direction that George I was taking England’s foreign policy particularly in the Baltic. Siding with the monarch were the Lords Stanhope and Sunderland who now sat opposed by a faction led by Robert Walpole and his brother-in-law Charles Townshend (1674-1738).¹⁵⁹ Tindal publicly supported Sunderland and those who stayed close to George I. In *The Defection Consider’d, and the Designs of those who divided the*

Friends of the Government, set in a True Light (1718), Tindal chastised the Walpolean Whigs. At first Tindal claimed he was reluctant to write about these affairs but a “due Regard for the Publick” had forced him to comment upon the “late Behaviour of certain Persons, whom, before I was very much esteem’d....” Here Tindal means Walpole himself.¹⁶⁰ Prior to the split, the Whigs were well placed to “promote the common Good.” However, “to see Things take a quite different Turn, and the Hopes of good Men miserably frustrated, must provoke the Indignation of all....”¹⁶¹ Such defection only harmed the party and provided encouragement to Jacobites who “began to look on their Game as lost, and think it in vain any longer to strive against the Stream, have *Now*, their Hopes reviv’d, and are wonderfully elated; and ev’ry where declare, that the *Whiggs* will do *That* for them....” A political house divided could not withstand the danger of Jacobites. Thus, Tindal asserted that the opposition Whigs harmed both the party and the nation.¹⁶²

One Party by their Principles are for a *Limited Monarchy* in the House of *Hanover*, for the *Church* and *Regal Supremacy*, as by Law established; for Tolerating the *Protestant Dissenters* at Home ... for Encouraging *Trade, Manufacture, Industry*, and every Thing that tends to the Publick Good. The other Party, being by their Principles for *Absolute Power* in the *Popish Line*, are of Course Enemies to *Liberty, Property*, and the *Protestant Religion*....¹⁶³

Tindal submitted to his readers that since the Whigs in defection no longer wished to be identified as Whigs, they must then be Tories. If the Whigs were to survive this crisis, they must become “happy as to have such Leaders, who are as much above Fear ... and inspires a whole Party.”¹⁶⁴ Tindal meant Sunderland.

Collins too kept abreast of these political events in London. He correctly predicted the outcome that followed the resignation of William Cowper (1649?-1723) as Lord Chancellor, who joined Walpole’s Whigs in April: “Upon the news ... my thoughts were immediately fixd on my Lord Parker; who (as I also hear from good hands) will certainly succeed him ... unless he insists on too high terms.”¹⁶⁵ In May 1718, Sir Thomas Parker (Earl of Macclesfield, 1721) did indeed become Lord Chancellor and Keeper of the Great Seal. Parker had a keen interest in learning—he initiated closer ties between Cambridge and George I—and held a reputation as a patron of worthy scholars. Accordingly, Collins urged Desmaizeaux

to contact Parker and, in June, Toland requested that Collins introduce him to Parker, a man it had “never been my good fortune to be known to” and whom he understood was a “solid philosopher.”¹⁶⁶ During this same year Collins tracked and approved of the tactics England had employed in the War of the Quadruple Alliance. The war had England siding with France against Spain in an attempt to preserve the peace reached with the Treaty of Utrecht. Collins advised Desmaizeaux that the Alliance was the best way to secure “a happy conclusion” to the threat posed by Spanish unrest. Collins’ view is not surprising given that he saw in King George I a man with whom “I have always concurred in Politicks.”¹⁶⁷ These are hardly the words of someone who wishes to undermine the existing political system.

Continuing Jacobite Fears

Deists’ writings on Jacobites were timely indeed. At the same time that Collins was acting in support of the government, others advanced a different agenda. In a late January 1718 number of the *Postman* a poem appeared titled “The Juror” written by one “W. B. formerly of S. John’s College, Cambridge.” Composed with a strong Jacobite message, W. B. used the poem to attack those who had abandoned the Stuarts.

Here you may see what Hypocrites will do,
What various Villanies such Men run through,
What mighty ills from Perjury proceed,
What Orphans ruin’d, and what Nations bleed,
What Treaties broke, what Monarchies betray’d,
How Statesmen rise, and Tradesmens Fortune made;
What e’er Nonjurors teach we sadly know,
It is the Juror strikes the surest Blow.¹⁶⁸

The Jacobite position also appeared prominently in a single sheet pamphlet, which purportedly contained the last words of James Shepheard (1697-1718)¹⁶⁹ just prior to his being hanged for high treason in March 1718. Shepheard’s final utterances were pure Jacobitism. He accused George I of invading “the RIGHTS of a CHURCH, which he came chiefly on *Pretence of defending,*” and of being party to the Bangorian position. What was more, Shepheard claimed he would die a member of the “CHURCH of ENGLAND, *as it stood before the Revolution,*” that

is, as the pure and intolerant institution it had been at the Restoration. Finally, and with his last breath, Shepherd requested that God “be Pleas’d to bless this Land, and *its Rightful King, JAMES the Third*; may he grant him a speedy *Restoration...*”¹⁷⁰ We do not know if these words were a true reporting, though it mattered not, the content was dangerous enough that, a few days later, inquiries were made to determine the origin of the work.¹⁷¹ The government received many offers to root out Jacobites and the following, dated 10 April 1718, is one example among many. Jacobites, the letter began, were “Villains who make it their practice to Spread in every place the poyson of disaffection, Sedition & Treason...” The anonymous author continued that “I mortally hate the vipors above mentioned, And humbly & most heartily offer my Service to Detect them.”¹⁷²

The Free Thinker

In March 1718 a new periodical appeared which defended the concept of freethinking and attempted to remove it from the too frequent connotation of heresy and sedition, which opponents of deism sought to solidify. Nevertheless, the *Free Thinker* and its editor Ambrose Philips (1675-1749) shared a goal with our deists: the removal of superstition from the nation.¹⁷³ In the initial issue, Philips assured readers that “To Think Freely is not to Think at Random: It is not to think like a Fool or a Madman; but like a Philosopher...” This concept was crucially important because it formed the “Foundation of all Human Liberty...”¹⁷⁴ He argued, there was nothing politically dangerous in those who engage in freethinking, quite the contrary they are “listed into no Party, nor tied down to any Profession...”¹⁷⁵ To encourage freethinking was to encourage innovation and philosophical advancement. As proof, Philips cited the example of Newton who employed “the whole Force of his Genius to penetrate farther into the Mysteries of Natural Causes, than most of his Predecessours; and has made him capable to unfold some Perplexities in Philosophy, which were thought too intricate for the Wit of Man.” Newton was, however, only the first step, a prototype for others to follow. It was entirely possible that future freethinkers, if given proper support and intellectual climate, would supersede even his genius: “[W]ho knows what amazing Discoveries some *Second Newton* may make hereafter, excited by the Example, and enlightened

by the Knowledge, of the *First*.”¹⁷⁶ To opponents of deism this link between natural philosophy and freethinking confirmed Henry Sacheverell’s claims in 1709 that heresy found support in the new philosophies of nature.

Morgan and Samuel Clarke’s Unitarianism

Sharing this goal of removing restrictions on thought was the physician and deist Thomas Morgan. He initially outlined his ideas on the nature of God during his participation in the Trinitarian debates among nonconformists which took place at Salter’s Hall in 1719. Using the work of the Newtonian and Anglican Churchman Samuel Clarke as support, Morgan endorsed a unitarian position arguing “That God is One, or, that there is but One only Living and True God.”¹⁷⁷ Seven years earlier, Clarke had published *Scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712) in which he presented every New Testament reference addressing the Trinity. He then outlined in fifty-five propositions the doctrine resulting from these passages. For Clarke, Scripture proved a singular Arian-like God. After threats of censure from Convocation in 1714, Clarke “acknowledged the Eternal Generation of the Son, and promise[d] not to write or speak any more on the Subject.”¹⁷⁸ Unlike Whiston, Clarke did not become a martyr for unitarian theology. Like Clarke, Morgan urged Britons to embrace what he viewed as the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. He referred readers to Deuteronomy 32.39 (*I am* he and *there is* no god with me....) and Isaiah 43.10 (*I am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.) and 44.6 (*I am* the first, and *I am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.) For Morgan the notion of a three-figure God was untenable and unscriptural. In his words: “The Supposition of a Duality, or Plurality of Gods, necessarily implies a Repugnancy or Contradiction; for these Two (or more) Gods would be equal or alike in all Perfection....”¹⁷⁹ Here Morgan had in mind theologians such as Daniel Waterland. To make Waterland’s Trinity a reality, Morgan claimed that two non-identical substances having “incommunicable Properties,” must come together and form one single substance, while at the same time retaining their original qualities. Morgan could never accept this; it was unreasonable.¹⁸⁰ What is more, Morgan wrote that “I think it must be evident to common Sense, that your Hypothesis is *really a Contradiction*.” The greater

problem with Waterland's view, and that of other Trinitarians, was that it tended to "Identify all Substances, whether Finite or Infinite, with the one infinite, self-existent Substance."¹⁸¹ For Morgan, God was absolutely singular. Those who held contrary views and present the truth of the Trinity as a certain fact, Morgan dismissed as "Tritheisticks."¹⁸²

Like our other deists, Morgan longed for free inquiry into religion. He saw "systemical Orthodoxy and Church Authority" as the chief barriers to this goal.¹⁸³ Morgan was particularly troubled by those who "came out with such an Air of Assurance, and appear'd to me so directly calculated to discourage all rational Freedom of Enquiry in Matters of great Importance...."¹⁸⁴ Aside from the popish qualities that such a position assumed, Morgan chastised people who would halt intellectual debate and curtail the use of reason in all matters, but especially those of such importance. Referring specifically to the notion of the Trinity, though no doubt he had in mind other issues too, Morgan stated that

I long for a Time when ... Bigotry and Enthusiasm shall give Place to Charity, and a rational Freedom of Enquiry; when the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel shall no longer be put to such poor Shifts to free themselves from the direct Claims of Infallibility, and when those who disclaim it in Words, shall do so in Reality and Truth; when Men shall no longer affront and mock the Almighty, by complementing his Word as the only Rule of their Faith, while they substitute their own Words instead of it....¹⁸⁵

People ought look for notions of God in the Bible and not rely on the words of priests whom Morgan accused of replacing Scripture with their own mistaken Trinitarian conceptions.

An undated poetical assessment of Morgan's position was composed by one Dr. Williams of Cambridge, and dedicated "To The Moral Philosopher," a reference to the title of Morgan's three volume treatise.

Receive, brave Heroe, all your due Applause!
The Matchless Champion of a Matchless Cause.
Both Fiends & Foes unite to raise thy Fame:
Deists with Glee uncommon sound thy Name;
And grateful Christians eccho back the Same.
The Breasts of both with Joy exultant glow:
Those, at your dreadful & dead-doing Blow:
These, that to Morgan they a Champion owe.¹⁸⁶

Williams seems to support Morgan's effort to cleanse Christianity of unfounded tradition and priestcraft as his description of "grateful Christians" would indicate. Moreover, Morgan is presented as the chief spokesman for deism, who has gained fame at the hands of supporters and detractors alike. Whether one agreed or disagreed with Morgan, one could not ignore him.

Conclusion:

The decade encapsulating English theological politics during 1709-1719 was indeed turbulent and our deists figure prominently in these events. They did not sit on the margins; rather they contributed to the discourses which analysed contemporary politics along with other observers. Indeed, the politics advanced by our deists might well be called Whig even if the theology that underlay the deist position was perhaps more extreme than that with which many Whigs would have been comfortable. Deist fortunes seemed on the rise in 1718 when the Stanhope and Sunderland ministry introduced a bill repealing the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, which had been enacted under the Tory government of 1710-1714. Despite opposition to the measure, including Walpole's, the Act was passed in 1719; however, the other Acts preventing Dissenters from holding office remained in effect.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, when Walpole came to power he refused to allow religion to become a governmental distraction and did not promote the programme of toleration of the former administration. This strategy was cemented in 1723 when Walpole chose Edmund Gibson as his religious advisor.

Notes

- ¹ Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?: England 1689-1727* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2000), 297-302.
- ² Geoffrey Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), 61.
- ³ Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell*, 46.
- ⁴ Henry Sacheverell, *The Perils of False Brethren, both in Church, and state* (London, 1709), 3.
- ⁵ Bod. MS Don e 16 f. 32r-v. Sacheverell's copy of extracts from the book of Common Prayer.
- ⁶ Sacheverell, *The Perils of False Brethren*, 5.
- ⁷ Sacheverell, *The Perils of False Brethren*, 9, 10.
- ⁸ Sacheverell, *The Perils of False Brethren*, 16; Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell*, 67.
- ⁹ Holmes, *The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell*, 72-3, 75, 78-9, 156-76.
- ¹⁰ Anonymous, *The High Church Mask Pull'd off: or, Modern Addresses Anatomized. Designed Chiefly for the Information of the Common People* (London, 1710), 3.
- ¹¹ Anonymous, *The High Church Mask Pull'd off*, 9.
- ¹² Anonymous, *The High Church Mask Pull'd off*, 10.
- ¹³ LPL MS 1770 f. 90r. Wake Diary 2 January 1710.
- ¹⁴ To Mr. Leibniz, 14 February 1710, in *A Collection of Several Pieces of John Toland*, 2 vols. (1729; facsimile reprint. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1977), 2: 388.
- ¹⁵ John Toland, *Mr. Toland's Reflections on Dr. Sacheverell's Sermon Preach'd at St. Paul's, Nov. 5 1709* (London, 1710), 2-3.
- ¹⁶ Toland, *Mr. Toland's Reflections on Dr. Sacheverell's Sermon*, 12, 13, 15.
- ¹⁷ Matthew Tindal, *New High-Church Turn'd Old Presbyterian* (London, 1710), 2.
- ¹⁸ Tindal, *New High-Church Turn'd Old Presbyterian*, 3.
- ¹⁹ Tindal, *New High-Church Turn'd Old Presbyterian*, 10, 12.
- ²⁰ Henry Sacheverell, *The Speech of Henry Sacheverell, D. D. upon his Impeachment at the bar of the House of Lords, ... March 7 1709/10* (London, 1710), 1, 5.
- ²¹ Sacheverell, *The Speech of Henry Sacheverell*, 6.
- ²² Anthony Collins, *A Vindication of Divine Attributes* (London, 1710), 3, 4, 4-5. Italics in original.
- ²³ Collins, *Vindication of Divine Attributes*, 18, 23. Many previous studies of deist natural philosophy focus exclusively on their use of the design argument. Ray Billington, *Religion without God* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 18-20; James E. Force, "Science, Deism, and William Whiston's 'Third Way'," *Ideas and Production, A Journal in the History of Ideas*, no. 7 (1987): 26; Thomas L. Hankins, *Science and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 6; John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 193; Isabel Rivers, "'Galen's Muscles': Wilkins, Hume, and the Educational Use of the Argument from Design," *Historical Journal* 36 (1993): 587.
- ²⁴ Byrne, *Natural Religion*, 3, 79; Geoffrey Cantor, "Berkeley's the Analyst Revisited," *Isis* 75 (1984): 671; Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000), 111. On this more generally see A. E. Pilkington, "'Nature' as Ethical Norm in the Enlightenment," in *Languages of Nature: Critical Essays on Science and Literature*, ed. L. J. Jordanvoa (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986).
- ²⁵ George Berkeley, *A Theory of Vision Vindicated* (1733) in *The Works of George Berkeley*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop vol. 1 (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1948),

254. On Berkeley and deism see Geoffrey Cantor, "Berkeley's the Analyst Revisited," *Isis* 75 (1984): 668-83.

²⁶ *The Grub Street Journal*, 22 April 1731; "Grub Street Journal," in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Margaret Drabble, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 421.

²⁷ Anthony Collins, *Priestcraft in Perfection* (London, 1710), 3.

²⁸ Collins, *Priestcraft in Perfection*, 5.

²⁹ Collins, *Priestcraft in Perfection*, 9.

³⁰ Collins, *Priestcraft in Perfection*, 11, 12.

³¹ Collins, *Priestcraft in Perfection*, 18, 20, 46.

³² Collins, *Priestcraft in Perfection*, 47, 48-9.

³³ William Chillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants, A Safe Way to Salvation* (London, 1638), 70-1. See also Robert Orr, *Reason and Authority: The Thought of William Chillingworth* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967).

³⁴ Anthony Collins, *Reflections on a Late Pamphlet, Intituled Priestcraft in Perfection* (London, 1710), 1, 2.

³⁵ Collins, *Reflections on a Late Pamphlet, Intituled Priestcraft*, 6.

³⁶ James O' Higgins provides the references for this material in his biography of Collins but does no more than note its existence. See *Anthony Collins: The Man and His Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 136-137.

³⁷ G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State 1688-1730: The Career of Francis Atterbury Bishop of Rochester* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), 123.

³⁸ Mr. Bromley to Dr. Atterbury, 23 September 1710 in *The Epistolary Correspondence, Visitation Charges, Speeches, and Miscellanies, of the Right Reverend Francis Atterbury, D.D.* (London, 1783), 28.

³⁹ DNB, 8: 1200; Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State*, 174.

⁴⁰ BL Add. 32096 f. 86. Francis Atterbury to Dr. G. Harbin, n.d.

⁴¹ BL Add. 32096 f. 88r. Atterbury to Harbin, n.d.

⁴² DNB, 19: 849.

⁴³ BL Add. 32096 f. 88r.

⁴⁴ DNB, 10: 734.

⁴⁵ BL Add. 32096 f. 90. Atterbury to Harbin, n.d.

⁴⁶ BL Add. 32096 f. 92r. Atterbury to Harbin, n.d.

⁴⁷ BL Add. 32096 ff. 93, 95r. Atterbury to Harbin, n.d.

⁴⁸ BL Add. 32096 f. 97r. Atterbury to Harbin, n.d.

⁴⁹ BL Add. 32096 f. 99. Atterbury to Harbin, n.d.

⁵⁰ Henry Broxap, *The Later Non-Jurors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 309.

⁵¹ BL Add. 32096 ff. 100v-101v. Atterbury to Harbin, n.d.

⁵² Mark Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press), 332.

⁵³ Toland to Harley, 22 August 1710 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 4: 572.

⁵⁴ Toland to the Earl of Oxford, 6 June 1711 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 5: 4.

⁵⁵ Toland to the Earl of Oxford, 3 December 1711 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 5: 120.

⁵⁶ A brief and useful account of the war is found in Jeremy Black, "Warfare, Crisis, and Absolutism," in *Early Modern Europe: An Oxford History*, ed. Euan Cameron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 224-5.

⁵⁷ Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1600-1715* (London: Longman, 1993), 159; Kishlansky, *Monarchy Transformed*, 332.

- ⁵⁸ Kishlansky, *Monarchy Transformed*, 333.
- ⁵⁹ Toland to the Earl of Oxford, 7 December 1711 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 5: 126.
- ⁶⁰ Kishlansky, *Monarchy Transformed*, 334.
- ⁶¹ *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 5: 127.
- ⁶² Robert Molesworth to Mrs. Molesworth, 8 May 1712 in *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections* (London: The Hereford Times Limited, 1913), 3: 258; Molesworth to Mrs. Molesworth, 16 July 1712 in *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, 3: 259.
- ⁶³ Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 88, 91-3, 96, 98, 100.
- ⁶⁴ Shaftesbury to Pierre Coste, 12 January 1712, from Naples in Rex A. Barrell, *Anthony Ashley Cooper Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) and 'Le Refuge Francais'--Correspondence* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 200.
- ⁶⁵ Shaftesbury to Thomas Micklethwaye, 29 March 1712 in *The Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, 479.
- ⁶⁶ Toland to the Earl of Oxford, c. 1712 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 5: 259-60, see also 258-9.
- ⁶⁷ Jonathan Swift, *T—l—nd's Invitation to Dismal* (London, 1712).
- ⁶⁸ LPL MS 1770 f. 128r. Wake Diary entry 31 December 1712.
- ⁶⁹ Anthony Collins, *A Discourse of Free-Thinking, Occasion'd by The Rise and Growth of a Sect call'd Free-Thinkers* (London, 1713), 27.
- ⁷⁰ Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 29, 30.
- ⁷¹ Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 30.
- ⁷² Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 76-7.
- ⁷³ Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 6.
- ⁷⁴ Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 37-38
- ⁷⁵ Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 38.
- ⁷⁶ William Whiston, *Reflexions on an Anonymous Pamphlet, entitled, a Discourse of Free-Thinking* (London, 1713), 23.
- ⁷⁷ Whiston, *Reflexions on an Anonymous Pamphlet*, 26, 40.
- ⁷⁸ Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 8, 46-7, 85, 109.
- ⁷⁹ Robert Wodrow to Prof. Hamilton, 13 April 1725 in *The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow*, ed. Thoms M'Crie 3 vols. (Edinburgh: The Wodrow Society, 1843), 3: 190-1. Wodrow's impatience with those who forced religious conformity no doubt was born during his role as one of the negotiators for Scotland during discussions over the Act of Union (1707).
- ⁸⁰ *The Guardian*, no. 3, 14 March 1713.
- ⁸¹ Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 8.
- ⁸² Collins, *Free-Thinking*, 14. William Whiston too cited Galileo's fate in his writings. Whiston saw himself much like Galileo persecuted by religious authorities too blind to see the truth that he advanced. See Larry Stewart, "The Trouble with Newton in the Eighteenth Century," in *Newton and Newtonianism: New Studies*, ed. James E. Force and Sarah Hutton (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 225.
- ⁸³ John Williamson to Robert Wodrow, 17 February 1713 in *The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow*, 1: 410, 412-13. On the meaning of alchemy in the eighteenth century see Lawrence M. Principe and William R. Newman. "Some Problems with the Historiography of Alchemy," in *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* ed. William R. Newman and Anthony Grafton (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 385-6. On Newton's and Boyle's alchemical studies see: Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Faces of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Lawrence M. Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and His Alchemical Quest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

⁸⁴ Richard Bentley, *Remarks Upon a Late Discourse of Free-Thinking*, 5th ed. (London, 1716), 11.

⁸⁵ Bentley, *Remarks Upon a Late Discourse of Free-Thinking*, 14.

⁸⁶ CUL MS Mm.I.53 f. 210r. See also Christian Biel to Richard Bentley, 10 July 1714; Christian Biel to Richard Bentley, 30 August 1714; Thomas Rud to Richard Bentley, 22 July 1716 in Richard Bentley, *The Correspondence*, 2 vols. (London, 1842), 2: 482, 499-500, 515.

⁸⁷ William Carroll, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Benjamin Pratt, ... Wherein the Dangerous Errors in a Late Book, Intituled. An Essay Concerning the Use of Reason in Propositions, the Evidence Whereof depends upon Human Testimony: Are Detected, Confuted....* (London, 1707), 4, 14. Carroll, like Stillingfleet saw Collins as contributing to Socinianism as did Toland, Locke, and Tindal. They make “*Humane and Divine Reason*, to be one and the *Same Thing*; that *Socinianism, Deism or Atheism*, as well as the most important Points in, the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, in *Christianity not Mysterious*, in the *Rights of the Christian Church*, and in other Books of the like Principles, are Solely grounded.” (16). He also recorded with approval the thoughts of an unnamed friend who claimed: “with me, the terms, *Socinian, Deist, Unitarian*, Signifie precisely the same Thing, that the word *Atheist* does with others.” (24). Recently, David Boyd Haycock has suggested that “In many ways Arians, deists, pantheists and atheists were all parcelled together by the truly orthodox, for only atheists (and Catholics) would wish to damage the Protestant Church.” David Boyd Haycock, *William Stukeley: Science, Religion and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 206.

⁸⁸ There were scores of letters, but see, especially, Locke to Collins, 1 October 1703; Locke to Collins, 21 October 1703; Locke to Collins, 29 October 1703; Collins to Locke, 10 November 1703 in John Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. De Beer 8 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967-1989), 8: 73, 81-2, 97-8, 110-1.

⁸⁹ Anthony Collins, *A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty*, 2nd ed. (London, 1717), 4.

⁹⁰ Collins, *Philosophical Inquiry*, 5-6.

⁹¹ Collins, *Philosophical Inquiry*, 8.

⁹² Collins, *Philosophical Inquiry*, 8-9.

⁹³ David Berman, “Anthony Collins: Aspects of His Thought and Writings,” *Hermathena* 119 (1975): 51.

⁹⁴ BL Add. 4221 ff. 329r, 330v.

⁹⁵ BL Add. 4313 ff. 69r-v. Desmaizeaux to Thomas Birch, 20 January 1735/6.

⁹⁶ George Berkeley to John Percival, 26 January 1712/13 in *The Works of George Berkeley*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop vol. 8 (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1948), 58.

⁹⁷ PRO SP 34/21/15A ff. 28-32.

⁹⁸ PRO SP 34/34 f. 122.

⁹⁹ PRO SP 34/34 f. 121.

¹⁰⁰ BL Add. 4282 f. 129r. Collins to Des Maizeaux, 5 May 1717.

¹⁰¹ BL Add. 4282 ff. 127v-128r. Collins to Des Maizeaux, 26 April 1717. Israel reproduces this passage in his *Radical Enlightenment* (98) but does not refer to the bookseller Baker.

¹⁰² Frank H. Ellis, “What Swift Did to Collins’s Discourse of Free-Thinking and Why,” in *Eighteenth-Century Contexts: Historical Inquiries in Honour of Philip Harth*, ed. Howard D. Weinbrot, Peter J. Schakel and Stephen E. Karian (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), 82-3. On Collins and his critics see also James Dybikowski, “Anthony Collins’ Defence of Free-Thinking,” in *Scepticism, Clandenstinity and Free Thinking*, edited by G. Paganini. (Paris: Éditions Champion, 2002), 299-325.

- ¹⁰³ Jonathan Swift, *Mr. C---ns's Discourse of Free-Thinking, put into Plain English, by way of Abstract for the Use of the Poor* (1713) in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D.*, ed. Temple Scott vol. 3 (London: George Bell and Sons, 1909), 169.
- ¹⁰⁴ Swift, *Mr. C---ns's Discourse of Free-Thinking*, 171.
- ¹⁰⁵ Swift, *Mr. C---ns's Discourse of Free-Thinking*, 172.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ellis, "What Swift Did to Collins's Discourse of Free-Thinking and Why," 86, 88.
- ¹⁰⁷ Swift, *Mr. C---ns's Discourse of Free-Thinking*, 192.
- ¹⁰⁸ John Toland, *The Grand Mystery Laid Open: Namely, by Dividing of the Protestants to Weaken the Hanover Succession, and by Defeating the Succession to Extirpate the Protestant Religion* (London, 1714), 3-4.
- ¹⁰⁹ Toland, *The Grand Mystery Laid Open*, 16.
- ¹¹⁰ Toland, *The Grand Mystery Laid Open*, 12-4, 15.
- ¹¹¹ John Toland, *The Art of Restoring. Or, the Piety and Probity of General Monk In bringing about the Last Restoration* (London, 1714), viii. This was not the first time Toland referred to the Civil War events with praise for the anti-monarch side. See his *A Defence of the Parliament of 1640, and the People of England Against King Charles I and his Adherents* (London, 1698).
- ¹¹² John F. Naylor, ed., *The British Aristocracy and the Peerage Bill of 1719* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 16; Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?*, 307.
- ¹¹³ Toland, *The Art of Restoring*, 2, 41, 38.
- ¹¹⁴ BL Add. 28095 f. 61.
- ¹¹⁵ BL Add. 28095 ff. 62r-63v.
- ¹¹⁶ Keith M. Brown, *Kingdom or Province?: Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 195-106; Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?*, 394-6; Paul S. Fritz, "The Anti-Jacobite Intelligence System of the English Ministers, 1715-1745," *Historical Journal* 16 (1973): 265-289.
- ¹¹⁷ *The Postman* 17 – 19 January 1717.
- ¹¹⁸ John Toland, *The State Anatomy of Great Britain. Containing a particular account of its several interests and parties, their bent and genius*, 4th ed. (London, 1717), 4.
- ¹¹⁹ Toland, *The State Anatomy of Great Britain*, 14.
- ¹²⁰ Toland, *The State Anatomy of Great Britain*, 55.
- ¹²¹ Toland, *The State Anatomy of Great Britain*, 32-3.
- ¹²² Toland, *The State Anatomy of Great Britain*, 81.
- ¹²³ *The Postman* 23 – 26 February 1717.
- ¹²⁴ PRO SP 35/8 ff. 28r-v. C. Maxwell to Robert Walpole, 3 February 1716/17.
- ¹²⁵ PRO SP 35/8 f. 34. Letter to Stanhope on Jacobite Actions, 1716/17; f. 170. Jn. Murgatroyd to Stanhope, 8 April 1717.
- ¹²⁶ Daniel Defoe, *An Argument Proving that the Design of Employing and Enobling Foreigners, is a Treasonable Conspiracy ... With an Appendix; Wherein an insolent Pamphlet, Entitled, The Anatomy of Great Britain in Anatomiz'd* (London, 1717), 50; Maximillian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe Master of Fictions: His Life and Ideas* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2001), 204.
- ¹²⁷ Defoe, *The Anatomy of Great Britain in Anatomiz'd*, 74; Novak, *Daniel Defoe Master of Fictions*, 495.
- ¹²⁸ Defoe, *The Anatomy of Great Britain in Anatomiz'd*, 77, 81.
- ¹²⁹ Defoe, *The Anatomy of Great Britain in Anatomiz'd*, 87, 95; Novak, *Daniel Defoe Master of Fictions*, 525, 654.
- ¹³⁰ *The Postman* 6 – 9 April 1717.
- ¹³¹ John Toland, *The Second Part of the State Anatomy, &c* (London, 1717), 7, 8.
- ¹³² Toland, *The Second Part of the State Anatomy*, 22, 23.
- ¹³³ John Toland, *Tetradymus* (London, 1720), xvii.

¹³⁴ BL Add. 4295 ff. 49r, 50r-v. Laurence Hanson published a transcription of this proposal without comment in 1936. He dates the manuscript to ca. 1717 but provides no reason for doing so. See Laurence Hanson, *Government and the Press 1695-1763* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), 135-138.

¹³⁵ Thomas Chubb, *The Supremacy of the Father Asserted*, 2nd ed. (London, 1718), 1; T. L. Bushell, *The Sage of Salisbury: Thomas Chubb 1679-1747* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1967), 17.

¹³⁶ Chubb, *The Supremacy of the Father Asserted*, 2, 7, 9, 18; Moshe Pelli, "The Impact of Deism on the Hebrew Literature in the Enlightenment in Germany," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 6 (1972): 39.

¹³⁷ Review of Isaac Newton, *The Chronology of the Ancient Kingdoms Amended* (London, 1728) in *The Present State of the Republick of Letters* vol. 1 April 1728, 254. The review encompasses the entire month's issue.

¹³⁸ Indeed, in his biography of Chubb, T. L. Bushell notes that Newton greatly influenced Chubb, but does not mention his use of Newton's theological writings. Similarly, Frank E. Manuel's study of Newton's chronology is silent about deist use of Newton's works. See Bushell, *The Sage of Salisbury*, 19-20; Frank E. Manuel, *Isaac Newton: Historian* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963).

¹³⁹ Thomas Chubb, *The Posthumous Works of Mr. Thomas Chubb*. 2vols (London, 1748), 2: M2: 147. (NB the page numbers for this section are out of sequence with the rest of the book.)

¹⁴⁰ Arthur Young, *An Historical Dissertation on Idolatrous Corruptions in Religion From the Beginning of the World*, 2 vols. (London, 1734), 2: 268. See Snobelen, "The Theology of Isaac Newton's General Scholium;" Larry Stewart, "Seeing through the Scholium: Religion and Reading Newton in the Eighteenth Century," *History of Science* 34 (1996): 123-65. On contemporary reaction to Newton's theology see Scott Mandelbrote, "Eighteenth-Century Reactions to Newton's Anti-Trinitarianism," in *Newton and Newtonianism: New Studies*, ed. James E. Force and Sarah Hutton (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 93-111.

¹⁴¹ Thomas Chubb, *Several Inquiries* (London, 1718), 3, quotation on 5.

¹⁴² DNB 12: 727; BL.Add. 32556 f. 134r. Thomas Chubb to Dr Cox Macro, 6 October 1718.

¹⁴³ BL Add. 32556 f. 134r.

¹⁴⁴ BL Add. 32556 f. 137r.

¹⁴⁵ BL Add. 32556 f. 140. Thomas Chubb to Dr Cox Macro, 18 July 1719.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Chubb, *An Enquiry concerning the Books of the New Testament, whether they were written by Divine Inspiration in Four Tracts* (London, 1734); Richard Parker would challenge Chubb by asserting that the similarity of the four Gospels proves their divine origin. See *A Letter to Mr. Thomas Chubb: occasion'd by his late book, intituled The True Gospel of Jesus Christ, asserted* (London, 1739), 10-11, 17-22.

¹⁴⁷ BL Add. 4221 f. 329r.

¹⁴⁸ BL Add. 4282 f. 228. Collins to Desmaizeaux, n.d. c. 1718.

¹⁴⁹ J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 352, 352n. 123; B. W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debates from Locke to Burke* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1998), 31-3.

¹⁵⁰ Some critics of Hoadly believed that he was even more devious in his challenges to the Church than were deists such as Toland. "Hoadly's worse-than-Heatheness sermon (for even Heathens have a greater regard for religion than he) ... Hoadly puts me in mind of another free-thinker Toland (the much abler and better writer of the two, tho of as vile principles)...." See Bod. Ballard MS 17 f. 66r. Michael Mattaire to Charlett, 23 May 1718.

¹⁵¹ See Benjamin Hoadly, *Queries Recommended to the Authors of the Late Discourse of Free Thinking* (London, 1713).

- ¹⁵² BL Add. 4282 f. 137r. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 1 July 1717.
- ¹⁵³ BL Add. 4282 f. 139r. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 8 December 1717.
- ¹⁵⁴ BL Add. 4282 f. 141r. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 25 February 1717/8.
- ¹⁵⁵ Jeremy Black, *Parliament and Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42; Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 193-4; Brian W. Hill, *Sir Robert Walpole: 'Sole and Prime Minister'* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989), 96-7.
- ¹⁵⁶ BL Add. 4282 ff. 141r-v. (underlining in original); on similar issues for country gentlemen and their estates see E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Acts* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975).
- ¹⁵⁷ W. R. Ward, *The English Land Tax in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 7, 9.
- ¹⁵⁸ BL Add. 4282 f. 149r. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 17 June 1718. Michael A. Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland, 1558-1829* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 88.
- ¹⁵⁹ Hoppit, *Land of Liberty?*, 399-403.
- ¹⁶⁰ Kavcic, "The Case of Matthew Tindal," 41-2.
- ¹⁶¹ Matthew Tindal, *The Defection Consider'd, and the Designs of those who divided the Friends of the Government, set in a True Light* (London, 1718), 3, 4.
- ¹⁶² Tindal, *The Defection Consider'd*, 5.
- ¹⁶³ Tindal, *The Defection Consider'd*, 12.
- ¹⁶⁴ Tindal, *The Defection Consider'd*, 61.
- ¹⁶⁵ BL Add. 4282 f. 145v. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 23 April 1718. For speculation on other candidates see Edward Harley, Jr. to Abigail Harley, 18 February 1717/8 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 5: 555
- ¹⁶⁶ BL Add. 4465 f. 16. Toland to Mr. C***, June 1718. Alan Harrison believes that Toland is writing to Edward Curll but provides no reason for this assertion. Given the above context, I suggest Collins is the recipient. Cf. Alan Harrison, "Notes on the Correspondence on John Toland" *I Castelli di Yale* 4 (1999): 10. John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 92-3. We know that Parker saw some of Toland's works and was not impressed, see BL Add. 4295 f. 27r. John Chamberlayne [FRS] to Toland, 21 June 1718.
- ¹⁶⁷ BL Add, 4282 ff. 157r-v. Collins to Desmaizeaux 19 December 1718. Like Collins, Toland too kept up on the political events of the day; he corresponded throughout 1719 with Robert Molesworth on such matters. See for example BL Add. 4465 f. 19. Molesworth to Toland, 1 August 1719.
- ¹⁶⁸ *The Postman* 23 – 25 January 1718.
- ¹⁶⁹ Not to be confused with Jack Sheppard, England's most famous criminal, and one of the inspirations for John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. See John Brewer, *The Pleasure of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 431-7.
- ¹⁷⁰ PRO SP 35/11 f. 84.
- ¹⁷¹ PRO SP 35/22 ff. 85f.
- ¹⁷² PRO SP 35/11 f. 83.
- ¹⁷³ Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 2000), 2, 80.
- ¹⁷⁴ *The Free Thinker* # 1, Monday March, 24 1718 in *The Free-Thinker*, 3 vols. (London, 1722-1723), 1: 5-6.
- ¹⁷⁵ *The Free Thinker* # 2, Friday March, 28 1718 in *The Free-Thinker*, 1: 11.
- ¹⁷⁶ *The Free Thinker* # 4, Friday April, 4 1718 in *The Free-Thinker*, 1: 22-3.
- ¹⁷⁷ Philalethes [Thomas Morgan], *The Friendly Interposer: or, The True Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, Stated. By a Physician* (London, 1719), 8. On Morgan's unitarian

writings see Jan Van den Berg, "Thomas Morgan versus William Warburton: A Conflict the Other Way Round," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 42 (1991): 83.

¹⁷⁸ Bod. Add. A. 269 f. 33r. Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 2, 180; J. P. Ferguson, *An Eighteenth Century Heretic: Dr. Samuel Clarke* (Kington: The Roundwood Press, 1976), 51, 53-55, 83; Larry Stewart, "Samuel Clarke, Newtonianism, and the Factions of Post-Revolutionary England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42 (1981): 56, 59; Stephen Snobelen, "Caution, Conscience and the Newtonian Reformation: The Public and Private Heresies of Newton, Clarke and Whiston," *Enlightenment and Dissent* 16 (1997): 161.

¹⁷⁹ [Morgan], *The Friendly Interposer*, 8-9.

¹⁸⁰ Thomas Morgan, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Waterland, occasion'd by His Late Writings in Defence of the Athanasian Hypothesis* (London, 1722), 9-10.

¹⁸¹ Morgan, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Waterland*, 11, 13;

¹⁸² Thomas Morgan, *The Nature and Consequences of Enthusiasm Consider'd, in some short Remarks in the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity* (London, 1719), 34.

¹⁸³ Thomas Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher*, 3 vols. (London, 1737-40), 1: vii.

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Morgan, *The Nature and Consequences of Enthusiasm Defended* (London, 1720), 3; Young, *Religion and Enlightenment*, 188.

¹⁸⁵ Morgan, *Consequences of Enthusiasm Defended*, 11.

¹⁸⁶ BL Add. 5822 f. 92r. post-1737.

¹⁸⁷ Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*, 352-353; Jeremy Black, *The Politics of Britain 1688-1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 59.

Chapter Five:

Deist Politics and Theology, 1720-1741

Robert Walpole was likely the most renowned and most reviled political figures in England during the early eighteenth century. Walpole seized the opportunity which events—and his return to government following the affair of the Peerage Bill (1719)—provided and charted a course through the turbulent political waters in the wake of the South Sea Bubble in August of 1720. Within two years both of his chief rivals the Earls of Stanhope and Sunderland would be dead and Walpole stood alone at the helm of England’s government.¹ Following the successful returns of the 1722 election, the Walpolean Whigs, styled by critics as the “Robinocracy,” turned Britain into a state dominated by a single party; for the next twenty years, they would rule the nation through bribery, patronage, and a certain amount of paranoia over Jacobitism. This chapter outlines the theological and political writings of our deists, which were conceived, during a period of what J. H. Plumb famously described as political stability, broken only by the quickly crushed resurgence of Jacobite fears during 1722-3 with the Atterbury Plot and the Cornbury Plot in 1733-4.

The South Sea Bubble and Politics of 1720-1

On the first day of April 1720, Matthew Tindal sent a letter of support to Lord Sunderland. In addition to approving of Sunderland’s politics, Tindal certainly remembered that the peer had come to aid of the All Souls Fellows in their challenge with Warden Gardiner, nearly a decade earlier. Tindal was dismayed to read the daily attacks on the ministry and he told Sunderland that a carefully considered reply ought to be forthcoming. He even had a potential author in mind:

“I desire nothing but to be in such a Condition as would best enable me to do service for which reason presuming on your favour I have ventured to take a small house in the country, (the furnishing it cost more than I thought) where without interruption I can employ my studies in the Summer as Lordship shall direct.” Impressing upon Sunderland his loyalty, Tindal ended by emphasising the immense “regard I have for your interest” and that he would wait patiently for an answer.² While no explicit reply exists, Tindal did receive a summons from an unnamed government minister in late September.³ Clearly, Tindal wished to be involved in England’s government.

As Tindal was attempting to ingratiate himself with Sunderland, John Toland, like many of his age, sought to participate in the frenzy of financial speculation which had seized England. In June 1720 Toland urged Robert Molesworth to help him invest in the South Sea Company. Toland must have been very self-assured when he wrote to Moleworth because four days earlier Toland had received a piece of fan mail in which the author commended Toland’s “heroick Spirit in defending y^e divine Truths against the ... World enchanted by Prejudices & Popish witchcraft.”⁴ At some date, approximately in mid-to-late-September, as Toland explained the situation to Molesworth, he had the opportunity to secure a subscription in the South Sea Company for £1000. However, the Directors had just ruled that “none except a parliament man shou’d subscribe” for that amount. With time being of the essence and knowing that Molesworth was his “honest patron,” Toland used Molesworth’s name in place of his “as being sure you would not take it ill, Since there was no time for asking your leave.” More to the point, “there was no other way of Securing my Subscription but by a Parliament man’s name, and I my self wou’d not be shelter’d by any name but yours....” Toland was confident that a profit was the certain outcome of the venture.⁵

When September came, Toland was true to his word and with Jean de Fonvive—Huguenot refugee and since 1698 sole owner of the *Post Man*—as the active partner, he bought the stock.⁶ Fonvive recorded the transaction: “Whereas Mr. John Toland had a Subscription of one Thousand pounds in the third money Subscription to the South Sea, under the name of the Right Honourable Lord

Viscount Molesworth and that I John de Fonvive made the first payment of one Thousand pounds upon condition that the said Mr. Toland and I should go halves in the profits....”⁷ The optimism of the note was short lived. Like many others, Toland was ruined when the bubble burst and by 30 October 1720 had lost everything. However, as he explained to Barnham Goode, a former Cambridge Fellow, such were the fortunes of life. Toland related that in regards to the events which seized the nation and threatened to topple the government, “I enjoy as profound tranquillity, as if living in Arabia.” The matter was best left to “the consideration of the Parliament, which alone can redress its own mistakes, and punish the miscarriages of the managers.”⁸

Toland also commented upon the events leading to the South Sea fiasco in a letter to Molesworth sent in January 1721 which contained “an account of the rise or fall of stocks,” but “there has been of late so small variation, & particularly so little prospect of their rising, that it was not worth while to give any body the least trouble about them.”⁹ There was, however, a way in which the stock might increase. If speculation had caused the crash, then public speculation might bring about a rise. Toland advised Molesworth, “my Lord if you think it your own or the interest of the Kingdom y^t they should rise, let it be known (as every mans speech a vote is quickly made publick) that you prefer the felicity of your Country....”¹⁰

Not waiting for others to take action, Toland conducted his own investigation and sent the results to Molesworth who had been “chosen one of the Committee to enquire into” the affair.¹¹ The picture painted was one of knowing corruption among many, though not all, of the “directors of the S. S. Company.” To reach his conclusion, Toland told Molesworth, he had “read over several accounts and papers which have been laid by the directors before the House of Commons and made the strictest enquiry, that I could possibly, into y^e behaviour of those Gentlemen, especially with relation to y^e several Steps they took in the execution of the Scheme, w^{ch} was intrusted to their management.”¹² Despite his best efforts, however, Toland had been unable to view the personal recordings of the Directors, “nor yet in their minutes, any order given for selling of Stock....” Nevertheless, an absence of evidence did not dissuade his speculation: “A Cabal is Suspected ... and

Company's money was made use of to buy their stock, I take it to be a heinous crime in those who were the promoters of such a design."¹³ Toland ended the report by revealing his desire that the few innocent Directors not be charged in the enthusiasm to imprison the guilty ones.

Like Toland, Tindal too had been seduced by the lure of easy money in the South Sea Company. They also shared the same fate following the burst of the Bubble. Tindal sought redress from the highest levels of government and on 2 August 1721 he once more wrote to Sunderland: "After all the Parliament had done for the relief of the Sufferers by the South Sea, I find I am a loser of about 900 in the Redemables." Tindal felt some reluctance in asking for assistance "[c]onsidering how very generous you have already been, to help me at this pinch if I could think of any other means." This is a tantalising allusion. Does Tindal mean that he received a reward for, or that he wrote *The Defection Consider'd*—the work chastising the Walpolean Whigs for abandoning the government of George I—at the request of Sunderland? Such an interpretation would be consistent with the previous letter in which Tindal again offered his service to Sunderland. Yet, it must be kept in mind that following Sunderland's death and the start of Walpole's reign in the Commons, Tindal would write in support of what became known, to critics, as the Robinocracy.¹⁴ However, we should not make too much of this because Tindal's other choice was the Tory opposition. Not wishing an absolute handout, Tindal assured Sunderland that he had future means to repay any money advanced to him. Tindal, however, was unsure as to when he might be able to capitalise on it: "I have indeed materials by me for a book which wou'd go near to make me whole, but I am afraid the publishing it wou'd, not be proper at this juncture, since it wou'd, being far bolder, make a greater noise then even the Rights of the Church did."¹⁵ Although he did not mention a title for the book, we may reasonably speculate that Tindal meant *Christianity as Old as the Creation* since, of all his publications from this point on, it was the only one of a theological nature and the one which caused the anticipated stir.

At the same time as Toland's detective work sought the cause of his financial ruin and Tindal worried about recovering his losses, the political and

religious ideals that they, and our other deists, advocated found a new outlet. The *Independent Whig* (January 1720—January 1721), was the brainchild of Thomas Gordon (d. 1750) and John Trenchard (1662-1723). Gordon was a Scottish lawyer who partnered with the Irish born Trenchard in 1719. The two men were critical of the direction in which the nation was being taken by the corruption of the clergy and of High-Churchmen who had politicised religion as a means to establish an exclusionary confession in England.¹⁶ William Wake, nevertheless, dismissed the paper's influence in the nation: it "pose[d] a very harmless Enemy to the Clergy and Religion" and "is of little moment."¹⁷ With the inaugural issue Gordon and Trenchard claimed a pedigree for their publication from the example of Ambrose Philips' *Free-Thinker*, which they described as "a useful as well as a fine Paper" especially for its treatment of "Superstition and Enthusiasm."¹⁸

The *Independent Whig* proceeded in its short run replete with sentiments that might have come from the personal pens of Toland, Collins, and Tindal: "Religion was designed by Heaven for the Benefit of Men alone." Moreover, "It was most agreeable to the infinite Goodness and tender mercies of God, to make every Thing he requires of us, weak Men, obvious and clear." Gordon and Trenchard proposed further that "the Bible is so plain as to all necessary Truths, that he that runs may read; and a Day-Labourer cannot fail of finding Truth that searches it there." The two editors claimed that one of their goals was to demonstrate that "the All-Powerful God is not a whimsical Being, that governs his Creatures by Caprice, and loads them with arbitrary and useless Burthens, which can serve no good purpose in Nature."¹⁹ This was the same depiction of God found within the writings of our deists. Thus, further associating deists and a Whig political programme. It is likely that Collins did more than merely watch the debates: he himself may have authored a number of essays *Independent Whig* which criticised priests.²⁰ The deist association did not end with Collins. At least one contemporary believed that Gordon too was "surely a Deist; for I heard him, ... speak very foolishly and wickedly against Christianity, and a future state..."²¹ Within a year the *Independent Whig* ceased publication, but the concerns it raised would continue to

be advanced by our deists. Gordon and Trenchard maintained their criticism of restrictive religion in *Cato's Letters*, to which we will return.

Toland's Death and Memorials

In March 1722 Molesworth wrote that it had been quite some time since he had received a letter from Toland. Despite the break in their correspondence, Molesworth assured Toland that any request for assistance would not fall upon deaf ears. Molesworth then alerted his long-time friend that "I am Embarked in a good affair no Less than Standing for Westminster. I have Employed all my Friends ... I am sorry you are not in a state of Health to do me service. Believe me when I tell you shall [do] as I do...."²² Clearly, Toland still held some worth as a political writer. Toland replied that he "was never a careless Correspondent" and certainly not to Molesworth. Nor was his silence due to "not needing assistance of my friends," but rather to his "almost incessant pains, and very extraordinary weakness." With regards to Molesworth's decision to enter the political arena once more, Toland offered his best wishes: "Since you will embark once more on that troublesome Sea. I heartily wish you all good luck...."²³

Toland died on 11 March 1722, though contemporary interest in his work did not die with him. Within two months, the bookseller William Mears offered for sale a collection of Toland's theological writings prefaced by the bookseller Edmund Curll's life of the author. Based on the biographical details, which Toland had included in many of his works, Curll promised a faithful account. In contrast to others who wished to vilify Toland, Curll suggested that "the Reputation of our Author hath received so great a Brightness from his own Pen, that it needs no auxiliary Light to increase its Lustre; and his Character is so secure from his own Works...."²⁴ Similar praise had followed the description of the Harrington edition, which was certainly one of Toland's "Labours for the Good of his Country...." Not all of the biography was rosy. Curll conceded that, in regards to *Christianity not Mysterious*, the "Piece made a great Noise in the *Republick of Letters*, and was attacked by several considerable Pens."²⁵ The overall tone of the work is sympathetic. Curll believed Toland had been unfairly criticised for advancing

opinion and encouraging discussion. This continued with the inclusion of an anonymous letter:

As you have often remarked, the Clamours against his Writings, were wholly undeserved, and proceeded chiefly from those Upstarts who envied his Learning, from some insolent conceited Priests, or from those bigotted Enthusiasts who never read them, or could not have understood them if they had.

It ended simply: “*Let him that is free from Sin, cast the first Stone.*”²⁶

Anthony Collins too noted Toland’s death, but not with much sympathy. Though the two were hardly close friends, Collins’ letter to Pierre Desmaizeaux on 15 March was cold: “I find by the Papers, that Mr Toland dyed on Saturday last at Putney. If that be so, I desire the favour of you, if you have an opportunity, to inquire & learn if the Books which I have lent him may be got.” These included a “very valuable collection of tracts, not to be met with, and what I want and must buy again. If I cannot recover my own.”²⁷ Two of the works, a life of Pierre Bayle and Edmund Ludlow’s *Memiors* had been in Toland’s possession since at least 1716.²⁸

When Desmaizeaux released his collection of Toland’s unpublished manuscripts in 1726, at least one member of Robert Harley’s family paid attention.²⁹ William Stratford ensured that Harley’s son, Edward Harley, the second Earl of Oxford was aware of *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr John Toland*. Referring to Edward’s father, Stratford told the young Earl that in “the second volume I meet with someone to which I was not wholly a stranger, though I did not think it had gone quite so far. I fancy your uncle could explain somewhat there to you.” Clearly, Toland’s efforts for Harley were not unknown, but the extent seems to have surprised many. Stratford revealed his feelings clearly: “I think I own it dangerous as well as improper for anyone to deal with such cattle, upon any terms of any occasion.” Moreover, Edward was not to believe the picture of Toland found within the pages of the collection, because Desmaizeaux had purposely omitted many documents—namely Locke’s letters to Molyneux—which tended to cast Toland in an unfavourable light.³⁰ While this was likely not an uncommon view of the *Collection*, the anonymous review in *The Present State of the Republick of Letters* took a more moderate tone. The reviewer complained that it was “the common

effect of prejudice against those who differ from us too widely, either in Religion or Politicks, to strip them at once of every commendable quality. This seems to have been very much Mr. Toland's Case." What was more, Toland's writings, though apparently riddled with heresy and error, reveal him to "have been a Gentleman of great natural parts, and acquired knowledge." As such the posthumous anthology "deserve[d] the attention of the learned."³¹ In death Toland received what he wanted in life: a fair assessment of his work which encouraged its inclusion in the republic of letters.

Collins versus Whiston on Prophecy

In that same year, the Nonjuror Richard Coxe lamented what he viewed as the persistent denial of religious mysteries in England. His chief concern was the rejection of the Trinity but he addressed other attempts to remove the unknowable from Christianity. Coxe knew that the tone of his work was important because "the more shocking it may be to Hereticks, the more They will decry it." Only with reasoned arguments offered to their opponents did Nonjurors like Coxe and High-Churchmen believe they could restore "the Church of God." It seems that the inflammatory rhetoric of Sacheverell was no longer the chosen vehicle to battle deists, rather the orthodox combatants chose the strategy of their antagonists and engaged in the learned debate that deists had always wanted.³²

Toland's death, as Coxe's lament indicates, did not end the efforts of deists to advance their views. During the mid-1720s Collins debated William Whiston on providence, and prophecy.³³ We begin with *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* (1724), a work Collins' friend the political commentator John Trenchard referred to as an entertaining "thunderstroke" in recent debates over religion.³⁴ Collins stated that revelations were built upon other revelations and that Christianity was constructed on "*prophecy* as a principle."³⁵ Though he did not deny that prophecy occurred, Collins stated that the only true meaning which could be assigned to a prophecy was a literal one fulfilled at the time of the original prophet and not at some date in the future. There was no predictive aspect in prophecy—it could not prove a revealed Christianity.³⁶ Only if the interpretation of an ancient, Old Testament, prophetic statement was done

allegorically did Collins believe that it could predict New Testament events. This was unacceptable to Collins who stressed the “obvious and literal sense, which bear in the Old Testament.”³⁷ The introduction of allegory into religion, Collins wrote, originated among pagans who believed religion was a mysterious thing which could not be plainly discussed. Therefore, “it was never simply represented to the people, but was most obscurely deliver’d and valid under *allegories*, or *parables*, or *Hieroglyphicks*....” Christians who argue for such interpretation of prophecy were no better than ancient atheists.³⁸

The second half of Collins’ book concentrated on Whiston’s strategy for prophetic interpretation, as did the two-volume follow-up work, *The Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered* (1726). Whiston is an interesting figure. He succeeded to the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics at Cambridge on Newton’s recommendation, but then lost it after he was banned from the university in 1710 for publicly avowing the Arian-like theology that he shared with Newton and Clarke. Whiston spent the remainder of his days giving public lectures in natural philosophy and religion.³⁹ Like Newton, Whiston saw prophecy as certain proof of the Christian religion and asserted there was also a moral element to prophecy.⁴⁰ In a manuscript treatise on the subject Newton wrote that prophecy was to “guide & direct” the Church “in the right way, And is not this the End of all Prophectick Scripture?”⁴¹ Newton admonished those who “shall turn Scripture from the plain meaning to an Allegory or to any other less naturall sense...” because, “Truth is ever to be found in simplicity, & not in y^e multiplicity & confusion of things.”⁴² It is evident that Newton took some interest in Collins’ thoughts on this matter because the only deist work in his library was *Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*.⁴³ Likewise, Whiston’s guidelines for prophetic interpretation stated “The obvious or literal sense of Scripture is the True and Real one, where no evident reason can be given to the contrary.”⁴⁴

Collins and Whiston both agreed that allegorical meanings were to be rejected in favour of single literal fulfilment. Where the two differed was in the temporal location of this fulfilment. Whiston believed all prophecies literally predicted Christ and were thus fulfilled during Jesus’ lifetime, while Collins

maintained that fulfilment occurred only during the life of the prophet.⁴⁵ For Collins, Whiston's notion of literal was merely another form of allegory. On Whiston's method, Collins commented that "It is necessary to confound the Prophets, and to reduce their prophecys to nothing, or to an unintelligible fate, before an interpretation remote from the sense of the Prophets can be introduc'd."⁴⁶ What is more, "to confute Mr. W's hypothesis effectually, I observe, that he is not able, ...to *restore* any *citations* of *prophecies* made from the Old Testament and said to be fulfill'd in the New, as to make them obviously, and literally, and agreeably to the context where he places them, relate to the purposes, for which they are cited authors of the New Testament."⁴⁷ In defence of his views Whiston presented some 300 examples of literally fulfilled prophecy. He claimed that of these "The main Aim of most of the Prophecies of the Old Testament, was the coming of the *Messias*, and the Circumstances and Characters of him and his Kingdom."⁴⁸ Against this assertion, Collins replied that a single real example would have sufficed. Whiston further argued that the reason why Old Testament prophecies do not obviously foretell the coming of Christ is due to the corruption of the text. Here Whiston also followed Newton who believed that the original religion—consisting of "two great commandments of loving the Lord our God with all our heart & soul & mind, & our neighbours as ourselves"—was "propagated by Noah to his posterity" before "they revolted" and "ceased to be his [God's] people...."⁴⁹ Any product of religion, including the Bible, produced since this deviation was inherently corrupt. To rectify this fault Whiston proposed a new edition and translation of the Bible. Collins was suspicious of the endeavour: it "is incredible, that the Old Testament should be so corrupted as Mr. Whiston asserts." And, what is more, "a *bible restor'd*, according to *Mr. W's Theory*, will be a mere WHISTONIAN BIBLE...."⁵⁰ For prophecy to have any value at all, Whiston and Newton agreed, it must contain future predictions. While Collins did not deny that prophecy occurred, he maintained that it did so in the distant past and in no way supported arguments in favour of a supernatural element to religion.

The Accession of George II

When the first Hanoverian monarch took the throne in 1714 protest and predictions of divine retribution were minor but a sense of uncertainty followed George I's every step. Thirteen years later, when his son, the Prince of Wales, became George II, the coronation might well be described as an expected non-event.⁵¹ Even those who still viewed the crown as a Stuart one saw their cause as hopeless and resigned themselves to the facts. No doubt typical is the following note, dated 1727, scribbled in the flyleaf of John Dunton, *The New Practice of Piety* (1705): "Whereas itt hath Pleased Almighty God of his Great mercy to take Unto himself our last Sovereign King George of Happy Memory the Imperial Crown of these King James is Rightfully and Sole Come to the High and Mighty Prince George Prince of Wales."⁵²

The same year was also a time for reflection and, perhaps, a chance to renew the righteousness of the nation by refuting the arguments posed by our deists. John Maxwell (fl. 1715), prebendary of Connor and chaplain to Lord Carteret (1690-1763), who had also made an early English translation of the *Principia*, produced a new edition of Richard Cumberland's *De Legibus Naturae* (1672) titled *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature*. Included in the book was a political essay titled *Concerning the City, or Kingdom of God in the Rational World, and the Defects in Heathen Deism*. With this short treatise Maxwell examined the politics of human existence: "Man *Political* is consider'd, as a *Member of Society*. The *Societies* are various, of which a Man may at the same Time be a Member, who may, therefore, be considered in as many various *Political Lights*." At the head of any society was God, an active and providential God. Any other conception of God, Maxwell argued, such as acknowledging "God, or universal Mind, considering him only *Naturally*, as the *Soul of the World*, and not *Politically*, as the supreme *Governor* thereof," failed to provide adequate foundation for that society and could produce only atheism or deism. Governors, like God, provided laws and enforced them. In contrast to the views of our deists, these laws originated in the ruler, not in nature and the order of things, nor were they the result of contractual obligations between ruler and those ruled.⁵³

Samuel Chandler (1693-1766) also writing in the year of George II's coronation issued an admonishment to deists. Chandler came from a Dissenting family and was educated at the Bridgewater Academy. His father Henry Chandler, who was a Dissenting minister at Hungerford and then at Bath, had the dubious honour of composing the preface to the sermon preached on the occasion of Thomas Morgan's ordination as a Dissenting Minister.⁵⁴ Though the work was titled *Reflections on the Conduct of the Modern Deists, In their late Writings against Christianity*, indicating a wide net of criticism, Chandler composed it as a response to Collins' *Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*. This was a calculated decision because Chandler believed that Collins had attempted to "set himself at the head of those who seem to deny the truth of Christianity, and who endeavour to subvert the foundations on which it is supported."⁵⁵ Not entirely critical, Chandler did admit that he was "firmly persuaded, as they would wish me to be, that they have the same right, as Christians, to think for themselves, and even to declare their opinions in conversations, and publish them in print...." Moreover, "They would have the press open to everyone, so would I. They would be allowed to argue against Christianity: I hope no one will ever attempt to hinder them. But this is not all they seem to want; they would have a farther liberty to insult, and revile, as well as argue against Christianity." These concession aside, he could not accept that "Christianity contains some maxims and principles destructive to liberty, and is a religion that requires it self to be supported by violence and force."⁵⁶ Deists had simply gone too far in their desire for intellectual freedom and this excess had rendered what beneficial remarks they did make unacceptable to the majority of Britons.

Chubb on Government

The year after George II became King, Thomas Chubb offered an examination of the authority of civil government in matters of religion with his *Some Short Reflections on the Ground and Extent of Authority and Liberty, with Respect to Civil Government*. In contrast to Maxwell, Chubb held that much of morality is found in and arises from "the nature of things." In the case of society, its moral direction, or common good, is derived from the inherent nature of society.

Accordingly, “those who have the Reins of Government in their Hands, should make the common Good the governing Principle of their Actions, thro’out their Administration.”⁵⁷ Humanity is “designed and constituted for Society” where they desire to be happy under natural and mutual obligation to it and to each other. Chubb continued that as a consequence of this constitution, society may “have no *Demand* upon any Individual, but in those Cases which it is for the *publick Good*; nor lay a *Restraint* upon any Individual, but in those Cases wherein the *Publick* is *injured*.”⁵⁸ In the matter of religion, which Chubb emphasised was a personal relationship between believer and God, “*Governors* have *no Authority*” because “they have no Right to oblige or restrain any Individual” who is acting as they think most pleasing to God. “The Favour of *God*,” he wrote, “and the Happiness of *another World*, are what *Society* can neither give, nor secure, nor take away from any Individual....” If government claimed to be a defender of truth, especially of religious truth, it must “protect and defend Men in their Searches, and Enquiries after it....”⁵⁹ To do otherwise would be to act as a tyrannical government and one unworthy of ruling in England. Chubb urged George II to heed this advice.

Four years later, Chubb described two celebrated anniversaries from England’s history as a means to illustrate his theory of governance. He could hardly have chosen two more charged dates: 30 January (the execution of Charles I) and 5 November (the Gunpowder Plot and William’s arrival). Regarding the latter, Chubb explained that “the *publick good* ought always to be *preferred* ... as the end and design of Government, is not to give princes an absolute dominion over the liberties and properties, ... but only to constitute them *guardians* of the *societies happiness*....”⁶⁰ In the case of 1688-1689, the public was not served by a Catholic king, and therefore the national welfare demanded a revolution in the name of the common good. As for 30 January, Chubb was sorry to see that it had “been generally made to serve, has been for the clergy to preach up the doctrine of passive-obedience and non-resistance in the most absolute and unlimited sense.” He focused on the late controversy following Sacheverell’s infamous sermon. Chubb noted with satisfaction that passive obedience was much less invoked since “the *house* of *Hanover* has been happily settled upon the *British* throne, than

heretofore.”⁶¹ Obviously, as he put it, “the two anniversaries ... are founded upon two *contradictory* and *incompatible* principles.” One offered light, the other darkness. The one date to remember was that most compatible with the chief goal of government: that is, with the public good and through it “the good of each individual.” The anniversary of 5 November allowed Chubb to provide his readers with a tangible example of “how we ought to behave under a *vicious* prince, who wickedly abuses the trust reposed in him, by attempting and endeavouring to undermine and destroy the common happiness ... so, this anniversary point out to the members of society, how they ought to act, when the common happiness is in an *apparent danger*...”⁶² In a later work, Chubb again addressed this date and disassociated it from any divine act of special providence by suggesting that an effective English fleet had done as much to safeguard the Prince of Orange’s arrival as any supposed action taken by God.⁶³

Preserved among a collection of miscellaneous writings by Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, were a few musings on government and religion, which take as their target positions very near, if not identical, to those published by Chubb: “No Government is wisely contriv’d, in which Religion is not consider’d as one branch of the Institution,” wrote Gibson. In direct challenge to Chubb’s alternative view, Gibson continued that “[t]he Supreme Legislative Powers in every Country, have a Right, as that are entrusted with the Publick welfare, to Establish and Encourage that Religion which they believe to be true, and to appoint such Forms of Worship and Services, as are judg’d, upon mature deliberation, to be agreeable to the nature and precepts of it.” Where Chubb saw protection of personal worship as a cornerstone of good government, Gibson judged a government neglectful which did not regulate religion as it saw fit for the betterment of the nation. What was more, those who challenged the nation’s orthodoxy threatened the “civil establishment” and needed to be prosecuted on that account.⁶⁴ For Chubb, had he ever seen these writings, Gibson’s views would have only confirmed the need for his.

Collins’ Final Work and His Death

Collins final work, *A Discourse Concerning Ridicule and Irony in Writing* (1729), was a historical study of ridicule concentrating on religious writings.

Collins saw England as a special case where literature that ridiculed its subject formed part of the common discourse. The book was a challenge to the suggestion that imprisonment was appropriate for those who laughed at and made fun of English laws. Collins reminded his adversaries of the use made by ridicule in attacks on Catholicism and Popery in past ages, specifically Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*.⁶⁵ Moreover, he noted that Anglicans had often mocked Puritans and Dissenters. Thus, turnabout was fair play in challenges to orthodoxy. Besides, he wrote, no one complained about the rhetorical strategy except its victims. The return of the monarchy to England in 1660, Collins asserted, had brought with it legislative limits on dissent as well as ridicule.⁶⁶ He hoped the eighteenth century would be more tolerant of those who followed their reason, who sought truth in matters of religion and who challenged with farce and satire what seemed unreasonable. Like Toland and Chubb, Collins saw the reign of the Hanoverians as an opportunity to remake England and the English Church into the bastions of toleration for which they desired.

On 13 December 1729 Collins died, after a long and painful ordeal with kidney stones. However, his health had been poor since 1723 when his son (also Anthony) died. The existing letters reveal the depths of Collins' despair as his son fought a losing battle with the illness that finally claimed him.⁶⁷ Though Collins had remarried in 1724 to Elizabeth Wrottesley, the daughter of Sir Walter Wrottesley, he "never enjoyed a good state of health...." News of Collins' death, according to Desmaizeaux, came "to the grief of all his Family but especially those who had been Eye Witness to most of his Actions near 30 years."⁶⁸ According to Zachary Pearce (1690-1774), Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-fields and future Bishop of Rochester, who relayed on 17 December a report of Collins' last words to Lord Macclesfield "I am told that his dying words were to this effect, 'I have endeavoured to serve true Religion and my, Country, and I hope that I shall go to a place where I shall find others that have done the same'."⁶⁹

Some observers agreed with Collins' assessment of his own life. Almost nine months to the day of Collins' death, *The Universal Spectator* contained an "Essay on the *Rural* life." The author, Henry Stonecastle of Northumberland, Esq.,

lamented the increasing absence of country gentlemen in England. As an example of what was being lost with the extinction of this breed of man, Stonecastle cited Collins.

Such was *Collins*, he had an opulent Fortune descended to him from his Ancestors ... He lived on his own Estate in the Country ... he always oblig'd his Family to a constant Attendance of Publick Worship; as he was himself a man of the strictest Morality, so he never suffer'd any Body about him who was deficient in that Point; he exercised a universal Charity to all sorts of People, without any Regard either to Sect of Party; being in the Commission of the Peace, he administered Justice with such Impartiality and Incorruptness ... he was indulgent to his Children, hospitable to his Neighbours, and kind to his Servants....

Stonecastle was at a loss determining which of Collins' characteristics would be most missed after his death: "the Parent, the Magistrate, the Gentleman, or the Scholar."⁷⁰ Conspicuous by their absence, however, is "deist" or "heretic." Moreover, that Collins was praised as a model gentleman suggests that he acted in concert with, rather than opposed to, the national interests, a defining aspect of the English gentleman as Paul Langford reminds us.⁷¹ This is evidence that Collins acted for the benefit of England rather than wishing to undermine the political establishment as has often been suggested.

A former servant of Collins', Richard Dighton, wrote to Desmaizeaux in mid-March 1731 alerting him to this edition of *The Universal Spectator*. Though Dighton was pleased to see such a favourable account of his late master, he lamented the fact that memory of Collins seemed to be vanishing: "I hope to live to See something come from you that will be a lasting Monument to the Character of that Great Man, I mean his Life which I am told you are now about to write. I hope it is true, I dare day Sr. you agree with me that 'tis pitty such an Honest & great man as he was should be quite forgott & no body is so able to doe it as your self."⁷² While it is unclear to which impending life of Collins Dighton referred, as no contemporary book-length biography exists, it is likely to have been the entry contained in Bayle's *Dictionary*, which Desmaizeaux greatly expanded.⁷³

Desmaizeaux knew much about Collins' life from their friendship and from Collins' manuscripts, which Desmaizeaux received by the terms of Collins' will.

However, Desmaizeaux was somewhat uneasy about removing them from the family. As he explained in a letter dated 6 January 1730, Collins' widow told him that she "should be glad to have them, and I made them over to her, whereupon She was pleased to present me with 50 Guineas."⁷⁴ Some months later, Desmaizeaux became "persuaded that I have betray'd y^e trust of a person who for 26 years has given me continued instances of his friendship and confidence." He then requested that his unnamed correspondent help him retrieve the manuscripts. Collins' widow ignored the request.⁷⁵

Seven years later, in 1737, Desmaizeaux came to loath his decision to relinquish the manuscripts. Gossip had spread throughout London that some of Collins' manuscripts were now in the possession of Edmund Gibson, now Bishop of London. Desmaizeaux believed the story and was free in his speculation: perhaps Collins' family had inadvertently allowed it to happen even though they had promised to keep the papers safe. News of this reached Collins' daughter Elizabeth in early March. She wrote directly to Desmaizeaux. "I am determined," she told him, "to trace out the Grounds of such a report and you can be no friend of Mine [and] no friend of Mr. Collins ... if you refuse to acquaint me what foundation you had for such a charge."⁷⁶ In reply, Desmaizeaux explained he had been "lately with some honourable persons I told them it had been reported that some of Mr. C's will were fallin into the hands of Strangers, and that I shou'd be glad to receive from you such information as might enable me to disprove that report." While Desmaizeaux did not know for certain which manuscripts had potentially found their way into unfriendly hands, he speculated that it was the "MS in eight volumes." Being no longer the keeper of Collins' archive, Desmaizeaux urged Elizabeth to see whether he father's papers were "entire and perfect, or whether there be any thing wanting in either of them."⁷⁷

Elizabeth responded on 6 April 1737 stating that she had "hoped for some satisfaction in relation to your charge...." After denying that she had let any papers escape her, she demanded the names of anyone who had suggested that she had been irresponsible with her father's documents.⁷⁸ The final letter of the affair came from Desmaizeaux. "I flattered myself y^l my last letter wou'd have Satisfied you,"

he told Elizabeth, but he saw “that my hopes were in vain.” He explained that his only motivation was Collins’ reputation and expressed surprise that he was now “represented as an enemy ~~to you~~ and challenged to produce proof and witnesses of a thing dropped in conversation....” Desmaizeaux continued that he had not intended to suggest that she played an active role in the disappearance of the manuscripts, if indeed they were actually missing. He ended by reminding Elizabeth “Mr. Col[lins] loved me, and esteemed me for my integrity, and sincerity of which he had several proofs, how I have been drawn in to myire him to forfeit y^e good opinion he had of me, and which, where he now alive wou’d deserved by expose me to his utmost contempt, is a grief of which I shall carry to y^e grave.”⁷⁹ In death too deists caused controversy even among those who were their friends.

Tindal’s *Christianity as Old as the Creation*

In 1730, the year after Collins died, the work Tindal alluded to in his 1722 letter to Lord Sunderland finally appeared. *Christianity as Old as the Creation* refined Tindal’s characterisation of God who “*has given Mankind sufficient Means of knowing what he requires of them; and what those Means are.*”⁸⁰ This divine gift had existed since the Creation but was not always acknowledged or accepted. As Collins had also suggested, we know by observing the world around us “that there is a God; or, in other words, a Being absolutely perfect, and infinitely happy in himself, who is the Source of all other Beings....” The reference to happiness revealed that God did not conceal His intentions from those who sought them. Repeating earlier conclusions, Tindal claimed that “God can require nothing of us, but what makes for our Happiness; so he, who can’t envy us any Happiness ... can forbid us those Things only, which tend to our Hurt; and this we are as certain of, as that there is a God infinitely happy in himself, infinitely good and wise....”⁸¹ Simon Browne (1680-1732), one time pastor of the congregation in the Old Jewry, London, rebuked Tindal by asserting that “It is becoming of God to honour *himself*, to expect honour from his *rational creatures*, to approve *those* who pay it, to dislike and be displeased with those who *do not*....”⁸² Where Browne viewed God as jealous and demanding, Tindal, like Toland and Collins, argued that those things necessary for this life are clear and known to everyone.

Like his fellow deists, Tindal accused “designing priests” of constraining the right of people to think freely in religion. This imposition by men who wished to preserve their importance, Tindal called priestcraft and directed his critical comments against it. The only priest that Tindal accepted was God, who would never have left the care of His religion in the hands of “a self-perpetuating, self-regulating body of men.”⁸³ Tindal took to task those who presented alternative descriptions of God and was especially critical of Catholics in this regard.

The Popish Priests are so far from giving the People any just idea of God, that they represent him as an arbitrary and tyrannical Being, imposing the highest pain, the practice of ridiculous Ceremonies, and belief of absurd Doctrines ... But ‘tis no wonder, that they are made to believe, that God requires to observing in different Things on the severest Penalties; since their Priests claim the same Power, in making such things necessary to the communicating in their Holy Church; out of which they affirm Salvation is not to be had.⁸⁴

This view of God who withheld knowledge and punished with an arbitrary will any person who gave offence is what Tindal sought to overturn. God was not a being to fear but rather admire; His desire was happiness in those who worship Him. Those who suggest otherwise, that God favours a certain denomination while damning another, make Him a tyrant and unworthy of worship.⁸⁵

Tindal Tangles with Samuel Clarke

Tindal’s chief opponent in this argument was the late Newtonian Samuel Clarke (he had died in 1729) against whom is directed an entire chapter in *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. In the second of Clarke’s Boyle Lectures, which secured his reputation as a Christian apologist and Newtonian populariser, he wrote that deists “have just and right Notions of God and of all the Divine Attributes in every respect; who declare they believe *that* there is One, Eternal, Wise Being; the Creator, Preserver, and Governour of all things.” Nevertheless, these same deists refused to believe any revelation from an active God preferring to measure the divine intellect against their own.⁸⁶ Contrary to such notions, Clarke stated “*That* the same God who Created all things by the Word of his Power, and upholds and preserves them by his continual Concourse, does also by his All-wise *Providence* perpetually govern and direct the issues and events of the World, and of

all, even the smallest things, that are therein.”⁸⁷ This God was also unlimited in power and action. As Clarke explained, “*The Self-Existent and Original Cause of all Things, is not a necessary Agent, but a Being indued with Liberty and Choice.*”⁸⁸ Clarke presented a Newtonian view of God and one he shared with Whiston who similarly claimed God “is a *Free Agent*, no way limited by any *Necessity* or *Fate*, but acting still by *Choice*, and according to his own *good Pleasure.*”⁸⁹ Both men suggested that one needed only to admire the natural world to know that the image of God they presented was correct.⁹⁰ Nature, thus, was to be interpreted within correct theological assumptions because deists argued that the same world also proved their view of a reasonable, consistent, and knowledge-sharing God. Theology was the lens through which nature was observed and interpreted.

Tindal further commented on what he viewed as Clarke’s defective notion of God: “Can a Being be denominated merciful, and good, who is so only to a few; but cruel, and unmerciful to the rest?”⁹¹ For Tindal the answer clearly was no. James Foster (1697-1753), a nonconformist minister at Barbican chapel, defended Clarke against Tindal’s assault by placing the differing reception of God’s message not with the divine author but with the human recipients. Foster explained that “God did not design all mankind, tho of the same species of being, for *equal happiness*; because they have not the *same capacities*, nor the *same advantages*, nor an *equal probability* of obtaining the *highest*, that their rational nature may be capable of.”⁹² Though God may indeed communicate in the clear language that Tindal supposed, not every person is capable to understand it. Even if this was not the case, Foster argued that God might wish to communicate with some people and not with others, as is His right. This was a God who engaged in “the *free distribution* of his favours, in dispensing which, he may act with what *variety*, and make what *difference* he pleases....”⁹³ It is directly opposite to that advanced by Tindal whose God would not allow some to receive “favours” at the expense of others; divine goodness did not permit selective salvation.

Daniel Waterland, Trinitarian theologian and Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, also read Foster’s book with interest and told Edmund Gibson that “It is grave, and in the main rational.” Waterland’s reading notes inserted into his copy of

Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation* reveal that he agreed with Foster regarding the disposition of God's providence. Some people were more able to comprehend divine communication than were others. "Reason," Waterland wrote in the margins, "is an excellent gift: But Sometimes bestowed upon fools: that make no use of it." However, Waterland did not approve of the concessions Foster made in showing the errors in Tindal's writings, which Waterland's notes indicate he read side by side with *Christianity as Old as the Creation*.⁹⁴ Chief among Waterland's concerns was that Foster gave "up the doctrine of the Trinity" but "Whether He be Arian or Socinian, is not certain." While Waterland decried the work of deists, some answers to them, like those by unitarian thinkers such as Clarke and Foster, did more harm than good.⁹⁵ To win the battle against deism but lose belief in the Trinity was no victory. As Waterland commented to Gibson, "defenders of Religion," like Foster, "I conceive, will do us no service. They are the men I am most afraid of."⁹⁶ Thus, sharp black and white lines of distinction between deists and their opponents are perhaps best characterised as shades of grey.

Mathematics and Historic Revelation

Tindal's comments on revelation are entirely consistent with his thoughts on God: "We are not required to believe more of God than we can conceive of him...."⁹⁷ As for revelation, if it took place, it did so within rules established by God. Tindal described this regulation as the "Law of Reason" and stated that it existed "antecedent to any external Revelation, that God can't dispense, either with his Creatures of himself, for not observing...."⁹⁸ Revelation must conform to human reason, otherwise it would be useless. Again Waterland refuted Tindal on this matter in another letter sent to Gibson. No such law ever existed, Waterland advised Gibson, and "No absolutely perfect Law can be grafted upon any thing but the promise of immortality which nature knows not of, which takes not within natural light." Only God may provide unbreakable laws, any found in nature are entirely contingent.⁹⁹

As for reports of historic revelation, where witnesses no longer lived, Tindal was very suspicious. How, Tindal asked, may we trust the stories of revelation or miracles from so long ago? The "very Nature of Probability is such," he replied

“that were it only left to Time itself, even that wou’d wear it quite out; at least if it be true what *Mathematicians* pretend to demonstrate, viz. That the Probability of Facts depending on human Testimony, must gradually lessen in proportion to the Distance of the Time when they were done.”¹⁰⁰ To support this position Tindal turned to John Craig’s *Theologiae Christianae Principia Mathematica* (1699).¹⁰¹ A Scottish mathematician, Craig (d. 1731) had endeavoured to determine a likely date for the Second Coming by using mathematics to chart the decline in belief of historic testimony and thus arrive at a date when faith in Christ would no longer exist. Tindal was particularly interested in the pages containing the results of Craig’s calculations “that after 3150 years from the birth of Christ the probability of his written history will vanish.”¹⁰² For Tindal this was certain proof that human testimony was a poor foundation for Christianity and belief in historic miracles.

A generation earlier others anticipated the potential danger of Craig’s work. Edmund Gibson wrote to Hans Sloane (1660-1753), then secretary of the Royal Society, in October 1699 on this issue. He urged the inclusion in the *Philosophical Transactions* of a paper that stressed the reliability and consistency of human testimony “by a very good friend; who was accidentally lead to satisfie himself about it by the Publication of a late Book.” The anonymous author of the tract had also used mathematical proofs to demonstrate that human testimony would survive intact even over great distances of time from the original event. Gibson believed the article would confute “a late wild and dangerous hypothesis that has given much advantage to Deists and Atheists.”¹⁰³ Other observers believed that Craig’s book was in the same league with Toland’s *Christianity not Mystrious*. In March 1701, the High-Church Tory Francis Atterbury advised an acquaintance that Craig’s book was being inspected along with Toland’s by the Lower House of Convocation.¹⁰⁴ If testimony was reliable, then the miraculous events described by the Apostles could not be dismissed solely on the basis of temporal distance as deists maintained.

This tactic continued to find adherents among enemies of deism. Joseph Butler (1692-1752), Bishop of Durham, in his *Analogy of Religion* (1736) later commented that are many accounts “of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, collected by those who have writ upon the subject; it lies upon

unbelievers to show, why this evidence is not to be credited.” Charles Leslie rehearsed such arguments in *A Short and Easy Method with the Deists* where he affirmed that one must accept biblical miracles because many pagans were converted to Christianity “upon the Conviction of what themselves had seen, what had been done publicly before their Eyes, wherein it was impossible to have Impos’d upon them.”¹⁰⁵ Leslie’s fellow nonjurors approved of his approach. A commonplace book with entries by Hilkiah Bedford, Fellow of St John’s College, Cambridge, records that, in accordance with Leslie, historical accounts contained in Scripture should be accepted as fact because they were composed during the lifetime of Christ when other witnesses would have quickly revealed any falsehoods in the writings. Deists, Bedford argued, could provide no answer to this critique.¹⁰⁶

Tindal’s image of an immutable and knowledge-sharing God provoked many readers. Simon Browne contended Tindal’s presentation made God a slave to the Creation. Moreover, God would be a very poor legislator if He could never change his mind or alter what he had previously done.¹⁰⁷ John Leland supported this position when he claimed that “God may require Things afterwards, which he did not actually require at the Beginning, and that supposing an Alteration in the Circumstances of Mankind, it may be highly agreeable to his Wisdom and Goodness....”¹⁰⁸ Whereas Tindal argued that this view made God an incompetent artist, William Law countered that He “is not an *arbitrary Being*, but does that which the *incomprehensible perfections* of his own nature, make it *fit* and *reasonable* for him to do.”¹⁰⁹ Similarly, Foster refuted Tindal’s analogy between God’s government and earthly rulers. “[T]here is,” he challenged, “no arguing from *earthly* governments to *God’s* government of the world; and what would be *tyrannical* in the one, may be very *wise* and *fit* in the other.”¹¹⁰ Such challenges had no effect on Tindal who held that God was consistent and predictable in his governance.

Chubb on Providence and Revelation

Like Collins and Tindal before him, Chubb remarked on the contemporary acceptance of the Copernican worldview which had replaced the Ptolemaic outlook. When Chubb dismissed arguments against him that he claimed were based on blind

adherence to tradition, authority, and simple acceptance of general consensus, rather than careful consideration of the arguments, he suggested the following: “Suppose the *reasons*, upon which the *Ptolemaick* system of astronomy was grounded had obtained *universal assent*; would that system have been *well grounded*, because the *reasons* upon which it is grounded had been *universally admitted*? And ought universal opinion to have determined the judgement of *Copernicus*, *against* the strongest and most obvious reasons to the contrary? Surely, not.”¹¹¹ When people are permitted to use their reason to consider the reality of things, unfounded philosophical schemes do not survive. The same was true in matters of religion. George Wightwick, minister to a congregation at Kingston upon Thames, did not agree that God adapted His messages to human intellects. He claimed that Chubb’s position was a “piece of stupidity and folly” and that one could only “pretend to vindicate it.”¹¹² Wightwick stressed that those who suggested “God reveals nothing to us, but what our weak and shallow reason is able perfectly to comprehend,” do a great disservice to the infinite wisdom of God.”¹¹³

In *Human Nature Vindicated* (1736) Chubb stated, “*God* does not require Men to do what they *cannot do*: He is not such an unreasonable Task-Master, as to require Bricks when there is not Materials for making them.”¹¹⁴ God would never, Chubb continued, require the impossible from humanity. Those who argued the contrary position were mistaken and perhaps motivated by personal gain. Humanity was never “unfairly dealt with” and God would always provide the materials for correct belief. It was an insult to the creator that He should require duties that humans cannot perform.¹¹⁵

We know that Chubb’s work on this and other subjects found a public audience. An anonymous full-page editorial in *Fog’s Weekly Journal* (9 January 1731), a High-Church periodical, conceded that Chubb had made some good points regarding God’s relationship to humanity, nevertheless, Chubb had exaggerated the merits of human reason. The author concluded that “Man, tho’ originally created perfect, is, by some Means or other, now become defective....”¹¹⁶ The literary paper, *The Present State of the Republick of Letters* also considered Chubb’s position on reason and religion. The reviewer believed that Chubb had purposely

“taken a great deal of pains to exalt reason in opposition to revelation.” The anonymous critic challenged this suggestion in an attempt to reassert the importance of revelation and the necessary aid of divine guidance.¹¹⁷

Tindal’s Death and the Controversy Over his Will

Matthew Tindal died on 16 August 1733. The following month, the physician, and All Souls graduate, Pierce Dod (1683-1754) provided an account of Tindal’s last moments: “The same vanity which seduc’d him to be so much out of the way most part of his life continued with him to the last, and he was as proud of dying hard as ever he was to be reputed a Top Free Thinker.”¹¹⁸ Though Dod spoke harshly of Tindal’s final thoughts, the two had shared experiences at All Souls. Like Tindal, Dod too had been compelled by Warden Gardiner to take orders. Dod, however, took his case directly to Archbishop Tenison and despite Gardiner’s protests a hearing was conducted at Lambeth Palace. Eventually Dod avoided orders by taking a medical degree rather than an MA. Tindal and Dod had some personal association with one another because both were present during one of the Fellows’ organisational meetings.¹¹⁹ Despite his unwillingness to become a divine, which he shared with Tindal, Dod believed that Tindal had gone too far in his theological assertions.

Controversy that seemed Tindal’s constant companion while he lived continued to follow him even after his death. Like Collins, the terms of Tindal’s will, and the ownership of manuscripts, caused a bitter confrontation first in private but then in a public dispute conducted in the *Grub Street Journal* for the better part of two years. The episode began when the bookseller Edmund Curll published a copy of Tindal’s will in October 1733.¹²⁰ Less than a month later, a letter was printed in the *Grub Street Journal* which challenged the legitimacy of the will in addition to denying the truthfulness of the will’s only heir.¹²¹ The unnamed beneficiary was Eustace Budgell for whom Tindal had acted as patron and at some point Budgell had borrowed £2,000 from Tindal.¹²² The disputed passage of the will reproduced by Curll stated that Tindal had bequeathed Budgell “the Sum of two thousand one hundred Pounds, ... my Strong Box, my Diamond Ring, and all my Manuscript-Books, Papers, and Writings....”¹²³

Included among the manuscripts purportedly given to Budgell was part two of *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. Budgell was killed in 1737 the victim of a boat accident, and no finished second volume has ever surfaced. Only a partial introduction of the book exists which circulated around 1732.¹²⁴ Contemporary rumours alleged and generations of historians believed that Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, suppressed and subsequently hid or destroyed the manuscript. David Berman and Stephen Lalor dispute this claim arguing that no proof exists with which to convict Gibson. However, given Gibson's implication in the gossip surrounding Collins' papers at around this same time, and his known hatred of deists, contemporaries might well have been right to suspect the Bishop's complicity in any destruction of a deist's manuscripts.¹²⁵ Without evidence, however, we may only speculate.

Tindal's nephew, Nicholas Tindal, refused to believe that his uncle had forsaken his entire family in favour of Budgell. Nicolas raised his doubts in the *Grub Street Journal*, which recorded on 6 December 1733 that Nicolas found the will "contrary to what his uncle had lately told him." Budgell replied that the will was genuine. The editor of the *Grub Street Journal* was also uncertain as to the will's authenticity and questioned why Tindal would have misspelled his own name three times and why he seems to have given away £800 more than he was reportedly worth. There was, the editor wrote, "some secret mystery in this affair..."¹²⁶ On 17 January 1734 the saga continued. Nicolas had gone to Budgell's home and demanded to see the will. When Tindal's strongbox was opened, not £2100 was present but only £1100. Nicolas "who before suspected foul play, was now by this information and other circumstances, strongly confirmed in his suspicions."¹²⁷ While the dispute continued into March 1734, the will was ultimately proven a forgery, though not before Budgell threatened to take his case directly to Robert Walpole. However, with the Excise Crisis occupying his time, it is unlikely that Walpole would have cared very much about Budgell or his claimed inheritance.¹²⁸

The debate over the authenticity of Tindal's will was not the only deist matter that found its way into the pages of the *Grub Street Journal* in the mid-1730s. In the number for 25 September 1735 an anonymous poem titled "On the

Deists Scheme of Fitness” satirised and refuted the deist conceptions of God and providence. The unknown poet claimed “Some daring Wits have raised an impious scheme / To laws and rules subjecting the Supreme....” New arguments are not found here. Deists, it is claimed, attempt to destroy the picture of an all-powerful God who is not restrained by His Creation. Rather, the poem continues that deists worship an inherent organising principle in nature, which “With obligations wou’d restrain their God; / Boldly assigning a superior rule, / Which God must act by, and must God controul.”¹²⁹ While our deists never stated this position explicitly, this characterisation is important in that it portrays a popular understanding of deism. With such depictions in periodicals, there can be little wonder why deism was perceived as a threat.¹³⁰

Chubb on Miracles and Providence

As did Tindal, Chubb refused to accept that God did not offer His message freely to all people. “[I]t is *unreasonable*,” he claimed, “that God should make a species of creatures *capable* of future bliss or torment, and that he should *pre-ordain* a few of that species to a state of unspeakable and eternal happiness, and the rest of them to a state of extreme and eternal misery....”¹³¹ God, as conceived by Chubb, had no interest in propagating misery. Caleb Fleming (1698-1779), dissenting minister and rumoured Socinian, responded by claiming that the fault of partial reception of God’s religion did not reside with God. The divine message was perfectly presented; however, only the righteous received divine instruction. Those who do not receive it must be wicked; the defect lies with the recipient and not God.¹³²

In his discussions of miracles in the late 1730s Chubb separated divine providence into two types: “particular” and “general.” God had created the world as an act of particular providence. The way God continued to act in the Creation to preserve its regular operation in accordance with divine laws was an example of general providence. As part of the original act of particular providence, God had made his perpetual righteousness part of his general providence.¹³³ Thus, once God established the universe, He did not alter, or interfere in its operation. In Chubb’s words, “God, at the creation, put the natural world under the direction of certain

Laws; and that ever since he has caused it to be passively subject to those laws....” God maintained a steady-state universe.¹³⁴ The alternative view “that God should be *frequently* and almost *perpetually* immediately interposing as aforesaid,” is Chubb argued, “a supposition that is greatly unlikely in itself...”¹³⁵ If God needed to interfere in the Creation he would be revealed as a defective craftsman.

Thomas Johnson (fl. 1718), one time master of the Chigwell Grammar School, founded in 1629 by Samuel Harsnett, Archbishop of York, refuted this claim by reversing Chubb’s argument. Johnson replied that “God is perfectly free as to acting or not acting at all, so to every Manner of Action; and by his being *perfectly free* I mean, that he is not determined by anything *ab extra*.”¹³⁶ Where Chubb saw God as good because He would not alter the Creation or impose impossibilities on people, Johnson held that God was great because of His unlimited power of action. Critics like Johnson might have been whom Chubb had in mind when he noted that orthodox thinkers were quick to tar as enemies of religion or atheists those who did not blindly agree with them. In this Chubb followed the precedent of Toland, Collins, and Tindal.¹³⁷

Chubb believed that God retained the power of particular providence, though divine goodness greatly restricted its use. This theme was the focus of a letter Chubb sent to William Bowdoin, a Boston merchant.¹³⁸ Only in extraordinary cases would God interpose in the normal operation of the universe and override general providence. The sole example that Chubb could provide of such an event was a comet crossing into Earth’s atmosphere the path of which God would have to alter in order to save humanity. Years earlier, William Whiston had identified this exact extraordinary celestial event as the physical cause of the Mosaic flood. Chubb read Whiston’s account, but dismissed the comet as an actual instance of particular providence and concluded that “such interposition is not consonant to that method of providence by which the Solar System is governed.” Chubb suggested that the comet must have been a naturally occurring phenomenon in a universe poorly understood. Moreover,

a universal deluge was an event that was [the] production of the greatest evil that has befallen the inhabitants of this globe, at least, that has come to our knowledg; so had the Deity by a Special application of his power prevented

this evil, it would, surely, have been consonant to the most perfect wisdom and goodness; provided such Special interposition to have been likewise consonant to that method of providence by which God governs and directs the affairs of the Solar System.... And as the Deity did not interpose in an extraordinary way, to prevent that universal deluge, which is supposed to have taken place; so this renders it greatly probable that such interposition is not consonant to that method of providence by which the Solar System is governed.¹³⁹

That God did not divert the comet, which resulted in the Flood, proved He will not intervene in the regular operation of the universe. If God did not use special providence to prevent the Flood, it was unlikely that He would act in the world for similar concerns. God was immutable and so were the universal laws. The universe operated within the unchanging laws of nature and so too did divine providence. Examples of supposed miracles were, Chubb claimed, attributable to the normal operation of nature, which was not fully understood.¹⁴⁰

Chubb also discussed providence in a letter he sent in 1723 to the physician James Jurin (1684-1750), Secretary of the Royal Society. Jurin was an advocate of inoculation against smallpox and used quantitative results to support his position. He solicited reports of inoculation from various locations in England to compose his evidence. Part of the controversy surrounding inoculation originated from the opinions of theologians who saw the prevention of illness as interfering with God's plan.¹⁴¹ As one critic put it: "Let the *Atheist* then, and the *Scoffer*, the *Heathen* and the *Unbeliever*, disclaim a dependence upon Providence, dispute the Wisdom of God's Government, and deny Obedience to his Laws: Let them *Inoculate*, and be *Inoculated*, whose Hope is only in, and for *this Life!*"¹⁴² Such a view of providence was exactly what Chubb hoped to discredit with his works. Advancing this goal perhaps explains Chubb's letter to Jurin. After relating the inoculation results for Sarum, Chubb advised Jurin that the practise had "inflamed the angry passions, & sturd up the bitter ... [and] bigotted high churchmen...." Chubb continued that these critics

say the practice is blasphemish, and diabolical; it is distrusting providence, and taking the power out of Gods hand; it will draw [down] divine Judgement, and for the proof of this point, they are so Stupid as to urge, that god has begun to Show his displeasure against it & us by that great mortality

that is amongst us, tho not one that has been in y^e practise, has fallen by it. This and a great deal more they Say, but reason they do not, upon the Subject.¹⁴³

As Chubb would tell Bowdoin, God does not intervene in the regular operation of the world. The universe ran according to order established at Creation. Moreover, just as “what is Called Posesion [sic] of Devils in the new Testament was no other in Fact but Distraction or Madness,” Chubb hoped that a sufficient amount of reasoning on smallpox would prove it just another disease and not God’s direct punitive action.¹⁴⁴ The letter also demonstrates that Chubb perhaps wished to become part of the community at the Royal Society. Andrea Rusnock has examined correspondence to the Royal Society under Jurin’s term as Secretary and concludes that people rarely sent letters simply to communicate information. Correspondents “sought to prove themselves by association with a Fellow of the Royal Society or by presentation of credentials signifying trustworthiness.” Though Jurin never acknowledged the letter, it is likely that Chubb sent it as a means to bring himself to Jurin’s attention by supplying important information and siding with Jurin in the debates with his theological enemies. Jurin’s silence may be explained with another letter in which he criticised Collins’ writings calling him a heretic; perhaps Jurin did not wish association with a deist like Chubb.¹⁴⁵

In his published works Chubb continued to address divine providence and questioned whether or not all miracles came directly from God. He believed the answer “must remain undetermined.”¹⁴⁶ God had, Chubb wrote, created various invisible beings with powers that might seem miraculous. The existence of these creatures made divine authorship of any miracle uncertain. However, he asserted that any miracle tending for the good of humanity, and consistent with human reason, must come from God.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the most famous miracle of all, that of resurrection of Jesus, could not with absolute certainty be attributed to God. Chubb conceded, however, that was the most likely cause. Although, he stated, “A skilful surgeon or physician, by a timely interposition, has sometimes prevented death....”¹⁴⁸ Caleb Fleming again took issue with Chubb on this point; though he did not specifically answer how physicians performed seemingly miraculous feats,

he stated that the “*raising of a dead person to life*, is an effect plainly *above* the natural ability or inherent power of any creature whatsoever...”¹⁴⁹ It was up to Chubb to prove to him that any other creature could produce life from death. For Fleming, Chubb’s argument was an example of natural philosophy proceeding into areas for which it had no credentials: some things were simply a matter of faith and could not be accounted for in terms of natural processes.

Chubb and Newton’s Prophetic Writings

Following his endorsement of the practises found at the Royal Society, Chubb borrowed from Newton’s *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St John* (1732) to further support the proposition that we do not know the purpose of prophecy. Chubb noted that “Sir *Isaac Newton’s* valuable discovery of the *laws of gravitation*, may, perhaps, be *equally* as useful to *Christianity*, as his discovery of the *sense of prophecies*, whilst it remains *indeterminate* what is the Christian revelation.”¹⁵⁰ Until we know the true use of prophetic writings, Newton’s method of simplicity ought to suffice for hermeneutical efforts. As we saw with Collins, this meant that only literally fulfilled prophecy was to be accepted as fact. Newton’s authority was to be accepted because of his success in natural philosophy. In the same way that Newton’s explanation of natural phenomena sufficed to account for the workings of a universe that was poorly understood, his strategy of biblical interpretation was to be preferred to more complicated schemes. However, Chubb admitted that “tho’ it may be *most evident*, that Sir *Isaac Newton*[’s] greatly *superior* abilities *better qualified him* to discover and ascertain the *true state* of the *natural world*; yet, that he was thereby better qualified to *discover* and *ascertain* the true sense and meaning of *dark and ambiguous* prophecies, may not, perhaps, be *quite* so apparent.”¹⁵¹ Truth in the physical world was analogous to truth in the spiritual world: one could know divine communication with the same degree of certainty that one knew the underlying causes of the world. In both cases, Newton was an excellent guide. What was more, Newton’s work was rendering a formerly mysterious universe comprehensible.

“The Author’s Farewel to His Readers” which proceeded Chubb’s *Posthumous Works* contained his final thoughts on God. He asserted that God was bound by the rules of right and wrong, though Chubb, like Tindal, did not reveal if these existed prior to God or were created by Him. Nevertheless, these rules dictated God’s actions including those of the Apocalypse: “God will *judge the world*, ... not by *capricious humour*, and according to *arbitrary will*; but by, or according to, the *eternal rules of right and wrong*....”¹⁵² God will act justly, not arbitrarily.

Morgan’s Image of God

We can form a correct image of God through reason by examining ourselves, Thomas Morgan suggested, as he entered the theological debates of the 1720s which our deists had done so much to stimulate. Morgan asserted that we may “form an Idea of God, or a Being of infinite absolute Perfection, only by attributing all the limited finite Perfections we find in our selves to God in an infinite Degree, and removing from Him whatever we conceive as implying any Thing of Weakness, Defect, or Imperfection.” Thus, Morgan eliminated all the apparatus of institutional religion, doing away with priests and indeed with any mediation between the believer and God. Morgan found support for his views, not in theological writings but, like Collins, in natural philosophy. The “Method of forming our Ideas of spiritual intelligent Beings, had been so clearly and demonstratively explain’d and accounted for by the new Philosophers, upon the *Principles of Reason*....” Contemporary philosophical explanation, Morgan continued, were much preferable to any “exploded Axiom in the *Pagan Philosophy*.”¹⁵³ Indeed, during his examination for ordination as a Dissenting minister in 1716 Morgan had specifically cited his “general Survey of this stupendious Fabrick of the Universe” in which the planets are “retain’d in their proper Orbits, and kept perpetually revolving about their respective centres,” as one of the chief reasons why he believed in God and wished to become a minister.¹⁵⁴

Challenges to Morgan became increasingly bitter and personal. The nonconformist minister Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) described Morgan’s work as “detestable, inconsistent, immoral, & insolent.”¹⁵⁵ Similarly, in a work Doddridge

called “among the best Books our age has produced,”¹⁵⁶ John Leland, nonconformist minister in Dublin, dismissed Morgan’s notions as “ridiculous Superstitions, that proceed upon an entire Ignorance, or wilful Misrepresentation...” by a man who had no “regard to Decency or his own Reputation...”¹⁵⁷ Leland held that God might intervene in the Creation at any time, for any reason. Only by equating the human mind to God’s did Leland believe that Morgan was able to arrive at his conclusions. Similarly, an anonymous reviewer for the *Grub Street Journal* called Morgan’s works “most tedious, immethodical, enthusiastical jumble of infidel cant, false history, mirepresentations, vain repetitions, and impertinence.”¹⁵⁸

As to the clarity of God’s message, Morgan sided with our other deists in arguing that God did not wrap His words in riddles. Critics saw this too. An anonymous reviewer of his work lamented that Morgan had much in common with the positions advanced by Chubb.¹⁵⁹ This is confirmed by considering Morgan’s writings on providence and revelation. Despite admitting that he did not know precisely what a revelation from God might entail, Morgan claimed that God would never suspend the normal and regular operation of the universe to enact it: “Such a Supposition would be unworthy of God, as the Creator and Governor of the World, and the universal Cause, Preserver, and Director of Nature.”¹⁶⁰ If God could alter the Creation at His will then people could not know the order of nature with the certainty that Morgan demanded. He further commented that “the Order of Nature, which I call the Order, Will, and continued Concurrence and Agency of God, we see this World has lasted, bad as it is, above 5000 Years, at least, and may last for ever, for any Thing we know.”¹⁶¹ The world operated as it had in the past and as it would for all eternity. This was true because God “governs the natural and moral World, by his constant, uninterrupted Presence, Power, and incessant Action upon both, and not by such essential inherent Powers or Properties in the Things themselves...” God’s role is that of a preserver.¹⁶² Morgan did not wish to remove God from the Creation but rather to eliminate the view of God as arbitrary and reactionary. As support for his position, he ironically cited Samuel Clarke as holding a complementary view.

The excellent and truly learned Dr. *Samuel Clarke*, in his Book of natural and reveal'd Religion, having clearly prov'd, that there must be an eternal, immutable Rule of Rectitude, natural Relation of Things, and moral Fitness of Actions, as founded in Nature and Reason, antecedent to all positive Will or Law whatever; he from hence concludes that what is thus antecedently right, reasonable, and fit, must likewise be the positive Will and Law of God, who cannot but act and will agreeable to natural Order, and moral Fitness.¹⁶³

While Morgan read Clarke as a potential ally, the two differed greatly. Clarke believed that human reason was too weak and corrupt to comprehend the divine plan, let alone know if the natural order was immutable. What is more, while Clarke did claim that God's will acted "in constant conformity to the eternal Rules of Justice,..." he viewed God as active and unlimited in action. The rules to which Morgan referred were God's rules and could not be comprehended by human reason. The present order of things did not constrain God who is "*a Being indued with Liberty and Choice.*"¹⁶⁴

To those who would suggest that "the Scripture it self represents the great Doctrines of the Christian Revelation under the Notion of Mysteries, and consequently that we must believe Mysteries, or not believe the Scriptures[.]" Morgan replied that "a Mystery, in the Scripture Notion of it, signifies something that depends so intirely on a Divine Testimony, that it could never have been known or discovered by Humane Reason ... but then, I say, that when once a Thing is revealed, or made known, it ceases to be a Mystery, for it cannot continue to be a Mystery..."¹⁶⁵ That is, once something is revealed it is no longer a mystery. Those who presented scripture as mysterious and unknowable in its entirety were mistaken and perpetuated falsehood upon all Christians. They were wrong, Morgan believed, because "Nothing that comes from God" will be "absurd, inconsistent and contradictory in themselves." God would never "require more of us than he has given, tho', perhaps, he may punish us for pretending to more."¹⁶⁶

John Chapman (1704-1784), Archdeacon of Sudbury (from 1741), was not convinced by Morgan's assessment of God's providence. He was concerned that Morgan's insistence that the world operated by immutable laws diminished God's power, even if God Himself enacted these laws. Repeating Clarke's arguments

against Toland and Collins, Chapman asked Morgan to consider that “the Principles of the best Philosophy, that the present uniform, regular *Course of Nature* (as it is commonly stiled) is every moment sustain’d by the continual Action upon *Matter*, either of God himself, or subordinate Beings appointed by Him...”¹⁶⁷ This criticism is somewhat curious in that Morgan actually states the identical position. Chapman, however, wished Morgan to accept that God may intervene in this order at any time. Morgan’s image of God could not allow this. To further support his refutation, Chapman drew upon the work of another Boyle Lecturer, the Bishop of Norwich, John Leng (1665-1727). In his *Natural Obligations to Believe the Principles of Religion, and Divine Revelation*, Leng concluded that the denial of divine revelation “is the very Point upon which those who can truly be called *Deists*, begin to divide from such, as believe a divine Revelation...”¹⁶⁸ This denial led only to atheism.

Morgan Embraces Newtonian Theology

Like Chubb, Morgan too found support for his assertions in Newton’s posthumously published theological writings. Newton, Morgan believed, had shown that “however dark and obscure the prophetick Parts of the [Bible] may be, yet the Doctrines contained in it are very clear, and cannot easily mistaken.”¹⁶⁹ This was an example of the power of human understanding and proof that God did not hide the meaning of Scripture from those who sought it. Waterland who, as we saw, composed several anti-deist and anti-unitarian tracts, believed Newton’s theological writings to be dangerous and Chubb’s and Morgan’s use of it likely confirmed his fears. He wrote to the Cambridge don, Dr. Zachary Grey (1688-1766) complaining that “I have been sorry that no one yet has undertaken a just Answer to Sir Isaac Newton’s 14th Chapter relating to the Prophecies of Daniel ... That Prophectical way & managing this Debate in the Side of Arianisme, is a very silly one....”¹⁷⁰ Grey took this call to heart and composed a rebuttal to Newton’s work the following year. In his book Grey claimed that Newton’s genius in mathematics had led to a kind of intellectual arrogance that encouraged Newton to venture into topics for which he was not qualified. Grey was particularly worried that Newton’s work might provide support to the deists.¹⁷¹

What is Old is New Again, John Chapman on Morgan

In his answer to Morgan's hermeneutical strategy, Chapman also dusted off the Socinian threat that had been raised against Toland. While never mentioning the heresy by name, the works Chapman used against Morgan were directly from the dispute. Noting, with approval, the earlier writings of Robert Boyle and John Norris on the subject, Chapman advised Morgan to consider that revelation might "lye *beyond* and *above* our Reason either to discover or comprehend, it is strictly demonstrable, that in that case no Objections will lye from *Reason* against them, and *Revelation* evinc'd by other mediums must carry it and command our obedience."¹⁷² Chapman also specifically asked Morgan to read Boyle's *Things Above Reason* to rectify his ill-conceived theology. On the cited page Boyle discussed "those things I have still'd *Unconceivable*, our *Ideas* are but such as a moderate attention suffices to make the mind sensible that she wants either light or extent enough to have a clear and full comprehension of them."¹⁷³ Though Boyle, linked to Anglican apologetic sermons through the Boyle Lectures, had composed these words a generation and a half earlier, and against a different foe, Chapman believed the view still had a role to play in Gregorian England. While heresies rose and faded, responses to them remained consistent.¹⁷⁴ The nature of God and His relationship to the Creation, and the extent of human reason, remained pressing issues well into eighteenth-century Enlightenment England.

Politics in Thomas Morgan's *Physico-Theology*

Morgan's *Physico-Theology or, A Philosophico-Moral Disquisition Concerning Human Nature, Free Agency, Moral Government, and Divine Providence* (1741), which as we will see described his final theory of matter and motion, contained a consideration of proper government based on a notion of humanity who desired only "their own Preservation and Well-being." God impressed this goal within every person and provided them reason to obtain it.¹⁷⁵ In tandem with reason went "Liberty of human Actions, viz. in a Power of suspending the Judgment and consequent Choice and Pursuit, in order to a thorough Examination, and till proper Evidence shall appear, and the carrying the Assent no farther than the Evidence, Perception of Truth. This is moral probationary Liberty,

or the Liberty of a Creature under moral Government....” Morgan argued that it was thus self-evident that freedom of thought was the foundation of proper religion. Were it not so, humanity would be “necessary beings” or “mere passive” sufferers who relied upon the guidance of others to think for them.¹⁷⁶

Any form of government which supported these conditions and sought to secure the happiness and peace of the nation was desirable. Contrarily, governments which did not encourage independent thought, and the arrival at truth through an individual’s use of reason, were to be resisted. As Morgan put it “Men in Society ought to be considered either in a State of *Peace* or *War*, as having their Interests and Happiness mutually connected, or inconsistent with, or repugnant to each other.”¹⁷⁷ One of the chief causes of conflict within a society was secular intrusion into matters, which concerned a believer and God. This juxtaposition between “divine and human Government, or between Theocracy and Civil Polity” was unfounded because Morgan, like Chubb, argued that human governments cannot regulate a person’s heart or beliefs.¹⁷⁸ Religion ought not to be a political tool; it was a matter between the believer and God.

Nevertheless, Morgan acknowledged his views were not widely accepted. He hypothesised that wrong notions of religion began in a person’s early education and continued into adulthood. These persons demanded adherence to the views they learned and “read but one Sort of Books, and converse with but one Sort of Men, and all others they look upon as dangerous Intruders and Invaders of that sacred Deposition of Error which they receive as Truth....” Such people did not examine their beliefs they simply take as granted. They are blind followers, not of reason, but of prejudices.¹⁷⁹ Party allegiances further curtail a person’s desire for total freedom of religion: “Should a Man make Religion a Matter of Choice and free Enquiry, he must be in great Danger of Apostasy from his Party, and therefore, all religious of Church-Parties take the most effectual Care possible to keep their Proselytes from all farther Enquiries or Reasonings about a Religion they have taken upon Trust....” Such forced conformity was never a part of the original Christianity, Morgan advised his readers. Did Christ and the Apostles describe a correct form of worship, regulate dress, or any “outward Modes or Forms in which

God was to be acceptably worshiped?”¹⁸⁰ Religion argued Morgan, as did all our deists, was a personal relationship between an individual and God, who encouraged honest inquiry.

Conclusion:

Robert Walpole’s government fell in 1742 following his refusal to support a European war when it seemed English prestige demanded it. When he finally entered the Wars of Jenkins’s Ear and Austrian Succession (1739-48), poor performances initiated Commons’ inquiries. In the face of mounting opposition, Walpole accepted a peerage as the earl of Orford and left the Commons for the last time in February 1742.¹⁸¹ While England dealt with yet another European war, deism as a perceived threat to political and theological stability faded from the collective mindset of the nation. Though anti-deist writings kept the heresy alive for decades, it was essentially forgotten. Indeed, while he described the early stages of the French Revolution, Edmund Burke (1730-1797) asserted that “Who, born within the last forty years, has read one word of Collins, and Toland, and Tindal, and Chubb, and Morgan, and that whole race who called themselves Freethinkers?”¹⁸² Burke was right. Though deism continued to find advocates after Morgan died in 1743, these new followers failed to inflame passions the same way their predecessors had.

From around 1750 England faced the Seven Years War, the American and French Revolutions, and an expanding empire. What was more, the worrisome destabilising democratic spirit that would turn France upside down was finding new advocates in England and ensured that arguments over prophecy and human reason took a backseat to this new threat. Also important were emerging changes in England’s character. Peter N. Miller has recently described how in the early eighteenth century the notion of England’s “common good” obtained through the maintenance of a unified confessional state was replaced by the protection of the individual. As Miller puts it, “the development of a notion of the individual that demanded more of governors, or rather, demanded that governors stay clear of more peoples’ lives, and implicitly denied the political nature of much personal belief and

practice...” secured a new notion of “common good.”¹⁸³ Our deists would certainly have welcomed this transformation.

It would, however, be wrong to ignore religious factors when attempting to account for the decline of deism. James E. Herrick and others have suggested that orthodox Christianity had many combatants who saw skilled answers to deists as the key to their advancement within the Anglican Church.¹⁸⁴ And, that sheer numbers simply overwhelmed deists who were drowned in a sea of pro-Anglican pamphlets and books. However, one contemporary observer saw things differently and suggested that the reason deism faded from the radars of Churchmen was that another problem had challenged the English Church. In a poetic assessment, John Potter (fl. 1742-1753), author of an anti-deist book, cited the rise of Methodism as the cause of deism’s demise.

The Deists and the Christians / on Many knotty Questions / With Learned
Altercations / Have long amused the Nation / And to give out we are loath /
The Deists say the Bible / Is most absurd and Idle / Tis full of Contradiction
/ And therefore but a fiction / And not a Rule of Truth. / The Christians say
the Meaning Wants nothing but Explaining To make it all agree Sir / In
perfect Harmony Sir / But How could ne’r be shown: / Now whilst this War
was Waging / The Methodists came raging....¹⁸⁵

Though this is not the place to consider this claim at any length, it is worth noting that one apparent religious threat replaced another and that theological concerns and sensibilities continued to play a role in the intellectual scene of the day.¹⁸⁶

Some general conclusions are now apparent regarding deists’ conception of God and politics. Firstly, deists clearly believed in a supreme deity or God who created the universe and enacted certain relationships between Himself and humanity.¹⁸⁷ People could know, with certainty, what God required of them because He ensured that important knowledge was within the capacity of all people to know it. Secondly, deists did not deny miracles or divine providence. They did, however, reject that miracles would be contrary to reason. Only Morgan seems to have denied the possibility of God acting in the Creation in a manner outside of its regular operation. Thirdly, deists did not accept that God stepped away from the Creation. Rather, His continuing predictable action in the world conformed to

eternal truths, which deists knew by their reason and the order of things.¹⁸⁸ These consistencies existed in both the natural philosophical and political realms.

It is true that many of those who challenged deists and their conception of God were Nonjurors and High-Church Tories, thus suggesting an element of political opposition to their refutations. Perhaps we should not make too much of this. Dissenters, and certainly Whigs, who would not have sided politically with Nonjurors, also challenged the conception of God advanced by deists. What is more, orthodox theologians, known Socinians, and suspected Arians all composed refutations of deists. Newtonians Clarke and Whiston certainly wrote against particular deists. But, it is also clear that Chubb and Morgan believed Clarke's tracts and Newton's posthumous works might support their positions. It is worth considering that because deists attracted rebuttals from across the political and religious spectrum, scholars ought to be careful in assigning categories of pro- and anti-deist based solely on these allegiances. Despite the variety of their politics, timing of their writings, and specific targets, most critics were united in a view of God. Their God was all-powerful, unrestrained by His laws, and entirely mysterious. Expounded upon by the pens of the High-Churchmen and Nonjurors, this view of God was translated into a conception of divine-right monarchs demanding passive obedience, who were not bound by the very inherent laws of nations that the deists claimed ought to guide governments.

Conversely, our deists argued for an accountable government which ruled by contractual consent given by those who were ruled. Just as God must always act in accordance with the laws of nature, so too must the monarch rule within the boundaries of national law. The same God who acted only for the benefit of humanity and not Himself provided, deists argued, the correct model of government, which must place the well-being of citizens before its own designs on maintaining power. Deists were not alone in their views. As our analysis of contemporary newspapers and periodicals has demonstrated, deist-like views were also on the agendas of other politically minded Britons. Rather than viewing deists as a group who wished to destroy the present system of government, it is more accurate to see them, especially in the case of Toland, Tindal, and Collins, as desiring a place

within a system that needed some modification but certainly not wholesale destruction.

Notes

¹ J. H. Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole: The Making of a Statesman* (London: The Cresset Press, 1956), 278-281; 293-328; Jeremy Black, *Robert Walpole and the Nature of Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain, British History in Perspective* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 12-13. See also John F. Naylor, ed., *The British Aristocracy and the Peerage Bill of 1719* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

² BL Add. 61650 f. 64. Mathew Tindal to Lord Sunderland, 1 April 1720.

³ PRO SP 35/23 f. 55a. Tindal to ?, 22 September 1720.

⁴ BL Add. 4465 f. 20. Martin Eagle to Toland, 20 June 1720. The author, Martin Eagle, was impressed with Toland's *Nazarenus*, a work suggesting that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were originally the same religion. See John Toland, *Nazarenus*, ed. Justin Champion (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1999). A recent study is Jeffrey Harrison, "Nazarene Christianity: John Toland on the Early Church" (master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach, 2001), ch. 4-6.

⁵ BL Add. 4465 ff. 21r-22r. Toland to Molesworth, 25 June 1720.

⁶ R. B. Walker, "The Newspaper Press in the Reign of William III," *The Historical Journal* 17 (1974): 699.

⁷ BL Add. 4295 f. 36. dated 21 September 1720.

⁸ BL Add. 4295 f. 39r-v. Toland ['Philagathus'] to Barnham Goode, 30 October 1720.

⁹ BL Add. 4465 f. 23r. Toland to Molesworth, January 1720/21. This is a much corrected and revised draft, which indicates that Toland was unsure of what to tell Molesworth.

¹⁰ BL Add. 4465 f. 23r.

¹¹ John Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble*, rev. ed. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2001), 213-4, 216. A slightly different version of Toland's South Sea Company history is found in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr John Toland*, 1: 404-47. This was not Toland's first foray into public finance. He had also sent Molesworth a manuscript proposal for "The Scheme, or Practical Model of a National Bank." See BL Add. 4465 ff. 39r-41v. While this version indicates that Toland himself was the author, the published version found in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr John Toland*, 1: 448-74 suggests that he merely copied it from the work of another.

¹² BL Add. 4465 f. 48r. The full account is found in ff. 48r-50v.

¹³ BL Add. 4465 ff. 49v-50r.

¹⁴ John Andrew Kavcic, "English Deism and Natural Law: The Case of Matthew Tindal" (master's thesis, University of Victoria, 1997), 41-2. However, we must treat Kavcic's claims of Tindal's support for Walpole with some caution. He seems to have been unaware of the letters to Sunderland, which are suggestive of Tindal's loyalty to Sunderland and his Whig faction, at least until 1722.

¹⁵ BL Add. 61650 f. 87. Tindal to Sunderland, 2 August 1721.

¹⁶ J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 350-351.

¹⁷ Bod. Ballard MS 3 ff. 83r. 84r. Wake to Charlett, 4 February 1719/20; 9 February 1719/20.

¹⁸ *Independent Whig*, 20 January 1720.

¹⁹ *Independent Whig*, 27 January 1720; 10 February 1720; 17 February 1720; 25 May 1720; 4 January 1720/1.

²⁰ David Berman, "Anthony Collins' Essays in the *Independent Whig*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 13 (1975): 463-69.

²¹ See John Nichols, ed., *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 9 vols. (London, 1812), 1: 709; cf. S. J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and Religion: The Myths of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 93-4, 125 n.9.

²² BL Add. 4465 f. 27r. Molesworth to Toland, 1 March 1721/2.

- ²³ BL Add. 4465 f. 29r. Toland to Molesworth, 2 March 1721/2.
- ²⁴ William Mears, *An Historical Account of the Life of Mr. John Toland in The Theological and Philological Works of the Late Mr. John Toland*, ed. William Mears (London, 1732), 2.
- ²⁵ Mears, *An Historical Account of the Life of Mr. John Toland*, 19, 51.
- ²⁶ To Mr. *****, 15 March 1721-22 in *The Theological and Philological Works of the Late Mr. John Toland*, 91-2.
- ²⁷ BL Add. 4282 f. 190.
- ²⁸ BL Add. 4282 f. 118.
- ²⁹ The work was also reprinted with an alternative title and with Desmaizeaux named as editor in 1747. *The Miscellaneous Works of Mr. John Toland, Now First Published from his Original Manuscripts*, ed. P. Desmaizeaux 2 vols. (London, 1747).
- ³⁰ Dr. William Stratford to Edward Harley, the 2nd Earl of Oxford, 14 July 1726 in *Report on the Manuscripts of his Grace The Duke of Portland*, 7: 441.
- ³¹ *The Present State of the Republick of Letters*, vol. 1, February 1728, 217, 218, 237.
- ³² Bod. MS Eng. th. c. 28 ff. 17, 109r, 139; MS Eng. c. 27 ff. 59, 87-90.
- ³³ On Collins' dispute with Whiston see Stephen Snobelen, "The Argument over Prophecy: An Eighteenth-Century Debate between William Whiston and Anthony Collins," *Lumen* 15 (1996): 195-213; James E. Force, *William Whiston: Honest Newtonian* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1985), 63-89.
- ³⁴ KSRL MS G23:11 f. 36v. John Trenchard to William Simpson, 19 November 1723. A draft is found at ff. 36r-v.
- ³⁵ Anthony Collins, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* (London, 1724), 27-28. In his two-volume critique of deism, Philip Skelton admonished Collins on this point. Skelton believed that Collins, who called himself a Christian ought to know that Christianity is, in the first place, founded on miracles and not prophecy. See his *Ophiomaches: or, Deism Revealed*, 2 vols. (London, 1749), 2: 342. The following year one "T. D." wrote to the *Gentleman's Magazine* with a similar complaint. He argued that Collins "should have undertaken to prove the preference of prophecy to miracles in point of evidence." And, "the apostles had personal knowledge and experience, both of the exact completion of the prophecies in Lord's actings, and of his power of working miracles; and consequently they had a double evidence of our Lord's divine mission...." *Gentleman's Magazine* 20 (February, 1750): 70-71.
- ³⁶ Snobelen, "Argument over Prophecy," 201-202; Force, *William Whiston*, 84.
- ³⁷ Collins, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons*, 39-40.
- ³⁸ Collins, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons*, 84, 90.
- ³⁹ Eamon Duffy, "'Whiston's Affair': The Trials of a Primitive Christian 1709-1714," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27 (1976): 129-50. On Whiston's post-Cambridge career see Stephen D. Snobelen, "William Whiston: Natural Philosopher, Prophet, Primitive Christian" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2000), passim; see also Stephen Snobelen and Larry Stewart, "Making Newton Easy: William Whiston in Cambridge and London," in *From Newton to Hawking: A History of Cambridge University's Lucasian Professors of Mathematics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 135-170.
- ⁴⁰ Snobelen, "Argument over Prophecy," 197-198, 200; Force, *William Whiston*, 79.
- ⁴¹ Yahuda MS Variant 1, Newton MS 1, f. 4. Newton's manuscripts are taken from the microfilm collection issued by Chadwyck-Healey (Cambridge, 1991).
- ⁴² Yahuda MS Variant 1, Newton MS 1, ff. 13, 14.
- ⁴³ John Harrison, *The Library of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 134 (item # 527). Unlike Boyle, Newton did not publish assessments of the day's issues in religion. Newton was much more guarded in his theological writings, keeping them very much close at hand. The only fragment that may be interpreted as a comment on contemporary heresies, perhaps even deism, is found in King's College Library, Cambridge, Keynes MS. 7 f. 1r, which can be dated to circa 1710. In this work, titled "Atheisme" Newton

outlines a brief argument from design to refute those who claimed the world arose due to chance. Contrary to Newton, Samuel Clarke's library contained several books by deists. See Stephen Snobelen, "The Library of Samuel Clarke," *Enlightenment and Dissent* 16 (1997): 185-97.

⁴⁴ William Whiston, *A New Theory of the Earth* (London, 1696), 95.

⁴⁵ This was likely one of the reasons that Trenchard found Collins' work intriguing. The *Independent Whig* for 16 March 1720 had offered a similar conclusion: "I think it is generally granted that Revelations are no more, and that Prophecy hath ceased. The Reason given for this, I take to be a very good one; namely, that God has already sufficiently discovered his Mind to Men, and made his Meaning manifest."

⁴⁶ Anthony Collins, *The Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*, 2 vols. (London, 1726), 2: 262; also 261.

⁴⁷ Collins, *Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons*, 120.

⁴⁸ William Whiston, *The Accomplishment of Scriptural Prophecies* (1707) in Gilbert Burnet, *A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion: Being an Abridgment of the Sermons Preached at the Lectures founded by the Honble Robert Boyle, Esq.*, 4 vols. (1737; facsimile reprint, Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2000), 2: 233.

⁴⁹ Yahuda MS Variant 1, Newton MSS 26.2 f. 38; 15.3 f. 57r. On Newton's belief in the corruption of the original church see Matt Goldish, "Newton's 'Of the Church': Its Contents and Implications," in *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature, and Influence*, ed. Richard H. Popkin and James E. Force (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999).

⁵⁰ Collins, *Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons*, 103, 225.

⁵¹ Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11-13.

⁵² Flyleaf on John Dunton, *The New Practice of Piety: Writ in imitation of Dr. Browne's Religio Medici*, 3rd ed. (London, 1705). Copy contained in the ESTC Microfilm Collection, reel # 4175.

⁵³ John Maxwell, *Concerning the City, or Kingdom of God in the Rational World, and the Defects in Heathen Deism*, in Cumberland, *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature* (London, 1727), ii, iv.

⁵⁴ John Valdimir Price, "Introduction," in Samuel Chandler, *Reflections on the Conduct of the Modern Deists, In their late Writings against Christianity* (1727; facsimile reprint, London: Thoemmes Press, 1995), v-vi. For the text of the preface see Nicholas Billingsley, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Ordination of Mr. Thomas Morgan* (London, 1717), iii-x. Ironically, Morgan who would declare himself an Arian of sorts in 1719 claimed in his "Questions and Confession of Faith" that he would advance "the Honour and Interest of Christ [in] the World."

⁵⁵ Chandler, *Conduct of the Modern Deists*, 3.

⁵⁶ Chandler, *Conduct of the Modern Deists*, 9, 20.

⁵⁷ Thomas Chubb, *Some Short Reflections on the Ground and Extent of Authority and Liberty, with Respect to Civil Government* (London, 1728), 3, 6.

⁵⁸ Chubb, *Some Short Reflections on the Ground and Extent of Authority*, 9, 10 (quote on 12).

⁵⁹ Chubb, *Some Short Reflections on the Ground and Extent of Authority*, 24-5, 38.

⁶⁰ Thomas Chubb, *An Enquiry Concerning the Grounds and Reasons, or What those principles are, on which two of our anniversaries solemnities are founded: Viz. That on the 30th of January, being the day of martyrdom of King Charles ... and that on the 5th of November, being the day of our deliverance from Popery....* (London, 1732), 8.

⁶¹ Chubb, *two of our anniversaries*, 11, 12.

⁶² Chubb, *two of our anniversaries*, 13, 14-5, 29.

⁶³ Thomas Chubb, *The True Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted* (London, 1738), 212-3.

⁶⁴ Bod. MS Eng. d. 2405 ff. 42-3, 45, 48. underlining in original.

⁶⁵ Anthony Collins, *A Discourse Concerning Ridicule and Irony in Writing* (London, 1729), 3-5, 7, 12.

⁶⁶ Collins, *A Discourse Concerning Ridicule*, 43-4.

⁶⁷ See BL Add 4283 ff. 198, 200, 201r, 243r.

⁶⁸ BL Add. 4282 f. 243v.

⁶⁹ BL Stowe MS 750 f. 441.

⁷⁰ *The Universal Spectator*, 22 August 1730.

⁷¹ Overlooking a person's theology so long as they maintained a sociable manner to their country neighbours confirms the conclusion found in Donald A. Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger: Parsons and Parishioners, 1660-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). On gentlemen see Paul Langford, "Manners and the Eighteenth-Century State: The Case of the Unsociable Englishman," in *Rethinking Leviathan: The Eighteenth-Century State in Britain and Germany*, ed. John Brewer and Eckhart Hellmuth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 295.

⁷² BL Add. 4282 f. 240.

⁷³ This conclusion is based on consultation with David Berman by email on 15 December 2002.

⁷⁴ BL Add. 4282 f. 245r.

⁷⁵ BL Add. 4282 ff. 245v-246r.

⁷⁶ BL Add. 4282 f. 252.

⁷⁷ BL Add. 4282 f. 247r. We know that this request troubled Desmaizeaux, because there exists at least three drafts of this letter, each with slightly different phrases as he searched for the right words. See BL Add. 4282 ff. 248r-251v.

⁷⁸ BL Add. 4282 ff. 254r-v.

⁷⁹ BL Add. 4283 ff. 256v-257v. The manuscripts were actually in the possession of Collins' neighbour in Essex, William H. Thomlinson. Elizabeth Collins gave them to him through her will, but have since been lost. See James O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins: The Man and His Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 173, 230-231.

⁸⁰ Mathew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730; facsimile reprint, London: Thoemmes Press, 1995), 1. Italics in original; John Byrne, *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion: The Legacy of Deism* (London: Routledge, 1989), 59, 78.

⁸¹ Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 12. This supposition drew several refutations from orthodox writers like John Leland who argued that "if there be a God that governs the World ... then there are Duties we properly owe him, and to transgress the Laws he has given, is truly and properly to sin against God..." See his *An Answer to a Late Book Intituled, Christianity as old as the Creation*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1733), 270 and 331-332.

⁸² DNB 3: 62; Simon Browne, *A Defence of the Religion of Nature and the Christian Revelation; Against the Defective Account of the one, and the Exceptions against the other in a Book, entitled, Christianity as Old as the Creation* (London, 1732), 14.

⁸³ Tindal, *A Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church*. In Two Parts, 10-11, 21, 29, 72; Tindal, *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted*, 23, 91, 221.

⁸⁴ Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 171-172.

⁸⁵ Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 172. Gerald R. McDermott, *Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17, 24-25; Paul C. Davies, "The Debate on Eternal Punishment in Late Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century English Literature," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 4 (1971): 269.

⁸⁶ Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation* (London, 1706), 34, 37. James E. Force, "Samuel Clarke's Four Categories of Deism, Isaac Newton, and the Bible," in *Scepticism in the History of Philosophy*, ed. Richard H. Popkin (Leiden: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), 53-74.

⁸⁷ Clarke, *Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion*, 301.

⁸⁸ Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God: More Particularly in Answer to Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, and Their Followers* (London, 1705), 126-127.

⁸⁹ William Whiston, *Astronomical Principles of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (London, 1717), 114.

⁹⁰ This was Newton's hope. See Henry Guerlac and M. C. Jacob, "Bentley, Newton and Providence (the Boyle Lectures Once More)," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 30 (1969): 307-18.

⁹¹ Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 363.

⁹² James Foster, *The Usefulness, Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Revelation Defended Against the Objections Contain'd in a Late Book Entitled, Christianity as Old as Creation*, 2nd ed. (London, 1731), 75; see also page 82.

⁹³ Foster, *The Usefulness, Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Revelation*, 82. Foster believed that most heresy was the result of innocent errors in judgement regarding religion. Thus, he did not concur with others who advocated prosecution for heretics who might better be dealt with through corrective education. See the account of his views in *Gentleman's Magazine* (June 1735), 290-1

⁹⁴ Bod. Rawl. 4_92 Daniel Waterland's copy of *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 191, passim.

⁹⁵ Foster had sided with the Arian advocates during the Salter's Hall conference. See DNB vol. 7: 494.

⁹⁶ LPL MS 1741 f. 78r. Waterland to Gibson, 29 December 1730.

⁹⁷ Tindal, *A Letter to the Reverend the Clergy*, 3.

⁹⁸ Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 166. On Tindal and natural law see Kavcic, "English Deism and Natural Law," 80 ff.

⁹⁹ LPL MS 1741 f. 72v. Waterland to Gibson, 10 January 1730/1.

¹⁰⁰ Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 163. On credibility of human testimony see Champion, *Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, 42-4. These themes were common ones in the deist controversy. Preserved at the Bodleian (Rawlinson MS B 211 ff. 333r-340v) is an anonymous unpublished manuscript composed in 1720 which asserted the truth of revealed Christianity and made special mention of historic revelation. In response to anticipated propositions the author issued alternative conclusions designed to remove the certainty which deists claimed for their position. First, the distance between the original act and the recording of it actually "oblige us to believe the truth of" it. If this were not the case then deists must also concede that no merit existed in the ancient histories told by Livy or Tacitus. Since deists refuse to abandon the classical examples in their writings, they must too accept biblical histories. Regarding the supposed inevitable falsehoods contained in a history written so long after the fact, the author replied "it is universally agreed among Men that human Testimony is a Sufficient ground for assent where there is no possible ground for suspicion because deceiving and being deceived is not in the common interest of Mankind...." Because the disciples desired only to spread the word of Christ and held no other ulterior motive, we ought to accept their accounts as true. Moreover, there were only twelve disciples and if they had been engaged in false history what are twelve against the rest of the witnesses to Christ who would surely have composed alternative histories if the Gospels were fabrications. As a final argument on this subject, the author invoked contemporary legal precedent. "The Apostles are to be believed because they provide facts of things they had seen. And, as all Civil Law relays, greater weight is given to eye witnesses." In the matter of the clarity of revelation, the author advised deists that "there is nothing in the Christian Religion unbecoming the Majestic and holyness or Truth of a Divine Revelation."

¹⁰¹ Johanne Craig, *Theologiae Christianae Principia Mathematica* (Lodini, 1699). There is an English translation of the work, as *Craig's Rules of Historical Evidence*, in *History and Theory* Beiheft 4 (1964).

- ¹⁰² Craig, *Theologiae Christianae*, 23-24; *Craig's Rules of Historical Evidence*, 27.
- ¹⁰³ BL Sloane MS 4037 f. 346r. Edmund Gibson to Hans Sloane, 24 October 1699; "A Calculation of the Credibility of Human Testimony," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, October 1699, 359-65. It is unlikely that Craig would have approved of Tindal's use of his work. In 1727 Craig wrote to John Conduitt stating with approval Newton's subordinating philosophy and mathematics to religion. See BL Add. 4007 ff. 686-7.
- ¹⁰⁴ Francis Atterbury to Trelawny, 11 March 1701, quoted in Champion, *Pillars of Priestcraft*, 43n.64.
- ¹⁰⁵ DNB 3: 519; Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (London, 1731), 248-49; Charles Leslie, *A Short and Easy Method with the Deists* Second Edition (London, 1709), 25.
- ¹⁰⁶ Bod. MS Eng. th. C. 46 f. 88r. The page containing the heading "Deism" is blank see f. 85v. Henry Broxap, *The Later Non-Jurors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 309.
- ¹⁰⁷ Browne, *A Defence of the Religion of Nature and the Christian Revelation*, 26, 29, 30.
- ¹⁰⁸ Leland, *An Answer to a Late Book Intituled, Christianity as old as the Creation*, 93-94.
- ¹⁰⁹ Law, *The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, Fairly and Fully Stated*, 65.
- ¹¹⁰ Foster, *The Usefulness, Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Revelation*, 298.
- ¹¹¹ Thomas Chubb, "The Author's Farewel to His Readers," in *The Posthumous Works of Mr. Thomas Chubb*, 2 vols. (London, 1748), 1: 132.
- ¹¹² George Wightwick, *Remarks on Mr. Thomas Chubb's True Gospel of Jesus Christ asserted and vindicated* (London, 1740), 70.
- ¹¹³ Wightwick, *Remarks on Mr. Thomas Chubb's True Gospel*, 103. Wightwick continued to be dismayed by the direction England seemed to be taking, which was only exemplified by thinkers like Chubb. On 25 November 1741 he preached a sermon which encouraged a "National Repentance" as the only "way to prevent the ruin of a sinful people." Similarly, John Phelps, who is known solely from his answer to Chubb, advised his opponent that if Chubb was going to make such statements regarding religion, "he should have borrowed the Title of CHRISTIANITY AS OLD AS THE CREATION" for his book and admit that he and Tindal were heretical brethren. John Phelps, *A Vindication of Revealed Religion, in answer to a late book of Mr. Chubb's entituled, An enquiry into the ground and foundation of religion* (London, 1740), 7; *Bibliotheca Britannica*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1824), 2: 753C.
- ¹¹⁴ Thomas Chubb, *Human Nature Vindicated: or, a Reply to Me. Beaven's book entituled, Supernatural Influences Necessary to Salvation* (London, 1726), 21.
- ¹¹⁵ Thomas Chubb, *A Discourse Concerning Reason, With Regard to Religion and Divine Revelation* (London, 1731), 5.
- ¹¹⁶ "A Letter to Mr. Chubb, on his last Performance," *Fog's Weekly Journal*, 9 January 1731.
- ¹¹⁷ *The Present State of the Republick of Letters*, vol. IX, January 1732, 295, 307. The successor to the *Republick of Letters*, *The History of the Works of the Learned* also contained comments upon Chubb's work. This anonymous reviewer described Chubb's literary style as full of "Repetitions and Tautologies" and that he had noticed "that disagreeable Multiplicity he ever employs in expressing the plainest Things. One would think he writ only for the dullest Apprehensions." See *The History of the Works of the Learned*, vol. XI, January 1742, 344n, 367.
- ¹¹⁸ BL Egerton MS 2618 f. 229.
- ¹¹⁹ A S. Cod. Appeals and Visitors' Injunctions vol. 1 ff. 81, 82, 84; vol. 2 item 235; Warden's MS 7 (no folios), entry for 29 June 1709. Ch Ch L William Wake Correspondence vol. 15 ff. 78r., 84. Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, 4 vols. (London: Parker and Co., 1892), 1: 410.

¹²⁰ *The Grub Street Journal*, 18 October 1733. The events were also outlined in various issues of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

¹²¹ *The Grub Street Journal*, 22 November 1733.

¹²² David Berman and Stephen Lalor, "The Suppression of Christianity as Old as the Creation Vol. II," *Notes and Queries* 229 (1984): 5; "Stray Notes on Edmund Curll, His Life, and Publication. No. 10—*Curll, Budgell, and Pope*" *Notes and Queries* Second Series 5 (1858): 489.

¹²³ "Stray Notes on Edmund Curll, His Life, and Publication," 490. This section of the will was also reprint in the *Grub Street Journal*, 6 December 1733.

¹²⁴ Matthew Tindal, *Introduction. The Reason Why This Second Volume of Christianity as Old as the Creation, has not Appeared Sooner* (London [published?], 1732?). [Bod. Rawl. 4^o 92.] Tindal attributed the delay to his old age (he was about 80 here) which prevented him from thinking for too long on any subject. The book was also to be a platform from which Tindal would respond the critics of *Christianity as Old as the Creation*.

¹²⁵ Berman and Lalor, "Suppression of Christianity as Old as the Creation Vol. II," 3-5. There is no mention of the rumours regarding Collins' manuscripts in the article.

¹²⁶ *The Grub Street Journal*, 6 December 1733. The claim that Gibson destroyed Tindal's manuscript is found in E. Royston Pike, *Slayers of Superstition: A Popular Account of Some of the Leading Personalities of the Deist Movement* (London: Watts & Co., 1931), 48.

¹²⁷ *The Grub Street Journal*, 17 January 1733/4.

¹²⁸ *The Grub Street Journal*, 7 March 1734, 30 March 1734; "Stray Notes on Edmund Curll, His Life, and Publication," 489. These events were also described in two brief pamphlets one written by Nicholas Tindal and the other by Eustace Budgell. Nicholas Tindal[?], *A Copy of the Will of Dr Matthew Tindal, with An Account of What pass'd Concerning the Same, between Mrs Lucy Price, Eustace Budgell Esq; and Mr. Nicholas Tindal* (London, 1733); Eustace Budgell, *A Vindication of Eustace Budgell, Esq; from some Aspersions thrown Upon him in a late Pamphlet* (London, 1733). J. H. Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole: The King's Minister* (London: The Cresset Press, 1960), 233-283.

¹²⁹ *The Grub Street Journal*, 25 September 1735.

¹³⁰ That same year Gibson noted that England's Dissenters would never be satisfied with their status until the Church of England accepted them as full communicants. Gibson lamented that these religious deviants were not satisfied with what he viewed as their more than generous treatment. See Bod. MS Eng. d. 2405 ff. 58v-59r, 118r. Gibson was also a role model for those who challenged deists. In 1734 an anonymous account of the deist controversy consisting of a brief historical assessment of the major works was dedicated to him. The book revisited all the familiar themes of God's providence, revelation, relevance of human testimony, and the limits of human reason. See Anonymous, *The Deist Confuted. Wherein His Principle Objections, against Revealed Religion, especially against Christianity, are briefly stated and answered. Being An abridgement of the whole Controversy* (London, 1734).

¹³¹ Chubb, *A Discourse Concerning Reason*, 24; T. L. Bushell, *The Sage of Salisbury: Thomas Chubb (1679-1747)* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1967), 24, 31, 70, 90, 96.

¹³² DNB 7: 273; Caleb Fleming, *Animadversions upon Mr. Chubbs' discourse on miracles* (London, 1741), 57.

¹³³ Thomas Chubb, *The True Gospel of Jesus Christ Vindicated* (London, 1739), 50; Thomas Chubb, *The True Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted* (London, 1738), 197-198, 204.

¹³⁴ Thomas Chubb, *A Discourse on Miracles, Considered as Evidence to prove the Divine Original of a Revelation* (London, 1741), 38; Chubb, *Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted*, 197, 198; Chubb, *Gospel of Jesus Christ Vindicated*, 50.

¹³⁵ Chubb, *Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted*, 210; Billington, *Religion without God*, 18-19.

¹³⁶ DNB 10: 936; Thomas Johnson, *An Essay on Moral Obligation: with a View Towards Settling the Controversy, Concerning Moral and Positive Duties* (London, 1731), 14.

¹³⁷ Chubb, *Discourse on Miracles*, vi.

¹³⁸ Bowdoin had requested this information in a letter which is now lost. T. L. Bushell, *The Sage of Salisbury: Thomas Chubb (1679-1747)* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1967), 16. Bushell included only one line from this letter in his biography. Irreligion in Boston continued to be problematic. Timothy Cutler wrote to Dr. Z. Grey from Boston on 5 June 1735 complaining that “Infidelity prevails also among us. Chubb’s ... Works, &c. do much mischief among us.” See John Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, 8 vols. (London, 1817), 4: 298.

¹³⁹ Thomas Chubb to William Bowdoin, 28 March 1745. Attached to front leaf of *A Collection of Tracts on Various Subjects Written by Thomas Chubb* (London, 1730). Massachusetts Historical Society. I am grateful to Kimberly Nusco for a copy of this manuscript. Though Bushell notes that Newton affected Chubb’s philosophy, it seems clear from this letter that Chubb was also familiar with Whiston’s work.

¹⁴⁰ Chubb, *Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted*, 208, 211-212; Chubb, *A Discourse on Miracles*, 2.

¹⁴¹ Andrea Alice Rusnock, “The Quantification of Things Human: Medicine and Political Arithmetic in Enlightenment England and France” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton, 1990), 41, 63, 77, 83. An example of Jurin’s advertisement for reports is found in James Jurin, *An Account of the Success of Inoculating the Small Pox in Great Britain, for the Year 1724* (London, 1725), 31v. “All Persons concern’d in the Practice of inoculating the Small Pox, are desired to keep a Registry of the Names and Ages of every Person inoculated ... They are intreated to send these Accounts, or an Extract from them ... to Dr. Jurin Secretary to the Royal Society, some Time in January....”

¹⁴² Edmund Massey, *A Sermon Against the Dangerous and Sinful Practice of Inoculation* (London, 1722), 29.

¹⁴³ RS Early Letters and Papers, Vol. 23(1) f. 36. Thomas Chubb to Royal Society [James Jurin], 10 August 1723.

¹⁴⁴ BL Add. 4292, f. 265b. Thomas Chubb to John Clayton, 1720.

¹⁴⁵ Andrea Rusnock, “Correspondence Networks and the Royal Society, 1700-1750,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 32 (1999): 160, 156. James Jurin to Oliver St. John, 14 March 1724 in *The Correspondence of James Jurin (1684-1750) Physician and Secretary to the Royal Society*, ed. Andrea Rusnock (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 236.

¹⁴⁶ Chubb, *Discourse on Miracles*, 13.

¹⁴⁷ Chubb, *Discourse on Miracles*, 37, 39 52, 63.

¹⁴⁸ Chubb, *Discourse on Miracles*, 14-16, quote on 16.

¹⁴⁹ Fleming, *Animadversions upon Mr. Chubb’s discourse*, 21, see also 17-18.

¹⁵⁰ Chubb, *The Posthumous Works*, 2: M3: 150.

¹⁵¹ Chubb, *The Posthumous Works*, 2: M3: 149.

¹⁵² Chubb, *The Posthumous Works*, 99.

¹⁵³ Thomas Morgan, *A Collection of Tracts, Relating to the Right of Private Judgement ... Occasion’d by the Late Trinitarian Controversy* (London, 1726), 432.

¹⁵⁴ Billingsley, *A Sermon Preach’d at the Ordination of Mr. Thomas Morgan*, 55. Morgan also spoke with admiration of the “Chymistry of Nature,” and the “divine Geometry” of God when he described the “Fabrick of the universal Nature as one vast, if not infinite Machine, consisting of an infinite Number of lessor Machines....”

¹⁵⁵ Philip Doddridge to Samuel Clark, 12 June 1737, in Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge DD (1702-1751)*, *Historical Manuscripts Commission* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1979), 84. Samuel Clark (1684-1750), not to be confused with Samuel Clarke, was a minister at St. Albans.

¹⁵⁶ Doddridge to Samuel Clark, early December 1738, in *Correspondence of Philip Doddridge*, 100.

- ¹⁵⁷ John Leland, *The Divine Authority of the Old and New Testament asserted ... Being a Defence of the First Volume of this Work, against the Exceptions and Misrepresentation in the Second Volume of The Moral Philosopher*. Volume the Second (London, 1740), 277, 366.
- ¹⁵⁸ *The Grub Street Journal*, 6 October 1737.
- ¹⁵⁹ *The History of the Works of the Learned*, vol. 3, January 1738, 134-5.
- ¹⁶⁰ Thomas Morgan, *Physico-theology: or, a Philosophico-moral Disquisition Concerning Human Nature, Free Agency, Moral Government, and Divine Providence* (London, 1741), 77. Morgan's uncertainty about revelation is in *Moral Philosopher*, 3: 146.
- ¹⁶¹ Morgan, *Physico-theology*, 315.
- ¹⁶² Morgan, *Moral Philosopher*, 1: 186, 188.
- ¹⁶³ Morgan, *Moral Philosopher*, 3: 137.
- ¹⁶⁴ Clarke, *Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion*, 62; Clarke, *Being and Attributes of God*, 126-127; Pfizenmaier, *Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke*, 62-63.
- ¹⁶⁵ Morgan, *The Nature and Consequences of Enthusiasm Consider'd*, 17-18.
- ¹⁶⁶ Thomas Morgan, *A Collection of Tracts, Relating to the Right of Private Judgement ... Occasion'd by the Late Trinitarian Controversy* (London, 1726), xiv; Morgan, *Physico-theology*, 315.
- ¹⁶⁷ John Chapman, *Eusebius: or the True Christian's Defence Against a Late Book Entitul'd The Moral Philosopher* (London, 1739), 105-6. Chapman cites Clarke again on page 74.
- ¹⁶⁸ John Leng, *Natural Obligations to Believe the Principles of Religion, and Divine Revelation* (1717, 1718) in *A Defence of Natural and Revealed Religion: Being an Abridgment of the Sermons Preached at the Lectures founded by the Honble Robert Boyle, Esq.* ed. Gilbert Burnet, 4 vols. (1737; facsimile reprint, Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2000), 3: 171.
- ¹⁶⁹ Morgan, *Moral Philosopher*, 1: 364.
- ¹⁷⁰ BL. Add. 5831 f. 172r. Daniel Waterland to Dr. Grey, late 1735. Brian Young includes a transcription of this letter in his book, but he omits the underlines which I have included to preserve the original emphasis. See Young, *Religion and the Enlightenment*, 37.
- ¹⁷¹ Review of Zachary Grey, *An Examination of the fourteenth Chapter of Sir Isaac Newton's Observation upon the Prophecies* (London, 1736) in *The Literary Magazine* vol. 2, 1736, 161; Manuel, *Newton: Historian*, 179.
- ¹⁷² John Chapman, *Eusebius: or the True Christian's Defence Against a Late Book Entitul'd The Moral Philosopher* (London, 1739), 40-1.
- ¹⁷³ Robert Boyle, *A Discourse of Things Above Reason* (London, 1681), 75; Chapman, *Eusebius*, 182.
- ¹⁷⁴ This is suggested but with a slightly different emphasis in Roger L. Emerson, "English Deism, 1670-1755" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1963), 19.
- ¹⁷⁵ Thomas Morgan, *Physico-Theology: or, A Philosophico-Moral Disquisition Concerning Human Nature, Free Agency, Moral Government, and Divine Providence* (London 1741), 160, 162.
- ¹⁷⁶ Morgan, *Physico-Theology*, 185-6, 210, 213.
- ¹⁷⁷ Morgan, *Physico-Theology*, 220-1.
- ¹⁷⁸ Morgan, *Physico-Theology*, 228-30; This claim had been rehearsed the previous year in the third volume of the *Moral Philosopher* (1740). See Thomas Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher* 3 vols. (London, 1737-40), 3: 120-1.
- ¹⁷⁹ Morgan, *Physico-Theology*, 236, 237.
- ¹⁸⁰ Morgan, *Physico-Theology*, 238, 283.
- ¹⁸¹ Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, 53-7.
- ¹⁸² Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France: A Critical Edition*, ed. J. C. D. Clark (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 253.
- ¹⁸³ Peter N. Miller, *Defining the Common Good: Empire, Religion and Philosopher in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁸⁴ James E. Herrick, *The Radical Rhetoric of the English Deists: The Discourse of Skepticism, 1680-1750* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 211-212.

¹⁸⁵ BL Add. 34744 f. 126. *The Modern Disputes* by John Potter. See also John Potter, *The Authority of the Old and New Testaments Consider'd, Christianity Clear'd of the errors of Modern Systems, and defended against the Deists* (London, 1742).

¹⁸⁶ This possibility is also suggested in Roland N. Stromberg, *Religious Liberalism in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), 163. Stromberg notes that deism's failure was Methodism's gain. On Methodism see John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁸⁷ In an article published after much of this was already written, Robin Attfield concurs with this assertion. See his "Rousseau, Clarke, Butler and Critiques of Deism," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 12 (2004): 430, 442-443.

¹⁸⁸ In more philosophical terms deists emphasised *potentia dei ordinata* rather than *potentia dei absoluta* or God's intellect over his will. God may indeed will anything, but His intellect ensures that the original conditions of Creation remain unbroken. On these themes see Francis Oakley, "The Absolute and Ordained Power of God in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Theology," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998): 437-61; idem, "The Absolute and Ordained Power of God and King in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Philosophy, Science, Politics, and Law," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998): 669-90; Margaret J. Osler, *Divine Will and the Mechanical Philosophy: Gassendi and Descartes on Contingency and Necessity in the Created World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Chapter Six:

Deists on Matter, Motion, and Newtonian Public Science: Early Excursions

The Dangers of Newtonian Philosophy

“The manner, in which Sir Isaac Newton has published his philosophical discoveries, occasions them to lie very much concealed from all, who have not made the mathematics particularly their study.”¹ Thus, Henry Pemberton (1694-1771), editor to the third edition of the *Principia* (1726), concluded regarding the contents of a book he knew better than perhaps only a handful of other readers. Newton’s refusal to explain the *Principia*, and in later years the *Opticks*, to a public eager for his natural philosophy created an opportunity for others to fill this void. Public science was born as a response to this market demand. Indeed, it was through the products of public science, coffeehouse lectures, church sermons, and popularised (rather than specialised) books that most interested people came to know Newton.²

There was more at stake, however, than the production of accurate, yet commercially viable, accounts of Newton’s esoteric mathematics. Newton himself explained the issue in a letter to Richard Bentley during their famed correspondence: “Gravity must be caused by an agent acting constantly according to Certain laws, but whether this agent be material or immaterial is a question I have left to y^e consideration of my readers.”³ The workings of nature testified to the existence of God, but the exact being of God remained uncertain. Despite his public diffidence, Newton and his close compatriots envisaged an immaterial, all-powerful, and active God at the head of the universe. William Whiston, however, knew that others, who embraced Newtonian philosophy, might not share this conception of the

divine author of nature. He feared that irreligious thinkers would appropriate Newton's work to support a universe in which Newton's God had no place. Chief among those Whiston saw as capable of such a creation were our deists who Whiston claimed had found support from "Sir *Isaac Newton's* wonderful Discoveries."⁴ The Tory Nonjuror Roger North (1653-1734) too was sceptical of the conclusions that might be drawn from Newton's philosophy. Unlike Whiston, North faulted Newton and not the deists. North believed that the *Principia* had fostered an atmosphere where "we find all our Second, third, & fourth hand philosophers all ways harping upon certain words...."⁵ Newtonian philosophy, it seemed, allowed heretics to advance their thoughts by attaching them to the credentials of a man whose work was greatly admired.

Contemporary attempts to understand what Newton had written in the *Principia* and in the various editions of the *Opticks* form the context for considering the writings of deists on matter and motion. What is more, in outlining the philosophy of nature constructed by several deists, we see how responses to deists figured prominently in the advancement of public science. It also becomes apparent that deists and authors of public science were not that different in their presentations. Our deists were not hostile to Newtonian philosophy, as is generally accepted, but were critical of the conception of God which they believed served as its foundation. Here politics and natural philosophy meet. Deists viewed the unpredictable God of the Newtonians as the God of the Tories and High Churchmen. However, deists were neither atheists nor the heralds of secular modernity. They separated Newton's laws of motion and conception of gravity from Newton's active God who guided them and replaced that God with the God of their theology. The Bishop of Worcester, Edward Stillingfleet, who composed one of the first anti-deist works in England, confirmed this when he claimed that natural philosophy was a potential weapon in the deist arsenal.⁶ He asserted that deists attributed "too much to the *Mechanical Powers of Matter and Motion*" and assigned an undignified role for God as mere conservator of the universe rather than its active ruler.⁷ Newtonians like Samuel Clarke, Whiston, and others, believed the deist separation of the Newtonian God from natural philosophy led only to atheism and,

what was worse, threatened to associate Newton with deism, as North asserted and Whiston feared.⁸

Editions of *Opticks* and a Cause for Gravity

Newton's *Opticks: Or, a Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections & Colours of Light* (first edition in 1704) set the tone for much of the learned natural philosophical discourse in eighteenth-century England.⁹ We are, therefore, well served by considering some key themes from the various editions, specifically those which surfaced in deist writings. The book was an expanded version of "New Theory about Light," a paper which Newton had sent the Royal Society in 1672 and published in the *Philosophical Transactions* in February of that year. The premise of both works was that light had been misunderstood. In opposition to previous interpretations, Newton asserted that "Light it self is a *Heterogenous mixture of different refrangible Rays*."¹⁰ That is, light was composed of immutable coloured rays, which differed in their refractive indices but which, when combined, formed visible white light. In the *Opticks* Newton asserted more confidently what he had stated in the *Principia*: namely, that matter was particulate and exceedingly rarefied. What was more, the component parts of matter could recombine to form any other piece of matter, without suffering any ill-effects from the transformation.¹¹ At the end of the 1704 treatise Newton appended sixteen queries in which he suggested that light too might be a material body composed of very small particles, though he did not declare this as a fact. He also expounded on the possible interaction of light and matter.¹² Newton, however, was cautious in asserting conclusions: "to determine more absolutely, what Light is, after what manner refracted, and by what modes or actions it produceth in our minds the Phantasms of Colours, is not so easie."¹³ Many future readers disregarded Newton's hesitation.¹⁴

A Latin edition, of the *Opticks*, translated by Samuel Clarke, appeared in 1706. Appended to it were new queries (17-23, later renumbered 25-31) which further considered the cohesion of particles and the nature of light. The most important of these queries as far as contemporaries were concerned were numbers twenty-one and twenty-three.¹⁵ The former speculated: "Are not the Rays of Light very small Bodies emitted from shining Substances? For such Bodies will pass

through uniform Mediums in right Lines without bending into the Shadow, which is the Nature of the Rays of Light.”¹⁶ Though the particles of light were imperceptibly small, they were material bodies. All reactions involving light could be interpreted as reactions between pieces of matter. Light particles also possessed an active power by which “or [by] some other Force, stir up Vibrations in which they act upon, which Vibrations being swifter than the Rays, overtake them successively, and agitate them so as by turns to increase and decrease their Velocities, and thereby put them into those Fits.”¹⁷ As P. M. Heimann and J. E. McGuire have commented, eighteenth century readers would have interpreted a “power” in matter as what it may do “in virtue of its intrinsic nature” and with respect to some “extrinsic circumstances.” It is therefore not unreasonable to expect some persons to have concluded these particles have the inherent power of motion.¹⁸ Query twenty-three, later renumbered as the famed thirty-first, continued the investigation: “Have not the small Particles of Bodies certain Powers, Virtues, or Forces, by which they act at a distance, not only upon the Rays of Light for reflecting, refracting, and inflecting them, but also upon one another for producing a great Part of the Phaenomena of Nature?”¹⁹ Matter, thus, seemed to many eighteenth-century readers to have an inherent power of attraction closely connected to the action of light. This conclusion was strengthened by Newton’s further comment that “Bodies act upon each other by the Attractions of Gravity, Magnetism, and Electricity.”²⁰ As he had done previously, Newton did not speculate into the cause of the attractions. Though clearly attraction had something to do with the materiality of light. Newton, however, hoped to discourage materialist views of nature by reminding his readers that “By this Principle alone there never could have been any Motion in the World. Some other Principle was necessary for putting Bodies into Motion; and now they are in Motion, some other Principle is necessary for conserving the Motion.”²¹

The second English edition of the *Opticks* (1717) included yet another batch of queries (17-24) between the previous two sets from the editions of 1704 and 1706. These most recent musings addressed a pervasive aether.²² Query seventeen theorised that light “excited” waves in the surrounding “aetherial medium.” In turn, these waves might be responsible for some motions. One might conclude therefore

that light imparted action to matter.²³ In query eighteen Newton conjectured on the properties of the aether itself: “is not this medium exceedingly more rare and subtile than the Air, and exceedingly more elastick and Active? And doth it not readily pervade all Bodies? And is it not ... expanded through all the Heavens?”²⁴ Thus, during much of the eighteenth century Newton could be read as supporting a view of nature that was predicated on motion propagated through a material medium, originating with the action of light.

Tindal and the Matter of the Trinity

Newton and his disciples were not the only ones concerned with these issues. Among our deists Matthew Tindal first considered the properties of matter in his published writings on the Trinity in 1695. Conceptions of matter had implications for Trinitarian and anti-Trinitarian theologies, as Stillingfleet’s argument against Toland and John Locke demonstrated. In presenting what he viewed as the difference between God and Christ—self-existence versus created-being—Tindal employed an analogy: “Suppose that there was some Matter self-existent, and some other Matter not self-existent, and the Nature of the one were not any way different from the Nature of the other, would they not be both equally Perfect?”²⁵ Matter, he posited, depended on nothing for its continued existence “and ha[d] subsisted ever since the Creation.” Moreover, all matter was identical regardless of how it was created. Any change in matter was not actual corruption or generation; rather, it was due to alteration in its motion and position. The “Laws of Motion” guided matter and were responsible for its outward appearance.²⁶ Tindal then claimed that his query regarding the Trinity remained indeterminate at this stage. Though one may see where Tindal was headed with his reasoning: two deities, one created and the other self-existent, were equal; neither one depended on the other for continued existence.

Tindal next examined the Trinity in terms of the Sun and the emanations of the Sun (i.e. light) standing in for God and Christ. Using the universe as a template with which to consider the Trinity was hardly a position unique to Tindal. The astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) used a similar scheme in his writings. For Kepler, the Sun—the most noble body in the heavens—was indeed God who guided

the motion of planets from His location at the centre of Creation. Natural philosophical investigations into the particulate structure of light and matter could also have heretical implications as Pietro Redondi's study of Galileo has demonstrated.²⁷ Tindal's analogy followed from the earlier conclusions regarding matter: rays of light "no way depend on the Sun for their Being or continuance in Being, except the Sun by creating Power makes them" to have existence. Even if, as some natural philosophers had posited, light was "parts of the *Aether* set in motion by the Sun, they no more depend on the Sun for their Being or continuance in Being, than the Sun does on them."²⁸ Once released from the Sun, light acted as a material body its speed and position were directed by the laws of motion. Tindal then asserted that Christ's existence was not therefore tied to God's existence just as light was not tied similarly to the Sun. With this brief exploration into natural philosophy, we can outline Tindal's conception of matter and motion in the late 1690s. The universe contained matter, which altered its composition as a consequence of motion. Nothing was created or destroyed but only moved into different configurations creating different appearances in a universe designed by God to run in accordance with the divine laws that He, as the divine craftsman, established.

Tindal continued to draw on natural philosophy and, in 1704, wrote that free access to contemporary natural philosophy was an example of humanity's "natural Right in all matters of Learning and Knowledge." Information about the universe, its construction and operation—like important information about religion and God—must be freely available to those who seek it. Tindal lamented that this seemed not to be the case in his day: "The more useful any Science is to Mankind, the greater will its Abuses be: Divinity, Law, Physick are sad instances of this."²⁹ Those who controlled truth in natural philosophy, like those who controlled religious truth, used it to advance themselves and their initiates. The only way to alter the situation, Tindal suggested, was to eliminate all restraint on publishing. Anyone who examined nature should be able to present the results of their free-thinking on such matters.

Toland's *Letters to Serena*

The same year as Tindal argued for an unrestricted press, John Toland published his theory of nature's workings. Though Toland had made passing references to the particulate structure of matter in *Christianity not Mysterious*, his first protracted thoughts on the subject appeared in the fourth and fifth chapters of *Letters to Serena* (1704). Shortly before its publication, Anthony Collins wrote expectantly to Locke advising him that Toland's book should be as entertaining as Newton's *Opticks*.³⁰ During his time on the Continent, Toland frequently debated natural philosophy with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Sophia Charlotte, Queen of Prussia. *Letters to Serena* resulted from these discussions.³¹ Toland himself confirms this in the preface when he declared that "*Serena ... [was] a very real Person...*"³² A letter in Toland's manuscripts supports his claim. The undated correspondence to an anonymous mother and daughter contained a copy of Toland's *Tetradymus* (1720) for the daughter and details his desire for the proliferation of learning and of philosophy among young women of merit.³³ As Sophia Charlotte was potentially heir to the House of Hanover that stood to succeed to the English throne, Toland's desire to present his erudition must be seen as highly political.³⁴ The book was arranged as a response to an anonymous admirer of Spinoza's philosophy.

Previous studies of Toland's natural philosophy have focussed almost exclusively on attempting to determine the origin of his views. The most influential work is by Margaret C. Jacob who claims that Toland's worldview is a reworking of the mystical writings of the Renaissance scholar Giordano Bruno.³⁵ She supports this hypothesis with the fact that Toland is known to have read, translated, and discussed in correspondence the contents of Bruno's natural philosophy. Since, in Jacob's reading, Toland is a radical thinker and social misfit, it is natural that he should embrace a radical worldview.³⁶ Scholars such as David Kubrin endorse Jacob's view. Others suggest that we remember Toland's fascination with ancient authors and look for origins in the writings of the Stoics. This is the view of Robert R. Evans who describes Toland's natural philosophy as "a fusion of neo-Stoic and Newtonian principles." Gavina L. Cherchi agrees that we must look to antiquity for Toland's sources, but suggests that he revived a kind of Epicureanism.³⁷ While I

agree that we need to create new accounts of Toland beyond what Jacob has written, I maintain that much effort is being spent determining origins at the expense of the contemporary context for Toland's writings. That is, how did his conception of God relate to his natural philosophy and how in turn did this relate to his political writings?³⁸

Refutations of Vacuous Mathematical Space

Toland believed that matter was homogeneous, and comprised the entire universe. Individual bodies or particles of matter did not exist. They were mental abstractions.³⁹ These imagined systems of matter had created, Toland submitted, untenable conceptions of nature. The most obvious of these fallacies was the acceptance of a vacuum, which was “one of the numberless erroneous Consequences of defining Matter only by Extension, of making it naturally inactive, and of thinking it divided into real Parts every way independent of one another.”⁴⁰ In contrast Toland postulated that space was “impenetrable, immovable, indivisible, the place which receives all Bodys, wherein they move and are contain'd, it self being void of all change or form, or figure.”⁴¹ He argued that inaccurate definitions of matter implied inaccurate definitions of space. What is more, Toland charged some natural philosophers, specifically mathematicians, of confusing definitions with reality. As an example, Toland asked his readers to consider time: “For my part, I can no more believe an absolute Space distinct from matter, as the place of it; than that there is an absolute Time, different from the things whose Duration are consider'd.”⁴² Time did not exist apart from that which was timed, in the same way that space did not (and could not) exist outside of what was contained in it. The contrary was true only if one supposed, with these unnamed mathematicians, “Space without Matter, as they did Duration without Things, Points without Quantity, and the like.”

Toland never mentioned any specific mathematician by name. Nevertheless, we may with confidence suggest that Toland had in mind Leibniz, philosopher and privy counsellor at Hanover, whom Toland met during his first trip there in 1701. During their debates Leibniz had urged Toland to contemplate that something other than matter existed in the universe. Toland refused this possibility and argued that

mathematicians began with faulty assumptions which, in turn, coloured their philosophies.⁴³ To convince readers, Toland suggested the following thought experiment. If two identical spheres be at some distance from each other there is “a measurable Space or Void” between them; that is, “there is a Space which is not body, between the other points of their Circumferences.” However, this apparently self-evident fact is only such if one at the same time supposes the “very Space which they pretend to prove.”⁴⁴ Philosophers had no difficulty in proving what they were predetermined to find, argued Toland, their hypotheses proceeded their facts.

To counter such hypothetical systems, Toland directed his readers to Isaac Newton’s sage advice on method, which he had learned from David Gregory (1659-1708) during his studies in Edinburgh.⁴⁵ As Toland explained

The Mathematicians compute the Quantitys and Proportions of Motion, as they observe Bodys to act on one another, without troubling themselves about the physical Reasons of what every person allows ... the latter wou’d succeed better in their Reason, if they did more acquaint themselves before hand with the Observation and Facts of the former, as Mr. Newton justly observes.⁴⁶

Ironically, as we will see shortly, Newton himself argued for the existence of actual time and space. Nevertheless, Toland endorsed the method of the *Principia*: seek instruction from nature and not from hypotheses. We know that Toland remained an adherent of this method from the notes he wrote in the margins of a copy of Martin Martin’s, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (1716). He shared the book with his friend and benefactor Robert Molesworth during 1720 and 1721. Toland was especially critical of Martin’s tendency to relate fanciful stories from the history of Ireland, such as that of a whale eating three sailors from a ship’s crew. He described this practise of acceptance without investigation as “unworthy a fellow of the Royal Society.” What was more Martin had “five or six times relied on others in things Curious enough, but which are in everyone’s power to experience.” Thus, Martin was “a very poor Philosopher.”⁴⁷ Only through observation did one act correctly in issues of natural philosophy.

Toland and Materialists

Toland's position on space was uncomfortably close to that held by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Spinoza (1632-1677), the bugbears of atheism for many early-modern English thinkers. A generation earlier Hobbes had claimed that time and space were "nothing but Ideas & Phantasms hapning internally to him [the philosopher] that imagineth: Yet they will appear as if they were externall and not at all depending upon any power of the Mind." Similarly, bodies were "that which having no dependence upon our Thought is coincident or coextended with some part of Space."⁴⁸ Thus, only physical bodies had real existence. The conclusion that many contemporaries drew from this assertion was that God too was material.⁴⁹

Spinoza went further and claimed that "By substance, I mean that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself: in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception." The only true substance was God.⁵⁰ During his educational sojourn in Holland in the early 1690s Toland had learned Spinoza's philosophy from a group of Spinozists who possessed several of their master's manuscripts.⁵¹ While Toland agreed with Spinoza that matter was extended and occupied all space with no parts truly separate, he believed that Spinoza had failed to "define Motion or Rest" and had thereby offered an incomplete account of matter.⁵² What is more, Toland found it unpardonable that Spinoza had not "so much as insinuated that Motion was" one of matter's defining features.⁵³ The result was an inadequate account of nature and of God:

Spinoza then, who values himself in his *Ethicks* on deducing things from their first Causes (which the Schoolmen term *a priori*) Spinoza, I say, having given no account how Matter came to be mov'd or Motion comes to be continu'd, nor allowing God as first mover, neither proving nor supposing motion to be an Attribute (but the contrary) nor indeed explaining what motion is, he cou'd not possibly show how the diversity of bodies reconcilable to the unity of Substance, or to the sameness of Matter in the whole Universe....⁵⁴

This was a crucial oversight because, as Toland explained, "the perpetual Changes in Matter are the Effects of Motion, which produces an infinity of different Figures, Mixtures, and sensible Qualityts." Motion lay at the heart of all natural phenomena. Spinoza could not accommodate this fact in his philosophy because he

acknowledged “no Being separate or different from the substance of the universe, no being to give it motion, to continue or to preserve it, if it has none of its own.” Not even God was separate from the material of the universe; indeed, the universe itself was God, various perceived parts were merely modes of God.⁵⁵ According to Toland, Spinoza then paradoxically claimed that matter was “naturally inactive.”⁵⁶ This contradiction made the system unintelligible. The one thing for which Toland did praise Spinoza was his presentation of Descartes’ mechanical philosophy which Toland called a “Philosophical Romance” because it defined matter by extension alone.⁵⁷

Related to his refutation of Spinoza was Toland’s consideration of the Cambridge Platonists, whom he particularly challenged in the work of Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), formerly Master of Christ’s College, Cambridge.⁵⁸ “No less Romantic,” began Toland, “is the plastic life of other philosophers, which (according to its modern Reviver the universally learned Dr. Cudworth) is not material, but an inferior sort of Spirit without Sensation or Thought, yet endu’d with a vital Operation and Energy; these Plastics seemingly to differ with the Hylozoics only about words....” Thus, Cudworth and Spinoza offered the same account of motion; only their words differed. Both men assumed motion of inactive matter by positing unfounded mechanisms. This was done, asserted Toland, to avoid the necessity of having God directly and constantly causing motion.⁵⁹ While Toland was critical of these philosophies, he himself did not remove God entirely from the universe. It was true that God created active matter, but He also directed its motions in accordance with an immutable design.

This role for God appeased some of Toland’s critics. In his *Deist’s Manual*, which appeared within six months of *Letters to Serena*, the reformed deist, critic of Alexander Pope, and in the words of one historian “a poor hack-writer,” Charles Gildon considered Toland natural philosophical claims.⁶⁰ Gildon wrote that he was very apprehensive of Toland’s hypothesis of matter and motion, especially its potential to remove God’s activity in the world, until he had read further into Toland’s work. Toland had, wrote Gildon, “remov’d the Cause of my Answering him, by owning its [matter’s] Creation, and supposing that God, with its other

Properties, endu'd Matter with this [motion] likewise; tho' I am far from being satisfied with the Reasons of his Opinion...."⁶¹

An Ally in Newton?

Historians of science well know that Toland sought support for his philosophy through claimed affiliation with Newton. Referring to absolute time and space, he claimed "Mr. Newton is thought not only to believe these things, but also put them both on the same foot." Newton's natural philosophy and theology necessitated the existence of absolute space and time. In a manuscript composed around 1695 ("Tempus and Locus") Newton stated that "Time and Place are common affections of all things without which nothing whatsoever can exist. All things are in time as regards duration of existence, and in place as regards amplitude of presence."⁶² Space and time were, therefore, consequences of being, characteristics of existence. This condition applied equally to God, as Newton confirmed when he referred to the divine being with the Jewish term *makom*, or place: "the substance essential to all places in which we are placed and (as the Apostle says) in which we live [and move] and have our being."⁶³ Infinite space and eternal time, which characterised the universe, were effects of God's eternal and infinite being. Newton cautioned, however, in the "General Scholium" appended to the second edition of the *Principia* in 1713, that God "is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite; he is not duration and space, but he endures and is present." Space existed independent of human thought and material substance because, if all matter were destroyed, absolute space and time would continue to exist because God existed.⁶⁴

Despite these seemingly irreconcilable differences, Toland claimed that Newton's words were "capable of receiving an Interpretation favourable to my opinion...."⁶⁵ All that was required to have his and Newton's philosophy mesh together was a modification in matter's definition by accepting what Toland knew to be true: matter had self-motion.⁶⁶ The first step was to deny void space. It was "to help sluggish Matter to Motion that this Space (as the room of its action) was principally devis'd; but matter not being inactive, nor wanting to have Motion continually impressed by an external Agent, Space may be exterminated from

Philosophy, as useless and imaginary.”⁶⁷ Though Newton had, admitted Toland, argued for real space, Newton had nevertheless hinted that “perhaps no one Body is in absolute rest.” What was more, Toland suggested that Newton, “who has seen the farthest of all Men living into the actual State of Matter; and indeed all Physicks ought to be denominated from the Title he has given to the first Book of his Principles, viz. *Of the Motion of Bodies*,” did not believe bodies were truly motionless.⁶⁸ It was in these statements that Toland saw himself and Newton as not so different; he had been assertive where Newton had been hesitant.

Notwithstanding Toland’s praise of Newton and citing him as a methodological model, scholars often see Toland, and other deists, as hostile to Newton. This interpretation originated with Jacob who claimed that Toland’s anticlerical stance was tied to his self-moving matter which Toland supposedly used to challenge Low-Churchmen who had wedded their Anglican theology to Newton’s natural philosophy in an attempt to create a stable providential worldview in politics.⁶⁹ But, Toland’s desire to undermine the existing political structure is far from certain as we saw in the previous chapters. Moreover, his words in *Letters to Serena* are not those of a critic, but rather of an admirer of a philosopher who, as Pemberton commented, purposely made his works obscure.⁷⁰

Action and the Force of Motion

Toland next addressed the reality of a moving force: “What sort of Being it is; where it resides in Matter or without it; by what means it can move Matter; how it passes from one Body to another; or how it is divided between many Bodys while others are at rest, and a thousand other such Riddles.”⁷¹ When philosophers could not find such an entity in nature, and determine whether it be material or immaterial, Toland lamented that they retreated to supernatural agency. Like Descartes, these scholars envisaged that God “actually concurs to every Motion in the Universe.” Toland found this occasionalist interpretation improbable. It was more likely that God had, at the Creation, impressed motion onto matter which was “sufficient for the future.” These unnamed philosophers made God an imperfect craftsman who had to continuously tinker in the world.⁷² It was ignorance that made philosophers take refuge in God’s activity, which was not “to explain things, but to cover their

own Negligence or Shortsightedness....” Toland countered that “God was able to create this Matter active as well as extended, that he cou’d give it the one Property as well as the other, and that no reason can be assign’d why he should not endue it with the former as well as with the latter.”⁷³

Toland then defined what he meant by motion, referring to it as local motion. He also noted that philosophers ought to distinguish “motion” from the “moving Force or Action:”

Local motion is only a Change of Situation, or the successive Application of the same Body to the respective Parts of several Bodies; so that his motion is nothing different from the Body it self, nor any real Being in nature, but a mere mode or Consideration of its Situation, and the effect of some Force or Action without or within the Body.⁷⁴

Condemning the strategy of mathematicians, Toland stated that they mistakenly assumed the existence of a “moving Force” and accepted the reality of motion without considering its origins. The practise of natural philosophy deserved better. Any attempt to explain the present constitution of things must begin with first principles. For Toland, this meant motion because “no manner of Variety is included in the bare Ideas of Extension, nor any cause of Alteration; and seeing it is Action alone that can possibly produce any change in Extension, this Action or Principle of Motion must be well clear’d and established, or the system must quickly be found defective.”⁷⁵

Toland believed his system of natural philosophy preserved divine dignity. In describing his innovation, he began by distinguishing between motion and “Action” which had befuddled previous systems.

I wou’d have this motion of the Whole be call’d Action, and all local Motions, as direct or circular, fast or slow, simple or compounded, be still call’d *Motion* being only several changeable *Determinations* of the *Action* which is always in the Whole ... I deny that Matter is or ever was an inactive dead Lump in absolute Repose, a Lazy and unweildy thing.⁷⁶

In other words, Toland argued that the motive force, in his terminology “Action,” was inherent in the universal matter, which filled all the Creation. The phenomena of local motions were perceptions of the alterations of matter witnessed by an observer. The “Action” of the whole explained the motion of the particular.⁷⁷ What

was more, matter could not be rightly “conceiv’d nor consequently be rightly defin’d without it, that nothing can be accounted for in Matter without this essential Action.”

This was precisely the kind of conclusion drawn from his work that Newton wished to discourage. He wrote as much to Richard Bentley, who delivered the first Boyle Lectures in 1692, which incorporated Newtonian mechanics to demonstrate the divine construction of the world. Prior to publishing the Lectures, Bentley sought clarification on some key points. “So then gravity may put y^e planets into motion,” Newton advised him, “but without y^e divine power it could never put them into such a Circulating motion ... I am compelled to ascribe y^e frame of this Systeme to an intelligent agent.” More importantly, Bentley had written “of gravity as essential to & inherent to matter: pray do not ascribe that notion to me, for y^e cause of gravity is what I do not pretend to know...”⁷⁸ For Newton, gravity was an aspect of divine activity in the world it could never have arisen on its own in the material universe Toland described.

Following Newton’s methodology of observation, Toland claimed to have determined the self-motion of matter “from the nature of the thing itself.” If he was successful in communicating his system for the operation of the universe, Toland boldly claimed, “then they may quarrel (who have a mind to it) with God or Nature, and not with me, who am but their humble Interpreter.”⁷⁹ He was cautious, however, not to claim more than he believed was possible to know concerning motion. This meant restricting the contents of the book to proving that matter was extended and active but not to speculating about the origin of its inherent action or the method by which it operated. Toland did not wish to become entangled in the disputes for which he had admonished mathematicians.

To accomplish this goal, Toland returned to the epistemology which he advanced in *Christianity not Mystrious*, specifically Locke’s conception of essences.⁸⁰ The definition of anything was a collection of observable nominal essences which were related to the unknown real essences. As he explained to readers, “if activity ought to enter into the Definition of Matter, it ought likewise to express the essence of it.” Because this was an overlooked part of matter’s

definition, Toland claimed that “Matter has bin hitherto but half, or rather a third part defin’d by Extension, from which alone many of its Modifications can follow by no means....”⁸¹ The correct definition of matter led to correct understanding of its nature: “Matter can no more be conceived without Motion than without Extension, and that the one is inseparable from it as the other.”⁸² Whereas incorrect, or incomplete, definitions of matter had supposed “that motion is extraneous to Matter.” In the same way that priests had created mysteries in religion, philosophical authority prevented the acceptance of inherent motion in matter. Indeed, in the second edition of *Christianity not Mysterious* Toland concluded that knowledge based on the mysteries of religion led to acceptance of similar practises in natural philosophy: “*Mysteries in religion* are but ill argu’d from the pretended *Mysteries of Nature*; and that such as endeavour to support the former by the latter, have either a design to impose upon others, or that they have never themselves duely consider’d of this Matter.”⁸³

To those who might not accept his assertions, Toland asked what sort of matter could be described without reference to constant motion? “It must be something depriv’d of all Figure or Color,” answered Toland, “neither heavy nor light, rough or smooth, sweet or sour, hot or cold, void of all sensible Qualitys, ... since all these depend immediately on motion....”⁸⁴ In stating that discernible features of objects depended on the qualities of matter on which they were built, though departing from many on the ultimate source—namely inherent motion—Toland followed contemporary understanding and distinguished between primary and secondary qualities. Philosophers like Robert Boyle argued that things such as colour were secondary qualities of matter that resulted from the particular arrangement and movement, that is the primary qualities, of its particles to produce the sensation we know as colour.⁸⁵

Toland also refuted Descartes’ laws of motion, dismissing them as being formed from a mistaken notion of “Action” or moving force. In “All Treatises of the ordinary Laws of Motion,” Toland wrote, “you meet with several degrees of Motion that any body loses or acquires; but those Laws concern the Quantity of the action of particular Bodys on one another, and not the action of Matter in

general....”⁸⁶ Adherents to these Cartesian laws had failed to realise that individual motions were the result of the more general “Action” of the universal matter. Toland explained that this was a common mistake because “the Vulgar taking local motion ... for a real being, have thought Rest a privation, or that Motion was Action, and that Rest was a Passion.”⁸⁷ Local motion was “Action” of the particular with a different name. What is more, these unnamed Cartesians did not accept that bodies of matter were mental abstractions; the motion of them could not but originate in the “Action” of the whole. “I may now” Toland asserted “conclude that action is essential to Matter, since it must be the real Subject of all those Modifications which are call’d local Motions....”⁸⁸

Toland on Gravity

In an attempt to provide a complete natural philosophy, Toland sought to explain gravity and planetary orbits. In the same way that he explained local motion, Toland stated “there cou’d be no Levity or Gravity in the suppos’d Chaos, and that these Qualities wholly depend on the Constitution and Fabrick of the Universe.” Gravity was the product of the entire universe as was the “Action” which underlay perceived motion. To suppose that individual pieces of matter had gravity in themselves was the same as believing that “the Wheels, and Springs, and Chains of a Watch can perform all those Motions separately which they do together.”⁸⁹ Gravity was the result of the universe in actual operation. The universal matter as a whole produced the effects that we identify as gravity. As Toland had claimed, actual separate particles did not exist because if they did, these particles would be the same as bits removed from a watch: able to do nothing until they were inserted back among the other pieces. The same was true of the universe: it was a harmonious interconnected system.

Local motion and gravity were the same: “Action” propelled both motions.⁹⁰ Gravity and local motion were thus nominal essences supported in some unknown way by the real essence of “Action,” which Toland claimed we could not know. In his agnostic stance over the real cause of motion, Toland sought refuge in Newton’s *Principia*, though his active matter was certainly not Newton’s. Despite this difference, he quoted from the *Principia*’s preface where Newton referred to

“Gravity, Elasticity, Resistance, Impulse, and Attraction, and of Explication of the mundane System by these Principles:”

I wish adds he that we cou'd by the Same Method of reasoning be able to explain the other Phaenomena of Nature from mechanical Principles! for I am induc'd by divers Considerations to suspect a little, that all these may depend on Certain Forces, wherby from Causes yet undiscover'd the Particles of Bodys are mutually impell'd against each other, and cohere accordingly to regular Figures, or whereby they recede and are driven from one another: which Forces being yet unknown, the Philosophers have hitherto attempted Nature in vain.

Like Newton, Toland claimed not to know what caused these forces of motion, though he suspected that it was “Action.” However, Newton had based his philosophy on passive matter altered from an inertial state by some force not inherent in matter. Force then, as interpreted by Toland, became an observable aspect of “Action.” By suggesting “Action” as the real essence of motion and thereby solving the problem posed by Newton, Toland rather brashly asserted “I would flatter my self, that I had done something towards it in this letter.” These are hardly the words of one who wishes to undermine Newtonian philosophy.⁹¹

In the appropriated language of Newtonian forces, Toland described the orbit of the Earth.

Notable Effects depend on these Forces the nearer they are to being equal, or the stronger one of 'em is than the other; wherefore the centripetal being much greater than the centrifugal Force of the Parts of the Earth, taking in likewise the Atmosphere, is one main reason that it never loses any of its Matter, and that it always continues of the same Bulk or Dimensions, the centripetal Force of Gravity that detains the Several Bodys in their Orbit, being considerably stronger than the centrifugal Force of Motion, by which they strive to fly off in the Tangent. Let the causes of these Forces be what they will, they are unanswerable arguments to my purpose of a perpetual Motion in all things.⁹²

In good Newtonian fashion, Toland refused to speculate on the cause of “these Forces.” Nevertheless, he viewed them as supporting his hypothesis of constant universal motion. The fact that the centripetal force of gravity always drew the Earth, and all its “Matter,” into orbit around the Sun and that the centrifugal force was always too weak to overcome the attraction of the Sun implied that the Earth, and everything upon it, was never truly at rest. Toland saw the constant motion of

the Earth as evidence of the constant motion of the universe and the matter of which it was composed. Thus, Newton's conception of centripetal force became for Toland evidence of inherent continuing motion. Gravity, like other local motions, was a result of the "Action" of the universe "be their Physical Causes what you please...."⁹³ Toland never attempted to determine the causes of motion. Such information, like the mysteries of Scripture, was not needed for this life. In the same way that action was inherent in our idea of matter, gravity was inherent in our idea of the material universe. Armed with his conception of material space, which was the location of gravity, combined with the constant action of the centripetal force of universal gravitation, Toland believed he had accounted for all natural phenomena in the universe.

Public Science and Reaction to Toland's Self-Moving Matter

Letters to Serena was available for sale in early May 1704 and refutations quickly followed. Toland's appeal to God's creative power in making self-moving matter did not satisfy all his critics as it had done for Gildon. Humphry Ditton (d. 1715), a nonconformist instructor in mathematics at Christ's Hospital Mathematical School and public lecturer in experimental philosophy at the Marine Coffeehouse, used the entire preface of his *The General Laws of Nature and Motion* (1705), a popularised account of Newton's natural philosophy, to dismantle Toland's theories.⁹⁴ Though he was certain Toland was joking in *Letters to Serena*, Ditton remained suspicious: "Infinite necessarily-self-moving Matter *may serve to entertain an Atheist, as well as Almighty Space.*"⁹⁵ Self-moving matter allowed no place for the active God, whom Ditton believed governed the Creation. The Astronomer Royal, John Flamsteed (1646-1719), approved of Ditton's answer to Toland and commented that the preface "which is y^e best wrote of any I have seen of a long time is a Special Answer to Mr Toland who contends in his lettre that motion is essential to matter which [Ditton] ridicules most judiciously."⁹⁶

In late November 1704 Samuel Clarke's Boyle Lectures from that year appeared in print.⁹⁷ Toland's natural philosophy received special attention in *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. The table of contents informed readers that on page forty-six one may find "*Mr. Toland's pernicious Opinion of*

*Motion being essential to Matter, confuted.*⁹⁸ Clarke refuted Toland's presentation, of what Clarke called the "Conatus to Motion," or matter's endeavouring to move.

The essential *Conatus to Motion* of every one or any one particle of matter in this Author's imaginarily infinite *Plenum*, must be either a *Conatus* to move from one determined way at once, or move every way at once: A *Conatus* to move some one determinate way, cannot be essential to any Particle of Matter, but must arise from some external cause; because there is nothing in the pretended necessary Nature of any Particle, to determine its motion necessarily and essentially. And a *Conatus* equally to move every way at once, is either an absolute Contradiction, or at least could produce nothing in Matter but an External Rest of all and every one of its Parts.⁹⁹

Motion must be imparted by an external force because Clarke argued that self-moving matter resulted in a contradiction. Without some guidance, the inherent motion of matter would have no plan of movement and would, therefore, be paralysed. For Clarke, the only external cause that he would entertain was God: the self-existing original creator of all things. Deists, like Toland, who denied this truth held inaccurate pictures of God.¹⁰⁰ The motivation behind Clarke's answer to Toland was his use—in Clarke's mind misuse—of Newton's natural philosophy. Both Newton and Clarke understood space as the location of God, a consequence of His being.¹⁰¹ Their shared theology developed while Clarke translated the *Opticks* into Latin at Newton's request. In latter years, Whiston recollected that Clarke's theological positions were "generally no other than Sir *Isaac Newton's* Philosophy; tho' frequently applied by Dr. *Clarke*, with great Sagacity, and to excellent purposes, upon many Occasions."¹⁰² For Clarke, Toland's notion of space bordered on atheism. This conception had to be quickly refuted lest others see Newton as an advocate for a material Godless universe. This was not an unfounded fear. The High-Church Anglican, John Hutchinson (1674-1737) was suspicious of Newton's conception of immaterial forces which Hutchinson suggested reduced God to the soul of the world. After discussing Newtonian philosophy personally with Toland, Hutchinson was convinced that Newton's work was compatible with, and provided support for, deism by reducing God to a mere enactor of motion.¹⁰³

Less than a month after Clarke's Boyle Lecture appeared William Wotton, FRS, spokesperson for the "moderns" in the famed Battle of the Books, answered

Toland.¹⁰⁴ Wotton presented his work in epistolary form titled: *A Letter to Eusebia: Occasioned by Mr. Toland's Letters to Serena*. Wotton, like Clarke, was uneasy about Toland's attempt to apparently remove God from the operation of the universe and to "root the Belief of all Religion out of the World."¹⁰⁵ Wotton, however, was no enemy to natural philosophy; properly understood it served as a testament to God's power. In *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694), Wotton had extolled the merits and achievements of the modern philosophers. He stated that one could not deny the improvement of star charts accomplished by Tycho Brahe and the excellence of Kelper's description of planetary orbits. Kepler's account had since been proved by "Mr. Newton, viz. *That all the Planets move in Elliptick Orbs about the Sun, at Whose Centre, being placed in one Focus of the Eclipse, they describe equal Area's in equal times.*"¹⁰⁶

In addition to dismissing Toland's notions as the ramblings of an atheist, Wotton considered the presentation of matter's attributes found in *Letters to Serena*. Where Toland argued that one could not think of matter without also immediately thinking of extension and motion, Wotton replied that "For God's sake what do's the Man mean? Have not you and I, madam, an Idea of Rest as well as of Motion? Can we conceive a Body to lye Still in a place as well as to shift it?"¹⁰⁷ Wotton then moved to a personal attack on his adversary: "I can conceive of Mr. *Toland* without thinking of Learning or Christianity, but I cannot conceive of thinking that he is a Man." He continued that one "can *mentally Separate* Motion from Matter; consequently unless other Arguments be produced, it will not be evident that Motion is Essential to it..."¹⁰⁸ If matter was everywhere infinite and identical as Toland claimed, Wotton drew his readers to the ludicrous implications of the assertion: "There is no real Difference between one Man and another, between Mr. *Newton* and Mr. *Toland*."¹⁰⁹ Should anyone not be convinced by his refutation, Wotton directed them to Clarke's *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, a work that "is so full towards my purpose, ... that I shou'd do my self an injury, and you too, should I omit it."¹¹⁰ Years later when Toland reflected on Wotton's characterisation of him, he dismissed the approach: "certain men will neither allow themselves nor others to commend any thing in one from whom they

differ; and that they do not stick at saying any thing to his prejudice, be it ever so improbable or ever false.” Because Wotton disagreed with some of his philosophical notions, Toland accused Wotton of refusing to see anything of merit in *Letters to Serena* because prejudice unfairly coloured Wotton’s reading.¹¹¹

Clarke delivered the Boyle Lectures again in 1705 and published them as *A Discourse Concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation*. The divine origin of gravity and motion maintained pride of place.¹¹² The universe, Clarke stated, proved the existence of an active Newtonian God. In more explicit terms, “All things that are *Done* in the World, are done either immediately by *God* himself, or by *created Intelligent Beings*: *Matter* being evidently not at all capable of any *Laws* or *Powers* whatsoever, any more than it is capable of *Intelligence*; excepting only this *One Negative Power*,” or Newton’s inertia. Writers like Toland, and later Collins, who ascribed the effects of nature to nature itself or some inherent power were simply wrong. As Clarke put it “all those things which we commonly say are the effects of the *Natural Powers of Matter*, and *Laws of Motions*; of *Gravitation*, *Attraction*, or the like; are indeed (if we will speak strictly and properly) the effects of *Gods* acting upon *Matter* continually and every moment.”¹¹³

This belief underlay many subsequent defences of Newtonian natural philosophy in the face of increasing deist writings on the topic, as George Cheyne (c.1673-1743) illustrates. A Scottish born physician, who learned Newtonian philosophy from his fellow Scot, Archibald Pitcairne (1652-1713), Cheyne was an imposing man who weighed some 450 pounds. He is best known as the author of the *English Malady* (1733), a study of cures for melancholy.¹¹⁴ In *Philosophical Principles of Religion: Natural and Revealed*, he followed Clarke’s example and declared that the universe as described by Newton revealed the presence of a wise and active creator.¹¹⁵ As Cheyne put it, “nature” meant nothing less than “the Perfect and Wise Production of Almighty God.”¹¹⁶ Addressing writers like Toland, he referred to Newtonian inertia:

[I]t is evident that no Particle of Matter, nor any Combination of Particles, *that is*, no Body, can either move of themselves or of themselves alter the Direction of their Motion; Matter is not endowed with Self-motion, nor with

a Power to alter the Course in which it is put, it is meerly passive and must for ever of it self continue in that State and that Course that it is settled in....¹¹⁷

Passive matter demonstrated the need for an external cause of creation and movement. Cheyne saw his book as “a plain *Demonstration of the Existence of a Deity*.”¹¹⁸ It was important, however, that one demonstrated the correct picture of God.

The period of 1704-1706 saw several Newtonian tracts both by Newton himself, as in the second English edition of the *Opticks*, and by his followers. One of the most well known of these works was initiated in October 1703 when an advertisement in the *Post Man* solicited subscribers “for Printing Lexicon Technicum Magnum: Or an Universal English Dictionary of Sciences.”¹¹⁹ Its author, John Harris (1666-1719), DD, had delivered the Boyle Lectures in 1698 and served as secretary to the Royal Society in 1709-10. He was also a well-known public lecturer in natural philosophy, specifically those facets dealing with mathematics, which he conducted at Session House, St Margarets Hill before moving to the Marine Coffeeshouse in late 1701.¹²⁰

Lexicon Technicum was based on the work of “that prodigious Mathematician Mr. *Isaac Newton*.” Harris, however, lamented the fact that the release of the *Opticks* coincided too close to the publication of his book and therefore he was unable to incorporate material from that “Excellent Book...”¹²¹ Under the heading of “Attraction” Harris wrote the following.

ATTRACTION, is the drawing of one thing to another. Whether among the Operations of Natural Bodies one upon another, there be any such thing as *Attraction*, properly so speaking, is a Question that hath been much debated amongst Philosophers ... However the word is retained by good Naturalists, and in particular, by the Excellent Mr. *Isaac Newton* in his *Principia*; but without determining any thing of the *Quale* of it, for he doth not consider things so much Physically as Mathematically.¹²²

Harris’ uncertainty mimics Newton’s: we know that bodies attract one another; we do not, however, know how this is done. As Harris notes, Newton satisfied himself with a mathematical description of the force. Referring to “Bodies” Harris suggested that they were “usually defined to be a Substance impenetrably extended;

or which having *Partes extra Partes*, cannot be in the same place with, or penetrate the Dimensions of any other Body. And this Property Mr. *Is. Newton* expresses by the word *Solidity*; and according to his excellent Philosophy the Ideas of a Body is, that which is *extended, solid and moveable*.”¹²³ Toland had stated a similar definition himself. Where Toland differed, and it was no trivial difference, was in his notion of “moveable.” He saw the third aspect of matter as the ability to obtain self-motion, whereas Harris agreed with Newton and claimed that “moveable” referred to the ability of matter to be acted upon in an alteration of its inertial state. Harris followed this book with a second volume in 1710, which we will consider shortly.

Collins Challenges Newtonian Mechanics

The contents of Anthony Collins’ library testify to his keen interest in natural philosophy. After he died, Collins’ thousands of volumes were auctioned off, over several nights in 1731, at St. Paul’s Coffeehouse.¹²⁴ Among the books listed for sale were Boyle’s *Works*, twenty-five volumes from the Paris Academy of Sciences, a complete set of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* for 1665-1727, Newton’s *Opticks* and *Principia*, Francis Bacon’s *Works*, Robert Hooke’s *Micrographia*, Pierre Gassendi’s *Philosophia*, and many others.¹²⁵ Collins also subscribed to a number of contemporary attempts to popularise Newtonian philosophy: Henry Pemberton’s *A View of Sir Isaac Newton’s Philosophy* (1728), both volumes of Harris’ *Lexicon Technicum* (1704, 1710), and other similar books.¹²⁶ Collins admired Newton’s philosophy and eagerly anticipated the release of the first edition of *Opticks* in 1704. He and Locke exchanged letters in which Collins related his enthusiasm for this new work by Newton.¹²⁷

Collins’ first public foray in natural philosophy occurred between 1706-8 in an extended dispute with Samuel Clarke, fresh from his two Boyle Lectures in which he had rebuked Toland’s excursion in natural philosophy. Collins and Clarke were drawn into their protracted pamphleteering by the nonjuring-divine Henry Dodwell who had suggested in print that the soul was naturally mortal.¹²⁸ We will address conceptions of the soul in Chapter Eight. At present we are concerned with what these writings tell us about Collins’ views on matter, motion, and gravity.

Nevertheless, as questions of the soul were intimately related to questions about matter, we must examine very briefly some of Clarke's initial exchange with Dodwell. Clarke feared that the suggestion of a mortal human soul would lead some people to think it was material because only material substances perished. As he had advised Toland, ordinary matter was brute, passive, and could never have any inherent power such as thought.¹²⁹ Collins replied by defending Dodwell's right to advance any notion of the soul he wished. Moreover, Collins suggested, as had Toland, that a system of matter might have certain powers that its individual pieces did not.¹³⁰

Clarke replied that it was "impossible and a direct Contradiction in the Nature of the Thing itself, that *any Power whatsoever* should *inhere* or *reside in*, any System or Composition of Matter, different from the Powers residing in the single Parts." For Clarke this was true because the motion of a system of matter was "nothing but the Sum of the Motions of all its Parts."¹³¹ If a collection of matter had the power of motion, there would be as many different motions as there were particles. Clarke hoped Collins would see the absurdity in claiming otherwise. Concerning the specific power of gravity Clarke stated explicitly that "*Gravitation* itself, is not a *Quality inhering in Matter*, ... but only an *Effect* of the continual and regular Operation of some other Being upon it."¹³² Following the same Newtonian line in his refutation of Toland, Clarke maintained that gravity proved divine action in the universe.

Collins replied that Clarke must prove that matter possessed the same powers, or lack thereof, separately that it had as a system, otherwise the entire objection would be rendered impotent.¹³³ If one considered the entire material world, it was evident that all the particles of matter contributed to the overall power of the system. Collins then stated that: "By Power I understand, in the Question between us, *An actual Ability to make or receive any Change, to act or be acted upon*. The Question then will be, whether there is in any System of Matter a Power to make or receive a Change, to act or be acted on, that is not the Sum or Aggregate of Powers of the same kind."¹³⁴ A "power" then was the ability to be enacted upon. Collins believed that Clarke must accept this definition as granted between them.

Where he and Clarke were certain to part was in their respective conceptions of gravity. Like Toland, Collins saw gravity as inherent in matter. He explained that “Matter gravitates by virtue of Powers originally placed in it by God, and is now left to itself to act by those Original Powers. And it is as conceivable that Matter should act by virtue of those Original Powers, as that an Immaterial Being should originally put it into Motion, or continue it in Motion.”¹³⁵ Collins described God as a skilled craftsman who did not need to perpetually attend to gravity in a universe that was unable to run on its own. Just as God did not miraculously intervene in matters of religion, He did not do so in matters of natural philosophy.

Clarke’s next pamphlet stated his position that a system of matter can have only those powers that the particles have separately: extension, mass, inertia, and nothing more. Regarding Collins’ notion of gravity, Clarke took tremendous exception. It was “a great Mistake in your Philosophy.” Clarke explained that

when a stone that was at Rest, does of itself, upon its Support being removed, begin to fall downward; what is it that causes the Stone to begin to move? Is it possible to be an Effect produced without a Cause? Is it impelled without any Impeller? Or can a *Law* or *Power*, that is to say, a *mere abstract Name or complex Notion*, and not any *real Being*, impel a Stone and cause it to begin to move?¹³⁶

Things cannot move by themselves. He wished Collins to contemplate this and realise the futility of his position.

While Collins did not deny the visual evidence of gravity, he suggested that it might not explain things so clearly. The real question was, he claimed, not whether a stone moves when its support is removed; rather:

whether *another Being*, or a Being distinct from Matter, does continually impel it, either immediately or mediately, (for I deny not the Necessity of a Being impelling another, in order to cause that Mode of Motion called *Gravitation*) and therefore Mr. *Clarke* changes the Question, when he introduces some *real Being* as necessary to impel a Stone, or cause it to begin to move upon its support being removed....¹³⁷

Matter moved due to the action of some other being, but whereas Clarke claimed this being was immaterial, Collins asserted that one could not make that assumption. In a further similarity to Toland, Collins claimed that all matter was in physical contact; there was no void. Consequently, gravity required the continual connection

of matter.¹³⁸ Surrounding bodies passed gravity to those particles they encircled in the system of the universe. For Collins this was a certain example of a power residing in a system of matter when it did not exist in individual pieces.

Collins then asked why this explanation of gravity was not more widely known to natural philosophers. “I have,” wrote Collins, “often admired that Gravitation should be esteemed a Matter of such Difficulty among Philosophers; for when Motion is supposed, and that all Matter is in constant Motion, and perpetually striking one Part against another, as I think no body doubts, one Part of Matter must be determined one way, and another Part another way.” Perpetual motion of matter caused gravity. Matter moved because the particles surrounding it moved. Where Toland employed “Action” to account for gravity, Collins suggested that gravity be thought of as one specific aspect of matter’s constant motion.¹³⁹ Also, like Toland, Collins sought authority for his position in the writing of Newton and quoted from the *Principia*.

[T]he Incomparable Sir *Isaac Newton* is of Opinion, *That Several Phenomena of Nature may depend on certain Forces, whereby from Causes (or Powers) yet undiscovered, the Particles of Bodies are mutually impelled against each other, and cohere according to regular Figures, or whereby they recede or are driven from one another; which Forces or Powers being yet unknown, the Philosopher hitherto have attempted Nature in Vain.*¹⁴⁰

If Newton himself did not know the cause of forces in nature, such as gravity, then Collins felt justified in offering whatever description he believed best accounted for the observed phenomenon.

Clarke saw things differently and chastised his adversary for not being “well acquainted with Natural Philosophy.” If it had been otherwise, Collins would surely have known that “it has been demonstrated even Mathematically, that Gravitation cannot arise from the *Configuration and Texture of the Parts of Matter*, and from the *circumambient impelling Bodies*.”¹⁴¹ Clarke then directed Collins to consider “*Sir Isaac Newton’s Principia* throughout; and the *Queries* at the End of the *Latin* Edition of his *Opticks*.” He also believed that Collins’ arrogance had exceeded his intellect. How could it be otherwise as Collins had, in one brief passage, “set aside all the Propositions in that most excellent Book [*Principia*].” In an attempt to

demonstrate to Collins the error of his hypothesis, Clarke noted that it was “established by Experiments, and from the Phenomena of the Heavenly Bodies; that the present Operations of Nature, depending upon Gravitation, cannot possibly be Mechanical Effects of *Matter in constant Motion perpetually striking one part against another.*”¹⁴²

Collins’ mistaken notions of gravity, like Toland’s, were bad enough, but more troubling was the co-opting of Newton’s name into the enterprise. Clarke accused Collins of insinuating to readers that “this great Man is of your Opinion in the present Question.” Furthermore, Clarke charged Collins with purposefully misrepresenting Newton who had specifically refuted conceptions of gravity like Collins’. Clarke further noted that what Newton meant by “force” and “power” was not what Collins believed. Such words did “not mean (as you did by *Powers originally placed in Matter by God*) to signify the *Efficient Cause* of certain determinate Motions of Matter, but only to express the *Action* itself by which the Effect is regularly produced, without determining the immediate *Agent* or *Cause*....”¹⁴³ Newton described the effect of gravity, he did not attempt to determine its cause. In a final attempt to reveal Collins’ mistakes, Clarke described Newtonian space of which matter occupied only a tiny fraction. As a result, “the great Phenomena of Nature cannot possibly depend upon any *Mechanical Powers* of Matter and Motion, but must be produced by the Force and Action of some higher Principle: and so leading us even with Mathematical Certainty, to *immaterial Powers*; and finally to the Author of all Power, the *Great Creator and Governor of the World.*”¹⁴⁴ Vacuous space and a paucity of matter necessitated that motion and gravity resulted from something other than matter. For Clarke and Newton this extra-cause was God.

During the dispute Collins wrote to John Trenchard, Whig propagandist and with Thomas Gordon co-editor of the *Independent Whig* and *Cato’s Letter*. The date of the letter (9 May 1707) was between Clarke’s last pamphlet and prior to Collins’ next reply. The contents reveal Collins’ private thoughts towards the current disagreement with Clarke and natural philosophy more generally. Collins advised Trenchard that “If [Clarke] means only to tell me as he argues with me,

That my reasoning is false, absurd, inconclusive, inconsistent &, for whosoever writes agt another must by writing agt him suppose him in the wrong & must consequently use such expressions without intrrenching on y^e rules of decency & civility.”¹⁴⁵ That is, Clarke did not have to agree with Collins so long as Clarke maintained a civil tone. Free-thinking encouraged these debates. Collins was, however, disappointed in Clarke’s actions prior to the latest pamphlet, specifically the “boasts beforehand, and talking of his having caught me at an advantage now that the dispute turns upon points of Mathematicks and Natural Philosophy.” Despite Clarke’s claims to the contrary, Collins felt confident in his understanding of the material. Indeed, he suggested that he and Clarke did not differ very much: “But what Question in Mathematicks are there in dispute between us? As for Gravitation I doubt not to defend what I have said which amount to no more than this: That matter can only move but when [it] is impelled.”¹⁴⁶ The only apparent difference was whether the impeller was material or immaterial, inherent or external. To Clarke this difference could not have been more important.

Collins responded to Clarke’s latest pamphlet by stating that he understood space differently than Clarke. Perhaps space was the place of matter and the one could not be considered apart from the other; moreover, one could have a vacuum without describing it as space without matter. In this view, real space did not exist, but was only abstractly considered. Contrarily, for Clarke as for Newton, space was the place of God’s being.¹⁴⁷ To defend his alternative view, Collins turned to the writings of Robert Boyle. It is evident that Collins held Boyle’s work in high regard, his library held thirty-two books by Boyle.¹⁴⁸ Based on his reading of the air-pump experiments, Collins believed Boyle defined a vacuum as “a vessel out of which the air is exhausted, ... by which he understands not a space wherein there is no Body at all, but such as is either altogether, or almost devoid of air....” Collins then explained to Clarke that he used “the term vacuum in the aforesaid” Boylean sense.¹⁴⁹ Thus, Collins maintained that gravity might be caused by a system of matter, even in a vacuum. Collins concluded by stating that until Clarke was able to demonstrate that a total vacuum existed in nature, “he will not be able to prove, that material Impulse is not the Cause of Gravitation,” Collins believed he was free to

write as he wished. Clarke did respond to this final challenge but only to restate his views.

Newtonian Philosophy Gets More Materialistic

Views of motion and gravity similar to those suggested by Collins became less controversial as the eighteenth century advanced. In late May of 1710 John Harris released the second volume of the *Lexicon Technicum*.¹⁵⁰ A comparison of the explanation given to terms like “Attraction” and “Body” reveals the alteration in contemporary understandings of Newton’s natural philosophy over a period of six years between the first and second volumes. One important difference was the pride of place given to the term “Attraction.” Harris wrote that he had provided readers “a further Account of that most amazing Property, the *Attraction* of the Particles of Matter one towards another, first discover’d by that Incomparable Mathematician and Philosopher Sir *Isaac Newton*...”¹⁵¹ Harris then reported how Newton had long considered the question of particulate attraction and that the Latin edition of *Opticks* included several important queries on this subject, which would reshape current views in natural philosophy. After relating Newton’s discovery that the force of attraction among the particles, which form observable bodies, varies inversely with respect to the size of the body, Harris considered the attractive power of light.

Wherefore the *Rays of Light*, being the least of all Bodies we know, must needs have the *greatest* and *strongest Attracting Force*; and how very strongly those Particles do Attract ... Now such a prodigious Force of *Attraction* in the Rays of Light cannot but have wonderful Effects in those Particles of Matter, with which they are joyned in the Composition of Bodies; and must cause that those particles Attract one another, and that they are moved variously among themselves.¹⁵²

These material bodies of light contained certain powers of attraction, which could be transferred to other bodies and in turn cause them to be attracted to one another. Light seemingly held the key to many mysteries in natural philosophy. Unlike volume one, which contained an entry on “body,” volume two has no such heading. Rather, “body” is replaced by “particles.” Particles of matter are hard, solid, and in possession of an attractive power. Thus, by 1710 Newtonians seemed to be concerned with particles of matter and the power of a material light. Indeed,

Geoffrey Cantor argues that based on Harris' work, the materiality of light became an accepted fact.¹⁵³

In 1713, the same year as Collins' *Discourse of Free-thinking*, William Derham's Boyle Lectures for 1711 and 1712 were published as *Physico-Theology*. Derham, FRS (1657-1735), was a graduate of Trinity College, Oxford and was ordained in 1682 prior to becoming Rector of Upminster in Essex (1689-1735). He was a friend of Newton and John Ray (1628-1705), the famed author of the *The Wisdom of God as Manifested in the Works of the Creation* (1691), which served as a kind of template for Derham's own catalogue of natural wonders that might prove a divine artificer. In addition to natural history, Derham published several articles in the *Philosophical Transactions* on astronomical and meteorological topics.¹⁵⁴ *Physico-Theology* was widely reprinted with a fifth edition appearing within seven years of its initial publication.¹⁵⁵ Derham followed in the footsteps of Ray and more recently of Clarke by asserting that natural philosophy might well serve theology.

We are, however, concerned with Derham's thoughts on light and gravity. Following the interpretation found in Harris, he stated: "I take *Light* to consist of material Particles, propagated from the Sun, and other luminous Bodies...."¹⁵⁶ He cited both Newton and Boyle as holders of this view. Turning to gravity, Derham described it as "the Tendency which Bodies have to the Center of the Earth." Like others of his age, Derham used Newton as his guide: "According to the principles of the *Newtonian* (the most rational of any) Philosophy, the cause of *Gravity*, is that universal Law of Matter, imprinted on it at it's Creation by the infinite Creator, namely *Attraction*: Which is congenial with all the Matter in the Universe; to Bodies and Compound, Solid and Fluid, in the Heavens, and the Earth."¹⁵⁷ In language, which might have come from Toland, Tindal, or Collins, gravity is seen to operate in terms of a "Law," which was "imprinted" on all matter at Creation. Where Derham and the deists deviated is seen most readily in *Astro-Theology*, the third set of Boyle Lectures Derham delivered in 1714 and published the following year. After advising readers that Newton "doth not pretend to assign" a cause to gravity, Derham concluded that we find answers in "the Wisdom and Power of the GREAT AUTHOR of All Things...." However, this was not the predictable knowledge-

sharing God of the deists. As Derham explained, our duty to God is to “*revere and fear him at all Times...*”¹⁵⁸ No deist would have characterised God this way.

Conclusion:

By juxtaposing the writings of our deists on natural philosophy with those of more known Newtonian popularisers, we are able to see that the two were not vastly different. Where Toland, Tindal, and Collins differed from Ditton, Harris, and others was in their conception of God as governor of the universe. However, as the next chapter demonstrates the difference between deist and non-deist presentation of contemporary natural philosophy becomes nearly indistinguishable as we near the middle of the eighteenth century.

Notes

¹ Henry Pemberton, *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy* (London, 1728), 1.

² Jeffrey R. Wigelsworth, "Competing to Popularize Newtonian Philosophy: John Theophilus Desaguliers and the Preservation of Reputation," *Isis* 94 (2003): 435-55; Stephen Snobelen, "On Reading Isaac Newton's *Principia* in the 18th Century," *Endeavour* 22 (1998): 159-63; Rob Iliffe, "'Is He Like Other Men?' The Meaning of *Principia Mathematica*, and the Author as Idol," in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration: Literature, Drama, History*, ed. Gerald Maclean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 159-76; Larry Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science: Rhetoric, Technology, and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

³ Isaac Newton to Richard Bentley, 25 February 1693 in *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, ed. H. W. Turnbull vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 254.

⁴ William Whiston, *Astronomical Principles of Religion, Natural and Reveal'd* (London, 1717), 243.

⁵ BL Add. 325548 f. 42r. On North and Newton see *Notes of Me: The Autobiography of Roger North*, ed. Peter Millard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 17-20, 141-2. On Newton's detractors more generally see John Friesen, "Anti-Newtonianism in Early Eighteenth-Century England" (master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2000).

⁶ Roger Lee Emerson, "English Deism 1670-1755: An Enlightenment Challenge to Orthodoxy" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1962), 14. Mungo Craig and the nonjuror Matthias Earbery anticipated this fear. Mungo Craig, *A Satyr Against Atheistical Deism with the Genuine Character of a Deist* (London, 1696), 12, 14; Matthias Earbery, *Deism Examined and Confuted* (London, 1697), 2-4.

⁷ Edward Stillingfleet DD., *Origines Sacrae, Or A Rational Account of the Grounds of Nature and Reveal'd Religion. To Which is now added Part of another Book Upon the Same Subject Written A. D. MDCXCVII* (Cambridge, 1702), 87, 100, 111, 116; Sarah Hutton, "Edward Stillingfleet, Henry More, and the decline of Moses Atticus: a note on Seventeenth-Century Anglican Apologetics," in *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England 1640-1700*, ed. Richard Kroll, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 68-9; 70, 76.

⁸ See Larry Stewart, "Seeing through the Scholium: Religion and Reading Newton in the Eighteenth Century," *History of Science* 34 (1996): 123-65.

⁹ Isaac Newton, *Opticks: Or, a Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections & Colours of Light*, 4th ed. (1730, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1979). On its publication see I. Bernard Cohen, "The Case of the Missing Author: The Title Page of Newton's *Opticks* (1704), With Notes on the Title Page of Huygen's *Traité De La Lumière*," in *Isaac Newton's Natural Philosophy*, ed. Jed Z. Buchwald and I. Bernard Cohen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 15-45. On the influence of the work see P. M. Heimann and J. E. McGuire, "Newtonian Forces and Lockean Powers: Concepts of Matter in Eighteenth-Century Thought," in *After Newton: Essays on Natural Philosophy*, ed. P. M. Harman (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1993), I: 233; Robert E. Schofield, *Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in an Age of Reason* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 3-5; Arnold Thackray, *Atoms and Powers: An Essay on Newtonian Matter-Theory and the Development of Chemistry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 1-7; Anita Guerrini, "Newtonian Matter Theory, Chemistry, and Medicine, 1690-1713" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1983), 6, 216; Alistair Duncan, *Laws and Order in Eighteenth-Century Chemistry* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996), 42.

¹⁰ Isaac Newton, "New Theory about Light," *Philosophical Transactions* 80 (19 February 1671/72): 3079; Casper Hakfoort, "Newton's Optics: The Changing Spectrum of Science," in *Let Newton Be!: A New Perspective on His Life and Works*, ed. John Fauvel et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 84-5, 92-3; Alan E. Shapiro, "Newton's Optics and Atomism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Newton*, ed. I. Bernard Cohen and George E. Smith

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 230-1. On the difference of Newton's theory and that of his predecessors see Richard S. Westfall, "The Development of Newton's Theory of Color," *Isis* 53 (1962): 339-58.

¹¹ Isaac Newton, *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. I. Bernard Cohen, Anne Whitman and Julia Budenz (1726, 3rd ed., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 795-6, 809; Duncan, *Laws and Order in Eighteenth-Century Chemistry*, 39; Schofield, *Mechanism and Materialism*, 7, 101; Guerrini, "Newtonian Matter Theory," 67.

¹² Newton, *Opticks*, 339-47; Shapiro, "Newton's Optics and Atomism," 227-8, 245, 250; Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Faces of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 218, 220.

¹³ Newton, "New Theory about Light," 3085.

¹⁴ Henry John Steffens, *The Development of Newtonian Optics in England* (New York: Science History Publications, 1977), 1-2.

¹⁵ Guerrini, "Newtonian Matter Theory," 180-1; Geoffrey Cantor, *Optics after Newton: Theories of Light in Britain and Ireland, 1704-1840* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 29; Thackray, *Atoms and Powers*, 8-42.

¹⁶ Newton, *Opticks*, 370.

¹⁷ Newton, *Opticks*, 372-3.

¹⁸ Heimann and McGuire, "Newtonian Forces," 235. See also Cantor, *Optics after Newton*, 25.

¹⁹ Newton, *Opticks*, 375-6.

²⁰ Newton, *Opticks*, 376.

²¹ Newton, *Opticks*, 396. See also Schofield, *Mechanism and Materialism*, 63.

²² Hakfoort, "Newton's Optics," 95; Dobbs, *Janus Faces*, 224.

²³ Newton, *Opticks*, 348; Dobbs, *Janus Faces*, 219, 226.

²⁴ Newton, *Opticks*, 349; Dobbs, *Janus Faces*, 227.

²⁵ Matthew Tindal, *Reflections on the XXVIII Propositions Touching the Doctrine of the Trinity* (London, 1695), 5.

²⁶ Tindal, *Reflections on the XXVIII Propositions*, 6. Tindal's use of natural law but not his "Laws of Motion" is examined in John Andrew Kavcic, "English Deism and Natural Law: The Case of Matthew Tindal" (master's thesis, University of Victoria, 1997).

²⁷ Pietro Redondi, *Galileo Heretic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

²⁸ Tindal, *Reflections on the XXVIII Propositions*, 7.

²⁹ Matthew Tindal, *Reasons Against Restraining the Press* (London, 1704), 9.

³⁰ Anthony Collins to John Locke, 16 February 1704, in John Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. De Beer 8 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967-1989), 8: 198.

³¹ Michel Fichant, "Leibniz et Toland: philosophie pour Princesses?," *Revue de Synthèse*, 116 (1995): 421-439; Rienk Vermij, "Matter and Motion: Toland and Spinoza," in *Disguised and Overt Spinozism around 1700* ed. Wiep Van Bunge and Wim Klever (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 276; J. G. Simms, "John Toland (1670-1722), a Donegal Heretic," *Irish Historical Studies* 16 (1968/69), 315; F. H. Heinemann, "Toland and Leibniz," *The Philosophical Review* 54 (1945): 441; Eugene English Dyche, "The Life and Works, and Philosophical Relations, of John (Janus Junius) Toland 1670-1722" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1944), 323.

³² John Toland, *Letters to Serena* (1704; facsimile reprint, Stuttgart-Bad-Cannstatt: Fredrich Formmann Verlag, 1964), b2v.

³³ BL Add. 45465 ff. 44, 45; see also Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 52-55.

³⁴ Champion, *Republican Learning*, 169. Champion links *Letters* with Toland's desire for Hanoverian succession but does not spend much time on the actual contents of the book.

³⁵ Margaret C. Jacob, "John Toland and the Newtonian Ideology," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 309, 313. She repeats this claim in *Newtonians and the English Revolution, 1689-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 228. Jacob, however, was not the first to make this assertion. In 1944 F. H. Heinemann argued that Toland's philosophy might be traced to Bruno. See his "John Toland and the Age of Enlightenment," *Review of English Studies* 20 (1944): 141.

³⁶ At the time of Jacob's initial work on Toland, there was renewed interest in influence of magic on early modern science, sparked by Frances Yates' *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964). Jacob's work was influenced by these debates. Indeed, she claimed: "By the 1960s a pilgrimage to the Warburg Institute or to Dame Frances's home in Claygate came to be seen as essential by any student with a serious interest in early modern thought." Moreover, Jacob stated that she was "inspired by a reading and rereading of [Yates's] Bruno book." Margaret C. Jacob, "Dame Frances Amelia Yates, 28 November 1899—29 September 1981" *Isis* 73 (1982): 425. On the influence of Yates' book see Floris H. Cohen, *The Scientific Revolution: A Historiographical Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 169-70, 286-96.

³⁷ David Kubrin, "Newton inside Out!: Magic, Class Struggle, and the Rise of Mechanism in the West," in *The Analytic Spirit: Essays in the History of Science in Honour of Henry Guerlac*, ed. Harry Woolf (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 115-6; Robert Rees Evans, *Pantheisticon: The Career of John Toland* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 152; Gavina Luigia Cherchi, "Atheism, Dissimulation and Atomism in the Philosophy of John Toland" (Ph.D. diss., The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1994).

³⁸ Justin Champion has attempted to determine such questions. However, his book is thin on natural philosophy with less than five dedicated pages. See *Republican Learning*, 168-9, 240-1.

³⁹ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 161, 166, 173, 176, 230, 234.

⁴⁰ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 172-3.

⁴¹ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 216.

⁴² Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 182.

⁴³ Heinemann, "Toland and Leibniz," 442-3; Stephen H. Daniel, *John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 193.

⁴⁴ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 222.

⁴⁵ Jacob, *Newtonians and the English Revolution*, 211.

⁴⁶ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 177.

⁴⁷ Bod. Gough Scotland 185: Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (London, 1716), 5, 33, 172. For more detail on this intellectual exchange between Toland and Molesworth see Justin Champion, "Erudition and Politics in John Toland's circle" (unpublished typescript). I am grateful to Justin for allowing me to see his unpublished work.

⁴⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Elements of Philosophy, The First Section Concerning Body* (London, 1656), 67, 75.

⁴⁹ A. P. Martinich, *Hobbes: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 351-4; J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675-1725* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 15.

⁵⁰ Spinoza, *The Ethics in Benedict de Spinoza, On the Improvement of the Human Understanding; The Ethics; Correspondence*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), 45; Michael Hunter, "Science and Heterodoxy: An Early Modern Problem Reconsidered," in *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*, ed. David C. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 449-56.

⁵¹ Dyche, "John (Janus Junisu) Toland 1670-1722," 32. In his recent book Jonathan I. Israel suggests that Spinoza's philosophy was very pervasive and that it formed the basis of deist, specifically Toland's, natural philosophical writings. Justin Champion cautions against such blanket statements of influence and urges scholars to consider more local influence upon

Toland rather than a European-wide network of closet Spinozists. See Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 12-13, 609-14; Cf. Champion, *Republican Learning*, 252.

⁵² Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 144.

⁵³ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 138, 145.

⁵⁴ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 146-7.

⁵⁵ Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's Heresy: Immortality and the Jewish Mind* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 2001), 34-5; Richard Mason, *The God of Spinoza: A Philosophical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 25, 44, 51.

⁵⁶ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 143.

⁵⁷ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 152. René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Valentine Rodger Miller and Reese P. Miller (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1983), bk. 2 § 4, § 36.

⁵⁸ Cherchi argues that *Letters to Serena* is really an extended critique of Cudworth's philosophy in that it inverts Cudworth's plastic nature. "Atheism, Dissimulation and Atomism," 189-99.

⁵⁹ A misconception exists regarding Toland and Cudworth, which originated with John Yolton in his book *Thinking Matter* and has been repeated most recently by Rob Iliffe. The assertion is that Toland referred to his concept of perpetual motion with Cudworth's term "autokinesy." However, nowhere in *Letters to Serena* does Toland use this word; he did not appropriate the language of his opponent. John Yolton, *Thinking Matter: Materialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 101; Rob Iliffe, "Philosophy of Science," in *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 4, *Eighteenth-Century Science*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 276. Yolton cites Cudworth and Iliffe cites Yolton, neither author cites *Letters to Serena*.

⁶⁰ *Post Man*, 6-9 May 1704; 7-9 November 1704. On Gildon's criticisms of Pope see *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, 5 vols., ed. George Sherbrun (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1956), 2: 3, 334, 343, 349; Edith Sitwell, *Alexander Pope* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1930), 124.

⁶¹ Charles Gildon, *The Deist's Manual: or, A Rational Enquiry into the Christian Religion* (1705; facsimile reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), preface.

⁶² J. E. McGuire, "Newton on Place, Time, and God: An Unpublished Source," *British Journal for the History of Science* 11 (1978): 117.

⁶³ McGuire, "Newton on Place, Time, and God," 121, 126.

⁶⁴ Newton, *Principia*, 941; J. E. McGuire, "Existence, Actuality and Necessity: Newton on Space and Time," *Annals of Science* 35 (1978): 465-9, 473. See also his "The Fate of the Date: The Theology of Newton's Principia Revisited," in *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*, ed. Margaret J. Osler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Newton's first law of motion—"Every body perseveres in its state of being at rest or of moving uniformly straight forward, except insofar as it is compelled to change its state by forces impressed"—also required absolute infinite space. A body could not keep its rectilinear motion in a finite universe; eventually it would overcome the space of its action. See Edward Grant, *Much Ado About Nothing: Theories of Space and Vacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 240, 243.

⁶⁵ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 183. Newton, *Principia*, 410.

⁶⁶ Daniel, *John Toland*, 200.

⁶⁷ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 213.

⁶⁸ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 201-2.

⁶⁹ Jacob, "John Toland," 320; Jacob, *Newtonians and the English Revolution*, 228, 238; Daniel, *John Toland*, 187-8.

⁷⁰ This is tentatively suggested by Philip McGuinness in "Hue and Cry of Heresy": John Toland, Isaac Newton and the Social Context of Scientists," *History Ireland* 4 (1996): 23-

6; idem, “‘Perpetual Flux’: Newton, Toland, Science, and the Status Quo,” in *John Toland’s Christianity not Mysterious: Text, Associated Works and Critical Essays*, ed. Philip McGuinness, Alan Harrison, and Richard Kearney (Dublin: The Lillipuit Press, 1997), 316; Rienk Vermij, “The Formation of the Newtonian Philosophy: The Case of Amsterdam Mathematical Amateurs,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 36 (2003): 199-200.

⁷¹ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 156.

⁷² Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 157. On occasionalism as it pertained Descartes see Daniel Garber, “Descartes and Occasionalism,” in *Causation in Early Modern Philosophy: Cartesianism, Occasionalism, and Preestablished Harmony*, ed. Steven Nadler (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1993), 9-26.

⁷³ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 234-5.

⁷⁴ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 140.

⁷⁵ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 141.

⁷⁶ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 159.

⁷⁷ Pierre Lurbe, “Matière, Nature, Mouvement Chez D’ Holbach et Toland,” *Dix-Huitieme Siecle* 24 (1992): 54-5.

⁷⁸ Isaac Newton to Richard Bentley, 17 January 1693 in *Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, 3: 240; John Henry, “‘Pray Do Not Ascribe That Notion to Me’: God and Newton’s Gravity,” in *The Books of Nature and Scripture*, ed. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994).

⁷⁹ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 160.

⁸⁰ Jeffrey R. Wigelsworth, “Lockean Essences, Political Posturing, and John Toland’s Reading of Newton’s *Principia*,” *Canadian Journal of History* 38 (2003): 521-537.

⁸¹ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 165.

⁸² Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 168.

⁸³ John Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*, 2nd ed. (London, 1696), 89.

⁸⁴ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 168-9.

⁸⁵ Peter Alexander, *Ideas, Qualities and Corpuscles: Locke and Boyle on the Eternal World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 70-1, 170-2.

⁸⁶ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 176-7. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, bk. 2 § 27, § 37-40; Daniel Garber, *Descartes’ Metaphysical Physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 197-254.

⁸⁷ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 199-200.

⁸⁸ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 202.

⁸⁹ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 184, 185.

⁹⁰ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 208.

⁹¹ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 233-4. Cf. Daniel, *John Toland*, 11, 187.

⁹² Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 206-7. M. C. Jacob sees statements like this as indicative of Toland’s desire to undermine Newton’s philosophy. Rather than see Toland as purposely destroying Newton’s philosophy, I argued that we ought to regard Toland as one of many who admired Newton but read him within the framework of their own experience. Cf. Jacob, “John Toland,” 320.

⁹³ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 208.

⁹⁴ Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 834-5; Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science*, 115-7. On Christ’s Hospital Royal Mathematical School see Rob Iliffe, “Mathematical Characters: Flamsteed and Christ’s Hospital Royal Mathematical School,” in *Flamsteed’s Stars: New Perspectives on the Life and Work of the First Astronomer Royal (1646-1719)*, ed. Frances Willmoth (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), 115-44.

⁹⁵ Humphry Ditton, *The General Laws of Nature and Motion* (London, 1705), preface. Ditton also composed a specific anti-deist work in 1712: *A Discourse Concerning the*

Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Three Parts. 2nd ed. (London, 1714). We will examine this work in chapter 8.

⁹⁶ RS MS/243 f. 19v. John Flamsteed to Abraham Sharp, 5 December 1704. This is also quoted in Larry Stewart, “Whigs and Heretics: Science, Religion, and Politics in the Age of Newton,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1978), 20. I have compared my transcription with Stewart’s but retain the original capitalisation. On Flamsteed more generally see the chapters in *Flamsteed’s Stars*.

⁹⁷ *Post Man*, 25-28 November 1704.

⁹⁸ Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God: More Particularly in Answer to Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, and Their Followers* (London, 1705), table of contents. The French edition of *Letters to Serena* commented that Clarke had in “de l’ Existence de Dieu. Chap IV page 35 Edition de 1717” tried in vain to refute Toland, but could not do it. John Toland, *Lettres Philosophiques* trans. Baron von Holbach (Londres, 1768). “preface.”

⁹⁹ Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, 46-7.

¹⁰⁰ Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, 123, 156.

¹⁰¹ McGuire, “Existence, Actuality and Necessity,” 463-508.

¹⁰² William Whiston, *Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Samuel Clarke* Second Edition (London, 1730), 95; Larry Stewart, “Samuel Clarke, Newtonianism, and the Factions of Post-Revolutionary England,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42 (1981): 53-6; idem, *The Rise of Public Science*, 88.

¹⁰³ John C. English, “John Hutchinson’s Critique of Newtonian Heterodoxy,” *Church History* 68 (1999): 584, 586; C. B. Wilde, “Hutchinsonianism, Natural Philosophy and Religious Controversy in Eighteenth Century Britain,” *History of Science* 18 (1980): 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Post Man*, 14-16 December 1704.

¹⁰⁵ William Wotton, *A Letter to Eusebia: Occasioned by Mr. Toland’s Letters to Serena* (London, 1704), 2, 21.

¹⁰⁶ William Wotton, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (London, 1694), 279, 280. He also composed an uncompleted life of Boyle. See Michael Hunter ed., *Robert Boyle By Himself and His Friends with a Fragment from William Wotton’s Lost Life of Boyle* (London: William Pickering, 1994), xxxvi-liv, 111-48.

¹⁰⁷ Wotton, *A Letter to Eusebia*, 55.

¹⁰⁸ Wotton, *A Letter to Eusebia*, 59.

¹⁰⁹ Wotton, *A Letter to Eusebia*, 67.

¹¹⁰ Wotton, *A Letter to Eusebia*, 71.

¹¹¹ John Toland, *Mangoneutes: being a Defence of Nazarenus* (London, 1720), 190.

¹¹² Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation* (London, 1706), 176, 178.

¹¹³ Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion*, 354-5.

¹¹⁴ Anita Guerrini, *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), xiv-xviii; John Friesen, “Archibald Pitcairne, David Gregory and the Scottish Origins of English Tory Newtonianism, 1688-1715,” *History of Science* 41 (2003): 163-91.

¹¹⁵ Guerrini, “Newtonian Matter Theory,” 133; *Obesity and Depression*, 72-88.

¹¹⁶ George Cheyne, *Philosophical Principles of Religion: Natural and Revealed: In Two Parts*, 2nd ed. (London, 1715), 2.

¹¹⁷ Cheyne, *Philosophical Principles of Religion*, 10. See also 8; Vincenzo Ferrone, *The Intellectual Roots of the Italian Enlightenment: Newtonian Science, Religion, and Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century*, trans. Sue Brotherton (New Jersey: The Humanities Press, 1995), 82.

¹¹⁸ Cheyne, *Philosophical Principles of Religion*, 180, 182.

- ¹¹⁹ *Post Man*, 6-8 April 1703.
- ¹²⁰ *Post Man*, 24-26 April 1701; 18-20 September 1701. On Harris' lectures see: Larry Stewart, "Philosophers in the Counting-Houses: Commerce, Coffee-Houses and Experiments in Early Modern London," in *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam, and London*, ed. Patrick O'Brien et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 338-40.
- ¹²¹ John Harris, *Lexicon Technicum: or, an Universal English Dictionary of Arts of Sciences* (London, 1704), preface.
- ¹²² Harris, *Lexicon Technicum* (1704), "Attraction."
- ¹²³ Harris, *Lexicon Technicum* (1704), "Body"
- ¹²⁴ *Daily Post*, 4-19 January 1731.
- ¹²⁵ James O' Higgins, *Anthony Collins: The Man and His Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 29; see also the advertisements in *Daily Post*. On the importance of libraries in Enlightenment erudition see Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 119-131.
- ¹²⁶ Henry Pemberton, *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy* (London, 1728); Harris, *Lexicon Technicum: or, an Universal English Dictionary of Arts or Sciences*, 2 vols. (London, 1704, 1710); *Cyclopaedia: or, an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, 2 vols. (London, 1728).
- ¹²⁷ Collins to Locke, 18 November 1703; Locke to Collins, 22 November 1703; Collins to Locke 16 February 1704, in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 8: 123, 126, 198.
- ¹²⁸ Jeffrey R. Wigelsworth, "The Sleeping Habits of Matter and Spirit: Anthony Collins and Samuel Clarke on the Immortality of the Soul," *Past Imperfect* 9 (2001-03): 1-24; J. P. Ferguson, *An Eighteenth Century Heretic: Dr. Samuel Clarke* (Kington: The Roundwood Press, 1976), 36-7.
- ¹²⁹ Samuel Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in *The Works of Samuel Clarke*, 4 vols. (London, 1738), 3: 730.
- ¹³⁰ Anthony Collins, *A Letter to the Learned Mr. Henry Dodwell; Containing Some Remarks on a (pretended) Demonstration of the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul*, in *Mr. Clarke's Answer to his late Epistolary Discourse, &c*, in *Clarke, Works*, 3: 749, 751. See also O' Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 71.
- ¹³¹ Samuel Clarke, *A Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell, To prove the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul*, in *Clarke, Works*, 3: 759.
- ¹³² Clarke, *A Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 760. On this see Robin Attfield, "Clarke, Collins and Compounds," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15 (1977): 46-7.
- ¹³³ Anthony Collins, *A Reply to Mr. Clarke's Defence of His Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, in *Clarke, Works*, 3: 767.
- ¹³⁴ Collins, *A Reply to Mr. Clarke's Defence*, 768.
- ¹³⁵ Collins, *A Reply to Mr. Clarke's Defence*, 771.
- ¹³⁶ Samuel Clarke, *A Second Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell, To prove the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul*, in *Clarke, Works*, 3: 792.
- ¹³⁷ Anthony Collins, *Reflections on Mr. Clarke's Second Defence of His Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, in *Clarke, Works*, 3: 811.
- ¹³⁸ Collins, *Reflections on Mr. Clarke's Second Defence*, 812.
- ¹³⁹ Collins, *Reflections on Mr. Clarke's Second Defence*, 812.
- ¹⁴⁰ Collins, *Reflections on Mr. Clarke's Second Defence*, 813.
- ¹⁴¹ Samuel Clarke, *A Third Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell, To prove the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul*, in *Clarke, Works*, 3: 846; see also 827.
- ¹⁴² Clarke, *A Third Defence of an Argument*, 847-8.
- ¹⁴³ Clarke, *A Third Defence of an Argument*, 848.

- ¹⁴⁴ Clarke, *A Third Defence of an Argument*, 849.
- ¹⁴⁵ KSRL MS G23: 14 f. 45v. Anthony Collins to John Trenchard, 9 May 1707. M. C. Jacob has published portions of this letter, but she did not treat it as part of the ongoing dispute. See “Newtonianism and the Origins of the Enlightenment: A Reassessment,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 11 (1977): 20.
- ¹⁴⁶ KSRL MS G23: 14 f. 46r. Underlining in original.
- ¹⁴⁷ McGuire, “Newton on Place, Time and God,” 114-29.
- ¹⁴⁸ O’ Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 28.
- ¹⁴⁹ Anthony Collins, *An Answer to Mr. Clarke’s Third Defence of His Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 881. Boyle would not have accepted this use of his work. See Jane E. Jenkins, “Arguing About Nothing: Henry More and Robert Boyle on the Theological Implications of the Void,” in *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*, ed. Margaret J. Osler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153-79.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Post Boy*, 23 to 25 May 1710.
- ¹⁵¹ John Harris, *Lexicon Technicum: or, an Universal English Dictionary of Arts of Sciences*, vol. 2 (London, 1710), “Introduction.”
- ¹⁵² Harris, *Lexicon Technicum* (1710), “Attraction.”
- ¹⁵³ Cantor, *Optics After Newton*, 31, 32-3. See also Heimann and McGuire, “Newtonian Forces,” 236; Schofield, *Mechanism and Materialism*, 16.
- ¹⁵⁴ A. D. Atkinson, “William Derham, F.R.S. (1657-1735),” *Annals of Science* 8 (1952): 368-92; Westfall, *Never at Rest*, 459; Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science*, 53. Derham also composed an unpublished life of Ray. See Edwin Lankester ed., *Memorials of John Ray, Consisting of his Life by Dr. Derham* (London: The Ray Society, 1846).
- ¹⁵⁵ *Post Boy*, 6 June 1713; 12 May 1720.
- ¹⁵⁶ William Derham, *Physico-Theology* (1713; facsimile reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976), 26.
- ¹⁵⁷ Derham, *Physico-Theology*, 31, 32.
- ¹⁵⁸ William Derham, *Astro-Theology: Or, A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, From a Survey of the Heavens*, 6th ed. (London, 1731), 156-7, 230-1.

Chapter Seven:

Deists on Matter, Motion, and Newtonian Public Science: From Deviation to Indistinctness

By the time Sir Isaac Newton died in 1727 contemporary enthusiasm for natural philosophy ensured that it had crossed the threshold of the rooms at the Royal Society to become firmly established as part of a national discourse. We need only look at the day's newspapers to see how much natural philosophy had captured imaginations and created a market niche. Newspaper advertisements offered consumers the opportunity to literally hold the world in their hands. Pocket globes and larger models contained "the newest Observations, communicated to the Royal Society at London, and the Royal Academy."¹ Such natural philosophical instruments also became popular decorations in fashionable London homes. One advertisement ran throughout 1717 offering

Cheap, curious, useful and instructive Ornaments for Rooms, Stair-cases, &c. being 19 new Maps neatly and correctly done ... including the latest Discoveries and Observations of the Royal Societies in London and Paris ... each map handsomely colour'd and Illustrated ... where is also Sold the very best ... Telescopes, Perspective Glasses, Reading Glasses, and many other Useful Curiosities, all of which no Person hath better Goods, better Choice.²

Even if one could not afford these latest items, they were not barred from the knowledge of new discoveries in natural philosophy. A curious notice for 22 September 1705 alerted readers on a budget that there was "Just Published, and is Given Gratis to any one that will but ask for it. A Philosophical Essay upon Actions on distant Subjects, wherein are clearly explicated, according to the Principles of the New Philosophy, and Sir Isaac Newton's Laws of Motion, all those Actions usually

attributed to Sympathy and Antipathy....”³ Interested parties simply had to visit the Sugar Loaf (a bakery) and request the book.

Of course, natural philosophical books written for a general audience continued to see many printings. Those who were excluded from Royal Society meetings could purchase, through subscription for twenty-five shillings, an abridged set of the *Philosophical Transactions* for the years 1700 to 1720. For readers with a continental eye, *Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris Epitomized* allowed a glimpse at developments across the Channel.⁴ We may note the enormous popularity of these kinds of works from notices placed around 1720 for auctions of libraries of deceased persons which made specific references to the natural philosophical books contained in them.⁵ Public lecturers continued to compete for patrons. By 1718 three distinct sets of lectures delivered by William Whiston and Francis Hauksbee, by John T. Desaguliers, and by Benjamin Worster with his partner Thomas Watts all offered instruction in “Mechanical, Hydrostatical, Pneumatical, and Optical Experiments.”⁶ In addition, various courses on chymistry, anatomy, and lectures in Gresham College ensured that any interested party with the means to do so had ample opportunity to immerse themselves in natural philosophy. It is into this arena of public science that I have sought to place deists’ writings on natural philosophy and will continue to do so as we move towards the middle of the eighteenth-century.

Toland’s *Pantheisticon*

Pantheisticon: or the Form of Celebrating the Socratic-Society (Latin ed. 1720; English ed. 1751) was Toland’s second attempt at composing a natural philosophy and contains his final view of God and providence.⁷ Recently, historians have demonstrated that Toland appropriated the term “pantheist” from the work of Joseph Raphson (1648-1715), mathematician and fellow of the Royal Society, using it to refer to God’s relationship with the Creation. In *De spatio reali* (1697) Raphson had claimed that space was an attribute of the divine first cause of Creation; thus anything in space was within God. According to Raphson, Jewish theologians “maintained a certain universal substance, material as well as intelligent, fashioning all things that exist out of its own essence, whence they have

received the name *pantheists*.” This “universal substance” penetrated everything, but was different from ordinary matter.⁸

Toland embraced Raphson’s characterisation of Pantheists and added they also believed that “the Force and Energy of the Whole, the Creator and Ruler of All, and always tending to the best End, is GOD, whom you may call the *Mind*, if you please, and *Soul* of the Universe; and hence it is, ... this Force, according to them, being not separated from the *Universe* itself, but a Distinction of Reason alone.”⁹ Toland still maintained the image of God as one who operated for the best ends of humanity and not for Himself: God is an ally in humanity’s search for obtainable knowledge. God is eternal and everlasting, He is the author of all things, and humanity exists in His presence. This was not a particularly unique nor radical position; William Whiston and Newton himself also believed that “in God we properly live, move, and have our being.” So too did the infamous preacher Henry Sacheverell.¹⁰ However, the similarities ended there. Whereas Toland’s God might be material that of his challengers was pure spirit. In 1720 Toland’s conception of God had reached its final stage: God placed all meaningful truths about the universe and himself within the capacity of the human intellect.

Some years earlier during one of his visits to Hanover, Toland had discussed his changing notions of God with Leibniz who responded with caution: “You frequently refer, Sir, to the opinion of those who think that there is no other God or Eternal Being than the World itself, ... But this opinion, which you yourself profess to reject, is as pernicious as it is unfounded...”¹¹ Though he would direct his criticism specifically at Newton’s claim that space was God’s sensorium, opinions such as Toland’s may also have been what Leibniz had in mind during his famed correspondence with Clarke when he wrote “Natural religion itself, seems to decay (in England) very much. Many will have human souls to be material: others make God himself a corporeal being.”¹²

By the time he composed *Pantheisticon*, Toland’s attempts at an English political appointment had come to nought. Moreover, he was destitute following his ill-fated investment in the South Sea Company. He was living in a tiny rented room with his books stacked on chairs.¹³ Because it was one of Toland’s final

publications, historians have been keen to see it as the ultimate formulation of his philosophy and have spent much effort seeking anticipation of *Pantheisticon's* contents in Toland's earlier writings. Margaret C. Jacob has claimed that the work was a handbook for a secret society, a kind of Masonic lodge. Similarly, Stephen Daniel argued that Toland wrote the book for a small "group of true believers." However, the attempts to link Toland to a secret society of Masons have been convincingly refuted. Justin Champion has also denied the existence of any pantheist society. Champion further claimed that when Toland identified himself as a pantheist it meant one who enjoyed intellectual debates; and, as we saw, demonstrated a particular view of providence. Pantheism is perhaps best viewed as a strategy of open intellectual exchange, not the foundation of a radical subculture of followers.¹⁴

The conception of matter and motion contained in *Pantheisticon* is both similar and different to that described in *Letters to Serena*. Toland continued in his belief that the universe was an infinite whole with no void space. Individual bodies were seen as such by "their peculiar Attributes, although, with Regard to the Whole, there were no Parts really separate." There was also a guiding principle that created "Harmony of the infinite Whole" and ensured the "most perfect Order" regulating "all Things in the *Universe*."¹⁵ This guiding principle was God, not "separated from the *Universe* itself, but a Distinction of Reason alone," whom Toland further described as the "Force and Energy of the Whole, the Creator and Ruler of All, and always tending to the best End...."¹⁶

Unlike *Letters to Serena*, where he noted that individual pieces of matter were mental abstractions of the universal matter, Toland here suggested that matter was composed of individual particles packed closely together. These particles were "most simple, and actually indivisible, infinite too in Number and Species, and that all Things are made out of their Composition, Separation, and various Mixture, but with proper Measures, Weights, and Motions."¹⁷ Matter existed everywhere; there was no void. Moreover, Toland claimed that by denying a void, he escaped the fault of Epicurus who had to invoke chance and fortune to account for the coming together into substances of atoms in an absolute vacuum. Toland also referred to

Newton in this vein. Whereas he once saw Newton's work as complimenting his own natural philosophy, Toland now viewed Newton as the most able spokesperson for those philosophers who maintained the existence of a real void space: "Whoever feeds his Fancy with these Notions, let him consult the great *Newton*."¹⁸

As he had done earlier, Toland argued that "universal Action" was the "chiefest of all Motions." Motion was transmitted from one body to another never decreasing.¹⁹ While there were individual motions, these were aspects of Action. Toland explained, that everything was "in Motion, and all Diversities whatsoever [were] so many Names for particular Motions," however, "not one single Point in Nature being absolutely at rest, but only with regard to other Things...."²⁰ Thus, for Toland motion was the true state of matter and rest existed in a relative sense only.

After outlining his mechanism for thought, which we will address in the next chapter, Toland considered the origin of material things. He found the Peripatetic notion of the four elements (earth-air-fire-water) "neither simple nor sufficient" to explain the initial constitution of the universe. Toland argued that an infinite universe must be eternal "as nothing could be made out of nothing." What is more, and considering the construction of trees, "the organic Structure of Seeds could not be formed out of any Course of Atoms, or any Species of Motion whatsoever."²¹ Seeds contained, in Aristotelian language, the *potentia* of becoming a tree. Toland saw this as fulfilment of purpose. He also stated that the same principle applied to animals.²² Things resulted from a kind of organic growth from first principles, or seeds, into their end product and would later be combined to form visible objects. Toland again contradicts what he had stated in *Letters to Serena*, notably that bodies appear different to observers due to the motion of their identical particles and the sensations this motion causes in us. In *Pantheisticon* he posited that things were built up from dissimilar substances. He explained that "Chymists demonstrate, that such Bodies are cemented by a manifold growing together of several Substances; for which Reason, from Gold, than which nothing seems to be more similar, they extract Sulphur, Quick-silver, Earth and other Things, that go to the Composition of this noble Metal...."²³ That these diverse substances grow together to form gold is

evident when the same substances can be disentangled from their heterogeneous mixture.

Toland, Gibson, and the Geology of a Living World

Because Toland incorporated geology and natural history concepts into *Pantheisticon*, it is worth pausing to consider his experience with these subjects. Edmund Gibson and Toland had a greater association than might be imagined. During June and July 1694 they spent much time discussing natural history. As is well known, in 1695 Gibson issued a new edition of William Camden's *Britannia*, a sixteenth-century geographical and historical account of Britain. To accomplish this task, Gibson relied upon the talents of many scholars including Toland, who was to guide the section of the book concerning Ireland.²⁴ Arthur Charlett later remembered that Toland "courted" Gibson who "very little valued his Learning to which [Toland] so much pretended."²⁵ The two unlikely partners did not remain together for very long. Gibson was irritated with Toland's suggestion that they revise a manuscript catalogue of English historians owned by Gibson. The final break between them occurred when Toland apparently uttered unfavourable comments regarding Camden which he unsuccessfully retracted.²⁶ The loss to Gibson's work was perhaps not a great one. When he initially arrived in Oxford Toland met and befriended Edward Lhwyd (1660-1709), antiquarian and Keeper of the Ashmolean. The two men had many conversations about geology, but Lhwyd confessed to a friend that Toland was "not conversant in these studies, and endeavours to perswade us" as to his abilities.²⁷ Like others who met him, Lhwyd described Toland's behaviour in mid-June 1695 with displeasure: he was "eminent for railing in coffee houses against all communities in religion, and monarch..."²⁸ Despite sharing intellectual interests with men such as Gibson and Lhwyd, Toland ruined these relationships with unrestrained vanity and self-promotion.

Pantheisticon was finally the proper venue for Toland to integrate his Oxford geological studies with his modified natural philosophy. He noted that veins of a sort are evident in stones through which an "Aliment" moves to provide "the Nutriment, and finally, an Exhalation passes through thin and hidden Pores." In the same way that the flow of blood provides nourishment for living creatures,

“Aliment” does the same for less obviously living matter. Indeed, the same “Aliment” was also present in blood.²⁹ Noting the variety of minerals and gems, Toland stated “there’s no Reason” to “believe, they were less actuated with Life, than the Teeth and Bones of Animals.” To those who would scoff at his notion of minute pores and a vitalising “Aliment” in nature, Toland requested that they consider their bones, which grow and are brought nutrients via “imperceptible Conduits.”³⁰ Toland explained the presence of certain materials in some locations and not in others by the amount of nourishment available in a particular place: “Marble grows here, Diamonds there; one Stone puts on its due Form sooner, another Stone later; this Seed generates Pebbles, that Rocks.” Toland’s universe was an organic one in which all components of it grew and lived; it was an infinite animal.³¹

Toland argued that his conception of an organic universe explained the observed phenomena better than did competing theories, specifically Descartes’ view of matter, defined by extension alone. In contrast, Toland argued that “Infinite, simple, and dissimilar Substances, or the primary Bodies of infinite Species, moveable and indivisible, make all the Mixtures of all Things, of which they themselves are the eternal, unexhausted, and immutable Matter.” These bodies can only be what they are. Things are what they are for all eternity. Sulphur seeds can only produce sulphur, bone seeds can only become bones. That is, “there can be no Division, much less Permutation of the first Bodies.” Toland concluded that there could not be any true destruction in the universe. Particles only change places in new configurations.³²

Some years after the publication of *Pantheisticon* an anonymous assessment appeared in the *History of the Works of the Learned*, a periodical which addressed “eminent writers in all Branches of polite Literature.” The reviewer referred to it as “a ridiculous *Latin* Piece ... by that despicable Knight-Errant in the Cause of Infidelity, *John Toland*.”³³ In an assessment reminiscent of that offered by William Wotton against *Letters to Serena*, the reviewer claimed, Toland’s purpose was “in *Words* only to say there is a *Deity*, but in fact it is destroying his Existence.” The fear was that these writings might corrupt “the unwary and the Half-learned.” There

was more at stake than wrong-minded conceptions of matter and motion: it was a battle to place the proper view of God in the hearts of Britons.³⁴

Debated Sources for *Pantheisticon*

Gavina Cherchi has recently suggested that the natural philosophy of *Pantheisticon* was modified Epicureanism. This interpretation forms part of her larger thesis that Toland was a radical heretic who paid only lip-service to Christian beliefs. The problem with this view is that the philosophy and the description of matter in *Pantheisticon* were vastly different from that advanced by Epicurus. Where the Hellenistic philosopher described identical atoms in a void moving by chance and fate,³⁵ Toland envisaged organic seeds of potential becoming their final product and then combining to form other complex bodies. Rather than Epicurean atoms, we ought to look for a philosophy based on seeds of uncreated matter. Toland's works suggest we contemplate the Pre-Socratic philosopher Anaxagoras (500-428 BC). We know that Toland read and was familiar with Anaxagoras' work; he referred Sophia Charlotte to it in *Letters to Serena*. Anaxagoras is known only through the surviving twenty fragments of his philosophy, which were preserved chiefly by Simplicius in his commentaries on Aristotle. The basic assumptions that underlay his philosophy are as follows: all which exists did not come into being, nor will anything come to an end. Everything is made of many parts, and is not singular; it is inseparable.³⁶ If we consider Anaxagoras' fragments in more detail, the parallels with the philosophy of *Pantheisticon* are striking. For example, fragment B4 states:

Before these things were separated off, when all things were together, no colour was evident; for the mingling together of all things prevented it—of the wet and the dry and the hot and the cold and the bright and the dark, much earth being in there also, and seeds infinite in number, in no way like each other, for of the other no one is at all like the other.³⁷

Moreover, fragment B6 claims, "And since the features of the great and the small are equal in number, for this reason, too, all (things) will be in everything. Nor is it possible to exist apart, but all (things) share a feature of everything."³⁸ The world is built out of infinite seeds, which combine to make the matter of all things. These seeds are not destroyed, only recombined. The universe, however, was not purely

materialistic. A “cosmic mind” interacted with matter “governing all motion of all objects, and perceiving and knowing all the physical changes occurring in different parts of the world....” We know that this mind exists not from direct experience but from its effects on matter. Because the universe was joined in matter and by the cosmic mind, it was a kind of organism, which breathed and performed all the functions of life. To readers of *Pantheisticon* all this sounded familiar.³⁹

Cherchi also suggests that Toland’s supposed Epicurean-like matter was a last stab at the establishment that denied him a place by demonstrating that atheism could find support in the same doctrines of matter and motion that men like Boyle and Newton believed demonstrated divine providence.⁴⁰ Where those two philosophers saw God’s direct and continuing handiwork in the operation of the universe, Cherchi argues that Toland presented self-moving matter, which existed in accordance with Newtonian physics, as a godless alternative. Toland himself, however, offered a different view consistent with the interpretation in our previous chapters. In the only extant explication of the *Pantheisticon*, Toland wrote to a former Cambridge fellow Barnham Goode in October 1720. After referring to his losses in the South Sea Company, Toland wrote “I think it the wisest course, at least the most becoming a Pantheist (who ought to be prepared for every caprice and reverse of fortune) to leave this national affair to the consideration of the Parliament, which alone can redress its own mistakes, and punish the miscarriages of the managers.”⁴¹ He had not lost faith in established politics or its institutions. His attitude was also consistent with the philosophy of *Pantheisticon*: things are built, broken, and built again, nothing is truly destroyed. The same might be said of Toland’s fortune: it was gone now, but perhaps it would be restored. This is also consistent with his letters to Molesworth on the South Sea Company. Toland further advised Goode that “as to F. P. in the Epistle before the *Pantheisticon*, let him know that it Signifies no more than Felicitatem precatur.”⁴² That is, one prays for happiness or success. This would seem to cast doubt on Cherchi’s hypothesis of Toland’s atheism and support Champion, who claims it is unlikely that we can dismiss Toland’s public assertions of Christian belief as “insincere and contrived.”⁴³

The uniqueness of the worldview Toland advanced in *Pantheisticon* is minimised when we consider the 31 December 1720 number of John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon's *Independent Whig*. Like Toland's natural philosophy, Trenchard and Gordon suggested that

Every Thing in the Universe is in constant Motion, and where-ever we move we are surrounded with Bodies, everyone of which must, in a certain degree, operate upon themselves and us; and it cannot be otherwise, that in the Variety of Actions and Events, which happen in all Nature, but some must appear very extraordinary to those who know not their true Causes: Men naturally admire what they cannot apprehend, and seem to do some of Credit to their Understanding, in believing whatever is out of their reach to be Supernatural.⁴⁴

This description is strikingly similar to Toland's: all of nature operated by the interaction of matter moving in accordance with established rules. As Toland had also claimed, ignorance of these rules forced some philosophers to find explanations in direct divine guidance. Finally, a proper knowledge of natural philosophy allowed formerly extraordinary events to be understood in terms of the rules of motion. By casting a wide net for the context of deist writings we see that they engaged with topics of interests and offered solutions that did not differ greatly from those of their contemporaries.

Collins, Whiston, and Deist Support of Public Science

Collins admired public lecturers on natural philosophy. Though he was debating William Whiston at great length over the meaning of prophecy in 1724, Collins appreciated Whiston's efforts to disseminate Newtonian philosophy. He also praised Whiston as an accomplished scholar with "great *designs* for the improvement of philosophy, and for the welfare and trade of his country: as appears by his attempts to explain the philosophy of Sir Isaac Newton, and by his other works in *mathematicks* and *physicks*, but above all, by his *attempts to discover the longitude...*"⁴⁵ Whiston did more than promote Newton's work in such publications as *New Theory of the Earth* (1696) and *Newton's Mathematick Philosophy More Easily Demonstrated* (1716); he encouraged participation in the endeavour. After he had been banned from Cambridge for Arianism, Whiston began a career as a public lecturer in mathematical philosophy in 1712. His lectures

were very popular and attracted large audiences. For example, the solar eclipse of 1715 provided Whiston one excellent opportunity to generate income by offering instruction on how best to observe the phenomenon and understand it.⁴⁶ The *Post Man* carried Whiston's advertisements, which alerted interested parties that he had created a "universal Astronomical Instrument for the easy Calculation and Exhibition of Eclipses, and of all the Celestial Motions." As the date for the eclipse neared, advertisements reminded readers that Whiston intended "to observe the great Eclipse next Friday over the North West Piazza in Covent Garden. Tickets are delivered out at his own house in Crosstreet near Covent Garden." Of course, in the week leading up to the event, Whiston adjusted the contents of his lectures to focus on eclipses.⁴⁷

Whiston's attempts to find a method to determine longitude at sea, which Collins also admired, were similarly a public exercise. Whiston and his partner, Humphrey Ditton, petitioned Parliament on 19 April 1714 to create a reward for the successful method of finding longitude. Ditton and Whiston believed that observing the difference between the flash of cannon shots and the resulting sound would allow ships at sea to accurately determine their location. Newspaper advertisements told Londoners that "there will be every Saturday Night that is tollerably clear, a Ball of Fire thrown up from Black Heath about a Mile high, and that the time will be exactly at 8 a clock" and would observers please "make and communicate their Observations as to its Azymuth, Altitude and the time it is visible every where, and to avoid, as far as they can, looking thro the thick Air of London." These experiments, though ultimately unsuccessful, carried on from 1714 to 1717.⁴⁸

Collins saw advances in public understanding of natural philosophy, Newton's specifically, as benefiting all Britons. Moreover, free-thinking encouraged the open discussion of natural philosophy. As a result, it was also advantageous for the nation. Some writers agreed with Collins but were less enthusiastic for the link because they claimed that lecturers like Whiston encouraged deism and other such heresies. As we have seen, deists accepted a unitarian view of God, as did Whiston, who proudly shouted-out his adherence to the heresy. For some, natural philosophy and heresy became one in Whiston. To

contemporaries Whiston also seemed to support deism, though he would have denied the connection. In 1742 the anonymous *A Dissertation on Deistical and Arian Corruption* identified the threats to Christianity as “Arian, Socinian, and other Deists.” The author claimed that because Arians and Socinians both denied articles of Scripture and “in so doing, invalidate all Revelation ... the difference between them and avowed Deists, is rather *verbal* than *real*; and therefore I rank them all under the same common Name *Deist*.”⁴⁹

Morgan’s Medical Principles

The year after Collins and Whiston disputed the merits of prophecy Thomas Morgan joined the growing ranks of Newtonian enthusiasts. Morgan’s initial publication on natural philosophy in 1725 centred on a theory of medicine. The title, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, was an allusion to Newton’s *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Like our other deists, Morgan saw a correct understanding of motion as essential for any scheme of natural philosophy. Next “to the Knowledge of God, of our Duty to him, and the means of obtaining the divine Favour; the Knowledge of the Principles and Laws of Motion ... is doubtless the most excellent and useful.”⁵⁰ The similarity of titles was not the only affinity that Morgan’s book bore to Newton’s. Morgan began by outlining the known Newtonian laws of motion: “Law 1: All Bodys will for ever continue in their State of Rest, or of uniform direct Motion, unless they are compell’d to change that State by some external impress’d Force. Law 2: The Alteration of Motion is ever proportional to, and in the same given Direction with the impress’d Force that cause it. Law 3: Re-Action is ever equal, and contrary to Action; or the mutual Actions of any two Bodys upon each other are always equal, and in contrary Directions.”⁵¹ No one could have mistaken Newton’s influence.

Motion, as Morgan described it, could be accounted for by the action of certain forces, the strength of which would be as the square of the time, proportional as the quantity of matter, and decrease as the reciprocal square of distances between bodies.⁵² Newton’s Law of Universal Gravitation also found a place in Morgan’s book. There “is in all Bodys, ... a mutual Attraction, ... we call Gravity or Weight, by which Bodys tend to the Centre of the Earth.”⁵³ Like Newton, Morgan denied

that the force of motion, or gravity, referred to any physical cause. Rather, it described “the Quantity and Direction of the Motion generated and produced by them.” Mistakes in this concept, argued Morgan, accounted for much of the misunderstanding of Newton’s work. It was the fault of “people pretending to Philosophy” that gravity was thought to be “an essential and intrinsick Power” in matter.⁵⁴ It is interesting that Morgan, though he was a deist and shared both theological and political opinions with Toland and Collins, here criticises their interpretation of gravity as a power inherent in matter—calling the proponents of these views “mechanical Gentlemen, who seem unwilling to admit any thing but Matter and Motion in the World.” Morgan explained that his depiction of gravity and motion ought to be accepted because of its source: “The wonderful and incomparable Author of the *Principia*....”⁵⁵

Having relayed the cause of motion as an immaterial force, Morgan proceeded, as had Newton, to describe its physical effects. The motion in the oceans and the atmosphere, Morgan assigned to the action of the Sun and Moon by means of “Perturbations.” In the same way that these perturbations enacted change in the ocean, they “must necessarily be impress’d upon the Blood and animal Fluids, and produce very sensible and considerable Effects in animals Bodys.”⁵⁶ This effect resulted from motion being impressed through the action of gaseous “aethereal Fluids,” which interacted with fluids, both bodily and oceanic, by means of the “Pores and Interstices” which all fluids have. These pores allowed a “continual Communication between the Atmosphere or external Air, and the Air included or contain’d in such Fluids....”⁵⁷ Morgan concluded that physicians cannot therefore, be ignorant of the laws of motion and the construction of matter. Since the human body operated by means of fluids, Morgan suggested that the cure to any disease must begin with knowledge of motion. He then considered the nature of the aether. Using Book II of the *Principia* as his source, Morgan stated that ordinary air “is a compressible and expansive Fluid; whose Density is ever proportional to its Compression....” From this analogy Morgan concluded that aether must act in a similar manner.⁵⁸ Motion was therefore caused by a force interacting with the all-pervasive aether.

Newtonianism of the Late 1720s

In addition to those by our deists, the 1720s saw many new popular natural philosophical writings concerning Newton. A reviewer for the *Republick of Letters* commented, in 1728, that despite Newton's lack of interest in making his *Principia* easily read, "as it is now translated, [it] may be very useful to a great many who understand neither Latin nor Mathematicks well enough to read the other." Contemporary enthusiasm for Newton fuelled such translations, as the reviewer explained. Public science and popularised books would "satisfy the general impatience to see whatever came from the hand of so great a Master...."⁵⁹

That same year Henry Pemberton, physician and editor of the third edition of the *Principia* (1726), produced *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, one of the most popular accounts of Newtonian philosophy; owners included the diarist Thomas Hearne, and the author Henry Fielding. Newton himself approved of the work and had subscribed to twelve copies.⁶⁰ Pemberton noted that the manner in which Newton had published "his philosophical discoveries, occasions them to lie very much concealed from all, who have not made the mathematics particularly their study."⁶¹ Past controversies had made Newton uneasy about being too simplistic in presenting the contents of the *Principia*. As Derham related, Newton was a man "who abhorred all Contests, ... And for this reason, namely to avoid being baited by little Smatterers in Mathematicks, he has told me, he designedly made his *Principia* abtruse; but yet so as to be understood by able Mathematicians, who [he] imagined, by comprehending his Demonstrations, would concur w[i]th him in his Theory."⁶² Admirers of Newton were left to themselves to understand the *Principia*. To aid the task, Pemberton submitted that works such as his, and those by Harris, Derham, and others, were the best way to disseminate Newton's discoveries.

Pemberton nevertheless cautioned that reading books and reflecting on them was not a sufficient method in natural philosophy. This was because "we can conclude nothing concerning matter by any reasoning upon its nature and essence, but that we owe all the knowledge, we have thereof, to experience."⁶³ That is, we must observe and inquire, refusing tradition and authority as guiding principles.

Pemberton stated that matter might appear “to lie at rest, [though] it really preserves without change the motion, which it has common with our selves: and when we put it into visible motion, and we see it continue that motion; this proves, that the body retains that degree of its absolute motion, into which it is put by our acting upon it....”⁶⁴ All things are in motion, even if we do not perceive it as such. Newton, who had “discovered that the celestial motions are performed by a force extended from the sun and primary planets, follows this power into the deepest recesses of those bodies themselves, and proves the same to accompany the smallest particle, of which they are composed.”⁶⁵ A force, within light emanating from the Sun, caused planetary motion and also allowed particles of matter to adhere to one another. While Newton had refused to speculate on the manner of this interaction, he did state that light was a material substance. It was possible to infer that gravity might likewise have a material cause.⁶⁶

Samuel Clarke’s younger brother, John Clarke, DD (1682-1757), Chaplain to the King, Boyle Lecturer for 1719 and 1720, and Dean of Sarum (1728-57), produced his own lay-account of Newtonian philosophy: *A Demonstration of Some of the Principle Sections of Sir Isaac Newton’s Principles of Natural Philosophy* (1730).⁶⁷ John Clarke greatly admired Newton, who, he claimed, composed “the most compleat Piece that ever was wrote upon” natural philosophy.⁶⁸ He then presented the known qualities of matter. It is “impenetrable, [as] we gather by our Senses, and not by Reasoning; for all those that we feel upon, we find by Experience are impenetrable, and from thence we conclude that Impenetrability is the Property of all Bodies whatsoever.” Moreover, “all Bodies are moveable, and continue of themselves, either in that State of Rest or Motion which they are once in, by some sort of Powers....” Knowledge of the properties of matter—extension, hardness and mobility—were inseparable and “the Foundation of all Philosophy.”⁶⁹

Tindal on Light and Motion

The same year as John Clarke described Newton’s conception of matter for general readers, Tindal again addressed the natural world in *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730).⁷⁰ Like Collins, Tindal noted the accepted view that the Sun remained stationary while the Earth and other planets circled it. For Tindal this was

yet another example of his belief that “Scriptural and Philosophical Account of natural things seldom agree.”⁷¹ If people wished true pictures of the world they must adopt a Newtonian method and examine for themselves the wonders of nature and not permit their understanding to be determined by some outside authority, be it secular or sacred. The order of things in the universe revealed human nature, “the relation we stand in to” God and, therefore, “the *Religion of Nature* takes in every thing that is founded on Reason and the Nature of Things.”⁷² The natural order was, as Tindal noted in his previous writings, composed of matter and motion. Moreover, nature also

teaches Men to unite for their mutual Defence and Happiness, and Government was instituted solely for this End; so to make this more effectual, was Religion, which reaches the Thoughts, wholly ordain’d; it being impossible for God, in governing the World, to propose to himself any other End than the Good of the Governed: and consequently, whoever does his best for the Good of his Fellow-Creatures, does all that either God or Man require.⁷³

This view compliments his political views. Just as God acted for the common good of Christians and did not impose Himself on them, governments too must act for the collective good.

Chubb’s Laws of Nature

A year after Tindal’s magnum opus, Thomas Chubb described the laws he believed guided both nature and humanity. These natural and immutable laws were “founded in the Reasons and Fitness of Things,” which comprised the Creation. Their substance was obedience to God combined with correct behaviour to one another. By fulfilling this divine request, Chubb suggested that we did what was necessary to satisfy the “Law of Nature.”⁷⁴ Key to the maintenance of the natural order was the proper motion of all the parts found in this order. Just as a machine needed correct motion to function properly, a nation needed the right motion of all its citizens: that is, people achieved correct motion within society when they act for the common good with their government ensuring this took place.⁷⁵ We know the law of nature through an examination of the Creation, a study of the divine design of the world. As Chubb put it “While the Heavens declare the Glory and Wisdom on God, they [also] shew the Rectitude of his Nature....”⁷⁶

Like Collins and Tindal before him, Chubb addressed the acceptance of heliocentric worldviews at the expense of geocentric models. In response to his critics Chubb replied: “Suppose the *reasons*, upon which the *Ptolemaick* system of astronomy was grounded had obtained *universal assent*; would that system have been *well grounded*, because the *reasons* upon which it is grounded had been *universally admitted*? And ought universal opinion to have determined the judgement of *Copernicus*, *against* the strongest and most obvious reasons to the contrary? Surely, not.”⁷⁷ When people are permitted to use their reason to consider the reality of things, unfounded philosophical schemes do not survive. Chubb suggested that the same was true in matters of religion. Once more, natural philosophy provided a proper method for religion.

Morgan’s *Mechanical Principles of Physick*

Conceptions of matter and motion in relation to God’s plan continued to attract Morgan’s interest. A decade after he published *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, Morgan issued a revised account of matter and motion in *The Mechanical Practice of Physick* (1735). An anonymous reviewer of the work, noted that this “is not the first book which we owe Dr. *Morgan*: he has already made himself known by several pieces, in the way of religious controversy: he also obliged the publick with a former work in the physical way; but, we know not how it happens, Dr. *Morgan* is more read as a divine, than as a physician.”⁷⁸ Though previous generations had used “Physick” as interchangeable with “natural philosophy,” Morgan used the term in the modern sense of physician and as a synonym for the practise of medicine.⁷⁹ He began by advising those who investigate such matters to seek “right Information” from people they think most qualified and not blindly accept dictates from supposed authorities or from books.⁸⁰ Indeed, Morgan suggested that it was lack of clarity in physick that had prevented its practitioners from realising the reality of certain substances like a Newtonian aether. In assigning blame, Morgan pointed an accusatory finger at the “*enthusiastick Chymists, such as Paracelsus, Van Helmont, and others,*” who had, “*carried the Art of Healing beyond all human Judgement and Comprehension....*” To remedy this defect, Morgan summoned his readers to throw off “*incomprehensible Jargon, and to reduce the*

*Practice of Physick to the known Laws of Motion and Mechanism.*⁸¹ Motion was the foundation of natural philosophy and the operation of human bodies.

Morgan believed that increased knowledge of the action of disease, which he described as its motion, was greatly important in physick. The key task in this quest was determining the movement of diseases inside the body and then finding the corrective motion of the curative agent.⁸² Previous attempts to advance a theory of cures were, Morgan asserted, based on occult qualities “without any regard to the known establish’d Laws of Matter and Motion....” As Newton had demonstrated, matter, motion, and the action of forces described the operation of the world, there was no place for hidden occult properties in a true account of physick. Morgan, however, conceded that these sub-par physicians had provided entertainment for Britons by “furnishing every *English Family* with Books to quack upon....”⁸³

Morgan advanced his theory by again aping the format of the *Principia* in listing various propositions, their proofs, and finally the conclusions that may be drawn from them. He also borrowed from the queries to the *Opticks* in a manner similar to Pemberton and Derham. Substances, which act to cure disease, he believed, may enter the body only as fluids once they had been “*reduced to an exceedingly fine and imperceptible Vapour.*” While Morgan admitted that this may seem strange to some readers, he assured them that “it is certain, that Fluids are capable of being rarefy’d, effuviated or volatiliz’d into any assignable Degree of Tenuity....”⁸⁴ Once a medicine was ingested it entered the stomach where the natural heat therein began a process of rarefaction. Chymists and experimental philosophers, noted Morgan, had proved that heat was capable of dissolving, resolving, and diffusing materials that were formerly solid. Thus, both the operation of the stomach and the initial process of cures could be known by observable experimentation.⁸⁵

A correct understanding of fluids and their motion was essential in physick. Morgan described the pressure of fluids as “*an active Force, propagated instantaneously through the whole Column or Canal in which the Fluid is continued, and is not generated in time, like the accelerating Force of Gravity....*”⁸⁶ That is, the force exerted by fluids in a confined vessel was constant, regardless of

the duration of the containment. This being so, he concluded that the “Pressure in Fluids is a very different and distinct Law of Nature or Principle of Motion....”⁸⁷ This was a difficult theory, because, as Morgan explained, even Newton himself had been mistaken in this regard. The “great and incomparable *Newton*, tho’ he discovered this Law of Fluidity, and the Effects of it, yet did not at least plainly and expressly distinguish it from the general Law of Gravity; which Obscurity, or want of more Expressness in this one single Point, has led many of his Mathematical Followers into a Difficulty....”⁸⁸ Morgan, however, conceded that Newton’s gravity did account for the pressure of fluids, but one had to ensure the correct implementation of gravity. As Morgan explained,

the uniform and instantaneous Velocities produced by Pressure, are the same with the accelerated Velocities last acquired by the perpendicular Descent of Bodies from the same Heights, through which such Pressure is propagated; and consequently, that the Law of Gravity, and all its Effects, so far agree with the Law of Pressure in Fluids....⁸⁹

Morgan then returned to specific bodily functions, chiefly the circulation of blood. He argued that the velocity of blood was continually decreasing as distance from the heart increased. Conversely, the nearer the blood got to the heart, the greater its motion. Such a pattern was modelled on the planets, which move faster at perihelion rather than aphelion. The opposite view, Morgan claimed, was held by the physician James Jurin. According to Morgan, Jurin presented this conclusion as an unresolvable paradox. Morgan was not so lenient with the hypothesis, calling it “not true in Fact.”⁹⁰ In advancing his criticism, Morgan asked readers to consider a cone. Taking the heart as the narrow end, he asked how the pressure of a fluid which originates at the smaller end can possibly have the greatest pressure at the end with the largest area. It was, Morgan concluded, a fact that “the Impetus or Momentum of the Fluid must be as the Velocities, or as the Sections inversely.”⁹¹ He submitted that Jurin’s notion was proven false.

As for the motion of animal bodies, including humans, Morgan suggested that “*the original active Force is intrinsically in the Solids, and the Fluids only act as they are acted upon.*” The solids are made vaporous by the heat of the stomach. The vapour acts like the aether and initiates motion in the body by means of pores in

the fluids, such as blood. How these forces operate, Morgan claimed not to know. Indeed, he noted that much of the problem with previous schemes of physick resulted from fruitless searches for such causes. A true physician ought to be satisfied with observable facts and relate these to known laws of nature, such as Newton's law of gravity, and to known phenomena, such as matter and motion.⁹² As Newton had claimed "hypotheses, whether metaphysical or physical, or based on occult qualities, or mechanical, have no place in experimental philosophy."⁹³ Not all of Morgan's readers were convinced of his commitment to this strategy, however. An anonymous reviewer described the work as an unproven hypothesis: "I hope better of Dr. Morgan; but this he may be assured of, the publick will pay little regard to his inferences, unless the facts from which they are drawn be specified."⁹⁴

Morgan and Bryan Robinson on Interpreting Newton

Morgan was following the well-established footsteps of Stephen Hales, DD, FRS (1677-1761) whose *Hæmasticks* (1733) had adopted the experimental style of Newton's *Opticks* in an analysis of blood's motion in which Hales revealed an active immaterial energy in blood as its vitalising agent.⁹⁵ In spite of this unacknowledged pedigree, Morgan's account of fluid dynamics drew a strong rebuttal from Bryan Robinson (1680-1754), anatomical lecturer at Trinity College, Dublin. Robinson believed it was Morgan and not Newton who was mistaken when it came to the description fluid motion.⁹⁶ He issued the challenge in a published letter to the physician and populariser of Newtonian philosophy, George Cheyne, a man he described as a "Person of Candour and Judgment, and throughly acquainted with Philosophical Subjects."⁹⁷ Robinson advised Cheyne that the mistakes in Morgan's treatise could be attributed to "his not having duly attended to what Sir *Isaac* and I delivered concerning these Motions."⁹⁸ Thus, Morgan's thesis could be dismissed with little difficulty.

What could not be as easily written off were Morgan's suggestions regarding the interaction of air with blood. Robinson was particularly aggravated over Morgan's comments regarding the twenty-fourth proposition of his *Animal Oeconomy*, which had been published the previous year. That work had also begun

with a discourse on the motion of fluids through cylinders in which, Robinson, like Newton, claimed to have “*avoided Hypotheses, and explained the Laws which obtain in human Bodies by Reason and Experiment.*”⁹⁹ The passage in question stated: “The Life of Animals is preserved by acid Parts of the Air mixing with the Blood in the Lungs.” Rather than Morgan’s subtle substance of air (aether) interacting with the pores in the blood as the impetus to motion, Robinson advanced the notion of acid particles combining with blood as the correct explanation.

Robinson claimed to have extrapolated his conclusion from a “series of Experiments taken from Sir *Isaac Newton*...”¹⁰⁰ We may be certain to which experiments Robinson referred. In 1692 the Scottish physician Archibald Pitcairne had visited Newton prior to taking up his post as medical lecturer at Leyden, where his students included Cheyne. Newton gave Pitcairne a short treatise entitled “*De natura acidorum*” which demonstrated the action of acid particles.¹⁰¹ The work was subsequently published in 1710 as a preface to the second volume of Harris’ *Lexicon Technicum*. Harris stressed the importance of the document by claiming that “it contains in it the Reason and of the Ways and Manner of all Chymical Operations, and indeed of almost all the Physical Qualities, by which Natural Bodies, by their small Particles, act one upon another.”¹⁰² Newton argued that particles of acid contained “a great Attractive Force; in which Force their Activity consists,” and that “By their Attractive Force also, by which they rush towards the Particles of Bodies, they move the Fluid and excite Heat; and they [brake] asunder some Particles, so much as turn them into Air, and generate Bubbles...”¹⁰³ Robinson seems to have concluded that acid, as Newton demonstrated and Harris encouraged, activated other substances to motion.

Robinson outlined his theory, beginning “*first*, that a constant Supply of fresh Air is necessary to preserve the Life of Animals; *secondly*, that fresh Air preserves Life ... by the very same Power ... whereby it preserves Fire and Flame ... and *thirdly*, that Air preserves Fire and Flame ... and consequently the Life of Animals, by its acid Particles.”¹⁰⁴ While much of what Robinson advanced was compatible with Morgan’s writings, the last premise is where they deviated. One could produce flame without air, Robinson claimed as he informed readers that a

mixture of Sprit of Nitre (an acid) and various oils could ignite. Furthermore, it was possible to maintain the flame “in a Mixture of common Sulphur and Nitre.” Thus, Robinson concluded that air must “preserve Fire” “by means of its acid Particles. There is no way of proving this Inference to be false, but by proving there are no acid Particles in the Air.”¹⁰⁵ Morgan’s response, according to Robinson, was to claim that “Acids will check and extinguish Fire sooner than common Water....”¹⁰⁶ Robinson did not acknowledge this as a worthy rebuttal. He concluded by stating that he “wish’d Dr. Morgan had considered my *Animal Oeconomy* with a little more Temper and Care....” There Robinson explained that “When Animals are deprived of the Acid of the Air,” their pulse decreases rapidly.¹⁰⁷ However, Robinson did not demonstrate how he was able to differentiate the lack of air from the lack of acid particles.

As had Robinson, Morgan formed his response as a letter to Cheyne, whom he called a “very proper and competent judge of the matter in debate.”¹⁰⁸ The question at hand was, as Morgan explained to Cheyne, whether he or Robinson had “most mistaken Sir *Isaac Newton*.” Morgan was not the only Newtonian expositor concerned with these issues. In using Newtonian philosophy to describe the workings of machines (in this case a human machine), Morgan was following the example of John T. Desaguliers who was deeply immersed in demonstrating the empirical reality of Newton’s mathematics. Desaguliers too was interested in calculating depictions of fluids in pipes, specifically those he undertook at the behest of his patron the duke of Chandos who in 1721 sponsored an unsuccessful scheme to redirect Uxbridge Water near London.¹⁰⁹ Repeating his previous arguments for the flow of water, Morgan advised Cheyne that:

[T]here seems to be something in this case that Dr. *Robinson*, as great a master as he is of *Sir Isaac Newton*, has not sufficiently considered. It is certain, that when water flows in canals or pipes, and runs out of a greater section into a less ... the velocities must be every where reciprocally as the sections, or equal quantities must flow through every section in the same time ... it is evident that water thus communicating and flowing through pipes ... does not observe the law of accelerating gravity, since that has no regard at all to any sections or communication of fluids, but an accelerating perpendicular descent only.¹¹⁰

It is perhaps worth reminding ourselves that Cheyne had written against Toland's interpretation of Newton. Nevertheless, Morgan felt him the appropriate mediator for his dispute with Robinson even though Morgan, as we saw, agreed with much of Toland's theology. This example demonstrates, if only in this one case, that we ought to be careful in drawing sharp distinctions between Newtonians and their perceived enemies. Robinson did not respond to Morgan's latest challenge and Cheyne never reacted to either man's attempt to draw him into their dispute. It seems clear that, by 1738, Morgan believed motion resulted from the interaction of the subtle substance of air (aether) and matter.

Natural Philosophy and *The Moral Philosopher*

Following his *Mechanical Practise of Physick*, Morgan considered the laws of nature in the first volume of his *Moral Philosopher* (1737). He stated that all persons contained knowledge of these laws, which were imprinted upon their wisdom and reason.¹¹¹ However, access to this latent knowledge required assistance. Some, who were vain and full of conceit for their own abilities, denied the necessity of this condition. Morgan claimed that we must have divine guidance—which is never refused—to determine religious truths. The same held for natural truths. The guide Morgan chose to lead people to correct understanding of the law of nature was, not surprisingly, Newton's *Principia* which, he maintained, contained “no doubt, natural Truths, and such as are necessarily founded in the Reason of Things; and yet, I think, none but a Fool or a Madman would say, that he could have informed himself in these Matters as well without [it], and that he is not at all obliged to such Master or Teacher.”¹¹² Correct conceptions of nature were within the capacity of all people; one needed only the right instruction.

Morgan described the material world as a system of bodies void of all thought and intelligence. Matter had no powers in itself, only the ability to be acted upon. As Morgan denied God the will to intervene in the ordinary workings of the Creation, the world must operate by means of immutable laws. However, the moral world—the world of human actions—was “capable of Intelligence, Will, and Choice” and therefore it was “impossible to govern the moral World by the Laws of

necessary, extrinsick Force, as it would be to govern the natural world, or System of Bodies, by the Laws of intelligent Self-Motion.” God governed both worlds by means of His “constant, uninterrupted Presence, Power, and incessant Action upon both...”¹¹³

Morgan also hoped to refute those who might suggest that matter, once it had been created and put into its natural order, no longer required “any farther Presence, Power, or Operation of the *first Cause*.”¹¹⁴ Here he further deviates from deists like Toland and Collins who had stated and hinted, respectively, that matter has no need of outside guidance. Morgan drew out the logical implications of such views: “But if these natural, inherent and essential Principles, Properties, or general Laws, can sustain and govern the World without God, or without the continued Agency of the first Cause; I would fain know why they might not have created the World at first, or why they may not be as well supposed to have been eternal, necessary, and independent of any Cause at all.”¹¹⁵ By denying an external cause of motion, philosophers potentially eliminated God from Creation, as Morgan desired to show. Morgan himself believed that God acted in strict conformity with the laws of nature. As he explained, “Preservation therefore, or the Support and Continuation of Existence and Motion, is as necessary an Effect of God’s presence, Power, and Action, as Creation itself...”¹¹⁶ By removing God from a universe operating by chance and impact, Morgan claimed that these thinkers could never answer the following questions: “What are the Laws of Nature? What is the Law of Gravity, the Law of communicating Motion from one Body to another by Impulse, and the Law of the *Vis Inertiae* of Bodies? Are these natural, essential and inherent Properties of the Bodies themselves, or are they the regular Effects of some universal, extrinsick Cause acting incessantly upon the whole material System by such and such general Laws and Conditions of Agency?”¹¹⁷ Any due consideration of these issues would reveal the impossibility of purely materialist accounts of the Creation and reveal the truth of Newton’s philosophy and the immaterial forces on which it was built.

In the third volume of *The Moral Philosopher* (1740), Morgan noted with approval the widespread knowledge and acceptance of Newton’s natural

philosophy: “There are few thinking inquisitive Persons, now among us, but knowing something of the *Newtonian* Philosophy, and the Laws of Nature demonstrated by that great Philosopher.” The best means to learn this work was from direct engagement with the *Principia* itself. Morgan acknowledged that this was not easy. Therefore, the majority of interested parties knew Newton’s work through the efforts of others who explained the dense mathematics in a more accessible way. As did Collins, Morgan praised those who diffused Newton’s philosophy throughout the nation. However, this was not the most efficient way to learn, as “It must be own’d, that this Way of receiving Truth from Authority has its Use, and may be of great Advantage to the Bulk of Mankind. But then it must be allow’d too, that this is a more imperfect Ground of Truth...”¹¹⁸ One placed great trust in those who popularised the original philosophy. This explained Morgan’s earlier caution in choosing one’s teachers.

The Active Matter of Morgan’s *Physico-Theology*

In 1741 Morgan advanced his latest theory concerning motion and its origin in *Physico-theology: or, a Philosophico-moral Disquisition Concerning Human Nature, Free Agency, Moral Government, and Divine Providence*. He began by describing the “mechanical Powers and Properties of Bodies, as distinct from the essential Attributes and Properties of mere passive Matter.” Matter could do nothing except be acted upon by “some universal, intelligent, designing Cause.” As he continued his investigation in natural philosophy, Morgan found that light (“the visive Element”) was a material substance not “endued with Gravity, Resistance, Pressure, or any other mechanical Power,” and yet it “actuated and exerted all the mechanical Powers of Bodies, and was the ... immechanical Principle of all ... Motion.”¹¹⁹ Thus, light, which pervaded all Creation, might be the active aethereal medium responsible for motion.

In one of the only other studies of Morgan’s natural philosophical writings, Robert E. Schofield approached *Physico-theology* with some confusion: he could not account for this new exposition of matter and motion, but suggested it reflected changes in contemporary Newtonianism.¹²⁰ Schofield is partially correct; however, he is mistaken to suggest that the contents of *Physico-theology* were a puzzle. The

action of light that Morgan employed is prefigured in his earlier work on fluids and aether. Schofield perhaps overlooks this fact because he appears not to have been aware of Morgan's 1735 book or of the dispute with Robinson.

Matter, according to Morgan in *Physico-theology*, was extended, solid, infinitely divisible, and moveable. Accepting Newtonian inertia, as he had done in previous works, he posited that "Matter is perfectly indifferent, and purely passive" with respect to motion or rest; "it must for ever continue in that State of Rest or Inaction, it is put out of it, or moved by some extrinsic Cause."¹²¹ In language reminiscent of Toland Morgan continued,

Rest is no *Action*, and requires no *Cause*, but Motion is Action, and we know of no Action without Motion. As Motion is Action or active Force, the continuation of Motion is continued Action of active Force; and therefore, to say that Motion may continue without continued Action or active Force and Causality, the same Thing in Effect, as saying that it may begin without any active Force or Cause at all.¹²²

Therefore motion as the cause of all occurrences in nature, was "owing to some extrinsic active Power or Energy." Established laws regulated motion, which Morgan called "mechanical Powers, Forces or Actions of Bodies." Chief among these properties of motion was gravity. Morgan's Newtonianism is again evident when he described gravity as the action by which all matter is "drawn or urged towards one another by Forces proportional to their Quantity of Matter directly, and the Squares of their Distances reciprocally ... [this] Power of Gravity is not essential to, or inherent in the Matter itself..." Gravity acts according to the "Laws of the strictest Harmony and Proportion." Its cause is "no other but the supreme, universal Agent, Author, Governor and Director of all Nature, or God himself."¹²³

Morgan reported that the pressure of fluids is related to, and analogous with, the power of gravity. The pressure which enacts motion in fluids is itself caused by some determinable "Weight or Force of Gravity." Moreover, since the force of gravity and fluid pressure may be described by a "subduplicate" (square-root) ratio they must have the same cause. Where the forces differ is in their direction of action, gravity in the rectilinear versus pressure in all directions simultaneously.¹²⁴ Additionally, two other properties existed: a force by which fluids endeavour to

retain “their Æquilibrium or equal pressure,” and a “restitutive Force” or elasticity by which bodies restore themselves once they have been compressed. In the case of air, it is “condensed in Proportion to its Compressure or the Action of Gravity, and rarify’d in Proportion to its Heat or the Action of Fire upon it.”¹²⁵ Morgan then concluded that all the mechanical powers he had related depended upon the action of gravity which, as he noted earlier, was a power not inherent in bodies but which affects them with respect to their situation in the Creation and their proximity to other bodies.¹²⁶ Gravity, therefore, must be “continually exerted thro’ the whole Creation.” This would, Morgan assured his readers, seem clear “if it can be prov’d, that there is actually in Nature a material Substance or elementary Fluid, which is not affected with any of these mechanical Properties....”¹²⁷

Morgan then revealed the existence of such a fluid, namely light. He regarded the investigation of light as a difficult, yet crucial, topic. While Morgan followed the lead of Newton, whom he praised as a “Man of the most elevated and uncommon Genius,” he believed that Newton had not exhausted the topic. Indeed, Newton had “left enough for the farther Disquisition and Investigation of future Ages.” What Newton had proved, with certainty, was that “Light is corporeal, or a material Substance.”¹²⁸ From this premise, Morgan suggested that “Fire and Light are essentially ... the same, and that Fire is nothing else but condensed Light.”¹²⁹ This conclusion was important because Morgan described fire (along with air) as one of the two “Counterforces” in nature. Thus, light was an active force.

Morgan outlined the sensible properties of light focusing particular attention on the fact that the “luminous Rays are in a continual vibrating Motion,” as all “Sir Isaac Newton’s Observations and Experiments upon Light evince....”¹³⁰ What was more, Newton’s work demonstrated that light rays might be reflected in one instance, refracted in the next, finally bouncing off some material body to begin the sequence again. The “General Scholium” added to the second edition of the *Principia* (1713) supported Morgan’s statements.¹³¹ In it Newton had repeated that all bodies move freely in space without resistance. He also concluded that “A Few things could now be added concerning a very subtle spirit pervading gross bodies and lying hidden in them; by its force and actions, the particles of bodies attract one

another at very small distances and cohere when they become contiguous ... and light is emitted, reflected, refracted, inflected, and heats bodies; and all sensation is excited....”¹³² Despite this motion, neither light nor the material with which it interacted were adversely affected. “Any one but moderately acquainted with the *Newtonian* Theory of Light,” Morgan confidently claimed, “must see the Reason and Necessity of what I have observed and advanced.”¹³³ As Anita Guerrini has suggested, Morgan presents himself as the one true expositor of Newtonian philosophy.¹³⁴ Morgan believed he knew what Newton did not: the nature of the unnamed subtle substance.

This medium was evenly spread through all nature and was composed of “extremely subtle and minute, [matter] and, perhaps, [even consisted] of the very smallest and last Divisions of Matter.” From this assertion, Morgan concluded, “that all other Bodies or material Substances whatever are immersed in this universal Fluid as the common Medium and Vehicle of all their Actions....”¹³⁵ To demonstrate this claim, Morgan presented the results of an experiment performed with a magnifying glass, which he believed demonstrated the motive power of light. He focused light from the Sun into a beam which possessed the power to cause combustion in items such as “light Tobacco” and “dead Oak” or, if sufficiently intense, to melt gold. This proved that fire was “nothing else, but elementary Light;” it was “an Element *sui Generis*, and not subject to the mechanical Laws and Properties of other Bodies, or Material Fluids.” It moved through space suffering no resistance and operating in “a purely immechanical” manner.¹³⁶

Schofield suggested that Morgan’s understanding of light might have been due to trends in contemporary views of Newton, though he could provide no definitive example. We may be more exact. Morgan, as we noted with Collins, subscribed to Henry Pemberton’s *View of Sir Isaac Newton’s Philosophy* (1728) where Pemberton extolled the merits of Newton’s *Opticks* stating that “whenever mankind shall be blessed with this improvement of their knowledge, it will be derived so directly from the principles laid down by our author in this book.” Later he wrote concerning the power of nature, that “Sir Isaac Newton has in general hinted at his opinion concerning it; that probably it is owing to some very subtle and

elastic substance diffused through the universe, in which such vibrations may be excited by the rays of light....”¹³⁷ Is it surprising that Morgan proposed motion to be the provenance of light? What is more, Pemberton’s demonstration of the motive power of light and fire as seen through the use of a magnifying glass is exactly the aforementioned one employed by Morgan himself.¹³⁸

Contemporary reviewers of *Physico-Theology* confirm Schofield’s interpretation that little novelty could be found in Morgan’s pages. One complained that, “Our Author has taken Care to say very few Things in this Book, which may not be found in others.”¹³⁹ The reviewer did, however, note that Morgan’s purpose had been to “Defend the cause of God” for which he could expect “no Thanks or Favour.” Morgan’s critics, as we saw with John Chapman, would “make him (alas poor Man) an Atheist, for demonstrating the Being, Providence, continual Presence, incessant Agency and Concurrence of the Deity in all the Works and Ways of Nature; and an Infidel, for not believing what they themselves could never understand and explain....”¹⁴⁰ The editor of the *Works of the Learned* concluded that “we cannot but approve of Dr. Morgan’s Impartiality, and take a Pleasure in Obliging him, so long as he maintains the Character (as we hope he always will) of a genteel and candid Disputant.”¹⁴¹

Having demonstrated the existence of a medium (active light) that propagated motion throughout the Creation, Morgan followed Newton’s example in claiming that he did not know “How this immechanical Fluid acts upon other Bodies, and exerts and determines their mechanical Powers.” Though Morgan refused to speculate, he did know that it was not “done by Weight, Pressure, Resistance, Impulse, or any mechanical Power or Property whatever.”¹⁴² He could, however, articulate the laws that governed its action and by which “an intelligent Being, who is a Governor and Director of Things, has determined and declared, he will act.”¹⁴³ That is, one could observe the physical results—the movement of material bodies in accordance with the laws of motion—of the actions performed by the immaterial medium or elemental light. This was the correct method in which to proceed because it was the method followed by the “great Philosopher, *Newton*.”¹⁴⁴ Morgan cautioned against concluding that the existence of such laws meant that

God does not act in the universe or that he gave “Bodies an independent Power of acting without him.”¹⁴⁵ Morgan hoped to impart to his readers an admiration for the direction of nature “by general Laws, such as being constantly and steadily acted upon and kept to, may obtain and secure the best Order and Constitution of Things.” This unalterable picture of Creation was more worthy of God, Morgan argued, than contrary views that required the “Author of Nature, to suspend his Laws, or alter his prescribed Rules and Measures of Actions, by frequently interposing on particular Incidents and Emergencies.”¹⁴⁶ God never suspended the laws of motion or nature. The world would continue to operate as it always had. Any other conclusion “would be unworthy of God, as the Creator and Governor of the World, and the universal Cause, Preserver, and Director of Nature.”¹⁴⁷ Toland, Collins, Tindal, and Chubb could not have said it more clearly and they would certainly have readily agreed.

Conclusion

By 1741 deists were no longer distinct in contemporary understanding of Newtonian philosophy. Indeed, they were helping to create this understanding.¹⁴⁸ Morgan’s work incorporates and anticipates contemporary views of Newton. A material aether received considerable attention in the years after *Physico Theology*. In his *History of the Royal Society* (1744), Thomas Birch included two letters by Newton to Boyle and Henry Oldenburg, then secretary to the Royal Society, written in 1679 and 1676 respectively, which described Newton’s early researches into aether. In these letters Newton suggested to Oldenburg that the “frame of nature” “may be nothing but various contextures of some certain aethereal spirits of vapours condensed, as it were, by præcipation, much after the manner, that vapours are condensed.” Newton then advised Boyle that aether may cause gravity because bodies will “get out and give way to the finer parts of aether below, which cannot be without the bodies descending to make room above for it to go out into.”¹⁴⁹ Moreover, in 1743 Robinson published *A Dissertation on the Aether of Sir Isaac Newton* in which he argued that the phenomena of nature were caused by a spiritual aether, which filled the universe and had both “Activity and Power.”¹⁵⁰ This position bears striking resemblance to that advanced by Morgan, though Robinson’s

aether was spirit and Morgan's was the material light of the *Opticks*. Notwithstanding this difference, eighteenth-century Newtonianism was shaped by appeals to aethers and material fluids and predicated upon the materiality of light.¹⁵¹ This was posited by Morgan and to a different extent by Toland; both built upon the observation and experimentation championed by all our deists.

Links like the ones our deists forged between politics, theology, and natural philosophy continued to trouble those who supported traditional power structures in England even as the eighteenth century drew to a close. Although Edmund Burke could state with relief in 1790 that our deists were no longer a political danger, he remained worried over the implications of experimental philosophy, championed by Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), as a factor undermining the established society. A Unitarian minister, Priestley's endorsement of the democratic spirit driving revolution in America and France, which was joined to his open and accessible style of chemical experimentation, solidified in the minds of many observers the association between experiment and destabilising political agendas. As Priestley put it, the "rapid progress of knowledge ... will, I doubt not, be the means, under God, of extirpating *all* error and prejudice, and of putting an end to all undue and usurped authority in the business of religion as well as of *science*." Experiments conducted with the active power of electricity revealed to Priestley and to his disciples that a similar active principle within the human spirit was being restrained by England's government. However, events across the Channel and across the Atlantic demonstrated that this condition was not perpetual. The fears conservatives had for such views were thus manifested in strong suspicion of heretical religion, political activism, explanations of nature deduced by experiment, and on personal investigation rather than acceptance of tradition. Distrust of events in France, and those who supported them, peaked when a mob burned Priestley's home and laboratory in July 1791 after he had planned to celebrate the anniversary of the Bastille's destruction.¹⁵² As he stood in the glow of the flames consuming his belongings, Priestley would have taken little comfort knowing that these reactions had a long history.

Notes

¹ The *Post Man*, 2 – 4 December 1707; 4 – 6 August 1709; A. Rupert Hall, *Isaac Newton: Eighteenth-Century Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5. For a detailed discussion of this and the following material see Larry Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science: Rhetoric, Technology, and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 101-254; Stephen David Snobelen, “Selling Experiment: Public Experimental Lecturing in London, 1705-1728” (master’s thesis, University of Victoria, 1995); Niccolo Guicciardini, *Reading the Principia: The Debate on Newton’s Mathematical Methods for Natural Philosophy from 1687 to 1736* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 170, 187; James E. Bennett, “Shopping for Instruments in Paris and London,” in *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen (New York: Routledge, 2002).

² The *Post Man*, 1717 passim.

³ The *Post Man*, 20 – 22 September 1715.

⁴ The *Post Man*, 13 April 1721; 2 May 1721.

⁵ See for example The *Post Boy*, 14 January 1719/20; 9 July 1720; 28 January 1721; 4 March 1721; 7 November 1721; 12 December 1721.

⁶ The *Post Boy*, 19 January 1719/20.

⁷ Years before Toland had defined “pantheists” as those who are unconcerned with theological disputes and who believe that the opinions of others can never harm them so long as they follow their reason. See Toland, *Socinianism Truly Stated*, 7. Margaret C. Jacob believes Toland invented the term and that “pantheism” formed the centrepiece of Toland’s philosophy. However, recent work casts doubt on this assertion. Michael P. Levine states: Toland “(possibly) coined the term ‘pantheist’ and used it as a synonym for ‘Spinozist’. However, aside from some interesting pantheistic sounding slogans like ‘Every Thing is to All, as All is to Every Thing’, ... Toland’s work has little to do with pantheism.” See his *Pantheism: A Non-Theistic Concept of Deity* (New York: Routledge, 1994), ix.

⁸ Stephen H. Daniel, “Toland’s Semantic Pantheism,” in *John Toland’s Christianity Not Mysterious: Text, Associated Works and Critical Essays*, ed. Philip McGuinness, Alan Harrison, and Richard Kearney (Dublin: The Lillipuit Press, 1997), 306-07; David Kubrin, “Newton inside Out!: Magic, Class Struggle, and the Rise of Mechanism in the West,” in *The Analytic Spirit: Essays in the History of Science in Honour of Henry Guerlac*, ed. Harry Woolf (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 116; Brian P. Copenhaver, “Jewish Theologies of Space in the Scientific Revolution: Henry More, Joseph Raphson, Isaac Newton and Their Predecessors,” *Annals of Science* 37 (1980): 532, 534, 546; Alexander Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), 190-205.

⁹ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 17-18.

¹⁰ William Whiston, *A New Theory of the Earth* (London, 1696), 6; Bod. MS Don e 16 f. 32v.

¹¹ Leibniz to Toland, 30 April 1709 in *State Papers and Correspondence Illustrative of the Social and Political State of Europe from the Revolution to the Accession of the House of Hanover*, ed. John M. Kemble (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857), 468. On Toland and Leibniz see F. H. Heinemann, “Toland and Leibniz,” *The Philosophical Review* 54 (1945): 442-446.

¹² “Leibniz’s First Paper,” in *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*, ed. H. G. Alexander (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), 11. Steven Shapin, “Of Gods and Kings: Natural Philosophy and Politics in the Leibniz-Clarke Disputes,” *Isis* 72 (1981): 197-200.

¹³ Gavina Luigia Cherchi, “Atheism, Dissimulation and Atomism in the Philosophy of John Toland” (Ph.D. diss., The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1994), 27; On Toland and the South Sea see BL Add. 4465 ff. 21r, 48r.; BL Add. 4295 f. 36.

¹⁴ Margaret C. Jacob, "John Toland and the Newtonian Ideology," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 328, 330; Stephen H. Daniel, *John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 210. Cf. Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 79; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 696n. 71; Justin Champion, "John Toland: The Politics of Pantheism," *Revue de Synthèse* 116 (1995): 270-3.

¹⁵ John Toland, *Pantheisticon: or the Form of Celebrating the Socratic-Society* (1751; facsimile reprint, New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976), 16.

¹⁶ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 17, 18.

¹⁷ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 19.

¹⁸ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 21.

¹⁹ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 20.

²⁰ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 21.

²¹ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 27.

²² Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 28.

²³ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 29.

²⁴ Stan A. E. Mendyk, *'Speculum Britanniae': Religious Study, Antiquarianism, and Science in Britain to 1700* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 213, 323 n. 34.

²⁵ Charlett to Archbishop Tenison, 25 October 1695 in S. R. Maitland, "Toland," *Notes and Queries*, 3rd ser. 4 January (1862): 7.

²⁶ Bod. Ballard MS 5 ff. 50. Gibson to Charlett, 23 June 1694; 58 Gibson to Charlett, 20 July 1694.

²⁷ Alan Harrison, "John Toland's Celtic Background," in *John Toland's Christianity Not Mysterious: Text, Associated Works and Critical Essays*, ed. Philip McGuinness, Alan Harrison and Richard Kearney (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1997), 247; Edward Lhwyd to Dr. Lister, 13 March 1693/94 in *Early Science in Oxford*, rpt. ed. 15 vols. ed., R. T. Gunther, vol. 14, *Life and Letters of Edward Lhwyd* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968), 232-3. The subject of the dispute originated in an article found in the *Philosophical Transactions* concerning some smooth stones. See "A Letter from Sir Robert Redding, late S. R. S. concerning Pearl-Fishing in the North Ireland, communicated by Dr. Lister, R. S. S.," *Philosophical Transactions* 198 (March 1693): 663-4. Toland's plan to compose the dictionary is described in Edward Lhwyd to J. Aubrey, 9 January 1693/94 in *Life and Letters of Edward Lhwyd*, 217.

²⁸ Edward Lhwyd to Lister, (6June—16 June), 1695: in *Life and Letters of Edward Lhwyd*, 278. Gibson and Lhwyd were frequent correspondents see Bod. MS Ashm. 1829 ff. 75, 80, 129, 154.

²⁹ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 30.

³⁰ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 32-3.

³¹ Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 31. This is discussed briefly in Manlio Iofrida, "Atérialisme et Hétérogénéité Dans La Philosophie De John Toland," *Dix-Huitième Siècle* 24 (1992): 40. For more, if somewhat Foucault-laden, on the lasting influence of these kinds of views see Kevin D. Hutchings, "Imagining Nature: Blake's Vision of Materiality" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1998), 27-38, 48-49, 73-79.

³² Toland, *Pantheisticon*, 54-56.

³³ *History of the Works of the Learned*, January 1740, 296-7.

³⁴ *History of the Works of the Learned*, January 1740, 299, 305. On a similar worry see Dan Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

³⁵ Margaret J. Osler and Letizia A. Panizza, "Introduction," in *Atoms, Pneuma, and Tranquillity: Epicurean and Stoic Themes in European Thought*, ed. Margaret J. Osler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3.

³⁶ Sven-Tage Teodorsson, *Anaxagoras' Theory of Matter* (Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1982), 7-13, 24.

³⁷ Malcolm Schofield, *An Essay on Anaxagoras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 123.

³⁸ Teodorsson, *Anaxagoras' Theory of Matter*, 99.

³⁹ Daniel E. Gershenson and Danile A. Greenberg, *Anaxagoras and the Birth of Physics* (New York: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1964), 25, 47-8. Though I have made a case for Anaxagoras as a source for *Pantheisticon*, I do not wish to suggest that he was the only source. Toland was tremendously eclectic in his use of authors and we should be reluctant to determine any one definitive source for his works.

⁴⁰ Cherchi, "Atheism, Dissimulation and Atomism," 208, 210-2, 221-3.

⁴¹ BL Add. 4295 f. 39r. Toland to Berham Goode, 20 October 1720. John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 135.

⁴² BL Add. 4295 f. 39r-v.

⁴³ Champion, "Politics of Pantheism," 264.

⁴⁴ *Independent Whig*, 31 December 1720.

⁴⁵ Anthony Collins, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion* (London, 1724), 283.

⁴⁶ Stephen D. Snobelen, "William Whiston: Natural Philosopher, Prophet, Primitive Christian" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2000), 63, 70, 76-7, 89. See also Stephen Snobelen, and Larry Stewart, "Making Newton Easy: William Whiston in Cambridge and London," in *From Newton to Hawking: A History of Cambridge University's Lucasian Professors of Mathematics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 162-168.

⁴⁷ *Post Man*, 19-22 February 1715; 12-15 March 1715; 16-19 April 1715.

⁴⁸ *Post Man*, 23-26 October 1714; 12-14 July 1715; 11-14 May 1717. On Whiston and longitude see Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science*, 185-96; Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 834-5.

⁴⁹ Snobelen, "William Whiston," 156-7; David Boyd Haycock, *William Stukeley: Science, Religion and Archaeology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 205-6. The work was a response to John Jackson, *A Dissertation on Matter and Spirit* (London, 1735). Jackson endorsed Clarke's Arian arguments and wrote Clarke to say that he saw the Arianism in Newton's "General Scholium." See Jackson's letter to Clarke in BL Add. 4370 ff. 25r-v, 37r-38r.

⁵⁰ Thomas Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine* (London, 1725), vii.

⁵¹ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 1-2; Anita Guerrini, "Newtonianism, Medicine and Religion," in *Religio Medici: Medicine and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 305.

⁵² Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 5, 8.

⁵³ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 28.

⁵⁴ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 31.

⁵⁵ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 32.

⁵⁶ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 80.

⁵⁷ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 82.

⁵⁸ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 95. Morgan's source was *Principia* bk 2, prop. 18: "Given the law of the centripetal force, it is required to find in every place the density of the medium with which a body will describe a given space." (Isaac Newton, *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. I. Bernard Cohen, Anne Whitman and Julia Budenz [1726, 3rd ed., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999], 686.)

⁵⁹ *The Present State of the Republick of Letters*, February 1728, 191, 190.

⁶⁰ *Sale Catalogues of Libraries of Eminent Persons* (London: Mansell, 1975), Vol. 7, *Poets and Men of Letters*, 146 (Item # 185); Vol. 8, *Politicians*, 105 (Item # 524); Vol. 10,

Antiquaries, 304 (Item # 2966); Westfall, *Never at Rest*, 800, 802; A. Rupert Hall, "Newton and His Editors: The Wilkins Lecture, 1973," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* 29 (1974): 320-1.

⁶¹ Henry Pemberton, *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy* (London, 1728), 1.

⁶² King's College, Cambridge, Keynes MS 133, f. 10. William Derham to John Conduitt, 18 July 1733; Rob Iliffe, "'Is He Like Other Men?' the Meaning of Principia Mathematica, and the Author as Idol," in *Culture and Society in the Stuart Restoration: Literature, Drama, History*, ed. Gerald Maclean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 159-176; Stephen Snobelen, "On Reading Isaac Newton's Principia in the 18th Century," *Endeavour* 22, no. 4 (1998): 159-63.

⁶³ Pemberton, *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, 1, 29.

⁶⁴ Pemberton, *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, 34.

⁶⁵ Pemberton, *A View of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophy*, 247.

⁶⁶ Arnold Thackray, *Atoms and Powers: An Essay on Newtonian Matter-Theory and the Development of Chemistry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 66, 82.

⁶⁷ J. P. Ferguson, *An Eighteenth Century Heretic: Dr. Samuel Clarke* (Kington: The Roundwood Press, 1976), 224-5.

⁶⁸ John Clarke, *A Demonstration of Some of the Principle Sections of Sir Isaac Newton's Principles of Natural Philosophy* (London, 1730), iii.

⁶⁹ Clarke, *Newton's Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 102.

⁷⁰ Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730; facsimile reprint, London: Thoemmes Press, 1995), 158.

⁷¹ Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 185.

⁷² Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 11.

⁷³ Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 18.

⁷⁴ Thomas Chubb, *The Comparative Excellence and Obligation of Moral and Positive Duties, Fully Stated and Considered* (London, 1731), 15, 52; Thomas Chubb, *The True Gospel of Jesus Christ Vindicated* (London, 1739), 50.

⁷⁵ Chubb, *The Comparative Excellence*, 42-3.

⁷⁶ Chubb, *The Comparative Excellence*, 63.

⁷⁷ Thomas Chubb, "The Author's Farewel to His Readers," in *The Posthumous Works of Mr. Thomas Chubb*, 2 vols. (London, 1748), 1: 132.

⁷⁸ *Literary Magazine*, 1 July 1735, 335.

⁷⁹ Margaret J. Osler, "Whose Ends? Teleology in Early Modern Natural Philosophy," *Osiris* 16 (2001): 154; Andrew Cunningham, "How the *Principia* Got Its Name: or, Taking Natural Philosophy Seriously," *History of Science* 29 (1991): 377-92.

⁸⁰ Thomas Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick: In Which the Specifick Method is Examin'd and Exploded* (London: 1735), vii.

⁸¹ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, vii, xiv, xvi. Morgan was not alone in this criticism. One Francis Clifton arrived at the same conclusion in his *The State of Physick Ancient and Modern, briefly consider'd; with a Plan for the Improvement of it* (London, 1732). See *The Present State of the Republick of Letters*, July 1732, 398, 406.

⁸² Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 2.

⁸³ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 3, 4.

⁸⁴ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 6, 8.

⁸⁵ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 21.

⁸⁶ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 55.

⁸⁷ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 58.

⁸⁸ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 59.

⁸⁹ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 61.

⁹⁰ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 78.

⁹¹ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 79.

- ⁹² Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 160-1.
- ⁹³ Newton, *Principia*, 943.
- ⁹⁴ *Literary Magazine*, 1 July 1735, 336.
- ⁹⁵ Theodore M. Brown, "Medicine in the Shadow of the *Principia*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987): 645; Robert E. Schofield, *Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in an Age of Reason* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 69-72.
- ⁹⁶ This episode is mentioned but not elaborated in Anita Guerrini, *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 153-4.
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Chapter Eight:

Deists on the Soul, Immaterial Matter, and the Human Body

Our deists and their critics often clashed over questions of matter and spirit. This is not surprising. For Christians, an immaterial soul was the foundation for morality and, indeed, the very basis of organised religion, which placed great emphasis on the fate and (in the case of Catholics) posthumous care of the soul. Likewise, studies of the human body and its operation were really examinations of the spirit which animated it and, by extension, of religion itself.¹ Continuing into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, uncertainty over the nature and composition of the soul inflamed passions.² Two examples from the margins of the deist controversy illustrate the phenomenon. Nathanael Taylor (d. 1702), a London minister, in *A Preservative against Deism* (1698) suggested that deists advocated the existence of no “such thing as a *pure Spirit, independent of all Body and Matter*; and that they *that advance the Opinion of pure and Immaterial Substances, trust to Fancy and meer Conjectures.*” If this was true, Taylor concluded, deists must hold that God Himself is a material being and not worthy of worship. This position was heresy to anyone who argued that acceptance of the immaterial Christ was a necessary condition of salvation.³ Over sixty years later, in 1759, Edward Goldney considered deists’ views of the soul in *Epistles to Deists and Jews, in Order to Convert Them to the Christian Religion*, which he had dedicated to George II. He and Thomas Secker (1693-1768), Archbishop of Canterbury, wished to convert Jews and deists back to Christianity by proving that Jesus was the true Messiah.⁴ Goldney criticised the apparent arrogance displayed in deists’ writings when they claimed that nothing in religion was mysterious. “Can you comprehend,” he asked,

“how spirit and matter, your soul and body is united, and what your soul is, and in what way and manner it now exists, and how it possibly can exist when departed out of the body?” These questions were, as Goldney hoped to demonstrate, true mysteries. Only God knew how matter and immaterial spirit united to form every person. Thus, deists must accept their own limitations and not tread into heresy taking unsuspecting readers with them by inquiring into things they could never know. As Goldney phrased it in a couplet: “Know then this Truth, y^e Deists, this believe, / In disbelieving, you yourselves deceive.”⁵ These themes figure prominently in our discussion of deist’s writings on the soul, the body, and immaterial matter. Though critics painted with wide brushstrokes a picture of deism and its opinions concerning the soul, a close examination reveals that these strokes obscure, rather than make a clear portrait, of deists.

Toland and the Matter of the Soul

John Toland initially considered the soul in the discussion of reason found in *Christianity not Mystrious*. He chastised thinkers who confuted the soul with reason. Reason, Toland stated, was merely one aspect of a multifaceted soul. As he had described motion as a specific mode of Action, Toland used the example of “Gold is not a Guinea, but a piece determined to a particular Stamp,” to suggest that a similar relationship held for reason and the soul. We know, he argued, “as much of the Soul as we do of any other thing else, if not more ... [but] we are strangers to the Subject wherein these Operations exist.”⁶ Thus, the soul, be it what it may, was the location of a person’s mental impulses, including reason, and this was known with the same certainty that accompanied knowledge of God and of motion.⁷

Critics of *Christianity not Mystrious* sought to refute the arrogance of these brief passages. Edmund Elys (f. 1707), Nonjuror, accused his adversary of “*Self-conceit*” because if Toland had truly contemplated his soul he would have reflected “upon the true IDEA OF GOD in his own Soul, and in the Soul of all Men...” Knowledge of the soul was more than finding the location of thought; it was proof of God’s existence. He claimed that Toland hid behind descriptions of the soul’s function by refusing to accept the deeper theological implication of contemplating one’s soul. Elys worried that Toland’s words could corrupt those who read the book

and believed that that soul was nothing more than the location of reason among other mental faculties.⁸ Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, answered Toland in a point-by-point refutation, concluding that Toland's description lacked substance and must be dismissed. How could it be otherwise from the pen of a man, who was, Stillingfleet believed, intent on spreading heresy in England?⁹

A few years later, in 1700, Toland published some further thoughts on the soul in *Clito: A Poem on the Force of Eloquence* which also addressed an array of topics including planetary motions and the processes of life. It is divided into two parts. The first is attributed to Clito "a certain eminent Man," and the second to Adeisidaemon.¹⁰ Clito asked the following questions.

Who form'd the Universe, and when and why,
Or if all things were from Eternity;
What Laws to Nature were prescrib'd by Jove;
Where lys his chiefest residence above;
Or if he's only but the World's great Soul;
Or parts the Creatures are, and God the whole
From whence all Beings their Existence have;
And into which resolv'd they find a Grave;
How nothing's lost, tho all things change their Form,
As that's a Fly which was but now a Worm;
And Death is only to begin to be
Som other thing, which endless change shall see;
(Then why should me to dy have so great fear?
Tho nought's Immortal, all Eternal are.)¹¹

The soul might be the source of life and the universal soul, if one existed, was the cause of all Creation. What is more, individual souls—those found in creatures—are not immortal. While the soul provided life, it did not exist beyond the death of that which it animated. The components of life, matter and soul, are temporarily joined into one being and then rearranged to form another life.

Toland's correspondence with the natural philosopher Leibniz in March 1702 conducted through the Queen of Prussia, Sophia Charlotte, contains his most detailed accounting of thought, the soul, and immaterial matter.¹² During their discussions Toland maintained his commitment to Lockean epistemology and stated that the basic question at hand was whether there existed "anything in our thoughts which does not at all come from the senses."¹³ He agreed that there was a faculty in

the mind upon which “sensible things act” though what this faculty might be we cannot know. The only way to determine the answer was to consider “the nature of the soul itself, but this is entirely impracticable.” To demonstrate this paradoxical response, Toland referred to Descartes who had been unable to inquire into his own soul, but had to begin with his body. The French philosopher was, Toland asserted, “obliged to have recourse to the body, and has had knowledge of his soul, Cartesian as it is, only by means of the sense and sensible things....” From this Toland concluded

that one does not in the least know the soul by itself, but only by the body, and consequently by the senses and sensible things. Because all his demonstrations on the nature of the soul consists in this, that finding nothing in the properties of bodies, in figures not the movements of which it is susceptible, which has the least rapport or correspondence to thought, he has concluded that the soul is not corporeal. I do not at present examine if this consequence is just, ... I only draw from it this consequence, that one does not in the least know the soul by itself, but only by the body, and consequently by the senses and sensible things.¹⁴

Toland then claimed that we have no certain proof “that the soul and the body are two substances.” When the body died, Toland argued that the soul did not continue: “if after my death, I am a soul, this will no more be me, since I am a soul and a body, that is to say, a man, which one cannot say of a soul....”¹⁵ Such a conclusion was rehearsed in *Clito* and repeated in Toland’s own epitaph, which read, in part:

His spirit is join’d with the aithereal father
From whom it originally proceeded,
His body yielding likewise to nature
Is laid against in the Lap of its Mother.
But he’s frequently to rise to himself again,
Yet never to be the same Toland more.¹⁶

While he lived Toland believed he was both matter and spirit, but once he died he ceased to be either.

Leibniz took little time to compose his rebuttal—“What is Independent of Sense and of Matter”—and dispatched it immediately to Sophia Charlotte.¹⁷ The Princess enjoyed the philosophical debates between Toland and Leibniz, first in person then in correspondence, and requested that Leibniz respond to Toland’s views. There was more at stake for Leibniz than answering this royal desire.

Leibniz hoped to accompany the Hanoverians to England should they succeed to the throne and, what is more, he desired to maintain his position as court philosopher. Should Sophia Charlotte or her mother believe what Toland was telling them, which was the antithesis of Leibniz's own views, then Leibniz would have no role in a future English court.¹⁸ Perhaps with this in mind, Leibniz advised the Queen that "I found the letter truly ingenious and beautiful." Nevertheless, he did "not entirely share the opinion of its author."¹⁹ The business at hand was, as Toland had stated, whether anything other than matter existed in the universe and did it alone act on the senses. Regarding the latter part of the query, Leibniz asserted that numbers and shapes are compared and considered in the soul in a manner entirely different from that employed by the external senses. He referred to this internal sense as imagination and as the place where clear and distinct ideas such as those found in mathematics take place. This faculty was part of a larger immaterial sense, which Leibniz identified as the "*natural light*."²⁰ "It is by this *natural light*," Leibniz told Toland, "that one may recognise also the *axioms* of mathematics; for example, that if the same quantity is taken away from two equals the remainders are equal and likewise that if both sides of balance are equal neither will sink, a fact which we can foresee without ever having tried it."²¹

In response to the second part of his dispute with Toland—that is, does an immaterial substance, i.e. the soul, exist?—Leibniz began with his explanation of matter.

Heretofore matter has been understood to mean that which includes only purely passive and indifferent concepts, such as extension and impenetrability, which need to be given determinate form or activity by something else. Thus when it is said that there are immaterial substances, one means by this that there are substances which include other concepts, namely, perception and the principle of action or of change, which cannot be explained either by extension or by impenetrability. When these have feeling, they are called souls, and when they are capable of reason, they are called spirits. Hence if anyone says that force and perception are essential to matter, he is taking matter for the complete corporeal substance which includes form and matter, or the soul along with the organs.

It followed naturally that "there is some *substance separate from matter*." Matter alone could not account for the present state of Creation, nor could it explain our

ability to reason and think mathematically. An immaterial God must have guided matter to form the universe just as the soul directed human thought. Leibniz further claimed that one cannot conceive of matter without immediately thinking of its immaterial companion.²² Like critics of Toland's theory of matter, Leibniz chastised him for advancing incomplete and inadequate definitions. There was more at stake than an incompetent natural philosophy. Toland's account threatened to challenge the place of God and the eternal salvation of those who accepted his heretical writings. Leibniz hoped to make this clear to Sophia Charlotte.

As we have seen, the public result of Toland and Leibniz's discussions with the Prussian Queen was *Letters to Serena* (1704). In the second letter, which Toland claimed was "*written at SERENA's Request,*" he presented a history of the soul's immortality. The belief in an immaterial and immortal soul had a history, though Toland conceded that this would be a strange conclusion for many to accept.²³ He began by relating how Aristotle and the other ancient philosophers did not "dream of any Principle or actuating Spirit in the Universe itself ... but explain'd all the Phaenomena of Nature by Matter and local Motion, Levity and Gravity...."²⁴ No doubt Toland approved of this approach, as it matches that adopted by him in the final two letters. The introduction of a mind as the immaterial director of the universal matter, Toland revealed, originated with Anaxagoras, the Pre-Socratic philosopher, whom we met previously.²⁵ From him, "PLATO and the rest greedily imbrac'd this Doctrine; and we know how widely the Grecians cou'd spread it by their numberless Colonys...."²⁶ From Anaxagoras, immaterial souls became popular among the Egyptians via Pythagoras' travels. The Egyptians were among the first who "particularly asserted the Immortality of the Soul, with all that depends on it, as Heaven, [and] Hell...." As his source Toland cited the father of history himself, Herodotus. Toland approved of Herodotus' method of personal investigation rather than accepting hearsay and second-hand reports.²⁷

Having thus demonstrated to Serena how the view of an immortal soul was propagated, Toland revealed why the notion gained acceptance. It was popular, he asserted, because it "flatter'd Men with the Hopes of what they wish above all

things whatsoever, namely, to continue their Existence beyond the Grave....” It was the vanity of men that brought life to immortal souls.²⁸ Toland continued that some philosophers believed that the soul had a separate perpetual existence from that of the material body. What was more, these philosophers “conceiv’d their own Thoughts or Ideas to be immaterial, and to have nothing in common with Extension.”²⁹ This was Leibniz’s position. As Toland wrote to Sophia Charlotte, ideas came only from sensory experience and matter only interacts with matter, all thoughts must be the result of these interactions. Toland developed this further in *Pantheisticon* where he described the workings of thought in a manner similar to the operation of the universe. Thinking was, he claimed,

a peculiar Motion of the Brain, the proper Organ of this Faculty; or rather a certain Part of the Brain continued in the Spinal Marrow, and in the Nerves with their Membranes, constitutes the principle Seat of the Soul, and performs the Motion of both Thought and Sensation; which very wonderfully, according to the different structure of the Brain, in all kinds of Animals.³⁰

In a satirical prayer, preserved in an undated manuscript, Toland further addressed those who believed in immaterial immortal souls.

O sacred Folly!
O sacred Ignorance!
O pious Devotion!
Which respects souls so very wise and holy,
[A]s not to improve by any humane notion!

The soul was something, but whatever it was, it did not conform to human notions. Souls may be immortal, but they are not so because philosophers and theologians assert it. Moreover,

What Nature is, or in what way She operates?
If the refulgent Starrs be Earth, or Sea, or Fire?
Such things Asininity as vain and useless, rates.
The onley needful Rule she evermore commands,
For getting God’s favour, and the Soul’s sure Repose,
Is this; with lolo-bent knees & high-uplifted hands to expect Eternal Rest,
w^{ch} on Death follows Close.³¹

Wishing for an immortal existence, one that persisted after bodily death, did not make it a fact of nature. Religious expectations did not impress themselves on the reality of things.

Illness Meets Philosophy: Toland's Care of his Body

Toland's beliefs regarding the body are further revealed in the final correspondence with his benefactor and fellow Irishman, Robert Molesworth, in early 1722.³² "I received yours ... which gives me such a dismal account of your ill state of health, that I was extremely concern'd at the condition you were in..." Molesworth wrote to Toland. As for the prospects of improvement in Toland's condition, he lamented that Toland was not "in town, for I doubt you cannot easily get such broths and bits of easy digestion as I shou'd take care to procure for you." He then mentioned a tract ("Physic without Physicians") which Toland had sent him, regarding available cures: "Your reflexions upon the Physicians, and the Injustice of the World are very right; but you must not indulge melancholy thoughts at such a time."³³ Though little exists to reveal Toland's specific experience with physicians, the one prescription we do have which was given to him by one John Wallace MD, is for the use of an enema.³⁴ In "Physic without Physicians" Toland complained that "[I] have no great strength; nor have I been once out of doors, since last abroad with yourself. This is the effect of Physic, taken against judgment, and given without any." He believed that if he had listened to nature and retired from the unhealthy atmosphere of London, he might have avoided physicians.³⁵ As priests had done to religion, physicians "who, by endeavouring to be always very cunning for others, by making everything a mystery, are frequently too cunning for themselves." Cures were simply a matter of understanding the relations, which existed in nature between all things, as he outlined in *Pantheisticon*. A true physician would know that the most effective cures are found in "a regular Diet, moderate Exercise" and not in constructed systems and unfounded hypotheses whereby charlatans set "up immediately for an able Physicians, and [are] by others so deem'd..."³⁶ One did not therefore need a physician to care for one's body just as one did not need priests in religion.

The letters between Molesworth and Toland continued. His health not improving, Toland decried the physicians who had attempted to restore his constitution. In melodramatic exaggeration, he told Molesworth that “the Doctor that was call’d to me, made me twenty times worse, if possible. All acknowledge that he had [tried] to kill me.”³⁷ Molesworth replied with understanding and a recommendation for a veal and barley broth: “I am sorry to find you continue so ill, and yet dare not prescribe any thing for you: no sort of Quacks have credit with you, and I can recommend nothing to you but your own kitchen Physic.”³⁸ A little more than a week later Molesworth again wrote to Toland advising him to stay the course: “The return of the spring, and your keeping to kitchen Physic, will restore you to health.”³⁹ These letters indicated that Toland did more than write about natural philosophy and the relationships existing among the parts of the universe; he used the knowledge in an attempt to cure himself.

As his death neared, however, Toland lost the force of his convictions. He deteriorated in early March and wrote such to Molesworth: “When I seem’d to be in a fair way of mending, my old pains in my thighs, veins, and stomach, seiz’d me violently two days ago, with a total loss of appetite, hourly releasing, & very high-color’d water.”⁴⁰ On 2 March Toland described his condition for the last time:

I have been so long silent; but by reason of almost incessant pains, and very extraordinary weakness. Two of three days before your servt called here last, I grew much worse than I was; & from a mending State (the vigor of my mind increasing, the wits little influenced on the infirmity of my Body) I relapsed again into all my former Symptoms, more frequent and Malignant than ever. This has obliged me to put my self into y^c Hands of a physician, who I believe to be an honest man, prepares his own medicines, and explains every thing he does to me.⁴¹

It is unclear if Toland changed his mind with respect to the abilities of physicians or if staring at his own mortality forced a change upon him. Nevertheless, he did not recover from this last illness and died on 11 March 1722.

A Fan of Deism and the Reception of Toland’s Views

We know that Toland’s work attracted interest. Indeed, among his manuscripts exists a letter that may be called a piece of fan mail: “Sir I am a Freethinker, and I glory in the Character.” What was more, “I neither regard

custom, nor fashion, authority nor power; Truth & reason are the only things that determine me.”⁴² Thus, George Turnbull (1698-1748), professor of philosophy at New College, Aberdeen, began his letter of 3 November 1718 to Toland in which he proudly presented his views on the soul to a man who, he hoped, would approve of them. The “only difficult[ies], that I can see, are out of the immortality of the Soul, arises from the principles of the Theists themselves.” From an immaterial soul, Turnbull stated that the following paradox existed:

To suppose a God at the tops of an Infinite Scheme, that sees all his designs at once, is in reality to suppose a thing finite & infinite at the same time. For that which is seen must be finite; so that if God see all his works, his works must have an end. Infinite knowledge, or an Infinite scheme perceived, is the most glaring contradiction imaginable. A succession of things may be vastly long, but end it must if it be perceived.⁴³

Toland seems not to have responded to Turnbull’s invitation to begin a regular correspondence.

Turnbull then attempted to initiate literary relationships with Molesworth and, through him, Anthony Collins. On 3 August 1722 Turnbull wrote Molesworth to introduce himself and to relate that he had used his position at Aberdeen to “promote the interests of liberty and virtue and to reform the taste of the young generation.”⁴⁴ Such actions were the fears of orthodox scholars who saw in deism a subversive and corrupting pursuit. Turnbull hoped to reform university learning to be compatible with freethinking and the unimpeded investigations of deism. He described the current university curriculum as “mere romance and enthusiasm. For how can it be so, while our colleges are under the inspection of proud domineering pedantic priests, whose interest it is to train up the youth in a profound veneration to their senseless metaphysical creeds and catechisms ... and to beget an early antipathy against all freethought....”⁴⁵ In his last letter to Molesworth, Turnbull related his enthusiasm for Collins’ work on freethinking: “I should be glad to know if he is still alive and what is become of him. Toland, who was said to have been of his club, I know, is gone.” He reiterated that “My Lord, ... I [am a] sincere and hearty lover of freethinking.”⁴⁶ In conclusion, Turnbull stated his wish to begin corresponding with Molesworth, but Molesworth did not reply.

Locke, Collins, and the Souls of Brutes

Collins, the other author Turnbull admired, addressed the soul, thought, and immaterial matter in both his public writings and private correspondence. In early 1704 John Norris, who had been very critical of Toland's writings, released the second volume of a two volume work titled *An Essay Towards the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World*. Both Collins and his friend John Locke were intrigued with the book. Collins wrote to Locke that he was annoyed with Norris's conclusion "*that Brutes are meer machines,*" calling it an unfounded hypothesis. The proper question, Collins told Locke, was "whether God can supperadd to matter a power of thinking." Collins, however, agreed with Norris that animals were material, but claimed that they had thoughts. Indeed, he was as certain of this fact as he was "of Mr: N[orris]'s thinking...."⁴⁷

In the third week of March 1704, Collins again wrote Locke alerting him that the relationship between thought and matter continued to occupy his time.⁴⁸ Locke replied that men like Norris "seem to me to decree rather than to argue." They insisted that animals were material and devoid of thought because their hypothesis that thinking was the providence of an immaterial substance demanded it. Moreover, thought was not evident in the known properties of matter, extension, and solidity. Locke cautioned that men like Norris did not draw the correct conclusion from this premise, namely that thought did not belong to extension or solidity. This was not the same as stating matter cannot possibly have a power to think.⁴⁹ Collins replied with thanks for the assessment of Norris' book and claimed that Locke had "made me understand my own thoughts better then I did before...."⁵⁰ This understanding would play a prominent role in Collins' coming quarrel with Samuel Clarke.⁵¹

Henry Dodwell and Mortal Souls

In 1688 the divine and scholar Henry Dodwell became Camden Professor of History at Oxford University. He held the post until 1691, when his refusal to swear allegiance to William and Mary made him a Nonjuror. This new status did not tarnish Dodwell's reputation as an intellectual of great learning.⁵² However, praise turned to disbelief when, in 1706, Dodwell published his views on the nature of

soul. The uniqueness of Dodwell's position sent stunned readers to their desks, with pen in hand, to refute him. The full title of the book reveals much of its contents: *An Epistolary Discourse, proving from the Scriptures and the First Fathers, that the soul is a principle Naturally Mortal, but Immortalized actually by the Pleasure of God to Punish or Reward, by its union with the Divine Baptismal Spirit, wherein is proved that none have the power of giving this Divine Immortalizing Spirit since the Apostles but only the Bishops.* Briefly, Dodwell believed that at Creation, God gave Adam *Afflatus*—the breath of life—which provided humanity with a living soul. God also added *pnoe*—his divine breath—which qualified this soul for immortality. After the Fall, God removed *Afflatus* making humanity and the soul mortal. God allowed *pnoe* to remain at his discretion. Thus, at death the soul still qualified for immortality, but, without the breath of life, the soul was continued only by the desire of God; it had no natural tendency to immortality. However, one could escape the inevitable destruction of the soul through baptism conducted by a priest who was ordained within an episcopal church.⁵³

For Dodwell the question was not one of the soul, but rather the power of God. An analogy between the soul and the body demonstrates the point:

Who doubts but that our Bodies are naturally Mortal? Yet who does therefore believe them actually Mortal after the Resurrection and the General Judgment? And what can hinder but that the same Divine Power which can and shall then Immortalize the Mortal Body, so as to qualifie it for eternal Punishment of which it had not otherwise been capable, may expose a mortal Soul to Immortal never ending punishment, as easily as themselves believe it preformed in the Case of the body?⁵⁴

Anticipating problems with his proposition, Dodwell reminded readers that he did not think the soul dependent on the body for its existence. Rather, he claimed the soul was continued “from the Divine Flation,” and not out of any “necessity of the Divine Nature...” Dodwell continued that it was “God's pleasure to continue all Souls to the Day of Judgement.”⁵⁵ God may indeed do so but He is in no way bound to do it. Moving away from arguments based on God's power, Dodwell supported his position by examining the soul as a created substance. As a creation of God, the soul depended entirely upon God for its existence, as did all other

created entities. In Dodwell's view: "There can be no punishment but of created beings. Nor has any created being a Right or Power to last for ever independent of the Divine arbitrary pleasure."⁵⁶ Thus, Dodwell viewed his book as a testimony to the absolute power of God.

Reception of Dodwell's initial book and the following defence was mixed. Not surprisingly, Dodwell's fellow Nonjurors embraced the special powers he reserved for bishops.⁵⁷ Others were not impressed. The Archbishop of Dublin commented that "I have read Mr Dodwell's Preliminary defence, & am a little out of patience wth it." He observed that the only reason Dodwell offered in defence of his curious theory of the soul was

to call it naturally mortall ... because God can wth draw his consurving power, & then it may relapse into nothing, at w^{ch} rate there neither is, nor can be any immortall creatures, for there is no being but must be annihilated if God wth draws his influence y^t preserves it. He therefore mistook y^e Title of his Epistolary discourse, & ought to have said that y^e Soul is naturally immortal, but will be destroyed by y^e displeasure of God.⁵⁸

The Archbishop delighted in the fact that Dodwell seemingly did not see his own contradictions.

Samuel Clarke expressed his concerns over the book directly to its author in a published pamphlet. This was not Clarke's first exposure to Dodwell; he had seen the name before in the work of Toland. In 1699, Toland had turned to Dodwell to support his view that since the doctrines of the Church were established in AD 360 at the Council of Laodicea, they were not divine. Clarke's response made special mention of Dodwell.⁵⁹ Perhaps Clarke identified Dodwell as sympathetic to the deist cause because Dodwell's position on the soul closely paralleled one of the types of deists—those who denied the immortal soul—a view Clarke advanced in his second Boyle Lecture.⁶⁰ The pamphlet to Dodwell began "Sir, It is a Thing of very ill Consequence, when Men of great Reputation in the World for Learning, ... allow themselves to advance new and crude Notions, and extravagant Hypotheses...." Though he admitted that Dodwell had never claimed so, Clarke feared that people of "loose Principles and vicious Lives" would see the title and draw the erroneous conclusion that "you suppose the Soul to perish at the

dissolution of the Body....”⁶¹ Clarke further advised Dodwell that only material substances were mortal and that the soul was certainly not material. Moreover, since matter was a conglomerate of particles and thought was an individual power resulting in an individual consciousness, it must be located within an indivisible immaterial substance such as the soul. Clarke ended with some free advice to Dodwell. The book “which you have put into the hands of sceptical and profane Men, to confirm them in their Prejudices against the Belief of the Immortality of the Soul” would require him to “think of some means of making satisfaction to the Church, to whom you have given so great Offence....”⁶²

Clarke ensured that Dodwell saw the pamphlet by leaving a complimentary copy at a bookshop frequented by Dodwell, who wrote in thanks for the unexpected gift:⁶³ “Sir, I did not know that the Copy of your book against me was a Present from the Author ... I had no reason to Expect that favour from a Stranger....” Dispensing with the pleasantries, Dodwell took exception to Clarke’s critique telling him that he knew of “no Atheist in England, that can take advantage from the primitive Doctrine of Natural Mortality....” He admonished Clarke for misunderstanding the intent of the book and tossing his name among those belonging to heretics. “I like all your zeal for Religion,” Dodwell told Clarke, “in an age of so little zeal, and should not have been sorry for being the Object of it, if I had deserved it....”⁶⁴ Despite the fact that Dodwell had concluded his *Epistolary Discourse* by claiming that “I am willing to hear what ... any *other* friend can say to convince me, if I should prove mistaken,” it seems he was not prepared for the ensuing backlash.⁶⁵

In reply, Clarke attempted to deflect Dodwell’s displeasure: “The Occasion of my Publishing an Answer to your Discourse ... was not (I assure you) out of any disrespect to your Person, whose great Learning is well known to the World....” However, “this last Book of your’s, was Judged by all Serious men of all Parties, ... to be of dangerous Consequences.” Thus, even if Dodwell had never intended the book to be a danger to religion, it might become so in the hands of the irreligious. Clarke continued his reply upon this theme:

You say indeed, you know no atheist in England, that can take advantage of the Doctrine of Natural Mortality. If I had assured him, that you allow none the benefit of actual Mortality I never Supposed, Sr, that you did allow them the benefit of Actual Mortality, you can never persuade them that they shall not have the benefit of Actual Immortality to Punishment [which] has always been made use of by unbelievers, as an Objection against Religion.⁶⁶

Clarke's chief concern lay in his belief that Dodwell's seeming denial of an afterlife would be the justification of lives lived with no fear of divine retribution or reward for actions on earth.⁶⁷

Maybe Material Souls, Clarke and Collins

Clarke's fears over the potential dangers of Dodwell's book were soon confirmed. In a public pamphlet Collins defended Dodwell's right to publish any description of the soul that Dodwell thought fit. Why Collins chose to defend the writings of a High Churchman is uncertain, though his desire to encourage uncensored debate on important intellectual topics must have played a role.⁶⁸ Drawing on his letters with Locke, Collins told readers that the "principal Argument for the *Natural Immortality of the Soul* is founded on the Supposition of its Immateriality...." If the soul was immaterial, it must be immortal. The problem was, Collins pointed out to Clarke, that one needed to prove absolutely that the soul was immaterial otherwise the above premise must be discarded. "By *Soul*," Collins wrote, "I suppose Mr. *Clarke* means a Substance with a Power of Thinking, or, as he expresses himself, with an *Individual Consciousness*. By saying *the Soul cannot possibly be Material*, I conceive is meant, that the Substance which hath Solidity added to it, cannot have the Power of Thinking."⁶⁹ A suitable answer could be given to Clarke, therefore, if one could demonstrate that the power of thought may be present in material matter. What was more, a specific power, in this case thought, might inhabit a system of matter even though it did not exist in the individual parts.⁷⁰

Clarke replied that "it is both absolutely false in Fact, and impossible and a direct Contradiction in the Nature of the Thing itself, that *any Power whatsoever* should *inhere* or *reside in*, any System or Composition of Matter, different from the Powers residing in the single Parts."⁷¹ If a material system did think, what

happened if it came apart? Would there then be as many thoughts as there were pieces? Only in the indivisible, immaterial soul could thought reside.⁷² Collins' subsequent rejoinder reminded Clarke that they lived in England, a nation which allowed people to examine "the Grounds and Reasons of prevailing Opinions."⁷³ Therefore, important questions, such as the nature of the soul, were suitable topics for public debate and not to be curtailed. Collins then considered Clarke's position and related all the condition that must be met prior to accepting it. One had to prove not only that "Consciousness is *an Individual Power*" but also that "Consciousness is not ... [a] Power resulting from an Union of different kinds of Powers...."⁷⁴ By demonstrating what he viewed as the unfounded premises of Clarke's view, Collins believed he was participating in an intellectual debate, the kind he endorsed in his other writings. For Clarke to be able to state with certainty the nature of the soul, he must know all the powers and properties of matter. Collins countered that until we knew the entire workings of nature, the being of the soul and thought must remain indeterminate.

Clarke's next pamphlet dismissed Collins' objections which were "wide of the main Question. For if the foregoing Proof, that Matter is incapable of Thinking, cannot be shown to be defective; it follows necessarily that the Soul must be an *immaterial indiscernible Substance*."⁷⁵ Until Collins could prove with certainty that matter can think, Clarke believed the debate settled in his favour. In what he hoped would be his final argument, Clarke outlined fifteen points addressing both material and immaterial matter. The key statements are as follows:

I. Every System of Matter *consists of a Multitude of distinct Parts.*"

IV. "Every real simple Quality *that resides in any whole material System, resides in all the Parts of that System.*"

V. "Every real compound Quality, *that resides in any whole material System, is a Number of such simple Qualities residing in all the Parts of that System; some in one part, some in another.*"

X "Consciousness, *therefore, being a real Quality, (Prop. VIII) and of a kind specifically different from all other Qualities, whether known or unknown, which are themselves acknowledged to be void of Consciousness, can never possibly result from any Composition of such Qualities.*"

XIII “The Conscious *that a Man has at one and the same time, is one Consciousness, and not a Multitude of Consciousnesses; as the Solidity, Motion or Colour of any piece of Matter, is a multitude of distinct Solidities, Motions or Colours.*”

XIV “Consciousness, *therefore, cannot at all reside in the Substance of the Brain or Spirits, or in any material System, as its Subject, but must be a Quality of some immaterial Substance.*”⁷⁶

These facts, Clarke believed, would silence his adversary.

Despite Clarke’s fervent hope, Collins penned yet another pamphlet which restated his positions.⁷⁷ Clarke responded with exacerbation: “In my last Reply I persuaded myself I had set the Question between us in so clear a Light, that there would have been no need of any new Debates, or of giving our Readers any further trouble in this Matter.”⁷⁸ Like Collins, Clarke offered no new evidence to readers.

In his final work of the controversy, Collins described how thought might result from material action: “I observe, that Thinking is an Action that begins not in us, till we are operated on by external material Objects, that act on us by Motion and Contact; no more than a Windmill begins to go till the Air or some other Body strikes against the Sails.” As Toland had suggested to Leibniz and Sophia Charlotte, Collins argued that we have no ideas until we encounter them through the senses and then reflect upon them. Therefore, thought must be the result of matter and motion.⁷⁹ Collins stated that it was well known that all matter was the same and that our perceptions of “Smells, Tastes and Sounds, &c.” result from the interactions of matter in our mind to produce the phenomena of these secondary qualities. Why could the same process not cause thought? Clarke’s reply contained no new arguments but simply restated his position. Collins did not respond and the debate of 400 pages came to an end.⁸⁰

The Fallout From Collins’ Defence of Dodwell

Observers identified Collins’ pamphlets as epitomising what was thought to be the deist position on the soul. This is seen in *The First Principles of Modern Deism confuted, in a demonstration of the Immateriality, Natural Eternity, and Immortality of Thinking Substance in general and in Particular of Human Souls,*

even upon the Supposition that we are entirely Ignorant of the Intrinsic Nature of the Essence of Things (1707).⁸¹ The author, John Witty, Rector of Lockington, composed the book as a reaction against the views Collins advanced—a fact he acknowledged in the preface—because “*the Doctrin[e] of the Immortality of the Soul [was] one of the strongest Bases of Religion....*” To deny this, was to deny religion itself. What was more, he identified Collins as one of the same club that had produced *The Rights of the Christian Church* (by Matthew Tindal).⁸² Shortly after Francis Higgins had refuted Toland’s theology and Dodwell’s description of the soul in the sermon we considered in Chapter Three, the Tory political newspaper *The Rehearsal*—edited by Charles Leslie, scourge to heretics—also contemplated the deist account of the soul.⁸³ The date (24 May 1707) suggests an attack on Collins. After telling readers that deists are “too many now among us,” the editorial claimed “[i]t is the Common Opinion of the Deists ... and which they make their Comfort, That the Soul of Man Dies with the Body, like the Flame of a Candle when it is put out, and that there is no Future Account, nor any Rewards or Punishments.” With no fear of eternal damnation, Leslie claimed that deists had no secure foundation for morality. While neglecting their personal salvation was bad enough, what was worse was that their immorality threatened to undermine the English nation, or so the paper suggested following Higgins’ assessment earlier the same year. Deists, *The Rehearsal* wrote, knew that they acted contrarily to the rest of Britons. Nevertheless, they delighted in the difference. A deist “when he came to Die ... had this Ejaculation, and said, If there be a God, a Heaven or a Hell, I am a Miserable Creature—But I much Doubt it. Behold here the utmost Hopes and Expectations of a Deist!”⁸⁴ This Tory characterisation of deists was certainly a motivating factor in Henry Sachevell’s famed sermon of 1709.

Despite Clarke and Collins ceasing their polemical pamphlets, the effect of their respective works was long lasting. Newtonian populariser and mathematical instructor, Humphry Ditton, who had challenged Toland’s notion of matter found in *Letters to Serena*, nearly a decade earlier, appended a specific refutation of deists’ conception of material souls in *A Discourse Concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1712). Regarding the notion of thinking matter, Ditton claimed that to

accept it, one must accept self-moving matter which “at once destroys all, that the world has ever call’d by the name of NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.”⁸⁵ His reasons were those of Clarke: Newtonian philosophy prohibited both material souls and self-moving matter. What was more, Ditton proposed that acceptance of thinking matter was the first link in the chain of heresy and unbelief.

In 1727, nearly twenty years after Collins first defended Dodwell, John Maxwell, Newtonian populariser and chaplain to the peer Lord Carteret, produced *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature*, a new translation of Richard Cumberland’s *De Legibus Naturae* (1672).⁸⁶ We know that both Collins and Clarke saw this edition because they, along with Isaac Newton, are listed as subscribers. As an appendix, Maxwell included an account of the Collins and Clarke dispute in which he argued that the soul was an immaterial substance entirely different from the material body. This fact, he advised readers, had “been set in a clear light by Dr. *Samuel Clark*.”⁸⁷ The work followed the path established by Clarke’s pamphlets. Even the main reasons levelled against Collins found a new home in Maxwell’s appendix: “The Soul, therefore, whose Power of thinking is undeniably one individual Consciousness, cannot possibly be a material Substance.” Maxwell also reprinted the list of fifteen propositions that Clarke hoped would silence Collins.⁸⁸ In *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed*, the book identified by many historians as signalling the philosophical death-knell of deism, Joseph Butler, Bishop of Derham, reprinted selections from the Clarke and Collins controversy. Butler sided with Clarke and stated that “Consciousness is a single and indivisible power, it should seem that the Subject in which it resides, must be so too.”⁸⁹ His reasons were Clarke’s: matter is divisible, and thus cannot be the location of an indivisible power, such as thought.

Some of Clarke’s associates, even though they actively encouraged his Arian-like pronouncements, differed from him in defining the soul. This was the case of John Jackson (1686-1763), Rector of Rossington, who had written to Clarke in 1714 and 1715 to tell him that he had converted to Arian theology. In 1735 Jackson published *A Dissertation on Matter and Spirit* which began with Collins’ plea that the nature of the soul was a subject that ought “to be freely enquir’d into

and seriously attended to.”⁹⁰ Though he decried as atheists those who held that matter was inherently active, Jackson admitted that we knew nothing concerning the internal structural essence of matter or spirit because this knowledge did not come from the senses. He then came very near to what Collins had offered to Clarke: “we cannot know that *Matter* cannot *think*; or that *Spirit* may not be *meerly passive* and *solid*; that is, whether the *Substance* or *Substratum* of what we call *Matter* is not in any respect or any possible Mode of Existence capable ... of *Consciousness* and *Intelligence*....” What was more, Jackson seemed to refute the argument that lay at the centre of Clarke’s work. If it could be proved that the soul had no extension or parts “it wou’d, I confess, prove it to be *not material*; but then this wou’d not prove it to be *positively immaterial*, or a positive acting Substance, *not material*.” Jackson’s underlying assumption was that God was the only purely immaterial entity. The soul, therefore, was some unknown combination of material and immaterial substance.⁹¹

A review of Jackson’s work appeared in *The Present State of the Republick of Letters* (January 1735): “The Publication of this Treatise is a great Surprise to many, who are known to entertain a very high Esteem of the Writer of it. Deism has been so generally connected with a Disbelief of the Immateriality of the Soul, that the barely supposing that it *may* be material, will be look’d upon by a multitude of well-meaning people, as a dangerous wounding of Christianity.” It had been assumed that both Jackson and Clarke shared the same view on the soul since they agreed in so many other facets of theology. The cause of the reviewer’s identifying Jackson with deism was Jackson’s comment that “if the human Soul could be prov’d to be *material*, that would have no ill Influence on Religion, or in the least weaken the natural or reveal’d Evidence of a future State.” Material souls were the calling card of deists. The reviewer ended by urging Jackson to rethink his position by reading the work of the very man whom he admired, that is Samuel Clarke.⁹²

Exploration of a Deist’s Mind

Perhaps the most unique writings on deists and the soul to be born in reaction to Collins, and deists generally, were those which appeared in Richard Steele’s *Guardian* during 1713, its only year of existence. Steele, essayist, play-

write, promoter of public science, and future MP, had started the *Guardian* as an organ of Whig political polemic to counter the various Tory papers. The editor was Steele himself in the guise of Nestor Ironside, “an old man who gives sound advice to people; indeed he is the guardian of this people, though not their leader.”⁹³ Steele, it will be remembered, refuted Collins’ *Discourse of Free-Thinking* in the *Guardian*. He received gratitude from a reader who claimed to have been present at a meeting of free-thinkers and was much disturbed by what he heard.⁹⁴ Steele’s stance regarding deists may explain why he composed the following astonishing fictional tale in the *Guardian* on 21 and 25 April.

The story was purportedly narrated by a man who had spent much time travelling on the Continent before finally settling in France. Before returning to England a friend of the man showed him a “little Amber Box of Snuff” and “made me a present of it, telling me at the same time, that he knew no readier way to furnish and adorn a Mind with Knowledge in the Arts and Sciences, than the same Snuff rightly applied.” His friend told the author that Descartes had rightly discovered that “the *Pineal Gland*, to be the immediate Receptacle of the Soul” where it acts on the body through nerves.⁹⁵ Then the story turned bizarre. The snuff possessed the ability to separate “the Soul for some time from the Body, without any Injury to the latter.” Once a person was a disembodied soul, they might enter the mind of any other person, through the pineal gland, in order to learn the knowledge contained there. After telling Steele of his immaterial adventures, the correspondent claimed that during one particular excursion he happened to be present during the initial planning “of a certain Book in the Mind of a Free-thinker,” which had taken place at the coffeehouse frequented by our deists and by fellows of the Royal Society.⁹⁶ The tale continued a few days later:

On the 11th Day of October in the Year 1712, having left my Body locked up safe in my Study, I repaired to the *Grecian* Coffee-house, where entering the *Pineal Gland* of a certain eminent *Free-thinker*, I made directly to the highest part of it, which is the Seat of Understanding, expecting to find there a comprehensive Knowledge of all things Humane and Divine; but, to my no small Astonishment, I found the Place narrower than ordinary, insomuch that there was not any room for a Miracle, Prophecies, or *Separate Spirit*.

This was satirically composed physical proof of what theologians could only hint at, namely that the understanding of a deist was smaller than that of orthodox thinkers. Perhaps if their minds could be sufficiently expanded, deists would see their mistakes and recant their heresy. The investigation of the deist interior continued, as the correspondent moved to the imagination. There resided “*Prejudice* in the Figure of a Woman standing in a Corner with her Eyes close shut, and her Fore-fingers stuck in her Ears; many Words in a confused Order, but spoken with great Emphasis, issued from her Mouth.” Deists refused to employ their imaginations to consider things, which might expand their understandings. Such things included divine providence and religious mysteries. Before ending the letter, the man submitted that these conditions were not present in just one deist because he had gone “round the Table, but could not find a Wit or Mathematician among them.” Steele thanked the man for the unusual account and suggested tongue-in-cheek to his readers that a potential medical cure to the disease of deism existed.⁹⁷

The Liberty of the Soul, Clarke and Collins Once More

A decade after his initial debate with Clarke, Collins again addressed the operation of the mind in 1714.⁹⁸ In *A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty*, Collins presented his argument that people are governed by necessity. That is, a person “who is an intelligent and sensible being, is determin’d by his reason and his senses;” however, Collins was quick to assure readers that he did not suggest that people had the mechanical action of clocks. Collins then attempted to prove this assertion through “experience and by reason.”⁹⁹

Humans are necessary agents if the actions they take are determined by a sequence of causes, each of which was required to have the known action be the result, Collins suggested. What was more, those who argued contrarily for a complete liberty of action did not understand the nature of cause.¹⁰⁰ A person was a necessary agent “because all his actions have a beginning. For what ever has a beginning must have a cause; and every cause is a necessary cause.” If something could originate without a cause then, Collins claimed, the world could have come into being without any cause, an atheistical conclusion to be sure. All known action

in the universe, celestial and terrestrial, plant and animal, was determined by some immutable sequence of causes.¹⁰¹

Through an investigation of the natural order and an acceptance of the necessity of causes, one acted in a moral way. Since only matter acts upon matter, and as he demonstrated in the previous exchange with Clarke, the operation of thought was material, the causes which enact our necessity of action must be material too. Humanity is determined to act in such a way as to increase happiness and avoid pain. If this were not true, then “there would be no foundation for rewards and punishments, which are the *essential supports* of society.”¹⁰² Consequently, the interaction of material causes on the human mind made us necessary agents predisposed to act for the common good.

Not surprisingly, Clarke rejected Collins’ ideas in their entirety. Clarke was sure he had seen the views before “in the Papers which lately passed between Me and the Learned Mr. *Leibniz*.” During their famed correspondence, Leibniz claimed that “God has forseen everything; he has provided a remedy for everything beforehand; there is in his works a harmony, a beauty, already pre-established.” In other words, there was perpetual unaided operation in the universe, as God had established all causes at the Creation. Clarke replied that the Creation operated by “the mere will of God.” Any other interpretation “would tend to take away all power and choosing, and to introduce fatality.”¹⁰³ In this threat to correct conceptions of God’s unlimited power, Clarke acknowledged that Collins presented the material in “such a Light, as may possibly deceive unwary Persons, whose Thoughts have not been much conversant upon so nice a subject.”¹⁰⁴ The same reason also underlay Clarke’s rebuttal to Dodwell and his previous exchange with Collins. It was not soundness of the arguments that worried Clarke: it was the conclusion that might be drawn from them.

Clarke believed that Collins began his work with a contradiction. To suggest that humans were necessary agents was to suggest an impossibility. If people were acted upon by immutable and necessary causes, then they would cease to be agents because only agents possessed the ability to initiate motion. Despite Collins’ claim to the contrary, Clarke submitted that a necessary being acting by

mere necessity was no better than a clock.¹⁰⁵ A passive entity cannot be the “*Cause* of an *Effect* more *considerable* than *itself*.” Thus, a necessary agent could never do the things that Collins advocated.¹⁰⁶ The question, as Clarke advised readers and cautioned Collins, was whether the cause of motion “must either finally be resolved into a *First Mover*, in whom consequently there is a *Liberty* of Action; or else into an *infinite and eternal Chain of Effects without any Cause at all*.”¹⁰⁷ Motion, or the ability to act or not act, originated in God who gave it to humanity.

Clarke then considered his adversary’s definition of liberty as “a power in Man, to do as he wills or pleases.” He paid special attention to the word “do,” which Clarke suggested “has no Signification.” Moreover, he claimed that Collins misunderstood his terms. It was not that “Man *acts* or *does* any Thing: But the *Liberty*, or *Power in Man*, to *do as he wills or please*, is, with *him*, exactly and only the same, as the *Liberty* or *Power in a Balance* would be, to *move as it wills or pleases*....”¹⁰⁸ What was more, Collins made the distinction between people and timepieces to be only “*Sensation and Intelligence*” and not in action. Clarke defined an agent as such precisely because of the ability to act. Indeed for Clarke, freedom of action was the basis of religion. During his examinations for Doctor of Divinity in 1709, one of his theses was that “all religion supposes the freedom of human actions.” People must have the freedom to responsibly choose religion because forced religion would not have the ability to encourage moral actions.¹⁰⁹ Clarke ended his rebuttal to a familiar adversary with a warning for Collins to consider the implications of his theories:

I cannot make an End, without earnestly desiring this Author seriously to consider with himself, *what* it is that he has all this Time been pleading for. For though it might be supposed possible, that, among *Necessary Agents*, a sort of a *Machine of Government* might be carried on, by such *Weights* and *Springs of Rewards and Punishments*, as *Clocks and Watches* (supposing them to *feel* what is done to them) are *rewarded* and *punished* withal; yet in Truth and Reality, according to this Supposition, there is nothing *intrinsically good* or *evil*, there is nothing *personally just* or *unjust*, there is *no Behaviour of rational Creatures* in any Degree *acceptable* or *unacceptable* to God Almighty. Consider the Consequence of this.¹¹⁰

Collins discussed the criticism offered by Clarke, with his close friend Pierre Desmaizeaux. “You make a right judgement of Dr. C’s book,” Collins told him, “It

is very peevish & haughty; and full of misrepresentations from one end to the other.” This was the same assessment he had given Trenchard regarding Clarke’s tone in the Dodwell dispute. Collins seemed genuinely surprised that a learned discussion would take on such a personal note. He would not, however, be drawn into a mudslinging contest: “I will take no hasty measures in this matter, and will most certainly outdo him in civility & good manners.”¹¹¹ Collins, however, was contemplating a reply, which he planned to present Clarke as a gift. Preferring not to discuss the matter in correspondence but rather in person with Desmaizeaux, Collins nevertheless offered the following assessment of Clarke’s arguments: “Does he [Clarke] not make liberty to consist in a ~~Power Physical Power (never put in practice) of acting contrary to the will~~ a Power of acting agreeably or contrary to the determination of the Will, tho the power of acting contrary & never put in practice! But no more of this, till we come together.”¹¹² For Collins, a potential power left unused was no power at all. The unfulfilled potential to act contrary to the necessary will was no argument against his position. Clarke was, Collins asserted, grasping at straws.

A few days later Collins again contacted Desmaizeaux about a similar theme: writers who “maintain’d the soul to have in it a principle of action.” Collins had in mind Clarke as a prime example of this group: “Action, according to Dr. C[larke], is ever concomitant with, & consequent to the will.”¹¹³ What was more, Clarke seemed to argue that “there must be a determination of the motive Power in man to the action or motion otherwise the motive power by being equally disposed to all actions or motions can begin none, and is like a body at rest incapable of beginning a particular motion.”¹¹⁴ The matter of the body must be brought to motion by something other than itself. For Clarke, this was the human will contained in the immaterial soul. Alternatively, Collins viewed this cause of human action as both necessary and material. But, this difference was not what raised Collins’ ire.

Little more than a year later Collins wrote to Desmaizeaux in June 1718 and expressed continued frustration with his treatment by Clarke. The impetus for the letter was a forthcoming natural philosophical collection of writings by Leibniz,

Clarke, and Newton, which Desmaizeaux was editing. Desmaizeaux had asked Collins if he would like to include a rebuttal to Clarke in the book. Despite the fact that he had been composing the work since July 1717 and had a “reply to Dr C in loose papers” Collins declined and replied, “Let not the collection of Leibniz & Clarke Papers &c. now printing in Holland wait for my reply to Dr. Clark. If I do any thing more, it shall be by way of addition to my Inquiry, in a third edition of it.”¹¹⁵ It was ironic, Collins mused, that though Clarke had brought religion into their debates and made Collins “an enemy & himself a friend to it,” when Clarke himself was deemed by many to be “an Enemy to Religion.”¹¹⁶ This was likely a reference to Clarke’s supposed heretical writings on the Trinity. Collins could forgive this blind-spot in Clarke’s arguments, but he continued to be irritated by the tone of the writings. This uneasiness was the real reason why Collins was reluctant to answer Clarke. He would not provide his adversary a readymade platform to “act the bigot against me; for what he says in the close of his Remarks shows that he will act the bigot to serve his purpose, as much as his other writings sho[w] that he does but act that part there....”¹¹⁷ Freethinking welcomed intellectual debates, but shrank from petty bickering.

The reply to Clarke eventually came, despite Collins’ initial diffidence. He was confident of success because prior to publishing, Collins had “had a dispute with an Ingenious [but unidentified] man & a great friend of Dr. Clarke on the Subject and had little effect upon him from concentration.” However, after “showing him my Paper, which he took with him out of my Library,” Collins claimed that he was unable to engage the man in debate, because his former opponent had abandoned all objections in light of the material he read.¹¹⁸ Collins’ timing was impeccable. *A Dissertation upon Liberty and Necessity* was published in 1729 the same year both he and Clarke died. He began by suggesting that the question of whether humanity was “an Agent or Patient?” remained unanswered: neither Clarke nor he had been able to settle the issue. Still skating around the issue of explicit material souls, Collins tellingly wrote “the Soul is so constituted, as to be affect by *Material Objects*.” However, he cautioned, we know not the qualities of matter, material or immaterial. But we do know, he conceded, that “the *Soul is*

Acted upon by Ideas as Matter is by Matter” and this unbroken sequence of causes negates complete human liberty, as he had originally argued.¹¹⁹

The Present State of the Republick of Letters carried a eulogy for Clarke which asserted that it was his excellence in natural philosophy “which enables us to determine the questions concerning *Liberty* and *Necessity*: It is that, which teaches us the Extent of the *Powers* of *Matter* and *Motion*: It is that which gives us the strongest evidence of God’s continual Government of the World.”¹²⁰ Correct knowledge of matter, motion, the soul and liberty, was thus essential in religion. The same issue of the periodical also contained a review of Collins’ *Dissertation upon Liberty and Necessity*. The reviewer wondered why a subject so long discussed should have had “no demonstration convincing enough, to gain universal assent to either side of the question” of whether people be necessary agents. Collins was commended for his clear presentation of material which he had originally published some ten years previously, but his arguments would only convince readers who could not “readily discern the Truth.”¹²¹ In spite of Collins’ arguments to the contrary, the reviewer claimed that it is “impossible for [people] to pay any proper *Worship to God*, without doing it by *Intention, Choice* and *Will*....” Collins’ failure to accept this axiom revealed that he was “greatly blinded with prejudice” in the matter. In a closing remark, the reviewer urged Collins to carefully and once more consider the writings of Clarke, “the greatest Master of Reason that ever liv’d....”¹²² We do not know whether Collins took this advice or even saw the review.

Public Reaction to Another Round of Clarke vs. Collins

In spite of Collins’ initial reluctance to answer Clarke’s criticism of *A Philosophical Inquiry*, others had no such restraint. John Trenchard—to whom Collins had expressed his frustration during the Dodwell dispute—and his partner Thomas Gordon considered Clarke’s reply to Collins notion of liberty and necessity in their *Cato’s Letters: or, Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious, and other important Subjects*.¹²³ The publications had originated as a critique of the government following the South Sea debacle of 1720. The number in question appeared on 12 January 1722 and was titled “Of Liberty and Necessity.”¹²⁴

Trenchard and Gordon suggested that the real issue between Clarke and Collins was “If a Man can do a voluntary Action without a Design to do it, and without any Reason or Motive for doing it, then Matter without *Understanding* has a self-moving Power; which is Atheism....” They further argued that, perhaps Collins had been partially correct in arguing for a necessary component to human actions. This was true because “the Mind of Man can be only a secondary Cause, [and] must be acted upon by other Causes; that God alone is the first Cause or Principle of all Motion; and that the Actions of all other Beings are necessarily dependent upon Him.”¹²⁵

They then noted that Clarke, who was identified as a “very great and justly celebrated Author,” had advocated the position that “Man has Self-moving Power.” Though Clarke had only supposed this to be the case, nevertheless, he had insisted that Collins accounted “for what no Man yet has accounted for, and yet every Man sees to be true,” namely, that matter and soul are distinct substances. Clarke should “kindly to have let us into that Secret himself,” *Cato’s* authors suggested. Like Collins, they urged Clarke not to be so quick in his criticism of others because, while he was correct that the soul and thought put a body into motion, “how these Effects are produced, we are wholly in the dark.”¹²⁶ Trenchard and Gordon admonished Clarke for demanding of others what he could not do himself: “Methinks this truly and learned Author should not call upon another to solve what no Man is more capable of solving than himself.”¹²⁷ Collins himself could not have made a better demand upon Clarke for civility.

Other respondents restricted their criticism of Clarke’s latest answer to Collins directly to Clarke himself. John Clarke (1687-1734), Master of the Grammar School at Hull, and no relation, wrote to Samuel Clarke on 29 May 1717. This was not the first comment that John Clarke had offered on a Newtonian response to Collins. In his copy of William Whiston’s *Reflexions on an anonymous pamphlet, entitulated, A discourse of free thinking* he criticised the treatment of Collins. Whiston had paradoxically endorsed “the justness of the anonymous author’s definition of the subject, and also the correctness of his mode of treating it; yet you say that his pamphlet contains some indirect censures on the conduct of

Priests.” Perhaps if priests “in all ages were ~~a little~~ more careful of their conduct, they need not feel much anxiety for what the world may say of them.” He ended by suggesting a better answer to writers like Collins was silence rather than provocation.¹²⁸

In this latest reaction to a rebuttal of Collins, John Clarke wrote to Samuel Clarke to engage in a “fair and impartial Enquiry” on the subject of human freedom. He then proceeded to side with Collins’ view that some necessity exists in human actions.

It does not appear to me so absurd a Supposition, that pleasure or pains, Reasons, motives, and Arguments, tho’ mere abstract notions, should in some Cases be the physical, necessary, and Efficient Causes of Actions: for that they are the physical, necessary, and Efficient Causes of Passions, that is to say, Inclination of Aversions, I think you, as well as anybody Else, must grant.¹²⁹

He argued that passions might result in both physical action and impressions upon the mind. That is, passions cause action by necessary relations, though John Clarke did not elaborate his theory and Samuel Clarke did not respond.

The Providence of Everyone: Tindal and the Soul

Unlike our other deists who considered the nature and construction of the soul, Matthew Tindal took a different line in his works. Tindal used the soul to demonstrate how priests imposed themselves on matters of religion over which they had no claim. Like Collins who argued that all people were necessitated to act for the common good, Tindal suggested that everyone is “bound to do all he can for saving another’s Soul, and therefore most things which the Clergy are oblig’d to perform are the duty of every Man....”¹³⁰ By making the care of the soul something which was only their providence, priests assured themselves a privileged place in society.¹³¹ Whereas, in reality, the soul was indeed an important aspect of life, but its care was entrusted to all people.¹³² For Tindal, descriptions of the nature of spirit were another way in which priestcraft showed itself. To William Law, who, as we saw, composed a lengthy response to *Christianity as Old as Creation*, Tindal’s view was yet another example of deistical vanity because mere reason cannot know anything about the soul, its operation, nor how it becomes united to the body. Such

information resided in God who acted in accordance with “the *incomprehensible* perfections of his own nature....”¹³³

Chubb and the Freedom of the Soul

Thomas Chubb too considered the relation in which the soul stood with respect to organised religion. He suggested that a person “contains a *Body* fitly organised, and formed in the general, as all our Bodies are, and that this Body is actuated by a *Mind*, whose principal Faculties are *Intelligence* and *Activity*.” The mind thus possessed a power of self-motion, which “directs the Body.” Though he did not explicitly identify the mind as an aspect of the soul, Chubb seemed to have held it as such. The idea of humanity originated in our idea of its composition, which came from our senses. It was thus, “the Effect or Produce of *Nature*, and not of a supernatural Influence; that is, it is the Produce of those *Laws* by which the natural World is governed, and not the Effect of a supernatural Influence, which operates above, or contrary to those *Laws*.”¹³⁴ We knew the body and, by extension, the mind and soul in the same way that we knew any other aspect of the Creation—without divine assistance. What was more, our soul was not harmed by a careful and honest investigation into the present state of Christianity. This inquiry, even if it led to a rejection of institutionalised religion, could not mean the “Death of their Souls” because, as Chubb had stated in previous works, God encouraged all people to think for themselves.¹³⁵

Daniel Waterland, Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, was greatly troubled by Chubb’s notions. Writing to Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, he claimed that Chubb had clearly composed this latest work so that it was “fitted to deceive” readers. Waterland described how its “first part is extremely confident, and irreverent, and indeed profane, to talk so freely of [G]od, and to make his own Imaginations the measure of divine wisdom. His other part about positive duties is loose and fallacious all the way.” However, the problem lay in that Chubb knew just enough philosophy to write books containing some level of sophistication which made quick responses difficult. As Waterland lamented to Gibson, it would take “something of a metaphysical Head to unravel him clearly and distinctly. He should be answered, and well answered.” Though Waterland was too busy to

undertake a rebuttal personally, he hoped one would be forthcoming.¹³⁶ A little more than a month later, and with no reply to Chubb yet in print, Waterland wrote again to Gibson. He suggested that when one replied to deists care needed to be taken because “It is impossible to do any good against them but by confuting them, or to confute them without exposing them, or to expose them without making them angry, as they are very ... conceited.”¹³⁷

Unlike Collins, whom he once characterised as a “a good sort of man, but an absolute fatalist,”¹³⁸ Chubb believed in complete human liberty. He described agency in people as the same thing as the “active Faculty or Power of Self-motion, and the same intellectual Faculty which excites to and directs that Motion...”¹³⁹ The mind was the source of liberty. People were entirely free and might act in any way they wish in response to their experience. Chubb, however, reminded his readers that God might impart wisdom to humans through a revelation. Though, “this does not affect his *Liberty*, nor give him any *new Agency*; he is just the same Creature as he was before...”¹⁴⁰ Not even God Himself can detract from human freedom. In a later publication, Chubb repeated that humanity was “capable of *Motion* or *Action*” and that this ability led them to be a moral creatures.¹⁴¹ For Chubb, people were moral because their freedom allowed them another choice other than a moral one. Because people use their freedom to make moral choices for the betterment of humanity, they are indeed moral.¹⁴²

The Immaterial Soul of a Physician

Like Toland and Collins, Thomas Morgan addressed the soul and immaterial matter in several publications. In his rebuttal of Waterland’s writings on Trinitarianism, Morgan considered the properties of matter and spirit. The soul and body were “Two Substances, distinguished by some essential and incommunicable Attributes, as suppose intelligent Agency and Solidity.” Unlike Toland, Collins, and, perhaps, Tindal, Morgan drew a sharp distinction between intelligence—hence thought—and the solidity of matter. Morgan advised Waterland that these two substances must be “united as closely, intimately, and inseparably as you please; let them mutually inhabit, and pervade, and penetrate each other, or what you will; yet still while they retain their really distinct, essential, and incommunicable

Properties.”¹⁴³ This conclusion was intended to remind Waterland that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit might be united but remain distinct substances and, therefore, the Trinity was a falsehood. There was, Morgan continued, “a real, vital Union, for Instance, between the Soul and Body,” and the “mutual Communication” between them.¹⁴⁴

Future writings on the Trinity provided Morgan more opportunities to publish his description of the soul. He considered the views of authors—like Collins and Tindal—who had posited that the soul “has no Ideas or Perceptions but those of Sensation only; such as are excited in the Mind, by the Impression of material Objects upon the Sensories of material Organs, as the Ideas of *Extension, Solidity, Figure, Motion, Colour, Sound, &c.*”¹⁴⁵ Thus, these thinkers submitted that we have no idea of anything, which we do not experience via our senses. In contrast, and deviating once more from our other deists, Morgan responded that any ideas coming from the senses “are certainly immaterial.” Despite that the ideas provide properties of material objects, such as extension and solidity, the “Ideas themselves I suppose are not *Matter*, or any Thing Corporeal.” Therefore, Morgan submitted that we know as much about matter as we do about spirit.¹⁴⁶ Both come to reside in our mind or rational soul from immaterial ideas.

Regarding the manner in which the soul operates on the body, Morgan offered some preliminary conclusions. The soul must communicate through the “organical Senses” because if these were disabled the soul “could not act upon the *Body*, nor be acted upon by *it*, or give any sensible Proof of its Union and real Presence.”¹⁴⁷ The soul must be permitted the power of “reflecting upon its own real Existence, [and] upon the Existence of first independent *Cause*, and of forming all those Ideas which concern the natural or moral Relation of such a *Cause* to its *Effects.*” To deny the soul the ability to know itself and its creator was to deny the soul existence distinct from the body. What was more, this view would mean “subjecting all the Powers and Operations of the *Mind* to the Laws of *Mechanism*; ... and Ideas to be nothing else, but the different *Modifications*, or at least the necessary Physical *Effects of Matter and Motion.*” This was the conclusion offered by Collins and Toland. Clearly, not every deist held identical notions on all topics.

Morgan continued that while Aristotelian philosophers might hold the position he challenged, a “Christian *Philosopher* and *Divine* should not maintain this....”¹⁴⁸ Matter cannot possibly think.

As we saw, Morgan wrote much on the operation of the human body. Presently, we will consider these with respect to immaterial substances. Blood circulated in the body through arteries and even the imperceptible vessels of the bones by the same laws of motion found in other natural philosophical operations. The material of blood, the “Globules”, was dissolved in exceedingly thin “pellucid Water.” The two substances were united through “the Heat and Motion of the Blood, and continued Action of the expansive Element,” or aether.¹⁴⁹ The constitution of humans was “subject to very considerable Alterations and Changes, with respect to the diffus’d Heat and Efflatus of the Blood, and the Life, Vigor, and Briskness of Thought and Motion.” When the heat in blood is raised a person is much disposed to thought and motion. Thus, once more following the example of Stephen Hales, Morgan believed it sufficiently evident that all muscular Motion is “preform’d by the intrinsick elastick Force of the nervous Fibrillae, contracting and restoring themselves against the stretching distending Force or Impetus of the refluent Blood....”¹⁵⁰ Motion originated in an immaterial desire, which began in the mind, and “the quantity of Motion impress’d upon the Pathetick Nerves in any Passion, is always proportional to the strength of the Desire.” The force to move travelled from the mind through the nerves to the object of the desire, such as a hand or leg.¹⁵¹ Motion and thought were thus the result of an interaction between material body and immaterial desire. However, Morgan was not willing to speculate on the exact manner in which this occurred: “How this immechanical Fluid acts upon other Bodies, and exerts and determines their mechanical Powers, I no more pretend to explain, than how the Soul acts upon the Body, or the Mind upon Matter: But we are sure, that this is not done by Weight, Pressure, Resistance, Impulse, or any mechanical Power or Property whatever.”¹⁵²

Morgan also attempted to explain the way disease and cures operated on the body. Illness was the “Effect of a *Stimulus*,” and “always signifies *Pain*, whether it begins in the Body or Mind; for tho the Causes here may be very different, the

Effects are much the same, and the Method of Cure the very same precisely....” The physician’s goal was to alter “with the various Degrees and Modifications of Motion in the animated sensitive Organs ... I would say, That *excessive* or *violent* Motion is *Pain*: Absolute *Rest* is perfect *Insensibility*: The Transition from one Extream to the other, is *Pleasure*....”¹⁵³ Therefore, a correct knowledge of motion, as we saw in chapter seven, was tremendously important for medicine. In a healthy body “a due Balance and Æquilibrium” existed between all the organs and fluids. When this balance is achieved no disease can affect the body.¹⁵⁴ One obtained a balance, much in the same manner offered by Toland, through proper ingestion of food, which is transformed in the stomach “into the same common Nature and Qualities of Flesh, Blood, Lymph, &c....” Though one ought to use moderation with food, because the “most general Causes of this Over growth of Fat with us in *England*, are Indolence, or Want of Exercise, attended with too free and plentiful Use of Ale, and a Flesh Diet.”¹⁵⁵ It seems that old problems are new again.

Conclusion

As we saw with matter and motion, the views of the soul and immaterial matter advanced by our deists are not reducible to one representative example. Though Toland and Collins suggested that the soul might be material and that only material matter acts in the world, Chubb and Morgan embraced an immaterial soul. Tindal seems not to have explicitly adopted one position or the other. He did, however, see unfounded appropriation of the soul’s care as a defining aspect of priestcraft. Collins believed that humanity was necessitated in their actions by an immutable sequence of causes acting upon the mind. Alternatively, his fellow deists proposed that total human freedom was the basis for the liberty enjoyed by all Britons. In spite of the fact that Chubb and Morgan would not have agreed with Collins, many critics saw Collins’ writings as emblematic of deism. As we have seen, it is not the case that he spoke for all his heretical brethren in this matter.¹⁵⁶ Any accurate picture of deism or deists, therefore, is found not in the writings of theological and political opponents but in those of the deists themselves even if this means that seamless histories of deism must be replaced by detailed accounts of individual deists.¹⁵⁷

Notes

¹ Andrew Cunningham, *The Anatomical Renaissance* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 196-7, 206.

² Gerard Reedy, *The Bible and Reason: Anglicans and Scripture in Late Seventeenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 32-4; B. W. Young, "The Soul-Sleeping System': Politics and Heresy in Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45 (1994): 64-81; James O' Higgins, *Anthony Collins: The Man and His Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 69; Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, Forward by Simon Schama (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2003), 3-43.

³ Nathanael Taylor, *A Preservative against Deism. Shewing Ther great Advantage of Revelation above Reason, in the Two Great Points, Pardon of Sin, and a Future State of Happiness* (London, 1698), 259; Nathanael Taylor, *A Discourse of the Nature and Necessity of Faith in Jesus Christ* (London, 1700). On this more generally see Jonathan I. Israel *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 471; J. A. I Champion, "'The Men of Matter': Spirits, Matter and the Politics of Priestcraft, 1701-1709," in *Scepticism, Clandestinity and Free Thinking*, ed. G. Paganini et al. (Paris: Éditions Champion, 2002), 118-119.

⁴ David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England 1485-1850* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1994), 254-5. The partners also made an unsuccessful visit to Aaron Hart, rabbi at the Great Synagogue in London.

⁵ Edward Goldney, *Epistles to Deists and Jews, in Order to Convert Them to the Christian Religion* (London, 1759), 131, couplet on 146.

⁶ John Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious, or a Treatise Shewing That There is Nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, Nor above it that no Christian Doctrine can be Properly Call'd A Mystery* (London, 1696), 8-9, 86-7. See also Stephen H. Daniel, *John Toland: His Methods, Manners, and Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 190-2.

⁷ John Spurr, "'Rational Religion' in Restoration England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 (1988): 570.

⁸ Edmund Elys, *A Letter to the Honourable Sir Robert Howard: Together with some Animadversions Upon a Book Entituled, Christianity not Mysterious* (London, 1696), 10-11.

⁹ Edward Stillingfleet, *A Discourse in Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity: with an Answer to the Late Socinian Objections*, 2nd ed. (London, 1697), 231.

¹⁰ John Toland, *Clito: A Poem on the Force of Eloquence* (London, 1700), iv. Nigel Smith, "The English Revolution and the End of Rhetoric: John Toland's *Clito* (1700) and the Republican Daemon," in *Essays and Studies 1996: Poetry and Politics*, ed. Kate Flint (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1996).

¹¹ Toland, *Clito*, 8-9.

¹² The discussions are related in Leibniz à Burnet de Kemney, 27 Février 1702 in *Correspondenz Von Leibniz Mit Der Prinzessin Sophie*, ed. Herausgegeben von Onno Klopp 3 vols. (1873; facsimile reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973), 2: 333.

¹³ John Toland to Sophia Charlotte, March 1702 in Eugene English Dyche, "The Life and Works, and Philosophical Relations, of John (Janus Junius) Toland 1670-1722" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1944), 296. The original text is in *Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz* vol. 6 ed. C. J. Berhardt (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1961), 508-14.

¹⁴ Dyche, "John (Janus Junius) Toland 1670-1722," 297. On Descartes' view see "Second Meditation: the Nature of the Human Mind, and How it is Better Known Than the Body," in Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy With Selection From the Objections and Replies* ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16-23.

¹⁵ Dyche, "John (Janus Junius) Toland 1670-1722," 298.

- ¹⁶ BL Add. 4295 f. 76.
- ¹⁷ F. H. Heinemann, "Toland and Leibniz," *The Philosophical Review* 54 (1945): 443-6; Champion, "Men of Matter," 132.
- ¹⁸ Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 168-9; Heinemann, "Toland and Leibniz," 441, 446.
- ¹⁹ "Leibniz to Sophia Charlotte, Queen of Prussia, 1702," in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, ed. Leroy E. Loemker 2nd ed. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1969), 547.
- ²⁰ Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 548, 549.
- ²¹ Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 550.
- ²² Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, 552; R. S. Woolhouse, *Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz: The Concept of Substance in Seventeenth Century Metaphysics* (London: Routledge, 1993), 55-9, 62, 66, 94.
- ²³ John Toland, *Letters to Serena* (1704; facsimile reprint, Stuttgart-Bad-Cannstatt: Fredrich Formmann Verlag, 1964), preface, 21.
- ²⁴ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 22.
- ²⁵ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 23, 24. On Anaxagoras see Malcolm Schofield, *An Essay on Anaxagoras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
- ²⁶ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 29.
- ²⁷ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 30-8, quote on 40.
- ²⁸ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 53.
- ²⁹ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 54.
- ³⁰ John Toland, *Pantheisticon: or the Form of Celebrating the Socratic-Society* (1751; facsimile reprint, New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976), 22.
- ³¹ BL Add. 4292 f. 64r. Underlining in original.
- ³² Many of these letters are published in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, 2 vols. (1726; facsimile reprint, New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1977), I have supplemented these with manuscript letters which are not reproduced in the collection.
- ³³ Molesworth to Toland, 5 January 1721/2, in *Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, 2: 484, 485.
- ³⁴ BL Add. 4292 f. 31. John Wallace MD, Recipe for Toland, 21 December 1718.
- ³⁵ John Toland, *Physic without Physicians in Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, 2: 274-5. Toland may have been inspired to compose this tract by the example of James Harrington whose works he published in 1700. Included in the collection was "An Imperfect Treatise written by James Harrington during his sickness, to prove against his Doctors that the Notions he had of his own Distempler were not, as they alleg'd, Hypochondriac Whimsys or Delirious Fancys." Harrington had also claimed, like Toland, that "NATURE is not only a Spirit, but is furnish'd, or rather furnishes her self with innumerable ministerial Spirits, by which she operates on her whole matter, as the Universe; or on the separate parts, as man's Body." What is more, and also like Toland, he argued that "NOTHING in Nature is annihilated or lost, and therefore whatever is transpir'd, is receiv'd and put to som use by the Spirits of the Universe." "Harrington's *The Life of the Mechanics of Nature*," in John Toland, ed., *The Oceana and Other Works of James Harrington Esq*, 3rd ed. (London, 1747), xlii, xliii,
- ³⁶ Toland, *Physic without Physicians*, 275, 276, 277, 280.
- ³⁷ Toland to Molesworth, 28 January 1721/2, in *Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, 2: 487.
- ³⁸ Molesworth to Toland, circa 28 January 1721/2 at 21:00 in *Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, 2: 485.
- ³⁹ Molesworth to Toland, 8 February 1721/2 in *Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, 2: 489.
- ⁴⁰ BL Add. 4465 f. 37r. Toland to Molesworth, prior to 1 March 1721/2.

- ⁴¹ BL Add. 4465 f. 29r. Toland to Molesworth, 2 March 1721/2.
- ⁴² BL Add. 4465 f. 17r. G[eorge] Turnbull to Toland, 3 November 1718.
- ⁴³ BL Add. 4465 f. 17v.
- ⁴⁴ George Turnbull to Lord Molesworth, 3 August 1722 in *Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections*, vol. 3 (London: The Hereford Times Limited, 1913), 344.
- ⁴⁵ Turnbull to Molesworth, 5 November 1722 in *Manuscripts in Various Collections*, 352.
- ⁴⁶ Turnbull to Molesworth, 15 May 1723 in *Manuscripts in Various Collections*, 360, 361.
- ⁴⁷ Anthony Collins to John Locke, 15 March 1704, in *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E. S. De Beer 8 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967-1989), 8: 241, 242. See John Norris, *An Essay Toward the Theory of the Ideal or Intelligible World* 2 vols. (1701-04; facsimile reprint, New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1978), 2: 58-100.
- ⁴⁸ Collins to Locke, 21 March 1704, in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 8: 249.
- ⁴⁹ Locke to Collins, 24 March 1704, in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 8: 254, 255. See Norris, *Ideal or Intelligible World*, 2: 1-57. On Locke and the possibility of thinking matter see John W. Yolton, *Thinking Matter: Materialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).
- ⁵⁰ Collins to Locke, 30 March 1704, in *Correspondence of John Locke*, 8: 258.
- ⁵¹ Philosophers have made many studies of the dispute see, for example, Ezio Vailati, "Clarke's extended Soul," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 31 (1993): 387-403; Howard M. Ducharme, "Personal Identity in Samuel Clarke," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24 (1986): 359-83; Robin Attfield, "Clarke, Collins and Compounds," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15 (1977): 45-54; J. H. Gay, "Matter and Freedom in the Thought of Samuel Clarke," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963): 85-105.
- ⁵² J. P. Ferguson, *An Eighteenth Century Heretic, Dr. Samuel Clarke* (Kineton: The Roundwood Press, 1976), 36; Philip C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 60; Vailati, "Clarke's Extended Soul," 391.
- ⁵³ Almond, *Heaven and Hell*, 61; Henry Dodwell, *An Epistolary Discourse, proving from the Scriptures and the First Fathers, that the soul is a principle Naturally Mortal, but Immortalized actually by the Pleasure of God to Punish or Reward, by its union with the Divine Baptismal Spirit, wherein is proved that none have the power of giving this Divine Immortalizing Spirit since the Apostles but only the Bishops* (London, 1706).
- ⁵⁴ Henry Dodwell, *A Preliminary Defence of the Epistolary Discourse, Concerning the Distinction Between Soul and Spirit* (London, 1707), 18. Dodwell received much advertisement from the Clarke and Collins dispute. A second edition of his *An Epistolary Discourse* came out in July 1707. See the *Post Man* 17-19 July 1707.
- ⁵⁵ Dodwell, *Preliminary Defence*, 67, 68.
- ⁵⁶ Dodwell, *Preliminary Defence*, 84.
- ⁵⁷ Bod. MS Eng. th. C. 46 f. 207r. On Dodwell among the Nonjurors see: C. D. A. Leighton, "The Religion of the Non-Jurors and the Early British Enlightenment: A Study of Henry Dodwell," *History of European Ideas* 28 (2002): 247-62.
- ⁵⁸ BL Add. 32096 f. 75. Archbishop of Dublin to Archdeacon of Baynard, 1 November 1707.
- ⁵⁹ See Toland's comments in BL Add. 4372 ff. 37r-v, 38r. 39r; John Toland, *Amyntor. Or, a Defence of Milton's Life* (London, 1699), 69-78; Samuel Clarke, *Some Reflections on that Part of a Book Called Amyntor, or the Defence of Milton's Life, which relates to the Writings of the Primitive Fathers and the Canon of the New Testament* in Samuel Clarke, *The Works of Samuel Clarke*, 4 vols. (London, 1738), 3: 925. Dodwell himself knew about Toland having, like others, requested information concerning him while Toland lived in Oxford. See Bod. MS Eng. Letters C 29 f. 23. George Ash to Henry Dodwell, 25 September 1694.

⁶⁰ Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion* (London, 1706), 32; James E. Force, "Samuel Clarke's Four Categories of Deism, Isaac Newton, and the Bible," in *Scepticism in the History of Philosophy*, ed. Richard H. Popkin (Leiden: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), 53-74.

⁶¹ Samuel Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 721, 722. On the theological dangers of such as position see Michael Hunter, "The Problem of 'Atheism' in Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 35 (1985): 141.

⁶² Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 730, 747. See also Vailati, "Clarke's Extended Soul," 388-93. The work was popular with a second edition appearing within a month of the initial printing. *The Post Man* 4-6 April 1706; 4-7 May 1706.

⁶³ On the importance of gift-giving among members of the republic of letters see Anne Goldgar, *Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 19-21.

⁶⁴ BL Add. 4370 ff. 1r-v. Henry Dodwell to Samuel Clarke, 22 May 1706.

⁶⁵ Dodwell, *An Epistolary Discourse*, 313.

⁶⁶ BL Add. 4370 f. 2r. Clarke to Dodwell, 1706. Underlining in original.

⁶⁷ BL Add. 4370 f. 2v.

⁶⁸ Larry Stewart, "Whigs and Heretics: Science, Religion and Politics in the Age of Newton" (Ph.D. diss, University of Toronto, 1978), 264; Jeffrey R. Wigelsworth, "The Sleeping Habits of Matter and Spirit: Samuel Clarke and Anthony Collins on the Immortality of the Soul," *Past Imperfect* 9 (2001-2003): 14-5.

⁶⁹ Anthony Collins, *A Letter to the Learned Mr. Henry Dodwell; Containing Some Remarks on a (pretended) Demonstration of the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul, in Mr. Clarke's Answer to his late Epistolary Discourse, &c.* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 750.

⁷⁰ O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 71.

⁷¹ Samuel Clarke, *A Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell, To prove the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 759.

⁷² Ducharme, "Personal Identity," 365.

⁷³ Anthony Collins, *A Reply to Mr. Clarke's Defence of His Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 764.

⁷⁴ Collins, *A Reply to Mr. Clarke's Defence* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 767, 770.

⁷⁵ Samuel Clarke, *A Second Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell, To prove the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 784, 794.

⁷⁶ Clarke, *A Second Defence of an Argument* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 795-9.

⁷⁷ Anthony Collins, *Reflections on Mr. Clarke's Second Defence of His Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 800.

⁷⁸ Samuel Clarke, *A Third Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell, To prove the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 824, 825.

⁷⁹ Anthony Collins, *An Answer to Mr. Clarke's Third Defence of His Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 863.

⁸⁰ Collins, *An Answer to Mr. Clarke's Third Defence* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 865, 866; Samuel Clarke, *A Fourth Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell, To prove the Immateriality and Natural Immortality of the Soul* in Clarke, *Works*, 3: 889. Attfield, "Clarke, Collins and Compounds," 47.

⁸¹ *The Post Man*, 3-5 July 1707.

⁸² John Witty, *The First Principles of Modern Deism confuted....* (London, 1707), ii, iv, viii, xvi.

⁸³ John C. Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 124, 141.

⁸⁴ *The Rehearsal*, no. 211, 24 May 1707.

⁸⁵ Humphry Ditton, *A Discourse Concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Three Parts*, 2nd ed. (London, 1714), 440. Original edition appeared in 1712.

⁸⁶ Stewart, "Whigs and Heretics," 139-40, 279-80.

⁸⁷ John Maxwell, *A Summary of the Controversy between Dr. Samuel Clarke and an anonymous Author, concerning the Immortality of Thinking Substance*, in Richard Cumberland *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature* (London, 1727), 5.

⁸⁸ Maxwell, *A Summary of the Controversy*, 7-13.

⁸⁹ Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed* (London, 1736), 16. On Butler see J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 361; Kenneth E. Harris, "Important Shifts in Argumentation: The Empirical Apologetic of Joseph Butler's *The Analogy of Religion*" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1998), 6-14, 54-59, 98-141. However, not all scholars agree with the emphasis given Butler in deism's demise. At the turn of the twentieth century John M Robertson argued that "Butler's book had very little influence till long after his death; being indeed very ill-fitted to turn contemporary deists to Christianity." See his *A Short History of Freethought: Ancient and Modern* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., 1899), 317. We should also remember that deists continued to write after 1736 and critics continued to answer them. See also S. J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and Religion: The Myths of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 107-108.

⁹⁰ BL Add. 4370 ff. 25r-v, 37r-38r; Larry Stewart, "Samuel Clarke, Newtonianism, and the Factions of Post-Revolutionary England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42 (1981): 58-61; Brian Young, "Newtonianism and the Enthusiasm of Enlightenment," *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science* 35 (2004): 649-652; John Jackson, *A Dissertation on Matter and Spirit* (1735; facsimile reprint, London: Thoemmes Press, 1994), iii.

⁹¹ Jackson, *A Dissertation on Matter and Spirit*, iv, 1-2, 23, 41, 51.

⁹² *The Present State of the Republick of Letters* vol. 15, January 1735, 95-7, 100, 102. Jackson, however, was no deist. He composed a response to Tindal's *Christiainity as Old as the Creation* in 1731 see Young, "Newtonianism," 655. Unlike his mentor, Clarke, Jackson did see some merit in deist writings. In a later work he thanked deists for their considered challenges to Christian doctrines because of which had become "better understood and defended, than I believe they otherwise would have been." He also reminded deists that "we shall always be ready to attend to what you offer in a rational or scholarly-like way; and will treat your Arguments and Persons with Decency and Respect." See John Jackson, *An Address to the deists, being Proof of reveal'd religion ... In answer to a Moral Philosopher*, 2nd ed. (London, 1762), 172-3, 174.

⁹³ Richard H. Dammers, *Richard Steele* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 111-14. On Steele and notions of the soul see Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason*, 113-129.

⁹⁴ *The Guardian* no. 9, 21 March 1713.

⁹⁵ See Descartes' account and a picture of the gland in Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 159-161, picture on 161.

⁹⁶ *The Guardian* no. 35, 21 April 1713.

⁹⁷ *The Guardian* no. 39, 25 April 1713.

⁹⁸ For a philosophical evaluation of the ensuing dispute see William L. Rowe, "Causality and Free Will in the Controversy Between Collins and Clarke," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987): 51-67.

⁹⁹ Anthony Collins, *A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty*, 2nd ed. (London, 1717), iii, iv.

¹⁰⁰ Collins, *A Philosophical Inquiry*, 11, 12-3.

¹⁰¹ Rowe constructed the following schematic of Collins' arguments:
Whatever has a beginning has a cause—Every Cause is a necessary Cause.

1. If we have free will then there will be volitions that are uncaused.

2. Volitions have a beginning.
3. Whatever has a beginning has a cause.
We do not have free will.

See Rowe, "Causality and Free Will," 54-5.

¹⁰² Collins, *A Philosophical Inquiry*, 87.

¹⁰³ H. G. Alexander ed., *The Leibniz—Clarke Correspondence* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), 18 [Leibniz's "Second Paper"], 21 [Clarke's "Second Reply"].

¹⁰⁴ Samuel Clarke, *Remarks Upon a Book Entitled, A Philosophical Enquiry Concerning Human Liberty* in *Clarke, Works*, 4: 721.

¹⁰⁵ Clarke, *Remarks Upon a Book*, 721-2; Ferguson, *An Eighteenth Century Heretic*, 114.

¹⁰⁶ Clarke, *Remarks Upon a Book*, 723.

¹⁰⁷ Clarke, *Remarks Upon a Book*, 724.

¹⁰⁸ Clarke, *Remarks Upon a Book*, 725.

¹⁰⁹ Ferguson, *An Eighteenth Century Heretic*, 39-41; Thomas C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian Theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729): Context, Sources, and Controversy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 2.

¹¹⁰ Clarke, *Remarks Upon a Book*, 737.

¹¹¹ BL Add. 4282 f. 129v. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 5 May 1717.

¹¹² BL Add. 4282 f. 130r. Underling in original, strikeouts indicate Collins' deletions.

¹¹³ BL Add. 4282 f. 131v. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 7 May 1717.

¹¹⁴ BL Add. 4282 f. 131v-132r.

¹¹⁵ BL Add. 4282 f. 137v. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 1 July 1717; BL Add. 4282 f. 150r. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 17 June 1718. The work was published as P. Des Maizeaux, *Recueil de Diverses pieces, sur la Philosophie, la Religion Naturelle, l'histoire, les Mathematiques, &c. par mrs. Leibniz, Clarke, Newton, & autres Auteurs Célèbres* 2 tomes (Amsterdam, 1720).

¹¹⁶ In his *Tetradymus*, Toland offered a similar assessment of Whiston. Toland noted the irony that Whiston wished to curtail the religious freedom of the deists, but the same freedom had certainly benefited Whiston who "may (next to God's providence) thank the good nature of the English people for his preservation: for in some other parts of the world he had, upon much fewer threats and remonstrances from two Priests, not to speak of the pulling and haling of their officer, been torn to pieces for all his gown and his innocence." See *Tetradymus* (London, 1720), viii.

¹¹⁷ BL Add. 4282 f. 150r.

¹¹⁸ BL Add. 4282 f. 180v-181r. Collins to Desmaizeaux, 28 August 1721.

¹¹⁹ Anthony Collins, *A Discourse on Liberty and Necessity ... with some Remarks upon the Late Reverend Dr. Clarke's Reasoning on this Point. And an Epistle Dedicatory to Truth* (London, 1729), 1, 3, 11, 13.

¹²⁰ "The Elogium of the late truly Learned, Reverend and Pious Samuel Clarke. D.D.," in *The Present State of the Republick of Letters*, vol. 4, July 1729, 53.

¹²¹ "Review of Anthony Collins, *A Dissertation upon Liberty and Necessity* (London, 1729)," in *The Present State of the Republick of Letters*, vol. 4, July 1729, 210.

¹²² "Review of *A Dissertation upon Liberty*," *Republick of Letters*, 376, 377.

¹²³ Collins had also stayed with Trenchard at least once. See KSRL MS G 23: 15 f. 50. Thomas Rawlins to William Simpson, 6 July 1709.

¹²⁴ [John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon] *Cato's Letters: or, Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious, and other important Subjects*, 4 vols. 6th ed. (1755; facsimile reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 4: 53.

¹²⁵ *Cato's Letters*, 4: 53, 55.

¹²⁶ *Cato's Letters*, 4: 55, 56.

¹²⁷ *Cato's Letters*, 4: 56.

- ¹²⁸ John Clarke, “A Note to W^m. Whiston. M.A. on his publication of the foregoing “Reflexions on an anonymous Pamphlet, entitled A Discourse of Free-Thinking,” in *Reflexions on an anonymous pamphlet, entitled, A discourse of free thinking. By William Whiston, M.A. The third edition* (London, 1713), flyleaves at end of book. This copy is owned by Steve Snobelen and I am grateful to him for a transcription of these notes.
- ¹²⁹ BL Add. 4370 ff. 19r-v. John Clarke to Samuel Clarke, 29 May 1717.
- ¹³⁰ Matthew Tindal, *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted, against the Romish, and All Other Priests Who Claim an Independent Power over It*, 3rd ed. cor. (London, 1707), 131.
- ¹³¹ John Redwood sees this as a defining aspect of deism. J. A. Redwood, *Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England 1660-1750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 66.
- ¹³² Tindal, *The Rights of the Christian Church*, 135.
- ¹³³ William Law, *The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, Fairly and Fully Stated. In answer to a Book, entitled, Christianity as old as the Creation* (London, 1731) in *The Works of the Reverend William Law, M. A.*, 9 vols. (London, 1892), 9: 65.
- ¹³⁴ Thomas Chubb, *Human Nature Vindicated: or, a Reply to Mr. Beaven’s book entitled, Supernatural Influences Necessary to Salvation* (London, 1726), 15.
- ¹³⁵ Thomas Chubb, *The Comparative Excellence and Obligation of Moral and Positive Duties, Fully Stated and Considered* (London, 1731), 7.
- ¹³⁶ LPL MS 1741 f. 80v. Waterland to Gibson, 22 November 1730.
- ¹³⁷ LPL MS 1741 f. 75r. Waterland to Gibson, 10 December 1730.
- ¹³⁸ [Chubb 18 June 1730] Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men*, 2 vols. ed. James M. Osborn (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966), 1: 379.
- ¹³⁹ Chubb, *Human Nature Vindicated*, 16.
- ¹⁴⁰ Chubb, *Human Nature Vindicated*, 17.
- ¹⁴¹ Thomas Chubb, *Scripture-evidence Consider’d, in a View of the Controversy Betwixt the Author and Mr. Barclay’s Defenders* (London, 1728), 10-11.
- ¹⁴² Chubb, *Scripture-evidence Consider’d*, 12.
- ¹⁴³ Thomas Morgan, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Waterland, occasion’d by His Late Writings in Defence of the Athanasian Hypothesis* (London, 1722), 9.
- ¹⁴⁴ Morgan, *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Waterland*, 22.
- ¹⁴⁵ Thomas Morgan, *A Collection of Tracts, Relating to the Right of Private Judgement ... Occasion’d by the Late Trinitarian Controversy* (London, 1726), 430.
- ¹⁴⁶ Morgan, *A Collection of Tracts*, 430.
- ¹⁴⁷ Morgan, *A Collection of Tracts*, 461.
- ¹⁴⁸ Morgan, *A Collection of Tracts*, 461.
- ¹⁴⁹ Thomas Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine* (London, 1725), 107, 112.
- ¹⁵⁰ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 155.
- ¹⁵¹ Morgan, *Philosophical Principles of Medicine*, 384, 386-7.
- ¹⁵² Thomas Morgan, *Physico-theology: or, a Philosophico-moral Disquisition Concerning Human Nature, Free Agency, Moral Government, and Divine Providence* (London, 1741), 56.
- ¹⁵³ Thomas Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick: In Which the Specifick Method is Examin’d and Exploded* (London: 1735), 37.
- ¹⁵⁴ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 38-9.
- ¹⁵⁵ Morgan, *The Mechanical Practice of Physick*, 91.
- ¹⁵⁶ Cf. Steven Shapin, “Of Gods and Kings: Natural Philosophy and Politics in the Leibniz--Clarke Disputes,” *Isis* 72 (1981): 198.
- ¹⁵⁷ In this I follow the example of those who have questioned the legitimacy of the Scientific Revolution as a historical reality and epistemological category. This contrasts with classic accounts, which saw the period from Copernicus to Newton as having its own

momentum and inevitability independent of other contemporary events, be they theological, political, or social. Contrarily, Steven Shapin, for example, posits that science is a social construct that is embedded with the same social relationships as any other aspect of life, past or present. See his *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). A similar approach is found among some historians of the Enlightenment such as J. G. A. Pocock who argues that the Enlightenment was not “unified phenomena with a single history and definition.” Rather, Pocock offers the notion of “Enlightenments” as a more useful term rather than attempt to shoehorn all eighteenth-century philosophy under some ubiquitous Enlightenment. See his *Barbarism and Religion: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8-9. In his recent book S. J. Barnett denies there was a deist movement because he suggests that no more than ten deists were active in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England. While I cannot here consider his claim, I do concur that we need to rethink broad characterisations of those whom we call deists. See S. J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and Religion: The Myths of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 2, 12-13, 18-19.

Chapter Nine:

Conclusion:

Not Just Abstract Philosophical Issues: Tinkler Ducket's Trial for Atheism

Several of the issues raised in this study—human necessity, materialism, and their implication for religion—did not remain literary abstractions disputed in party newspapers, theological pamphlets, and from Anglican pulpits. They were the focal point in a trial for atheism at Cambridge University in 1739. Tinkler Ducket was a Fellow of Caius College who had been much intrigued with the materialism found in Samuel Strutt's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Physical Spring of Human Actions and the Immediate Cause of Thinking* (1732). In his book Strutt, about whom we know next to nothing, hoped to refute the “unphilosophical notion” that humanity was composed of both matter and spirit. To bolster his argument that people were only a material substance with a peculiar motion, Strutt referred readers to “what has been already so successfully offer'd on that Head by the learn'd Mr. Toland” in *Letters to Serena*. Because philosophers did not know the exact nature of matter, Strutt suggested—and used Anthony Collins' arguments against Samuel Clarke as support—it could not be concluded exactly what properties matter possessed. Continuing to cite Collins, Strutt wrote that no reason could be offered against the notion that a system of matter, such as that which made up a human body, was capable of thought.¹

To his future detriment, Ducket had written an enthusiastic letter on Strutt's book to an acquaintance, the reverend Stephen Gibbs in October 1734.² The letter

found its way to Cambridge authorities and was later published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*. In part Duckett advised Gibbs that,

as to any farther Progress in *Atheism* I was arriv'd at the Top, the *Ne plus ultra*, before ... being fixed and immoveable in the Knowledge of the *Truth*, to which I attained by means of that *infallible Guide* the *Philosophical Enquiry*; and I am glad to hear, what I did not at all doubt of, that it would equally enlighten your Understanding; ... If any material Objection should arise (which is barely a possible Supposition) I beg you will consult *Me*, or some other *Able Minister of the Word of Truth*, to the quieting of your Conscience, and avoiding all Scruple and Doubt.³

The clear pronouncement of atheism and, what was worse, atheism caused by a philosophical search after truth based on the works of Toland and Collins, was cause for great concern at Cambridge and only confirmed the fears of those who had predicted such consequences of free-thinking and deism.

The trial to strip Duckett of his Fellowship and expel him from the university began in February 1739.⁴ It took place at Richard Bentley's Master's Lodge at Trinity College because Bentley was too ill to travel to another location. His presence at the trial and the testimony that would be offered provides another link to concerns regarding deism and its influence. Indeed, Bentley saw materialism as one of the key aspects of deism, the result of "truly *idiot evangelists*" and as the first step on the path to atheism.⁵ Once the proceedings were underway, Duckett readily acknowledged that the letter to Gibbs was indeed in his hand.⁶ He did, however, deny a related charge that he had attempted "to seduce one Mary Richards, by telling Her, That all Religion was a Forgery of People in power &c." The court further alleged "That upon Her telling him He should be damn'd for such practices, without Matrimony, ... He reply'd, That Matrimony was only Priestcraft, That to avoid any ill Consequences, Such as Child Bearing &c. He had a soverign Remedy which were drops to avoid Child Bearing...." In a final attempt to woo the young woman, Duckett apparently told her that the "Favour he ask'd was an act of Benevolence." He did admit that he believed "Matrimony was Priestcraft," but conceded nothing else.⁷ Corrupting women in the name of combating priestcraft was seen as yet another example of the immorality of those who claimed participation in such a fight.

When the questioning returned to the contents of the Gibbs letter, Duckett denied that he was “Intent [on] Seducing [Gibbs] to Atheism, which he Submit[ed] to the Judgement of the Court.” Furthermore, Duckett refuted the charge “That he ever attempted to seduce others into Atheism and into any wicked or Erroneous opinion, by Prophane and Blasphemous Writings and Speeches....” Rebuttal witnesses painted a different picture. One confirmed that while Duckett had never specifically called himself an atheist, nevertheless, he “express’d Himself a Favourer of Materialism, that about Three quarters of a Year ago....” On cross-examination Duckett did recall making the statements, but some four years previously.⁸ The time of the utterances did not save Duckett when the Court reconvened on 16 March and produced another witness who recalled that some five years earlier, Duckett had also expressed “the Principles of Atheism.” The witness also reported that Duckett had frequently praised Strutt’s book and its contents.⁹ Thus, a link between materialistic writings of deists, atheism and immorality seemed to be firmly established.

The sentence, delivered on 23 March 1739, came as no surprise. The Bench began by commenting upon the “Heinousness of the Crime Destruction of all Religion....” What was more, he “was of opinion, that the charges of Atheism as laid in the Articles, had been fully proved against Tinkler Duckett MA....” Thus, expulsion was the correct punishment for a man who seemed determined to spread heresy, and likely atheism, amongst the Cambridge community.¹⁰ Duckett made a futile attempt to persuade the Court to reconsider its verdict. He “spoke with a good grace” that “Reason was the Sovereign Guide of all Mankind: That Freedom of Thought and Private judgement were the Right of Every one....” The echo of Collins could not have been lost on Bentley and others who sat in judgement. As to atheism, Duckett confessed he had indeed been “involved in the Error of Atheism, but that upon recollecting his Thoughts He soon declared against That Unhappy ~~Opinion~~ Delusion....”¹¹ The impassioned plea fell on deaf ears and the sentence stood as delivered. While our deists survived in the turbulent eighteenth century unscathed and unpunished, the same cannot be said for at least one of their devotees.

Radical Science From Radical Thinkers?

In a classic article Steven Shapin described the interlocking spheres of intellectual inquiry in eighteenth-century England: “theology, politics, and natural philosophy overlapped because they were connected in legitimations, justifications, and criticisms, especially in the use of conceptions of God and nature to comment upon political order.”¹² It is these relationships that I have sought to present in this study by reconstructing the intertwined erudite endeavours of John Toland, Anthony Collins, Matthew Tindal, Thomas Chubb, and Thomas Morgan. These were the deists named by William Whiston as men who “have proceeded in their grosser Degrees of Infidelity” by appropriating Newtonian natural philosophy. Edmund Burke also repeated this same list of men when he wrote that deism was no longer a problem in late-eighteenth-century England even though it had once been a major political concern.¹³ While there were undoubtedly other persons whom we may call “deist,” that both Whiston and Burke identified the same men is a signal that the writings of these five were particularly important. What is more, they were active from the beginning of the deist controversy when Toland published *Christianity not Mysterious* in 1696 until Morgan published *Physico-theology* in 1741. At this point the perceived threat of deism is acknowledge to have declined in Britain.

Too often when historians have addressed deism in England, Toland is presented as the archetypal example.¹⁴ As did Toland so did the deists. I hope to have complicated these stories. By examining deists through the lenses of post-1689 politics and post-*Principia* natural philosophy, we see that they were more than the characteristics demonstrated by Toland. Deists were individuals, who, though sharing important tenets of theology, need to be treated as such and not subsumed into the persona of Toland. Otherwise, we lose the diversity of these thinkers whom many contemporaries saw as a real threat to the stability of English society in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.

To create my account it was necessary to proceed as constructing a puzzle: each piece was firmly positioned before we placed its neighbour. We began with the theological outline of the puzzle, proceeded to the interior and set the political pieces, which form the bulk of deist tracts, and finished with natural philosophy. I

hope it is apparent, as Shapin has reminded us, that no piece fits without those surrounding it. The construction of this picture forces a reconsideration of the pervasive view that deists were critical opponents of Newtonian philosophy.¹⁵ Toland at no point wrote negatively regarding Newton. He did, however, suggest that Newton's work might support a materialist worldview. In *Pantheisticon*, Toland presented Newton as a worthy foil. Collins used Newton as support for his claim that so long as the cause of gravity remained unknown one could create other explanations that seemed reasonable. He also actively supported public lectures and popular books of Newtonian philosophy. Tindal, on the other hand, never mentioned Newton in his works, at all, though his writings reveal a strong similarity to those composed by promoters of public science. Yet, Chubb, for his part, clearly endorsed Newton's theological tracts. Morgan was undeniably favourable to Newton's philosophy and strategy of prophetic interpretation. A collective study of deists, rather than some ubiquitous "deism," reveals that generalisations about their use of natural philosophy must be reconsidered. Where we may usefully speak in generalisations is in the conception of a predictable and immutable God that formed the basis for the positions advanced by our deists.¹⁶ They accepted Newtonian mechanics but not the active and unpredictable God that Newton and his closest followers believed ruled the universe. Our deists held that God ensured important truths about the world—namely its continuing predictable action—and that a detailed understanding of its parts and workings was entirely knowable to those who sought it, which in turn allowed them to claim a level of certainty in their natural philosophy absent from that of their critics. This was a direct outcome of deists' theological assumptions and cannot be explained any other way. The same theology also guided their political positions.

It is time to return to the query posed by Roger Cooter and Stephen Pumfrey. How did audiences use and understand the knowledge they gained from participation in the phenomena of public science?¹⁷ Regarding our deists their providential assumptions coloured how they understood and then presented natural philosophy. I suspect that this is also true of other consumers of public science. As one historian asked recently "What *was* God doing in the eighteenth century?"¹⁸

From this study, it is evident that notions of God continued to provide the same foundation for the learned investigations of the day as had been the case for previous generations.¹⁹ This is even true for our deists. Though auditors heard the same contemporary accounts of nature, they listened with different ears. Despite the best hope of Colin Maclaurin, who argued that correct natural philosophy led to a correct image of God, one could absorb all Newton's philosophy and still arrive at conclusions that Newton would not have recognised based on political and theological assumptions.

As I have attempted to demonstrate, this does not make deists who read natural philosophy, such as the five examined here, subversive radicals bent on destroying existing governmental institutions, as suggested by Margaret C. Jacob. However, deists did certainly wish to remake the Church of England without the priestly corruption they believed was flourishing in the institution. This is not the same as wanting its wholesale destruction. Regarding politics, the evidence demonstrates that Toland courted a government position from Robert Harley, as did Tindal from Lord Sunderland. What is more, Toland was a constant supporter of both Harley's country platform and the Hanoverian monarchs. Collins agreed with many royal policies and was a popular and successful County Treasurer and Justice of the Peace, positions that were just as political as sitting in Parliament. Chubb and Morgan similarly wrote in favour of the newly secured Protestant succession and urged government to comply with a deist theological outlook.

Our deists were not secular atheists. It is true, however, that French *philosophes* and generations of Enlightenment historians, took deists as such.²⁰ But, just as we no longer credit Newton with the active encouragement of deism, the same reasoning should extend to English deists and remove them from the position of founding fathers of what has been traditionally defined as the movement leading to the French Revolution and modernity.²¹ At the very least, the supposed inevitable aspect of this relationship ought to be questioned. Each group—deists in England and *philosophes* in France—applied their learning to solve problems and concerns of immediate relevance to them. It is unlikely the case that either anticipated how their works would be used by others. We need only look to the

reaction of Newtonians like William Whiston and Samuel Clarke—to the use of their master’s natural philosophy by our deists—to see that what a philosopher thought was the message of their work was not always how it was read.

Deists were full participants in the political and natural philosophical discourses of eighteenth-century Britain. As recent scholarship demonstrates, these discourses birthed “Enlightenment” in Britain before it was exported to the Continent. If my presentation of deists is accepted, then a reassessment of what deism in England meant to deists is necessary—especially in light of the recent characterisations of the English Enlightenment as clerical and strongly religious.²² Deists must be seen as part of this movement, and not only as sideline critics, even if latter day interpreters take them as promoters of atheism.²³ Thus, I suggest that deists be viewed as integral (not tangential) figures in accounts of eighteenth-century Britain and English Enlightenment alongside their contemporaries and no longer relegated to works titled *Radical Enlightenment*.²⁴ Rather, deists were part of the promotion of Newtonian philosophy, a key factor in any account of the Enlightenment, wishing to stand shoulder to shoulder with those figures we traditionally associate with the movement.

What is more, the radical disposition of deists’ worldviews is lessened when we look at their contributions to natural philosophy in conjunction with those produced by their contemporaries. By contemporaries, I mean neither Newton nor Robert Boyle, but rather people like themselves who sought to understand the new philosophies and then share that understanding with an eager public.²⁵ This is why we focussed on purveyors of public science. It is deists’ unfortunate happenstance to have composed accounts of nature that conflicted in various ways with that offered by Newton. This same fate befell Robert Hooke, who is emerging only now from the historical shadow cast by Newton as the hero of the Scientific Revolution. Writers who provided alternative theories and explanations to those of Newton were, by their very disagreement with Newton, often viewed as radical, or so some scholars would have us believe. Looking backwards we know which natural philosophical system had staying power. At the time, however, things were not so clear cut. In an age of public science, national and international political intrigues,

and increasing—if begrudging—religious tolerance, deists sought to have their voices heard in a nation that they hoped to make better for having listened.

Notes

¹ Samuel Strutt, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Physical Spring of Human Actions and the Immediate Cause of Thinking* (London, 1732), 1-3, 6, 4-8.

² John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 135.

³ "A true copy of a letter which was the foundation of the proceedings against a Fellow of a College at Cambridge," in *The Gentleman's Magazine* vol. 9, April 1739, 203. The letter also advised Gibbs that three letters, which had appeared in the *The Country Journal: or, the Craftsman*, that called for a independent and uncorrupted Parliament free from the interference of the Crown, were also by Strutt. See *The Country Journal: or, the Craftsman*, 7, 14, 21 September 1734.

⁴ There are two accounts of the trial. A copy is found in BL Add. 5822 ff. 90v-94r. A longer version is in CUL MS Ee.vi.43 ff. 1r-12v. I have consulted both, but references are to the CUL material.

⁵ Richard Bentley, *Remarks Upon a Late Discourse of Free-Thinking*, 5th ed. (London, 1716), 14. R. J. White, *Dr. Bentley: A Study in Academic Scarlet* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965), 234-5; James H. Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley*, 2 vols. (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1833), 2: 391-4.

⁶ CUL MS Ee.vi.43 ff. 6r-v.

⁷ CUL MS Ee.vi.43 f. 7r.

⁸ CUL MS Ee.vi.43 f. 7v.

⁹ CUL MS Ee.vi.43 f. 8v.

¹⁰ CUL MS Ee.vi.43 ff. 11v-12r.

¹¹ CUL MS Ee.vi.43 f. 12v.

¹² Steven Shapin, "Of Gods and Kings: Natural Philosophy and Politics in the Leibniz--Clarke Disputes," *Isis* 72 (1981): 202. Cf. Francis Oakley, "The Absolute and Ordained Power of God and King in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Philosophy, Science, Politics, and Law," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998): 679-81.

¹³ William Whiston, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston* (London, 1749), 109; Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France: A Critical Edition*, ed. J. C. D. Clark (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 253.

¹⁴ Examples include Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheism, Freemasons and Republicans*, 2nd rev. ed. (The Temple Publishers, 2003); Frederick C. Beiser, *The Sovereignty of Reason: The Defence of Rationality in the Early English Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Joel C. Weinsheimer, *Eighteenth-Century Hermeneutics: Philosophy of Interpretation in England from Locke to Burke* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). Even Barnett who claims to question the existence of deism in the Enlightenment uses Toland as the defining feature of the myth of English deism. See *The Enlightenment and Religion*, 52-62, 94-102.

¹⁵ Margaret C. Jacob and Larry Stewart. *Practical Matter: Newton's Science in the Service of Industry and Empire 1687-1851* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 19; Paul Russell, "Hume's Treatises and the Clarke-Collins Controversy," *Hume Studies* 21 (1995): 99. Cf. Jeffrey R. Wigelsworth, "English Deists as Heretical Newtonians," unpublished paper presented at the History of Science Society Conference (November 2003).

¹⁶ Cf. S. J. Barnett, *The Enlightenment and Religion: The Myths of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 19. Barnett claims no consistent deist religion existed.

¹⁷ Roger Cooter, and Stephen Pumfrey. "Separate Spheres and Public Places: Reflections on the History of Science Popularization and Science in Popular Culture," *History of Science* 32 (1994): 237.

¹⁸ Dror Wahrman, "God and the Enlightenment," *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 1060.

¹⁹ This is most evident in studies of natural philosophers but also applies equally to the day's politics. See Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Faces of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Margaret J. Osler, *Divine Will and the Mechanical Philosophy: Gassendi and Descartes on Contingency and Necessity in the Created World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics During the Ancien Regime*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

²⁰ Some early versions of this view are found in E. Royston Pike, *Slayers of Superstition: A Popular Account of Some of the Leading Personalities of the Deist Movement* (London: Watts & Co., 1931); Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (London, 1876); Norman Torrey, *Voltaire and the English Deists* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930). A more recent articulation of this view is offered by J. G. A. Pocock, "Post-Puritan England and the Problem of Enlightenment," in *Culture and Politics From Puritanism to the Enlightenment*, ed. Perez Zagorin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 91, 93.

²¹ The classic account is Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment An Interpretation: the Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967); *The Enlightenment An Interpretation: the Science of Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969). See also Dale N. Daily, *Enlightenment Deism: The Foremost Threat to Christianity and the Role It Has Played in American Protestantism* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance Publishing Co., Inc., 1999).

²² See Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2000); B. W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debates from Locke to Burke* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1998); J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: The Enlightenment of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Knud Haakonssen, ed., *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jonathan Sheehan, "Enlightenment, Religion, and the Enigma of Secularization: A Review Essay," *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 1061-80.

²³ In this I agree with Barnett who notes the similarity between traditional Enlightenment and non-Enlightenment, deist and non-deist thinkers (*The Enlightenment and Religion*, 5, 222-224).

²⁴ See Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment*; Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁵ The de-radicalisation of deists has long been encouraged by Roger L. Emerson, though he emphasises theology and politics without mentioning natural philosophy. See his "Heresy, the Social Order, and English Deism," *Church History* 37 (1968): 389-403; "Latitudinarianism and the English Deists," in *Deism, Masonry, and Enlightenment*, ed. J. A. Leo Lemay (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1987), 44.

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