

THESIS

THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN LOCKE

presented by

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PREFACE

It is the purpose of this thesis to present a sound exposition of Locke's theological opinions. The rationalism of Locke has been generally regarded by orthodox theologians as having exerted a disintegrating influence in theology. His name has usually been associated with the Deistic movement. But side by side with the rationalism in Locke's theology there is evidence of sincere belief in its supernatural elements. With this in mind Mc Giffert has characterized Locke as a "rational supernaturalist." Soon after Locke's death, however, the supernatural element in his theology was shown to have an untenable foundation and his position in this respect was undermined. As a result this side of his theology has been neglected. It is our purpose to show the relationship of these two aspects of Locke's thought, the content of each, and the substance of his teaching on the Church and toleration.

And now I have a personal word. I wish here to acknowledge my debt to my two teachers who have been my advisors in this study. I wish to thank Professor John Baille, who believed that Locke had a theology worthy^{of} two

years of study. I now concur in his opinion. His guidance and criticism has been helpful. The friendship and encouragement of Professor G.T. Thompson have made the way easier. Also I wish to thank Dr. A. Mitchell Hunter for reading Chapter Four and giving valuable suggestions; and to R.G. Smith who has read the entire manuscript and assisted in matters of form, I am very grateful. Finally I cannot sufficiently thank my wife whose inspiration and constant encouragement leaves me ever in her debt.

D.G.W.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND : HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL

In 1453 a Turkish army unwittingly influenced the course of Western thought by its capture of Constantinople. The flight of the Greek scholars to Italy at this time marks the beginning of an epoch known as the Renaissance, when the rich humanity reflected in the literature of ancient Greece became known to the western world. The treasures which the scholars brought were readily welcomed. For a long time, slowly but surely, the soil had been prepared for what they brought. The preceding age was not one of confusion, as has often been thought, but one of a tightly organized ecclesiastical totalitarianism which controlled not only the keys to heaven, but ^{also} the tools of learning and secular power in this world. As early as the time of the Crusades, the re-discovery of Aristotle had stimulated the minds of men, and had threatened to compromise the teachings of the Church, when Albertus Magnus and his illustrious pupil, Thomas Aquinas, were able to formulate a system whereby Christian

doctrine and Aristotelian philosophy were harmonized. For a time the church was thus able to maintain its grip over all areas of life, but such a condition could not last. The growing commercialism and rivalry between the city states of Italy produced a new set of values which were measured in terms of human personality. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Dante drew material for his great masterpiece from classical as well as Biblical sources, and a generation later Petrarch and Boccaccio indicated in their writings a frank interest in the literature of the past.

Those who had been stifled by the humid atmosphere of medieval theological thought were eager to breathe the fresh air which the re-discovery of classical learning brought to them. By way of reaction, the new civilization - for it was not less than that - was a return to paganism and antiquity. The appreciation of beauty, literature and the zest for living in a temporal world with its own intrinsic sensuous enjoyment, was in complete antipathy to the asceticism and other-worldliness of the church controlled era. ^A Unfortunate accompaniments of this movement was a frank hedonism in contrast to the restraints hitherto imposed by the church. But the Renaissance was more than a reawakened interest in

antiquity; it had in it something of a character of its own, occasioned by the expansion of man's horizons. White-winged ships sailed away to find a passage to the Indies and discovered a new continent. The invention of gunpowder, printing, the compass and telescope broadened life greatly at many points. There arose scientists of the first magnitude. It was the time of Galileo, Kepler and Copernicus. The latter's discovery enabled man to see himself as a citizen of the universe and thereby cut from under the church her earth-centred theological and scientific views. As a result of this widening of human horizons, men began to think about themselves as human personalities, each one of whom could achieve values for himself in this world. A secular conception of life had forced a wedge into men's thinking, but though the general influence of the church began to wane, little direct conflict was at first apparent.

While the awakening came first to Italy, it quickly spread to Germany, France and England. In Germany the mysticism of Eckhart and Tauler had deepened the quality of the religious life. Realising the futility of rationalistic discussion in religion and resenting the intrusion of the Roman hierarchy, these men sought direct communion with the

spirit of God. The climax of this quickening of the religious life came with the Reformation under Luther. It was in principle a revolt against authority. There were several contributing factors. On the negative side there was the reaction against the abuses of the ecclesiastical organization and the revolt of the northern peoples against the domination of Latin Christianity. On the positive side, the Renaissance had brought with it an increased understanding of the original Bible, which, with its emphasis upon mysticism, produced a great evangelical revival among the more profound and religious people north of the Alps.

As Locke's contribution to theological thought came at a time when the spheres of reason and revelation were being allocated, it is well that we should briefly consider the position of the reformers in this respect.

Luther tended to narrow down the sphere of natural theology, and he rejected Aristotle altogether. He accepted the doctrine of "double truth", a medieval distinction made concerning reason and revelation. He distrusted reason. For him it was the "trumpet of the devil" because it was corrupted with the rest of our nature at the time of the Fall.

!!
trumpet

Assurance of the revelation of the gospel was gained by faith, the essence of which was an unconditional personal trust in Christ. Anything which preaches Christ was his criterion of divine revelation.

Melanchthon, the classical scholar of the reformation, was a lover of Greek philosophy and a far greater humanist than Luther. He made a kind of amalgamation of the best in Luther with the best in humanism. He maintained that natural theology was essential and had its place as an important preliminary in the understanding of religious truth, though revelation gave by far the more complete knowledge of God.

Zwingli's position is midway between that of Luther and Melanchthon. He rejected the view that the essential nature of God could be known ^{by} natural theology, but he believed that the light of nature gives an elementary religious knowledge. He was the first writer to make a distinction between general and specific revelation, and he maintained that the Bible was a revelation of God. His friendly attitude towards philosophy anticipated the modern spirit and it was his view of the relationship between natural and revealed religion which was adopted by Calvin.

Both the Renaissance and the Reformation were medieval in character, but in them were the seeds of modern thought which were destined to develop towards the end of the first half of the sixteenth century. Implicit in the revolt against authority, which characterized both wings of this same fundamental movement, there was a deep-seated conviction that man had the right to free inquiry. This was, however, a comparatively new conception and footsteps moved falteringly in untrod fields of endeavor. Perhaps it was inevitable that side by side there should exist science and sorcery, credulity and scepticism, the claims of reason and of revelation. Here was a confusion which barren Scholasticism, magic and theosophy could not meet, and unless a new way of looking at the world could be found no progress could be made.

One of the first to attempt to formulate a new method to mark out the fields of knowledge was an English lawyer and statesman, Francis Bacon. It is significant that from this point forward we see philosophy passing out of the hands of the ecclesiastics - all the medieval philosophers were connected with the Church - and into the keeping of those primarily concerned with secular pursuits. Between 1560 and 1600 there was born a series of able thinkers, who

were to do their creative work between 1600 and 1650. With Bacon, we find Hobbes, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Descartes in this period. All of these men were at one in their concern that reason should be allowed to go its way untrammelled by authority and prejudice. But the approach which was adopted took two different lines. The English, on the one hand, following Bacon, came to the problem seeking to draw conclusions from empirical data. The character of the thinking done on the continent took (following Descartes) a mathematical and metaphysical turn. This distinction will be seen to have its utmost importance when we seek to trace the tendency manifest in the theology of John Locke.

Bacon began by admitting the breakdown of philosophy. He found that great strides were being made in physical science but that there was no adequate method for dealing with its results and relating them to the great ends of human life. This was caused by what Bacon called the "distempers of learning", wherein words took the place of substantial thought, truth was deduced from a priori notions, and credence was given uncritically to all kinds of fantastic propositions. It was better, he said, to begin without any presuppositions whatsoever, to examine the particular facts,

and after considering the pros and cons, and deciding which are true, to derive one's conclusions in the form of general propositions. There was a danger, he pointed out, that too great specialization might bring about error, for true knowledge he held to be universal. These were the rules laid down by Bacon concerning empirical induction as the general method of science and constitute his great legacy to the modern world.

Since Locke was greatly influenced by Bacon it is well that we should outline the chief points of Bacon's theological opinions. It is not easy to say just how sincere he was in his references to religion, for there is indication that his views were coloured to suit those in power. As we have seen, his formulation of the scientific method was practical and secular, without reference to metaphysics or theology. But questions concerning God and the ultimate destiny of man cannot be treated within the limits of the method of science. Such are not within the range of reason, but are matters of faith and theology. Reason and revelation have distinct spheres. Thus:

The knowledge of man is as the waters, some descending from above, and some springing from

beneath; the one informed by the light of nature,¹ the other inspired by divine revelation.

All that reason can do for revelation is to refute atheism. but anything positive is outside its sphere. But just as reason has nothing to say within the province of revelation, so too, Bacon maintains, theology must stay within its field and not meddle with matters which do not concern it. The Word of God has no right to be used as the basis of natural theology. Here Bacon's purpose seems to appear most clearly. He was not so much concerned to build a firm foundation for theology as anxious to free reason from the hand of religious authority and allow it complete freedom in its own sphere.

Thomas Hobbes also attempted to formulate a method whereby natural science could become the basis of philosophy. Unlike Bacon, he utilized the method of induction, taking as his starting point the idea that all things which happen result from motion. Like Bacon, however, he was anxious to free scientific investigation from the restrictions imposed primarily by the Schoolmen. He derived his method from geometry, and sought to apply it, not only to phenomena of the material

1. Bacon, AOL, Vol. 6, 207.

world, but to mental and social facts as well, with the result that he emerged with a mechanical and materialistic world view. He reduced consciousness to motion and identified it with the changes in the nervous system. All knowledge, he said, rests upon sensation. This includes our moral and religious ideas. Man's emotions are physical, and fear has led man, originally a non-social being, to form into groups. Fear also lies at the basis of religion, he maintained, and has led men to both truth and falsehood. Really, however, there is no essential difference between true and false religion, and religion's criterion is based upon the judgment of the community, resulting in the practical identification of church and state. It is not the truth of religion that matters, but its political suitability, and while Hobbes was willing to recognize that ^{men} might believe inwardly as they pleased, outward conformity was essential to the state, since no state could flourish with divergent religious opinions. The trend of Hobbes' philosophy thus becomes apparent. While, like Bacon, he wished to have reason untrammelled by ecclesiastical authority, he did so for another purpose. He wished to make the state the ultimate object of loyalty.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury is another of the Englishmen

whose thought exercised great influence in the first half of the seventeenth century. He does not, however, follow Bacon or Hobbes in the empirical approach to knowledge. The highest kind of truth, he said, was truth of the intellect. Such truth was derived from certain common notions, and on these religion and morality are based. It appeared to him that there must be some axioms in knowledge from which we can derive a foundation upon which to reason, for otherwise discursive reasoning led to an infinite regress. As a result he formulated those common notions from which the rest of knowledge could be deduced. The criterion of these axioms was that they were universally acknowledged; and he found that there were five in number which were common to all mankind. They are as follows:

- (a) Some Supreme Being exists.
- (b) This Supreme Being ought to be worshipped.
- (c) Virtue joined with piety is the chief part of the cult of the divine.
- (d) Faults are to be expiated by repentance.
- (e) Rewards and punishments are to be expected hereafter.

Revelation is found in these common notions themselves, and

may be found (1) in our hearts and (2) in nature. He rejected the idea that there was any external authority in religion. He further disclaimed public revelation and maintained that "formed" religions were but corruptions of the prime, original religion which lies in mankind's immediate apprehension of God. Pagan cults were the result of priestcraft and the success of early Christianity was its direct appeal to the heart. The difficulty with contemporary Christianity lay, he believed, in the fact that the simple religion of Jesus had been obscured by priestly accretions. The only true religion, he held, was natural religion which was revealed immediately in the heart of man. He thus overcame the conflict between reason and revelation by amalgamating them, but it is important to remember that when he uses the term reason, he is always thinking of the intuitive as opposed to the discursive reason. It was his emphasis upon natural religion that later won for him the name of the "father of Deism."

While in England the general mode of thinking in philosophy was following the line laid down by Bacon, Descartes on the continent had formulated a different method of approach. He too was anxious to assert the independent power of reason but he pursued a less empirical and more

mathematical method. It was with Descartes that modern philosophy is generally regared to have begun. He emphasized, besides the importance of the mathematical method, the modern principle of individuality, and the complete severance of the spheres of thought and extension. He was educated in a Jesuit school, and after completing his course, he found himself with many doubts as to whether any real knowledge existed in the world. He then became a master of mathematics with the view to using its method in approaching the fundamental problems of philosophy.

Descartes believed that if he could really attain "clear and distinct" ideas which could be absolutely certain, and from these could deduce other truths, he could by the mathematical method build up a comprehensive system which would explain to him the meaning of the universe. In order to do this he began by doubting everything, but came to the conclusion that in the very act of doubting he asserted his own existence. His first principle thus became "Cogito, ergo sum." From it he derived the knowledge of the existence of God by employing the idea of causation, an unchallenged axiom of the thinking of his time. Of all the ideas which one could find in one's mind, Descartes believed that there

was but one which the mind could fail to produce by its own power. This was the idea of God - infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, omniscient, omnipotent, the Creator of all things. It was unthinkable that the idea of such a perfect being should arise within the finite mind of man. The idea of God, Descartes believed, was implanted at birth in the mind of every individual, as an indication of the divine workmanship in each person. Furthermore, the idea of the external world is placed in our minds by God, who would not deceive man by compromising His integrity. Hence God must be perfect, with the result that the reality of matter must be admitted when the idea of it is clearly apprehended. Descartes was an intensely religious man, and this feature of his character has often been overlooked by those who would emphasize the wide powers he gave to human reason. He never questioned the validity of revelation, and was willing to trust its truth in areas where reason had no basis for proof. But the Church was quick to perceive that his work would undermine the orthodox position and his works were condemned as heretical.

Having briefly surveyed the attitude to reason and revelation of the thinkers preceding Locke, we now turn to those specifically English influences in the religious and political

sphere which formed the background of Locke's writings on the church and toleration. One must not forget that the thinkers in the last half of the seventeenth century placed scant value upon the intellectual heritage of the past. None the less, they were debtors in a far greater measure than they knew, and the factors which sharpened the issues with which they had to deal find their roots in the English Reformation.

The reformation under Henry VIII was born not so much of religious conviction as of ecclesiastical politics, and of an English national consciousness which resented any encroachment by the Pope over what was believed to be England's own affairs. It would, of course, be unfair to overlook that small nucleus who had been convinced supporters of the Protestant cause, many of whom were exiled abroad under the Marian persecution. With the accession of Elizabeth the exiles who were forced to leave England during the reign of Mary returned, many of them great strengthened in their Protestant views. Their zeal for a church based on the scriptural pattern, in the interests of its purity, earned for them the derisive name of "Puritans." Elizabeth, who was primarily a politician in her approach to theological

controversy, wanted peace and quiet, and she sought to take the course of action which would settle the differences of belief and weld the nation together into a unity. Yet all through her reign the Puritan movement grew. The Bible became the pattern in speech and living of this group of religious zealots. For the most part the movement remained within the established church, but there were those who in haste and impatience became Dissenters. Meanwhile the more orthodox in the church were consolidating their own position, educating their priests, and becoming increasingly hostile to the Puritans. The climax came with the Civil War, followed by the Commonwealth when the Puritans under the leadership of Cromwell had control of the government. During the time when the Puritans were politically in the ascendant, a wide degree of toleration was allowed. With the Restoration and the decline of the Puritan cause, toleration became a great issue, not only because men realized its political expediency, but also because they had become tired of religious conflict, and the realization had begun to work in their minds that if there could be sufficient use of reason in religion, the prejudices which caused the conflicts could be removed. It was within this field of thought that John Locke was to

exercise the might of his intellectual energy and to leave the imprint of his thinking upon subsequent generations.

We may now summarize the period between the Renaissance and the world in which Locke was to take his place. In this period a whole new conception of life had arisen, its negative phase being manifest in the revolt against authority, and its positive phase being an emphasis upon individuality. In the intellectual sphere this took the form of a demand that the search for truth be unrestricted by any authority, the chief offender in this case being the church. There were two interconnected lines of inquiry. One concerned the understanding of the world of nature, the other sought to find the meaning of the conscious and spiritual interests of man. Reason was the tool with which this search was pursued in either case.

The first phase then of modern thought is scientific Rationalism - an appeal to reason which takes its method and criterion from the new scientific inquiry, whose remarkable results had been a revelation of what the mind of man could accomplish.¹

As we have pointed out, this new inquiry was approached in two different ways. The English after Bacon were more

1. Rogers, SHOP, 253, 254.

empirical, while the continental thinkers after Descartes were more mathematical and builders of metaphysical systems. This was an era in which it was thought that the "unaided reason", given free scope, could solve all the problems of human existence; and indeed in spite of this immature optimism, it cannot be overlooked that in this time such investigations had proved exceedingly fruitful. Gradually, however, the lack of historical perspective, failure to relate reason to the warmer aspects of human living and the inability of reason to settle many major problems in theology brought the extent of reason's power into question. Men sought to answer the question as to how far reason gave valid knowledge in religion and morality. Here Locke entered into the inquiry and left his mark on the history of thought.

The register of the Parish Church at Wrington in Somerset bears the following entry among the births. "1632, August 29 - John, the son of John Locke." Not far from the church stands the two-storied thatched cottage in which he was born. His mother, Anne or Agnes Keene, appears to have come from her home in nearby Pensford to visit her in

brother in Wrington, where in due course she gave birth to her first son.

Very little is known about Locke's childhood. That it was spent in the locality of Pensford seems highly probable; perhaps he paid occasional visits to nearby relatives. His father was a country attorney, and his mother the daughter of a substantial tradesman. Five years after the birth of her first son, another child was born to her and was given the name Thomas. From this time on we hear nothing more about Locke's mother, and it is assumed that she died shortly after the second son was born. There is no indication that Locke had any conscious recollection of her influence upon him. The one reference we do have is couched in general terms and comes from Lady Masham's letter to Le Clerc. "What I remember him to have said of his mother expressed her to be a very pious woman and affectionate mother."¹

To his father Locke believed himself to be in the greatest debt. "From Mr. Locke, I have often heard of his father, that he was a man of parts.....Mr. Locke never mentioned him but with the greatest respect and affection. His father used a conduct towards him when young that he often spoke

1. Fox-Bourne, Life, 1, 13.

of afterwards with great approbation. It was the being severe to him by keeping him in much awe and at a distance when he was a boy, but relaxing, still by degrees of that severity as he grew to be a man, till, he being become capable of it, he lived perfectly with him as a friend."¹ One may surmise that both his parents were pious, industrious, self-reliant lovers of liberty, typical of the middle class in seventeenth century England.

For the first few years Locke was taught by his father. This home instruction may have been supplemented by short periods at a grammar school in nearby Bristol when the times were not too troublesome. When Locke was but ten years old the Civil War broke out and his father supported Cromwell, serving as a captain under Colonel Popham. In such turbulent times, his formal studies must have suffered, yet Locke's mind could not have but matured in the stress attendant on a nation in civil war. At a later period he looked back upon this period and made the comment:

I no sooner perceived myself in the world,
but I found myself in a storm which lasted
almost hitherto.²

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1. Fox-Bourne, Life, 1, 13. Cf. "Some Thoughts Concerning Education."
 2. King, LLJL, 6.

About 1646, through the influence of Colonel Popham, Locke was admitted to Westminster School in London. Here he was to remain for six years. The scholastic discipline, with its emphasis upon verbal learning, had not been relaxed under the Puritans, and the study of Latin, Greek and grammatical rules formed the major part of the curriculum. Later, in his treatise on education, Locke speaks with strong feeling against this kind of learning, which even in these early years began to distress him. The discipline in Latin and Greek, however, was to prove valuable to him in later years when it opened to him the great storehouses of learning written in those languages. During the school years many events of great significance took place, and Locke was in London on the day when Charles I was executed. He had several close friends at school but none of them reached fame in later life. Among his classmates were John Dryden and Robert South, but there is no indication that he was intimate with them.

At Whitsuntide, 1652, Locke was elected to a Junior Studentship at Christ Church. He matriculated there in the following November and for the next thirty years, with ~~the~~ few interruptions, Oxford was to be his home. At Oxford, as at Westminster, the emphasis upon verbal sophistry still

clouded the search for truth. It was at this time we first begin to see in Locke that rebellion against scholasticism and traditional modes of learning which was to mark his life and thinking from this point onward.

I have often heard him say that he had so small satisfaction from his Oxford studies, - as finding very little light brought thereby to his understanding - that he became discontented with his manner of life, and wished his father had designed him for anything else than what he was there destined to.¹

He went rarely to the disputations, and spent much of his time in the company of witty and learned men. His restless and eager mind chafed ^{at} what he considered to be mere casuistry. One of his contemporaries, Anthony Wood, later wrote of him.

This John Locke was a man of turbulent spirit, clamorous, and never contented. The club wrote and took notes from the mouth of their master, who sat at the upper end of ~~the~~^{the} table; but the said Locke scorned to do ~~it~~; so that while every man of the club besides were writing, he would be prating and troublesome.²

There is one Oxford influence which, in view of later happenings, is of the utmost significance. When Locke came

1. Fox-Bourne, Life. 1, 47.

2. Fox-Bourne, Life. 1. 94 note 1.

to Christ Church, its Dean was John Owen. For many years when his own religious views were being attacked, Owen advocated toleration. Later when there was political backing for his own sect, he continued to plead for a toleration of all different beliefs within the State. With Milton and Jeremy Taylor, he advocated toleration, not as political expediency, but as a religious duty.

At some time in his undergraduate career, Locke's mind was stirred by the "new philosophy" which allowed free inquiry into the nature of experience. The work of Descartes, who died the year Locke left Westminster, was beginning to be felt even at Oxford, the stronghold of traditionalism, and while opposition to his work was manifest, yet his books were being read and his indirect influence was being felt in the classrooms. While it is true that Cartesianism never deeply affected the thinking at Oxford, the works of the newer thinkers, Descartes, Hobbes and Bacon, were rousing leading minds throughout England. Locke was stirred when he discovered Descartes. "The first books....which gave him a relish for philosophical things.....were those of Descartes."¹

Towards the end of his undergraduate training Locke

1. Fox-Bourne, Life. 1, 62.

began to be seriously concerned about his life work. Two years before the Restoration he received his master's degree, and the next year he was elected to a Senior Studentship, which was tenable for life. Two years later, his father died leaving him enough property to insure him a small but secure living. Not long after being elected to the Senior Studentship he was made lecturer in Greek and in Rhetoric, and censor of moral philosophy, offices usually assigned to those studying for holy orders. There is some indication that Locke, at least for a time, seriously considered entering the priesthood of the Anglican communion. His temperament and training indicate that he had a strong interest in religious matters. He had moved away from the Puritan position in which he had been nurtured, but was not attracted by the Dissenters. His sympathies seem to have been drawn towards the Latitudinarians in the established Church. In this period Whichcote, the Cambridge Platonist, was his favorite preacher. But whatever considerations may have urged him towards the church, including, we may conjecture, that it was that for which his father had prepared him, he determined upon a lay career. When in 1666 he refused an offer of preferment from the Irish Church, he said, after giving his reasons for so doing, "The

same considerations made me a long time reject very advantageous offers of very considerable friends in England."¹ Perhaps, now that his mind had been stimulated by the method of free inquiry, he feared the impediment of church authority if he wished to continue his intellectual pursuits. But while he decided against a church career, he continued throughout his life to be keenly interested in theology and religious affairs.

In the year 1663 the Royal Society was founded at Oxford, and gave indication of the great advances which the experimental method was making as a method of obtaining knowledge in physical science. Locke was not left untouched by the influence of this kind of inquiry, and four years later we find him engaged in experiments in chemistry, meteorology and medicine. Two years later he was engaged in a sort of amateur medical practice, and although he never took a degree in this profession he continued to practice in a limited way for the rest of his life and was always known among his familiar friends as Dr. Locke.

During the winter of 1665, Locke was appointed secretary to Sir Walter Vane, Ambassador to the Elector of Brandenburg.

1. King, LLJL, 29.

This experience was most profitable and enjoyable to him, but was not, as one might be led to expect, a prelude to a diplomatic career. He served his position creditably for a year, at the end of which time he was asked to accept the post of secretary to the embassy in Spain. This he refused, and returned to Oxford, but his contact with men of affairs was one more valuable ingredient which was added to the mixture of his interests and experiences. He had not yet decided what was to be his vocation, and in refusing the Spanish appointment he said that he was "pulled both ways by divers considerations."

This aptly expressed the state of mind in these Christ Church years - pulled different ways by divers tastes and ready sympathies, but as yet without deep, decided, and persistent intellectual purpose - Descartes, amateur medical experiments, theological problems, social problems, intercourse with men in public affairs, each in turn.¹

It was at this point that a chance circumstance intervened to determined the next few years of his life. Lord Ashley, later to become the first Earl of Shaftesbury, came to Oxford to drink the Astrof medicinal waters. He had engaged a certain Dr. Thomas to procure the waters for him, but since the

1. Fraser, Essay, 1, xxii.

doctor was called away he asked Locke to provide them in his stead. Through some misadventure Locke's arrangements miscarried, so that he called on Lord Ashley to explain the matter. He made his apologies and was asked to stay for supper, which he did. So charmed was Lord Ashley with this young physician that he asked him the next day for dinner, and afterwards to visit him in London. This was the beginning of an enduring friendship based upon a mutual interest in civil and religious liberty. The next year Locke became a member of Lord Ashley's household in the combined position of physician, advisor, and tutor. For the next fifteen years he shared house and fortune with this very important statesman of the reign of Charles II. This new relationship secured for Locke both sufficient leisure and stimulus to continue his previous lines of intellectual inquiry, and his entry into the company of men of affairs may have done much to save him from the faults to which the exclusive academic life is exposed. As time went on he became increasingly intimate with Lord Ashley.

Mr. Locke grew so much in esteem with my grandfather, that, as great as great as he experienced him in physic, he looked upon this as but his least part. He encouraged him to turn his thoughts another way, nor would he suffer him to practice

physic except in his own family, and as a kindness to some particular friend. He put upon him the study of religious and civil affairs of the nation, with whatsoever related to the business of a minister of state; in which he was so successful, that my grandfather soon began to use him as a friend, and consult with him on all occasions of that kind.¹

One of Locke's first activities in the service of Lord Ashley was to act as secretary to a company of men engaged in framing a constitution for the colony of Carolina in North America. Of particular interest are the notes, still extant in his own handwriting, of the provisions made for the ensurance of religious liberty in the colony.

No man shall be permitted to be a freeman of Carolina, or have any estate or habitation within it, that doth not acknowledge a God, and that God is to be publicly worshipped.²

No restriction is made on the manner in which a man must worship. Further:

Religion ought to alter nothing in any man's civil estate or right. No person shall disturb, molest or persecute another for his speculative opinions in religion, or his way of worship.³

While we do not know how active a voice Locke had in the

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1. Fox-Bourne, Life. 1, 198.
 2. Fox-Bourne, Life. 1. 240 Article xcv.
 3. Fox-Bourne, Life. 1. 242 Article cix.

these articles, we do know that they are opinions which he had expressed on paper before this time. The articles were framed in his presence and we may surmise that his influence was great; for such opinions were far in advance of the current conception of toleration.

During his years with Shaftesbury, Locke's interest in medicine continued to flourish under the stimulus of contact with leading physicians of the time, notably Sydenham and Maplestoff. Locke had come from Oxford to London during the year of the great plague, and the physicians in London found the newcomer well qualified to help them in combatting the disease. Locke also continued, in London, his experiments in natural science, in the pursuit of which he became acquainted with Boyle, the chemist, and entered on a friendship with him which lasted until the latter's death, when Locke was made his literary executor. In 1668 Locke was elected to the newly formed Royal Society, an event which brought him into further intercourse with those minds which were being stirred by success in experimental investigation.

During the winter of 1670 - 71 in the company of five or six such friends, a question arose which thoroughly interested Locke, the answer to which was to cost him great intellectual

labour. The discussion centred about the principles of morality and revealed religion, and the specific problem was the capacity of the human understanding to deal with such matters. At the request of those assembled to set down (on paper) his thoughts concerning the problem and to report to the group at their next meeting, ~~he~~ he confessed that he thought he could do it easily upon a single sheet of paper. But as the dimensions of the inquiry became apparent to him, his treatment became greatly extended, and it was nearly twenty years before he completed his final answer in the form of An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.

In 1675, when Shaftesbury fell from power, Locke was able to journey to France, as he had long wanted to do. He went for reasons of health, as the London air had aggravated an old asthmatic complaint. In France he had much uninterrupted leisure to continue his inquiry concerning the human understanding and to pursue various experimental studies in which he was interested. In Montpellier he found a new and congenial friend in the person of Thomas Herbert, later the Earl of Pembroke. Their conversations on philosophical subjects proved to be mutually stimulating. How many of the leading French thinkers Locke knew personally during his

sojourn in France it is difficult to determine. During the time of his residence there Malebranche, Arnauld, Nicole, Leibniz, and Spinoza were all at work, and at least he must have followed the current of their thoughts and the controversy which their writings aroused. His letters disclose that he was associated with Bernier, a pupil of Gassendi, Guenellon, an Amsterdam physician, Thoynard, a naturalist and biblical critic, Justel, a jurist and man of letters, Römer, the Danish astronomer, and Thuvenot, the traveller. The variety of their activities shows the wide field of Locke's interests.

Locke returned to London in 1679, and shortly after, when Shaftesbury returned to power, became busily engaged in his service. This period was short-lived, since, as a result of his intrigue in supporting the Duke of Monmouth as successor to the throne, Shaftesbury had to flee from England, and died within a short time in Amsterdam. The shadow of this ^{infringe} event could not but fall upon Locke, who, it appears, had nothing to do with it. After Shaftesbury had fallen from power the second time, Locke had left his service and returned to his own pursuits in Oxford and Somerset. None the less, his relationship with Shaftesbury was well known and suspicion

was directed against him to such an extent that he felt it expedient to leave the country. He too, went to Holland, which at this time was the asylum for those who could find neither religious nor political freedom in other parts of Europe. There he remained for five years. He first went to Amsterdam, to stay with Dr. Guenellon, a friend of his Paris days. In Guenellon's home he met Phillip von Limborch, the Remonstrant professor in theology. Their acquaintance quickly ripened into a friendship, which is an important clue to many of Locke's theological ideas. They continued to correspond on theological topics until the end of Locke's life.

Unfortunately, Locke could not long remain in Amsterdam. The political suspicion which first was responsible for his exile continued to molest him, with the result that he kept moving in secret from place to place. For some time he took the name of Dr. Van der Linden. During the winter of 1684, while he was still in Holland, he was removed from his studentship at Oxford by direct order of the king, and deprived of a part of his income. The injustice of this cut deep into his heart and he was never quite able to forget it.

The next winter in Holland Locke met a young member of the faculty in the Remonstrant College, Jean Le Clerc, who had founded the "Bibliotheque Universelle", then the most important literary organ in Europe. To this Locke contributed several articles, the first of his writings to be printed. The following year he removed to Rotterdam, and lived there with a wealthy Quaker and book-collector, Benjamin Furley. His association with religious men in Holland forms one of the most significant chapters in the story of his life.

Towards the end of his exile, Locke became cautiously associated with other men whose political activities had caused them to be exiled from England. Among them was Burnet, later to be Bishop of Salisbury, Mordaunt, later the Earl of Peterborough, and above all he became well known to both William and Mary. When the revolution proved successful and James II was deposed in favour of William, Locke escorted the Queen and Lady Mordaunt back to England.

After his return Locke settled at Dorset Court on Channel Row in London, near to the centre of activities. He was soon offered the important post of Ambassador to the court of Frederick, Elector of Brandenburg. His weak physical

condition made it necessary for him to refuse. One sentence in his letter to Lord Mordaunt gives an insight into the quality of his devotion to faith and country. He speaks of his regret in being unable to serve the king " at a moment when there is not a moment to be lost without endangering the Protestant and English interest throughout Europe...."¹

Three months later he was offered a position which he was able to accept, a Commissionership of Appeals, which provided an honourable position and a modest income along with no great claims upon his time.

With the coming of William and Mary the question of toleration was raised in Parliament under the two forms of Comprehension and Indulgence. Locke was greatly interested and sought to bring the weight of his influence to bear on the side of toleration. Rather than attempting any direct method, he sought to leaven public opinion by writing in the press. To this end he published anonymously the Epistola de Tolerantia, written in Latin and addressed to his friend Limborch. This letter, written in 1685, was published in March 1689, and was the first really significant work which he gave to

1. King, LLJL, 173.

the world. Its contents represented the culmination of long and earnest thought combined with the maturity of his own personal experience, the germs of which can be traced back to his undergraduate days. This work was soon translated into English by William Popple, a Unitarian merchant, and its dissemination aroused a storm of controversy. To clarify some of the issues raised in the conflict Locke published a second letter in the following year.

Very soon after this, in February of 1690, he published, again anonymously, Two Treatises on Government. As the letters on toleration were born of a desire to justify the rights of the individual in religious matters, so these treatises sought to point out the rights of the individual in relation to the state. In March of the same year the Essay Concerning Human Understanding made its first appearance. It presented in philosophical form the fundamental propositions which were implied in both the letters and the treatises. It was Locke's answer to that problem proposed long before, ibid., "to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with."¹

The two years in London following his return from Holland

1. Essay, from the Epistle to the Reader.

were, as a result of his publications, of the utmost importance. He had carefully supervised the Essay as it went to press, and had watched with disappointment the various acts of Parliament making up the Revolutionary Settlement, which fell far short of the position he had upheld in his writings. But now again, as before, the London air and his advancing age - he was now nearly sixty - began to take their toll on his constitution. He was invited to try the air at Oates, the country seat of Sir Francis Masham. This place, about twenty miles from London, amid the leafy lanes on the edge of the Epping forest, seemed to fulfil his every need. In February of 1691 he gathered up his belongings and moved to Oates, and as a paying guest settled down there for the remainder of his life. It was undoubtedly the most congenial home he had ever had. He was free to do as he wished, and yet at the same time was enthroned in a family circle as its most beloved member. Thus he was greatly comforted in his declining years. Lady Masham was the daughter of Ralph Cudworth, the Cambridge Platonist, and her able mind and friendly understanding greatly endeared her to Locke. At Oates he continued to use his pen vigorously on a variety of subjects. In 1695 he published The Reasonableness of

Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures, in which he made the attempt to rescue the simple essence of the gospel from what he believed to be its accretions. Later, he conducted his famous controversy with the Bishop of Worcester, and replied now and then to the more stinging of the attacks made on him by various writers. Towards the end of his life he interested himself in the letters of St. Paul and made a careful written study of them. The results of this study were published posthumously.

At Oates he welcomed his friends, among them Issac Newton, Lord Shaftesbury, Lord and Lady Peterborough, William Molyneaux, the new friendship with whom cheered and encouraged him, Peter King, his cousin, afterwards Lord Chancellor, and Anthony Collins, a young Essex squire.

In 1696 Locke was appointed on of the Commissioners of Trade and plantations. While he journeyed to London to attend the meetings of this commission, Oates still remained his home, and he was always glad to return to it after being away. In 1700 his declining strength made it necessary for him to resign the commissionership, and thereafter he withdrew altogether from public life. As the shadows lengthened on his

declining strength, he led a quiet life at Oates preparing for the end, spending much of his time in Biblical studies and religious meditation. During this time he wrote a Discourse of Miracles, making his contribution to a current controversy. Attacks were still being made against his published writings, but he was content to ignore most of them. Now and again some gross misunderstanding caused him to take up his pen in defence. When the Essay was officially condemned at Oxford, he wrote to his friend Collins, "I take what has been done there rather as a recommendation to the book."¹ Before he died he was to see the fourth English edition of the Essay published.

In the summer of 1704 his health began to decline rapidly. During the summer he continued to ride out during the day, but as the autumn approached he spent his days enjoying the sunshine in the garden. During this time he was tenderly nursed by Lady Masham and on October 28th he died, as he declared, "in perfect charity with all men, and in sincere communion with the whole Church of Christ, by whatever names Christ's followers please to call themselves."²

In physical appearance. Locke was slight in build and

1. Fraser, LOC, 265.
2. Fox-Bourne, 2, 557. Life.

his almost constant illness made his frame look spare indeed. The portrait by Kneller shows the face, at once sensitive and keen, yet bearing the trace of suffering.

Of his personal characteristics, we are indebted to the letter of Lady Masham to Le Clerc, and to Pierre Coste, who was Locke's amanuensis in the latter years of his life, for our information. Both greatly admired him, but there is no reason to suppose that their reports are inaccurate. They give a picture of a great man, not overawed by his own importance of learning, who loved to interest himself in what other people were doing. He was courteous and loving to those who came within the inner circle of his friendship. He was fond of children, who were always happy in his company. Men and women alike found him charming. His resourceful conversation made him a congenial companion in any situation.

Averse to all mean complaisance, his wisdom, his experience, his gentle and obliging manner, gained him the respect of his inferiors, the esteem of his equals, and the friendship and confidence of men in the highest station.¹

To those who sought his counsel, he gave it freely. To the poor he gave intelligently. He could not bear to see anything

1. Fox-Bourne, Life. 2, 534.

wasted and was careful in his own personal economy. He dressed simply and in good taste.

In all his conduct he was upright and moral. It is very difficult to find direct evidence for the exact quality of his piety, but as one gathers up all the threads of his life, there appears to have been great depth in his relationship with God, which sustained strengthened and comforted him throughout his days.

Lady Masham, who probably knew him more intimately than any other person, gives us this statement of his character.

He was always, in the greatest and in the smallest affairs of human life, as well as in speculative opinions, disposed to follow reason, whosoever it were that suggested it; he being ever a faithful servant - I had almost said a slave - to Truth; never abandoning her for anything else, and following her for her own sake, purely.¹

In order to understand Locke's thought, of which his theology forms an important part, it would be well if we could trace the influences which affected it. This, however, is a very difficult thing to do, for Locke has been looked upon as a founder of a new movement in philosophy and con-

1. Fox-Bourne, Life. 2. 540.

sequently the historical antecedents of his own thinking have been neglected by subsequent scholarship.

We have seen Locke's early disgust for the decadent Scholastic philosophy at Oxford. None the less, while he was there, he went through the courses offered in Aristotelian logic, Metaphysics, Ethics and Physics. It is significant that while he always speaks with derision of the Schools, his references to Aristotle are always couched in terms of the greatest respect.

As we have seen, Locke considered that his philosophical awakening came as a result of his reading Descartes. But he did not consider himself in any sense a pupil of Descartes, for "he was much more frequently conscious of differences than of agreement, between the results of his own thought and the system of his predecessor."¹ It is possible that Locke may have underestimated his dependence upon Descartes, for while it is true that the differences are great, Gibson states that without Descartes' idea of self-consciousness in the background of his mind it is quite impossible that the author of the Essay could have ~~produced the Essay~~ could have produced the work as we have it today.

1. Gibson, LTK, 206.

Just how much Locke was influenced by the Cambridge Platonists is also hard to measure. It has been pointed out that at one time Whichcote was his favourite preacher, and that at a later time he lived in the household with Cudworth's daughter. Von Hertling, who has made a special study of this relationship, makes a sharp distinction in Locke's thought between the empirical and rationalistic tendencies and maintains that strong influence was exerted by the Cambridge men on the rationalistic side of his thinking. This cleavage is hardly warranted, and it is probable that Hertling has overestimated such influence. None the less, "With their outlook in theology and ecclesiastical politics he was in complete sympathy."¹ It is our opinion that it is in the broad field of the practical interpretation of the Christian ethic that the influence of these men most affected Locke.

One of the great surprises in Locke's writings is the fact that he nowhere mentions Bacon, for in the general approach to his work Locke invariably follows the Baconian method as contrasted with the Cartesian. Much though he owed to Descartes for his first awakening in philosophy, Locke can never be classed as a system builder, and his dislike for metaphysical considerations is too well known to need

1. Gibson, LTK, 237.

elaboration. He was too much the critical empiricist ever to delve into pure metaphysics. In this connection there is a fact in Locke's personal history which must not be overlooked. "....It is cardinal to the understanding of Locke's life and thought to remember that he belonged to the medical profession and that he practiced it, intermittently, all his life."¹ Later, his interest in things experimental and scientific brought him into personal contact with those "master builders", Sydenham, Huygenius, Boyle and Newton. That British quality of common sense, raised by him to the point of genius, brought him to the task which he conceived to be that of under-labourer to these men, "clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge."² Whether he read Bacon is not known, but it may be surmised that he did, for the Novum Organum is among the books mentioned in a "catalogue of my books at Oates."³ One may venture the opinion that the empirical tradition was so much a part of Locke's intellectual environment, that after his early repudiation of the scholastic method the one which took its place~~d~~ seemed to him to need no comment.

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1. "Times Literary Supplement," 1932, 586.
 2. Essay, in the Epistle to the Reader.
 3. Fraser, LOC, 221.

What books Locke read dealing with the history of thought we do not know. He was a typical example of his time in his failure to recognize the value of history as it revealed the continuity of movements and thought.

So little store does he set upon a knowledge of other men's opinions, on matters concerning which reason should be the judge, that it is only on the rarest occasions that he refers to the views of other writers in a manner sufficiently definite to enable them to be identified. When he would cite a supposed matter of fact, such as the virtues which were cultivated by the people of Peru, the capacity of a parrot for rational conversation, or the non-existence of the idea of God among the Carribee Islanders, he is ready with his references, including chapter and page. But in matters of speculation, where appeal is made to the reader's own intelligence, he prefers to set forth what he conceives to be the truth, contrasting it when necessary with opposing principles, but without encumbering it with references and quotations.¹

That he read widely we may be quite sure, for he had an almost insatiable curiosity, which though not always as selective as it might have been, gave him a thirst for all kinds of reading. His library at Oates gives some indication of this.

Among them are the works of Descartes, Nicole, Malebranche, Gassendi, 'Logique de Port-Royale', 'Novum Organum', Newton's 'Principia', 'from the author', with many books on voyages and travels..²

1. Gibson, LTK, 182.
2. Fraser, LOC, 221.

Fox-Bourne reports:

All old literature and every work of note that appeared in his lifetime, written in English, Latin or French, whether on philosophy, science, or theology, politics, history or travel, was not only skimmed over but studied by him.¹

This may be an extravagant statement, but there appears to be no doubt that he read extensively.

One of the best clues to Locke's thinking would be to know the content of his conversations, for he placed high value on the stimulus and information derived in talking with other men. As we have seen, the Essay was the answer to a problem which arose in such a circumstance. Locke was fond of bringing together groups of keen-witted men, whose opinions he respected. At Oxford, in London and in Holland he used this method to sharpen his mind and to obtain information. With its obvious advantages there is one drawback to such a method for obtaining knowledge, for much of the information Locke must have gleaned was second hand and hence as inaccurate as such information usually is. A further method Locke utilized for keeping in touch with leading minds was that of letter writing. All his life he kept up a corres-

1. Fox-Bourne, Life. 2, 538.

pondance with men of various activities.

His general approach to problems has been considered characteristic of the English philosophical temper.

He is the typically English philosopher in his love for concrete exemplifications of the abstractions in which more speculative minds delight; in his reverence for facts - facts of nature, or facts of conscious life; in indifference to speculation on its own account; in aversion to mystical enthusiasm; in calm reasonableness, and ready submission to truth, even when truth could not be reduced to system by a human understanding; and in the honest originality which stamped the features of his intellect and character on all that he wrote.¹

There was little of the poet in him and his fancy never soared to imaginative heights. Philosophical precision is often wanting in his style. But with all his faults, "he was woven of good English cloth: his texture was the hoddin gray which lasts."²

1. Fraser, LOC, 274.

2. "Times Literary Supplement", 1932, 586.

CHAPTER TWO

LOCKE'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Inasmuch as Locke's theory of knowledge underlies the whole of his thinking, it is essential for us to trace the chief points of its argument if we are to understand adequately his theology on its rational side.¹ We have already noted that Locke's purpose in formulating such a theory was to define the sphere of knowledge in relation to the principles of revealed religion and morality. The Essay Concerning Human Understanding he considered to be his contribution to the solution of that problem. We have seen that throughout his life Locke was a keen student of science and did all that he could to follow the new trends in its wide field. Yet when he comes to the formulation of his theory of knowledge, he makes it explicit that the kind of knowledge he considers most important for men to have, is that which concerns man's duty and the discovery of the existence of God, whose divine law he believes man's duty

1. Cf. Fischer, RJL, 5. "Die Grundlage der Religionsphilosophie John Locke's ist seine Erkenntnis-theorie...."

to be. "Morality and Divinity are those parts of knowledge that men are most concerned to be clear in."¹ When he had come to the conclusion that the limits of knowledge are very narrow, he none the less maintained that men "have light enough to lead them to the knowledge of their Maker, and the sight of their own duties."² After completing his survey of the limits of man's knowledge, he was still able to say that God "has furnished men with faculties sufficient to direct them in the way they should take, if they will but seriously employ them that way when their ordinary vocations allow them leisure."³ We may rightly conclude, then, that Locke was not only interested in the scope of theological knowledge, but that he also considered he had found an answer to the problem concerning the "principles of morality and revealed religion" which was the first active impulse that set him to work on the Essay.

Locke identified certainty and knowledge. "With me to know and to be certain is the same thing: what I know, that I am certain of; and what I am certain of, that I know. What reaches to knowledge I think may be called certainty; and

1. Essay, from the Epistle to the Reader.
2. Essay, 1. 1. 5.
3. Essay, 4. 20. 3.

what comes short of certainty, I think cannot be called knowledge."¹ Thus knowledge is affirmed to have in it no element of doubt. But he goes even further to give it unconditional validity. "What we once know, we are certain is so; and we may be secure that there are no latent proofs undiscovered, which may overturn our knowledge, or bring it in doubt."² In this manner he protects knowledge, not only against the possibility of doubt but against that of error as well. There are two general characteristics which Locke considered necessary to knowledge. On the one hand, knowledge must be "instructive", that is, it must bring in something new in its meaning in contrast to a "trifling proposition" which has but verbal meaning. Further, knowledge, besides being certain and instructive, must be "real"; for Locke believed that the knowledge he sought to understand had reference to a reality which is both independent of the knowing mind and of the ideas by which it is apprehended.

The kind of knowledge to which Locke attributed certainty, instructiveness and reality, he called "scientific", that is, concerned with universal propositions. Scientific knowledge he distinguished from "experimental" and "historical"

1. Works, 4. 145.

2. Essay, 4. 16. 3.

knowledge which deal with the specific facts derived from sensuous data. He held that empirical generalizations from these facts could never be universally true, and consequently that such propositions were inferior in quality to scientific knowledge. Knowledge, as he used the term, was found in the intuitive perception of the connection between ideas, which was seen to hold good in the very nature of the case. He did not discuss the metaphysical theory upon which this assumption is based. Since universal knowledge showed itself most clearly in mathematics, Locke, as Descartes before him, hoped to work out a system by which knowledge could be as clearly deduced as in geometrical demonstration, especially, as we have pointed out, in the interconnected fields of morality and divinity.

The material of knowledge is ideas, and Locke felt that if there was anything new he had to say it was about ideas. But strangely enough he offered no explanation as to what he meant by his use of the term "idea". It is apparent that he equates ideas with conscious intelligence, so that if one is said to have ideas, he must be considered an intelligent being. As Gibson has pointed out,¹ there was a considerable

1. Gibson, LTK, 21.

divergence of opinion among seventeenth century thinkers as to what idea meant. Locke, employing a "plain, historical method", the method of matter-of-fact common sense, waives all transcendent questions, and as a result, fails to draw distinctions as sharply as he might have done. For Locke, as for others of his time, an idea might be conceived as a psychological process or a logical content. When he defines the term idea as "whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks,"¹ we see idea standing for an object of the understanding. Yet he also insists that such an idea can be present to the understanding only at the time of its perception.

To ask, at what time a man has first any ideas, is to ask, when he begins to perceive; - having ideas, and perception, being the same thing.²

This statement, and others like it, which indicate that Locke viewed the meaning of idea as a psychical process, has lead many to the conclusion that his purpose was primarily a psychological one. But no such conclusion can be admitted, as his primary purpose was to find the certain content of which the human mind is capable, and the knowing process

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1. Essay, 1. 1. 8.
 2. Essay, 4. 1. 9.



receives consideration only so far as it is involved in this. In this connection it may be pointed out that Locke inherited from Descartes the conception that whatever happens in the mind is the result of self-conscious thought. Thus an idea can be present to the understanding only when one is aware of its perception. In the light Locke found it necessary to modify his statements concerning the mind as a "storehouse" and "repository" of ideas.

Our ideas being nothing but actual perceptions in the mind, which ceases to be anything when there is no perception of them, this laying up our ideas in the repository of the memory signifies no more than this - that the mind has a power, in many cases, to revive perceptions which it has once had, with this additional perception annexed to them, that it has had them before. And in this sense ideas are said to be in our memories when indeed they are actually nowhere.¹

Another characteristic of the ideas in Locke's account, is that when they are clearly apprehended it is impossible to confuse them with any other. "It is the first act of the mind (without which it would never be capable of any knowledge) to know every one of its ideas by itself, and distinguish it from others."² This character of an idea Locke calls

1. Essay, 2. 10. 2.

2. Essay, 4. 7. 4.

its "determined" or "determinate" quality. Nor can an idea be capable of change. A mutable idea, he maintains, is not possible, because if an idea is said to have changed, it then becomes another idea altogether. Since each idea is determined in the process of perception, and its meaning is exhausted in that single perception, the question arose as to whether that idea could be said to be eternal. Here Locke might have distinguished between idea as a logical content and as a perception to ^{his} advantage, but he failed to do so, and contented himself by a reference ^{to} ~~with~~ what appeared to him to be plain matter of fact. "What wonder is it that the same idea should always be the same idea? For if the word triangle be supposed to have the same signification always, that is all this amounts to."¹ In this connection it may be pointed out that when Locke speaks of ideas he does not mean Platonic "Forms".

We see here then, the chief features of the "idea" which Locke took to be the raw material of knowledge, and the distinctions which he drew will show themselves as significant parts of the whole structure of his thought.

Before he could proceed with his own explanation of how

1. Works, 10. 257.

ideas arise in the mind of man, Locke felt that it was necessary to refute the position of those who held that innate ideas formed the basis of knowledge. When the church and Aristotle had been swept away as final authorities over the minds of men, an emptiness became apparent, and a new authority was sought. Accordingly, thinkers, in the seventeenth century appealed to a doctrine of innate ideas which they believed had been implanted by God, acting through nature, in the minds of all men at birth. As we have seen, Lord Herbert of Cherbury actually formulated a doctrine of innate ideas. With others the doctrine was vague, but it was employed by leading thinkers including the Cambridge Platonists and Descartes. While those who held the doctrine did not agree on all points, they were at one in acknowledging their belief that ideas could be present to the understanding prior to experience. It was against this principle that Locke, who believed experience to be primary, waged his battle.

It would be sufficient to convince unprejudiced readers of the falseness of this supposition [re innate principles] if I should only show (as I hope I shall in the following parts of this discourse) how men, barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have without the help of innate impressions, and may arise at certainly without original notions or principles.¹

1. Essay, 1. 2. 1.

Because it is so difficult to determine exactly against whom this principle was directed, some writers have assumed that Locke set up the position merely to knock it down again, to enhance his own theory thereby.¹ Before we can judge the weight of such a conclusion it is well that we have clearly before us what Locke believed to be the opposing theory which did so much violence to his conception as to how truth actually arose.² Innate principle, Locke conceived the argument to run, gave a special origin to knowledge, for it was implanted in the mind "in its very first being,"³ and cannot be appropriated by "the use of our natural faculties."⁴ Such knowledge possesses a "distinct sort of truth,"⁵ and is the only valid foundation for knowledge, since our "natural faculties would bring us only an uncertain, floating estate."⁶ Since they are "sacred"⁷, these "principles must not be questioned"⁸. From them other certainties are deduced, and in them are to be found the basis of religion and morality. The criterion set up was the supposed fact that they were universally agreed to, and they were universally agreed to because they were innate. So, Locke maintained, the

1. Fraser states in his edition of the Essay, 1. 37, note 2. "Locke assails it in its crudest form, in which it is countenanced by no eminent writer."

2. Cf. Gibson, LTK, 34 f.

3. & 4. Essay, 1.1.1.

5. Essay, 1.1.5.

6. Essay, 1.2. 13.

7. Essay, 1.2.21.

8. Essay, 1.3.25.

the argument ran.

While this theory obviously ran counter to the way in which Locke conceived ideas were formed, it also clashed with another part of his thinking, for he was convinced that knowledge could be of little value unless it made its appeal to the actively appropriating intelligence of every individual.

The floating of other men's opinions in our brains makes us not one jot the more knowing, though they happen to be true... Such borrowed wealth, though it were gold in the hand from which he received it, will be but leaves and dust when it comes to use.¹

Professor Gibson believes this to be the deepest motive for Locke's polemic against innate ideas, for Locke always insists upon the primacy of experience, and of the individual's activity in appropriating knowledge.

Against whom was this polemic directed? Or is it simply an argument of straw? This is one of the most perplexing problems surrounding the Essay, and there have been those, as we have seen, who think Locke took a very weak argument, the more easily to show it ridiculous. It is acknowledged

1. Essay, 1. 3. 24.

that he had in mind Lord Herbert's De Veritate, for he mentions him by name in the body of the Essay.¹ But he also says that the Essay was well started before his attention was drawn to that work. There is good reason that we may believe Locke had his old intellectual enemies, the Schoolmen, primarily in mind when he refuted the the position that knowledge was based upon innate ideas and that he considered their position as the one which was fundamentally in opposition to his own. He was quite sure that he would be upbraided for "pulling up the old foundations of knowledge and certainty."² and that his confutation of innate principles would " seem absurd to the masters of demonstration."³ These are undoubted references to the Schoolmen. If at times he was indeed referring to Descartes, it is probable that he was disappointed that Descartes had only partly succeeded in freeing himself from the trammels of scholasticism.

As long as men could hold sacred an untouchable theory of innate principles, whereby prejudice could be kept in and truth kept out, Locke claimed that the basis of certainty was unsound and directed the vigour of his mind against it.

1. Cf. Essay, l. 2. 15.

2. Essay, l. 1. 28.

3. Essay, l. 3. 24.

He was quite sure that the principles of certainty in morality and divinity would be insecure just so long as men could appeal to innate principles for their beliefs.

Once he thought he had shown that there could be no foundation for a theory of innate principles, Locke proceeded, in the second book of the Essay to consider the origin of "simple" ideas. It must be kept in mind that Locke considered not that ideas in themselves could be thought of as knowledge, but that they were the material, and that certainty resulted from a judgment made about them. He therefore set to work, using the plain, historical method, to show how ideas arise in consciousness and declined to formulate any theory concerning the connection of ideas with their ultimate source; for he was convinced that any such metaphysical speculation would carry him beyond his matter-of-fact, commonsense method. None the less, as we have pointed out, Locke always held that ideas somehow held good of a reality beyond and apart from themselves.

In order to appreciate Locke's attempt to determine the content of ideas, it is necessary to remember that in the seventeenth century the historical point of view was in

eclipse, and that the composition theory dominated all thinking. Ideas of development and evolution were unheard of. A complex whole was considered to be, logically and actually, no more or less than the sum of its parts, and if such a whole could be analysed into its parts, its nature was thus thought to be understood. All creation was made up of various complex combinations of simples, in a closed non-developing order in which nothing new could emerge.

It was with the composition theory in mind that Locke approached his problem of the formation of ideas. By ascertaining what were the "original", "primary", and "simple" ideas, he thought that he would have a basis for knowledge. Since he held that complex ideas were no more than the combination of various simple ideas, which took on no distinct character of their own apart from their constituent elements, he thought that when he had shown by logical analysis what were the simple ideas involved, he could establish a firm foundation for knowledge. It has been suggested that "it was for this reason that the question of the determination of the logical content of our ideas came to be so closely connected in Locke's mind with an investigation of their origin and

manner of formation."¹ One of the results of Locke's investigation proved to be that the composition theory would not always be able to support the materials he wished to engraft upon it. Yet he never repudiated the theory, and was thereby led to certain formal contradictions.

Locke defined a simple ideas as one which "being in itself uncompounded, contains in it nothing but one uniform appearance or conception in the mind, and is not distinguishable into different ideas."² His criterion, then, of a simple idea is its inability to be reduced by analysis. He had difficulty in applying this test to his ideas of duration and extension, which none the less he continued to class as simple ideas. When he was attacked by critics at this point he answered, showing a practical rather than theoretical interest, that one may spoil intelligent discourses by making too nice divisions, and one must not stress one's definitions too much.

There were two characteristics of a simple idea upon which he placed the greatest emphasis. In the first place we can make no simple idea for ourselves. In this respect

1. Gibson, LTK, 51.
2. Essay, 2. 2. 1.

the mind is passive and receives ideas from either sensation or reflection. Ideas are in no wise to be construed as subjective creations but are appearances of real existences. The ideas given in sensation have to do with the qualities of material things, while the ideas gained from reflection yield ideas concerning the operations of our own minds. The term "passivity", or "passion", as Locke said, does not mean that the mind is totally passive in the reception of its ideas. Locke speaks of ideas as being "suggested" or "furnished" to the mind, and in so doing his motive is to guard against the notion that there can be any arbitrariness arising from subjective desires at the basis of the apprehension of the fundamental material of knowledge.

In the second place, Locke insisted that simple ideas are known first only in actual experience. This is a corollary to his polemic against ideas. He contended that there could be no ideas prior to experience, and that the mind at first is a tabula rasa. Thus we cannot make ideas as we choose, nor can we fail to comprehend them when they are presented to us in experience. Here we see the attempt Locke has made to ensure the independence of our ideas from any

arbitrary subjective tampering in their perception.

In the formation of complex ideas, Locke maintains that the mind is active "wherein it exerts its power over its simple ideas."¹ Complex ideas are formed either by compounding or enlarging. In compounding the mind "puts together several of those simple ones it has received from sensation and reflection, and combines them into complex ones."² The process of enlarging is essentially the same, but is "a putting of several units together, though of the same kind. Thus by adding several units together we make the idea of a dozen."³ While the burden of the argument here falls on the synthesis of simple ideas, Locke maintains that we see complex ideas already formed in nature, and taking the method found there, other combinations can be formed as the individual wishes. Here again we see the breakdown of the composition theory upon which Locke places so much stress, for his theory cannot account for the unity of a complex whole. If a complex idea is no more or no less than the composition of its simple constituent parts, that is all that can be said of it. But Locke introduces meaning into

1. Essay, 2. 12. 1.
2. Essay, 2. 11. 6.
3. Essay, 2. 11. 6.

the complex idea thus brought about which is not contained in the analysis of its parts. The theory breaks down again in the treatment of "ideas of relation" and "general ideas", an understanding of which is essential to the comprehension of Locke's theory of knowledge.

Locke noticed that all ideas have in them "some kind of relation."¹ We immediately see here the difficulty which subverts the composition theory. Locke recognized that ideas of relation could not result from either sensation or reflection. He therefore made a kind of compromise, and said that the relationship of ideas to the data of experience in sensation and reflection is that they are "ultimately founded upon" or "terminate in"² ideas gained from experience, without which ideas of relation would be meaningless. Relationships between ideas become known only through an overt act of the mind. He illustrates this by using the idea of a triangle, the idea of which is presented in experience as a non-related whole. The relation of the various angles remain "secret" until the mind by its own volition compares them, and shows of what the relation consists.

The formation of universal, or, as Locke called them,

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1. Essay, 2. 28. 18.
 2. Essay, 2. 28. 18.

"general ideas" is important, as these ideas are the basis for scientific knowledge. Here the activity of the mind is of the utmost significance, and is, according to Locke, a specifically human thing, the possession of which "puts a perfect distinction between man and brutes."¹ General ideas are formed by a process of abstraction from particular facts presented in experience; but these ideas, when formed, have no existence apart from the mind that forms them.

Thus the same colour being observed today in chalk or snow, which the mind yesterday received in milk, it considers that appearance alone, makes it a representative of all of that kind; and having given it the name whiteness, it by that sound signifies the same quality wheresoever to be imagined or met with; and thus universals, whether ideas or terms are made.²

When an abstraction has been made and a general idea has been formed, ideas of relation are used for purposes of comparing, to decide if other particular qualities given in experience, say that of white, fall under the classification of the general idea of white.

We see here Locke's recognition of the mind's activity in comparison and abstraction, which despite its

1. Essay, 2. 11. 10.

2. Essay, 2. 11. 9.

psychological vagueness concerning the association of ideas, makes the distinction between the universal idea held in the mind, and the qualities derived from experience. While he marks them off as being in fact mutually exclusive, he shows how they may be related to one another, and indicates the dependence of abstract ideas upon experience.

Having viewed the way in which Locke considers that ideas arise, we now turn to his treatment of the manner in which knowledge may be secured. Locke makes it quite clear that ideas in themselves are not to be thought of as knowledge but that it is derived from a judgment about them.¹ We have seen that when he speaks of knowledge, Locke has in mind that kind of cognition which is absolutely certain, excluding the possibility both of doubt and error. If Locke seems to assign a too narrow sphere to this kind of knowledge, it is well to bear in mind the absolute quality of his definition.

Judgments about ideas may be of two kinds. On the one hand a judgment may result in knowledge, but on the other hand, in the region where complete certainty is not possible,

1. Locke uses the term judgment ambiguously. At times he uses it to mean the faculty of judgment as inferior to the faculty of knowledge. Here it is used as a decision about ideas. We use it in this latter sense.

a judgment may be made which yields opinion or probability. Locke is very careful to point out that the difference between knowledge and probability is not one of degree nor of difference in kind. Nor is the distinction based upon a subjective conviction that a proposition is, or is not, true, for Locke acknowledges that where certainty is not possible, probability has within it the power to convince a man to act in practical circumstances. For:

The evidently strong probability may as steadily determine the man to assent to the truth, or make him take the proposition for true, and act accordingly, as knowledge makes him see or he is certain that it is true.¹

The difference between knowledge and probability hinges on the possibility of error. In probability our assent "excludes not a possibility that it may be otherwise."² When knowledge has been achieved then its certainty is convincing in all conditions and for all time.

What we once know, we are certain is so; and we may be secure that there are no latent proofs undiscovered which may overthrow our knowledge or bring it to doubt.³

Locke defines knowledge as "the perception of the

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1. Works, 4. 299.
 2. Works, 4. 299.
 3. Essay, 4. 16. 3.

connection and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our ideas."¹ It is on this power of perception that the understanding is said to be based.

Where this perception is, there is knowledge; and where it is not, there, though we may fancy, guess, or believe, yet we always come short of knowledge.²

This perception Locke calls intuitive, and in it the agreement or disagreement between ideas is immediately apparent. In this kind of knowledge there is no need for "proofs" or "intervening ideas".

If we will reflect on our ways of thinking we shall find that sometimes the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves, without the intervention of any other; and this I think we may call intuitive knowledge. For in this the mind is at no pains of proving or examining, but perceives the truth as the eye doth light, only by being directed towards it.....This part of knowledge is irrestable, and like bright sunshine forces itself immediately to be perceived, as soon as ever the mind turns its view that way; and leaves no room for hesitation, doubt or examination, but the mind is presently filled with the clear light of it.....He that demands a greater certainty than this, demands he know not what, and shows only that he has a mind to be a sceptic without being able to be so.³

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1. Essay, 4. 1. 2.
 2. Essay, 4. 1. 2.
 3. Essay, 4. 2. 1.

Agreement or disagreement may not always be immediately apparent for its relationship to be visible, so that in many instances "intervening ideas" must be employed. To this process Locke gives the name "demonstration". This process is much more difficult than intuitive perception.

A steady application and pursuit are required to this discovery: and there must be a progression by steps and degrees, before the mind can in this way arrive at certainty, and come to perceive the agreement or repugnancy between two ideas that need proofs and the use of reason to show it.¹

Each step in the process of demonstration is based upon intuitive perception, and unless in each step of the demonstration the intuitive relation is clearly perceived, then the final result will fail to produce knowledge. Since the steps in reasoning, in some instances, may be dependent upon memory, and hence not immediately present to the mind in perception, the possibility of error on the subjective side is opened. It is doubtless this which Locke has in mind when he speaks of demonstration as being inferior "in degree" to intuition. Yet when each step, properly certified by intuition, is added to another step equally certain, the

1. Essay, 4. 2. 4.

result, even with these intervening proofs, Locke holds, gives absolute objective certainty.

Locke further insisted that knowledge must be not only certain but also real. "Our knowledge...is real only so far as there is conformity between our ideas and the reality of things."¹ At this point it must be remembered that for Locke the materials of knowledge were thought to be signs which represent to the mind the world of reality, and while the ideas about the world are not to be confused with the real world itself, they somehow represent it to our minds. Thus a proposition may be said to be true or "contain real truth.....when our ideas are such as we know are capable of having an existence in nature."² For his proof that this is so Locke said that the very simplicity of simple ideas was the key to their reality, since it would be impossible for us to make them ourselves. For the reality of complex ideas, in which the mind may have been active in their formation, Locke's criterion is based on their "so being framed that there be a possibility of existing conformable to them"³, even including those ideas for which no actual correspondence can be found in nature. Unless such

1. Essay, 4. 4. 3.
2. Essay, 4. 5. 8.
3. Essay, 2. 30. 4.

ideas are incoherent and do not contradict what we know about nature, it is in that sense that they may be said to be real. In dealing with the knowledge of substances Locke recognized the inadequacy of the foregoing explanation, and was finally driven to the conclusion that ideas are inadequate when one deals with concrete being in its essence.

It is Locke's assumption that knowledge is real which involves him in difficulty. Though he accepted the current metaphysical categories, his investigation often undermined them, and he had to abandon them tacitly, though he never expressly repudiated them.

Thus like many other thinkers, he was destined to prove an illustration of the truth that metaphysics has a way of avenging itself on those who slight or disregard it, and that its deepest entanglements are often reserved for those who think they have discovered a path, by following which its difficulties may be avoided.¹

There is one further characteristic of knowledge upon which Locke placed the greatest emphasis, for he drew a distinction between "instructive" and "trifling" propositions. This represents the philosophical basis of his feeling that

1. Gibson, LTK, 11.

verbal consistency was insufficient for certainty. In his treatment of the subject he seems to anticipate Kant's classification of analytical and synthetic judgments. If the subject and predicate are identical in a given proposition, or if the predicate signifies only some part of the subject, then Locke says that while we are bound to accept such a proposition as true, the knowledge so derived is "only a verbal certainty, but not instructive."¹ It is for this reason that he maintains that they have no value since they contribute nothing to the extension of real knowledge or the knowledge of things. They were true, yes, "but what advance to such propositions give in the knowledge necessary or useful to their conduct."² Here we see Locke's reference to the main design of the Essay in which he defined his object as a search to find knowledge concerning the principles of morality and divinity, and, while he seems to have strayed far from his initial question, the trend of his mind reflects itself in his ultimate problem.

Now that we have seen the characteristics which Locke assigns to certain, real and instructive knowledge, we turn our attention to the criterion of that form of cognition

1. Essay, 4. 8. 3.

2. Essay, 4. 8. 3.

which Locke calls probability, the assent to which yields belief or opinion. While in belief and opinion the subjective factor enters in strongly in the apprehension of ideas, it is not this which is stressed by Locke to indicate its distinction from knowledge.

And herein lies the difference between probability and certainty, faith and knowledge, that in all parts of knowledge there is intuition; each intermediate idea, each step has its visible and certain connection: in belief no so. That which makes me believe is something extraneous to the thing I believe; something not evidently joined on both sides to, and so not manifestly showing the agreement or disagreement of, those ideas that are under consideration.¹

Thus Locke would say that we do not know that the sun will rise tomorrow, but we believe that it will. Nor do we know that Columbus first discovered America but we believe that it was so. The first proposition is believed because of the background of one's experience, the other on historical testimony. Both may determine judgment and result in an assent being given, as indeed it should, but the result of such a decision is short of knowledge because the inner connections of the sun and of Columbus do not in all cases indicate what

1. Essay, 4. 15. 3.

is predicated about them above, and the decision thus made rests upon extraneous support.

After having defined the general nature of knowledge Locke turns to its classification.

To understand a little more distinctly wherein this agreement or disagreement consists, I think we may reduce it all to these four sorts: (1) identity or diversity. (2) Relation. (3) Coexistence, or necessary connection. (4) real existence.¹

These sorts are not considered to be mutually exclusive, nor do they represent his final view of the types of knowledge, but are introduced presumably to illuminate his argument.

Identity or diversity was a distinction concerning the content of an idea rather than a description relating to personality.

It is the very first act of the mind, when it has any sentiments or ideas at all, to perceive its ideas; and, so far as it perceives them to know each what it is, and thereby also to perceive their difference, and that one is not another. This is so absolutely necessary that without it there could be no knowledge, no reasoning, no imagination, no distinct thoughts at all.²

This is, as Locke himself was aware, a presupposition about

1. Essay, 4. 1. 3.

2. Essay, 4. 1. 4.

knowledge, rather than a type of it. Its weakness lay in the fact that it could give but "trifling" knowledge, since its subject and predicate must be identical, and because real knowledge was beyond its scope.

The second sort of knowledge has to do with those necessary connections which Locke supposed to hold good between abstract ideas.

Since all distinct ideas must eternally be known not to be the same, and so be universally and constantly denied one another, there could be no room for any positive knowledge at all, if we could not perceive any relation between our ideas, and find out the agreement or disagreement they have with another in several ways the mind makes of comparing them.¹

Locke found his chief examples of this sort of knowledge in arithmetic and geometry, and believed that had he time, he could work out a system of ethics based on the same method.

Knowledge of "coexistence and necessary connection" concerns the relations of concrete being, and, as such, is distinguished by Locke from the knowledge which is derived in the former sort of knowledge, i.e., of necessary

1. Essay, 4. 1. 5.

connection, which depends upon the abstracted content of our ideas. As we have already noted, Locke based his theory of the origin of complex ideas upon the composition theory, and thought that substances formed the substratum upon which qualities are dependent; he next sought to understand what the qualities were which gave the substance its distinct character. This, he found, could not be determined in any a priori way because we do not know what is the essence of any given substance. This sort of knowledge must therefore rest upon the facts of experience. ".....Coexistence can no further be known than it is perceived."¹ Even though experience may have shown us that all men we have ever known or heard of, sleep, yet Locke would not allow the statement, that all men sleep, to be considered certain knowledge, because he would say that we cannot know the essence of a man in an ultimate metaphysical sense. It would be by the knowledge of the essence alone, and hence with all the qualities resulting from it, that we could know whether this statement is true. It is probably true that all men sleep, but this is opinion or belief and not knowledge.

1. Essay, 4. 3. 14.

Concerning "real existence" Locke always makes the tacit assumption that ideas always hold good of a reality beyond and apart from them. Since knowledge consists in "nothing but the perception of the connection and repugnancy of any of our ideas," how can it be said that knowledge in order to be certain must have validity in relation to real existence? This involves a formal contradiction in Locke's theory. Its source is probably the fact that all knowledge, being dependent upon reality, must be taken into consideration whether we will it so or not, unless we wish to become involved in complete subjective idealism. Locke had drawn a sharp distinction between idea and real existence, and thought that there could be no bridge between them.

Having the idea of anything in our mind no more proves the existence of that thing, than the picture of a man evidences his being in the world, or the visions of a dream thereby make a true history.¹

It was on this basis that Locke rejected the Ontological argument for the existence of God, of which a full discussion will be found later. "Real existence can be proved only by real existence; and, therefore, the real existence of God can only be proved by the real existence of other things."²

1. Essay, 4. 2. 1.
2. King, LLJL, 316.

Locke therefore sought to find an example of the direct apprehension of real existence. This he found in the conscious subject.

As for our own existence, we perceive it so plainly, and so certainly that it neither needs nor is capable of proof. For nothing can be more evident to us than our own existence. I think, I reason, I feel pleasure and pain; can any of these be more evident to me than my own existence? If I doubt of all other things, that very doubt makes me perceive my own existence, and will not suffer me to doubt of that. For, if I know I feel pain, it is evident I have as certain perception of my own existence as of the pain I feel: or if I know I doubt, I have as certain perception of the existence of the thing doubting, as of that thought which I call "doubt". Experience then convinces me that we have an intuitive knowledge of our own existence, and an internal infallible perception that we are. In every act of sensation, reasoning or thinking, we are conscious to ourselves of our own being; and in this matter come not short of the highest degree of certainty.¹

This Cartesian argument is open to the same criticism as has been levelled against it in Descartes' own formulation. In this argument all that Locke can be said to have proved was that his own thoughts existed. These thoughts, or, in his own term, "ideas", do not predicate real existence.² But

1. Essay, 4. 9. 3.

2. From a psychological point of view the argument is also seen to be false, for a child often refers to itself in the third person before it has learned to identify its thoughts with itself.

Locke was convinced that he had found a true instance of real knowledge (a unity of real existence and idea) in self-conscious experience. On it he based his demonstration of the existence of God, to which we will give attention later.

While knowledge of the existence of the natural world did not comply with all the requirements which Locke set up, he considered that we can, nevertheless, have real knowledge of it. He was not, of course, a subjective idealist, for while he was concerned primarily with ideas, he always held that they were signs of a reality distinct from them. His test of the existence of anything material lay in the convincing power of the experience itself.

I ask anyone whether he is not invincibly conscious to himself of a different perception, when he looks on the sun by day, and thinks on it by night; when he actually tastes wormwood, or smells a rose, or only thinks on that savour or odour.¹

Here Locke clearly distinguishes between memory and imagination on the one hand, and actual perception on the other. He has three corollaries to this central proposition. First,

1. Essay, 4. 2. 14.

if one looks at the sun at noon, the impression which the experience makes carries with it a completely convincing quality. Secondly, even when an act of will is responsible for the creation of written letters on a page, their existence, once they are set down, is no less real than any other real existence. Lastly, he uses the argument that certain sensations always come through the same sense organs and that the senses support one another in revealing the real existence of material things. While he acknowledges that these reasons fall short of his requirements for knowledge, he none the less, in his common-sense way, assigns to them that certain cognition which he calls knowledge. "This certainty is as great as our happiness or misery, beyond which he have no concernment to know or be."¹

Locke thus concludes that we can have three absolute certainties. We can know ourselves by intuition, the existence of God by demonstration, and the existence of material things, by an inference he does not previously provide for. These and these alone come within the range of knowledge. All else is belief or opinion.

1. Essay, 4. 2. 14.

CHAPTER THREE

REASON AND REVELATION

The hundred years following the middle of the seventeenth century have been called the reign of natural theology in England. In this era many writers on theological subjects rested their case on a vague and often unexplained appeal to Nature and Reason. Nature they understood to be the universe in its orderly functions, material and immaterial, and insight into its ways was made by reason, sometimes held to be the "light of nature." For many, the highest test of any fact or proposition was whether it was natural or not, and that meant "natural" as judged by the criterion of reason. The rapidity with which scientific discoveries were being made in the "world of nature" inspired men's ingenuity, and in the wonder of what had been achieved, men began to feel the power of reason, but failed to understand its limits. It was inevitable that religion, as the chief concern of man, should feel the influence of this tendency

to ground everything on nature and reason, and in theology there appeared to be a widening gulf between the claims of revelation or positive religion on the one hand, and natural theology, or reason, on the other. The culmination of the reign of natural theology came with the Deists, who believed that the Gospel was but a republication of the original, pure religion of nature, and that the traditional theology of the time was in accord neither with good reason nor good morals.

As a result of this tendency of rationalism to make inroads on orthodox theology, the respective claims of reason and revelation and the proper province of each were much discussed. In the heat of the ensuing controversy many took extreme positions on either side. But comparatively early in the struggle there was a group of men, Tillotson, Locke and Samuel Clark, called by Mc Giffert the "rational supernaturalists", who, while rationalistic in spirit, nevertheless refused to disregard what they believed to be the legitimate claims of revelation, and sought to work out a careful relationship between the two.

Locke was never able to state exactly and consistently

what he believed the limits of reason and revelation to be. His treatment of the subject, nevertheless, represented a genuine effort to satisfy the demands of both reason and revelation without sacrificing what appeared to him to ~~contain~~^{be} the truth in each. As we have seen, Locke employed the "plain, historical method" in the formulation of his theory of knowledge. In it he said very little about natural religion as such, but his references indicate that he was sure that a very substantial part of religious truth could be won by the use of the "unaided reason." "I doubt not but to show, that a man, by the right use of his natural abilities, may,.....attain to the knowledge of God and other things that concern Him."¹ "For the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of creation, that a rational creature who will but reflect on them seriously cannot miss the discovery of the Deity."²

But Locke was more than a rationalist. He was a sincere and devout Christian, whose piety carried him "in the bottom of his heart" beyond the position he was disposed to accept

1. Essay, 1. 3. 12.
2. Essay, 1. 3. 9.

with the "top of his mind". He never questioned what appeared to him to be an undeniable fact of revelation. Like all true Puritans, out of whose tradition he had come, he simply accepted it without remark. He believed that in his polemic against innate ideas he had destroyed a false basis for the discovery of the knowledge of God, and in the fourth book of the Essay, and in his specifically religious writings, he sought to define what he considered to be a surer way to attain religious truth. For him reason and revelation were the two distinct channels by which such truth could be discovered, and he set about to define their separate spheres.

Reason is natural revelation, whereby the eternal Father of light and fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties: revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately; which reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives that they are from God. So that he that takes away reason to make way for revelation, puts out the light of both, and does much what the same as if he would persuade a man to put out his eyes, the better to receive the remote light of an invisible star by a telescope.¹

Here as elsewhere in the Essay, Locke, while admitting the possibility of revelation, none the less, pleads chiefly

1. Essay, 4. 19. 4.

for a more extended acknowledgment of the abilities of reason to discover religious truth. This passage clearly indicates the position of revelation as being a kind of supplementary source of religious knowledge "enlarging" upon that which can be derived from the use of the natural faculties.

Thus, like Tillotson before him, Locke employed reason as a criterion of the truth of revelation, using the current phrases of his time concerning revelation as being "according to", "above" and, "contrary to" reason.

By what has been before said of reason, we may be able to make some guess as to the distinction of things, into those that are according to, above and contrary to reason. 1. According to reason are such propositions whose truth we can discover by examining and tracing those ideas we have from sensation and reflection; and by natural deduction find to be true or probable. 2. Above reason are such propositions whose truth or probability we cannot by reason derive from those principles. 3. Contrary to reason are such proposition as are inconsistent with or irreconcilable to our clear and distinct ideas. Thus the existence of one God is according to reason; the existence of more than one God, contrary to reason; the resurrection of the dead, above reason.¹

This further passage indicates that revelation not only

1. Essay, 4. 17. 23.

supplements reason by enlarging its knowledge, but also that revelation must always bow to reason in ascertaining the validity of revelation, i.e., as a true revelation. Locke elsewhere makes this even more explicit, viz., "..No proposition can be received for divine revelation, or obtain the assent due to all such, if it be contradictory to our clear intuitive knowledge."¹ Further, there is in Locke's thought the latent assumption that though revelation, when true deserves to be believed, prejudice and fancy enter in unless its credentials are in accord with reason. There are but two instances when reason cannot positively judge the truth of a given revelation, first, when the content is wholly above reason:

Thus, that part of the angels rebelled against God, and thereby lost their first happy state: and that the dead shall rise and live again: these and the like [are] beyond the discovery of reason.....with which reason has nothing to do,²

and secondly, "revelation, where God has been pleased to give it must carry it against the probable conjecture of reason."³ In the first instance, Locke accepts the rebellion of the angels and the resurrection of the dead as leg-

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1. Essay, 4. 18. 5.
 2. Essay, 4. 18. 7.
 3. Essay, 4. 18. 8.

intimate data of revelation. Since they are beyond the reach of sensation and reflection, reason cannot refute them, and they must be accepted as matters of faith. In the second instance, a given revelation deserves to be believed even when the weight of probability may be against it. Remembering Locke's theory of knowledge, and the very narrow scope which he gives to the absolutely certain cognition which he calls knowledge, and the extensive area in which probability obtains, we see that while the tendency of the foregoing discussion is to limit revelation severely, in the context of his thought he gives revelation greater scope.

Yet revelation must always receive its credentials from reason, in a negative sense, before the revelation can be said to be true. For, "we cannot have an assurance of the truth of its [a given revelation's] being a divine revelation greater than our own knowledge."¹ Thus our believing a revelation to be true does not make it so, and Locke disparages anything that savours merely of subjective persuasion. Yet no doubt is thrown on the validity of revelation itself. "Whatever God hath revealed is certainly true:

1. Essay, 4. 18. 4.

no doubt can be made of it."¹ Nor is doubt cast on the integrity of God, for it is that fact which leads Locke to show that there can be no ultimate disparity between that which is discovered by reason and that which is revealed.

.....No mission can be looked on as divine, that delivers anything derogatory to the honour of the one, only, true, invisible God, or inconsistent with natural religion and the rules of morality: because God having discovered to men the unity and majesty of his eternal godhead, and the truths of natural religion and morality by the light of reason, he cannot be supposed to back the contrary by revelation; for that would be to destroy the evidence and use of reason, without which men cannot be able to distinguish divine revelation from diabolical imposture.²

This statement is better understood when we realize that Locke, incredible as it may seem, was quite sure that diabolical spirits ~~and~~ instilled perverse thoughts into the minds of men. But what we have here is far more important than simply a reference to diabolical imposture. It is another illustration of Locke's fundamental position that reason is natural revelation and that the source is in God, whose nature is such that He cannot reveal one thing by reason and its opposite by direct supernatural means. It would

1. Essay 4. 18. 10.

2. Works, 9. 261, 262.

have been interesting to have had a development at this point; but Locke's dislike of metaphysics, and his desire not to be carried by any speculation beyond his "plain, historical method", prevented him from developing it.

As a corollary to the above proposition Locke gives us further indication of what he believes the character of God to be in His revelations.

.....It cannot be expected that God should send anyone into the world on purpose to inform men of things indifferent, and of small moment, or that are knowable by their natural faculties. This would be to lessen the dignity of his majesty, in favour of our sloth, and in prejudice to our reason.¹

It has been suggested² that the passage just quoted is in contradiction to Locke's statement in the Essay, "that the same truths may be discovered and conveyed down from revelation, which are discoverable to us by reason....."³

But this later statement is, as Worcester maintains, designed to throw light on the majesty of God. The emphasis is on its probability and indicates again the central theme of Locke's contention, that truth coming from God may be

1. Works, 9. 262.

2. Cf. Worcester, ROJL, 25, note.

3. Essay, 4. 18. 4.

apprehended by the two channels of reason and revelation, but that in accordance with our conception of God, and the facts of human experience, it seems well to conclude that it is beneath the divine dignity and majesty to utilize the extraordinary process of revelation to make known those truths which can be easily discovered by the "more natural" means of reason.

In this connection we see the empirical tendency of Locke's theory of knowledge again appearing in his discussion of revelation. ".....I say, that no man inspired by God can by any revelation communicate to others any new simple ideas which they had not before from sensation or reflection."¹ One might receive new ideas in an immediate revelation, but they could not be communicated to others except on the basis of the content of simple ideas already known by those to whom it would be communicated. Otherwise, Locke maintained, it would be uninformative and only verbal. When St. Paul was rapt up into the third heaven, he was not able to put into words what had happened to him there, but could say only that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor

1. Essay, 4. 18. 3.

hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive"; he could say no more. Locke considered St. Paul's inability to communicate the content of his revelation to others a necessary conclusion to be drawn from the grounding of simple ideas in sensation and reflection, a conclusion, that is to say, which guards against the utilization of "trifling propositions" in place of "instructive" ones.

When it has been shown that a revelation is not contrary to reason, Locke makes a further positive requirement of revelation before it is to be believed. Here he employs, as did Tillotson, the Christian evidences, i.e., the fulfillment of prophecy and the witness of miracles. On the former, little stress is placed, and the examples are found outside the main line of Locke's argument. They do, however, help to show how much Locke was bound by the current theological ideas of his time, and indicate how he never really escaped from this bondage. In his commentary on II Corinthians 3 : 14, he remarks, "Christ, now he is come, so answers all the types, prefigurations, and prophecies of him in the Old Testament, that presently upon turning our eyes upon him, he appears to be the person designed."¹

1. Works, 8. 200.

Further, "There are two arguments by which the Apostle Paul confirmed the Gospel. One was the revelations made concerning our Saviour by types and figures and prophecies of him under the law; the other, miracles and miraculous gifts."¹

The evidence of miracles Locke held in high esteem, and towards the end of his life he wrote a short Discourse of Miracles which was published posthumously. In it he says that "miracles are the basis on which divine mission is always established, and consequently that foundation on which believers in any divine revelation must ultimately bottom their faith."² And in the Essay we find, "..... Miracles.....well attested, do not only find credit themselves, but give it also to other truths, which need such confirmation."³ Locke is always explicit in his conviction that miracles are a sure attestation of divine revelation, and in that opinion he reflects the belief of his time.

When revelation has passed all the negative tests imposed upon it by reason, and has produced the positive "evidence" to witness to its divine character, then Locke held

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1. Works, 8. 200.
 2. Works, 9. 264.
 3. Essay, 4. 16. 13.

that such a revelation must be received as true. "Not to believe what he [God] has revealed whether in a lighter, or more weightier matter, calls his veracity into question..."¹ Again in the Essay we find, "This carries with it an assurance beyond doubt, evidence beyond exception. This is called by a peculiar name, revelation, and our assent to it faith which as absolutely determines our minds, and as perfectly excludes all wavering as knowledge itself; and we may as well doubt our own being, as we can whether any revelation from God be true."² Here Locke places revelation in joint dominion over knowledge with reason. Thus when revelation has satisfied the negative tests and imposed by reason, and offers positive testimony by the witness of the evidences of Christianity, then, according to Locke, divine revelation deserves to be believed. Such communicated truth, supernaturally revealed, is as sure as the absolute certitude discovered by reason.

Having established the theoretical grounds upon which revelation may be said to exist side by side with reason, each in its distinctive sphere, it is now necessary to investigate the faculty by which such a revelation may be apprehended. Locke treats this in the Essay in the fourth book, under

1. Works, 7. 234.

2. Essay, 4. 16. 14.

the heading, "Of Faith and Reason, and their distinctive provinces."¹

Reason, therefore, here, as contradistinguished from faith, I take to be the discovery of the certainty or probability of such propositions or truths, which the mind arrives at by deduction made from such ideas, which it has got by the use of its natural faculties; viz. by sensation and reflection.

Faith, on the other side, is the assent due to any proposition, not thus made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God, in some extraordinary way of communication.² This way of discovering truths to men, we call revelation.³

We see here that Locke allows the criterion of assent in faith to rest on testimony, i. e., "upon the credit of the proposer." He brings forward no philosophical argument to show why he believes this to be so, for by his contradistinction of faith and reason he has cut off reason from judgment in the case of actual apprehension of revelation in faith. He makes this even stronger in another passage where he says, "Faith stands by itself and upon grounds of its own, nor can it be removed from them and place to those of knowledge."⁴ But such strong language is hardly justified, for

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1. Essay, 3. 14. 18. 2. Locke uses faith in two different meanings. This is theological faith, differing from reason. Elsewhere he speaks of faith as probability.
3. Essay, 4. 18. 2. 4. Works, 2., 293, note.

while Locke allows reason to go out one door in formal definition, he finds it necessary to bring it back through another, for just so long as traditional revelation is passed from person to person, its transmission opens it to the possibility of error; and in such a situation reason must judge. Thus:

Whatever God hath revealed is certainly true: no doubt can be made of it. This is the proper object of faith: but whether it be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge; which can never permit the mind to reject a greater evidence to embrace what is less evident, nor allow it to entertain probability in opposition to knowledge and certainty. There can be no evidence that any traditional revelation is of divine original, in the words which we receive it, and in the sense we understand it, so clear and so certain as that of the principles of reason: and therefore Nothing that is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the clear and self-evident dictates of reason, has a right to be urged or assented to as a matter of faith, wherein reason has nothing to do.¹

Faith, then, while distinguished by Locke from reason as a different way by which religious truth may be received, finally rests upon reason for its validity. Thus the emphasis, with which Locke asserts, in the passage quoted above, of the absolute dominion of faith in its own province, seems

1. Essay, 4. 18. 10.

to be incongruous with the general trend of his argument. He himself makes this specific in the following statement. "Where I treat of it faithin contradistinction to reason; though in truth it is nothing else but an assent founded on the highest reason."¹ There can be no doubt about the ambiguity of the position indicated here, and one may try in vain to make out of it a coherent system. Faith appears most strongly when it is viewed by Locke as a theoretical possibility, and when he is insisting upon the power of God to communicate with men in direct supernatural revelation. In this capacity, faith can discover to men certain religious truths which are above reason. Yet since Locke is expressly concerning himself only with traditional revelation, he insists that reason must judge its validity, since errors may occur in its transmission from the spectator to one who has not seen. There are two vulnerable points appearing in Locke's discussion of faith. In the first place, it is open to the charge of subjectivism, when he allows the credit of revelation to rest on testimony, i.e., on the "credit of the proposer." Secondly, and closely allied to the first weakness, a strong individualistic tendency is

1. Essay, 4. 16. 14.

manifest, when he states that every man must judge for himself the truth of and given revelation. Perhaps the root of the difficulty is in Locke's failure to distinguish clearly between the content delivered and the criterion of validity. In one passage in the Reasonableness of Christianity he indicates an awareness of the distinction which we suggest.

And many are beholden to revelation, who do not acknowledge it. It is no diminishing to revelation, that reason gives its suffrage too, to the truths ~~of~~ revelation has discovered. But it is our mistake to think, that because reason confirms them to us, we had the first certain knowledge of them from thence; and in that clear evidence we now possess them.¹

If it were not for the fact that Locke staunchly maintained that divine revelation was always accompanied by extraordinary outward signs to vouch its truth, we might accept the above distinction as final. As it is we are left with logical difficulties in regard to his theoretical position.

Having taken into account the theoretical grounds on which Locke marks off reason and revelation, and the manner in which their respective data are to be appropriated, we turn to that practical relationship which he assigns to "natural religion" on the one hand, and "revealed religion"

1. Works, 7. 145.

on the other. We take the term natural religion to be the content of religion discovered through the use of the "light of nature" or the "unaided reason", as distinguished from revealed or positive religion which is made known through direct supernatural revelation of God in Christ. Behind his whole treatment, one finds Locke's undiscussed assumption that the Gospel was but a republication of the original, pure, religion of nature. This assumption was held widely among the rationalists of the time.

As we have seen, Locke's thought is very hospitable to natural religion, i.e., to the religion whose contents can be discovered by reason alone. Reason can instruct man about the existence of God and in the knowledge of his duty. Before the coming of Christ, the Gentiles had such a religion, according to the light of nature which instructed them in the "immutable standard of right."¹ While theoretically this should have been sufficient for them, actually something was lacking, for "Natural religion, in its full extent, was nowhere, that I know, taken care of by the force of natural reason."² Among the ancients, Locke says in an early

1. Works, 7. 133.

2. Works, 7. 138.

fragment, Sacerdos, the philosophers instructed men in virtue, but their speculations were too intricate for the vulgar, and since the philosophers had nothing to do with the priests, such rules of morality had no authority. Locke always assumes that there must be supernatural authority to buttress a rule of morality. No promise of a future life was made explicit, with its hope of rewards and fear of punishments, and " a clear knowledge of their duty was wanting to mankind."¹ The result was that, previous to God's revelation in Christ, man was actually led by reason not so much towards as away from the knowledge of God and the fulfillment of His moral law.

When, however, Christ came to earth he gave both knowledge and authority to the principles which men had or could have discovered by natural reason, so that, as Locke insisted, men could not fail to recognize them as coming from God. He attaches great significance to the coming of Christ from this practical point of view and ascribes to it the blending of religion and morality.

Jesus Christ, bringing by revelation from Heaven the true religion to mankind, reunited

1. Works, 7. 139.

these two again, religion and morality, as the inseparable parts of the worship of God, which ought never to have been separated, wherein for the obtaining the favour and forgiveness of the Diety, the chief part of what man could do consisted in a holy life.....¹

Further, Christ was able to establish an authority for the virtuous life, "To one that is once persuaded that Jesus Christ was sent from God.....all his commands become principles."² And all must recognize that Christ was sent from God, for he bears the extraordinary outward signs, miracles which "lie level with the commonest understanding. He that can distinguish between sick and well, lame and sound, dead and alive, is capable of his doctrine."³ Once acknowledged, Christ's principles were further fortified by the revelation of the certainty of a future life, with rewards and punishments dealt out in a last judgment, so that men who recognized that in this world "virtue and prosperity do not often accompany one another"⁴ would be constrained to live the good life here for the eventual reward in the next world. Worship was purified by Christ of its too great formality, and made into an inward and

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1. King, LLJL, 287.
 2. Works, 7. 146, 147.
 3. Works, 7. 146.
 4. Works, 7. 148.

spiritual service of prayer and praise to God as our Father. In the human endeavour after righteousness God had promised, through Christ, the continued assistance of the Holy Spirit.¹

There can be no doubt that Locke placed great emphasis on the coming of Christ, on the actual and practical side. While he would hardly be willing to say that Christ's advent introduced any new content into our religious knowledge, he explicitly asserts that the event is of the great importance in bringing to men an absolute assurance of the knowledge of God, and the consequent authority of this knowledge is a buttress for morality. It had the further advantage of revealing to the unlearned a content of religious truth of which they would otherwise have remained ignorant. One might wish that Locke had investigated fully the question as to why, before the time of Christ, men had failed to take advantage of the benefit of natural religion; for his answer would have thrown great light on our central problem.

There is an obvious divergence between the theoretical and practical position which Locke sets up concerning reason and revelation as channels for discovering religious truth.

1. Works, 7. 151.

In theory Locke never rejects the possibility of revelation, but he narrows its sphere, and the logic of his position excludes it. Bound by his uncritical assumption that revelation is a fact, he attempts to make it cohere with his theory of knowledge. The resultant tendency is to emphasize reason at the expense of revelation. On the practical side of his discussion, found chiefly within his specifically religious writings, he finds that the revelation in Christ procured advantages which natural religion was unable to achieve. Thus in the practical sphere the tendency to minimize tacitly the importance of reason, by emphasizing the authority of Christ's advent, is manifest.

In connection with Locke's discussion of revelation, special place must be given to his doctrine of miracles. We have pointed out the evidential value which he assigns to them in certifying a given revelation, but it is well that we take account of what this seventeenth century man of science considered a miracle to be.

A miracle then I take to be a sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to

the established course of nature is taken by him to be divine.¹

Having defined a miracle, Locke immediately anticipates two possible objections which he thinks might be raised against his definition and sets about to answer them. In the first place, he thinks that such a definition will be considered very uncertain, "for it depending on the opinion of the spectator, that will be a miracle to one which will not be so to another."² But Locke holds, while admitting the truth of the objection, that it has no force;

.....For it being agreed, that a miracle must be that which surpasses the force of nature in the established, steady laws of causes and effects, nothing can be taken to be a miracle but what is judged to exceed those laws. Now every one being able to judge those laws only by his own acquaintance with nature, and notions of its force (which are different in different men) it is unavoidable that that should be a miracle to one, which is not so to another.³

Here we see exhibited once again Locke's predisposition to treat evidence from a completely individualistic point of view, laying the burden of proof for the confirmation of the reality of a miracle upon the spectator's ability to

1. Works, 9. 256.

2. Works, 9. 256.

3. Works, 9. 256.

recognize it as such, and to distinguish it from what he knows of the orderly processes in nature.

The second objection which he anticipates is that he failed to make his definition exclusive enough.

Another objection to this definition, will be, that the notion of a miracle thus enlarged, may come sometimes to take in operations that have nothing extraordinary or supernatural in them, and thereby invalidate the use of miracles for the attesting of dvine revelation.

To which I answer, not at all.....¹

In this proposed objection the only miracles called into question are those which are wrought in confirmation of a divine revelation, and Locke assumes that history indicates but three persons "who have come in the name of the one only true God....viz. Moses, Jesus and Mahomet."² Other claims he dismisses as "obscure" or "wild stories" which are "manifestly fabulous."

Now of these three before mentioned, Mahomet having [no miracles] to produce, pretends to no miracles for vouching his mission; so that the only revelations that come attested by miracles, being those of Moses and Christ, and they confirming each other; the business of miracles, as it stands really in matter of fact, has no

1. Works, 9. 257.

2. Works, 9. 258.

manner of difficulty in it; and I think the most scrupulous or sceptical cannot from miracles raise the least doubt against the divine revelation of the gospel.¹

In this manner Locke thinks he has his argument well in hand, as far as concerns what has actually taken place in history, but since "scholars and disputants will be raising questions where there are none"² he adduces further proof to substantiate his position.

The first proof set forth is based upon two presuppositions, first, of the unity and supreme power of God, and second, that such power is utilized by God to communicate truth to men. Thus:

God can never be thought to suffer a lye, set up in opposition to a truth coming from him, should be backed by a greater power than he will show for the confirmation and propagation of a doctrine which he has revealed, to the end it might be believed.³

To give a concrete example of what he had in his mind Locke cites the miracles Moses performed before Pharaoh in competition with the Egyptian sorcerers. Since both were able to produce, "serpents, blood and frogs" their actions "could

1. Works, 9. 258.

2. Works, 9. 258, 259.

3. Works, 9. 260.

not to the spectators but appear equally miraculous." "But when Moses serpent eat up theirs, when he produced lice which they could not the decision was easy."¹

The other proof Locke proposed was based upon the abundance of miracles offered as credentials of the Gospel.

Such care has God taken that no pretended revelation should stand in competition with what is true divine, that we need but to open our eyes to see and be sure which came from him.²

The number, variety, and greatness of the miracles wrought for the confirmation of the doctrine delivered by Jesus Christ, carry with them such strong marks of an extraordinary divine power, that the truth of his mission will stand firm and unquestionable.³

Here again we are given concrete exemplification.

For example, Jesus of Nazareth, professes himself sent from God: he with a word calms a tempest at sea. This one looks on as a miracle, and consequently cannot but receive his doctrine. Another thinks that this might be the effect of chance, or skill in the weather, and no miracle and so stands out; but afterwards seeing him walk on the sea, owns that for a miracle and believes: which yet to another has not the force, who suspects it may be done by the assistance of a spirit. But yet the same person, seeing afterwards our Saviour cure and inveterate palsy by a

1. Works, 9. 260.

2. Works, 9. 261.

3. Works, 9. 261.

word, admits for a miracle and becomes a convert. Another overlooking it in this instance, afterwards finds a miracle in his giving sight to one born blind, or raising the dead, or his raising himself from the dead, and so receives his doctrine as a revelation coming from God.¹

As we have already noticed, whenever Locke speaks of a revelation as having actually taken place, his discussion is always marked by the conviction that it is miraculously attested. When he thinks that he has shown that a miracle has been performed, there is to be no wavering in the acceptance of the doctrine which it is employed to confirm.

For miracles...are the basis on which divine mission is always established and consequently that foundation on which believers of any divine revelation must ultimately bottom their faith.....² .

Yet in this passage we do not have Locke's complete position, for he appears to engage in a kind of circular reasoning, which hardly confirms the statement just quoted above. By making the assumption that miracles did take place in history, the purpose of which was to establish the truth of the Gospel, he seeks to bring that idea into harmony with the intellectual and moral claims of religion discoverable by reason. And when the theoretical claims of revelation

1. Works, 9. 259.
2. Works, 9. 264.

and reason come into conflict Locke is, as we have seen, prone to give the primacy to reason. This is true concerning miracles.

I do not deny in the least that God can do, or hath done miracles for the confirmation of truth; but I only say that we cannot think he should do them to enforce doctrines or notions of himself, or any worship of him not conformable to reason, or that we can receive such for truth for the miracle's sake: and even in those books which have the greatest proof of revelation from God, and the attestation of miracles to confirm their being so, the miracles are to be judged by the doctrine, and not the doctrine by the miracles.....¹

There is a further passage in the Reasonableness of Christianity which throws further light on this problem.

For though it be easy to omnipotent power to do all things by an immediate over-ruling will, and so to make any instruments work, even contrary to their nature, in subserviency to his ends; yet his wisdom is not usually at the expense of miracles, (if I may so say) but only in cases that require them, for the evidencing of some revelation or mission to be from him. He does constantly (unless where the confirmation of some truth requires it otherwise) bring about his purposes by means of operating according to their natures. If it were not so, the course and evidence of things would be confounded, miracles would lose their name and force; and there would be no distinction between natural and supernatural.²

1. King, LLJL, 126.
2. Works, 7. 84, 85.

Thus when miracles are not needed they but confound the truth. The point is carried further and made more explicit in relation to the whole matter of faith when, after saying that faith and reason stand in their own separate spheres, Locke says:

Their grounds are so far from being the same or having anything in common, that when it is brought to certainty, faith is destroyed; it is knowledge then, and faith no longer.¹

Hence when any truth has been apprehended as certain by reason, then Locke says that faith is not only irrelevant and confounding, but that, indeed, it is impossible. Here he follows the traditional scholastic distinction, laid down by Aquinas between faith and reason.

It is interesting to note that Locke considered that no miracles were accomplished after the time of the apostles. In controversy with Jonas Proast, he summoned ^{to his} the aid of his friend Limborch, to prepare for him the evidence on the subject which can be found in his Third Letter on Toleration.

But this, I think, is evident, that he who will build his faith on reasonings upon miracles delivered by church historians, will find cause to go

1. Works, 2. 293, note.

no further than the apostles' times, or else not stop at Constantine: since the writers after that period.....speak of miracles in their time with no less assurance, than the fathers before the fourth century and a great part of miracles stood upon the credit of the fourth.¹

Locke was convinced that, after the time of Christ and his apostles, the Gospel was so well attested that it needed no further assistance from miracles. This is in line with his general point of view of the essential reasonableness of Christianity, which, when once apprehended by the simplest of human kind, would be acceptable to them.

It is not difficult to criticize this doctrine of miracles with its assumptions and circular reasoning. As Worcester has pointed out, in grounding the validity of miracles on the scientific knowledge of the beholder, Locke introduces one of the most cautious and destructive attacks ever attempted. It is probable that he never intended to throw discredit on miracles, but that in a time when reason was attempting to assert itself amid religious prejudice, the true significance of this destructive criticism was not apparent to him. Bound by his naive assumption that miracles must always accompany revelation, he sought to account for

1. Works, 6. 453.

them as best he could. On the positive side it appears that Locke believed that miracles told man something about God. "Their significance to him lies not so much in the contrariety to ordinary events, as in the light they threw upon the divine nature, which could use them to enforce a system of morality, thoroughly acceptable to human reason."¹

In the fourth edition of the Essay, after some correspondence with Molyneaux, Locke added a section to it which he called "Enthusiasm", a form of assent which he conceived to be capable of the grossest error. Its discussion is helpful in distinguishing Locke's conceptions of reason and revelation and their separate spheres.

Upon this occasion, I shall take the liberty to consider a third ground of assent, which with some men has the same authority, and is as confidently relied on as either faith or reason; I mean enthusiasm: which laying by reason would set up revelation without it.²

We have seen that Locke considered it impossible for revelation to assert its position without the aid of reason, and that he who would put away reason in the interests of revelation "puts out the light of both." The source of interest in immediate revelation as a manner in which

1. Alexander, LOC, 88.

2. Essay, 4. 19. 3.

religious truth could be appropriated, Locke thought was not hard to find. It was born of the intellectual laziness which he believed was characteristic of the majority of mankind.

Immediate revelation being a much easier way for men to establish their opinions and regulate their conduct, than the tedious and not always successful labour of strict reasoning, it is no wonder that some have been very apt to pretend to revelation, and to persuade themselves that they are under the peculiar guidance of heaven in their actions and opinions, and especially in those of them which they cannot account for by the ordinary method of knowledge and the principles of reason.¹

Locke did not deny the possibility of immediate revelation.

God, I own, cannot be denied to be able to enlighten the understanding by a ray darted into the mind immediately from the fountain of light.²

But he did think that men too easily made that possibility an untrue conviction, with the result that the "conceits of a warmed and overweening brain" led them to identify their own wish of what might be true with that which actually is true.

For strong conceit, like a new principle, carries

1. Essay, 4. 19. 5.

2. Essay, 4. 19. 5.

all easily with it, when got above common sense, and freed from restraint of reason and check of reflection, it is heightened into a divine authority, in concurrence with out own temper and inclination.¹

Once this process had begun, it continued in a vicious circle, and Locke says that the adherents unconsciously become bound in this way. "It is a revelation because they firmly believe it: and they believe it because it is a revelation."²

A little later in his treatment Locke makes a most interesting statement, characteristic of his penetrating insight. After making the more obvious statement that firmness of persuasion is hardly proof that any proposition has come from God, he makes it very clear that the high quality of one's moral life does not free the honest searcher after truth from the hard intellectual labour of its pursuit.

Good men are still liable to mistakes, and are sometimes warmly engaged in errors, which they take for divine truths, shining in the minds with the clearest light.³

Locke dreaded enthusiasm. In its meaning was bound

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1. Essay, 4. 19. 10.
 2. Essay, 4. 19. 12.
 3. Essay, 4. 19. 12.

together those things which he hated most - subservience to tradition and authority, emotional warmth buttressing religious prejudice, and above all its tendency to obscure reasoning. It was this dread which prompted him to look among the things of sense for the evidence of revelation, and led him to put his trust in the outward miracle rather than in an inward assurance. It is in this section of his work that Locke gives us, in a celebrated statement, the key to his theology as well as his philosophy. "Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything."¹ Locke had lived through a period of history when an unenlightened religious enthusiasm had caused great difficulty. He raised a strong voice against it, and the influence of his attack carried weight through an entire century.

Now, after a survey of Locke's exposition concerning reason and revelation, the main trend of his argument presents itself in outline. It begins with the assumption that reason and revelation are two distinct means for the apprehension of divine truth. Reason is able to discover the existence of God, and to instruct man in his duty. Revelation, accredited by miracles, and checked by reason, enlarges our know-

1. Essay, 4. 19. 14.

ledge and enforces the claim of duty, but is never able to contradict the knowledge gained by our clear intuitive perceptions. In theory, Locke gives the more important place to reason, which shares with revelation the function of discovering religious truth, but stands supreme as our "last judge and guide" to its validity. In the practical experience of mankind, it has been found (Locke does not say why), that reason has not been able to accredit, nor to enforce, its claims to all people, so that it was not until the revelation of God in Christ as Messiah that men actually had the knowledge of God, and sufficient induc^ement to live according to His will.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTENT OF NATURAL RELIGION

In the previous chapter we have seen that Locke drew a rigid distinction between the claims of reason and revelation in the discovery of religious truth. It is our purpose in this chapter to determine how much and what divine truth Locke believed can ~~be~~ reach~~d~~ by the use of his "unaided reason." Our investigation will be attended with some difficulty, since Locke nowhere gives a clear account of what he means when he speaks of natural religion, nor does he present an ordered survey of its content. It must be remembered in this connection, that, at the time when Locke was doing his thinking and writing, natural religion was a topic of considerable importance, and all thinking men, religious and laymen alike, had something to say about it. It appears from Locke's scattered references to natural religion that its importance was so evident to him that he did not consider it necessary to argue its case.

We have noticed already that though his method in formulating his theory of knowledge was empirical and was thus in the main stream of Baconian tradition, Locke nowhere acknowledges the name or work of the one who formulated it. Similarly, his theoretical theological views are permeated with what appears to be full consent to the claim of natural religion to discover by reason all that it needful of God, and of one's duty towards Him. It is only in this light that Locke's principle interest in religious problems, wherein he attempts to rationalize the content of revealed religion, can be adequately understood. He was above all a practical man whose interests were in "clearing the ground a little" and applying principles. This he achieved with an extraordinary amount of common-sense. It is this same general and practical interest which precluded Locke from giving any systematic treatment of the content of natural religion. As a result we must draw our references from scattered and fragmentary material.

Let us look at Locke's specific references to natural religion. In his discussion of the imperfection of words, when he speaks of the difficulty in comprehending the mean-

ing of the Scriptures through words, he has this to say about natural religion.

And we ought to magnify his [God's] goodness, that he hath spread before all the world such legible characters of his works and providence, and given mankind so sufficient a light of reason, that they to whom this written word never came, could not (whenever they set themselves to search) either doubt of the being of a God, or of obedience due to him. Since then the precepts of Natural Religion are plain, and very intelligible to all mankind, and seldom come to be controverted: and other revealed truths which are conveyed to us by books and languages, are liable to the common and natural obscurities and difficulties incident to words; methinks it would become us to be more careful and diligent in observing the former, and less magisterial, positive, and imperious, in imposing¹ our own sense and interpretation on the latter.

While it is true that Locke's purpose here is to assert the insufficiency of language in the transmission of divine revelation, he also asserts the "superior catholicity of natural religion."²

Again in a passage already quote from a Discourse of Miracles, there is this specific reference to natural religion.

.....No mission can looked on to be divine

1. Essay, 3. 9. 23.
2. Essay, 1. 121. note 1.

that delivers any thing derogating from the honour of the one, only, true, invisible God, or inconsistent with natural religion and the rules of morality: because God having discovered to men the unity and majesty of his eternal godhead, and the truths of natural religion and morality by the light of reason, he cannot be supposed to back the contrary by revelation.....¹

It is quite clear that neither of these references deal primarily, in a positive way, with the theoretical adequacy of natural religion; it is this fact, indeed, which had caused Hefelbower² to conclude that the weight of Locke's emphasis is only to be properly understood when it is seen as an attempt to rationalize the content of revealed religion. But **can** we say that this is a proper interpretation of what little material Locke gives us? Even in the narrow sphere in which Locke found that absolutely certain knowledge obtained, the basic elements of natural religion are found. "We are furnished with faculties (dull and weak as they are) to discover enough in the creatures to lead us to the knowledge of the Creator, and the knowledge of our duty;....."³ Again, we find Locke saying that God "hath furnished men with those faculties which will serve for the sufficient discovery of all things requisite to the end of such a being:

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1. Works, 9. 261, 262.
 2. Hefelbower, RJL, 124.
 3. Essay, 2. 23. 12.

and I doubt not but to show that a man, by the right use of his natural abilities, may, without any innate principles, attain to the knowledge of a God, and other things that concern him."¹ Here Locke's reference is in the midst of a polemic against innate ideas, and contains a positive statement only in protest against what he believed to be a false way of discovering religious truth, ~~is~~, by innate principles. In his Journal for Sunday, September 18, 1681, there is a much more positive statement. "That there is a God, and what God is; nothing can discover to us, nor judge in us, but natural reason."² This is an important statement, for it attributes to reason the power of discovery in religious matters as well as that of judgment.

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In light of our discussion it is not too much to infer that Locke, as a rationalist, had in the back of his mind a definite assurance that an adequate, if unsystematic, content of natural religion could be discovered by the use of human reason. It is on the basis of this deep-seated persuasion, that, it appears to us, Locke sought to make reasonable the revealed doctrines. Perhaps it is not untrue to say that in his heart and experience the truths of revealed religion

1. Essay, 1. 4. 12.

2. King, LLJL, 124.

were primary, but that when he came to think about the extent of human knowledge and the powers of reason, he found that reason, well used, was able to discover a great body of religious truth. This he called natural religion.

When Locke attacked the theory of innate ideas, he destroyed what he believed to be a false basis of ideas, including the idea of God. He thought it unnecessary to appeal to such a theory when it appeared to him that a better basis for the knowledge of the existence of God could be established.

Locke's attitude towards the ontological proof for the existence of God is moderately sceptical in the Essay. In his discussion of the abstract opposition between idea and real existence, Locke maintained that there could be no direct transition between them. Thus, "the having of an idea of anything in our mind no more proves the existence of that thing, than the picture of a man evidences his being in the world, or the visions of a dream make thereby a true history."¹ This truth was one generally agreed upon, with the one exception in which it was held that, since the idea of God included his possessing every positive quality of perfection, to deny his existence would prove to be a logical contradiction of terms. The argument was originally formulated by Anselm,

1. Essay, 4. 2. 1.

but was revived by Descartes and given great emphasis by him. In the Essay, Locke has this to say about it.

How far the idea of a most perfect being, which a man may frame in his mind, does or does not prove the existence of a God, I will not here examine. For in the different make of men's tempers and application of their thoughts, some arguments prevail more on one, and some on another for the confirmation of the same truth. But yet, I think, this I may say, that it is an ill way for establishing this truth, and silencing atheists, to lay the whole stress of so important a point as this on that sole foundation.¹

Later, in a paper entitled Deus, published in the collection by Lord King, Locke expressly considers this theistic proof and rejects it. His objection to it has its basis in principles already laid down in the Essay.

By ideas in the mind we discern the agreement and disagreement of ideas that have a like ideal existence in our minds, but that reaches no further, proves no real existence, for the truth we know is only of our ideas, and is applicable to things only as they are supposed to exist answering such ideas. But any idea, simple or complex, barely by being in our minds, is no evidence of the real existence of anything out of our minds answering that idea.²

Should the statement be made that our idea of God includes

1. Essay, 4. 10. 7.

2. King, LLJL, 316.

necessary existence, Locke would say that it is but to "suppose" it and does not prove His existence, for "real existence can be proved only by real existence, and therefore, the real existence of God can only be proved by the real existence of other things."¹ In a reply to the Bishop of Worcester's attack on the Essay, Locke utilized the argument which was set down under Deus, and it may be conjectured that it was for this purpose that Locke took upon himself the consideration of the problem.²

Locke's use of the teleological argument is not clear. In several instances he appears to infer the existence of God from order and purpose observed in creation. "For the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect upon them, cannot miss the discovery of a Deity."³ This may be read teleologically, but it also may be understood cosmologically. There are, however, further references which lend themselves to interpretation as an argument for the existence of God from design. Speaking of the eye, Locke says that "the structure

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1. King, LLJL, 316.
 2. Works, 4. 53-56.
 3. Essay, 1. 3. 9.

of that one part is sufficient to convince me of an all-wise Contriver. And he has so visible claim to us as his workmanship that one of the ordinary appellations of God in Scripture is God, our Maker."¹

There are further references to "the all-wise Contriver", a name for God which Locke often employs. Sometimes he speaks of God as an Architect, as in the following statement. "And when we consider the infinite power and wisdom of the Maker, we have reason to think that it is suitable to the magnificent harmony of the universe, and the great design and infinite goodness of the Architect....."² From references such as these Fraser has concluded that there can be no doubt of "his [Locke's] recognition of the teleological argument."³ Hefelbower, on the other hand, thinks it doubtful if Locke employs it, saying that his formulation of it is neither clear nor adequate. He contends that the argument appears but incidently¹. This latter statement is obviously true, but that Locke did not employ the argument is not as apparent. The passages cited give some fragmentary indication that Locke recognized certain evidences of design and

1. Works, 5. 252.
2. Essay, 3. 6. 12.
3. Hastings, ERE, 2. 177.

purpose in the world which pointed men to the knowledge of the existence of God. It is difficult to believe that the essential points of the argument as we have indicated them had no meaning for him.

There can be no doubt whatever that Locke placed the greatest emphasis on his "demonstration" for the existence of God; his own special formulation of the cosmological argument. Locke lays great weight upon it and his treatment of it is full and explicit. He believed that he had an incontrovertible proof of God's existence, as certain as the correct answer to a mathematical problem. Man can, "by the right use of his natural abilities",¹ come to an absolutely certain proof of the existence of God which is open neither to doubt nor error. "It is as certain that there is a God, as that the opposite angles made by the intersection of two straight lines are equal."² Locke, of course, realized that God cannot be presented to us in sense experience. And as we have shown in the discussion of his theory of knowledge, real existence can be known only of one's own ego. In his rejection of the ontological argument, Locke made it clear that real existence could be proved only by real

1. Essay, 1. 3. 12.

2. Essay, 1. 3. 17.

existence, and the only real existence which one can know is one's own conscious self. It is from this fact that Locke deduced his demonstration. For, as he declared, "we cannot want a clear proof.....[that God exists] as long as we carry ourselves about us."¹ He then elaborated the steps of his proof as follows:

I think that it is beyond question, that a man has a clear idea of his own being; he knows certainly that he exists, and that he is something.This, then, I think I may take for a truth, which every one's certain knowledge assures him of, beyond the liberty of doubting, viz, that he is something that actually exists.

In the next place, man knows, by^{an} intuitive certainty that bare nothing can no more produce any real being, than it can be equal to two right angles.....
.....If, therefore, we know there is some real being, and that nonentity cannot produce any real being, it is an evident demonstration, that from eternity there has been something; since what was not from eternity had a beginning; and what had a beginning must be produced by something else.²

Next, it is evident, that what had its being and beginning from another, must also have all that which is in an belongs to its being from another too. All the powers it has must be owing to and received from the same source.³

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1. Essay, 4. 10. 1.
 2. Essay, 4. 10. 2.
 3. Essay, 4. 10. 4.

We can thus see the main outline of Locke's position. He would say it something like this. As a rational being, I know that I have not always existed. It is evident also that Something has existed from all eternity. It is a fallacy to think that real existence, an example of which I have in myself, could produce itself out of nothing. Since I am aware of my finiteness, that I had a beginning, and know that everything which had a beginning must have been produced by something else, all that belongs to me as a human being must have come from another Being, an Eternal Something. This Eternal Something is God. One may not care to call such a Being God, but according to Locke "that matters not."

This process of demonstration "requires thought and attention; and the mind must apply itself to a regular deduction of it from some part of our intuitive knowledge, or else we shall be as uncertain and ignorant of this as of other propositions which are in themselves capable of clear demonstration."¹ When this process has been properly has been properly carried out, the existence of God, Locke believed, is "the most obvious truth that reason [reasoning]

1. Essay, 4. 10. 1.

discovers...."¹

It is this argument which lies behind Locke's theoretical concept of God, and as we have pointed out, his demonstration is but a modification of the well-known cosmological argument. Locke had given much thought to his proof of God's existence, and while he undoubtedly received help from the thought of others in its formulation, it may have said to have been his own by virtue of the hard intellectual labour which he gave to it. Aaron has pointed out some of the source material for Locke's proof. "The influence of Cicero and Cudworth....is very apparent."² He shows that in the tenth chapter of the fourth book of the Essay, Locke mentions Cicero's De Legibus by name and seems also to draw from De Natura Deorum. "His journal for 18th of February 1682 reveals the extent of his debt to Ralph Cudworth's The True Intellectual System of the Universe."³ One also sees here evidences of the Scholastic thought, which show how much Locke was enmeshed in concepts which had been originally formulated by them. *Whom?*

Aaron also points out that a criticism which has been urged

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1. Essay, 4. 10. 1.
 2. Aaron, LOC, 241.
 3. Aaron, LOC, 241, note 3.

against the cosmological argument cannot be used against it as it is stated by Locke; it cannot be argued that he is assuming as impossible an infinite series of causes, a series that must end in a First Cause. What is being argued for here is simply that any present existent is dependent upon something that has existed from eternity.

Locke's argument is full of presuppositions. He assumes that anything which has had a beginning must have had a cause. Throughout his demonstration the principle of causality is employed as a universal necessity. In his discussion of "cause" Locke used it to refer to those meanings which arise in consciousness when sequences are observed in the world of sense. But is it within the power of observation to see what is the cause and what has been caused, in any given instance? Even if one could be sure of the causal relations in the phenomena of the material world, its use in a theistic argument such as this is precarious. The argument must break down because its universal necessity cannot be proved, since its observation is manifestly beyond the range of sensible or reflective experience.

Furthermore, Locke's use of the term Eternity lacks

precision. For him it was but a negative idea. It can be understood only in terms of the intellectual necessity which forces one to make duration infinite. Locke's argument is principally based on his belief that creation ex nihilo is impossible. Since real existence cannot be conceived to have come from nothing, the mind is called on to acknowledge that some real being has existed from eternity which is sufficient to create other real being. And, as Kant has pointed out, we are thus driven from the cosmological argument to the ontological, since the idea of real being carries with it the idea of necessary existence. Should Locke protest that it is not the idea of real existence which is presupposed, but real existence itself, one may ask a further question. "Is the step from present existence to necessary existence from eternity anything more than ideal? And if it is merely ideal, has not the cosmological argument revealed itself to be in essence the ontological argument which Locke himself rejected?"¹ It appears that Locke assumed all that he sought to prove, but since the idea of God as First Cause was little criticised in his day, the argument which he formulated continued to exercise influence through

1. Aaron, LOC, 243.

the next century.

Locke not only used his demonstration to prove the bare existence of God, but employed it as well in deducing two of the attributes of God's nature. God's omnipotence, Locke thought, could be proved by the via causalitatis. After he had declared that it is necessary to suppose that something has existed from eternity, he finds that it must have been all-powerful.

Next, it is evident, that what had its being and beginning from another, must also have all that which is in and belongs to its being from another too. All the powers it has must be owing to and received from the same source. This eternal source, then, of all being must also be the source and original of all power; and so this eternal Being must also be the most powerful.¹

This involves the principle that the ultimate cause of all things must have within itself the capacity to produce all that exists. On this principle Locke deduces the second attribute of God's nature.

Again, a man finds in himself perception and knowledge. We have then got one step further; and we are certain now that there is not only some being, but some knowing, intelligent being in the world. There was a time, then, when there was no

1. Essay, 4.1. 4.

knowing being, and when knowledge began to be; or else there has been also a knowing being from eternity. If it is said, there was a time when no being had any knowledge, when that eternal being was void of all understanding; I reply, that then it was impossible there should have been any knowledge: it being impossible that things wholly void of knowledge, and operating blindly, and without any perception, should produce a knowing being, as it is impossible that a triangle should make itself three angles bigger than two right ones.¹

Locke could not see how matter could possibly produce mind. Intelligence alone, he would maintain, is capable of producing intelligence. Therefore the fact of intelligence, revealed in self-conscious thought, must have its origin in a Supreme Mind. Locke was not exactly sure what mind meant when it was applied to the Supreme and Eternal Being. His great perplexity arose from the notion that in the principle of causality, as he understood it, nothing can be contained in the effect which is not first in the cause. This argument he saw would prove too much. Locke had proved from the existence of his own intelligent being, a Supreme, All-knowing Being. Could not the same principle be used in another way? Could not one take, as the starting point, extended being, the reality of which Locke admitted, and infer as its

1. Essay, 4. 10. 5.

cause a God of material substance? To do this would have made the Infinite Being both "material and cognative." But Locke could not accept this conclusion because it came into conflict with his conception of God as Supreme Mind, a Being totally immaterial. Yet if he was to go equally on his via casualitatis, it was obvious that on the basis of the principle he used to infer Supreme Intelligence from finite intelligence, he must also, for the same reason, infer extension in God's nature. This Spinoza had maintained. Locke was aware of the implications of his difficulty. One way to have disentangled the problem would have been to attempt to reduce matter to mind. But this was impossible in Locke's philosophy because he had maintained that sensation and reflection were two distinct and independent sources of knowledge. Locke struggled to remove this obstacle in his thought of God. He believed that it would be disastrous to include matter as an attribute of Deity. If he invested every particle of matter with thought, there would be as many thinking beings as there were particles of matter, and there would be an infinite number of gods.

If then neither one peculiar atom alone can be this eternal thinking being; nor all matter, as

matter, i.e. every particle of matter, can be it; it only remains, that it is some certain system of matter, duly put together, that is this thinking, eternal being.¹

Locke believed that this was the most common ^{view of} held by those who held that God was material. But it did not solve the problem.

To suppose the eternal thinking Being to be nothing but a composition of particle of matter, each whereof is incogitative, is to ascribe all the wisdom and knowledge of that eternal Being only to a juxta-position of parts; than which nothing can be more absurd.²

It was impossible to produce matter from mind. Locke was inclined to think it better understandable that even one atom of being which thinks, could, if all-powerful, by an act of will create all matter. But how matter could be created out of nothing, he could not see.

Locke never came to any satisfactory solution of this problem, though it was a continual disturbance to his mind. In a letter written to Anthony Collins very shortly before his death, he expressed the opinion that mind cannot be ascribed to God in the sense we know it in man.

1. Essay, 4. 10. 16.

2. Essay, 4. 10. 16.

Though I call the thinking faculty in me, mind, I cannot, because of that name, equal it in anything to that eternal and incomprehensible Being, which, for want of right and distinct conceptions, is called Mind also, or the Eternal Mind.¹

But with this statement Locke demolishes his whole argument for the Divine intelligence. If the cause is fundamentally different from its effect, then there is no basis for Locke's inference of God's intelligence from the finite intelligence. It must be concluded that Locke's demonstration of the Eternal Being is faulty because he overrides the fundamental distinctions upon which his theory of knowledge is founded.

While Locke utilized his demonstration to prove God's existence, omnipotence and omniscience, he employed another method to discover the remaining attributes of God's nature. He said that we cannot know God in His essence for we can think of Him only as a complex of qualities which we refer to Him from the complex ideas we have about finite spirits. The treatment of this important subject is remarkably slight, given incidently^{at} in three short paragraphs. It is the only place in which Locke considers the origin of our ideas of God, and we shall quote the three paragraphs in full.

1. Fraser, Essay, l. lxxix.

For if we examine the idea we have of the incomprehensible Supreme Being, we shall find that we come by it in the same way: as a complex idea, the materials of which are first seen in sensation and reflection and that the complex ideas we have both of God, and separate spirits, are made of the simple ideas we received from reflection: v.g. having, from what we experiment in ourselves, got the ideas of existence and duration; of knowledge and power; or pleasure and happiness; and of several other qualities and powers, which is better to have than to be without; when we would frame an idea of the most suitable we can to the Supreme Being, we enlarge every one of these with our idea of infinity; and so putting them together, we make our complex idea of God. For that the mind has such a power of enlarging some of its ideas, received from sensation and reflection, has already been shown.¹

If I find that I know some few things, and some of them, or all, perhaps imperfectly, I can frame an idea of knowing twice as many; which I can double again, as often as I can add to number; and thus enlarge my idea of knowledge, by extending its comprehension to all things existing or possible. The same also I can do of knowing them more perfectly; i.e. all their qualities, powers, causes, consequences, and relations, &c, till all be perfectly known that is in them, or can any way relate to them: and thus frame the idea of infinite or boundless knowledge. The same may also be done with power, till we come to that we call infinite; and also of the duration of existence, without beginning or end, and so frame the idea of eternal being. The degrees or extent wherein we ascribed existence, power, wisdom, and all other perfections (which we can have any ideas of) to that sovereign Being, which we call God, being all boundless and infinite, we frame the best idea of him our minds are capable of: all of which is done, I say, by enlarging

1. Essay, 2. 23. 33.

those simple ideas we have taken from the operations of our own minds, by reflection; or by our senses, from exterior things, to that vastness to which infinity can extend them.¹

For it is infinity, which, joined to our ideas of existence, power, knowledge, &c, makes that complex idea, whereby we represent to ourselves, the best we can, the Supreme Being. For, though in his own essence (which certainly we do not know, not knowing the real essence of a pebble, or a fly, or of our own selves) God be simple and uncompounded; yet I think I may say we have no other idea of him, but a complex one of existence, knowledge, power, happiness, &c., infinite and eternal: which are all distinct ideas, and some of them being relative, are again compounded of others: all which being, as has been shown, originally got from sensation and reflection, go to make up the idea or notion we have of God.²

Here again we are confronted by Locke's empirical account of the origin of our ideas, and, as we see from the foregoing paragraphs, he applies the method to the discovery and formulation of the attributes of God. The process is quite simple. A person has but to examine himself, to find those "qualities and powers, which it is better to have than to be without", enlarge them to an infinite number of times, and he will have some idea of the qualities of the Divine Nature. The criterion upon which the finite qualities are to be judged with

1. Essay, 2. 23. 34.
2. Essay, 2. 23. 35.

a view to their enlarging is loosely employed. What one person might consider to be a quality or power "better to have than to be without" might be different from those chosen by another. Locke appears to have realized that this was too unstable a foundation upon which to choose the attributes which we to be infinitely enlarged. In his Journal he makes this statement. "Whatsoever carries any excellence with it, and includes not imperfection, must needs make a part of the idea we have of God."¹ But the same objection remains, and is yet another indication of the strong individualistic tendency in Locke's thinking.

In another passage in the Essay, Locke discusses the relation of God's goodness to His power, and concludes: "If it were fit for such poor finite creatures as we are to pronounce what infinite wisdom and goodness could do, I think I might say that God Himself cannot choose what is not good: the freedom of the Almighty hinders not his being determined by what is best."²

1. King, LLJL, 123.
2. Essay, 2. 21. 50.

Locke was aware that the complex idea we have of God was inadequate. It was deficient because it was negative. The raising of finite qualities only served to show that however knowing, happy and good we might be, God was more knowing, more happy and better than anything we can know or imagine. Hence our complex idea of God must always fall far short of what God must be in reality, and our best conception of Him must fail to indicate His real nature. As Gibson has pointed out, Locke assumes the scholastic identification of reality and perfection, though he nowhere makes his assumption explicit. Further, in Locke's usage, the process can only be understood quantitatively, for he defines raising a thing to infinity as but extending in quantity an idea gained from experience. A God whose attributes are determined by this method is different only in degree from human beings. This gives Locke's discussion a crude anthropomorphic flavour.

An apparent contradiction between our idea of God gained in this fashion and the account given in Book Four of the Essay called forth a letter from Molyneux to Locke. He says in a part of this letter.

In Bk. iv. ch. xvii, par. 2, you say the existence of all things without us (except only of God) is had by our senses. And in Bk. II. ch. xxiii. par. 33-36, you show how the idea we have of God is made up of the ideas we have gotten by our senses. Now this, though no repugnancy, yet to unwary readers may seem one. To me it is plain that in Bk. IV, ch. xvii, you speak barely of the existence of God; and in Bk. II, ch. xxiii, you speak of the ideas that are ingredient in the complex idea of God; i.e. you say that 'all the ideas ingredient in the idea of God are had from sense' and in Bk. IV, you only assert that the existence of this God, or that really there are united in one Being all these ideas, is had, not from sense, but demonstration.¹

Locke replied to Molyneux that he had made a correct analysis of his argument. But had he? Was it not true that Locke had inferred the qualities of omnipotence and omniscience as well as the bare existence of God by his method of demonstration?

The difficulty which we have seen in Locke's thinking about God is fundamental to his whole theology. It seems we may conclude with Aaron that...

Locke believes first, and then seeks rational justification for his belief.....Why does Locke believe? His education and the custom of his age clearly account in some part for this fact. But the belief plays too great a part in his philosophy to be attributed to these sources. Locke,

1. Fraser, Essay, I. 418, note 2.

no doubt, did feel that a First Cause was essential and he also felt that we ourselves need explaining.Yet one cannot but feel that his real ground for believing was no rational argument of any kind. It was the knowledge of God 'through His Spirit', this deep intuition and presence. The piety and deep religious feeling of Locke's works forcibly suggests such a view.¹

Locke nowhere expressly states how he believed God is related to the world and mankind. In our treatment of this subject we are once again forced to look for scattered passages which will give us hints as to Locke's actual position. Behind his thinking in this matter there is an unresolved point at issue. It can be stated in the form of a question. What is the relation of God to the law of nature? Two general tendencies are to be noted. In the first place, when Locke is speaking against innate ideas, he expressly states that he does not wish it to be understood that he means to deny a law of nature, the operation of which can be known by reason, the light of nature.

There is a great deal of difference between an innate law, and a law of nature;.....I think they equally forsake the truth, who running into contrary extremes, either affirm an innate law, or deny that there is a law of nature, i.e. without the help of positive revelation.²

1. Aaron, LOC, 304, 305.

2. Essay, l. 2. 13.

There seems no reason to doubt that Locke was well acquainted with that conception of a law of nature which was held by the majority of his contemporaries, a law which has independent authority over men, and suffers no intrusion upon its authority from external sources. This view is typical of seventeenth and eighteenth century rationalists.

Yet while Locke believed in a law of nature, he also insisted that God's omnipotence shall in no way be compromised. He believed it essential to the majesty of God that nothing should hinder His will. We have seen that he thought God's will was probably determined by His goodness. This was Locke's way of saying that the Divine will is not capricious, but is directed to serve the ends of goodness. Does Locke mean by this that there is something independent of God, a law of right, to which God's will must conform in the eternal nature of things?

The point at issue here had its roots in a controversy of the later medieval theologians. In general, the nominalists tended to the view that law had an actual positive existence, created by God, and the realists tended to the belief in a law which is inherent in God's nature. It seems

quite probable that Locke would have preferred to modify the absoluteness of the realist view in favour of the Omnipotence of God. God, he would say, is the ultimate source of law, since there can be no law without a lawgiver. The Lawgiver is an Omnipotent God.

The year following the publication of the Essay, Locke wrote a letter to his friend Tyrrell on this subject. In the letter he speaks of the law of nature as a "branch of the divine law." Reason counsels man that it is good to obey natural law. This law is obligatory on man, because it, like all law, comes from God. Thus Locke appears to resolve his difficulty without compromising the omnipotence of God; but he does tend to give up the realist conception of a law inherent in God. For when Locke became greatly involved in some problem he could not resolve, he always preferred to say that it was the will of God alone which could explain them. This was a tacit reference to God's supervening power.

Locke found another agency which threatened God's omnipotence in man's free will. He could not reconcile the co-existence of divine and human agency after he had attributed to God both omnipotence and omniscience. In his celebrated

chapter on "power" in Book Two of the Essay. Locke made an attempt to work out a solution to this problem. In the course of the successive editions of the work which were published in his lifetime, many changes were made with the hope that he might further clarify his position. The subject forms the basis of a series of letters which he exchanged with Molyneaux.

"Power", Locke said, is that "which is able to make, or able to receive any change."¹ Active power is that which initiates the change, and passive power is that which is able to receive it. Matter he considered to be wholly destitute of active power, and God, the author of all things, "is truly above all passive power."² Man, standing between God and matter in the scheme of creation, has combined in his being the capacity both for active and passive power. The danger to God's omnipotence, Locke thought, came from the coexistence of the divine and human agency in active power. Locke never solved this problem with satisfaction to himself. His rewriting of the Chapter on "Power" and the numerous additions he made to it only served to confuse the

1. Essay, 2. 21. 2.

2. Essay, 2. 21. 2.

problem further. He would not resolve one side of the contradiction into the other when the evidence made it clear that both were true. At length he wrote to Molyneux as follows:

I own freely to you the weakness of my reasoning, that though it be unquestionable that there is omnipotence and omniscience in God, and though I cannot have a clearer perception of anything than that I am free, yet I cannot make freedom in man consistent with omnipotence in God, and yet I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truths I most fully assent to.¹

This indicates Locke's essentially empirical spirit. He was never willing to purchase consistency at the price of overlooking the facts as he found them. If he found it impossible to clear the difficulty he did not further obscure the issues involved. That Locke should have failed to comprehend human freedom as submission to God's will indicates one of the points where his common-sense method failed him.

Locke has given us no definite ideas about his views on the ultimate nature of reality. He would have been the first to protest that his purpose was not metaphysical. Yet now

1. Fraser, Essay, I, civ, cv.

and again he gives us a glimpse into the background of reality out of which his theory of knowledge comes. It is probable that he accepted, as did most of the thinking men of his time, the dualism of the two kinds of substances in nature, active immaterial substance and passive material substance.¹ This conception of nature had been given great currency by Descartes, and was generally accepted during Locke's time. Locke in his own investigation found it impossible, on an empirical basis, to affirm that the universe could be understood either as mind alone or matter alone. Moreover he found it impossible, as we have seen, to reduce one to the other. God, as "pure spirit" and "only active"², could invest matter with thought. To suppose matter could in some sense produce thought, he conceived absurd. "...Those who deny or question an eternal omniscient spirit, run themselves into a greater difficulty by making an eternal and unintelligent matter."³

Locke set up a kind of graded order of being in which he placed God, as active immaterial substance, at the top, and matter, as entirely passive in power, at the bottom. In

1. Cf. Essay, 2. 23. 15.

2. Essay, 2. 23. 38.

4. King, LLJL, 87.

between God and matter there were various degrees of being which partook of both kinds of substances in varying degrees. Man stands midway in this order. He is the lowest in intelligence, but ~~above~~ above brutes.

This hypothetical conclusion concerning man was attacked sharply by Locke's critics. Locke admitted that we cannot have any certain notion of what substance is, but in concluding that God had added mind to material substance, he was led to allow the possibility that man in substance might be material. The scholastics had formulated a theory that man was both material and immaterial, his soul being the immaterial element. At death, they maintained, the body decomposed, but that the soul, being immaterial, was indestructible. On this they based their doctrine of immortality. Locke would not admit that there was evidence to prove the soul to be immaterial, and denied that immortality could be proved in this fashion. Such a proof, he maintained, was "above reason", and was so adequately attested by revelation that it needed no support from reason. It was the suggestion that the soul was material in substance which cause Stillingfleet to take him to task, for in doing so, Locke had undermined a basic foundation of one of the Christian doctrines.

One of the unusual features of Locke's system of being is the place which he gives to angels. The Essay is full of references to them, and Locke thought it was not necessary to appeal to revelation in support of the knowledge of their existence.

Observing, I say, such gradual and gentle descents downwards in those parts of creation that are beneath man, the rule of analogy may make it probable, that it is so also in things above us and our observation; and that there are several ranks of intelligent beings, excelling us in several degrees of perfection, ascending upwards towards the infinite perfection of the Creator, by gentle steps and differences, that they are every one at no great distance from the next to it. This sort of probability, which is the best conduct of rational experience and influence; and a wary reasoning from analogy leads us often into the discovery of truths and useful productions, which would otherwise lie concealed.¹

We see here that Locke makes no assertion that we can know the existence of angels, but in the knowledge that there are brutes below in the order of creation, whose spiritual faculties are less developed than those in man, so too, he believes by analogy that it is probable that there are creatures above men whose faculties are far more developed in the Godward direction than those of men.

1. Essay, 4. 16. 2.

What, then, may we be certain about God by reason? We do not know very much about God, Locke would say. We can be sure that He exists, and that we owe an obligation of obedience to Him.

So, having an idea of God and myself, of fear and obedience, I cannot but be sure that God is to be feared and obeyed by me: and this proposition will be certain concerning man in general, if I have an abstract idea of such a species whereof I am one in particular.¹

If man would but obey God, Locke believed it probable that he would not only achieve happiness in this present world, but that he would lay a good foundation for happiness in the world to come. "It being highly rational to think, even were revelation silent in the case, that, as men employ those talents God has given them here, they shall accordingly receive their rewards at the close of day, when their sun shall set, and night shall put an end to their labours."²

1. Essay, 4. 11. 13.

2. Essay, 4. 14. 4.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONTENT OF REVEALED RELIGION

Locke assures us that by the use of our natural faculties we can know of the existence of God and that obedience is due to Him. These insights do not require the aid of revelation. "That there is a God, and what God is, nothing can discover to us but natural reason."¹ But, as we have seen, there are truths above reason in religion, the content of which is gained through revelation. Further, since the prime purpose of revelation is not to inform men about the nature of God, we may be led to expect that its significance is found in the information which it gives concerning God's relationship with men in salvation. This is, in fact, what we do find, and we shall see that Locke developed a doctrine of redemption on the basis of what he believed to have been revealed. In this he followed the main outline of orthodox Christian teaching, but introduced many of his own thoughts in several important instances. We must therefore

1. Fox-Bourne, Life, 1. 462.

follow with care what Locke believed that we are taught through the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

Throughout his life, Locke reflected his early Puritan training. Of the three ways which have been held to lead to the apprehension of God's revelation, personal illumination, the Church, and Holy Scripture, Locke declares for the last. He stands squarely in the Protestant tradition, in his conviction that the Bible is the sole basis of the Christian religion. We have seen how completely he rejected immediate personal illumination, which he called "enthusiasm," as being a tool of lazy minds, behind which prejudice could be shielded. We shall see that Locke was distinctly "low church" in his ideas about ecclesiastical organization. But his reverence for the Bible was as deep as his knowledge of it was great. For a layman who combined a wide variety of interests in his keen mind, Locke possessed a remarkable grasp of the contents of Holy Scripture. The Essay itself contains abundant quotations from the Bible. While he concerned himself primarily with the New Testament, his works show that he was not unacquainted with the contents of the Old Testament. The curriculum of Locke's studies in Oxford included both Hebrew and Greek, and we may be assured by his

frequent references that he knew something of the former and was at home in the latter language. He knew the Scriptures and used them. He believed that Holy Writ contained all that a Christian needed to know concerning the way to salvation. "In the New Testament.....I think are contained all the articles of Christian faith."¹

While Locke's approach to Scripture was always reverent, he was so sure of its truth that he did not fear to subject it to the tests imposed by reason, for, as we have seen, he did not believe that anything revealed was contrary to reason. The title of his principal theological work, The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures, indicates the trend of his thought in this matter. It must be confessed, however, that Locke was more free in his exegesis than certain passages allowed, and that he often toned down or modified the meaning of refractory materials.

Students of Locke's theology have pointed out a very remarkable characteristic of his approach to Scripture. They find it hard to reconcile the fact that Locke tends to expand the use of reason in the religious sphere with his

1. Works, 2. 67, note 1.

acceptance of the theory of plenary inspiration. Rational in temper though he was, and eager though he was to test by reason the claims of the Christian religion, he comes to Scripture with his mind made up on two points. First, he is sure that God has revealed Himself, and, secondly, that this revelation has been given in the Bible. Grant to him these two presuppositions and Locke is willing to treat Holy Writ as he would any other writing. Several illustrations are pertinent here. In commenting on I Corinthians II : 6, "Howbeit we speak wisdom to them that are perfect", Locke makes the following notation.

[Perfect] here is the same with spiritual...one that is so perfectly well apprised of the christian religion, that he sees and acknowledges it to be all a pure revelation from God, and not, in the least, the product of human discovery, parts or learning; and so deriving it wholly from what God hath taught by his Spirit in the sacred scriptures, allows not the least part of it to be ascribed to the skill or abilities of men as authors of it, but received as a doctrine coming from God alone.¹

This is the most extreme position to which Locke gives credence; other statements are much more moderate, of which the following may be taken as a fair example:-

God, when he makes the prophet, doe not unmake the

1. Works, 8. 91, note a.

man. He leave all his faculties in their natural state to enable him to judge his inspirations whether they be of divine original or no. When he illumines the mind with supernatural light, he does not extinguish that which is natural.¹

This latter statement modifies the position of the former which excludes human cooperation entirely. Locke's theory here ensures the infallibility of the Divine message, by making it a personal communication of God to the one He has chosen to do His bidding. In another comment Locke says that the Apostle Paul "had the immediate direction and guidance of the unerring Spirit of God and so was infallible!"² There is a further passage in which Locke speaks of the manner in which God communicates with men.

God, I believe, speaks differently from men because he speaks with more truth, more certainty: but when he vouchsafes to speak to men I do not think he speaks differently from them, in crossing the rules of language in use amongst them: this would be not to condescend to their capacities, when he humbles himself to speak to them, but would lose his design in speaking what when spoken they could not understand.³

Locke's doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture becomes apparent in these statements which we have quoted. Locke's uncritical acceptance of a doctrine of plenary inspiration

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1. Essay, 4. 19./4.
 2. Works, 6. 184.
 3. Works, 5. 245, 246.

is naive and appears incongruous to the general temper of his method. This should not blind us, however, to the significance of the work which Locke has done in the interpretation of the content of revelation in Holy Writ.

Locke was led to write the Reasonableness of Christianity, he tells us, because of his interest in the controversy which was going on between Churchmen, Unitarians and other Dissenters, concerning justification by faith. Gradually, as the subject made inroads into his thinking, he found himself drawn "into a stricter and more thorough inquiry into the question about justification."¹ He was, he said, not satisfied with the current systems of divinity, which were more confusing than enlightening.

The scripture was plain and direct, that it was faith that justified: The next question then, was, What faith that was that justified; what it was which, if a man believed, it should be imputed to him for righteousness? To find this out, I thought the right way was to search the scriptures; and thereupon betook myself seriously to the reading of the New Testament, only to that purpose.²

Locke thought he had found the correct answer to the questions which he had set for himself. But with becoming modesty he declared in the preface that if anyone found him

1. Works, 7. 187.

2. Works, 7. 187.

wrong after an unprejudiced examination of his work, he was asked "as a true Christian, in the spirit of the Gospel, (which is that of charity,) and in the words of sobriety, to set him [Locke] right, in the doctrine of salvation."¹ The doctrine of justification by faith is thus the central concept of Locke's scheme of redemption. His interpretation of the doctrine is somewhat novel, as we might expect from his dissatisfaction with traditional statements of the doctrine. We must follow its development carefully.

Locke's treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity is not altogether clear. In his writings there is no formal statement concerning it, and nowhere does he expressly affirm or deny its validity. We have seen that he denied to reason the power to understand the essence of God's nature. He also conceived it impossible that any simple ideas derived from revelation could be communicated unless such ideas were derived from sensation and reflection. Thus Locke set up a formal barrier to any natural or revealed knowledge of the substance of the Godhead. Stillingfleet quickly seized upon this point and concluded that Locke purposely undermined the basis for belief in the Trinity. Such an imputation of

1. Works, 7. 2.

Locke's motive is open to question; it is, indeed, doubtful whether he purposely sought to refute the doctrine. His attitude towards it appears rather to have been that of the agnostic. It is true that the times in which Locke lived made it dangerous to attack one of the fundamental doctrines held by the established Church. One cannot refrain from making the conjecture that had the times been more free Locke might have defined his position more explicitly. His cautious temper, in any case, prevented him from provoking trouble on this point in theology. When he was directly questioned about the Trinity by the Bishop of Worcester, he side-stepped the main issue. He sought neither to compromise his own view nor to risk incurring the wrath of the orthodox. He seems to have thought that the doctrine of the Trinity could not be established either by reason or by revelation. Stillingfleet asked Locke directly if he "owned the doctrine of the Trinity, as it hath been received in the Christian church?"¹ Locke replied that "it is too hard to know how a doctrine so disputed has been received in the Christian church", and added that he thought "it might be enough to own it as it is delivered by the Scriptures."² An entry in his Common-place Book entitled "Unitaria" leads

1. Works, 4. 197.

2. Works, 4. 197.

us to believe that Locke thought that the doctrine was engrafted on Christian theology at the Council of Nicea. "The Fathers before the Council of Nice speak rather like Arians than orthodox" and "there is scarcely one text alleged to the Trinitarians which is not otherwise expounded by their own writers."¹ Again, "The Divinity of the Holy Spirit was not believed, or as I think, so much as mentioned by the time of Lactantius, i.e., anno 300.."²

While Locke's reply to Stillingfleet was that he accepted the doctrine of the Trinity as it is delivered in the Scriptures, he nowhere tells us what his scriptural interpretation of the doctrine is. He speaks of the office of the Holy Spirit as that of inspiring and strengthening men after the departure of Christ from the earth. But he does not discuss its relation to the Godhead. Our only clue to Locke's teaching on the doctrine of the Trinity is to be found in the consideration of the implications of Christ's relationship to the Father. Christ was sent by God, Locke maintains, to reveal the full and final way of salvation to men. His coming was prophesied in the Old Testament and His divine mission was established by his display of supernatural

1. King, LLJL, 297.
2. King, LLJL, 298.

power in the performance of miracles.

Locke never clearly defined what he meant when he said that Jesus is Messiah. In the Reasonableness of Christianity, he devoted many pages to the assertion that Christ is the Son of God, which is but another way of saying that Christ is Messiah. He quotes Peter in John 6 : 69, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God," to prove his contention, and cites many other passages in support of his conclusion.¹ Locke also refers to this point in his controversy with John Edwards. Edwards insisted that when the eunuch declared, in Acts 8 : 37, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God", he implied that Christ is God. Locke did not agree. The words "Son of God" appear to me to be spoken and meant here as well as in several other places of the 'New Testament' in this sense, viz. 'That Jesus Christ is Messiah', and in that sense, in this place, I assent to them."² Locke energetically seeks to justify his equation of the terms, "Son of God" and "Messiah". He adds that it was on the basis of Christ's revelation of Himself as Messiah to Peter that "our Saviour said he would build his church."³ In the Third

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1. Works, 7. 18.
 2. Works, 7. 242.
 3. Works, 7. 18.

Letter for Toleration, Locke speaks of Christ as being "the wisdom of the Father", in which capacity he alone can know perfectly the truths revealed in Scripture.

Further insight into the relation between Christ and God is to be found in Locke's commentaries. Concerning the phrase, "according to the spirit of holiness", found in Romans I : 4, Locke says.

'According to the spirit of holiness', is here manifestly opposed to, 'according to the flesh', in the foregoing verse, and so must mean that more pure and spiritual part of him, which by divine extraction, he had immediately from God.¹

Here Locke shows his belief in the two natures of Christ, as a man "in the flesh", who partakes of the divine in his "spirit of holiness."

Locke's treatment of Corinthians 8 : 5 and 6 is helpful. The passage is:

For, though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many and lords many, But to us there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things.²

1. Works, 8. 278, note d.

2. ibid., p. 134

His paraphrase of the 6th verse is as follows:

Yet to us Christians, there is but one God, the Father and Author of all things, to whom alone we address all our worship and service; and but one Lord, viz, Jesus Christ, by whom all things come from God to us, and by whom we have access to the Father.¹

In a note on the whole passage, Locke says that while among the heathen there were many "Lords-agent" with us as Christians, there is but one "Lord-agent, Jesus Christ".² Christ is pictured here as the chief agent of God, the mediator of divine grace.

Locke had difficulty with Ephesians 3 : 9. "The fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been in God who created all things by Jesus Christ." His paraphrase studiously avoids attributing the power of creation to Christ.

And to make all men perceive, how this mystery comes now to be communicated to the world, which has been concealed from all past ages, lying hid in the secret purpose of God, who frames and manages this whole creation by Jesus Christ.³

Locke further fortifies his contention that Christ's part is but to manage the creation of God, by drawing attention to

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1. Works, 8. 134.
 2. Works, 8. 133, note c.
 3. Works, 8. 470.

the fact that Scripture employs the word "creation" in two different senses. He agrees that usually it is used "in sacred scripture to express creation, in the scriptural sense of creation, i.e. making out of nothing," but adds in the next note that, "It will be onserved that St. Paul often chooses to speak of the work of redemption by Christ as creation."¹

One final passage will be of value to us. In the verses 9 and 10 of John 14, Locke is confronted by Christ's words to Philip. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father..... Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The works that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwellest in me, he doeth the works." Locke says about this passage. "For that by being 'in God' and 'God in him' he signifies such union with God, that God operates in and by him....."² "Let the works that I have done convince you, that I am sent by the Father."³ John Edwards was quick to comprehend the significance of this interpretation and called Locke "antitrinitarian and racovian", asserting that such an explanation made Adam and Christ equal as the sons of God. Locke replied that he did not know how the

1. Works, 8. 470, note 2.

2. Works, 7. 91.

3. Works, 7. 92.

antitrinitarians understood the passage. "I took not the sense of those texts from those writers, but from the Scripture itself, giving light to its own meaning."¹

These passages have given us some understanding of the relation which Locke thought to exist between Christ and the Father. He thought of Christ as a supernatural being, sent by God to be His supreme agent in the world. Christ brought to earth a perfect revelation of God, but he did not claim that he himself was God, nor did others, who knew him in his earthly life, think him to be such. From one passage we gain the impression that Locke thought Christ's divinity consisted in his sinlessness, i.e., in his "spirit of Holiness", which was the character of his "divine extraction." This implies how completely the concepts of morality and divinity were woven together in the fabric of Locke's mind. Throughout his discussion he places emphasis upon the unity of God. But is this enough to classify him as a Unitarian? It is true that Locke was influenced in his theology by Thomas Firmin, a Unitarian merchant, and we have references to the theological discussions in which Locke took part in this man's home. His Epistola de Tolerantia was translated

1. Works, 7. 172.

from Latin into English by William Popple, another Unitarian. Further, one can believe that the Unitarians took great delight in reading Locke's theological treatises. Edwards hastened to point out that the Reasonableness of Christianity was "all over Socinianized." Yet while there are tendencies in the direction of Unitarianism in Locke's theology, it is very difficult to classify him with the Unitarians, because as we have seen, he believed that reason alone was too narrow a foundation on which to establish Christian truth, and he accepted with a simple faith the divinity of Christ.

What then, can we conclude about Locke's thinking concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity? He believed that it was absolutely impossible for reason to discover anything about the essence of God. Reason, did however, give man an assurance of God's existence and unity. In a careful study of the Scriptures, Locke found no conclusive evidence to support the Trinitarian doctrine. He saw that those who were considered orthodox disputed over it. He appears to have had some suspicion that the doctrine had been "invented"¹ rather than revealed. As a result it appears that he saw nothing sufficiently compelling to induce him to accept the doctrine in

1. King, LLJL, 298.

any formulation. His cautious temper prevented him from denying its truth when he had no positive evidence to the contrary. Had its truth been plain, Locke probably would have considered it a relatively unimportant doctrine, for he omitted it from the articles which he considered essential in Christian belief. Locke's own position concerning the Trinity is agnostic. He was content neither to affirm nor to deny its validity. But his denial that any positive knowledge can be known about the essence of God by reason, and his failure to find support for the doctrine in the Scriptures, cut the foundations from under the orthodox position. His assertion of its relative unimportance perhaps did more to discredit it than its outright rejection could have done. Even the rationalists among the orthodox could not but feel this challenge which the doctrine received at the hands of Locke, and the weight of his influence must be reckoned against it.

To make "Jesus Christ nothing but the restorer and preacher of pure natural religion," Locke thought, did "violence to the whole tenour of the New Testament."¹ For the influence of Christ is not limited to his restoration of purity in worship. Christ is the Redeemer. Around his advent

1. Works, 7. 5.

centres a whole doctrine of Redemption.

The doctrine of redemption, and consequently of the gospel is founded upon the supposition of Adam's fall. To understand, therefore, what we are restored to by Jesus Christ, we must consider what the Scriptures show we lost by Adam.¹

God created Adam in the state of paradise, righteous and "immortal, destined to life without end."² "Paradise was a place of bliss, as well as immortality; without drudgery and without sorrow."³ When Adam ate of the forbidden tree, he fell from the "state of perfect obedience, which is called justice in the New Testament,"⁴ and "he lost bliss and immortality"⁴ by so doing. He was condemned to die. He did not die immediately, but became mortal, "and from thence to his actual death, was but like the time of a prisoner between the sentence passed and the execution."⁵

What Adam lost by his sin in paradise is thus clear. "Nobody can deny, but that the doctrine of the gospel is, that death came on all men by Adam's sin."⁶ Locke is aware that many dispute what death means in this instance. "Some

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1. Works, 7. 4.
 2. Works, 7. 5.
 3. Works, 7.7.
 4. Works, 7. 5.
 5. Works, 7. 5, 6.
 6. Works, 7. 6.

will have it to be a state of guilt, wherein not only he, but all his posterity was so involved, that every one descended of him deserved endless torment, in hell-fire."¹ Locke objects to this interpretation because it seems " a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery."² Such an interpretation conflicts with man's idea of the righteousness of God. "Could anyone be supposed by a law that says, 'For felony thou shalt die', not that he should lose his life; but be kept alive in perpetual exquisite torments? And would anyone think himself fairly dealt with, that was so used?"³ Why should Adam's posterity be charged with his sin? Some interpret the passage, "in the day that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die," Locke says, in this way, "Thou and thy posterity shall be ever after, incapable of doing anything, but what shall be sinful and provoking to me and shall justly deserve my wrath and indignation."⁴ Locke asserts that such an interpretation would not do credit to the justice of a human being, and would much less be worthy of a righteous God.

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1. Works, 7. 6.
 2. Works, 7. 6.
 3. Works, 7. 6.
 4. Works, 7. 6.

"I must confess, by death here, I can understand nothing but a ceasing to be, the losing of all actions of life and sense."¹ If death meant corruption of human nature, then Locke thought it "strange that the New Testament should not anywhere take notice of it."² It is true, he says, that all men inherit mortal life from Adam, "but, as I remember, every one's sin is charged upon himself only."³

When Adam had been turned out of paradise, "he was exposed to the toil, anxiety, and frailties of this mortal life which should end in dust out of which he was made."⁴ His mortality descended to all his posterity. But Locke says it may be asked, why, if God is righteous, should all men suffer mortality for Adam's sin? Is it consonant with the justice of God to have men suffer for the original sin? Locke replies that it depends upon what one means by punishment. "If God afford them a temporary, mortal life, 'tis his gift; they owe it to his bounty; they could not claim it as their own right, nor does he injure them when he takes it away from them."⁵ This is quite a different thing from putting men in a state of misery for a sin not their own. Mortality in no

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1. Works, 7.7.
 2. Works, 7.7.
 3. Works, 7.6.
 4. Works, 7.7.
 5. Works, 7.7,8.

wise compromises the goodness of God. It exhibits His grace. Mortal life is the gift of God. "That such a temporary lifewith all its frailties and ordinary miseries, is better than no being, is evident, by the high value we put upon it ourselves."¹

The conditon of mortality in which Adam's sin involved all men prevailed until the time of Moses. Then God gathered together His chosen people, the children of Abraham, and formed them into a nation. He gave to them a law, which, if they obeyed it perfectly would restore to them the immortality lost by Adam.

Though this law, which was righteous, just, and good, were ordained to life, yet, not being able to give strength to perform what it could not but require, it failed, by reason of the weakness of human nature, to help men to life. So that, though the Israelites had statutes, which if man did, he should live in them; yet they all transgressed and life, by the deeds of the law.....This was the state of the Israelites.²

The Gentile world, without such a law, became hopelessly corrupt.

Though God made himself known to them, by legible characters of his own being and power, visible in the works of creation; yet they glorified

1. Works, 7. 8.

2. Works, 8. 275.

him not, nor were thankful to him; they did not worship the one, only, true, invisible God, the creator of all things, but revolted from him, to gods, set up by themselves, in their own vain imaginations, and worshipped stocks and stones, the corruptible images of corruptible things.

That, they having thus cast off their allegiance to him, their proper Lord, and revolted to other gods, God, therefore, cast them off, and gave them up to vile affections, and to the conduct of their own darkened hearts, which led them into all sorts of vices.¹

This was the state of the Gentiles before the coming of Christ. Thus both Jews and Gentiles were in a hopeless condition. The Jews inevitably fell short of the law, and the Gentiles were mired in sin.

We have seen that while Locke thought of Christ as a supernatural being, he did not think of him as being God. This, however, did not prevent him from giving assent to the miraculous conception and birth of Christ. These he accepted as facts revealed in an infallible book. Christ's incarnation he believed to be the central fact of God's redemptive scheme. Adam's fall excluded him from paradise, and brought mortality to all men. The Jews had this penalty remitted by the Law of Moses. Obedience to this Law was the condition of immortal life.

1. Works, 8. 276.

Here then we have the standing and fixed measures of life and death. Immortality and bliss, belong to the righteous; those who have lived in an exact conformity to the law of God, are out of the reach of death; but an exclusion from paradise and loss of immortality is the portion of sinners; of all those, who have any way broke that law, and failed of a complete obedience to it, by the guilt of any one transgression.¹

This obedience Locke denotes as the "law of works" and it is curious to observe that he believes that by exact obedience man has the right to eternal life. As a matter of fact, no one was able to obey the law perfectly, for one transgression precluded one's hope of immortality. All men were in a state of death because they could not fulfil the "law of works".

Since the "law of works" was a practical impossibility, proving too hard for the achievement of mankind, a new law was promulgated by God, through Christ. This was the "law of faith" which both built upon and superseded the "law of works". Locke is very careful to point out that the "law of faith" does not abrogate the "law of works."

The difference between the law of works, and the law of faith, is only this: that the law of works makes no allowance for failing on any occasion.

1. Works, 7. 10.

Those that obey, are righteous; those that in any part disobey, are unrighteous, and must not expect life, the reward of the righteous. But, by the law of faith, faith is allowed to supply the defect of full obedience: and, so believers are admitted to life and immortality, as if they were righteous.¹

"The rule.....of right, is the same that ever it was"²
Locke assures us, and stands immutable. To those who believe properly God supplies sufficient grace to overcome the defects in obedience.

What must be believed if one is to partake of the benefit of the "law of faith"? This is the point to which Locke's whole discussion has been leading. "What we are now required to believe to obtain eternal life, is plainly set down in the gospel."² Locke finds it clear and simple, contained in a single sentence, "Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," or, in words which express exactly the same meaning, "Believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah." "This was the great proposition that was controverted concerning Jesus of Nazareth, 'Whether he was the Messiah or no?' And assent to that was that which distinguished believers from unbelievers."³ Most of the pages of the Reasonableness of Christian-

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1. Works, 7. 14.
 2. Works, 7. 14.
 3. Works, 7. 17.

ity, are devoted to adducing proof-tests for this contention. He eventually arrived at the conclusion that "it is plain, the the gospel was writ to induce men to a belief of this proposition, 'That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah', which if they believed, they should have life."¹

Locke's usage of the term "belief" in this proposition includes more than intellectual assent. He makes it clear that to accept the proposition "Jesus is the Messiah" means the commitment of one's whole self to the purposes of God, which is to give as perfect obedience to His claims as possible within the limits of our human nature. Locke would concur in the Scriptural formulation, that faith without works is dead. One must become Christ's disciple and follow him.

The believing Jesus to be the Messiah, includes in it receiving him for our Lord and King, promised and sent from God: and so lays upon all his subjects an absolute and indispensable necessity of assenting to all that they can attain of the knowledge that he taught; and of a sincere obedience to all that he commanded.²

We see here the final outcome of the fall of Adam in Justification by faith to all believing Christians. By the

1. Works, 7. 18.
2. Works, 7. 421.

"law of faith", a person who accepts Christ and sincerely endeavours to follow him is accepted by God. But we must inquire further into the exact manner in which man may be justified.

Locke rejected the notion that man is accepted by God because Christ accumulated merit which may be used to redeem mankind. Locke thought such a payment on Christ's part to be unnecessary. When faith is reckoned for righteousness, the lack of perfect obedience is overcome and man is ideally represented as having fulfilled the "law of works" which ensured him the right to immortality. In his paraphrase of Romans 4 : 5, Locke states it thus:

But to him, that by his works attains not righteousness, but only believeth on God, who justifieth him, being ungodly, to him justification is a favour of grace: because his believing is accounted to him for righteousness, or perfect obedience.¹

What this imputing or reckoning of righteousness is, may be seen,.....viz, the not reckoning of sin to any one, the not putting sin to his account.²

Here we see how Locke has combined the operation of an immutable law and the grace of God in his doctrine of justification by faith. "The doctrine of justification by faith

1. Works, 8. 310.

2. Works, 8. 310, note 6.

necessarily supposeth a rule of righteousness...."¹ Perfect obedience to God's law entitles man to eternal life. Sin prevents man from fulfilling the law perfectly, but faith supplies that which is lacking. Through faith man thus fulfills the law and is entitled to the same reward as if he had perfectly fulfilled the "law of works." This is Locke's attempt to bring together the reformed and Romanist views, which results in a curious blend. It neglects the importance of Christ's sacrifice, and stresses his significance solely as the bearer of a new law, the "law of faith."

Of Christ's work on earth Locke has little to say. He points out that John the Baptist indicated that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus accepted that designation and the contemporary witnesses are convinced of it, first, because Jesus fulfills the prophecies made concerning him in the Old Testament, and secondly, because he is able to display supernatural power in the performance of miracles. He chose his disciples and began his ministry of teaching and healing. But though Jesus knew himself to be the Messiah, he made no announcement of the fact, keeping it a secret even from his disciples in order to prevent suspicion and prolong his

1. Works, 8. 308, note g.

ministry. Locke dwells on this hesitancy of Jesus to reveal the true significance of his coming. He cites many passages, with the view, it would seem, of showing that even in Jesus' own time his true purpose was not seen by those who were close to him. So, Locke would imply, just as it was difficult then to see this central teaching of the gospels, so, at the present time, it may be overlooked.

Locke's doctrine of the atonement is obscure and we may believe that he attached scant importance to the sacrificial death of Christ. In the Reasonableness of Christianity he devoted little space to the discussion of the topic, with the result that John Edwards called him to task in a stinging rebuke. It is true that in the Reasonableness of Christianity Locke does speak of the self-giving death of Christ as a proof of his immortality. He quotes John 10 : 18 to that end. "No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." And, "For this laying down of his life for others, our Saviour....." was for "his obedience and suffering, rewarded with a kingdom."¹ Christ's death was a result of his obedience to God's law, and for it he received a heavenly kingdom, though which he made it possible that "all men shall

1. Works, 7. 109.

return to life again at the last day."¹ In the last day all men shall be judged by God according to their righteousness. Quoting I Corinthians 6 : 9, Locke says, "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." But the righteous receive their reward. "God therefore, out of mercy for mankind, and for the erecting of the kingdom of his Son,..... proposed to the children of men, that as many of them as would believe Jesus his Son (whom he sent into the world) to be the Messiah...should, for his Son's sake, because they gave themselves up to him,...be forgiven...and so their faith....should be accounted to them for righteousness."²

Locke was not willing to concede that all men are rewarded with immortality. The condition of salvation, however, he thought was not vested in the arbitrary will of God. It is true that God has singled out certain persons to receive his favour, but such a decision depends upon the virtue of the persons thus separated. The following statement is Locke's note on the passage, "Even so, then, at this present time also, there is a remnant, according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works." Commenting on this Locke says:

1. Works, 7. 110.

2. Works, 7. 110, 111.

This exclusion of works, seems to be mistaken by those, who extend it to all manner of difference in the person chosen, from those that were rejected: for such a choice as that excludes not grace in the chooser, but merit is chosen. For it is plain, that by works here, St. Paul means merit, as it is evident also from ch.iv.2-4. The law required complete, perfect obedience: he that performed that, had a right to the reward; but he that failed and came short of that, had by the law no right to anything but death. And so the jews, being all sinners, God might, without injustice, have cast them all off; none of them could plead a right to his favour. If, therefore, he chose out and reserved any, it was of mere grace, though in his choice he preferred those who were best disposed and most inclined to his service. A whole province revolts from their prince, and takes arms against him; he resolves to pardon some of them. This is the purpose of grace. He reduces them under his power, and chooses out of them, as vessels of mercy, those that he finds least infected with malice, obstinacy, and rebellion. This choice neither voids, nor abates his purpose of grace; that stands firm; but only executes it so, as may best comport with his wisdom and goodness. And, indeed, without some regard to a difference, in the things taken, from those that are left, I do not see how it can be called choice. A handful of pebbles, for example, may be taken out of a heap, they are taken and separated, indeed from the rest, but if it be without any regard to any difference in them, and from others rejected, I doubt whether any body can call them chosen.¹

It is not our purpose to dwell on Locke's theoretical solution of the difficulties involved in the Doctrine of Election. It is obviously inadequate, for one has to ask the further question - if God be Creator and Sustainer, why do some become

1. Works, 8. 388, note 6.

more righteous than others? But Locke perhaps has failed no more than others to throw light on this mysterious problem, which is, in all probability, beyond the range of human reason to understand.

In a short entry in his Common-place Book, entitled "Electio", Locke expresses a practical objection to the doctrine.

I cannot see of what use the Doctrine of Election and Perseverance is, unless it be to lead men into presumption and a neglect of their duties, being once persuaded that they are in a state of grace, which is a state they are told they cannot fall from. For, since nobody can know that he is elected but by having a true faith, and nobody can know when he has such a faith that he cannot fall from, common and saving faith, as they are distinguished, being so alike that he that has faith cannot distinguish whether it be such as he can fall from or no (vide Calvin, Inst. 1.3, c. 2, 6, 12), - who is elected, or has faith from which he cannot fall, can only be known by the event in the last day, and therefore is in vain talked of now till the marks of such a faith be certainly given.¹

Predestination to damnation is a doctrine which Locke rejected. When confronted by the passage, "What, if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath, fitted to

1. King, LLJL, 295.

destruction" (Romans 3 : 22), Locke notes that by "vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction, "[Paul] manifestly means the nation of the jews, who were now grown ripe and fitted for the destruction he was bringing upon them."¹ "That he here speaks of men, nationally and not personally, in reference to their eternal state, is evident....."² The rejection of the doctrine finds support in another passage in the Common-place Book, for August 7, 1681. "Looking on God as a being infinite in goodness as well as in power, one cannot imagine he hath made anything with a design that it should be miserable, but that He hath afforded it all the means of being happy that its nature and estate is capable of."³

We must now resume our discussion of Locke's interpretation of the meaning of Christ's death. As we have seen, he found it difficult to believe it necessary that merit be attached to it. He clearly rejects the satisfaction theory of Christ's death in his comment on Romans 3 : 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood....."

Redemption signifies deliverance, but not from

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1. Works, 8. 376, note w.
 2. Works, 8. 377, note w.
 3. King, LLJL, 123.

everything; nor does redemption by Jesus Christ signify that there was any compensation made to God by paying what was of equal value, for that is inconsistent with what St. Paul says here expressly, that, they were delivered gratis, - but, if any-one will, from the literal signification of the words in English, persist in it against St. Paul's declaration, that it necessitates an equivalent price paid, I desire him to consider whom he redeemed are in bondage to, viz. sin and Satan. Nor could the price be paid to God in strictness of justice, unless the same person ought in strict justice to have the thing redeemed and the price paid for its redemption. For it is to God we are redeemed by the death of Christ.¹

It seemed quite improbable to Locke that there was any sacredotal meaning in the death of Christ. "I do not remember that he any-where assumes to himself the title of a priest."² Yet with all his arguments against the satisfaction theory of Christ's death, Locke says, towards the end of the Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity, "It is very hard for a christian, who reads the scripture with attention, and an unprejudiced mind, to deny the satisfaction of Christ: but it being a term not used by the Holy Ghost in scripture, and very variously explained by those that do use it.....I left it [out]."³ And he adds, "I do not remember that our Saviour has anywhere named satisfaction."⁴

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1. Works, 8. 304, note.
 2. Works, 7. 113.
 3. Works, 7. 418.
 4. Works, 7. 268.

It appears that Locke realized the absence of an adequate doctrine of the atonement in his theology. He indicated that he would like to have believed in the doctrine of satisfaction. The verbal assaults from Edwards which accused Locke of failing to do justice to the crucifixion and atonement, finally brought the reply from Locke that such discussion was outside the design of the Reasonableness of Christianity, which was to discover only those necessary articles, the believing of which was necessary to make one a Christian.

If Locke neglected the sacrificial death of Christ, he place great importance on the resurrection, for, to his legalistic frame of mind, this brought the fact of immortality to the knowledge of mankind in its most literal sense. Christ's death and resurrection proved beyond all doubt that he was the Messiah, which fact set in operation the "law of faith". Locke indicates the centrality of the resurrection in the following passage, commenting on I Corinthians 15 ; 17, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain." "If Jesus be no risen from the dead, he is not the Messiah, your believing in it is vain, and you will receive no benefit by that faith."¹ Locke regards the resurrection as essential to

1. Works, 7. 340.

the proof of Christ's Messiahship. The two doctrines support one another. "Our Saviour's resurrection...is truly of great importance in Christianity; so great, that his being, or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it: so that these two important doctrines are inseparable."¹

The resurrection assures mankind of existence beyond the grave. Before the coming of Christ the doctrine of immortality was not known, or if it was known, its meaning was obscure and men failed to grasp its full meaning. "There was no particular promise of eternal life until the coming of Christ."² Christ not only brought the certain knowledge of life after death but through his resurrection and Messiahship put into force the "law of faith" by which men may attain to it. To the question as to the exact manner in which men become partakers in the benefits of Christ's resurrection, Locke gives only one explicit answer.

Adam being turned out of paradise, and all his posterity born out of it, the consequence of it was, that all men should die, and remain under death for ever and so be utterly lost.

From this estate of death, Jesus Christ restores all mankind to life: I Cor. xv. 22, 'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.' How this shall be, the same author tells us in the

1. Works, 7. 341, 342.

2. King, LLJL, 297.

foregoing ver. 21. 'By man death came, by man also came resurrection from the dead.' Whereby it appears, that the life, which Jesus Christ restores to all men, is that life which they receive again at the resurrection. Then they recover from death, which otherwise all mankind should have continued under, lost forever; as it appears by St. Paul's arguing, I Cor. xv. concerning the resurrection.¹

In Locke's dispute with the Bishop of Worcester over the resurrection, he makes it clear that by resurrection he means a resurrection on the last day when men shall be judged. "I say, the general resurrection on the last day."² His doctrine is thus clear though unusual. All men, as sons of Adam, are mortal, but through Christ's resurrection immortality is assured to all. At death a man ceases to exist until the last day, when he is called forth from the grave and judged according to his obedience and faith. If through faith in Jesus as Messiah he has mitigated his lack of perfect obedience to God's law, he is restored to life and made immortal.

Concerning those who have never heard of the Saviour, Locke allows them a place which does more credit to his humanity than to the logic of his position. "God will require

1. Works, 7. 9.
2. Works, 4. 304.

of every man 'according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not'. He conceives it impossible than any man could be without some knowledge of God's redemptive purpose.

The same spark of the divine nature and knowledge in man, which making him a man; showed him also the way of atoning the merciful, kind, compassionate Author and Father of him and his being, when he transgressed that law. He that made use of this candle of the Lord, so far as to find out what was his duty, could not miss to find also the way of reconciliation and forgiveness, when he had failed of his duty: though if he used not his reason this way, if he put out or neglected this light, he might, see neither.

The law is the eternal, immutable standard or right. And a part of that law is, that a man should forgive, not only his children, but his enemies, upon their repentance, asking pardon and amendment. And therefore he could not doubt that the author of this law, and God of patience and consolation, who is rich in mercy, would forgive his frail offspring, if they acknowledged their faults, disapproved the iniquity of their transgressions, begged his pardon, and resolved in earnest, for the future, to conform their actions to this rule, which they owned to be just and right. This way of reconciliation, this hope of atonement, the light of nature revealed to them: and the revelation of the gospel, having said nothing to the contrary, leaves them to stand and fall on their own Father and Master, whose goodness and mercy is over all his works.¹

We see here a kind of a scheme of redemption discoverable by reason p~~ar~~allel to that which is revealed in the Scriptures. While in both cases the hope of immortality is based

1. Works, 7. 133.

on the grace of God, the way of revelation makes the hope more sure. What can be discovered by reason in this sphere is only probable; it can never be more than that, and gives no definite assurance of attaining to immortality. This doctrine concerning those who have not heard of Christ plainly contradicts what Locke has written about the state of the Gentiles before the coming of Christ. It is another indication of Locke's profound regard for the justice and mercy of God, who is so bound by his own goodness, and an immutable standard of right, that He will not punish those who have lived according to their best light.

As for those who definitely reject Christ, Locke hints at their annihilation. The little he says concerning them indicates that he did not believe they were assigned to an everlasting punishment. "Not any to whom the gospel hath been preached shall be saved without believing Jesus to be the Messiah."¹ The most explicit reference to those who reject Christ is found in the Common-place Book for August 7, 1681.

Though justice be also a perfection which we must necessarily ascribe to the Supreme Being, yet we cannot suppose the exercise of it should extend

1. Works, 7. 127, 128.

further than his goodness has need of it for the preservation of his creatures in the order and beauty of the state that he has placed each of them in; for since our actions cannot reach unto him, or bring him any profit or damage, the punishments he inflicts on any of his creatures, i.e. the misery or destruction he brings upon them, can be nothing else but to preserve the greater and more considerable part, and so being for their preservation, his justice is nothing but a branch of his goodness, which is fain by severity to restrain the irregular and destructive parts from doing harm; for to imagine God under a necessity of punishing for any other reason than this, is to make his justice a great imperfection, and to suppose a power over him that necessitates him to operate contrary to the rules of his wisdom and goodness, which cannot be supposed to make anything so idly as that it should be purposely destined or put in a worse state than destruction (misery being as much worse state than annihilation, as pain is than insensibility, or the torments of the rack less eligible than quiet sound sleeping): the justice then of God can be supposed to extend no further than infinite goodness shall find it necessary for the preservation of his works.¹

We may conclude that Locke believed that the wicked perish at death, and that because of their sin and lack of faith in rejecting Christ, are not restored on the last day to everlasting bliss.

Locke believed that his doctrine of redemption was a reasonable one. That is why he called his work on the subject

1. King, LLJL, 123, 124.

the Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scrip-
tures. The doctrines which have been revealed in Holy Writ
are in the category of "above reason" which Locke defined in
the Essay. He taught the doctrine of Justification by Faith
in such a way as to show that it is in no way contrary to
reason. The law of Moses he equates with the law of reason,
the law of nature. Reason convinces men that God is Omni-
potent and One. The grace of God in his mercy to mankind
is a quality which Locke thinks man would have discovered
in time by reason, as some have done, without the hearing
of the Gospel. The New Testament is such a perfect system
of morality that one needs to look no further for a guide
to conduct. The positive "law of faith", promulgated by
Christ is congruous with the mercy and justice of God. Thus
the Gospel is seen to be reasonable when one approaches it
without prejudice. The Gospel has two great advantages over
natural religion. The first is the Gospel's simplicity. Those
who have no time for study can grasp the doctrine in its
teaching and understand it. Secondly, the knowledge of re-
wards and punishments in a future day encourages virtue on
earth. Sometimes Locke leans to the idea that the Gospel
reveals doctrine impossible for reason to discover. At other

times he appears to think that in time reason would have been able to discover the truths revealed in the Gospel. Generally, his position is, as we have seen in Chapter Three, that the Gospel reveals truths that reason could not have discovered, such truths being judged as true when they are accredited by miracles and found not contrary to reason.

The very last years of Locke's life were spent in a close examination of the letters of St. Paul. To them he brought the same method he had used in the Essay and the Reasonableness of Christianity. He sought to understand the Epistles as they were, bringing to them only an unprejudiced understanding. In his work, Locke anticipates the spirit of modern historical criticism. He attempted to identify himself with the writer, to understand why he wrote, the conditions which surrounded the writing, and the circumstances which called it forth. He says of this method:

In prosecution of this thought, I concluded it necessary, for the understanding of any one of St. Paul's epistles, to read it all through at one sitting: and to observe, as well as I could, the drift and design of his writing.¹

Of this method Fraser remarks: "He was among the first in

1. Works, 8. xiii.

Europe who led towards the large historical exegesis since practiced by the great German critics, which has so transformed Christian thought."¹ Locke here, as in his defined purpose in the Essay, cleared the ground a little and cut away the trammels of prejudice. Locke must not be credited with too much. His method is not critical, for he lived in an age which had not yet seen the significance of the idea of development. His method was rational, which differs chiefly from the critical in being non-historical. In the course of this chapter especially we have had occasion to quote from his Commentaries. Here and there he displays remarkable skill at paraphrasing. In the following passage we gain some insight, not only into the section commented upon, but into Locke's thought concerning the significance of the Gospel. The paraphrase is of I Corinthians 2 : 14-16.

But a man, who hath no other help but his own natural faculties, how much soever improved by human arts and sciences, cannot receive the truths of the gospel, which are made known by another principle only, viz, the Spirit of God revealing them; and therefore seem foolish and absurd to such a man : nor can he, by the mere use of his natural faculties, and the principles of human reason, ever come to the knowledge of them; because it is, by the studying of divine revelation alone, that we can attain the knowledge of

1. Fraser, LOC, 262.

them. But he that lays his foundation in divine revelation, can judge what is, and what is not, the doctrine of the gospel, and of salvation; he can judge who is, and who is not, a good minister and preacher of the word of God; but others, who are bare animal men, that go not beyond the discoveries made by the natural faculties of human understanding, without the help and study of revelation, cannot judge of such a one, whether he preacheth right and well, or not. For who, by the bare use of his natural parts, can come to know the mind of the Lord, in the design of the gospel, so able to instruct him (the spiritual man) in it? But I, who, renouncing all human knowledge in the case, take all, that I preach, from divine revelation alone, I am sure, that therein I have the mind of Christ; and therefore, there is no reason why any of you should prefer other teachers to me; glory in them who oppose and vilify men; and count it an honour, to go for their scholars and be of their party.¹

1. Works, 8. 96, 97.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CHURCH AND TOLERATION

In this chapter it is our purpose to examine Locke's doctrine of the Christian Church and his teaching concerning toleration. We will consider them together because the two were inextricably woven together in the fabric of his thinking. It is not too much to say that Locke thought that the prime duty of the church was to exercise toleration.

Since you are pleased to inquire what are my thoughts about the mutual toleration of christians in their different professions of religion, I must needs answer you freely, that I esteem that toleration to be the chief characteristical mark of the true church.¹

Locke's interest in toleration was life-long and in the course of time he contributed four different letters to its cause. The first letter, the Epistola de Tolerantia, is the most important, and "has been called the most original of Locke's works."² The full significance of this letter may

1. Works, 6. 5.

2. Fraser, LOC, 90.

be underestimated in those countries where freedom of belief has been an accepted part of the religious tradition for over two centuries. But it must never be forgotten that Locke's contribution to toleration was one of the strong factors in the establishment of this tradition. The arguments of the Epistola have a quality in them which time has not been able to spoil, and even though it was written as a tract for the times, to set right what Locke believed to be the most conspicuous sin of the church, its message still speaks against interference in religious belief. In our own day when there is a tendency of the civil power to crush this freedom the arguments of the Epistola might well be studied.

Locke's teaching on toleration is not only the most original and abiding of his religious works, but it speaks most typically of Locke, the religious man. It combines the interests of the thinker and the man of affairs; the deep piety and sense of justice; and the concern both for the rights of the individual and for those of the community as a whole. We shall see, as we go on, how much of the man is reflected in this phase of his work.

It was not that Locke said anything entirely new. The Epistola de Tolerantia was first published in Holland where for many years the subject had been the occasion for spirited debate. Le Clerc had complained in the May, 1687 issue of the Bibliothèque Universelle that toleration was the only religious topic then discussed in Holland. Locke was doubtless greatly influenced in his attitude to this matter by his exile in Holland. But for the roots of his thinking on the subject we must go further back than the years he spent away from England. As Alexander has pointed out, "Nothing is more interesting than to trace the preparation in Locke's mind for his authentic deliverances, and the papers preserved to us show rather how early than late the central ideas in his various doctrines took shape."¹ About the history of his ideas on toleration we are particularly fortunate. Various early fragments show how soon in Locke's thinking he became aware of the barriers of intolerance and religious prejudice which blocked the way to truth and the well-being of mankind. Perhaps it is almost inevitable that Locke should have made some contribution to the cause of tolerance. So many environmental circumstances, personal and national,

1. Alexander, LOC, 13.

contributed to his interest in it that there is little wonder that the idea was to be the "mainspring" of his life from youth onwards.

The toleration which Locke sought "implied a protest against those who in theological and other inquiries, demand absolute certainty in questions where balanced probability alone is within the reach of a human intelligence."¹ Amid increasing religious discord in seventeenth century England, into which Locke had been born, far-seeing men within and without the church laid the foundations for the building of a lasting tolerance. Chillingworth, Hales of Eton, Jeremy Taylor and other liberal Anglican Divines had advocated a broad comprehension within the Established Church. They believed that the narrow limits of actual knowledge in the sphere of religion made it necessary that mutual toleration be practised apart from a very few fundamental doctrines, so that a wide latitude of belief might be possible within the confines of one comprehensive Church. Liberal Puritans had also pled the cause of toleration, but the basis of their polemic differed from that of the Latitudinarians.

1. Fraser, LOC, 90,91.

Men like Goodwin and Owen were zealous for orthodoxy. They disliked comprehension because they felt that it compromised true doctrine. Yet for those who had genuine differences of opinion as to just what constituted the orthodox position, they sought a mutual toleration. Each sect, they believed, should have the right to its own doctrine without interference. Both the Anglicans and the Puritans united in their protest against civil interference with those who did not or could not accept the form of Christian faith officially approved by the state.

One of Locke's very early decisions concerned his church relationship. He had been reared a Puritan, but eventually took his place with the liberal Anglicans, the Latitudinarians, who advocated a broad comprehension within one Church. He accepted their belief that each individual should have jurisdiction over his own beliefs beyond a very simple formulation of the fundamental doctrines of faith. Throughout his life Locke purposely refrained from attaching himself exclusively to any one ecclesiastical communion. He did not wish to be bound by the total doctrine of any one church. He numbered among his friends men of many beliefs and opinions. Perhaps

the greatest single theological influence in his life was his friendship with Limborch, the Remonstrant professor of theology, whose acquaintance he had made in Holland, and with whom, for the remainder of his life, he corresponded on matters of theological importance. Locke knew Puritans, Anglicans, Quakers, Unitarians, Dissenters, Roman Catholics and Jews. To one of his broad sympathy and ready understanding persecution was abhorrent. Further, Locke's keen mind saw that greed for power was the underlying motive for religious persecution in many cases, and he was anxious to expose the false pretence of much that had paraded under the banner of religious conviction. Too, often, he noticed, belief was made orthodox because it was the whim of the reigning sovereign. He found that the church was "for the most part more apt to be influenced by the court, than the court by the church."¹

How the church was under the vicissitude of orthodox and arian emperors is very well known. Or if those things be too remote, our modern English history affords us fresher examples, in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, how easily and smoothly the clergy changed their decrees, their articles of faith, their form of worship, everything, according to the inclination of those kings and queens.²

By Locke's time, the people of England were tired of

1. Works, 6, 27.
2. Works, 6. 27.

religious persecution. They had seen that the Dutch had benefitted both spiritually and nationally by their policy of toleration. It had become apparent to the keener thinkers of this period that religious toleration was not only a necessity for the spiritual health of the individual, but that its achievement would also bring national unity and strength. Locke approached the problem both as a believing Christian and a loyal Englishman. His discussion on toleration is consequently both religious and political.

As early as 1660, according to Fox-Bourne's reckoning, we have a fragment from Locke's pen which indicates his early interest in toleration. The piece is entitled "Reflections on the Roman Commonwealth." Locke found that the religious system begun by Romulus and completed by Numa was the "wisest and most politic system of religion that ever any lawgiver founded."¹ Numa showed his wisdom in that he did not require "the belief in many articles of faith", and Locke observes that "if schisms and heresies were traced to their original causes, it would be found that they have sprung chiefly from the multiplying articles of faith, and narrowing the bottom of religion by clogging it with creeds and

1. Fox-Bourne, Life, 1. 149.

catechisms and endless niceties about the essences, properties, and attributes of God."¹ Numa was able to narrow down the essentials of faith to two articles, which all men could agree. "First, that the Gods were the authors of all good to mankind, and the second, that to merit this good the Gods were to be worshipped, in which worship the chief end of all was to be innocent, good and just."² In Numa's system, Locke found the generous principle of toleration. This was the result of vesting the management of the national religion with the senate and the people. It prevented tyranny at the hands of the priests. Locke applauded the restrictions imposed upon those who presided at the worship of the gods. It prevented priestcraft from developing, for Locke observed that "priestcraft and tyranny go hand in hand."³ It is interesting to note that here we have some of the principal roots of Locke's mature thought on toleration. We see already his emphasis that the essential articles of faith should be few, that worship in its best sense is primarily moral, and that whatever defection there has been in religion has come through priestcraft.

1. Fox-Bourne, Life, 1. 149.

2. Ibid., 149.

3. Ibid., 149.

Perhaps the next of Locke's writings is a treatise in answer to the question, "Whether the civil magistrate may lawfully impose and determine the use of indifferent things in Religious Worship?" Locke answered this in the affirmative, but it must be remembered that his reply came at the time of the Restoration under Charles II. In the anticipation that the Restoration would put an end to the ecclesiastical anarchy which had prevailed for some time, Locke, along with many others, indulged himself in hopes which were never realized. Writing out of his experience of the conditions previous to the Restoration he found that "a general freedom is but a general bondage"¹, and hoped that the quarrels of the various church parties would be settled in the authority which would be imposed with the return of the king. If, however, there had been ecclesiastical anarchy before the Restoration, its place was taken by a new form of tyranny. It was against this tyranny that Locke henceforth directed his efforts.

There is a long entry in Locke's Common-place Book called "Sacerdos" from which we have previously quoted. Fox-

1. King, LLJL, 8.

Bourne thinks that this undated paper was written before 1667. In this paper Locke returned to the point of view which he had taken in the "reflections on the Roman Commonwealth." He could not see, he tells us, how the magistrate "hath any power to order and direct matters indifferent in the circumstance of worship."¹ From this position Locke never again deviated. Here again we find a strong polemic against the priesthood, but this time Locke makes his charge specific and directs it against the Christian priests. He finds no sanction for a Christian priesthood. Their presence is but an indication that "antichrist has sown those tares in the Church."² He describes how the priesthood began.

The clergy, by degrees as Christianity spread, affecting dominion, laid claim to a priesthood, derived by succession from Christ, and so independent from civil power, receiving (as they pretend) by the imposition of hands, and some other ceremonies agreed on (but variously) by the priesthoods of the several factions, an indelible character, particular sanctity, and a power immediately from Heaven to do several things that are not lawful to be done by other men. The chief whereof are - 1st, To teach opinions concerning God, a future state, and ways of worship. 2nd, To do and perform themselves certain rites exclusive of others. 3rd, To punish dissenters from their doctrines and rules. Whereas it is evident from Scriptures,

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1. King, LLJL, 289.
 2. King, LLJL, 289.
 3. King, LLJL, 289.

that all priesthood terminated in the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, who was the last Priest.¹

Thus it was, says Locke, that the Christian clergy attempted to secure for themselves the power of the office that belonged to the priests among the Jews.

Locke's analysis of the way in which religious persecution and religious wars arise is notable.

The magistrate, being persuaded it is his duty to punish those the clergy please to call heretics, schismatics, or fanatics, or else taught to apprehend danger from dissention in religion, thinks it his interest to suppress them - persecutes all who observe not the same form in the religious worship which is set up in his country. The people, on the other side, finding the mischiefs that fall on them from worshipping God according to their own persuasions, enter into confederacies and combinations to secure themselves as well as they can; so that the oppression and vexation on the one side, self-defense and desire for religious liberty on the other, create dislikes, jealousies, apprehensions, and factions, which seldom fail to break out into downright persecution, or open war.²

In the "Sacerdos" we have a hint of an idea which was to stand out in Locke's mature religious thinking. In this treatise he not only repeats his contention that the desire for power is the basis for a tyrannical priestcraft in the

1. King, LLJL, 289.

2. King, LLJL, 290.

Christian as well as the pagan church, but that the priestly accretions have obscured the original, pure, religion of Christ. Later Locke was to say this more positively. He was to say that one must return to the original and simple gospel in order to get to the heart of Christianity. Here we have the negative idea that was to later develop into a positive trend of thought.

In 1667 Locke wrote but did not publish "An Essay concerning Toleration." The years between the writing of this essay and the Restoration had been rife with religious conflict and persecution. The Act of Uniformity of 1662, the Conventicle Act of 1664, and the Five-mile Act of 1665 had brought severe hardship upon the Dissenters. Locke himself suffered under the new order. He was not a Dissenter, but when he applied for the degree of Doctor of Medicine at Oxford, after completing the usual course, it was not granted, presumably because the High Church Party was then in power, and Locke, not being an adherent to their principles, thus lost his degree. We may, however, acquit Locke of any exclusively personal motive in writing his essay. Toleration was a subject much discussed, and as we have seen, he had already given much attention to it. It may be true that the personal

rebuff serve to urge him to find a solution to the much-mooted problem. His desire to reach the truth of the matter, together with his broad sympathies, prevented his making any one-sided conclusion. Perhaps that is why this early essay is almost identical with the more famous Epistola which he was to publish in 1685, the latter being but an enlargement of the essential arguments in the earlier work.

We have seen and outlined in our foregoing discussion something of the history of Locke's interest in toleration. We have been able to look behind the scenes into some of his unpublished writings on the subject which show the sequence of his ideas and how much they reflect both the man and his time. It is our purpose now to examine, as systematically as possible, what might be called Locke's Doctrine of the Church. We will attempt to determine in what he considered the character of the church to consist, and what the attitude of its members should be to those who are outside its fold.

From what we have already learned of Locke's religious ideas we are not led to expect that he attached great importance to the place of the church. He believed with Chilling-

worth that the Bible alone is the whole religion of Protestants and that reason alone ensures the validity of revelation. According to Locke's theology man stands as an independent moral being before God, his Creator, and is alone personally accountable to Him in the matter of salvation. Man is justified by his faith in Christ as Messiah. Locke appears to have honestly believed that the church had more often been a hindrance than a help in man's relationship to God.

Locke disagreed with the Romanists that it was upon Peter that the Christian Church had been founded. He believed that it was founded upon Christ alone. "Our Saviour has promised that he will build his church on this fundamental truth, that he is 'Christ the son of God; so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!'"¹ In another place he says, "I do not remember that our Saviour any-where promises any other assistance but that of his Spirit; or gives his little flock any encouragement to expect much countenance or help from the great men of this world;..... 'not many wise men, after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,' I Cor. i. 26, is the style of the Gospel."²

1. Works, 6. 484.
2. Works, 6. 485.

In his Common-place Book, Locke addresses himself to a discussion of the church. It may be pointed out in passing that Locke's idea is Puritan, in that it divides the full life of man between the church on the one hand, and the state on the other. "There is a twofold society, of which all men in the world are members, and that from the twofold concernment they have to attain happiness: viz, that of this world and that of the other: and hence there arises these two following societies, viz. religious and civil."¹ It will be noticed that Locke often uses the words religious society in place of the word church. The very fact that he uses the terms interchangably indicates his attitude towards the church.

In the Epistola, Locke gives us his definition of the church. "Let us now consider what a church is. A church then I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls."² In a paper written in Holland, and dated 1673-4, Locke drew up

1. King, LLJL, 300.

2. Works, 6. 13.

rules for his ideal religious society. It is entitled "Pacific Christians", and the rules are quote in full as follows:

1. We think nothing to be known or believed for salvation, but what God hath revealed.

2. We therefore embrace all those who, in sincerity, receive the Word of Truth revealed in the Scripture, and obey the light which enlightens every man that comes into this world.

3. We judge no man in meats, or drinks, or habits, or days, or any other outward observances, but leave every one to his freedom in the use of those outward things which he thinks can most contribute to build up the inward man in righteousness, holiness, and the true love of God, and his neighbor, in Christ Jesus.

4. If any one find any doctrinal parts of Scripture difficult to be understood, we recommend him, -1st, The study of the Scriptures in humility and singleness of heart; 2nd, Prayer to the Father of lights to enlighten him; 3rd, Obedience to what is already revealed to him, remembering that the practice of what we do know is the surest way to more knowledge; our infallible guide having told us, If any man will do the will of Him that sent me, he shall know of the doctrine, John vii, 17. 4th, We leave him to the advice and assistance of those who he thinks best able to instruct him. No man or society of men, having any authority to impose their opinion or interpretations on any other, the meanest Christian. Since, in matters of religion, every man must know, and believe, and give an account for himself.

5. We hold it to be an indispensible duty for all Christians to maintain love and charity in the diversity of contrary opinions: by which charity we do not mean an empty sound, but an effectual forbearance and good-will,

carrying men to a communion, friendship, and mutual assistance one to another, in outward as well as spiritual things; and by debarring all magistrates from the making use of their authority, much less their sword (which was put into their hands only against evil-doers), in matters of faith and worship.

6. Since the Christian religion we profess is not a notional science, to furnish speculation to the brain, or discourse to the tongue, but a rule of righteousness to influence our lives, Christ having given himself to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people zealous of good works,* we profess the only business of our public assemblies to be to exhort thereunto, laying aside all controversy and speculative questions, instruct and encourage one another in the duties of a good life, which is acknowledged to be the great business of true religion, and to pray God for the assistance of his Spirit for the enlightening our understanding and subduing our corruptions, that so we may return unto him a reasonable and acceptable service, and show our faith by our works, proposing ourselves and others the example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the great pattern for our imitation.

7. One alone being our Master, even Christ, we acknowledge no masters of our assembly; but, if any man in the spirit of love, peace and meekness, has a word of exhortation, we hear him.

8. Nothing being so oppressive, or having proved so fatal to unity, love and charity, the first great characteristic duties of Christianity, as men's fondness of their own opinions, and their endeavours to set them up, and have them followed, instead of the Gospel of peace; to prevent these seeds of dissension and division, and maintain unity in the difference of opinions which we know cannot be avoided - if any one appear contentious, abounding in his own sense rather than in love, and desirous to draw followers after himself, with destruction or opposition to others, we

* Titus, ii. 14 (This is Locke's footnote)

judge him not to have learned Christ as he ought, and therefore not fit to be a teacher of others.

9. Decency and order in our assemblies being directed, as they ought, to edification, can need but very few and plain rules. Time and place of meeting being settled, if anything else needs regulation, the assembly itself, or four of the ancientest, soberest, and discreetest of the brethern, chosen for the occasion, shall regulate it.

10. From every brother that, after admonition, walketh disorderly, we withdraw ourselves.

11. We each of us think it our duty to propagate the doctrine and practice of universal good-will and obedience in all places, and on all occasions, as God shall give us opportunity.¹

This is a remarkable document. It contains most of Locke's ideas on the church, and much though its content reflects his own ideas, it appears to have been strongly influenced by the Quakers.

Several features of Locke's idea of the church stand out, and we shall make special note of them, drawing our material both from the passage above and from other pertinent sections of his writings. Locke insists upon the voluntary character of man's relationship with the church. "Nobody is born a member of any church"², Locke says, in the sense that he is born a member of civil society. One may choose

1. King, LLJL, 276 - 278.

2. Works, 6. 13.

what church one desires, and shall suffer no interference from any other person as to what this choice shall be. "It is part of my liberty as a Christian and as a man to choose of what Church or religious society I will be of, as most conducing to the salvation of my soul, of which I alone can judge."¹ The individualism marked in the last phrase of this statement shows how thoroughly the idea is embedded in Locke's whole philosophy.

Since man's hope of salvation can be the only reason for his affiliation with any religious society, so Locke says that it can be the only reason why he should continue his membership in it. "For if afterwards he discover anything either erroneous in the doctrine, or incongruous in the worship of that society to which he has joined himself, why should it not be as free for him to go out as it was to enter? No member of a religious society can be tied with any other bonds but what proceed from the certain expectation of eternal life. A church then is a society of members voluntarily uniting to this end."²

The church is voluntary. But "no church or company, I

1. King, LLJL, 356.
2. Works, 6. 13.

say, can in the least subsist and hold together, but will presently dissolve, and break to pieces, unless it be regulated by some laws, and the members all consent to observe some order."¹ The making and maintaining of these laws is vested in the society as a whole. They may choose someone to guide their deliberations, but there shall be no priests. Locke speaks definitely against apostolic succession in this connection. To say that "no society can be a true church, unless it have in it a bishop, or presbyter, with ruling authority derived from the very apostles and continued down to the present time by an uninterrupted succession"² is folly. Christ's own promise, Locke maintained, was far more simple and explicit, and implied a denial of such a view. "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them" is the passage which Locke cites from Matthew 18 : 20 for his proof.

If one is really solicitious about the true church, Locke points out the basis of true communion with it, which is an acceptance "in such things and such things only, as the Holy Spirit has in Holy Scriptures declared in express words, to be necessary to salvation."³ The church has no

1. Works, 6. 14.
2. Works, 6. 14.
3. Works, 6. 15.

right to initiate doctrine, for it comes alone through the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. Nor has it a right to interpret doctrine, for that each man must do for himself.

It may be asked then, what is the purpose of the church, and what are its powers? Having stated that the chief end of a religious society is to attain happiness in another world, Locke, in one of his "Miscellaneous Papers" gives a more explicit account of what he thinks to be the purpose of the church. The condition of communion with any church, he holds, is the promise to obey the laws of the society.

The proper matter of the laws of this society, are all things tending to the attainment of future bliss, which are of three sorts: 1. Credenda, or matters of faith and opinion, which terminate in the understanding. 2. Cultus religiosus, which contains in it both the ways of expressing our honour and adoration of the Deity, and of address to him for the obtaining of any good from him. 3. Moralia, or the right management of our actions in respect to ourselves and others.¹

The proper matters of the society are spiritual. The only "arms by which the members of this society are to be kept within their duty, are admonitions, exhortations and advice!"²

"From every brother that, after admonition, walketh

1. King, LLJL, 301.
2. Works, 6. 16.

disorderly, we withdraw ourselves."¹ "This is the last and utmost force of ecclesiastical authority."²

Since membership in a religious society is voluntary, a man may, if he so chooses, affiliate himself with no church at all. If, however, he does decide to join the membership of some communion (and Locke assumes that every thinking man will do so), it is not wholly an indifferent matter as to which he will join. Locke makes the tacit assumption that all Protestant churches differed only in matters of small moment, and that all accepted what he considered to be the fundamentals in doctrine necessary to salvation. On such a basis, it would make little difference which church one joins. But Locke does not allow this inference to be made. It does make a difference to which church one belongs, because in every church truth is to be found mixed with error, and every reasonable person has the intellectual obligation to choose the communion with the greatest truth in its doctrine. Each person must make his own choice in this matter.

We have seen that Locke asserts that the function of the church is to direct man towards salvation, and that

1. King, LLJL, 277.

2. Works, 6. 16.

there are three areas in which the church must concern itself, i.e., Credenda, Cultus religiosus and Moralia. We will consider these separately and in detail.

From what we know of Locke's religious opinions we would expect that he would demand that church doctrine should be very simple and "lay level with the commonest understanding." He divided Christian doctrine into two sorts, those which are essential to salvation, and those which are not necessary but useful. As we have seen, the church does not originate doctrine, but its members seek to understand what they find in Holy Scripture, the most important task of which is to separate the necessary from the unnecessary beliefs. When a church thinks that it has found a doctrine that is true, that doctrine is to be given the widest possible hearing. Its truth must be proclaimed far and wide. But, Locke cautions, no church, even when its members are convinced of the truth of its doctrine, has the right to claim infallibility.

It would appear that the position of the unnecessary but useful doctrines in Locke's classification is anomolous. He says that these doctrines must be studied, systematized

and harmonized with other doctrine. But their value is not clear. The reason for their introduction becomes apparent when Locke presses the point that failing to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary doctrine has been the parent of all heresy and schism. "Heresy," he says, "is a separation made in the ecclesiastical communion between men of the same religion, for some opinion contained in the rule itself.....Amongst those who acknowledge nothing but Holy Scriptures to be their rule of faith, heresy is a separation made in the Christian communion for opinions not contained in the express words of Scripture."¹ This is a hard blow at much church doctrine, but Locke was willing to accept as necessary doctrine only that which is expressly contained in Scripture. It is this fact which undoubtedly influenced what appears to be his rejection of the Doctrine of the Trinity, for he could find no reference to it in Holy Writ.

We have anticipated Locke's answer to the question concerning the question as to what are the necessary doctrines in Christian faith on which man's redemption depends. Locke's conception of the great simplicity of the Gospel is apparent

1. Works, 6. 55, 56.

here. Anything intricate in a system of divinity, with "too nice divisions", he believed was prima facie evidence against its truth.

While all Scripture was accepted as verbally inspired, and equally true, Locke looked for his essential doctrine in the Gospels and the Acts. He disregarded the Epistles because he found that they were written for specific situations which had arisen in the churches, and so do not contain doctrine that is universal. Further, they were written in a difficult style, and all men could not easily understand them. Finally, they were written as instructions to those who were already in the faith, and could not be regarded as articles the believing of which constituted a man a Christian.

I do not deny, but the great doctrines of the Christian faith are dropt here and there, and scattered up and down in most of them. But it is not in the epistles we are to learn what are the fundamental articles of faith.¹

It was in the Gospels and the Acts that Locke found a single fundamental doctrine, the acceptance of which differentiated a Christian from an unbeliever. This doctrine Locke

1. Works, 7. 154.

considered to have been his own personal discovery. In the preface to the Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity he says of it,

The first view I had of it seemed mightily to satisfy my mind, in the reasonableness and plainness of this doctrine; but yet the general silence I had in my little reading met with, concerning any such thing, awed me with the apprehension of singularity; until going on in the gospel-history, the whole tenour of it made it so clear and visible, that I more wondered that every body did not see and embrace it; than I should assent to what was so plainly laid down, and so frequently inculcated in holy writ, though systems of divinity said nothing of it.¹

This was the one, grand, fundamental doctrine which Locke discovered that was required in express words in the Gospel. "Jesus is the Messiah." "This was the proposition that was then controverted, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, 'Whether he was the Messiah or no?' And the assent to that was that which distinguished believers from unbelievers."² This alone Locke considered to be the one necessary and cardinal tenet of Christian doctrine. Other doctrines might be useful, but belief in them did not effect the matter of salvation. In the last chapter it has been shown how this doctrine is the keystone of Locke's scheme of redemption

1. Works, 7. 187.
2. Works, 7. 17.

and its consideration need no longer detain us here. So much, then, for credenda.

Locke accepted the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We have seen that he believed that no one was bring into the church, and consonant with that fact, we may infer that baptism was regarded by him as a kind of initiatory rite. In this view he inclines towards the Zwinglian position. In his Commentary, Locke writes of baptism as the "initiatory ceremony of the Christian Church."¹ Again, commenting on Romans 6: 1, he says that Paul explained to his converts that by "the very initiatory ceremony of baptism, wherein they were typically buried with Christ.... ,.....they, as he did, ought to die to sin; and as he rose to live in God, they should rise to a new life of obedience to God."² It is evident that Locke considered baptism to be the first formal step in redemption, a profession of faith, which brought a person into communion with Christ and His church.

Locke's position regarding the Lord's Supper is also Zwinglian. In the Commentary he describes the origin of the

1. Works, 8. 142.

2. Works, 8. 332.

sacrament.

Two of these ceremonies [of the Jew's Passover] were eating of bread solemnly broken, and drinking a cup of wine, called the cup of blessing. These two our Saviour transferred into the Christian church, to be used in their assemblies, for a commemoration of his death and sufferings.¹

There is no indication but that Locke thought the bread and wine as anything but symbolic of Christ's suffering and death. In commenting on I Corinthians 10 : 4, Locke says that spiritual meat and drink, "all which were typical representations of Christ, as well as the bread and wine, which we eat and drink in the Lord's Supper, are typical representations of him."² In the sixteenth verse of the same chapter we find, "They, who drink the cup of blessing, which we bless in the Lord's supper, do they not hereby partake of the benefits, purchased by Christ's blood, shed for them on the cross, which they here symbolically drink? And they, who eat of the bread broken there, do they not partake of the sacrifice of the body of Christ, and profess to be members of him?"³ The sacrament of the Lord's Supper Locke understood as a symbolical memorial to the blood and body

1. Works, 8. 156.

2. Works, 8. 143.

3. Works, 8. 145.

of Christ.

The ceremonies and rites of the church, other than the sacraments, Locke divides into two groups. There are those, in the first place, which come to us directly from Scripture, instituted by Christ and the apostles. Secondly, there are those in respect to which, in lieu of any gospel prescription, the injunction of St. Paul is to be followed: "that everything be done decently and in order." Whenever Locke speaks of ceremonies and rites he usually does so in a disparaging tone, for he always has in the back of his mind the notion that ceremonies are but priestly accretions engrafted upon the pure and simple gospel. One of the great practical advantages of Christ's advent was his inauguration of a simple and inward worship of God. Before the Incarnation, "stately buildings, costly ornaments, peculiar and uncouth habits, and a numerous huddle of pompous, fantastical, cumbersome ceremonies, every-where attended divine worship. This, as it had a peculiar name, so it was thought the principal part if not the whole part of religion!"¹ Christ showed the useless character of this kind of worship, and that "to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, with

1. Works, 7. 147.

application of mind and sincerity of heart, was what God henceforth required."¹ "Praises and prayer, humbly offered up to the Deity, were the worship now demanded; and in these every one was to look after his own heart, and to know that it was that alone which God had regard to, and accepted."² Since the time of Christ, the priests had obscured true Christian worship. It was necessary to return to the simple spiritual worship of God which Christ required. Thus we see that Locke not only tended to narrow ^{the place of} doctrine, but that he also sought to limit and transform the cultus religiosus according to Christ's own pattern.

If Locke's teaching minimized doctrine and the forms of worship, it everywhere emphasized the importance of moralia. His most pointed criticism is based on his belief that it does violence to righteousness. "Lustrations and processions were much easier than a clean conscience, and a steady course of virtue; and an expatory sacrifice that atoned for the want of it, was much more convenient than a strict and holy life!"³ Everywhere in his writings, Locke is explicit in his contention that righteousness is the most important element in the

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1. Works, 7. 148.
 2. Works, 7. 148.
 3. Works, 7. 139.

Christian life. He refers to it again and again. "The Christian religion we profess is not a notional science, to furnish speculation to the brain or discourse to the tongue, but a rule of righteousness to influence our lives."¹ When Locke was urged by Molyneaux to develop a system of ethics according to the mathematical method, he replied that he did not have the time to do it, but that, in any case, the matter was not urgent since a perfect system of ethics was to be found in the New Testament. The virtue taught in the New Testament was implemented by the hope and fear of future reward or punishment in the world to come. Locke emphasizes that God requires a determined obedience to His will. While Locke ultimately rests salvation of mankind in the grace of God, he insists that obedience to the Christian moralia is the essential evidence that one believes.

We have now seen what Locke conceived to be the nature and purpose of the church and it remains for us to examine his view of the relation between church and civil authority. Locke declares his position thoroughly in the Epistola, the chief arguments of which it is now our purpose to consider.

Locke begins his discussion with the assertion that the

1. King, LLJL, 277.

chief mark of the church is toleration. He spends some time in exposing the hypocrisy of those who persecute in the name of religion. He then passes to a consideration of the authority of the state.

The commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for the procuring, preserving and advancing their own civil interests. Civil interest I call life, liberty, health and indolency of body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture and the like.¹

It is the duty of the magistrate to see that his people are secured to the "just possession of these things belonging to this life."² His jurisdiction "reaches only to these civil concernments,"³ and cannot "be extended to the salvation of souls."⁴ Two reasons for this are given. First, the care of souls is not committed by God to the care of the magistrates or to any human being other than oneself. Each man alone is responsible for his own soul and he can deputize its control to no one in the matter of salvation. Faith cannot be prescribed according to the will of the magistrate, but can be built only on "an inward and full persuasion of

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1. Works, 6. 10.
 2. Works, 6. 10.
 3. Works, 6. 10.
 4. Works, 6. 10.

the mind."¹ Secondly, outward force can do good, for "such is the nature of the understanding that it cannot be compelled to the belief of anything by outward force."² Could one's mind be changed at will by the power of the magistrate, salvation would be dependent not upon the light of reason and purity of life, but on the fashion of the ruling powers in the country into which one has been born.

The religious and civil societies are distinct. Each has its rights, on which the other cannot intrude. A church has the exclusive right to remove from its membership anyone who has failed to obey its rules. Differences in opinion should not prejudice one's civil affairs. No church, even with the approval of the magistrate, has any right to interfere with the concerns of other churches. If a man fails to take proper care of his own soul, this is no business of the state. Each person will have to answer to God on the last day for his own actions. Anything to do with salvation is outside the jurisdiction of the civil authority.

But, says Locke, some will argue that while the authority in religious matters does not originally belong to the magis-

1. Works, 6. 11.

2. Works, 6. 11.

trate, it may be delegated to him by an infallible church. Locke stumbles at this suggestion. "Of what church I beseech you?"¹ The magistrate will favour the church "which certainly likes him best."² "What difference is there whether he lead me himself or deliver me over to be led by others.....If the religion of any church became, therefore, true and saving, because the head of the sect, the prelates and the priests, and those of the tribe, do all of them with all their might, extol and praise it; what religion can ever be accounted erroneous, false and destructive."³

The magistrate lacks the power to prescribe rites and ceremonies either in his own church or in any other church. He does not have the right to forbid such rites and ceremonies in any church so long as they do not affect morals and the public peace. "Whatever is lawful in the commonwealth cannot be prohibited by the magistrate in the church. Whatever is permitted unto any of his subjects for their ordinary use, neither can nor ought to be forbidden by him to any sect of people for their religious use."⁴ Even such a practice as idolatry must be tolerated. Should a magistrate forbid it,

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1. Works, 6. 26.
 2. Works, 6. 27.
 3. Works, 6. 27.
 4. Works, 6. 37.

such power, once claimed and exercised by him, could be used, should he desire it, for the suppression of orthodoxy. This would subordinate religious to civil authority.

Just as the magistrate has no right to interfere with worship in the church, so he has no right to interfere with the articles of faith. Locke considers speculative and practical articles separately. What one believes is only for one's own understanding. Should the magistrate seek to regulate the speculative articles of faith, he could do no more than encourage hypocrisy. Locke has bitter sarcasm for civil intrusion in this instance. "A sweet religion, indeed, that obliges men to dissemble, and tell lies both to God and to man for the salvation of their souls."¹ Locke's polemic in this matter, as in others, is to assert the autonomy of religious belief when such belief does not jeopardize the safety and security of the state.

Practical articles of faith concern conduct, and since morals lie within the jurisdiction of the magistrate, Locke urges great care in distinguishing between civil and religious authority in this sphere. One must watch that the state does not attempt to infringe on the rights of the church. In this

1. Works, 6. 40.

be remembered, he says, that the chief purpose of the church is to assist man to attain happiness in the other world, and the business of the state is to protect persons and their goods in this world. If one makes this fundamental distinction, no conflict becomes too difficult to solve. Thus, when a man has erroneous opinions which do not interfere with the civil rights of his fellow men, he is to be tolerated. Locke makes the statement that one man's perdition is of no prejudice to another man's affairs. One may not be content to see such a man persist in wrong opinion, but the only instruments to be used for his correction are "kind exhortations and affectionate remonstrances."

Locke then raises a difficult question for one who divided, as he did, the total life of man between church and state. "What is the magistrate should enjoin anything by his authority, that appears unlawful to the conscience of a private person?" Locke thought that such an instance would be exceedingly rare, but he replied that should such a conflict arise, a man was always to obey God first. He was to break the law of the magistrate and accept the penalty in punishment for the sake of conscience. Should it happen that the conflict was a clear example of a magistrate attempting to exercise

control beyond the recognized sphere of his authority in religious matters, Locke enjoined men to resist the encroachment.

There are, Locke recognized, instances when a church sought to exceed its authority and interfere in matters which were contrary to the morality allowed within the state, and dangerous to the public peace. He instances the fact of child sacrifice, which, he says, if prescribed as a religious rite of the church, should be forbidden by the magistrate because it interferes with civil rights. Again, Locke gives examples of the practice of certain ecclesiastics, who maintained that "faith need not be kept with heretics" and "kings excommunicated forfeit their crowns and kingdoms."¹ Such persons, who seek special privileges for themselves in civil concerns on the pretence of religion, are not to be trusted, Locke observes. They are hypocrites.

There are two classes of persons who are not to be tolerated. "That church can have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate, which is constituted upon such a bottom, that all those who enter into it, do thereby ipso facto deliver themselves up to the protection and service of another

1. Works, 6. 45, 46.

prince."¹ Locke takes for his example the Mohametans, but it is quite clear that it is the Roman Catholics whom he has primarily in mind. The state can tolerate such a church only at great danger to itself. The true ground for suppression is then not religious but civil.

Atheists also are not to be tolerated. For, "promises, covenants and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God but even in thought, dissolves all."² Suppression in this, as in the last instance, is, however, not upon religious but on civil grounds, since without a belief in God to give them a proper basis for morality, such men are liable to do violence to their fellow-men. This seems strange to our thinking today, but it is important to remember that in Locke's time, atheism was a term used to denote those of profligate character.

There are four principle arguments behind Locke's plea for toleration. In the first place, Locke claimed that intolerance and persecution were but tools of those who sought for power in the name of religion. This was sheer hypocrisy, for true religion could be propagated only by means of charity.

1. Works, 6. 46.

2. Works, 6. 47.

Secondly, since the church was a voluntary society of men, it had no power to use force, since force is no part of its right. Should it happen that in a given church a member failed to obey the rules of that body, the utmost extent of the church's right was to excommunicate him. Thirdly, the narrow limits of man's knowledge about life and destiny made intolerance unjustifiable. It was possible that there might be genuine disagreement about matters of belief and forms of worship, and history had vouched instances when the persecuted had been nearer the truth than the persecutors. It will be still time enough to persecute, Locke maintained, when the truth is fully known. Fraser says of this argument. "A deep and abiding conviction of the narrow limits of man's understanding in the sphere of religion was at the bottom of Locke's argument."¹ Lastly, even if truth were known completely, persecution is a poor tool for conversion; it fails, in fact to achieve its true end. Force, it is true, may bring about outward conformity, but it can never create an inward conviction, which alone is necessary to salvation. Charitable exhortation and example are the effective instruments of a church sincerely engaged in its own task. Intolerant persecution is both wrong and fruitless.

1. Fraser, LOC, 92, 93.

CONCLUSION

We have now completed our investigation of the important points in the theology of John Locke. The material for our study has been of a somewhat fragmentary character. There are many omissions in Locke's religious opinions; many important points in Christian theology are either not treated at all or are mere touched upon. Much of Locke's specifically theological writing lacks real substance. Often there are painstaking arguments and many repetitions to confirm a single point. The Reasonableness of Christianity could be contracted into one-fifth of its bulk by a skilful scholar and lose nothing in its content thereby; indeed it would gain. As a result of this paucity of substantial material in Locke's specifically religious writings, we have had to search for hints to his theological opinions dropped here and there throughout his entire writings. We have found many valuable suggestions in his works on philosophy, education and politics, and in his more informal writings and letters.

Two important points must be borne in mind in the interpretation of Locke's theology. First, his interest

is always primarily practical. As he said, the Christian religion was not a source of speculation to talk about, but a rule of righteousness to guide one's life in its practical adjustment. Second, Locke's method of writing, even in as important a work as the Essay, is casual, put down as his mind turned to the subjects he wrote upon.

Despite the paucity of material and the fragmentary character of its content, Locke's theology is not as incoherent as it may appear to be on first view. It has been our purpose to present as ordered an account of it as its unsystematic character will allow. This task, we believe, has not been unrewarding, for, with all his faults, Locke was a thinker of the first order, and his genuine interest in religion has left us with many penetrating insights.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of Locke's theology is his twofold division of the source of religious knowledge into reason and revelation. Locke is clear that reason is the tool of the soul in its sojourn through this life, and the more reason is used, the happier its user becomes. Revelation, on the other hand, to use Locke's own words, is like a telescope, which guided by reason, focuses

on eternal things, and is concerned chiefly with man's destiny in another world. Locke inherited and accepted the idea that the spheres of reason and revelation were separate. Assuming the reality of this distinction between natural and revealed religion, he attempted to define the sphere of each. The division he made was in the nature of a compromise and did not eventually prove successful. Thinkers who saw deeply into the significance of Locke's treatment of this twofold division in the source of religious knowledge could not escape the conclusion that the claims of revelation were included here, not because of any natural congruity with the main body of Locke's thinking, but because it was necessary to satisfy the intellectual demands of Locke's intensely religious disposition. Consequently, the rationalists were not satisfied with Locke's formulation. Nor did the compromise please the theologians, who saw, in the humble place assigned to revelation and in Locke's stringent narrowing of doctrine, a threat to the orthodox position.

As an empiricist, Locke was inclined to look for evidence of truth among the things of sense. It is for that reason that he was led to test Divine revelation by miracles.

Without miracles to vouch the authority of revelation, Locke dismissed its claim as "enthusiasm". As has been pointed out, however, Locke unwittingly undermined his own position by making testimony the criterion of the validity of miracles. But the account of these miracles was found only within the inspired writings themselves. When Hume looked into this question, he quickly exposed the fallacy of its position, with the result that the supernatural element in Locke's theology lost the foundation he gave to it.

On its rational side, Locke's chief contribution to theology was his "demonstration" of the existence of God and the formulation of the attributes of His nature. But, as we have seen, Locke tends in this respect to assume all that he wishes to prove. The failure of his demonstration is a commentary upon the fact that the reality of God is not known by means of a chain of argument, but because that Reality is ever present with men through His Spirit.

Two questions may be raised in connexion with the influence of Locke's theology. First, it may be asked, what is Locke's relation to Deism? It is not our purpose to treat this question in detail but to give the solution which

becomes apparent after a detailed study of Locke's theology. Locke has been called the father of Deism. But this designation is scarcely correct, for the Deists, in general, identified the religious life with the moral, and rejected its mysterious and supernatural elements. They advocated a natural religion, the content of which could be known entirely by the use of reason. We have seen that Locke was sympathetic to this point of view. He emphasized the importance of the use of reason in religion, as did, indeed, most of the theologians of his time. He was anxious to show Christianity a reasonable religion. Furthermore, some of the Deists acknowledged Locke as the source of their inspiration. But, in our opinion, Locke cannot be called a Deist. It is significant that not once during his lifetime was he referred to as such. While he subjected revelation to the strictest tests by reason, he believed that reason could not discover the full content of religious truth. His references to natural religion in some sections of his theological writings are far from complimentary. He believed that God had sent His Son into the world to lead men to salvation. This knowledge he considered to be beyond reason's power to discover, but not contrary to it. He was convinced of the truth of

such revealed mysteries as the Virgin birth and the Resurrection of Christ. Locke cannot be classed as orthodox, yet, at the same time for the reasons we have given neither can he be accounted a Deist.

None the less, it is not hard to see how the Deists could fail to derive inspiration from Locke's writings. When the weakness of his grounding of revealed doctrine on miracles became apparent, the weight of his influence tended to support the Deist position. Hence, though Locke may not be reckoned a Deist, his works must be understood as making a substantial contribution to its furtherance. ?

The second question concerns Locke's relationship to the notion of a return to the early simplicity of the Gospel. Can it be said that Locke was the author of this sort of thinking? The idea of the return to the original simplicity of the Gospel, like that of Deism, had its roots in a practical moral protest. Lord Herbert of Cherbury had already pointed out that pagan cults were the result of priestcraft and that the early success of Christianity was dependent upon its simple appeal to the heart. He believed that in his own time the religion of Jesus had been obscured by priestly accretions. In this Locke agreed with Lord Herbert,

but whether he got his idea directly from him is difficult to determine. Undoubtedly the latter had influenced the whole climate of opinion which Locke knew. In any case, Locke very early suspected priestcraft as being responsible for the unworthy elements in religion. He said that priestcraft and tyranny went hand in hand. To prevent this state of affairs Locke thought the only solution would be to return to the simple religion of Jesus. This he conceived to be an inward and spiritual worship of God and obedience to His will. It was his positive solution to the problem of the immoral elements he found within the organized religion of his time. There is a clear argument to be found in Locke's writings which indicates complete sympathy with a "back to the simple Gospel" movement. This sort of thought, however, was so much a part of the time, when men had become tired of disputes and persecution arising out of conflicts in speculative theological opinions, that we cannot credit Locke with originating it. But the influential character of his formulation of this trend of thought is bound to lead to constant associations of his name with it.

Surprise has often been expressed that Locke's theology, with its comparative lack of originality, its inconsistencies and negative emphasis, should have exercised such a

powerful influence in the two or three generations following his death, not only in England but in France and America as well. Two considerations stand out to show why this should have been so.

In the first place, in his common-sense way, Locke was a "progressive", who consolidated the advance positions made by the leading thinkers before and during his time. With his typical caution, he chose a prudent course, combining together reason and experience. Now and again he was led to unwise compromises. Yet for the most part he stood for slow, steady and reasonable progress. He was fortunate in the time in which he lived. He came into a world which was becoming aware of the great advances which had been made in many fields in the preceeding era. It was nothing less than genius that he was able to consolidate these advances within the scope of his work.

In the second place, the greatness of Locke's character must be taken into account. He was blessed with a keen brain and a great soul, and had other fine qualities of mind and heart. These qualities, reflected throughout his writings, earned for him a unique place in the history of thought in England. He was a servant of truth, almost a slave, eager

to expand the claims of knowledge in the religious sphere, yet he never allowed his own enthusiasm to carry him further than the light of strict reasoning would permit. He was neither a dogmatist nor a sceptic. The breadth of his interests, with its tendency to make his insights superficial, none the less gave to his thought a comprehensiveness and a vision that would have otherwise been impossible. He was able to leave his impress not only on theology, but upon philosophy, education, medicine, law, and politics, and to exert considerable influence in the management of the practical affairs of his time. He raised common-sense to the point of genius. And it must be admitted that his arguments are often more practically helpful than theoretically convincing. In an age of excitement and prejudice he was able to help men to think clearly in religious matters. He loosened the chains of dogma and won for men the right to pursue truth for its own sake in religion. He made a great contribution to the cause of toleration. The stature of his character could not ^{but} lead to great influence in his own time and in later generations.

In his controversy with Jonas Proast, he was taunted with "writing for a party." Locke's reply is so typical of

his spirit in theological thought that we will conclude our discussion with it.

But that you may another time be a little better informed what party I write for, I will tell you. They are those who in every nation fear God, work righteousness, and are accepted with him; and not those who in every nation are zealous for human constitutions; cry up nothing so much as outward conformity to the national religion; and are accepted by those who are promoters of it. Those that I write for are those, who, according to the light of their own consciences, are every-where in earnest in matters of their own salvation, without any desire to impose on others; a part, so seldom favoured by any of the powers or sects of this world; a party that has so few preferments to bestow; so few benefices to reward the endeavours of any one who appears for it; that I conclude I shall easily be believed when I say, that neither hopes of preferment, nor a design to recommend myself to those I live amongst, has biased my understanding, or misled me in my undertaking. So much truth as serves the turn of any particular church, and can be accomodated to the narrow interest of some human constitution, is indeed often received with applause, and the publisher finds his account for it. But I think I may say, truth, in its full latitude of those generous principles of the gospel, which so much recommend and inculcate universal charity, and a freedom from the inventions and impositions of men in the things of God; has so seldom had a fair and favourable hearing anywhere, that he must be very ignorant of the history and nature of man, however dignified and distinguished, who proposes to himself any secular advantage by writing for her at that rate.¹

1. Works, 6. 544, 545.

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