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Reviews

Editorial

With this volume we return to a more familiar format, combining articles, comment, documents, review articles and reviews. Some of these have been held up for a while because the last two issues have been special issues. We hope that such a slippage will not occur again. The next issue will be a special issue. It will be a festschrift for D O Thomas to mark his retirement as co-editor of the journal. I am pleased to report that James Dybikowski of the University of British Columbia has agreed to take his place. He has served on the editorial advisory board for many years and has always been a vigorous supporter of the journal. Readers will be familiar with his work on David Williams and, more recently, with his editing of the special number on Samuel Clarke. He is currently engaged in an edition of the correspondence of Anthony Collins. A philosopher and classicist, he will assist greatly in ensuring that the journal retains its appeal across the disciplines.

We are sad to report the death of Professor T A Roberts, formerly Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. He had been a member of the advisory board since the inception of the journal and was always interested in its progress. His refreshing individuality was often reflected in his reviews, and his advice and opinions will be sorely missed.

M H F
J D

RICHARD PRICE AND THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT'S FEMINISM

Saba Bahar

Biographers of England's most famous eighteenth-century feminist Mary Wollstonecraft have noted how the Rational Dissenter and political pamphleteer Richard Price befriended her during her stay in Newington Green.[1] She mentions in a 1786 letter to her sister Eliza that he has been 'uncommonly friendly to me. I have the greatest reason to be thankful'.[2] Wollstonecraft was, moreover, acquainted with his theological and philosophical writings, as a 1788 letter to a family friend George Blood implies. She recommends he reads Price's *Four dissertations* but that he forsakes the more controversial *Sermons on Christian doctrines*. As such, her comments suggest that she was familiar with his work. Not surprisingly, her novel *Mary, a fiction* written at this same period reflects the direct influence of Price's reflections on divine providence.[3]

Nor does the relationship stop when Wollstonecraft and Price are no longer neighbours. When Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the revolution in France* launched the pamphlet wars of the seventeen-nineties by openly attacking the Dissenting Minister's defence of the French revolutionaries, Wollstonecraft was among the first to defend her mentor. Her 1790 *Vindication of the Rights of Men* aired many of the ideas of her more celebrated *Vindication of the Rights*

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1 Ralph M Wardle, Mary Wollstonecraft, *A critical biography* (London, 1951), passim; Claire Tomalin, *The life and death of Mary Wollstonecraft*, revised ed. (London, 1992), 29-44; Gary Kelly, *Revolutionary feminism: the mind and career of Mary Wollstonecraft* (Basingstoke, 1992), 27-8.

2 Ralph M Wardle, ed., *The collected letters of Mary Wollstonecraft* (Ithaca, 1979). It might be interesting to note that Price makes no mention of Wollstonecraft in the diaries he kept at the time. See 'Richard Price's Journal for the Period 25 March 1787 to 6 February 1791 Deciphered by Beryl Thomas with an Introduction and Notes by D O Thomas', *The National Library of Wales Journal*, 24 (1980), 366-413.

3 See the very helpful annotations by Gary Kelly in his edition of *Mary* in *Mary and wrongs of woman; or Maria* (Oxford, 1980).

of Woman, including those concerning the status of women in contemporary society. Price was sincerely touched by his protégée's campaign on his behalf, as a recently reprinted letter reveals. He writes that he is 'particularly happy in having such an advocate and he requests her acceptance of his gratitude for the very kind and handsome manner in which she has mentioned him.'[4] Yet despite the obvious biographical connections between these two philosophical and political agitators, there has been very limited examination of their intellectual relationship. In what follows I will attempt to outline the contours of this affiliation by examining how his moral philosophy may have laid the ethical and political foundations for her feminism. I will be particularly attentive to how his arguments in favour of moral agency and against utilitarianism inform her discussion of women's education and of the sexual virtue of chastity.

Any understanding of Price's moral philosophy must begin with an appreciation of the providential vision of his theology. In his religious writings, Price's optimism upholds the intrinsic goodness of God's design. Any existing evil, he claims, is part of the 'absolutely perfect' divine plan.[5] Moreover, Price insists repeatedly that divine perfection and goodness continue to be a felt presence in the world. 'The Deity', he writes, 'cannot be an indifferent spectator of the series of events in that world to which has given being. His goodness will as certainly engage him to direct them agreeably to the ends of goodness'.[6] This insistence on divine will does not, however, militate against an equally strong emphasis on humanity's moral agency.

To understand what, to the modern mind, may seem somewhat contradictory, let us turn to a central aspect of Price's theology and ultimately of his moral philosophy, namely his rejection of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination.[7] Refusing to impute Adam's

[4] Quoted in Kelly, *Revolutionary feminism*, 100.

[5] Richard Price, *Four dissertations*, Second Edition, with Additions (London, 1768), 5.

[6] Price, *Four dissertation*, 5.

[7] The importance of this rejection is stressed D O Thomas, *The honest mind: the thought and work of Richard Price* (Oxford, 1977), 5-6; see 19-40

transgressions to his posterity, Price emphasises instead the way each and every rational being determines its future salvation. If mankind has clearly fallen from grace, it is nevertheless penitent and may lift itself up through virtuous actions. Focusing on Adam's posterity, Price argues that mankind has been given the capacity to rise again through earthly existence after the fall. This capacity includes rational faculties, desire for a virtuous existence, and most importantly the absolute liberty in which to exercise this potential. For, argues Price, without 'scope for action the whole rational universe would be a system of conscious machinery, void of value and dignity'.[8] The fall of man thereby becomes a *felix culpa*, announcing the promise of redemption through the conscious and conscientious acquisition of virtue.

Yet despite Price's insistence on the joyous prospect of a future state, in no way does he suggest that it is guaranteed. In his *Review of the principal questions in morals*, he had argued that liberty or the possibility of self-determination is the absolute precondition for moral agency. Throughout his career, in his political writings on the American revolution, in his famous debate on necessity and free will with Joseph Priestley and in his theological works, he returns to this axiomatic supposition. In his account of fallen man, he recognises in this freedom the supreme logic of divine design which wants to assure humanity both the fullest bliss achieved through personal efforts and, equally important, total responsibility for any action. Absolute liberty - despite or rather because of the obvious hazardous risks it entails - is the necessary condition for postlapsarian humanity's conscious dignity and moral agency. Similarly, because humanity must be free to act, it cannot be guaranteed present virtues and future blessings: it must instead acquire them. They 'are offered to our *acquisition*, not our

for a discussion of the relationship between Price's theology and his moral philosophy. The following reflections on Price are indebted to Thomas's work.

[8] Price, *Four dissertations*, 94.

acceptance', Price explains, 'and the condition of our *having* them, is our *earning* them by the exercise of the powers given us.'[9]

But absolute liberty is not the only precondition for the acquisition of virtue. Knowledge and intention are equally important. For, without the possibility of knowing what a moral action is, how can the virtue of an action be determined? Thus, the more developed the understanding becomes, the more the possibility for acquiring virtue increases. Together, liberty and knowledge imply the 'capacity' for a virtuous act. What actually determines the virtue of an act, however, is intention or the rational decision to do good.[10] This conscious desire becomes, for Price, the defining characteristic of human virtue, rendering the manner in which free will and knowledge are exercised towards a virtuous end more significant than the end itself.

Consider the distinction Price elaborates between 'absolute virtue' and 'practical virtue'.[11] The former derives from an abstract, immutable standard of truth, a Platonic Ideal embodied by the divine will. Although mankind, through the exercise of its rational faculties can discover this will and can increasingly act upon its truths, it can nevertheless not be judged by these same absolute standards. Unlike the divine being, mankind does not have the same extensive knowledge, even if it has the same capacity to acquire it and to strive towards a godlike existence in the next world. Therefore, it can not always arrive at the same objective standards of virtue. Thus, whereas standards of rectitude are universal and unchangeable in the abstract sense, in particular circumstances they vary.

[9] Richard Price, *Sermons on the Christian doctrine, as received by the different denominations of Christians* (London, 1787), 295-6; emphasis in the original.

[10] Richard Price, *A review of the principal questions in morals*, 3rd ed., edited with an Introduction by D D Raphael (Oxford, [1787] 1948), 184. See Thomas, *Honest mind*, 87-111 for a detailed discussion of the importance of intention in Price.

[11] See Price, *Review*, 177-199. For very lucid accounts of this distinction, see Anthony Lincoln, *Some political and social ideas of English Dissent, 1763-1800* (Cambridge, 1938), 109-111 and Thomas, *Honest mind*, 87-111.

In this insistence on the practical and particular aspects of virtuous deeds, Price certainly does not opt for a relativist approach to human actions and morals. He continues to uphold absolute and immutable standards of good. Indeed, he insists that the moral agent must always strive to do 'what, according to his best judgement, he is persuaded to be the will of God'.[12] Significantly, Price articulates here two standards of virtue: the will of God and the limited if 'best' judgement of the moral agent. These two standards in turn underlie the distinction between 'absolute virtue' or objective standards understood 'independently of the *sense of the agent*'[13] and 'practical virtue' or what the 'agent ought to do, *upon supposition* of his having such and such sentiments'.[14] Whereas the former highlights the virtuous consequences, the latter shifts attention to the process or means by which the virtuous agent arrives at this end. If his or her intention has been to do good according to the best of his or her knowledge, then regardless whether the results are deemed wrong by objective standards, the agent has been 'practically virtuous'.

Given Price's clear emphasis on a distinctly human sphere of moral agency and knowledge, his emphasis on practical virtue should come as no surprise. In fact, he even implies that evaluating human virtue on the grounds of 'absolute virtue' is a debilitating morality, which denies humanity the possibility of a moral conscience. He also suggests that it is a form of divine presumption, because it claims to know the totality of the circumstances surrounding the act. Price's practical virtue instead valorises the role of individual conscience, which mediates between particular circumstances and abstract ideals. It allows moral agents to judge themselves 'upon the conformity of [their] actions to the sincere conviction of [their] minds'.[15]

In Price's preference for practical over absolute virtue, it is possible to detect his position against the emerging school of

[12] Price, *Review*, 180.

[13] Price, *Review*, 177.

[14] Price, *Review*, 177.

[15] Price, *Review*, 179.

utilitarianism.[16] By focusing more on the agent's conscience and intentions, he refuses to measure virtue by the consequences of actions. Arguing that the positive outcome of an action is not a sufficient condition for a virtuous one, he insists that the agent also *wants* to do good. Moreover, because Price emphasises the agent's deliberation over the consequences of his act, he refuses to subject the future happiness of one individual to that of the 'greatest numbers'. The virtuous actions of moral agents must be measured in relation to their virtuous desires and not to social-determined ends, defined by self-appointed human arbiters of consciences.

How then does Price's vision of providence, his insistence on liberty, knowledge and conscious intention in the acquisition of virtue and his anti-utilitarian approach inform Mary Wollstonecraft's feminist moral and political philosophy? I will begin with a passage from her 1790 *Vindication of the Rights of Men*.

> That both physical and moral evil were not only foreseen, but entered into the scheme of Providence, when this world was contemplated in the Divine mind, who can doubt, without robbing Omnipotence of a most exalted attribute? But the business of life of a good man should be, to separate light from darkness; to diffuse happiness, whilst he submits to unavoidable misery. And a conviction that there is much unavoidable wretchedness, appointed by the grand Disposer of events, should not slaken his exertions: the extent of what is possible can only be discerned by God. The justice of God may be vindicated by a belief in a future state; but, only by believing that evil is educing good for the individual, and not for an imaginary whole. The happiness of the whole must arise from the happiness of the constituent parts, or the essence of justice is sacrificed to a supposed grand arrangement. ... To suppose that, during the whole or part of its existence, the happiness of any individual is sacrificed to promote the welfare of ten, or ten thousand, other beings - is

[16] For a discussion of Price's differences from utilitarianism, see Thomas, *Honest mind*, 72-80

> impious. But to suppose that the happiness, or animal enjoyment, of one portion of existence is sacrificed to improve and ennoble the being itself, and render it capable of more perfect happiness, is not to reflect on either the goodness or wisdom of God.[17]

Recent commentary has turned to this passage as evidence for Wollstonecraft's belief in Price-like understanding of the role and importance of divine providence.[18] Evil is clearly part of the divine plan, she explains here, and to question this 'scheme of Providence' is to question the very existence and essence of God. Yet as with Price, such a belief neither denies human agency nor prevents humanity from acquiring virtue through doing good unto others. After all, the belief in divine justice and in the reward of an after life only makes sense if it focuses on the 'individual' and not on the 'imaginary whole'. Doing anything less is human arrogance which, claiming to foresee God's intentions, 'sacrifice[s]' justice 'to a supposed grand arrangement'.

This distinction between the 'essence of justice' and 'a supposed grand arrangement', between 'individual' and 'an imaginary whole', between 'the happiness of any individual' and the 'welfare of ten, or ten thousand, other beings' invokes a Price-like opposition to a purely utilitarian approach to virtue and articulates an implicit preference for practical over absolute virtue. Emphasising the moral agent's deliberation more than the results, practical virtue cannot be measured in relation to the 'imaginary whole', or the sum total of consequence. The social ends ignore the individual means, sacrificing them for the general good. Such an approach, argues Wollstonecraft, is 'impious'. Any attempt to substitute its 'supposed grand arrangement' for the grander 'schemes of Providence' is a form of divine presumption. The only

[17] *The works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, 7 vols. (London, 1989), 5:52-3. All further references are in the text. I will use the abbreviations VRM and VRW for *Vindication of the Rights of Men* and *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* respectively.

[18] See Daniel Robinson, 'Theodicy versus Feminist Strategy in Mary Wollstonecraft's Fiction', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 9 (1997), 183-202 and Gordon Spence, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Theodicy and Theory of Progress', *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 14 (1995), 105-127.

possible 'sacrifice' is the moral agent's willingness to abandon his or her immediate pleasure for long term happiness. Not surprisingly, this individual 'sacrifice' entails all the conditions of practical virtue of a moral act: the capacity to deliberate (liberty and reason), intention and action. In short, rather than valorising artificially defined social ends which may well reflect partial interests, Wollstonecraft favours the accumulated happiness resulting from individual actions. In so doing, she reaffirms the moral authority and agency of individual and independent 'constituent parts'.

When the philosopher articulates this argument in *Vindication of the Rights of Men*, she speaks in favour of social justice. When, in her subsequent *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, she turns to the question of female virtue, this reflection takes on a feminist inflexion. She considers Price's dictums on active virtue specifically with respect to a female moral agent. Women, like humanity more generally, must be able to redeem their fallen state through the exercise of conscience and the acquisition of virtue. They too must be guaranteed the necessary preconditions, liberty and knowledge. Yet, argues Wollstonecraft, these very social and legal preconditions are denied to women.

Consider 'the laws relative to women' (*VRW* 70), and most notably those which refuse a wife 'protection of civil laws' (216) individually and irrespective of her husband. After all, the status of *feme covert* denied married women the right to own and dispose of property, to incur debts, to contract with another party, to deploy legal power in relation to their children and to bring action for injury to their person or their property without the prior consent of their husband. Nor could wives be sued without making husbands defendants.[19] In other words, matrimonial laws, which refused

[19] See William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the laws of England*, 4th ed. 4 vols. (Dublin, 1771), I: 442. For a discussion of women and marriage in the eighteenth century, see Bridget Hill, *Women, work, and sexual politics in eighteenth-century England* (London, 1989), 196-211; Susan Staves, 'Money for Honor: Damages for Criminal Conversation', *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture*, 11 (1982), 279-98 and Susan Staves, *married women's separate property in England, 1660-1833* (Cambridge, Maas., 1990).

wives both rights and duties, in fact denied them any legal agency. In so doing, they withheld from women the possibility of becoming virtuous. '[F]or how can a being … be virtuous, who is not free?' (217), asks Wollstonecraft to conclude her examination of inadequate civil laws.

Elsewhere, the feminist philosopher clearly demonstrates how the absent legal agency results from and reflects on an equally absent moral agency. After all, in issues of conscience and faith, a wife is expected to submit to the authority of her husband. It is such precepts that Wollstonecraft contests when she refuses to submit to the 'scepter' of her fellow man, claiming instead that 'the conduct of an accountable being must be regulated by the operations of its own reason; or on what foundation rests the throne of God?' (105).[20] Similarly, she refuses Jean-Jacques Rousseau's dictum that a woman's religious belief must be dictated by her mother or husband:

> '*Every daughter ought to be of the same religion as her mother, and every wife to be of the same religion as her husband; for, though such religion should be false, that docility which induces the mother and daughter to submit to the order of nature, takes away, in the sight of God, the criminality of their error.*' As they are not in a capacity to judge for themselves, they ought to abide by the decision of their fathers and husbands as confidently as by that of the church. (156-7; Wollstonecraft is quoting Rouseau's *Emile* and the emphasis is hers.)

In responding to Rousseau's argument here, Wollstonecraft evokes obedience to the church. In so doing, she may well be contrasting the more acceptable ecclesiastical authority with the more problematic and fallible human one of a parent. It is more likely, however, that she compares the blind obedience to the Church with the blind obedience expected of daughters to their

[20] For an insightful discussion of the religious basis to Wollstonecraft's feminism, see Barbara Taylor, 'For the Love of God', *Mary Wollstonecraft and 200 Years of feminisms,* ed. Eileen Janes Yeo (London, 1997).

fathers and husbands. She echoes arguments developed by Rational Dissenters in favour of individual religious conscience and the right to freedom of worship.[21] Her remarks certainly recall those by Richard Price, William Enfield and Joseph Priestley against the state monopoly of religion and the absolute authority exercised by the Church of England. Just as the state has usurped religious freedom, Rousseau seeks to carry 'his male aristocracy still further' (157). Pursuing the issue, Wollstonecraft notes how the emphasis on a woman's 'blind obedience' violates 'the sacred rights of humanity'; or perhaps, she adds acerbically, simply limits 'the most sacred rights ... *only* to man' (153; emphasis is Wollstonecraft's).

The feminist philosopher also examines Rousseau's incoherent logic. What happens, she asks in a footnote, when the husband's and the mother's religious opinion differ? On what basis should the young woman then determine her religious beliefs? Calling attention to the husband's humanity – and hence to his fallibility - she questions the wisdom of relying on his religious opinions. Husbands, she writes, are 'imperfect being[s]' (118) and often nothing more than 'overgrown children' (91), with little 'religion to teach [their wives]' (157 n.1). Ridiculing this absurd situation, Wollstonecraft compares it to one where the 'blind lead the blind' (91).

In these arguments in favour of women's freedom to worship, Wollstonecraft emphasises not only absolute liberty, she also insists that daughters 'learn from the exercise of their faculties' (153) and not by submitting to their parents. As such, she introduces other preconditions for the acquisition of virtue: the exercise of reason and hence the acquisition of knowledge through experience. This insistence on knowledge even applies to matter often considered not consistent with 'female delicacy', namely the reproductive system of plants and animals (*vide* 192-193; 193 n.3). Indeed, Wollstonecraft demands that women have a sexual education and in this differs yet again from Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

21 See Lincoln, *Political ideas*; John Seed, '"A set of men powerful enough to many things": Rational Dissent and political opposition in England, 1770-1790', *Enlightenment and religion: rational dissent in the eighteenth-century*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge, 1996).

Rousseau, indicates Wollstonecraft, would willingly leave women 'in a state of the most profound ignorance'. He would deny them sexual knowledge. Or rather, he would provide them with only enough knowledge as will 'preserve [their] chastity and justify the man's choice' (157). This pedagogical principle is determined by Rousseau's emphasis on women's reproductive function and the social disorder it threatens. On the one hand, a woman must entice and seduce her future husband and lover. On the other hand, she must maintain an appearance of chastity and sexual modesty, for any doubt concerning her sexual virtue will cause the man to doubt subsequently his paternity. Hence the bizarre condition of Rousseau's Sophia who charms without any knowledge and indeed self-knowledge of what she does. She appears both modest and coquettish. Her simple dress seems '"only put in its proper order to be taken to pieces by the imagination"' (157; Wollstonecraft is citing Rousseau's *Emile*). In short, a woman's sexual education must ensure that she 'knows' without 'knowing' – or rather without *appearing* to 'know' – that she 'knows'.

Ultimately, Rousseau's pedagogical precepts result in an exaggerated emphasis on the *appearance* of chastity over the *virtue* of chastity itself. Wollstonecraft contests Rousseau's claim that '"A man ... secure in his own good conduct, depends only on himself, and may brave the public opinion: but a woman, in behaving well, performs but half her duty; as what is thought of her, is as important to her as what she really is ... Opinion is the grave of virtue among the men; but its throne among women."' (203). Objecting to this sexual understanding of virtue, Wollstonecraft notes that it confuses 'virtue' with 'reputation' (*vide* 202). For, the woman who is governed by how others perceive her no longer strives to act in accordance with the dictates of her conscience. Her actions are not guided by what her reason and her knowledge deem the most virtuous solution. Instead, she does what will receive the most social approbation. At best, such a woman assures what Wollstonecraft terms an 'insipid decency' (203), hardly akin to the active virtue founded on liberty, knowledge and intention. At worst, she becomes immoral even according to social standards. The feminist philosopher recounts how a woman who 'valued herself [only] on the propriety of her behaviour before marriage'

was later 'faithless' to her equally adulterous husband (202). In short, the emphasis on women's public opinion and reputation reduces female virtue to a mere 'nominal distinction' (210). It is hardly an intrinsic moral and ethical foundation for the social behaviour of both women and men.

But it is not only that women's moral behaviour is determined by their reputation for virtuous behaviour and hence by the denial of liberty and knowledge necessary for moral agency. Equally seriously, women are judged according to the standards of absolute virtue – or standards 'independently of the *sense* of the agent'.[22] Instead of emphasising women's conscious deliberation and their active desire to do good according the best of their knowledge and abilities, Rousseau's pedagogy insists on the consequences of women's behaviour, namely their ability to *appear* virtuous. Hence, although women have more 'propriety of behaviour' (194) and seem to be more modest and chaste than men, in fact, argues Wollstonecraft, they are not. Subject to more rules of decorum, behaviour and propriety, they may produce virtuous results without necessarily having virtuous intentions. These results can only be determined by applying the standards of an external authority, not by examining the woman's conscience.

Wollstonecraft questions the application of standards of absolute virtue to women for the same reason that Price does when speaking of humanity more generally. Subjecting women to the authority of public opinion denies them their moral agency. Moreover, she indicates how presumptuous it is for mere men to claim to know the divine will more than their fellow humanity and hence to judge in its name. This usurpation of moral authority, she writes, makes virtue 'a relative idea, having no other foundation than utility, and of that utility men pretend arbitrarily to judge, shaping it to their own convenience' (120).

Wollstonecraft rejects this utilitarian approach to women's virtue, sexual or other. This emphasis on the appearance of chastity focuses on the consequences of an act, not on its intrinsic rectitude. Moreover, such an approach sacrifices the future happiness of a woman 'to promote the welfare of ten, or ten thousand, other

[22] Price, *Review*, 177.

[men]' (*VRM* 52), as she wrote in her earlier polemic. In her feminist analysis, however, Wollstonecraft is not simply arguing that the 'justice of God' implies 'believing that evil is educing good for the individual, and not for an imaginary whole'. But rather she is demonstrating that this 'imaginary whole' is the whole of the male sex, who protecting their own interests, claim to act in the interest of the human race. In so doing, Wollstonecraft provides a philosophical justification as to why women's sexuality and her childbearing function cannot be subjected to the interest of the (male) race. On the contrary, women have a theological and moral existence in their own right, independent of their marital and maternal responsibility. Given this, they also deserve civil and political rights.

Now, of course, like Rousseau and other eighteenth-century philosophers, pedagogues and moralists, Wollstonecraft certainly upholds the importance of sexual chastity for women. Which is perhaps why so many recent feminist scholars remain sceptical of the eighteenth-century feminist's revolutionary message.[23] Without denying the validity of these hesitations, it nevertheless remains important to emphasise the qualitative difference in her approach to the virtue of chastity. First, unlike Rousseau, Wollstonecraft is not arguing that women receive a '*little* knowledge of men' (157; emphasis added), but rather *all* the knowledge necessary to render possible the desired and active acquisition of virtue. The 'informed' women will, moreover, strive to attain a righteous existence for its own sake and not to satisfy the demands of male proprietors, who need to ensure that their heirs are really theirs.

Wollstonecraft's objections to a 'nominal' (210) approach to virtue also insist that moral standards must apply equally to men as

[23] The literature on Wollstonecraft's conservative sexual politics is now too vast to cite in its entirety here. See, among others, Mary Poovey, *The proper lady and the woman writer: Ideology as style in the works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago, 1984), 48-81; Cora Kaplan, 'Wild nights: pleasure/sexuality/feminism', *The Ideology of Conduct: essays in literature and the history of sexuality*, eds. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York, 1987); Joan B Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, 1988), 93-151.

to women. Hence, contrary to many of her contemporaries, she argues vociferously against the 'want of chastity in men' (208).[24] This is also one of the reasons why she is far more sympathetic to the 'fallen' woman who cannot, unlike her male seducer, escape social, legal and financial censure. Wollstonecraft also recognises that 'fallen women' result directly from a social system that fails to ensure the preconditions for the acquisition of virtue. Most seduced innocents, she writes, are '*ruined* before they know the difference between virtue and vice' (140; italics hers; underlining mine). They are not even accorded the knowledge and liberty to choose virtue.

Finally, because there is a qualitative difference to her approach to female virtue, Wollstonecraft arrives at a very different solution. Writing against 'Asylums and Magdalens' which offer a refuge to seduced women without changing either the social or moral conditions which produce them, she proclaims, 'It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world!' (140). The establishment of a more just earthly existence certainly entails providing women with legal (absolute liberty or an independent civil status) and social conditions (the knowledge acquired through experience and through the exercise of rational faculties) necessary for active virtue.

Examining the intellectual relationship between Richard Price and Mary Wollstonecraft thus allows for an increased appreciation of Wollstonecraft's feminism and its transmission over the past two hundred years. Repeated requests for better educational possibilities for women certainly echo Price's belief that the spread of knowledge heralds a 'future period of improvement'. Similarly, demands for women's civil and political rights, including those of married women, certainly re-iterate his belief in the natural right to exercise individual conscience. But if these two tenets of Wollstonecraft's philosophical and political legacy to feminism have often been evoked and discussed, what remains unexplored is

[24] Wollstonecraft is certainly not the only eighteenth-century writer to question the sexual double standard. For a discussion on how this debate contributes to the rise of feminist consciousness, see Alice Browne, *The eighteenth century feminist mind* (London, 1987).

its anti-utilitarian foundations. Women's civic, political and moral agency cannot be subjected to the demands of 'social ends', be they determined in the name of her children, her husband, her family, her race or her nation. Her legal and moral existence-in-herself must be recognised. This was certainly not the case in Wollstonecraft's time. As I reflect on the battles for contraception and reproductive choice both in industrialised nations under siege from the 'religious Right' and in non-industrialised ones acting in the name of a menacing 'population bomb', I wonder whether it is still not the case today.

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JAMES LOSH (1763-1833): DISSENTER & REFORMER

Jeffrey Smith

James Losh was so situated in time and place as to allow us – by studying his speeches and writings – to accomplish several things. Firstly, to understand something of the circumstances that prompted the emergence of the middle class in early nineteenth-century England. Secondly, to appreciate what life was like for a Dissenter, and a dissenting professional man in the van of the provincial reform movement. Finally, to view a great many of the national figures in politics of his day from his non-metropolitan viewpoint.

A thematic rather than a chronological approach to Losh's life has been chosen for this study, because the latter would cause the narrative to oscillate between the major issues which overlapped during the last forty years of Losh's life, with a resultant loss of focus. To understand properly this fascinating man, it is more helpful to follow the workings of his mind on each single issue, rather than having the view of it blurred by the details of his busy working and private life. By studying each of his campaigns separately, a clearer picture of his general outlook can be recovered.

Four major primary sources have been used: the hand-written diaries which he kept for most of his life; his correspondence with Earl Grey and Henry Brougham; his published articles on parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation and anti-slavery; and the *Newcastle Chronicle* which reported all his major speeches. When considering the provenance of his diaries, we must guard against the distortion or bias which is often inherent in such personal sources. As T J Nossiter comments:

> ...it will not absolve us from treating the raw data with the same cautious scepticism and mature judgement that the historian ordinarily demands in the use of literary sources.[1]

[1] T J Nossiter, *Intellectual opinion and political idioms in reformed England* (Sussex,1975), 3.

However, they are the original hand-written records, for the most part compiled on the day of the event, or immediately afterwards. Losh carried his diary with him when travelling the circuit, on business, or pleasure, and had a practise of making a nightly entry. He comments on an exception to this:

> End April 1829.
>
> From about the middle of February I neglected to keep my Journal regularly and it is made from short notes in my pocket book, from memory, and from my diary of the weather etc. It cannot, therefore, be so fully relied upon as to minute accuracy, as usual, in all matters of importance, however, and with respect to my employment, reading etc. I believe it is substantially correct ....[2]

The content of the diaries point to their being intended as a private record. They are often repetitive, sometimes pompous, and occasionally irritatingly sanctimonious. At other times, however, they give an endearing portrait of a decent man, often struggling to survive in difficult circumstances, without compromising his high ideals.

The diaries clearly reveal that James Losh was a product of the Enlightenment. They show that he read and venerated the classics; that his rationalism had turned him away from the established Church to Unitarianism; that he found the emotionalism of the Romantics distasteful and public demonstration abhorrent; that he had little empathy with the poetry of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, holding Milton supreme; that he saw in education the answer to most of societies problems; and that he held personal freedom in politics and religion to be the supreme and inalienable right. As a business man with literary aspirations; a reformer with a Burkean commitment to preserving existing institutions; a compulsive diarist; a keen horticulturist; and a loyal friend, he both advocated and lived by Enlightenment values. The poet Robert Southey (who knew him well, even though he had

[2] Losh Diary, vol.26.

moved away from Losh politically) described Losh in a letter to his brother:

> March 14,1809
> On Monday last, after a week's visit, I took coach where I had appointed to pass a day with James Losh, whom you know I have always mentioned as coming near the ideal of a perfect man than any other person whom it has ever been my good fortune to know; so gentle, so pious, so zealous in all good things, so equal-minded, so manly, so without a speck or stain in his whole habits of life.[3]

A word picture of a paragon of virtue – yet in his own eyes Losh was a lazy dreamer given to 'castle-building'. He was constantly anxious about those around him, and given to living above his means.

Before going up to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1782, he had a year at Penrith School, to which he admitted he owed little.[4] To enter Cambridge in the late eighteenth century required classical and mathematical knowledge, then considered necessary precursors to becoming a man of the cloth. Latin dominated the classroom, which Losh found congenial, so that he went up to university well prepared. His interest in classical literature remained with him all his life.

The clerical aspirations he went up to Cambridge with, did not last. Losh quickly found himself sympathetic to the cause of religious dissent. He found what he saw as the hypocrisy of the national church unacceptable, and he quickly moved to a more congenial home with the Unitarians. His subsequent long friendship with William Frend, whose dissenting views were to cause his dismissal, suggest the source from which Losh's Unitarian views derived.

By the time Losh left the university in 1786, subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles had been abolished. A declaration of bone fide membership of the Church of England replaced subscription to the Articles for BAs. How Losh dealt with this

[3] C C Southey ed., *Life and correspondence of Robert Southey* (6 vols., London, 1849-50), III, 224-5

[4] E Hughes, Surtees Society abridgement of the Losh diaries. Vol.171, xii.

situation is not recorded. Having decided against the ministry, and chosen instead a career in law, he may have felt that at 23 he had declared himself enough. He had already taken a large step. Something of his attitude towards subscription might be inferred from this later diary entry:

> February 1, 1829
> I went to St.Nicholas's Church ... I received the sacrament which indeed I never objected to do except as a qualification for office....

Losh was stepping into a profession, not the first choice for a second son, but one that was growing in stature. 'The importance of the professions and the great professional classes can hardly be overrated. They form the head of the great English middle class, maintain its tone of independence, keep up to the mark its standard of morality and directs its intelligence.' Words written by H Bryerly Thomas (1822-1867) who, after University College, London, and Jesus College, Cambridge had himself taken to the profession of law.[5] For Losh, and others in the landed classes, there were few suitable occupations in the late eighteenth-century available. Many (although not all) regarded trade in the ordinary sense as beneath consideration, unless it be that of a large merchant company such as the East India Company. The other acceptable career was in one of the liberal professions: divinity, medicine or law. For the latter a liberal education based on the classics at a university, was essential. And so Losh left Cambridge for Lincoln's Inn, and was called to the Bar in 1789.

Apart from the prejudices that Losh would face as a Dissenter he was aware that the provincial lawyer was considered more lowly than his metropolitan counterpart, and his diaries attest to his resentment of this situation. However, this did not prevent him from being a whole-hearted member and a leader of the local community and of the region. As an indication of that involvement and his position in it, his diary records his

[5] W J Reader, *Professional men: the rise of the professional Classes in nineteenth-century England* (London, 1966), 1.

attendance at the ball and supper held to honour the newly created Lord Collingwood:

> November 28, 1805.
>
> After dinner returned to Newcastle in a chaise with Mr.Peters, and went to a ball and supper in honour of the great naval victories. A large party mixed as to the quality of the company. It was amusing enough to observe the ill grace with which many of the *Old Gentry* paid their respects to the newly-created Lady Collingwood, who certainly had the appearance and manners of an amiable and an unaffected woman....[6]

As a friend of Earl Grey, Henry Brougham, Lord Lambton and a whole range of national and local luminaries, Losh was unusually prominent in social and political affairs.

We know that in the early 1790s he was actively associated with a group of gentlemen reformers in London, who formed the Society of the Friends of the People. It was Losh and George Tierney who drafted the petition for parliamentary reform that Charles Grey presented to the House of Commons in 1793. Losh was also a member of a small group of Cambridge graduates which discussed radical ideas with William Godwin. Godwin's diary records such a meeting at an evening tea party at William Frend's:

> February 27, 1795
>
> Tea at Frend's with Holcroft, Losh,
>
> Tweddell, Jonathan Raine, Edwards, Wordsworth, Higgins, French and Dyer.[7]

Later in this year Losh went to live in the Bristol area for his health, where he again met Wordsworth and through him Coleridge and Southey. Losh's relationship with the Lakeland poets was to last for the rest of his life, and his diary entries about them are very revealing. He was invited to accompany Wordsworth and Coleridge on their trip to Germany, but declined.

[6] Losh Diary, vol.12

[7] Diary of William Godwin, Abinger Papers, The Bodleian Library.

In 1798, Losh married Cecilia Baldwin, daughter of the Reverend Doctor Baldwin of Aldingham, near Ulverston, a marriage that Losh's uncle and benefactor frowned upon. The reason for this disapproval is not clear from his diaries, but significantly his uncle Joseph Liddle thereafter became less generous to him. The year following, Losh and his wife set up their home in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Bearing in mind Losh's dissenting views, it is interesting to consider the religious ferment that was Newcastle leading up to the year of his arrival. J E Bradley describes it as follows:

> The Dissenting community in Newcastle upon Tyne was one of the largest in the north of England, though it lacked some of the rich diversity of Bristol. Seven chapels belonged to the Scots Presbyterians ... The Scots chapels ... were closely linked through the Newcastle presbytery which in 1783 included thirteen ministers ... Two Unitarian chapels subsisted in the eighteenth century ... and there was a group of Particular Baptists ... The Quaker meeting was situated in Pilgrim Street and on 20 December 1792, the Methodists opened the Orphan House in Northumberland Street....[8]

As an active member of the local Unitarian community, Losh aided his minister Rev.W.Turner in many excellent schemes for the improvement of the morals and education of the young. His relationship with Turner was always close, even though he did not always agree with him on religious matters. It says much for this friendship, and for the open rational attitude in the church that Turner created, that serious disagreements were possible without rancour.

Losh's Unitarian Christianity was broad enough to accept the right of others to pursue the religion of their choice. This is reflected in the congregation that formed around William Turner following his arrival in Newcastle in 1782. Its members came from various religious backgrounds – some from non-Presbyterian congregations, several from Anglican families –

[8] J E Bradley, *Religion, revolution and English radicalism* (Cambridge, 1990), 255.

and there was a wide diversity of belief within the congregation. Turner held in 1811 that religious individualism was the cornerstone of the congregation. Individual Christians, each one professing Christianity for himself according to his own views of it, formed upon a mature consideration of the Scriptures, and acknowledging the minister's right to do the same; and necessarily united in nothing but a desire to worship the Supreme Lord of all as disciples of one common Master.[9] Theologically, Turner was a Socinian, and Losh's close relationship with him suggests that he too embraced that form of Unitarianism, although definite evidence is lacking.

In 1810, Losh took a leading part in the establishment of the Jubilee Schools, and other infant schools. His exertions to promote the education, particularly religious education of the lower classes, we can trace from the Bristol days in the 90s. His interest in education – which he saw as the eventual route to manhood suffrage – was deep and abiding. It led him to promote the formation of self-run Mechanics Institutes. As befitting a close friend of Henry Brougham, he took shares in the establishment of University College, London, and maintained a lively interest in the founding of a college in Newcastle and a university at Durham. We find in his diary that he did not hesitate to criticise a proposal to exclude Dissenters from its degrees.[10]

We move now from this general sketch of his life to the first of the three major issues of his day that coloured and energised the remainder of his busy life.

Catholic Emancipation

It would appear from his diaries that Losh was constantly at odds with the Government of the day. On one issue in particular he was continually criticizing them: this was the treatment of the Catholics in Ireland. This is revealed in many of his writings, but a particularly apt expression of his opinion,

[9] W A Turner, *Short sketch of the history of Protestant Non-conformity and of the society assembling in Hanover Square Chapel* (Newcastle, 1811), 29-31

[10] Hughes, Surtees Society abridgement, xv

until legislation removed the restrictions, is recorded in his diary in 1824. It refers to a book by Maria Edgeworth, an author for whom Losh had considerable respect. Losh comments as follows:

> July 25, 1824.
>
> *Captain Rock* - interesting little work. It is a severe but I fear just exposure of the long continued unjust and impolitic conduct of this count towards Ireland, and is I think well calculated produce a deep and general effect upon a subject which has hitherto been strangely neglected by the public in general ... Nothing can be more weak or more wicked than the conduct of our government as to the state of the Irish church in general, and tithes in particular, nor anything more abominable than their uniform conduct towards the Catholics.[11]

Losh was aware that this fellow Dissenters were deeply divided on the issue: the Methodists and Evangelical Trinitarians were moving away from a common cause with the Unitarians. As a Unitarian Losh believed passionately in religious freedom for all sects, including Catholics. This was not because he had any sympathy with the beliefs and ritual of the Catholic church. Indeed, his diaries show how distasteful he found his visits to Catholic churches. The following is a typical Losh comment:

> December 24, 1810
>
> At Catholic church with Cecilia. The mummery evidently borrowed from the pagan rites, is no doubt very disgusting, but I was pleased to see the evident devotion of the congregation.[12]

But, however, unacceptable Losh found their ritual, he was deeply concerned that the Catholics, like all Dissenters, were denied a voice in public affairs. Born in 1763, Losh could be said to have grown up with the Catholic emancipation question. He had seen the pressures of the war with France inflame Irish discontent, followed by the concession of enfranchisement but not representation in 1793. He was in London at the time of the

[11] Losh Diary vol.22.

[12] Ibid.,vol.13.

failure of Grattan's bill for complete Catholic emancipation in 1795, which led to the merging of Irish radical thought with nationalism. He would have been aware of the bloody end of the popular rising, led by the Irish middle classes at Vinegar Hill, and the subsequent failure of the Union of 1801 to give the Irish what Pitt had promised.[13]

Losh was hopeful that after Pitt's death a Fox-Grenville administration, would introduce relief for the Catholics, along with a beginning on parliamentary reform. Those early hopes seemed to die with Fox.

> The pro-Catholic members of the Ministry of All the Talents did not want to raise the question of emancipation at the cost of upsetting the King.[14]

The administration were forced to resign when the Irish petition for emancipation of 1807 caused the King to insist on a promise the matter would not be raised in that form.

On Tyneside, one of the ways local reformist opinion was mobilised was through the holding of commemorative dinners, ostensibly to remember their erstwhile leader Charles James Fox. Significantly, at the 1812 dinner, both Dissenters and Catholics were represented, to express their dissatisfaction with the Government's policies. Losh's diary records:

> January 24, 1812.
>
> Dinner at Foster's - Fox's birthday - large party, 108 or thereabouts, Sir R Millbank in the chair. A great number of county gentlemen present. Most principal Catholics and Dissenters in particular attended. Everything was conducted very well, and the meeting was in every respect such as the friends of civil and religious liberty might have wished for. There still remains in this nation much good sense and right feeling but I fear they are not a match for the selfishness and corruption which have nearly overwhelmed everything which is good.[15]

[13] G T Machin,wrote, 'the Irish Catholics were convinced they had been duped'. *The Catholic question in English politics 1820-1830* (Oxford,1964) 12.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Losh Diary, vol.14.

To Losh the impending storm seemed to break when Perceval was assassinated on 11 May. Losh himself, saw little chance for improvement with any replacement for the assassinated Perceval. Liverpool, the new prime minister, did not consider the time had yet arrived for a settlement of the question that would satisfy Catholics and still provide security for the Protestants. His government was neutral towards Catholic claims.

As a Unitarian, Losh saw the folly in continuing to restrict the Catholics or any Dissenting group:

> February 17, 1813.
>
> An article in the *Morning Chronicle* by Mr. Butler. This is the clearest and most decisive (and at the same time the most temperate) statement of the folly of restricting the civil rights of the Catholics or any other section, on account of their opinions, and contains a triumphant reply to all the common topics of abuse against the Roman Catholics, as unworthy to be trusted as subjects or members of society.[16]

While Losh was following the latest news on the Catholic question, parliament was considering Grattan's motion for the committee on the claims of the Roman Catholics, which the House of Commons had pledged to institute. Grattan's speech to the Commons of 23 April, 1813 was reported in the *Newcastle Chronicle:*

> Would they deprive two-thirds of the Irish people, and one-fourth of the people of the British Empire of their civil liberties forever?... In disqualifying a British subject on account of his religious opinions, they would attack the principle that made them a parliament, and disqualifying themselves ... Ireland has proved herself capable of long and patient allegiance... You have voted thanks year after year to armies composed of Catholics ....[17]

In May his bill had a second reading and went into committee

[16] Ibid.,vol.15.

[17] *Newcastle Chronicle*, 2 May 1813.

stage, but it foundered on the question of securities for the Protestants.

The coming of peace with France in 1815 also turned parliamentary scrutiny to the state of Ireland, raising the Catholic question again. Peel was resistant, but at least he realised the depth and intricacy of the problem, particularly the part played by the economic conditions of the Irish peasantry.[18] In so far as politics was centred on great public issues, the dominant force in the 1820s was the swelling current of Irish nationalism. Roman Catholic emancipation might sound the knell, if it were granted, of old Toryism, but if it were withheld, of the union between Great Britain and Ireland.

The founding in 1823 of the Catholic Association by Daniel O'Connell first raised the temperature of debate; and then in 1824 the so-called Catholic Rent, O'Connell's system of national subscription. As Hinde points out, 'O`Connell took the struggle for Catholic rights out of the clubs, counting houses, and drawing rooms of Dublin and Irish countryside, and the mass of poor Irish Catholics made him their uncrowned king.'[19]

The Association began to loom large in the political consciousness of the English. It was thought that the Irish Catholics might want to separate from England altogether.[20] The king, GeorgeIV, was as vehemently against emancipation of the Irish Catholics as his father had been. A bill to amend the Acts relating to unlawful societies in Ireland, though bitterly contested by the opposition, was carried by a large majority. Losh read all the newspaper reports and was soon to become more actively involved. He saw no good in the Bill making the Catholic Association illegal:

> February 18, 1825.
> Debate on the Catholic Association. After a debate of four days, it was determined by a large majority in the House of Commons to put down the Association by Act

[18] N Gash, *Mr. Secretary Peel* (London, 1961), 203.
[19] W Hinde, *Catholic emancipation: a shake to men's minds* (Oxford, 1992), 14.
[20] Machin, *The Catholic question,* 44.

> of Parliament. A measure in my opinion very likely to do harm and incapable of doing good.
> [End of the month comment] The Catholic claims have excited much attention and it seems to me they are rapidly gaining ground. There has been no cry **No Popery** and **The Church is in danger**. Certainly the state of Ireland is much better understood than formerly, and its importance much more truly estimated.[21]

As the 1820s progressed, Daniel O'Connell's harnessing of the masses in the Catholic Association changed the political balance of power. The Catholic Church's involvement in the collecting of the 'rent' meant the masses themselves had now a sense of commitment to O'Connell's aims. The Association, by vetting parliamentary candidates and mustering the forty-shilling freeholders, had a decisive effect on the late 20s elections. O'Connell commented:

> There is a moral electricity in the continuous expression of public opinion concentrated on a single point.[22]

The failing health of Lord Liverpool in January 1827 was putting the continuance of the government in doubt. Losh, though concerned for the premier, recognised that his death could mean an administration more sympathetic to the Catholic cause. We have already seen how he assessed Liverpool's virtues, and regarding his attitude to the Catholic question Losh wrote:

> February 20, 1827.
> An account of the sudden and alarming illness of Lord Liverpool arrived ... For my part, I cannot think it a great loss to be deprived of a Prime Minister who was a determined enemy of Parliamentary Reform, of Catholic Emancipation also. Upon this last subject, it must be allowed that his mind had made considerable advances in knowledge and liberality...[23]

[21] Losh Diaries, vol.22.
[22] R F Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600*-1972 (London ,1988), 298
[23] Losh Diaries, vol.24.

Losh wrote of the consequences:

> April 17, 1827
> the resignation of the Chancellor, the Duke of Wellington etc. seems to be considered generally as a great public good, but that of Mr.Peel many people lament very much. I confess, I am not one of those who does so, for tho' he is certainly a man of considerable talents, active, and I believe desirous of doing good, yet his prejudices on the Catholic question, and no doubt about religious freedom altogether, render him an unfit person to form part of a liberal adminstration....[24]

When the Duke of Wellington set about forming a new government, the King insisted that Catholic emancipation was not to be made a cabinet question, and that in Ireland the Lord Lieutenant and Lord Chancellor were to be Protestants. However, he was prepared to allow that the Government should include both pro- and anti-emancipation ministers.

From the end of July the Duke of Wellington was to fight round after round on behalf of Catholic Emancipation. The king was still passionately against; Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, the king's influential brother, furiously so; and of the Cabinet, Lord Anglesey was for it, and Peel also, by conversion, but pledged to resign as soon as his side won. 1828 was a very wearing year for the Duke. Losh reveals his respect for the Duke's integrity and his commitment to Ireland in his diary:

> End of August 1828.
> Public affairs appear to be stationary, except in Ireland where the Catholic question become daily more and more important. Government must be well aware of the wisdom, not to say the necessity of granting the just demands of the Irish, and what they did with respect to the Dissenters, shews they are not hostile to religious liberty. I suppose the great stumbling block is the Church establishment in Ireland, and the great patronage, public and private, connected with it and Protestant

[24] Ibid., vol.24.

> Ascendancy.[25]

But the year 1829 came with the Catholic question still embedded in the quicksands of royal evasion. Peel now supported the Duke, making the Cabinet wholly for emancipation. Hinde argues that the Cabinet feared that doing nothing to quieten the turbulence of Ireland, was a danger greater than the risks consequent on removing the disabilities.[26]

The Duke was prepared to consider any solution that did not imperil the Union. He had written to his brother William, 'I don't like the Catholic question. It is the natural wish in every people to become independent of their numerous and more powerful neighbours.'[27]

Either the king must give his assent to the proposed bill, or they would resign. His refusal to assent the Bill brought their immediate resignations. The king realised the enormity of what he had done and sent an immediate letter of retraction: 'I have decided to yield my opinions to that which is considered by the Cabinet to be for the immediate interests of the country.'[28]

Losh, meanwhile, was battling for support of the measure in the north-east. Though not violent in their opposition to legislative relief for the Catholics, the local opponents of any concessions were robust in their opinions. Losh made a major speech, and the newspaper report makes it clear that during it he demonstrated how skilful he had become in handling heckling from the floor. The *Newcastle Chronicle* reported the meeting on 14 March. Losh said:

> We, the requisitionists, called together a public meeting ... to know whether it was your will and pleasure to petition Parliament in order to remove the Catholic disabilities ...We did not attempt to take you by surprise. We wished not only to say that we desired to petition, but to tell you what we intended to say to Parliament.

The meeting which began noisily, became quiet. Losh went on:

> Look around you and what do you find in the County of

[25] Ibid., vol.26.
[26] Hinde, *Catholic emancipation*, 135-6.
[27] E Longford, *Wellington* (London, 1992),397.
[28] Ibid.,402.

> Durham? You find both members for the county, the members for the city, and the Lord Lieutenant all of one mind ... I mention the name of Early Grey – a name no Northumbrian can ever forget ... but if we are not to be taught by names, I will meet these persons on the merits of the question itself. Every Lord Lieutenant who has gone to Ireland, from the time of Lord Cornwallis to that of Lord Anglesey, however strongly he might feel against the Catholics, after a residence there, and after he had seen the state and condition of that country has returned a decided friend to Catholic Emancipation....

At this point there was further uproar. Losh waited patiently. When he could speak he reminded them of the cost of their opposition:

> We are told that this measure will do no good – that is folly. That the country is quiet..It is quiet by an army of 30.000 men in Ireland. It is quiet by an annual expenditure of four million sterling, which is literally thrown away; and will it be no saving, then, to obtain a settlement of the Catholic question?

He recorded in his diary, his reactions to the meeting:

> March 10,1829
>
> Public meeting for petitioning on the *Catholic Question* ... The clergy and Methodists had formed a junction and bringing in a number of colliers etc., they outnumbered us. In all other respects they made a miserable figure. They had on their side one magistrate, one barrister, one physician, one surgeon and only one attorney. Their *genteel* partisans consisted of Methodists, a great many of the clergy, and a considerable number of old women. Even their majority amongst the mob might easily have been prevented by a little exertion.

The Catholic Relief Bill was presented to the House of Commons on 10 March. The substance of the enacting clauses was: Roman Catholics were to be allowed to sit and vote in Parliament having taken the oath; Roman Catholics could vote and also be elected; they could hold all offices civil and

military except certain high offices. The bogey of the Catholics persisted long beyond Losh's time. However, in the result, the majority of the peers were in accord with that more liberal attitude which Losh recorded in his diary:

> End April 1829.
>
> I rejoice that the Duke of Wellington has had the firmness and perseverance to effect his great measure of Catholic Emancipation, in spite of the clamour of the ignorant and the selfish, for into one or other of these great classes the great body of the anti-Catholic may, I think, be fairly divided ... it seems at first sight singular that the great measures of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and Catholic Emancipation should have been carried by men as the Duke of Wellington and Mr.Peel, although they had failed under the auspices of Mr.Fox,Mr.Pitt, Mr. Burke etc.[29]

As a Whig Losh would, I feel, have preferred that such a great measure have been carried by a government led by Earl Grey, but he was overjoyed that at least it was now accomplished. His confidence in, and support for, Grey would become evident in the next great issue to be fought for.

Parliamentary Reform

When he became involved Losh's activities were not prompted by political ambition (as might be said of, for example, Henry Brougham). Losh responded to social need rather than to the political climate. Although he was always aware when the time was right for energetic action (as it was in 1830). Yet his argument for reform was continuous throughout the period 1793-1832. He saw the need for changing a corrupt system he first knew in his youth, and which he attacked, not with pious platitudes but with reasoned detailed argument. He was impatient with politicians who judged the climate not tactically favourable for debate on the issue. As we have already noted, in 1792 Losh was associated with Charles Grey and a group of reforming gentlemen and aristocrats who formed the Society for the Friends of the People. Charles Fox was against its

[29] Losh Diaries, vol.26.

formation, and against the raising of the parliamentary reform issue at a time of rising war fever, but Grey persisted.[30] Losh refers to the Society and to his relationship with Grey in a later diary entry:

> March 17, 1832.
> I remember 40 years ago (in Debret's shop) having a warm discussion with Lord (then Charles Grey) Grey, when he took fire at my stating to him my fears that the *Friends of the People* (of which society he was chairman) would fail for want of energy and decisive measures. We were then young men ... We got to high words ... We parted haughtily....[31]

The Society's proposals did not seek to commit Parliament to a very definite programme of reform: it spoke of restoring the freedom of election; ensuring a more equal representation of the people; and giving the people a more frequent exercise of their right to choose their representatives. The generalisations of this document evaded the difficult questions which marked off the various shades of reformist opinion from each other. If the Friends of the People rejected universal suffrage, where and how would they fix franchise levels? Were they prepared to go further than triennial parliaments? What was their attitude to annual elections? Experience eventually confirmed that Grey favoured a conservative answer to each of these questions. On 13 June, 1810, in the House of Lords, Grey declared that while the best interests of the country depended upon parliamentary reform, nothing should be done to hurry it on until 'it was taken up by the people of England seriously and affectionately.'[32] To all this Henry Brougham was decidedly opposed.

During the following few years Losh was dissatisfied that Parliamentary Reform had been put into abeyance – lost in the manoeuvring of professional politicians playing the parliamentary game. We find him critical of Grey for this change of direction: and of his avoidance of a personal commitment to

[30] J W Derry, *Charles, Earl Grey* (Oxford, 1992), 32-39.
[31] Losh Diaries, vol.31.
[32] Christopher New, *Life of Henry Brougham to 1830* (Oxford, 1961), 148.

reform, whenever he was invited to speak at local 'Fox dinners'. Losh commits to his diary his disappointment with Grey:

> September 1814.
> Lord Grey was in the chair ... He spoke well and with such apparent frankness. He avowed himself the enemy of every species of corruption, and recommended to the whole company, in their respective spheres, to keep a watchful eye on the government ... I could not help but observing, however, that Lord Grey never in direct terms mentioned Parliamentary reform, tho' both Lord Lambton and Dr. Fenwick gave him fair opportunity of doing so....[33]

In January 1820, Grey wrote to his son-in-law Lord Lambton (later to become the Earl of Durham and to acquire the nickname 'Radical Jack') that there was little likelihood of reform in his lifetime.[34] In Newcastle, however, Losh expressed a more confident opinion in a speech on January 26, 1820, supporting a petition for parliamentary reform. It was well time, with local elections about to take place. Losh was reported in the *Newcastle Chronicle* as having this to say:

> I feel it is right to say a few words as to the nature of Parliamentary Reform ... to consider what the House of Commons is ... it ought to be and must be, to be of use, the fair representation of the feelings and the opinions of the people at large ... Can it be right that the majority of the House should be elected by a few individuals, by the basest means, by gross corruption, and thus composed of persons who have no common interest with the people whatever? ... Is it reasonable that the county of York ... should only send two members to parliament, whilst Old Sarum sends the same number?
> Another great object, Sir, which we have in view, is the shortening of the duration of Parliament; and both upon

[33] Losh Diaries, vol.15.
[34] J Cannon, *Parliamentary reform 1630-1832* (Cambridge, 1972), 183.

> principle and original practice, it is quite obvious that seven years is too long a period of delegating trust to anyone whatever ... There is no magic in the word one year ... if you dare not trust your representative for more than one year, why trust him at all? It appears to me plain that one year is too short as it is that seven years are too long....

Losh at this point expresses a dislike of the secret ballot:

> The third doctrine held to be infallible, I think more mischievous than either of the others. I mean Election by Ballot. This would lead to every species of meanness, and degrade us from that manly character which I hope Englishmen will always maintain....[35]

We can see how far his ideas have progressed since the move for reform in the 1790s. He is speaking directly to his own kind, in language they understood.

In 1820 Losh seemed to be one of the few still agitating for reform. In the seven years that would pass before changing national circumstances would encourage his active involvement in the re-awakening of the issue, he was heavily involved in both private and professional matters. However, he was ready to act and his entry of February 1827 shows that the reform issue was now on the move again and a further public meeting was held. It is interesting to see how far Losh is identified with the issue. He records his impressions:

> February 7, 1827.
>
> I dined at a great dinner given in Fletcher's Long Room to Mr. Beaumont [MP for Northumberland] it was numerously and upon the whole respectably attended. I spoke upon the subject of parliamentary reform (having been requested to give that as a toast). So I knew the day before, and I had considered the heads of what I thought right to say, and acquitted myself apparently to the general satisfaction.[36]

[35] *Newcastle Chronicle*, 29 January 1820.
[36] Losh Diaries,vol.24.

But Losh was a little premature with his enthusiasm. As Cannon points out in the early summer of 1827 the prospects of parliamentary reform looked anything but good, and the country evinced very little interest.[37]

Though the issue did not encourage any further local meetings for two years, Losh was not slow to use other means to activate the subject. In 1829, he took up his pen again in the cause of Reform and his article appeared in the *Westminster Review,* January 1830.[38] He is replying to the Address of the London Radical Reform Association to the People of the United Kingdom, 19 October 1829:

> it is generally professed to be acknowledged, that the people ought to be represented: but nobody has ever been able to determine whether this is best done by their having voices in the election of their representatives, or by having none. Some persons, for instance, think that it would promote the intended object, if the large towns like Manchester and Leeds had a chance for chusing at least one representative. Others, on the contrary, believe that the way to accomplish the end, is to cause two representatives to be elected by nine drunken men in Cornwall. If the people are to represented at all, they ought to chuse their representatives. If they do not chuse their representatives, they are not represented at all.

It should be noted that Losh in this article is arguing solely for the middle class to be represented, whereas in 1820 he covers the whole spectrum of parliamentary reform: reduction in the duration of parliament; disenfranchising the rotten boroughs; extending the franchise; and the evils of the secret ballot.

When George IV died in June 1830, a general election caused the reform issue to be debated more vigorously than ever before. Grey challenged Wellington on the issue, and stung him into claiming that the representative system had the full

[37] Cannon, *Parliamentary reform*, 186.
[38] *Westminster Review*, XXIII.

and complete confidence of the country. Grey himself, did not like universal suffrage, annual parliaments or the secret ballot.

On 15 November Wellington's ministry was defeated on proposals related to the civil list. Radicals were aware that Grey's proposals fell short of what in theory they wished to achieve, but they knew that the only realistic hope of getting a substantial measure of reform through parliament lay through Grey. There was no chance of a 'democratic' measure being accepted by Parliament. Losh commented on Grey's new administration:

> November 19, 1830.
>
> It appears that Lord Grey has the confidence of the King, but the precise construction of the new administration is not yet known. I much doubt the stability of any administration formed wholly of either Lord Grey's Whig friends or a mixture of them and Tories. *Liberal* measures must be adopted or else the *ultra-liberals* I fear will throw all into confusion.[39]

Although it was to be some fifteen months before the administration would be ready with its reform proposals, Losh did not lose the opportunity that a local concern for reform gave him, to keep the issue in front of the 'respectable' people. The *Newcastle Chronicle* published a report of a public meeting 20 December 1830, to consider a petition on reform.[40] Losh opened the meeting:

> Mr. Losh said it now became his duty, on behalf of the gentlemen who had signed the requisition just read, to state to that great and respectable meeting, the grounds upon which they had called them together, and the object they had in view. That object was to obtain for this great country a thorough and efficient form of reform of the Commons House of Parliament, and that object he trusted would be pursued by all fair and proper means.

[39] Losh Diaries, vol.28.

[40] *Newcastle Chronicle*, 24 December 1830.

He reminded them that the present corrupt system had to be changed, asserting that now was the time for making their voices heard, and urging them to support Grey in the difficult task ahead. Losh believed, as reported, that people had now more knowledge of the true state of affairs and the circumstances which had brought them about. He commented:

> Since that period, knowledge and information had been extensively diffused ... he thought he might be permitted to allude to the Lord Chancellor [Brougham]... his high situation...would enable him to do more ... to spread more widely the plans for improvement....

The indefatigable Losh was willing to address meetings wherever he could gather middle-class support:

> January 27, 1831.
>
> ...We had difficulty getting to Morpeth with four horses and the roads to the north-west and east were impassable....

At the Reform Meeting recalled in Morpeth on 9 February Losh, in answering the allegation of a previous speaker that reform was unnecessary, had the following to say:

> He rejoiced in his able support [Mr. Liddell's] but the honourable gentleman instantly veered around, and the whole of his speech, from beginning to end, was intended to show that parliamentary reform was unnecessary; that a corrupt House of Commons never did anyone any harm; and that a reformed one would do no good; and that pensions were not only good things in themselves, but were approved by His Majesty's Ministers.[laughter]
>
> If the honourable gentleman considered what a representative government was, he would see that if in 1793 a reform had taken place, founded on the petition of the Friends of the People, the war would never have taken place, or, if begun, would have been put an end to sooner....[41]

[41] Ibid., 11 February 1831.

Losh's diary entry following this meeting shows the effort the moderate reformers went to avoid the radical demands for the ballot, that could well have split support for the Grey proposals.

> February 8, 1831.
>
> The meeting, however, was not very numerous and the mob of Morpeth certainly proved a majority in point of numbers ... Mr. Liddell, I may venture to say, gaining nothing by our second contest ... We were fortunate in beating or rather eluding the sticklers for the Ballot.[42]

On February 16, 1831, Losh wrote to Lord Brougham:

> I have no doubt petitions may be obtained from all our towns in this part of England if you wish it. But nothing can be done until the Reform question is disposed of. A substantial Reform and a moderate property tax might, and trust, would save the country.They may be bitter pills but they must be swallowed by the Capitalists and the Aristocracy....[43]

The first version of the Reform Bill was presented to the House of Commons by Lord John Russell on 1 March 1831 and proposed the disenfranchisement of 60 boroughs with populations of less than 2,000, involving 119 MPs and the partial disenfranchisement of 47 boroughs of between 2,000 and 4,000. With 168 seats eliminated, the new House would be smaller, since England would gain only 97 seats, Wales 1, Scotland 5 and Ireland 3 in compensation for those losses. The borough franchise was to be vested in the £10 householder. In the counties the £10 copyholder and the 50 shilling leaseholder were to be enfranchised in addition to the forty-shilling freeholder.

Tyneside opinion was sufficiently strong to cause a further meeting:

> March 8, 1831.
>
> Attending a Reform meeting at the Turk's Head and waiting upon the Mayor with a requisition for a public

[42] Losh Diaries, vol.28.
[43] University College, London, card no. 6062.

> meeting of the town and neighbourhood. Mackenzie and Macleod behaving admirably, giving up their peculiar opinions with a view to promote unanimity in order to carry the great measure, the destruction of the property boroughs. The Mayor granted our request with a much *shew* of cordiality.[44]

On March 10, 1831 Losh wrote to Lord Brougham about it:

> My dear Lord Brougham,
>
> We have had an admirable meeting here. We were threatened with a formidable opposition both from the Radicals and the Free Burgesses, but the leaders of the former declared their unqualified approbation of Lord John Russell's Bill, and disclaimed Hunt's declaration that the radical reformers were not satisfied. The only shade of dissatisfaction they said was the duration of parliaments, but they would even submit to that in order to prevent dissension – 3 years will satisfy them. All our resolutions passed unanimously ... The meeting at North Shields went off as well as possible and I have no doubt there will be a similar result in all the other towns in the district....
>
> P.S. We have the greatest reason to believe that the Tories (and the Tories in London) were the authors of two attempts to throw our meeting into confusion. If so, their discomfort was compleat.[45]

Losh was not given to conspiracy theories and to make such an accusation suggests that he must have been in possession of very strong evidence for the intrusion of London Tories into the local meeting.

We can see that Losh as usual was acting not only as a reporter of middle-class opinion, but also as mediator. He was giving Brougham the reassurance that the majority of the 'respectable' people were behind the government, and that he himself was rousing them to defeat the intentions of the opposition. At this critical juncture, Losh fired off another

[44] Losh Diaries, vol.28.
[45] University College, card no.6063.

article to the *Westminster Review*, April 1831. This was a journal that he read regularly, and admired though not uncritically.

> Free governments are simply an invention for bringing clashing interests into unison without violence , for making government direct what the people will obey, and the people obey what the government direct. This is not Radicalism; it is good Whiggery of 1688.

Losh knew his middle class readers and how much they resented paying taxes without a voice in their own affairs. To them, a political issue should resolve itself down to 'the man who pays the piper calls the tune'. Losh never hesitated to stress the financial aspect of any issue. He was not patiently waiting for the outcome of the election. He was busy in Cumberland, the county of his birth, and where he now had property with voting rights. He was jubilant at the final Whig success:

> May 7, 1831.
>
> Was there ever anything like our success in the county elections? To sum all, Lord Lonsdale consents to let a Reformer come into his hitherto pocket county of Westmorland. I foresee that the loss of the Durham seat will be a lasting sore place to the Taylors [Tory] ... In congratulating the country on the defeat of the varios anti-Reformers [in The Star] it likewise congratulates them 'upon the return to Parliament of that honest member Mr. Creevey for Downton....[46]

The king wrote to Grey on 28 May urging him to consider modifications which while not affecting the principle of the Bill, would conciliate. Grey was unmoved.

Losh was also keeping in touch with Lord Durham ['Radical Jack' Lambton]. It seems that Losh had offered some suggestions for combining voting rights with liability for jury service:

[46] Losh Diaries, vol.28.

> June 4, 1831.
>
> Lord Durham agrees with me in all my opinions as to the defects of the Reform Bill: the division of the counties and the want of uniformity in the qualification in particular. He told me that they had tried my suggestions of making the right of voting and duty of serving upon juries co-extensive, but found that the number voters would be too small. We both agreed that dividing the whole thing down into districts, pretty nearly equal as to population, and making the franchise uniform, must finally be resorted to, but it probably would have been too strong a measure to begin with.[47]

Though not so alarming as elsewhere, pressure was continuing on Tyneside. In this heightened public emotion, Losh was, as on previous occasions, struggling to maintain unity of action. The Newcastle Reform Meeting to petition the House of Lords in favour of the Reform Bill, held on 26 September, was reported in the *Newcastle Chronicle:*

> Mr. Losh: The Reform Bill had now passed the House of Commons ... it became distinctly necessary, as stated in the requisition ... that it should meet with no impediment in the House of Lords. The Bill had passed after a tedious ... a most disgraceful opposition ... the King and the House of Commons, and the nation, were on one side, and only a handful of interested borough proprietors and borough nominees on the other....[48]

Losh's diary entry, following this meeting, senses the increasing temperature for reform:

> September 26, 1831
>
> It is quite clear to me that in the north at least (and I believe all over the kingdom) the desire for parliamentary reform has become more intense instead of (what has been pretended) any reduction having taken place. The present bill liberal as it is, may not permanently satisfy the nation, but it will probably do so for some time at

[47] Ibid., vol.30.

[48] *Newcastle Chronicle*, 4 October 1831.

least, and at all events it is preparing the way, and affording a chance for a system of gradual and quiet amelioration, instead of scenes of bloodshed and confusion which, without it, must inevitably have taken place.[49]

The House of Lords continued to resist the passing of the Bill. Lord Brougham tried to persuade them in his speech of 7 October. The Lords rejected the Bill by a majority of 41. This rejection provoked a massive outburst of rioting and disorder in London, Bristol and Nottingham. Losh commented:

October 25.1831

The accounts from Bristol are very bad. The mob appears to have committed great outrages and to have been subdued by the soldiers and with a great cost of lives. This riot seems to me to prove two things: first, that either a Reform or a Revolution must take place immediately, and secondly, that 'the Schoolmaster' has still much to do. Of both these facts I have for a long time been fully satisfied.[50]

Losh senses that locally the violence is only being contained awaiting the result of the Bill:

November 9, 1831.

We have so far been able to keep the Ultra-Reformers quiet and by a *little management* [my italics] our public meetings in this district have gone off very well. But unless the Reform Bill be passed very soon there will be a bursting out of public indignation which nothing can resist in the northern counties. What is called the Northern Political Union has done mischief ... Indeed, previous to the great meeting on the Town Moor, I do not believe that the pitmen ever thought of interfering in political matters at all.[51]

But there was little Losh could do locally to ease the difficulties of an adminstration divided against itself and beset

[49] Losh Diaries, vol.30.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid .

by irresolvable problems.[52] Defeated in the Lords on Lyndhurst's motion in Committee on May 7, the Ministry resigned in view of the king's refusal to use his power to create the necessary peerages to carry the measure. The fact that this meant there was no chance of forming an anti-reform administration was not lost on Losh. This and the agitation of the country is reflected in his diary:

May 9, 1832.

The country was thrown into a great agitation by the success of the manoeuvres of the oligarchy in the House of Lords and the consequent resignation of Lord Grey. The conduct of the King is much to be lamented ... I do not think it possible to form an anti-reform administration....[53]

May 15, 1832.

Meeting of 10,000 people at Newcastle....[54]

Wellington's failure to form an anti-reform administration (as Losh had predicted) contrasted with Grey's determination to stand firm. The passage of the Act was almost an anti-climax with the folding of the king and Wellington's resistance to the creation of peers. The final letter of Losh to Lord Brougham on the success of the Reform Bill, expressed the hope that the dust would be allowed to settle:

September 7, 1832.

The Reform Act ... has done so much and gone so far beyond the most sanguine hopes of all reasonable men, that I most anxiously wish that no attempt may be made for several years to come, to make any material alterations in it – nothing beyond improvements in the mere detail of its operation, where it may in practice be found not to work well....[55]

How typical of Losh that, even though he could see the need for further extensions to the franchise, he wanted society to

[52] See, Cannon, *Parliamentary reform*, 230.
[53] Losh Diaries, vol.31.
[54] Ibid.
[55] University College, card no.34713.

have time to absorb the political and social consequences of the Act.

The Slavery Issue

It was time to do something positive about the slavery issue whilst the middle classes had the fervour for reform. Losh had been keeping the local flame alive, and he was ready now that the Reform issue was out of the way. The Dissenters, especially the Quakers, had been prodding the matter for decades. The Dissenters generally defined slavery as a moral rather than a political issue, though they were not unsympathetic to economic or political factors. Losh, for example, was a man of firm Unitarian beliefs, yet sufficiently a business man to grasp the economic considerations of the problem as well. He realised, as has been said by Anstey 'Providence virtually guaranteed that religious duty and economic interest would coincide....'[56]

It could be argued that the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 merely intensified the fight to remove an offence to humanity. The anti-slavery activists were aware that the Bill of that year was insufficient to stop a trade that was so lucrative to so many influential families. Lacking a metropolitan political platform for an expression of his views, Losh worked through local organisations and societies. He was an active organiser of pressure groups for political purposes in his area. We find an early example of this noted in his diary on 7 September 1814: 'Slave trade committee and Antiquarian Society'.[57]

By the time Canning became Foreign Secretary, in Liverpool's administration, all the leading maritime countries had been persuaded to follow British example and abolish the trade. But it was a hollow victory because no government except the British took effective steps to enforce the prohibition on their own nationals. So although the British slave trade had

[56] R Anstey, *The Atlantic slave trade and British abolition 1760-1810* (London, 1975), 15.

[57] This was eight years before James Cropper organised his society for abolition.

been effectively stamped out by the Royal Navy, the trade as a whole was increasing.[58]

With the economic problems that followed the end of the war, the slave issue took a back seat. Then early in March 1823, Wilberforce published a pamphlet in which he forcefully, but moderately, argued the case for abolition of plantation slavery. Meanwhile, Henry Brougham wrote an article which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* based upon Macaulay's book *Negro Slavery*.[59] It had tremendous influence. In the north-east, Losh became more robust in his attacks upon the slavery lobby, probably triggered off by Brougham's activity.

> April 29, 1823.
>
> Public petition against slavery ... I endeavoured to point out the evils of slavery in the West Indies, and to show the reasonableness of a temperate mitigation of them, and of the final abolition of slavery when both the slaves and the slave holders were prepared for the result. I stated the folly and extravagance of supporting the West Indies trade against the East Indies by bounties, duties etc. and agreed that nothing but free labor could enable the West Indies to bring their sugar to Europe at as low prices as that from the east. I mentioned some of the most obvious modes of gradually emancipating the slaves etc.[60]

The *Newcastle Chronicle* published the following report:

> a public meeting was held in the Guildhall for the purpose of petitioning Parliament 'to take into consideration the state of slavery in the West Indies, with a view to mitigate the condition of the slaves, and to promote the gradual abolition of slavery itself'.
>
> Mr. Losh rose ...'About sixteen years ago Parliament abolished the trade in slaves altogether as connected with this country, and it was then hoped that that abolition would be productive of a great amelioration of the condition of the slaves in our West Indies settlements,

[58] W Hinde, *George Canning* (Glasgow, 1973), 341.

[59] *Edinburgh Review*, LXXV.

[60] Losh Diaries, vol.21.

and that a state of freedom would naturally have arisen from it. But from circumstances which must be obvious to all, it had happened that Slavery was not in substance much ameliorated.

Losh was never extreme in his views, and on this issue, as we have seen in others, he looked for amelioration of the worst aspects of the business, leading to eventual emancipation:

to give them at once complete emancipation, would be attended with the greatest disadvantages to the slaves themselves, as well as their owners. But the advocates of the abolition of slavery did not propose any such speculation; they proposed nothing but what they were satisfied would be beneficial to both....

This had been a very long speech. Not only was his audience prepared to listen to it, but the *Chronicle* to print it in full. When one considers that the resolution of this issue was still ten years ahead, it says much for not only Losh, but also for the concern of a middle-class Tyneside audience who had little connection with a trade that centred on western seaports. Losh's diary for 1823 and thereafter reveals how the issue was becoming a cause, if not in the provinces generally, then certainly on Tyneside:

May 14, 1823.

A very respectable meeting of the Friends of the Abolition of Slavery, this evening. Mr.Bell the Mayor in the chair. I think our measures likely to be useful because they were temperate.

May 21, 1823.

Slavery Abolition Committee. I was in the chair...and had the satisfaction to see much zeal and unanimity amongst a set of the most respectable men in a most excellent and almost (as Mr. Parkinson calls it) sacred cause.

August 1823.

religious freedom and the abolition of slavery must follow.[61]

[61] Ibid.

Canning's Order in Council of March 16, 1824, sought to reduce the ill-treatment and pave the way to emancipation. Wilberforce had no illusions about the colonial assemblies and asked whether or not the Imperial Parliament should insist on abolition in all the colonies. Canning's view was that, 'by gradual measures, producing gradual improvement, not only may the individual slave be set free, but his very status may be utterly abolished....'[62]

1824 saw Losh's involvement in the issue continue to increase, particularly as he appeared to have little faith in Canning's vision:

March 19, 1824.

I read the debates in the House of Commons on the subject of ameliorating the condition of the slaves in the West Indies. Mr. Canning's speech is certainly very able and dextrous in many respects, but as is often the case when a person tries to please both sides, I think he will offend both the friends to real amelioration and West Indian proprietors....[63]

Never slow to take personal initiative, Losh is again upon his feet at a public meeting. Here he is advocating more use of petitions, as the Anti-Slavery Society was resorting to:

March 31, 1824.

Public meeting on the subject of Negro Emancipation ... My great object was to shew that petitions were useful both for the purpose of supporting government, and of pointing out to them the prudence, not to say the necessity, of extending their plan to the old as well as the ceded colonies. I took an opportunity also of considering and recommending a fair and equitable compensation to the planters, upon their making out cases of real loss, tho' I denied their having any title to their slaves, or their children, beyond a claim from the fact of Parliament having sanctioned their possession of them.

[62] Hinde, *George Canning*, 344.

[63] Losh Diaries, vol.21.

It was printed by a local printer, probably at Losh's own expense.[64]

The following extracts from the printed version of the speech, refer to the legal justification for slave ownership.

> Again, the planters say, that at all events the slaves are their own absolute property, and that they are the best, nay the sole, judges as to the management of that which belongs to themselves. I am far from denying Sir, that the laws of this country have guaranteed their right to this strange species of property; and I most freely admit, that they ought to have a fair compensation for any direct loss which they may sustain by the Acts of the legislature, however wise and salutary those acts may be.

After this major speech Losh's diary continues to record his regular involvement in the anti-slavery movement:

> June 16, 1824.
>
> Slave Abolition Meeting ... was not numerously attended, but upon the whole went off very well. I was in the chair and only made a short speech in opening the business. Dr.Fenwick spoke as usual with great clearness and effect. Mr. Pringle made a very sensible speech as also did Mr. Turner and Mr. Angus stated some very interesting facts as to the state of slavery at Honduras.[65]

Losh saw that the resistance of the planters could lead to the Government being provoked to take action:

> End of June 1825.
>
> The conduct of the West Indies planters, particularly what are called the Legislatures of Jamaica and Bardadoes, continues to be so weak, so violent and so contumacious towards this country, that I cannot help hoping good will come out of evil, and that they may provoke the Government to take some decisive measure

[64] *The speech of James Losh Esq. in the Guildhall, Newcastle. 3rd March 1824...for the purpose of petitioning Parliament for the improvement and gradual emancipation of the slave population of the British Colonies.* Printed by T. & J. Hodgson, Union St. 1824. (located at N923/10 Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society).

[65] Losh Diaries, vol.24.

> of their own accord, to compel some amelioration of the conditions of the Negro slaves, or what would be still better, that the nation at large may be fairly aroused and express their indignation in language which cannot be misunderstood and which no government dare to treat with neglect.[66]

In 1828, Losh again had the opportunity to speak to a large public meeting on this issue. The intervening three years had been largely devoted to parliamentary reform and the Catholic question. The fact that this issue could draw a large audience and be reported in the press, suggests the extent of local concern. Losh's diary confirms this:

> May 8, 1828.
>
> Public meeting at the Guildhall on the anti-slavery question. The Mayor presided and the meeting was a tolerably good one. I moved the resolutions and spoke about half an hour, with ease to myself, and I have reason to believe, to the satisfaction of the Friends of Emancipation ... the resolutions, which were drawn up cautiously, and confined to the support of measures proposed by the Government, passed unanimously and I trust the petition will be numerously signed....[67]

Losh's speech was printed in the *Chronicle*.[68] His longest to date, it reminded his audience of the long years of effort, and the frustrations of dealing with the planters' lobby, and the need to continue to press government for action:

> He knew of many who had the strongest feeling for the emancipation of the slaves, who viewed with the utmost horrors the miseries to which they were subjected, who thought that by means of petitioning no good would be effected, and that, in fact, some mischief might be probably ensue from it. With such opinions, however, he could never coincide. He felt that unless the public at large called upon the Government to fulfill their

[66] Ibid., vol.25.

[67] Ibid., vol.26.

[68] *Newcastle Chronicle*, 10 May 1828

> measures, that no advance would be gained – and that, after many years had been wasted in suspense and inactivity, this course would still have to be resorted to....

Losh reminded his audience that the larger slave-owning islands were continuing to resist the Government's wishes. Only the Crown colonies obey Canning's Order in Council of 1824. What must they do to deal with the recalcitrant planters? Losh had contented himself in his speech with rallying support for continuing the pressure on the Government, avoiding the detail of his previous arguments with reform and the emancipation of the Catholics still in the balance.

The next three and a half years saw a rising tempo of anti-slavery agitation. Traditional tactics were pressed forward with more vigour and some success, especially with the large public meeting and with petitioning. No less than 5,020 petitions against slavery were presented to the first reformed parliament in the opening months of 1833. In the provinces 1,300 provincial anti-slavery associations were formed.[69]

The general election of 1830, caused by the accession of William IV, saw anti-slavery agitation coupled to a demand for parliamentary reform, reviving in the industrial counties of the north. Yorkshire returned Brougham for whom the abolition of slavery took pride of place among the measure ventilated. This heightened political awareness and pressure for change, was to a large extent the work of provincial men like Losh. On 13 July 1830, Brougham asked the House to resolve to consider the matter of colonial slavery in the next session. The motion was defeated by 29 votes. Brougham held that the imperial parliament had the right to determine the issue. It had the right to encroach upon what was called private property, since no man was justified in having property in his fellow creatures:

> Let the planters beware – let the assemblies beware – let the government at home beware – let the Parliament

[69] R Anstey, 'The Pattern of British Absolutism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,' *Anti-slavery, religion and reform: essays in memory of Roger Anstey*, ed. C Bolt and S Drescher (Kent, 1980), 27.

> beware! The same country is once more awake – awake to the condition of negro slavery; the same indignation kindles in the bosom of the same people; the same cloud is gathering that annihilated the Slave Trade.[70]

With Losh and his committee colleagues constantly pressing the matter, the north-east was in the forefront of provincial agitation. Losh records in his diary:

> August 11, 1830.
>
> A numerous meeting of the Friends of Abolition of Slavery was held today in the large Methodist Meeting House. Beaumont was in the chair, and Brougham made one of his magnificent but somewhat too-vehement speeches. He was warmed and somewhat exalted by the great events which have occurred in France, and also by the most honourable and flattering mark of public approbation which he has just received from the great county of York, having been called upon (together with Lord Morpeth) by the freeholders, and what is still more remarkable by the great majority of the gentry to represent them in Parliament.[71]

Even though he had been immersed in the reform issue, the subject of slavery had never been far away from Losh's mind. It re-emerges in his diary in 1833.

> January 30, 1833.
>
> I attended a very numerous Anti-Slavery meeting held at the Wesleyan Chapel. I suppose there were 3000 persons present. The Mayor, John Brandling, presided and a great number of the most respectable men, principally Quakers and Dissenters were on the platform. I, as the Chairman of the Anti-Slavery Society, opened the business with a speech of about 3 quarters of an hour, which was received with great applause. I had certainly thought a good deal on the subject, but had not arranged what I meant to say, and was much surprised at the size of the

[70] R Stewart, *Henry Brougham: his public career* (London, 1986), 241.

[71] Losh Diaries, vol.28.

> chapel and the number of auditors. I, however, found no difficulty in expressing myself and I do not think that I omitted anything of importance which appeared to me to support my view of this great question.[72]

Losh's speech was reported as usual in the *Chronicle*. Losh was his usual eloquent self:

> [This is] no less than an inquiry whether our fellow creatures should remain bound men; whether in fact they should remain as the actual property of persons who in his mind could have no property in human beings. The motives which had actuated the advocates of slave emancipation had been treated with every species of misrepresentation and obloquy, and they themselves had been termed wild theorists – person who were wishful to make a display of their benevolent feelings at the expense and to the ruin of others. Was that true?

This was a simpler speech than Losh had made hitherto. Perhaps he felt he merely had to remind them of some of the issues.

1833 was to be the year for the emancipation of the slaves, the second great measure of Grey's administration. Losh, however, was not altogether satisfied with the West India Slave Emancipation Bill when it eventually came through. He wrote in his diary (shortly before his death):

> July 23, 1833.
>
> I think the Government have done wrong in agreeing to a 12 year term of apprenticeship, and also in giving any compensation, except where loss is satisfactorily proved. 20 millions a large sum (but if necessary I do not object to it – only the necessity should not be taken for granted). My friends, the Quakers, and other zealous enemies of slavery, seem to me unreasonably violent against the Government plan and suspicious (without any cause) of their honest and good faith.[73]

[72] Ibid., vol.33.

[73] Ibid.

Though to his mind the final outcome was unsatisfactory, nevertheless it had been achieved after years of effort, and he was, unlike the Quakers, not one to seek to undermine this last political reform of his time.

Conclusion

The ideas expressed by Losh on each of these three main themes reveal one attitude that coloured his thinking: it was a desire for progress but with stability and continuity. Whilst Losh regretted the corruption of the Court and its restricting affect on successive administrations – particularly where Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform – he had no republican sympathies. He was proud to be English, and typical of his concern for his country and his critical though not unsympathetic attitude towards the crown and its incumbent are the following entries:

> May 23, 1812.
>
> As I expected the Prince Regent seems determined to adhere to his new friends, or rather the wretched system of favouritism. The miserable remains of Mr.Pitt's administration are to carry on the government of this great country in these awful times – in the very crisis of its fate the Prince must, if he persevere, ruin himself and his family. God grant he may not ruin the nation also!
>
> November 8, 1817.
>
> News arrived of the death of Princess Charlotte of Wales, and as far as we short-sighted creatures can judge, a heavier calamity could scarcely have fallen my beloved country ... This event is not only to be lamented as depriving us of a successor to the throne of full age, excellent character and possessed of vigorous understanding, but still more lamentable as making a long minority (to say nothing of a disputed succession) probable, and a quick change of kings almost certain....

Losh advocated reforming those institutions that bore heavily on the productive middle class and the labouring classes. He was aware of the hopelessness of the latter in the face of

chronic unemployment, poverty, and hunger; often exacerbated by the actions of the upper classes. Losh accepted his own place in society (though not the restrictions which were the price he had to pay for his Dissenting views) and in that capacity worked tirelessly for change. At the same time he was a strong advocate of the lower classes improving their situation and their prospects by education and industry. Losh was a reformer with a strong sense of realism of what was achievable. Where would we put Losh in the reform movements of his time? That he must, by his own identification, be seen as a provincial is not uncomplimentary to him. At the same time, though his principal mileau was the north-east, where he was seen as the leader of the Whigs (his obituary so describes him), his opinions, his intelligences to the leaders of Grey's administration, and his support for them nationally as well as locally, make him larger than a purely provincial figure. The following correspondence underlines this stature:

> To Lord Brougham:
> November 9, 1831
> I had a letter from Mr Warner a few days ago in which he says that his friend the Bishop of Bath and Wells 'repents bitterly the vote which he gave and that had he seen beforehand he believes his vote would have been different....'
> June 4, 1831.
> I had much talk with Lord Durham both with respect to the Reform Bill and the state of the collieries ... Lord Durham agrees with me in all my opinions as to the defects of the Bill – the division of the counties and the want of uniformity in the qualification in particular....

A diary entry that makes clear how much Losh was in the confidence of national leaders. On this occasion it is a visit to No.10 at a crucial moment in the fight for the Reform Bill:

March 17, 1832.

> I called upon Lord Grey and sat with him for some time. He received me in his usual frank and kind manner. I say usual, because I never experienced any other during an acquaintance of forty years, tho' formerly we have had

> very warm disputes on political subjects...he asked what was thought of him and the Reform Bill in the north ... I stated to him that in the northern counties the anxiety for reform was very intense, and that failure in the present measures would produce the most alarming consequences ... He said that he would neglect nothing in his power to ensure success ... I said that I had personally the greatest confidence in his firmness ... He complained of the labour of his official business, and said more than once 'Losh, I am too old for my work....'

From the abortive reform proposals that Grey had put before the House in 1793, which Losh had helped Tierney to draft, until the slavery issue that followed the Reform Bill, Losh was a conduit to London for the political opinion of his peers. Losh was more than a minor provincial political figure, and for a Dissenter without official position, his influence was more than marginal.

If there is one description that seems to fit Losh it is that of a seeker of social justice: for the Catholics, the unfranchised middle classes, and for the plantation slaves. His commitment to this purpose was lifelong, intense, and unselfish. It is the more remarkable when one remembers that Losh was born into a privileged county family, and already had voting rights, yet chose to spend a lifetime representing the unrepresented middle classes and fellow Dissenters.

It is, therefore, not unreasonable to consider that Losh epitomised the Dissenting professional provincials of his time. One of that body of socially and politically active Dissenters in the major towns like Norwich, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, and Newcastle who rallied to the cause of Reform. Like Losh, many of them must have deliberately decided that their future lay in the provinces. There is little doubt, from Losh's diaries, that he was happy to be numbered among them.

Losh was a man capable of attracting the loyalty and affection of his associates. Perhaps the final word should be left to one of these, the Reverend William Turner, so long Losh's Unitarian minister, but also friend and ally in so many

educational and socially improving schemes. In his obituary sermon in 1833, Turner described Losh as:

> a cordial associate, and able adviser in the management of temporal concerns: a liberal co-operator in any schemes which might be proposed of more extended usefulness, whether by schools, or libraries, or other modes of Christian instruction. As an individual who found in him the faithful friend, the kind adviser, and the judicious helper, and all here have known him, or at least have heard of him as the polished gentleman, the active philanthropist, and the exemplary Christian.

Jeffrey Smith
University of Northumbria at Newcastle

JOHN TOLAND'S LETTER CONCERNING TOLERATION TO THE DISSENTING MINISTERS

James Dybikowski

Printed below is a copy of an unaddressed, undated letter by John Toland from the Edmund Gibson Papers in Lambeth Palace Library.[1] Toland sent it to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Tenison, on 2 May 1707, to defend himself against Daniel Defoe, who then described it as famous if unpublished.[2] For Defoe, Toland's letter mischievously urged the Dissenting Ministers to whom it was sent in January 1706 to support a universal liberty of Christians — Catholics included — and, indeed, a universal toleration of 'all Opinions *meerly Religious*'.[3] Defoe was gratified that they collectively agreed not to respond to Toland, but his observations on the letter attracted Tenison's unwanted attention. Toland sent Tenison this copy together with a defence against Defoe's numerous misrepresentations which, he says, satisfied the Archbishop. There the matter rested. Shortly afterwards, Toland left for the continent where he remained for several years.

A decade later, however, Toland in his highly successful *State anatomy of Great Britain* defended the compatibility of full liberty of conscience with a national Church.[4] The basis of this liberty, he argues, is reason, its utility as public policy, and its consistency with Scripture and the Church Fathers.[5] Liberty of conscience, he argues, is not moral licentiousness as its enemies claim, nor does it imply the indifference of religions. Instead it entails the toleration of morally indifferent actions and opinions not destructive of

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1 The manuscript is published by kind permission of the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library.

2 *The Dissenters vindicated* (London, 1707), 34.

3 For the dating of the letter, see *Second part of the State anatomy* (London, 1717), advertised *Post Man*, 6-9 April 1717, 51.

4 *State anatomy of Great Britain* (London, 1717), advertised *Daily Courant*, 21 January 1717, 26-32.

5 *State anatomy*, 29. See also *Nazarenus*, ed. J. Champion (Oxford, 1999), 161.

society and religion.[6] Religious diversity as such is compatible with good government and any danger to the national Church arises not from Dissenters, but from the faction within that insists on the preservation of its political monopoly to the cost of the nation. He distinguishes complete from partial liberty of conscience. The latter can be satisfied by freedom of worship, but the former demands that positions of public trust not be reserved for those who belong to the national Church.[7] Liberty of conscience and toleration are far from exhausted by freedom of worship or the liberty to express an opinion.

To Daniel Defoe, many of these claims had a familiar ring. Indeed so, since Toland's views and much of his language derive directly from his 1706 letter. For Defoe, Toland's intention all along had been 'to give a full Liberty to all Sorts of Error, Heresie, and Schism . . . because we all know he has professed these heresies, and attempted to draw in the Dissenters to countenance the Allowance of them: But the Dissenters wisely avoided the Snare, and thereby prevented that Reproach which would long ago have been cast upon them by their Enemies'.[8] He agrees with Toland's proposals for the relief of Protestant Dissenters, but he supports them only because the Dissenters, at least the kind that matter to him, share with the National Church 'one Christian, Orthodox Faith'.[9] In any case, the Dissenters would be better served by pursuing measures aimed at securing relief with greater caution than any timetable Toland might have in mind.

When Defoe renewed his attack, Toland responded by publishing not only his 1706 letter to the Dissenting Ministers — two each were sent to Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists — but also his letter to Tenison as well as responses he had received from Dissenting Ministers.[10] He did so not only because Defoe provoked him, but also because the Dissenters as a body had just published a declaration in the *London Gazette* of 5 March 1717 in which they

6 *State anatomy*, 27.
7 *State anatomy*, 27-28.
8 *An argument proving that the design of employing and enobling foreigners is a treasonable conspiracy* (London, 1717), 75.
9 *An argument proving the design*, 76.
10 *Second part of the State anatomy*, 44-73.

expressed open support of a general toleration for all peaceable subjects.[11] For Toland, this declaration constituted a vindication of himself against Defoe.

Here is the text of the copy Toland sent to Tenison. It corresponds to the letter he published in 1717, as well as to the description he gave to Tenison of the copy he sent him with 'the few misspellings, and the many misplacings of Capital Letters by the Amanuensis'.[12] Toland's letter of self-defence to Tenison, which it accompanied as an attachment, forms part of the same collection, although the two documents have been separated from each other.[13]

Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. 933/8, Toland on toleration.

Sir,

A Person of your Experience cannot be ignorant, how common a thing it is, for Men to declaim against others for that very fault, whereof they are not only guilty themselves in their Practice, but which they frequently and passionately labour to justify by their Arguments. And this they doe with the same intent, that they make an excessive show of Zeal for Religion or the Publick good, the better to cover their private Ambition, Revenge, or other primitive Designs; by which Artifice they sometimes mislead those to promote and assist their Projects, who wou'd have prov'd their most Cordial opposers, had they once suspected that they acted only for personal Ends.

Thus, Sir, all Sorts of Protestants Dissenting in this Kingdom from the Church establisht by Law, are represented as unworthy of any Civil Trust or Honour in the Commonwealth, by certain persons, who, thô pretended Advocates for the Church, give abundant reason to believe,

11 For the declaration of the Dissenters, see Edmund Calamy, *Historical account of my own life*, ed. J. T. Rutt (2 vols., London, 1829), II, 366-68; *Second part of the State anatomy*, 65-66.
12 *Second part of the State anatomy*, 50.
13 Lambeth Palace Library, Ms.930/229, Toland to Tenison, 2 May 1707.

they are as little Friends to the present Church as to the present Government of England. But notwithstanding the unchristian Persecutions, and inhuman Severities, which Men of this Character have heretofore procur'd against the Dissenters, to the unspeakable Discouragement of Learning; to the Decay of Trade, Depopulation of the Kingdom, Disturbance of the Government, and (what's of more Consequence than all the rest) to the manifest hazard of the Protestant Religion, which thrô such means was very near undermin'd by Popery, till it was Miraculously deliver'd by the Providence of God, and by the Courage and Conduct of his[14] Principal Instrument King William III: Yet these very Men, with their Adherents and Abettors, are above Measure Clamorous and possitive at this time, in their Libels, Sermons, and Discourses, as if all the Dissenters in general, and each of their bodies in particular, were by their Principles engaged against any Religious Toleration, except only of their own way; And that, were they in Possession of Civil Administration, they would neither tolerate those of the Church of England, nor even one another, which consequently renders them justly undeserving the Toleration they enjoy.

Thô I want no proof, Sir, that most of our Bishops, a considerable Number of the Inferior Clergy, and the Body of the People, are intirely convinc'd that this is an Egregious Calumny, and Malitiously dispers'd by the Favourers of Popery, or of a Popish Pretender to the Crown, to create Distractions in the Government, and to weaken the Protestants by adding Jealousies to their Divisions: Nevertheless divers well meaning People are found Credulous enough to receive such dangerous Impressions, being seduc'd by their timorous Fancies, or by their Ignorance of the true State of Affairs. For my own part, I have not a stronger Moral Certitude of any thing in this World, than of your being all for Toleration, which I conceive my self oblig'd to acknowledge after a carefull

[14] 'his' not printed in *State anatomy*, 52.

perusal of your best Books, after hearing many of your celebrated Preachers, and Conversing with some of the most intelligent in every Communion; as thinking it more equitable, safe, and certain, to learn the opinions of others rather from themselves than from their Adversaries, (who are but too prone to misunderstand or misrepresent them) and as being allow'd this Latitude and Familiarity, by the Dictates both of reason and Religion, by the Charity of the Church of England, and by my Christian Liberty. however, for the satisfaction of certain persons, who ought to be under no mistakes in this Case, I was particularly desir'd to get your's and Mr .....'s opinion under your hands, as men that may be justly presum'd to know the Sentiments of the rest of your Party concerning Toleration and Persecution: for tis impossible to speak intelligibly of the one without supposing the other, there being no middle way of acting in matters purely Speculative or indifferent.

Now, that (on the one hand) you may not Imagine, Sir, I purpose to entrap you by any Captious Ænigma, and that no body (on the other hand) may pretend to discover any Prevarication or Ambiguity in your Answer; I think it becomes a Lover of Peace, and a Candid Enquirer after Truth, to premise the following Restrictions, or rather Explications of the Question.

I. First I don't expect that you'll answer for every individual person of your Communion, but only for much the greater Number, or Bulk of that persuasion in England: for there's no Sect or sort of Men, but some particulars among 'em have favourite Notions, repugnant to the Publick profession of the rest; thô, because they agree together in most things, or at least in the Primary Points of their Doctrine, they Pass with others under one Common Denomination. Every Society of Men will afford Numerous Examples of this kind, and the Peculiar Opinions of many private Doctors in the Church of England are as well known, as that She was never charg'd with such opinions on their account: nor ought our Church to be less Charitable, in this

respect, to other Churches; no more than the Infirmities or Vices of a few, shou'd any where be imputed to the whole Number, when disclaim'd by the Profession of all, and not committed by the greater part.

II. Secondly, by Liberty I don't mean Licentiousness, but Forbearance; and this only in such Actions as are in their own Nature indifferent, or in such opinions as are merely Speculative; and which do not necessarily lead to any Practice destructive of Society. For in matters of property, Civil obedience, or moral virtue, which are common to all Mankind, and without which no private ffaith or Publick Community cou'd subsist, the Magistrate is to restrain what the Laws prohibit, let a man alleadge never[15] so much persuasion or conscience for his proceedings; Since Murder, Stealing, Defamation, and the like are plainly Evil and Injurious, be the inward Motives of the Transgressor what they will. But in Points of Simple opinion, nothing can be justly punisht by the Magistrate, Since he's only to punish where he can be a Competent Judge: Whereas neither by his own Discretion, nor by the Evidence of others, can he certainly judge of mens Sincerity or Hypocrisy, of their Obstinacy or Docility, nor whether they receive Solid Satisfaction, or continue still perplext with Doubts and Scruples, which (according to their various Dispositions, apprehensions, or prepossessions) they may well do, notwithstanding the Truth has been never so adequately demonstrated; and therefore the refusal or neglect of Men is no blemish to the Truth, but a Sign of their Ignorance; prejudice, Stupidity, or perversness.

III. Thirdly by Toleration I don't mean Indifference, and much less Approbation. We are doubtless to wish that all Mankind wou'd heartily embrace the Truth, and we are likewise sedulously to endeavour it in our Several Stations. Yet this desireable End is not to be attain'd by seizing

[15] 'ever' in *State anatomy*, 54.

person or Goods, by Stigmatizing, Banishment, or Death, but by Arguments, Exhortations, and Exemplary Living, by inward Conviction, and by such gentle tho' Serious Reproofs, as may express more of Love than of Anger, and indicate a Warmer Concern for the happiness of another, than for Victory or our own Reputation. 'Tis the usual Stratagem of the Romish Preists, to make their Deciples beleive that the States of Holland (for Instance) approve all the Sects which are tolerated in their Province; Whereas no People on Earth are more tenacious of their Religion, than those of the National Church in that Country. But they can tolerate and protect such as they can't approve, and commiserate those who won't be convinc'd. In our own Dominions the Popish Agents insinuate, that all those Statesmen, Clergymen, and others who declare for Toleration, are lukewarm or indifferent in their Religion. But while they have Humanity and the Gospell on their Side, the Example of our Saviour and his Apostles, and the prosperous Event of their Practice, as well to Religion as to the Government, they are not to be shaken in their prudent Resolution by this Aspersion: and We are charitably to suppose, that most of 'em are no less conscious to themselves, than we know 'em prepar'd to convince Gainsayers, of the Truth and Divinity of their Religion; to which therefore they must have resolved an Inseparable Adherence; but not to any Distinguishing Names of Party, which thô admitted rather than approv'd out of Custom, yet are ordinarily impos'd by their Antagonists.

I doubt not, Sir, but you agree with me, that tis the worst mark imaginable of a Church, when none must be deemed a Sincere Member of her Communion, who has any Indulgence for others, or who is not for branding, oppressing, and destroying all that Dissent from her Doctrine or Discipline. But the Truth, Simple and undisguis'd, is not afraid to encounter any Adversary, thô never so formidable, Since none can prove too hard for her Lustre, with all the Armor of Art, or Fraud, or Violence: Whereas Superstitious Tales and Practices, dare not abide the Touchstone of

Examination, either by Scripture or Reason; And that Opinions, which are only grounded on Authority or calculated for gain, must needs be supported by Force and Fear, by secular honours and rewards to their Maintainers, and by deterring their Impugners with Punishments and Incapacities, which is the Genuine Source and Secret of all Persecution.

To be more particular, Sir, you cannot be satisfyed your Self than I am, that those of your Profession are not indifferent in their Dissent, for which they have suffer'd with so much constancy and perseverance; nor inclin'd to approve those other opinions, against which they appear so strenuously both from the Pulpit and the Press, thô persuaded they can neither be influenced nor rectifi'd by Compulsion. I know there are many Opinions which you more than disapprove, I mean that with me you abominate and Detest them, thô you Pitty those who profess them; Such as beleiving that any humane Power can forgive Sins against God, or dispense with the Observation of his Commands; and that a Consecrated Wafer, becomes both God and Man, which is not only the grosse[s]t[16] Idolatry and most extravagant Absurdity, but likewise direct and execrable Blasphemy. I know you are zealously averse to any opinions that are Derogatory to the Dignity or Suffrings of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, or that tend to lessen the Divine Authority of the Old or New Testament. I further know, that you cannot entertain such a Thought, as if you were desir'd to Tolerate, or that others shou'd intend a Toleration, for anyone who asserts the absolute Mortality of the Soul, without all hope of a Resurrection; or that denies the Being or Attributes of God, particularly his Providence in the Government of the World, whereby the Religion of an Oath (which is one of the main Bonds of Society) wou'd be rendred of no Efficacy, and the Dread of Secret Villainy be quite extirpated. And Lastly I know that you and every other Protestant Party, may, agreably to the Principles of Reason

[16] 'greatest' in *State anatomy*, 57.

and Christianity, and without opposing Toleration, or Entrenching on the Civil Power, Deny Communion to disorderly persons and enormous Sinners, who are to be considered no better than Unbelievers, till they heartily submit to the Laws of the Gospel, and be reconcil'd to the Fellowship of the Faithfull by Visible Signs of Repentance.

I take it then for granted, that you think your Self no more concern'd in the former Mistaken Practices of any Church or Persons, than our present Bishops are to be arraign'd for all the Variations either of Doctrine or Discipline that have happen'd in the Church of England since the Reformation; and I am sure that you reject (as much as the Magistrates themselves) the Popish Supremacy and Doctrine of Dispensations, with the Enthusiastical Notion of Dominion's being founded in Grace.

But, Sir, It is my earnest and (I hope) not unreasonable request to you, that you wou'd be pleas'd in a few Lines to signify to me:

1.st. Whether, after admitting and presupposing all the above written Qualifications, you hold and approve an impartial Toleration in Religion, both of such Actions as are themselves indifferent, or in their Circumstances unsinfull, and of such Doctrines or Opinions as are not Destructive of human Society and of all Religion, but consisting in bare Speculation, and solely regarding the Conscience or persuasions of Men?

2.dly. Whether you think divers Religions, or diversitys in the same Religion (under the said Limitations) to be consistent with good Government; and that, if you had the same Civil Magistracy in your own hands, you wou'd, on these Principles, Tolerate the Worship of those who are now the National Religion, and of all other Protestant Communions? And

3.dly. Whether you beleive, that not only all Compulsion in matters of mere Opinion is improper, useless, and unjust; but

that depriving Men of their Native Advantages, and excluding them on the Score of Such differences from Civil Trusts, is a real Force and punishment, which you wou'd no more practice upon others, than you approve of them as practic'd against your Selves, according to the precept of Our Saviour, who injoyns his followers, to do to others, what they wou'd be done unto?

And in these three Demands, I think the whole Doctrine of Toleration is clearly Expressd and Contain'd.

Now I reiterate my Entreaty, Sir, that with the Soonest you wou'd let me understand Your Own Opinion, and that of your Brethren, in this Momentous Point, and at this most Seasonable Conjuncture; not purely as a favor to me (tho' such I shall esteem it) but cheifly as a peece of Justice you owe to your Selves, and the People committed to your Care. So wishing a happy Success to your Labour for the Benefit of Mens' Souls and their Temporal Welfare; I remain, Sir, with due respect, Your Sincere Friend, and most ready to Serve you in all good Offices,

Jo: Toland

Endorsed: Mr Tolands yt mention'd in Dan: de Foe's book called ye Dissenters Vindicated. p.34 1707.

Toland, Defoe and the Dissenters

I will turn later to Toland's account of toleration, but it is worth observing in a preliminary way that he was committed to a general and impartial religious toleration. In *Mangoneutes* he remarks that civil liberty and religious toleration 'have been the two main objects of all my writings.' When he wrote to the Dissenting Ministers, he was cultivating Robert Harley, among others, in the hope of sustained and profitable patronage.[17] Nevertheless, he

[17] *Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission,* 29, VIII, 409. I am grateful to J D Alsop who allowed me to read an unpublished manuscript

should be taken at his word when he observes: 'civil Liberty, religious Toleration, and the Protestant Succession. These are my conditions *sine qua non*: and he that will not agree with me on this foot, must never employ me nor ever trust me.'[18] For Toland, these were connected objectives. The splintering of the Protestant interest through mutual intolerance was a powerful threat to civil liberty. He would not compromise his commitment for the sake of patronage, but he might trim around the edges to gain support for his general position.

Toland writes in his *Memorial of the state of England* in October 1705 — his earliest systematic account of toleration — that he would 'always gratefully acknowledge' the personal obligations he incurred to Dissenters. He had reason to say so. He had an early flirtation with Dissent and, among other things, his studies in Leiden were financed by Daniel Williams and other Ministers who expected he would return to join their number.[19] Now, however, he writes as a professed member of the Church of England. He emphasizes these earlier connections, to show how well placed he is to answer the misrepresentations of Dissent promoted by pamphlets such as the notorious *Memorial of the Church of England.*[20]

of his which provides a more careful and circumspect account of Toland's relations with Harley than other published accounts. Defoe had been employed for some time as Harley's agent (Angus McInnes, *Robert Harley, puritan politician* (London, 1970), p.77 ff.).

[18] *Collection of several pieces of Mr. John Toland*, ed. Pierre Des Maizeaux (2 vols., London, 1726), II, 227.

[19] For a record of the payments made to Toland as a student in Holland, see Alexander Gordon, *Freedom from ejection* (Manchester, 1917), 182-3. For the expectation that Toland would return to become a Dissenting Minister, see *Collection of John Toland*, I, ix. For Toland's account of his early connections with Dissent, see 'An apology for Mr. Toland', rpt. in P McGuiness, Alan Harrison and Richard Kearney, eds., *John Toland's Christianity not mysterious* (Dublin, 1997), 117-18. Toland's earlier conduct had gained him the enmity of the Dissenters, and he writes with satisfaction to Harley on 16 May 1707 that they no longer viewed him as such (*Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 29, VIII, 409).

[20] J Drake, *Memorial of the Church of England* (London, 1705).

Memorial of the Church of England claims that the established Church is in danger of subversion by occasional communion, hypocritically practiced by Dissenters to achieve power by obtaining positions otherwise closed to them.[21] The Dissenters, tainted with the sins of their fathers, are portrayed as democratic republicans in politics, enemies of the Church's constitutional role, and, while enjoying the benefits of toleration, themselves arbitrary and intolerant. *Memorial* does not attack the Toleration Act, claiming it put an end to persecution.[22] Toland argues, however, that it portrays Dissenters 'as unworthy of any Toleration, since by their principles they would neither tolerate any else, nor even one another.'[23]

Before 1705 Toland had not been as unqualified and charitable in his defence of Dissenting claims to toleration. In *Life of Milton* he reproves the Presbyterians in particular for lending support for the Blasphemy Act of 1698. As one commentator observes, this Act 'converted heresy into blasphemy', by making the denial of any of the persons in the Trinity to be God or the affirmation that there are more Gods than one criminal offenses for anyone who had been educated as, or had professed to be a Christian.[24] It also made the denial of Christianity or of the divine authority of Scripture offences. Toland draws a larger moral:

> This naturally leads men to think that they have not repented of their Rigors in the Civil Wars; and that should the Dissenters once more get the Secular Sword into their hands, they would press Uniformity of Sentiments in Religion as far as any other Protestants or Papists ever yet have don: witness their inhuman Treatment of Daniel Williams (a sober man and a judicious Divine) for no cause that I can discern, but that he made Christianity plainer than som of his Collegues in the Ministry, and that, it may be, he takes a

[21] *Memorial of the Church of England*, 18.

[22] *Memorial of the Church of England*, 36.

[23] *Memorial of the state of England* (London, 1705), advertised *Daily Courant*, 31 October 1705, 44.

[24] 9 William III (1698), cap. XXXII. See Leonard W Levy, *Treason against God*, (New York, 1981), 329.

> greater latitude than such as thro their ignorance cannot, or will not, from design.[25]

Notwithstanding, Toland *hoped* most Dissenters, 'som few leading Men excepted', now supported toleration.[26]

Toland returns to these themes in *Art of governing by parties*, where he reproaches Dissent once more for its collusion against Quakers as well as its support for the Blasphemy Act on the threadbare pretext that the Act is directed not against the religious opinions of Unitarians, but against blasphemy. He advises the Dissenters to 'read Fox's Martyrology, and they'll find Queen Mary's Judges made use of that Distinction before them.'[27]

In *Memorial of the state of England*, however, Toland strikes a different note occasioned by the increased stridency of the attack on Dissent from the time of Queen Anne's accession. Whatever may have been true of the Presbyterians of old — the only Dissenting sect whose commitment to toleration might be colourable — Presbyterians 'are *all* now for *Liberty of Conscience* to all Men in points of meer Religion or Opinion'.[28] In his letter to the Dissenting Ministers his position is equally unqualified. In *Memorial of the state of England*, he argues that, contrary to the *Memorial of the Church of England*, their recent writings, notably

[25] *Life of Milton* (London, 1699), 78. Toland's suspicions were heightened by Dissent's support for a comprehension he judged to be motivated by a desire for power. Toland generally supported greater comprehension, but subject to not collapsing comprehension into uniformity and a general toleration as its foundation. For his ambivalent reactions to comprehension, compare *Art of governing by parties*, 29-30; *Memorial of the state of England*, 54-55; *An appeal to honest people against wicked priests* (London, [1713]), 30; *Second part of the State anatomy*, v-vi .

For Williams' ill-treatment, see Calamy, *Historical account of my own life*, I, 323-24, 337-38, 351, 356-59, 371 ff., 394-97. For Toland's letter urging publication of extracts from his *Gospel truth stated and vindicated*, see *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, 23 (1692), 505-9.

[26] *Life of Milton*, 75.

[27] *Art of governing by parties*, (London, 1701), 26-27.

[28] *Memorial of the state of England*, 36; my emphasis.

those of Edmund Calamy, support toleration.[29] In his letter to the Dissenting Ministers he says much the same and cites other similar, but less publicly available evidence drawn from sermons and personal contacts. In *Memorial of the state of England*, he also notes that, in answer to a recent appeal from the Quakers, the Independents and Presbyterians sent letters to their New England counterparts in opposition to Quaker persecution.[30] Toland's principles hadn't changed; rather he implies that the Dissenters were clearly demonstrating a changed outlook.

A letter to the author of the Memorial of the state of England, probably by Thomas Rawlins and largely an attack on the politics of the *Memorial*, opens, however, by remarking of Toland's pamphlet: 'You have stated the Case of Dissenters so distinctly; and so closely and solidly evinc'd the Reasonableness and

[29] *Memorial of the state of England*, 37. In *Second part of the State Anatomy*, 70-71, Toland also quotes from Calamy's writings, remarking of one passage that it deserved to be 'writ in letters of gold.'

[30] *Memorial of the state of England*, 36-37. See S M Reed, 'Church and state in Massachusetts', *University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences*, vol.3, no.4 (1914), 98-104, and Robert Taylor, *Colonial Connecticut* (Millwood, N.Y., 1979), 122; 197. Connecticut had published an old law against heretics who included Quakers. The London Quakers made representations to the Plantation Office to have the law annulled by the Queen as inconsistent with the Act of Toleration in 1703. At the same time they approached London Presbyterians and Independents to make common cause. Both provided the Quakers with less than they wanted. They both wrote early in 1704 to their New England counterparts, but were unprepared to take further steps until they had replies. Nevertheless they expressed support for liberty of conscience. The letter from the Presbyterians was later published by Calamy in *An abridgement of Mr. Baxter's History of his life and times* (2nd.ed., 2 vols, London, 1713), 670-72, in which they declare reluctance to dictate to others. That said, they are strongly for liberty of conscience not only on the strength of the Gospel, but as an 'undoubted Right of Mankind' for those 'not justly chargeable with any Immorality, or what is plainly Destructive of Civil Society.' When the Presbyterians and Independents declined further action, the Quakers made further representations of their own and, indeed, in 1706 the Queen annulled the Connecticut law. Connecticut, without reference to the Queen, amended its own law so that it no longer applied to Quakers.

Necessity of Toleration, that I think no good Man can find any just cause of Exception'.[31] While Rawlins is reassured by Toland's claims about the Dissenters' recent conduct, he would still like to see them supported by a declaration from Dissenting Ministers for 'an universal Toleration of all manner of Opinions that are merely religious'.[32]

For Rawlins, as for Locke, while toleration is a right, it is subject to forfeit by 'those who refuse the same Justice to their Fellow-Creatures.'[33] Rawlins argues that, without a declaration supporting a general toleration, Dissent encourages the Church to suppose it 'is playing a Game with sharpers upon the Square' and protects 'a Snake in her Bosom'.[34] These reservations were shared by others. In *Second part of the State anatomy* Toland says he wrote to the Dissenting Ministers to obtain their reassurances for 'two Persons no less eminent for their virtue than for their rank'.[35]

Defoe soon learned of Toland's letter to the Dissenting Ministers which he attacked repeatedly jointly with Rawlins' pamphlet.[36]

[31] *Letter to the author of the Memorial of the state of England*, 1. Thomas Hearne, *Remarks and collections*, eds. C E Doble, D W Rannie and H E Salter (11 vols., Oxford, 1885-1921), I, 158, remarks on 3 January 1706 that it had very recently come out. J A Downie, 'William Stephens and the *Letter to the author of the Memorial of the state of England* reconsidered', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 50 (1977), 253-59, defends its attribution to Rawlins, who had been a long time friend of Toland's. It is also attributed to him in Anthony Collins' catalogue of his library (Kings College, Keynes Ms.217).

[32] *Letter to the author of the Memorial*, 4.

[33] *Letter to the author of the Memorial*, 2.

[34] *Letter to the author of the Memorial*, 4; Locke, 'Letter concerning toleration', in David Wootton, ed., *John Locke: political writings*, (London, 1993), 425-26.

[35] *Second part of the State anatomy*, 45-46.

[36] The relevant publications are:

i. *Remarks on the letter to the author of the state-memorial*, (London, 1706), esp. p.9.

ii. *Review of the state of the British nation*, 9 February 1706, announcement of Defoe's unrealized intention to publish a work entitled, *Universal Toleration considered, and an Enquiry how far it is reasonable for the Dissenters to declare themselves upon that head.*

For Defoe, the only toleration Dissent should acknowledge is of 'all conscientious Differences of Opinion amongst those, *who profess and embrace one Christian, Orthodox Faith*'.[37] The foundation of orthodoxy is the doctrinal articles of the Church of England.[38] For Dissent to declare itself, as Toland asked, would deliver it into the hands of its enemies.[39] But if it rejected his overture, it would be represented as intolerant. Better to be silent than answer an unsuitable question.

For Defoe, Dissent's strongest claim did not lie in any abstract principle as Toland proposed, but in a 'treaty' to which it was a joint party with the Church of England. By the terms of this treaty, Dissent rejected a precarious and illegal liberty offered by King James for a constitutionally secure right expressed in the Toleration Act.[40] This right, forged in an historical alliance, is restricted, but its guarantees are not contingent on its declaration of the extent and limits of toleration. To answer Toland would be to acknowledge Dissent's existing right as weaker than it really was.

iii. *Jure divino: a satyr*, (London, 1706), advertised as this day published *Daily Courant*, 24 July 1706.

iv. *The Dissenters vindicated; or a short view of the present state of the Protestant religion in Britain*, (London, 1707), advertised *Review of the state of the British nation*, 1 April 1707.

v. *Review of the state of the British nation*, 1 December 1709.

In view of Defoe's sustained hostility, it is notable that as recently as January 1703, while Toland was in Holland, a report forwarded to the then Secretary of State, the Earl of Nottingham, described Toland's industrious distribution of numerous copies of Defoe's *Shortest way with the Dissenters* (J D Alsop, 'Defoe, Toland, and *The shortest way with the Dissenters*'', *Review of English Studies*, 43 (1992), 245-47). Alsop remarks that Toland's role 'was an embarrassment for Defoe and may help account for [Nottingham's] considerable hostility when Defoe was finally apprehended'.

37 Defoe, *Argument proving the design*, 77; my emphasis.

38 Defoe, *Argument proving the design*, 74.

39 Defoe, *Argument proving the design*, 71.

40 Defoe, *Jure divino*, xviii-xix.

Toland on toleration

Toland claims that his letter to the Dissenting Ministers 'reduce[d] the doctrine of Toleration to a clear and positive System, whereas it has been hitherto deliver'd only in general terms or popular harangues; and . . . sometimes perverted from its true end to serve very ill purposes'.[41] Far from being 'a snare' designed to entrap the Dissenters into conceding what was contrary to their interest, it constituted 'so complete and candid a System of Toleration, as no honest man or good Christian will scruple to approve'.[42]

In making these claims, Toland passes over other systematic accounts of toleration, most notably Locke's in his *Letter concerning toleration*, Tindal's *Essay concerning the power of the magistrate* (1697) and even his own *Memorial of the state of England* from which his letter borrows heavily. The rationale for turning a blind eye to *Memorial* is clear. Since he wished to keep his identity as its author secret, the best policy was to ignore it.[43]

Toland, however, was well aware of Locke's *Letter* which he praised in his *Life of Milton* as exhausting its subject and treating it 'with greater clearness and brevity than ever before'.[44] In his letter to the Dissenting Ministers, as elsewhere, there are numerous echoes of Locke. For example, in *Memorial* he appropriates without attribution Locke's rebuttal of Jonas Proast's claim that moderate restraints can be justified if used to instruct or to dispose the restrained party to consider. Like Locke, Toland replies that if this aim justified any punishment, it would also justify the use of immoderate restraint. In fact, however, it justifies neither.[45] Other notable similarities are his view of the limits of the Magistrate's role, his affirmation of the right of individual examination, his

41 *Second part of the State anatomy*, 47-48, in his letter to Tenison.

42 *Second part of the State anatomy*, 60.

43 *Collection of John Toland*, II, 354-55.

44 *Life of Milton*, 147.

45 *Memorial of the state of England*, 45-46. Toland also cites provisions of the *Fundamental laws of Carolina*, unattributed but written by Locke, to support his view that a 'religious foundation, distinct from a political foundation for Toleration is Non-sense' (*Second part of the State anatomy*, 67-68).

critique of the use of religion to promote dominion over others and his agreement on the range and limits of toleration.

The originality and interest of Toland's account, then, lies not in its leading principle or its system — as Rawlins observed about Toland's *Memorial*, it is not original, but was none the worse because of that — but in the persistence of their assertion and its application and extension of its principles to embrace a remarkably wide range of issues.[46] As Toland observes in *Memorial*: 'the *Toleration of Religions* . . . extends much further than a bare *Permission of Publick Worship'*. He applies it in his writings to comprehension, occasional conformity, sacramental tests for positions of public trust, the Schism Act for its attack on Dissenting Academies, naturalization, double taxation based on religious belief and the consistency of religious pluralism with a National Church.47 Indeed, as he remarks in *Memorial*, it is impossible to discuss these issues 'intelligibly and distinctly . . . without previously stating the nature and extent of Toleration.'[48]

Toland divides the substance of his letter to the Dissenting Ministers into two: a set of qualifications and a set of demands interpreted in their light. The leading qualifications are the distinction of liberty of conscience from licentiousness and indifference. In both the distinctions are directed against the likes of Atterbury, who in his *Letter to a Convocation-man* views 'universal unlimited Toleration' — the unqualified sort Defoe attributes to Toland — as tantamount to 'the indifference of all

[46] *Letter to the author of the Memorial*, 1.

[47] *Memorial of the state of England*, 42-43; Reasons for naturalizing the Jews (London, 1714); State anatomy, 29-32. Defoe also pointedly attacks Toland on the naturalization of Jews (Defoe, *Argument proving the design*, 76; see *Second part of the State anatomy*, 67, for Toland's rejoinder). For a good account of the originality of Toland's application of his principles to the Jews, see Justin Champion, 'Toleration and citizenship in enlightenment England', in O P Grell and R Porter eds, *Toleration in enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), 133-56.

[48] *Memorial of the state of England*, 43.

religion' and desired by the enemies of religion who are responsible for the spread of 'licentiousness'.[49]

In discussing licentiousness, Toland defines the scope of toleration by reference to actions which 'are *in their own Nature* indifferent'. Later in the letter and again in *State anatomy*, he widens his principle to include not only these actions, but those which in the circumstances of their performance are *unsinful*. His intention is to limit liberty of conscience to actions not injurious to others or harmful to society. As Locke recognized, however, some actions indifferent in themselves, such as washing an infant, may be compelled for the public good, because the failure to do them may cause the spread of communicable diseases say.[50] The principles of harm and injury short-circuit arcane discussions which turn on the way action are described. More significantly, however, the sinfulness of actions is not the right criterion. Locke clearly recognized that many sins do not fall within the Magistrate's purview.[51] Even when they do, it is not as sins that they are of interest, but because they are harmful to others or invade their rights. Toland relies on Locke, but he is less careful.

When Toland turns from actions to opinions, he relies on the Magistrate's incompetence to judge inward states. But his basic point turns not on their inaccessibility to the Magistrate, but on their harmfulness to other individuals or society. For even if the Magistrate were competent to assess them, they would not fall within the scope of his authority for that reason alone. The use of inappropriate criteria for the distribution of social goods is a contributory cause to some of these states, most notably hypocrisy, while their use as criteria discourages those who are worthy of trust because of their good moral character.

[49] Atterbury, *Letter to a Convocation-man* (London, 1697), 2-3. Toland began a reply to this work, but did not continue because so many effective answers were published ('An apology for Mr. Toland', 119. Among these was Tindal's *Essay concerning the power of the magistrate*, (London, 1697), 176-204.

[50] 'Letter concerning toleration', 412.

[51] 'Letter concerning toleration', 417.

to be, it is because other factors, like the desire for power, are at play. These claims are echoed in other free-thinkers, such as Anthony Collins, who, with Toland, turn the argument for uniformity on its head by arguing that the real cause of disorder is in misguided attempts to impose uniformity.[63]

Toland's final and perhaps most significant demand turns on extending toleration beyond the right to practice a religion. He claims that exclusion on the basis of religious belief is not just the denial of privilege, but of right and, as such, constitutes a punishment. In his *Memorial* he expresses the principle more broadly to embrace 'places of honour, trust, or profit', although earlier in his letter to the Dissenting Ministers he refers to places of honour as well.[64] His argument is directed against those like the author of the *Memorial of the Church of England* who, on the strength of the Toleration Act, claim: 'We don't persecute the Dissenters'.[65] The interest of his account lies in his rejection of this claim. To be arbitrarily deprived of a right constitutes a punishment.

Replies of Dissenting Ministers

When Toland wrote to the Dissenting Ministers, he insisted that they should answer not only for themselves, but also for the majority of their communion. Why did he send the letter to Ministers? What did he intend to do with their answers?

In *Second part of the State anatomy*, Toland explains why he approached Ministers in particular: 'I was always more afraid of some straitlac'd Laymen in this affair than of the Ministers who well understood the equity, benefit, and importance of an Impartial Toleration.'[66] He wrote to Ministers of distinction. Not all are identified, but they included the Baptists Joseph Stennett (1663-1713) and Richard Allen (d.1717); the Independent John Nesbitt

[63] Anthony Collins, *Discourse of free-thinking* (London, 1713; rpt. Stuttgart Bad-Constatt, 1965), 101-3; *Discourse of the grounds and reasons of the Christian religion* (London, 1724), xxxviii-xxxix.

[64] *Memorial of the state of England*, 46.

[65] *Memorial of the Church of England*, 36.

[66] *Second part of the State anatomy*, 48.

(d.1727); and the Presbyterian John Shower (1657-1715).[67] Using a pseudonym, Toland had previously sent Shower a copy of *Memorial of the state of England*. Shower responded positively: ''Tis the real state of our case set in a true light, with excellent judgment and eloquence; very likely to open the eyes, and calm the minds of many.'[68] It is clear from Shower's response in this letter that Toland had also solicited from him the reactions of other Ministers to the pamphlet. When Toland later included him among the Dissenting Ministers to whom he sent the letter printed above, he already had reason to anticipate a supportive response. Toland claims he had letters from other Ministers apart from ones he published and that these were even less qualified in their support than one's he published. If so, it is unclear why he did not publish them, since it was contrary to his interest not to do so.

Of the letters Toland published in *Second part of the State anatomy*, the answer which comes closest to giving him what he asked is from Allen who not only accepts Toland's account of toleration, but adds the agreement of several Ministers with whom he had already conferred. He believed most Baptists would agree, but expressed this as an interim judgment and wanted Toland to await the outcome of a larger meeting at which the issue would be more widely canvassed. Toland observes that some Ministers who supported the issuing a public declaration were rebuffed by others on prudential grounds. He wrote to Stennett that he did not expect a public declaration and repeated his original request that he wished to have a comment on the views of most Baptists. But Toland doesn't say whether he had an answer, turning instead to responses from Independents and Presbyterians. He plainly wanted a statement which could be construed as applying to the body, but his correspondents were reluctant to give him that assurance without a declaration from their respective bodies. He claims he

[67] For accounts of these Ministers, see Walter Wilson, *History and antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses* (4 vols., London, 1808), III, 258-41 (Allen); II, 595-605 (Stennett); III, 282-87 (Nesbitt); II, 308-20 (Shower).

[68] *Collection of several pieces of Mr. John Toland*, II, 356-57, dated 24 October 1705. For Toland's use of the pseudonym, see II, 354-56, Toland to [Harley], 14 December 1705.

received letters from other Ministers, apart from ones he published, which were less qualified in their support of his position on toleration than the one's he published.[69] If so, it is not apparent why he did not publish them. It was contrary to the view he supported not to do so.

From the Independents and Presbyterians, Toland received little more than their resolutions on the treatment of Quakers in New England. He had already trumpeted their actions in *Memorial of the state of England*. Shower remarks that in view of their support for the New England Quakers, other Ministers did not think it 'adviseable to speak for so numerous a Party, unless call'd to it by our Superiors.'[70]

Toland places a brave front on these replies. He reckons that as answers they were 'as full and pertinent as can be to the design of my Letter; and nothing deny'd but what was never askd, nor ever design'd, viz. to have it subscrib'd by the Dissenting Ministers, as a publick act in the name of their whole body.' But neither had they affirmed what he wanted. Still he conceded that he received, by the standard of the other letters, an unsatisfactory reply, but he is evasive about indicating what he was told.[71]

Toland showed these responses to an acquaintance he was cultivating, Elisha Smith, who in turn gave Thomas Hearne an account of these proceedings.[72] There is one difference between Smith's and Toland's accounts. Smith claimed that Toland wanted the Dissenting Ministers 'to meet in a Body to debate [his letter] & lend an authoritative answr', where Toland consistently denies that he had such an intention. Smith also adds that the letter was sent to the Quakers, although they are not expressly mentioned by Toland. Smith writes:

[69] *Second part of the State anatomy*, 61: 'I had several from those of other persuasions, approving my System of Toleration, even with fewer Restrictions.'

[70] *Second part of the State anatomy*, 64.

[71] *Second part of the State anatomy*, 65.

[72] Bodleian Ms. Rawl. c. 146/47, Elisha Smith to Thomas Hearne, 23 January 1707. I am grateful to Daniel Carey who provided me with this transcript.

> I have seen the answrs from the Heads of the Independents, Quakers, & Anabaptists, which unanimously all subscribe thr consent to such a Toleration & confess the justice & equity of it. But the Presbyterians are divided in their Resolution all the leading young men are for it to a man, but the old ones that still return to the Principles of the Assembly, are as much against it, so that it is like to create a Schism amongst them.

What did Toland intend to do with the answers? The title page of *Second part of the State anatomy* asserts that he now offered for public consideration what had been originally transacted for 'Private Satisfaction'. In *Jure divino*, however, Defoe says the contrary. Toland, he remarks, 'desires [the Dissenters] to give him their Answer in Writing, which I have been told he design'd to publish.'[73] When the Presbyterians showed a reluctance to reply, Toland, according to Elisha Smith, intended to expose them.[74] In his published letter to Stennett, moreover, he openly acknowledged his intention to make a 'publick use' of the answer.[75] He was positioning himself to act as a public spokesman for the Dissenting claim to a wider toleration. Whatever his intentions, he may have failed to receive the response he hoped for even from Ministers who supported him on toleration because they suspected his intentions.

Edmund Calamy's reactions to Toland are particularly illuminating since Toland consistently showed high regard for him and his writings. According to Calamy, around this time Toland showed him a manuscript and indicated 'he was able to drop several things in favor of Dissenters, to vindicate them from that narrowness they were charged with, which he said would come with more decency from such an one as he, than from among themselves.'[76] Calamy did not reciprocate Toland's regard,

[73] Defoe, *Jure divino*, xix.

[74] Hearne, *Remarks and collections*, I, 319, E Smith to Hearne, 23 January 1707; Bodleian Ms. Rawl. c. 146/47.

[75] *Second part of the State anatomy*, 61-62.

[76] Calamy, *Historical account of my own life*, II, 37-38. Calamy remarks of the letters sent to the Dissenting Ministers that they were sent 'with

viewing him as pushy and obnoxious.[77] He thought it would be unwise to encourage him: 'I knew not how to imagine that his defence could be for our credit, or do us any service.' When the Dissenters, led by Calamy, published their declaration in 1717 expressing support for the toleration of all peaceful subjects, they managed their own publicity.

There is one point on which Toland dwells elsewhere which is not included in the theory of toleration he outlined to the Dissenting Ministers. In *Anglia libera*, he claims that religion is as natural among humans as a national religion or Church is to a government: a peculiarly Erastian formulation of an arrestingly unpersuasive analogy.[78] But the claims of national religions extend only to public support and maintenance, not exclusive privilege over goods to which those not belonging would otherwise have a right. To seek the privileged position of the national Church, however, is to be guilty 'of being accounted Hypocrits instead of designing Reformation' and to merit 'to have their Liberty taken away, and their Persons to be put out of the Protection of the Government.'[79]

Toland repeats these claims in *Memorial* where he is prepared to concede the perpetuity of its position to the Church of England and allows that any other sect endeavouring to displace it could legitimately be reduced to the condition of '*Helots* or Slaves'.[80] It is a circumstance he quickly assures the reader that would never come to be, for the rationale of his proposal is to give the national Church sufficient security to allow it to grant without fear of any threat to its position a full toleration while it would provide tolerated Churches everything which they can claim by right. So content was Toland with this solution that he quoted the entire passage from *Memorial* in *State anatomy*.[81] Whatever its merits politically — and these seem doubtful — it begs the larger question

abundance of ostentation'. It is not clear what manuscript Calamy says he was shown by Toland, whether his *Memorial* or another one.

77 Calamy, *Historical account of my own life*, II, 38.

78 *Anglia libera*, 95 ff.

79 *Anglia libera*, 101.

80 *Memorial of the state of England*, .58.

81 *State anatomy*, 30-31.

whether there would continue to be a rationale for maintaining a national Church by the community once its sole distinctive function is narrowed to financial support from the entire community.

In *Second part of the State anatomy*, Toland cites numerous provisions relating to religion from the Constitutions of Carolina, which was largely drawn up by Locke.[82] He notes, among others, the provision of the proposed law which recognizes the Church of England as its established Church. When Pierre Des Maizeaux later published those constitutions from the corrected text which Locke had given to Anthony Collins, he added a note based on information received by Collins from Locke. This article, he claims, was not inserted by Locke, but by others.[83] But in the context of the political objectives Toland entertained for his theory of toleration, an abstract inquiry into Church establishments as such would not have served his purposes, but would have undermined them.[84]

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82 *Second part of the State anatomy*, 67-68.

83 *Collection of several pieces of Mr. John Locke*, ed. Pierre Des Maizeaux, (London, 1720), 44.

84 I am grateful to the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies and the Mills Memorial Library at McMaster University for a Fellowship which made it possible to do the research for this paper.

'ALL TRUTH, ALL RIGHTEOUS THINGS' : THE CORRESPONDENCE OF CALEB FLEMING AND SYLAS NEVILLE, 1769–1776

G M Ditchfield *

Rational Dissenters are often better known for the published rather than the private expression of their opinions. Accordingly, any revelation of private documents is to be welcomed as providing context for their public careers and exposing them to the test of consistency between outward professions and internal confidences. For this reason the publication in 1950 of selections from the diary of Sylas Neville contributed most valuably to the study of eighteenth-century radicalism, especially in London, and gave many insights into the connections between heterodox theology and radical politics.[1] Much of the diary, however, was not included in this volume and its unpublished sections, together with the diarist's correspondence, render the Neville Papers at Norfolk Record Office a significant source of information for Rational Dissent.

One of Neville's closest friends was the Independent minister Caleb Fleming (1698-1779) and it is the purpose of this article to present his correspondence with Neville over a seven-year period. Six original letters from Fleming to Neville survive, as do copies of fourteen written by Neville to Fleming. Quite apart from amounting to an example of a clerical-lay interchange, the letters are of particular value for the career of Fleming. Although he was a prolific author, with some sixty theological works to his name and although he left numerous manuscript sermons on his death, very little of his correspondence survives.[2] This probably explains why

* I wish to thank Norfolk Record Office for permission to quote from the Neville Papers, the Houghton Library, Harvard, for permission to quote from the diary of Thomas Hollis; Professor L S Pressnell for valuable advice on eighteenth-century banking; and Trish Hatton for invaluable help with the word-processing of this article.

1 B Cozens-Hardy ed., *The diary of Sylas Neville, 1767-1788* (Oxford, 1950).

2 A rare exception is a letter from Fleming to Rev. John Wiche, dated 14 Dec. 1768, giving brief details of the life, death and funeral of Nathaniel Lardner; *Protestant Dissenters' Magazine,* iv (1797), 434-5.

he has no biography.[3] Yet his importance to themes which were central to the religion and politics of his time is increasingly recognized by historians. Fleming was a vital figure in the perpetuation of anti-Catholicism and his type of Socinian theology was essential to the development of Protestant Dissent as an oppositional force both in Britain and in the North American colonies.[4] His paranoia about Catholicism, emphasised vehemently in this correspondence, was no tactical device; it was as genuinely expressed in his private utterances as in his published work. Together with his fear for domestic and colonial liberties, his anti-Catholicism placed him firmly among the critics of the late eighteenth-century ecclesiastical and political establishment.

A feature of the correspondence printed here is an unquestioning assumption that religious and political issues were of the same essence and that religious and civil liberties were inseparable. Fleming and Neville both perceived the world of politics from a fundamentally religious perspective. This can be seen in their discussion of the main political questions of the period – attempts to amend the requirement of subscription to the Articles of the Church of England, the exclusion of John Wilkes from the House of Commons after the Middlesex elections of 1768-9, the assertion of the liberties of the City of London against the ministries of Grafton and North and the attempt to impose parliamentary taxation upon

3 The main sources for Fleming's life are a memoir in the *Monthly Repository,* xiii (1818), 409-13 and William Turner, *Lives of eminent Unitarians* (2 vols, London, 1840-43), I, 275-98. There is a comment on his intellectual connections in Caroline Robbins, *The eighteenth-century Commonwealthman. Studies in the transmission, development and circumstance of English liberal thought from the restoration of Charles II until the war with the thirteen Colonies* (New York, 1968), 360-362.

4 Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in eighteenth–century England. A political and social study* (Manchester, 1993), 184; J C D Clark, *The language of liberty 1660-1832. Political discourse and social dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge, 1994), 328. However, *pace* Professor Clark, it was not Thomas Hollis who, from a quasi-Deist standpoint, expressed disgust at a sermon by Fleming, but his cousin Timothy Hollis; *Diary of Sylas Neville,* 58.

the American colonies. The threats raised by these questions to what Fleming, Neville and their associates regarded as historic English liberties seemed to them to be traceable to a common cause, namely a Court–dominated scheme of authoritarianism. In this respect, Rational Dissent revealed its essential monism – everything began with religion and the anxiety about a tyrannical government, sympathetic to Popery and with ambitions redolent of the early Stuarts, hinged on the character of George III, a devout Anglican, and the supposedly Laudian aspirations of the ecclesiastical bench. Hence the letters of both correspondents are replete with anti-clericalism and carry an unmistakable sub-text of republicanism. It would not be difficult to show that these fears were greatly exaggerated,[5] but this correspondence demonstrated beyond doubt that they were sincerely held. Neville's concern in his letter to Fleming of 1 November 1775 that his letters might be opened by government agents is comparable to Thomas Hollis's obsession, in the later stages of his life, with Popish 'spies'.[6]

The letters add considerably to the published version of Neville's diary. There, one encounters Fleming as Neville saw and heard him; in his letters he speaks with his own voice. We see Fleming in venerable and avuncular old age, acting in a paternal and advisory capacity towards Neville, who was 43 years his junior. Neville's letters reveal his immense admiration for Fleming, whom he regarded as something of a polymath, and from whom he sought financial as well as political guidance. The latter's suggestions as to physical health – to an intending student of medicine – serve as a reminder of the variety of pastoral roles expected of a Dissenting clergyman. Through comments about such matters as his travels and even his culinary preferences, Fleming emerges in a warmer, more human, light than that usually associated with him as a dry,

[5] G M Ditchfield, 'Ecclesiastical Policy under Lord North', in J Walsh, C Haydon and S Taylor eds, *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833. From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), 228-46.

[6] Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Eng. 1191 (Diary of Thomas Hollis, 19 May 1766, and many subsequent entries). There is a microfilm copy of the diary in the Seeley Library, Cambridge University.

arid preacher who drove most of his congregation away by an over–intellectualised Socinianism. That impression has been created by writers with an anti–Socinian bias. Walter Wilson, for instance, depicts Fleming as 'neglected and discountenanced by the bulk of his brethren',[7] yet his letters, and Neville's replies, reveal someone with a wide circle of friends and contacts. So does his will, with its lengthy list of small legacies.[8] Fleming, moreover, displayed his collegiality by service upon the General Body of Dissenting Ministers in London, the background to whose deliberations he reported to Neville in his letter of 6 March 1772. He was able to combine these qualities with unbending theological principles and – at least in the short term – a deep pessimism about public affairs. In the latter respect he was not untypical of his type, although his prediction as to the likely response by the American colonists to 'one internal tax laid upon them' (letter of 3 January 1771) has a prophetic ring.

The letters add personal details about the circle of Rational Dissenters who looked for inspiration to Thomas Hollis, even when they did not know him personally. One preoccupation of members of that circle was the advancement of their case in the newspaper press. So seriously did they take this activity that John Disney subsequently assembled a collection of 'Letters on Religious Liberty, from the Newspapers', in six volumes, in which he identified some of the contributors.[9] However, Neville supplements the information in Disney by identifying himself as the author of three such letters in the *London Chronicle* for 1770. He speculated intelligently, if inconclusively, as to the authorship of other pseudonymous letters. Neither he nor Fleming seems to have considered the irony whereby they had in fact little difficulty in securing the publication of items in which they regularly denounced threats to the free expression of their opinions.

[7] W. Wilson, *Dissenting Churches of London* (4 vols., London, 1814), II, 287.

[8] Public Record Office, PROB 11/1056, ff. 91-3 (Will of Caleb Fleming).

[9] Dr Williams's Library, MS. 87.1-6. The collection covers the years 1771–76, though very few items from the final year are included.

Furthermore, the letters add to our sense of that Anglo–Scottish dimension to Rational Dissent which historians are beginning to explore.[10] When the correspondence began, Neville was living at Scratby House, near Yarmouth, with frequent visits to London. Here he heard Fleming preach at Pinner's Hall, Old Broad Street, was first introduced to him by Timothy Hollis on 8 December 1767[11] and thereafter visited him at his home in nearby Hoxton Square. But in 1771 he enrolled as a medical student at Edinburgh University where, of course, no Anglican subscription was required. His progress and ultimate success, together with some of the vicissitudes of academic application, are recounted in his letters to Fleming. Both men perceived the link between the campaign against compulsory subscription for Anglican clergy and undergraduates and – in a slightly different form – for Dissenting ministers and schoolmasters and the moves within the Church of Scotland to amend or abolish the requirement of subscription to the Confession of Faith. Rational Dissenters identified themselves with heterodox critics of the Kirk and its increasingly conservative Moderate regime, of which the historian William Robertson was the personification. Neville followed the course of Scottish educated opinion very carefully. He informed Fleming of what he saw as its slavish pro-ministerial attitude as the conflict with the American colonists grew closer to war. In June 1776, anticipating 'an adulatory address in favor of the ministerial measures' from the General Assembly of the Kirk, he penned a furious riposte to the editor of the *St James's Chronicle*. The address duly appeared in the *London Gazette* of 1-4 June 1776; Neville's reply, characteristically signed 'Pym', was published on 18-20 June.[12] He denounced the Address as the result of fraudulence and

[10] See, especially, Martin Fitzpatrick, 'The Enlightenment, politics and providence: some Scottish and English comparisons', in Knud Haakonssen ed., *Enlightenment and religion. Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge, 1996), 64-98.

[11] Norfolk R.O., MC 7/1 (Unpublished diary of Sylas Neville, 8 Dec. 1767).

[12] Norfolk R.O., MC 7/1 (Copy of Neville's letter to the *St James's Chronicle,* 5 June 1775).

manipulation on the part of a Court junto led by 'the Rev. P.R.'(i.e. Principal Robertson), attributed its passage to the engrossment by the Crown's supporters of many rights of presentation to parishes and placed his faith in 'a virtuous minority' which could be relied upon to 'disclaim all Approbation of such sanguinary measures, of so unnatural a War'. Fleming was well acquainted with this minority, since it included his friend William Dalrymple of Ayr, who had facilitated the award by the University of St Andrews of his D.D. degree in 1769.

The surviving correspondence ends in May 1776. In 1777 Neville, his studies completed, embarked on a lengthy European tour. During his absence Fleming retired from his pastorate and died on 21 July 1779, whereupon the Pinner's Hall congregation became extinct. Neville himself lived until 1840, but the most interesting phase of his life was undoubtedly that covered by the letters printed in this article.

Note:
The letters of Fleming to Neville in Norfolk R.O. are classed as MC7/349. The letters of Neville are copies, some of which were copied into small notebooks by the Rev. Francis Howes, who also transcribed Neville's diary. These copies of Neville's out-letters are classed as MC7/1-4.

Both correspondents sometimes wrote 'the' and sometimes 'ye'; here 'the' is given throughout. Similarly, 'yt' for 'that' and 'wh' for 'which' have been expanded, as have such abbreviations as 'agt' for 'against'; a few abbreviations where the meaning is obvious have been left untouched. Spelling has been modernized (e.g. 'should' for 'shoud') and so has capitalization. The ampersand '&', however, has been retained. Editorial insertions are indicated by square brackets.

1

Rev. Caleb Fleming to Sylas Neville,
3 October 1769

Dear Sir,

Yours of Sept. 2 came safe to hand, & was considered by me, as an affectionate friendly epistle, notwithstanding I have

deferred an acknowledgement till now.[13] I was sorry to be informed you had so much illness; & have been so long hindered from the rural enjoyment you proposed in your retreat – I was with [excision] Esqr yesterday, who has been the tour of Holland & Flanders – he inquired earnestly after you; & wondered you call not on him – I told him, you was removed from town; but did not so much as tell him into what county – you best know whether it would be right to give him a line – if you should, I should advise [excision]. But more than this, I say not – only that he seems to have an affection for you, & is not capable of desiring to injure or offend you.[14]

The times thicken with the darker shades covering the whole British political system! & unless the openings of Musgrave & the unkennelling the *fox* excite the pursuers to a full cry, the scheme of subversion will soon take place.[15] The city-efforts are yet vigorous, tho' the m _ l damps[16] are as powerful as they can make them. If *Banks*, a man of no manner of mental ability, be kept out of the first seat of magistracy, it will foil the sons of corruption very much;[17] & the spirit of patriotism will in some degree recover from under the hand of oppression. The York-Association is very respectable; & I would hope the Devonshire meeting may be as promising.[18] But all this while, there is no sort of light breaking in upon us from

[13] Neville's letter to Fleming of 2 September 1769 has not survived; his papers contain no copies of his out-letters before 1770.

[14] Evidence from other letters in this series (see, for example, Neville to Fleming, 19 Nov. 1770 and 22 Feb. 1772) suggests that the person whose name is excised was Timothy Hollis.

[15] In 1769 Samuel Musgrave, a physician of Exeter, published incorrect reports that the peace settlement with France of 1762-3 had been obtained through bribery by the Earl of Bute's ministry, of which Henry Fox, 1st Baron Holland, was a prominent member.

[16] Fleming's meaning here is probably 'ministerial attempts to stifle'.

[17] Sir Henry Bankes, an Alderman of the City of London and a supporter of the Court, was an unsuccessful candidate for the office of Lord Mayor in 1769, 1771 and 1772.

[18] Yorkshire and Devonshire were among the 18 English counties which petitioned against the exclusion of Wilkes from Parliament after the Middlesex elections of 1768-9.

St *James's*. The Thane Ld Bute has the full grasp of the Sceptre of Majesty.[19]

You will pay my compliments to Mr *Whitesides*[20] & let me hear of your welfare, when you are settled in your *villa.*

Thank G. Mrs F. is in pretty good health[21] I have been a fortnight at Maldon in Essex.

I am, affectionately yours,

C. Fleming

Hoxton Square, London
Oct 3d. 1769

2

Rev. Caleb Fleming to Sylas Neville,

2 January 1770

[No beginning]

The turkey considered in itself, was worthy the acceptance of any man, but as the present of a sincere friend, it had additional merit & shall I tell you, tho' I have not been over the threshold of my door for near a month, I eat a hearty dinner of it yesterday – my disorder, thro' mercy, is going off, & I hope to take the Pulpit again the next Lord's Day.

[I] am sorry to find you have complaints – [I] doubt not, but you will do all you can to keep up your spirits – your nearness to the sea, I should think an agreeable circumstance – would advise you to go out as much as you can – to Yarmouth is a fine ride for you.

Mr Tim. Hollis paid me a visit last week, enquired after you – you would do well to give him a line. His sister, Mrs Winnock,

[19] John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, tutor and favourite of George III, was Secretary of State (1761-2) and First Lord of the Treasury (1762-3); although he never held office after 1763 he was frequently, albeit unjustly, accused by opponents of the Court of exercising secret influence behind the backs of ministers.

[20] Rev. John Whiteside, assistant minister (1743-61) and minister (1761-84) at the Old Meeting, Great Yarmouth.

[21] Mary, *née* Harris, of Hardstoft, Derbyshire, who outlived Fleming.

now lies dead, in consequence of having set fire to her linen last Sunday 3 weeks – so that we may reckon she thereby lost her life – lay in agonies near 3 weeks.[22]

As to the public, you know my apprehensions are not very favourable &, with you, I fear there is not public virtue enough to balance the Vessel in any rising storm – if ever the iniquities of a nation were full, surely it is the present condition of Britain – heaven indeed seems to chastise & warn us, by the plague on our cattel – if this should succeed to humble & reform us, we may not yet be delivered into the hands of men – but this is very doubtful.[23]

My compliments to Mr Whitesides when you see him & my best wishes attend your self.

I am, affectionately yours,

C. Fleming

London, Hoxton Sq.
Jan. 2d. 1770

3

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,
Scratby, Nov. 19, 1770

Dear Sir,

Frequent want of health & a fear of interrupting you in your important labours have prevented my writing to you for some time, not any want of respect. I entertain the highest esteem for you & the warmest gratitude for the advice & assistance you have kindly given me. I now write to inquire concerning your health & that of Mrs Fleming, a favourable account of which will give me much satisfaction. The prospect of public affairs is still very black

[22] Mary Winnock died on 28 Dec. 1769, following the accident on 3 Dec. described by Fleming; diary of Thomas Hollis, 28 and 29 Dec. 1769.

[23] The King's speech at the opening of Parliament on 9 Jan. 1770 began with a lament about the 'distemper among the horned cattle'; *Journals of the House of Commons (JHC)*, XXXII, 455. There were accusations that the ministry gave priority to this item in the hope of diverting attention from the pro-Wilkes petitions following the Middlesex elections.

& very little appearance of any light. If the threats against the Massachussets Bay are tamely suffered to be carried into execution, farewell the liberties of the Mother Country as well as those of the Colonies![24] The scheme of Despotism goes on, & I fear will be compleated, tho' carrying the Election of a Lord Mayor against the Court & the spirit shewn in London & Westminster, are favourable circumstances. I think by all accounts Trecothic, the late Mayor, did not answer expectation.[25] Be so good as to let me know how Mr Tim. Hollis does. I have abstained from writing to him, because I greatly suspect he would disapprove of my conduct, tho' several reasons concur to convince me of its necessity.

Dear Sir, I have the honour to be, with much respect, your most humble servant,

Sylas Neville.

My situation is _____ at Scratby, by Yarmouth, Norfolk

4

Rev. Caleb Fleming to Sylas Neville,
22 November 1770

[No beginning]

It was with no small pleasure I received yours of last night – this early reply will, I hope, give evidence. Many times have I expressed a concern about you. The account you give of your having been indisposed, would have had an abatement, had you

[24] The King's speech at the opening of Parliament on 13 Nov. 1770, six days before Neville wrote, stated that 'very unwarrantable practices' persisted in the colony of Massachusetts Bay and that law-abiding citizens had been 'oppressed by the same lawless violence which has too long prevailed in that province'; *JHC*, XXXIII, 4.

[25] In September 1770, a Wilkite, Brass Crosby, was elected Lord Mayor of London; the Cities of London and Westminster had both petitioned on behalf of Wilkes in 1769 and maintained the pressure thereafter; the Rockinghamite Barlow Trecothick, one of the M.P.s for the City of London, 1768-74, was elected Lord Mayor in June 1770 to complete the term of William Beckford, who had died earlier in that month.

informed me of the present state of your health being much improved. This I will imagine as I cannot but wish your happiness. The King's answer to the city remonstrance, is 'My Sentiments have been communicated before on that Subject, & I can, by no means, comply with the prayer of your petition'.[26]

We are told, that upon his expressing acrimony on the patriots to the Q – she said 'Remember, Sir, you are K ___ of a nation which is to be governed rather by love than authority; the English are not a people who obey because they must, but because they will; & you have sufficient examples in the annals of your ancestors, that when once the person of a K. falls into contempt, his dignity is little regarded'.[27] One would wish it was a true report – some desirable consequences might be expected.

Your ideas of the plan of administration agree with mine. Black & all black, is the prospect. We seem, by the debaucheries of the age, consigned to the jaws of ruin! Despotism stalks onward with her grim aspect, caressed by all her profligate minions! & blindly reverenced by those of better mind, whose eyes are sealed. It should appear to be a time, when every mortal symptom has laid hold on *Britannia's* constitution. Every Jesuitical *manoeuvre* is in full influence. Bute & Mansfield are the two fiends that controul the system.[28]

Mr Tim. Hollis, I hope, is well. But he has been much abroad, & [I] have not seen him lately; tho' I hear he was in town yesterday.

[26] This was the wording in which the King's answer to the City of London's remonstrance, against alleged attacks upon its privileges, was reported in the *General Evening Post,* 20-22 Nov. 1770 and in several other London newspapers.

[27] This story appeared in several London newspapers, including the *London Evening Post,* 20-22 Nov. 1770 and the *Middlesex Journal,* 20-22 Nov. 1770.

[28] William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield, was Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench. Oppositional rhetoric linked him with Bute as a champion of arbitrary government. Quite apart from anti-Scottish prejudice, Mansfield was unpopular with Rational Dissenters because of his former Jacobite connections and his reputation for pro-Catholic sympathies – this despite his famous judgement in the Sheriffs' Case (1767) which declared that Protestant Nonconformity was not a crime at law.

Mr Thos. Hollis I saw at Lyme, in Dorsetshire, last August: [I] suppose he yet continues in the west.

And now I will say something of myself. In the rising summer & till autumn, my legs swelled pretty much. The Dr. told me, it was owing to a bad state of my lungs & advised journeyings. I have made 3 tours, one of 200, another of 400 & a 3rd of about 130 miles.[29] Since these excursions the swellings are gone, & I have had only one fit of the breast complaint of about 8 or 9 days. [I] am at present, through the favour of heaven, in good health. Mrs F. not quite as well: my poor daughter very bad.[30] I have some thoughts of publishing a late view I have taken of the *Xn Sabbath, Baptism, & the Eucharist,* but am not yet determined.[31]

Don't be so long in letting me hear from you.

If acceptable, my compliments. to Mr Whitesides.

I am, affectionately yours,

C. Fleming

London, Hoxton Sq.
Nov. 22, 1770.

P.S. I have lately had a present made me by a stranger, of an illustration of the New Testament – Printed for R. Goadby – which is in 2 Vols. Folio – I am surprized at the performance – recommend it to you.[32]

[29] In his diary for 22 June 1770 Thomas Hollis recorded 'Walked to Hoxton Square & paid a visit to Dr Fleming .... Presented him with ten guineas, to defray the expence of a tour into the Country for his health, from which Tour he has otherwise abstained'. (Diary of Thomas Hollis). The diary ends on 3 July 1770 and hence does not include Fleming's visit to Hollis in August of that year, mentioned in this letter.

[30] Mary Fleming, the only one of Fleming's ten children to survive him.

[31] Fleming's *The open address of New Testament evidence,* in three sections, dealing with the reason and end of the Christian sabbath, of baptism and of the eucharist, was published in 1771.

[32] Robert Goadby (1721-1778), *An Illustration of the New Testament, by notes and explications* (Sherborne, 1759).

5

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

S[cratby] H[ouse] Dec. 28, 1770.

Dear Sir,

I received yours of Nov. 22d with much satisfaction.[33] The concern you express about me is greater than I deserve; but in confidence of it I shall write oftner to you. The account of your recovery gives me no small pleasure & is an alleviation of my own bad state of health. I have been greatly disappointed in my hopes of getting rid of my complaints by a constant residence in the country. My nervous distress is as great as ever & my stomach disorder continues with additional force, particularly in the cold season. The bad effect of the sea upon the weather I was not aware of, when I made choice of a maritime situation. The agreement of your sentiments on the state of the nation with mine does me honour. We have little public spirit in motion here. A great part of the people of this country, particularly the richer sort, is held in chains of darkness by the ministry of the Townsends [sic] & Walpoles.[34] The decay of the spirit of Liberty in America gives me real concern; but I hope it is not so great as it is represented. From your knowledge of the friends of America you can perhaps give me some light in this matter. All the enemies of Freedom, Religious and Civil, are in arms; it is therefore the duty of all its friends to oppose them in every way in which they are able. On this principle, I, however unequal to the task, made some remarks on an extract from Forster's Sermon entitled "The Establishment of the Church of England defended on the principles of Religious Liberty", printed in the Lond. Chron., having seen no answer to it for some time after its publication. My remarks are signed "A true friend of Civil & Religious Liberty" & appeared in the Lond. Chron. of Sep

[33] Neville recorded his receipt of this letter on 1 Dec. 1770; *Diary of Sylas Neville,* 86.

[34] A reference to the political dominance of these two closely-related families in Neville's own county of Norfolk; in 1769 neither Norfolk nor the city of Norwich joined the national petitioning campaign against the exclusion of Wilkes from the Commons after the Middlesex elections.

1.[35] Two other papers of mine, one concerning a Militia, the other entitled "Remarks on Cinna's Reflections on Reformation", both signed *Pym,* were published in the same Chron. of Oct. 4 & Nov. 1.[36] If you honour these papers by looking at them, let the goodness of my intention atone for the defects in the execution, & kindly point out any errors into which I have fallen, which your great experience in the good cause will soon discover. I hope Mrs Fleming is now better. My best wishes attend you & your family.

I am, with great esteem & affection,

Yours,

S. Neville.

P.S. I have sent you a Norfolk turkey, I hope a good one. It was killed this evening. Observe (to prevent indisposition) I have ordered my servant to pay the carriage to London.

The same direction on the basket, with this addition – "Car[riage]: p[ai]d."

P.SS Both turkeys went by the Coach from the Bear at Yarmouth.

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[35] Extracts from Nathaniel Forsters *The Establishment of the Church of England defended upon the Principles of Religious Liberty* appeared in the *London Chronicle,* 21-23 June 1770. Neville's reply, accusing 'the friends of spiritual tyranny' of defending 'despotism upon the principles of civil liberty', was printed in the same newspaper of 30 Aug.-1 Sept. 1770. Forster was Rector of All Saints, Colchester.

[36] The first of these letters, defending the citizen-based militia and denouncing standing armies as 'ready instruments in the hands of government, for every evil work', was published in the *London Chronicle,* 2-4 Oct. 1770; the second letter, attacking a previous contribution from 'Cinna' (6-9 Oct. 1770) which adopted an anti–republican stance and argued that 'The power of the Crown, instead of preponderating, is too light', appeared in the *London Chronicle,* 30 Oct.-1 Nov. 1770. Both letters were indeed signed 'Pym'.

6

Rev. Caleb Fleming to Sylas Neville,

3 January 1771

Dear Sir,

You do me no injury in concluding me much concerned about your health; only you erred in saying it is greater than you deserve. The fine turkey came safe to hand Dec. 31 for which we are much obliged to your friendship. I am very sorry you find no advantage from your situation. Do you drink *Valerian tea* between breakfast & dinner? It has been of great service to me, when made strong. Use *friction* every morning to your breast & bowels before you rise. Either with brush, or flannel. I should hope these measures would relieve you.

As to our political system, it is tumbling. Despotism is openly avowed in all measures of a ____ n; & the Minister[37] having both Houses under his thumb, renders the case desperate. The north–americans have not answered my expectation; & yet, there is one thing would unite them, in spite of all the efforts of the ministry, & that is, one internal tax laid upon them.

I cannot account for the conduct of a certain person, but upon the supposition that Bute has taught him to swallow a crucifix.[38] This is, you see, something like conjecture. Your several letters I reviewed the other night – remembered, that they pleased me. But knew not they were yours. The Lond. Chron. is very backward at inserting any of my letters. The last, signed *Old Milton,* does not yet appear, tho' before that [I] had not sent any for some time.[39] Thos. Hollis Esqr. is yet in Dorsetshire, going to build him an house at Lyme. He has been gone since July. Tim. Hollis Esq. I saw yesterday morning, he inquired kindly after you – & he is well.

[37] Lord North.

[38] Fleming wrote 'cruci ... fix'. Could he have meant Lord Mansfield (see note 16, above)?

[39] Fleming's letter, denouncing 'the uncommon countenance given to popery under the present administration', appeared in the *London Chronicle,* 21-23 Feb. 1771. Fleming is identified as 'Old Milton' in Disney's 'Collection of Letters on Religious Liberty, from the Newspapers' (D.W.L. MS 87.1-6).

I am solicited by some of my friends, to print 3 discourses, [of] the Sabbath, Baptism, and the Supper: but am not yet deter[mined]. There is [sic.] one or two objections yet unsubdued. I am losing many of my people by deaths & removals: so the P[inners] Hall is but thin. I find the subscriptions sunk one half within about 4 years past – for a considerable time past I have been attempting to investigate the evidence of our religion – in the last 3 discourses, the unity, pure divinity & universality of the Gospel–System of instruction.

The efforts that have been making in North–Britain against subscription have been obstructed, by Dr *Robertson*, the historian & others. How are men bewitched with a love of this world & a fondness of power – & how astonishing so many should be persuaded to love slavery.[40] Do you take in the Political Register?[41] I think that the best monthly publication – a present has been made me of *Illustrations on the New Test.* in 2 Vol. folio, by Goadby of Sherborne, Dorsetshire, a perfect stranger to me – I am surprised at the clearness of the unitarian doctrine, in his commentary.

And now, I will relieve you from any farther attention, while only reminding you of what engagement you have laid your self under, in yours of 28th of December, wherein you say, that in confidence of my concern about you – *I shall write oftner to you.* These are your very words – let me know that you wear them as the Jews did their Phylacteries, & pay them a most religious attention.

I am affectionately yours &c,

C. Fleming

Jany. 3 1771

[40] William Robertson (1721-93), the celebrated historian and moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, had opposed attempts by the 'Moderate' party in the Kirk to abolish or amend compulsory subscription to the Kirk's Confession of Faith. Some critics of the Confession were suspected of Socinianism. See Ian D L Clark, 'Moderatism and the Moderate Party in the Church of Scotland 1752-1805' (Cambridge PhD dissertation, 1964), chapter 8.

[41] The radical monthly magazine started by the Wilkite John Almon in May 1767.

Hoxton Square, London

P.S. If you see it fit, my compliments at Yarmouth.

7

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,
S[cratby] H[ouse] Aug. 12, 1771.

Dear Sir,

I hope you will pardon my not writing to you sooner according to your very kind desire expressed in your letter of January 3d last. I trust you will not impute it to neglect or want of inclination. God knows I was willing enough to avail myself of so honourable a testimony of your favour & affection; but continued want of health in the winter, &, since that was over, great trouble I have had about a sum of money which I have lost by the failure of a person to whom it was intrusted, have prevented me till now, though impatient to know concerning your welfare.

Present my best wishes to Mr. Tim. Hollis, when you have an opportunity. I shall ever have a grateful remembrance of the many civilities I received from him.

I thank you for recommending the "Illustrations of the New Testament, &c." printed for R. Goadby. It does honour to your approbation. I wish I had time & health to study it more. The respect I have for your judgment makes every hint from you valuable to me.

The dissention among those who pretend to be patriots has given me, as well as all other real friends of the public cause, inexpressible concern; but the want of moral character in some of them led me to suspect them long ago. I hope they will soon return to the cause they have deserted, or that their places will be supplied by more honest & better-principled men.[42] The designs of the Court would be evident (were its *measures* silent) from the publications of its emissaries. I was filled with indignation on seeing in the Lond. Chron. (No. 2274) a letter recommending the worst deeds of the Stuarts, as precedents, & holding up the fate of the worthy

[42] This is a reference to the split in the Society of Supporters of the Bill of Rights between Wilkes and John Horne.

alderman H. Cornish, to intimidate the lately-elected Sheriffs; but was glad to see proper notice taken of it in subsequent papers.[43] All attempts to emancipate the minds of Britons from religious tyranny have hitherto been as unsuccessful as those made in favour of civil freedom. I had some hopes from the meeting of the Clergy, &c. for the purpose of soliciting relief in the matter of subscription. But I confess they are a good deal damped when I consider the complexion of that Assembly to which they are to apply.[44]

I think we are indebted to your pen for "Some Account of the late attempt at Cambridge to set aside the 39 Articles of that pedantic tyrant James I" (signed *Luther*), & for "Symptoms of public ruin" (signed *A Republican*). Forgive my freedom in conjecture.[45]

In my stomachic illness last winter the friction you were so good as [to] recommend was of service to me. With regard to the present state of my health, it is but indifferent, &, as travelling may be of use to prevent a violent return of my disorder, I have thoughts of visiting London soon, when I will do myself the honour of waiting on you. I fear I have required your attention too long. If I have, forgive me. My best wishes attend you & your family.

Dear Sir, I am with much esteem,
Your humble servant,

S.N.

[43] The letter of which Neville complains appeared with the signature of 'WEX' in the *London Chronicle*, 9-11 July 1771. It condemned the agitation of the Wilkites and warned them of the fate of Henry Cornish, a London Alderman and critic of James II, who was hanged on a charge of treason in 1685. Letters strongly critical of 'WEX' may be found in the *London Chronicle,* 13-16 July and 16-18 July 1771.

[44] The meeting of liberal Anglican clergy which decided to petition for relief from subscription took place on 17 July 1771 at the Feathers Tavern, London, and its participants quickly became associated with that name.

[45] The letter from 'Luther' appeared in the *London Chronicle,* 2-4 July 1771 and that from 'A Republican', entitled 'Symptoms of public ruin, which are not imaginary', in the same newspaper for 23-25 July 1771. Their authorship remains uncertain.

P.S. My nervous disorder often makes my hand shake. I wish you may be able to read my writing.

8

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,
The Bell, Stilton, Oct. 28. 171 [sc. 1771]

Dear Sir,

I was extremely sorry at not seeing you again before I left Town, according to my promise & inclination & to your kind desire. I assure you it was not a voluntary transgression. Your candour, I know, will believe me, when I have just got into the great North road, after a very fatiguing journey across the country. I was at Newmarket races as I passed. The folly, madness & wickedness of those who meet there, excited many melancholy reflexions. The great importance of my present undertaking fills me with care & anxiety. My spirits are very low. I sincerely hope you are well, & am, with great esteem & regard,

yours,

S.N.

P.S. I will write to you again as soon as I am settled in lodgings &c at Edinb.

9

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,
Edinb. Feb. 22, 1772

Dear Sir,

Excuse my not letting you hear from me sooner. The delay proceeded from hurry occasioned by a multiplicity of causes arising from the new pursuit in which I have engaged. I hope you know me better than to impute it to indifference or neglect. I have the highest respect for you, & esteem my acquaintance with you one of the most honourable circumstances of my life – a life alas! that has not hitherto been marked with many fortunate circumstances. I bore my journey hither tolerably well, tho' by not beginning it soon enough I was obliged to travel a good deal in the

night. Letters of recommendation which I carried from Mr Hoyle[46] & Dr Manning, an eminent physician of Norwich,[47] secured me a pretty favorable reception here, & (I thank God) I have not met with any thing disagreeable, except the difficulty I find to support myself as a gentleman after the loss of part of my fortune, which I think I mentioned to you. This difficulty is increased by the expensive way in which the genteeler sort of students of Physic live here. I have been ill more than once since I came here, but not dangerously, which encourages me to hope that my engaging in business will produce the desired effect, at least, in removing my nervous disorder – especially when I consider that the initiating branches of medical study are (as all agree) the most dry & disagreeable. I am obliged to work hard & often do not get to bed before morning. This, I am afraid, will hurt me; but, as I am engaged in an honourable & useful pursuit, I hope the most High will give me strength to go through with it. An epidemic fever prevails at present here. Two gentlemen who board where I do, have been taken with it, & I am much afraid – the more so, as any severe illness at this juncture would (besides its usual disagreeable concomitants) be attended with an interruption of my studies. Do not you think me tedious concerning myself? With regard to Church & State, I think, both become daily worse. The fate of the clerical Petition was what I expected from the deplorable corruption of a very great majority of the H. of C.[48]

But notwithstanding, your account of its shameful rejection gave my spirits a shock which they have not yet recovered. – Mr Sawbridge's intended honest & upright motion will have no better

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[46] Rev. John Hoyle was joint minister of the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, from 1758-75. The death of his wife, followed by a stroke in 1773, wrecked his health. He died at the age of 50 on 29 Nov. 1775. See J and E Taylor, *History of the Octagon Chapel, Norwich* (London, 1848), 45.

[47] John Manning (d. 1806), a successful medical practitioner in Norwich and an honorary freeman of the city.

[48] The House of Commons rejected the Feathers Tavern Petition by 217 votes to 71 on 6 Feb. 1772.

success.[49] It has pleased God in his mercy to remove one of the nation's enemies,[50] but I am afraid a sufficient No. yet remain to compleat the work of *ruin.*

Give my respects to Mr Tim. Hollis, without mentioning my being in this part of the island or my intentions. If I live to perfect my plan, I shall probably make it known to him. Pray let me hear from you as soon as you have leisure from more important concerns. I shall rejoice to hear that you are well. I shall return to England for the summer about the middle of April, when the long vacation begins. I wish it was come. The badness of the weather & other disagreeable circumstances have made this winter seem uncommonly long. I am lucky in the company of several Norfolk gentlemen, fellow-labourers with myself in the same profession.

I am, Dear Sir, with the greatest esteem,

Your most obliged humble servant,

S.N.

Pray when did you see your friends, our female historian[51] & Mr. Thos. Hollis? I am anxious to hear of their welfare, tho' particular circumstances deny me the pleasure of their acquaintance. I am afraid you will find difficulty in reading my writing. By taking notes continually of the lectures I hear, I have got into a way of writing too fast & not attending enough to the shape of the letters. Adieu! I am sure you must be tired of this long epistle. Direct for Mr Neville, at Mrs Chapman's, Adam's Square, Edinburgh.

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[49] i.e. John Sawbridge's motion for shorter Parliaments, the defeat of which on 4 March 1772 is mentioned in Fleming's letter to Neville of 6 March.

[50] Probably a reference to Augusta, Princess Dowager of Wales, the mother of George III, who died on 8 Feb. 1772.

[51] Catherine Macaulay, to whom Fleming introduced Neville on 30 April 1768; see G M Ditchfield, 'Some Literary and Political Views of Catherine Macaulay', *American Notes and Queries,* xii (1974), 70-6.

10

Rev. Caleb Fleming to Sylas Neville,

6 March 1772

Dear Sir,

Yours of Feb. 22 gave me pleasure, as it informed me of your situation & circumstances. I should not wonder at your being treated with civility as well on your own account as that of your recommendation from Norwich. [I] am sorry for the reason of your complaint – hope you will find a present application useful to your health & spirits – undoubtedly you will find the requisite application a little trying to you at first, but tho' the initiatory branches of medical study are dry, yet the novelty of them, & their importance as fundamental, must take off much of the disagreeable. I wish you may escape the epidemical fever you mention, & find no interruption given to your studies.

[Marginal note]: Marriage Bill in H. of Coms. that the bill be printed,
Ayes 109. Noes 193.

Sawbridge's Motion for shortening Parliaments, for 83, against 251.[52]

The expensive way of living common to physical students, you will avoid as much as you decently can: but I suppose some conformity will be unavoidable.

As to the treatment given the petition of the Clergy, no better could be expected from a Tory administration & especially as there is not any thing less understood by our established Clergy, than religion, or the rights of conscience. They have all been trained to dissimulation & prevarication both with God & man & are not aware of the deformity & malignity of oaths & subscriptions to things they neither believe nor understand. And, I know not how it is, but in all national church-establishments, the Clergy are excessively fond of both wearing & imposing chains & fetters, as if

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[52] Fleming was correct about the voting figures for each bill; both divisions took place on 4 March 1772; *JHC,* XXXIII, 553.

they were an honourable badge of their profession. It is astonishing that any ecclesiastical constitution that assumes the name of christian should affect to put on the most disgraceful airs of profession!

But shall I tell you, the 3 denominations of protestant dissenters are to meet together this very evening at the Library, Red–Cross–Street, in order [to] report the sense of the Body, as desirous of being relieved from subscription &c, & this, under a promise of being countenanced by the ministry this very session.+ [53]

This is, *inter nos*, to be a kind of atoning sacrifice to remove the load of guilt & reproach which hangs over a sett of the vilest of _ _ _ _ _ _ keep this to your self, or view it only as my private opinion – nevertheless, I shall be glad should it succeed.

Dr *Nowell's* Sermon preached before the Coms. Jany 30th had, by management, obtained the thanks of the House & an order to print it – but no sooner did it come from the press, but the House ordered their thanks to be blotted out of their Journals. It occasioned some most excellent speeches to be made, which exposed the despicable tool of despotism.[54]

As to Mrs Macaulay, I have not seen her these 18 months neither Mr T. Hollis[55] – he never comes to town that I know of; nor have I had a line from him these twelve months past – I hear he is well, but resides wholly in Dorsetshire.

[53] The General Body of Dissenting Ministers in London held an extraordinary meeting on 4 Mar. 1772 and, having been encouraged by reports of ministerial sympathy, formed a committee to promote a relief bill; D.W.L. MS. 38.106 (Minute Books of the General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers), vol. 2, p. 109. Fleming's letter was probably begun on 4 March ('this very evening') and despatched two days later.

[54] Thomas Nowell, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, had used the occasion of the traditional 30 January sermon before the House of Commons in 1772 to preach doctrines of submission to royal authority which were widely interpreted as a return to notions of non-resistance and passive obedience. As a result, on 25 Feb., the Commons voted to delete from its *Journals* its vote of thanks to Nowell. For the debate to which Fleming refers, see W Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England,* XV, 312-21.

[55] i.e. Thomas Hollis.

Mr Tim. Hollis I saw yesterday morning, who is well. Do you know Mr Creech the bookseller? & whether he has sent him for sale, *The true new testament doctrine of Jesus X considered?* When you favour me with a line, I shall be glad to have information – & if he has it, whether it has any purchasers. It is an excellent book.[56] After thus long asking your attention – I bid you *farewel.*

I am affectionately yours,

C. Fleming

London, Hoxton Sq.
Mar. 6 1772

+ The *donum Regium* men have applied to a _____ n, against the original plan – & now the Bishops are to determine whether we shall be freed from subscription. Mar 6.[57]

11

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

7 August 1772

Dear Sir,

I received your obliging letter of March 6 at Edinburgh. So much Attention does me honour. I did not trouble you with a letter at that time, having nothing of importance to communicate, & the principal intention of the line I now send you, is to inquire the state of your health, about which I shall always be anxious. I thank

[56] Paul Cardale, *The True Doctrine of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ considered* (2nd ed., London, 1771). Cardale was a friend of Fleming and published this tract pseudonymously. William Creech (1745-1815) was one of the leading booksellers in Edinburgh, with premises at the top of the High Street; he published the works of leading figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, including Adam Ferguson and Hugh Blair.

[57] Fleming's comment reflects a suspicion widespread among Rational Dissenters that the trustees of the Regium Donum, a charity established in the reign of George I for the widows of Dissenting ministers, were clients of government and would dilute the original aims of the Dissenters' relief bill. See John Stephens, 'The London Ministers and Subscription, 1772-1779', *Enlightenment and Dissent,* No. 1 (1982), 45-7.

God I escaped the fever which prevailed in the winter & carried off many of our students – among others two of the *soberest* & m*ost virtuous* young men in the University (their names Billingsly & Bury), both sons of Dissenting ministers in England.[58] I enjoy a tolerable state of health – engaging in this study has had a good effect upon it.

It appears to me that *Despotism* in civil & spiritual matters is *Advancing* with large strides. The Bishops, *those determined enemies of the rights of mankind, triumph in the victory they imagine* they have gained over the Dissenters. May their triumph be soon turned into disgrace is my earnest wish.[59] I imagine the Ministry, tho' they suffered the bill to pass thro' the House of Commons, were secretly combined with the *rogues in lawn-sleeves* to stop its further progress. Sad is our condition, when it is in the power of the Crown to pass or not pass a Bill in the House of Commons. Did not the Dissenters, who made the application, go too far in offering *any kind of subscription?*[60] I think the civil government has no right to interfere at all in any matter of *Religion,* except (as is excepted by the great Mr Locke) where any man or set of men pursues opinions, *under pretence of religion,* endangering

[58] The records of Edinburgh University show that a Samuel Billingsley matriculated in medicine in the session of 1770-71. It is probable, although not certain, that he was the son of Rev. Samuel Billingsley, minister of the presbyterian chapel at Bradford on Avon, 1748-58, and subsequently at Peckham. No record of a student named Bury or Berry survives, but Neville's letters of 21 Dec. 1773 and 26 Mar. 1774, together with Fleming's letter of 22 Jan. 1774, strongly suggest that the student to whom Neville refers was the son of the Rev. John Berry, Presbyterian minister at Crediton, 1751-82. I am grateful to Mrs Jo Currie of Edinburgh University Library for advice on this point.

[59] When the House of Lords rejected the Dissenters' Relief Bill by 102 votes to 27 on 19 May 1772, 25 of the 26 bishops voted against the bill, either in person or by proxy; see G M Ditchfield 'The Subscription Issue in British Parliamentary Politics, 1772-79', *Parliamentary History,* 7 (1988), 68–70.

[60] The relief bill of 1772 proposed to substitute a brief declaration of belief in scripture for subscription to the doctrinal articles of the Church of England.

the *safety* or subversion of the r*ights* of other men. With this limitation I do not see that the civil power has any right to force any man *even to declare that he is a Christian.* Constantine did the Christian Religion the *greatest injury,* when he interposed the authority of the state in its favour further than *to hinder its being persecuted.*

I called twice to make the inquiry you desired about the sale of "The true New–Testament Doctrine of Jesus Christ considered" – but did not find any person who could give me the necessary information. I therefore left a commission with a friend to procure & write it for me. I have been in Norfolk above two months. I came from Newcastle by sea, to satisfy an inclination I had to try how it would agree with me. I hope Mrs Fleming is well.

I am, Dear Sir, with the most perfect esteem,

Yours affectionately,

S. Neville.

Scratby–House
Aug. 7, 1772.

P.S. Any letter directed for me at Scratby House, near Yarmouth, will come to my hand.

12

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

17 August 1772

Dear Sir,

The *loss of money* which I think I mentioned to you when in Town last year, & other *unfortunate circumstances* of the same kind which have happened since, with *the great expence* which I find attends the study of Medicine, have at last determined me to apply part of the remainder of my fortune to the purchase of *an annuity for my life.* I should therefore be greatly obliged to you, if you could obtain for me the opinion of the celebrated Dr Price, who has written with so much reputation on this subject & is (I am told) known to you; & ask him what annuities he thinks the best both with regard to *terms of purchase & security* to the purchasers for the payment of them; in short, what he would advise a friend of yours to purchase in preference to any other. It may be necessary to

inform him, that that friend is now in his 31st year, of a weak constitution, very liable to nervous & other complaints; & the sum intended to be laid out £1400 or £1500. If the Dr could recommend an Attorney or Broker, whose diligence & fidelity could be depended upon in transacting this affair, it would be a favour.[61] Dear Sir, pardon the trouble I give you – it is *the effect* of the great confidence I have in the friendship you have so often manifested for me. Pray, what progress had the late worthy Dr Harris made, at the time of his death, in his account of James II? Did he leave any papers ready for publication, & under whose care?[62] I saw our friend Hoyle on Saturday; he is greatly afflicted with rheumatic & other disorders. I am afraid he will never get the better of the effects of his *most exemplary* attendance upon his wife in her last illness. I am extremely sorry for it. He is a man of *singular worth*, of most generous & liberal principles.

Let me hear from you as soon as you can conveniently, as it is of great consequence to me to have this business of the annuity settled upon a firm footing before I return to Edinburgh, which I must do in the beginning of October.

I am, with great respect & affection,
Yr very humble servant

S. Neville.

P.S. Direct to me at Scratby House, nr Yarmouth. I understand that my last letter to you was not despatched from Norwich so soon as I intended. I am sorry at being obliged to trouble you with another

[61] Price's reputation as an authority on annuities had been established by his *Observations on Reversionary Payments* (1770). Fleming, too, had acquired considerable knowledge of the subject through the reports of the Annuitant Committee of the General Body of Ministers; see D.W.L. MS 38.106, pp. 92–4.

[62] William Harris (1720-70), Dissenting minister near Honiton; biographer of the Stuart kings and friend of Thomas Hollis. His life of James II was unfinished at his death. There is no trace of a manuscript of that work at Dr Williams's Library, although Harris bequeathed his papers to that institution.

so soon; but the necessity of the measure, in which I desire your friendly assistance, did not appear clearly sooner.

S[cratby] H[ouse] Aug. 17, 1772.

13

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,
16 September 1772

Dear Sir,

I duly received both your your [sic] letters,[63] & cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the very friendly concern you take in my affairs. I am extremely sorry you have so much trouble on my account. I will act as you advise, as soon as the money is ready, of which I will give you notice. In the mean time, if you hear from Dr Price or receive any further information from others on the subject, be so good as [to] communicate it to me, & I wish you could have an Attorney in your eye of undoubted abilities & integrity. Be so kind as cause put the inclosed [sic.] into the Post. Letters for the North go more directly from London than from our office. I hope your health has been benefited by the Tour you have made.

I am, with great regard & affection, yours,

S. Neville.

P.S. I suppose you heard no more of the Exeter Bank. Pray inquire if any annuities are granted now by the Duke of Bedford's people. They used to be formerly, & were reckoned good.[64]

[63] The two letters from Fleming have not survived, although Neville recorded on 12 Sept. 1772 the receipt of one letter, in which Fleming promised him all possible help in his search for an annuity; *Diary of Sylas Neville*, 178.

[64] The Exeter Bank was founded in 1769 and appears to have had connections with banks in the City of London. See J Ryton, *Banks and banknotes of Exeter 1769-1906* (Exeter, 1984), 23-4, 100-102. The note of anxiety in Neville's tone is probably explained by the banking crisis of 1772–3. The reference to 'the Duke of Bedford's people' might refer to the way in which large landowners borrowed extensively, often for agricultural improvement. Possibly Neville hoped that if he raised

Scratby House. September 16, 1772

14

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

16 October 1772

Dear Sir,

I have your transcript from Dr Price, & after all the information we can collect, I think with you the *common market most eligible.* I intended being in Town about this time, as you wrote that my presence was *necessary* in the business; but was prevented by an opportunity offering to dispose of my lease here, which I thought it most prudent to embrace, as I found keeping a family here during my absence very expensive & inconvenient on many accounts.[65] Disposing of part of my furniture & placing the rest in safety, with other matters of some importance to me, will require as much time as I can possibly spare before the commencement of the term at Edinburgh. When that is over, I hope to see you in London. The information your great good nature has procured for me, will I think be of as great use *there* as it would be *now.*

I am, with the greatest esteem & affection,

Yours sincerely,

S. Neville.

I am glad to see that Mr Thos. Hollis begins *again* to take some notice of public affairs. The recommendation of the *Hiero* of *Xenophon* to the perusal of the King of Sweden in the London Chronicle, No. 2465, & of certain books to the Swedish nation in

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sufficient funds to loan to the Bedford family, he might receive a fixed annual sum in return. His uncertainty is probably explained by the death of the fourth Duke of Bedford, the leader of a parliamentary faction, in 1771 and the succession to the dukedom of a minor. I am indebted to Professor L S Pressnell for advice on this point.

[65] It is likely that Neville, a lifelong bachelor, used the word 'family' in the sense of 'household', although he had a mistress and illegitimate children. For details of his menage see *Diary of Sylas Neville,* xii.

No. 2469 of the same paper, I attribute to the *generous spirit* of that *truly* patriotic Gentleman.[66]

If you should have occasion to write to me before you hear from me from Edinburgh, direct to this place, & the letter will be sent under cover to me.

Scratby House, Oct. 16, 1772.

15

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

21 December 1773

Dear Sir,

I have not written to you since I left Norfolk, being unwilling to give you *unnecessary* trouble & having nothing of *importance* to communicate. But, as an opportunity by a friend now offers, I gladly embrace it & hope to find in your answer a favourable account of your health, which will be *highly grateful* to me. I intended being in London last autumn to carry into execution the affair of the annuity, about which I formerly wrote to you. But I am now so deeply engaged at this University that I find it impossible to leave it yet, even for a month or two. Your *kind inquiries* & very *satisfactory information* in that business I shall ever have in remembrance. I shall see you as soon as my business here will permit, & in the mean time I should like to know (if it is not too much trouble) how many years purchase annuities which are sold at market (& which you thought the most eligible) sell for in general; i.e. upon an *average,* one with another.

Pray do you know a Mr Bury, a dissenting clergyman at or near Exeter?[67] I am desirous of borrowing a MS. of very great

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[66] The letter from 'Algernon Sydney', recommending Xenophon's *Hiero; or, the Condition of a Tyrant* to Gustavus III of Sweden, who had in Aug. 1772 staged a monarchical coup, appeared in the *London Chronicle,* 26-29 Sept. 1772. The second letter, signed '"Mask" of J.M.' [i.e. John Milton] commended a series of republican classics to the Swedes and appeared in the same newspaper for 6-8 Oct. 1772. Although it cannot be shown conclusively that they were written by Thomas Hollis or with his encouragement, the possibility remains a strong one.

[67] See n. 59, above.

consequence to a medical man, which belonged to his son who died at this University some time ago. It is needless to trouble you with particulars till I know whether you are acquainted with Mr Bury or with any person who has *interest* with him. I have so much to do that I am harassed beyond measure – having hardly time to *eat* or take my *natural rest,* & since the setting in of the winter my health has been very indifferent. When did you see Mr Timothy Hollis? I hope he is well. I hope also the other Mr Hollis is well; tho' I have not yet the pleasure of his *acquaintance,* I respect his *virtues*. Let me continue to enjoy your good opinion, & believe me to be, with the most sincere respect,

Your devoted humble servant,

S. Neville.

P.S. Direct for me at Mr Browne's, bookseller, Edinburgh, & write soon, if you can spare time from more important concerns.[68]

Edinb. December 21, 1773.

16

Rev. Caleb Fleming to Sylas Neville,

22 January 1774

Dear Sir,

It gave me pleasure to receive a line from you: wherein you appear to be so well as you are, with such incessant application – but are you to be justified in giving your studies an attention above your strength? [I] should have been glad to have seen you last autumn. As to annuities on lives, my son has enquired for me, but the only office he would have recommended is at present shut up. I could not give him your age, which is needful to ascertain what is the current allowance. I told him, I thought, somewhere about 35. He said the market would not give more than 6 3/4 per Cent.

[68] Probably James Brown, whose premises in 1773 were in Parliament Close, Edinburgh.

You ask, if I know one Bury, a dissenting Clergyman near Exeter – if you mean Bury of Crediton, I personally know him, & have done many years. A family that did belong to his Church, who are come to town, belong to my Church at P[inners] Hall. I take it for granted, that when I know your request, the matter, if not of a difficult nature, may be managed for you.

You also enquire after Mr Tim. Hollis. I saw him yesterday, & he is, I thank G, pretty well. We lost Thos. Hollis Esq. the first day of this year. He was upon one of his Lordships in Dorsetshire in apparent health, walking with some of his workmen, fell down & instantly died. He has left several curious things to Tim Hollis Esq. with £3,000. In other legacies £5,000 more, & the bulk of his Estate to Tho. Brand Esq., with whom he had travelled. Among his very numerous legatees, I hear my name is found with a legacy of £100 – he has not left anything to any one of his family besides the above.[69]

These particulars I thought might entertain you. T.H. Esq., deceased has not been in town for 3 years & more, but had given orders that day he died by a letter to his lawyer in Pall-Mall, to make the house ready to receive him in a few days. I need not tell you, that our political heaven is more & more cloudy: & I should suspect that a storm was gathering – but I pretend not to a prophetic spirit.

I am, with great esteem,
Yours &c

C. Fleming

London - Hoxton Sq
January 22 - 74

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[69] Thomas Hollis died on 1 January 1774. In his will (Public Record Office, PROB 11/994, ff. 122-3) he left legacies to several Rational Dissenters or their associates; they included £100 to Fleming, £100 to Theophilus Lindsey and £500 to Francis Blackburne.

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Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

26 March 1774

Dear Sir,

I have your much esteemed favour of January 22d, & thank you for the particulars it contained, which (as you justly supposed) entertained me much.

The death of Mr Hollis affected me not a little. He was one of the few pillars which supported this land from sinking into an abyss of corruption & slavery. I wondered & was uneasy that no *public* tribute of praise was paid to his memory; but in a late London Chronicle I see a letter, signed Lycidas, in which his *rare virtue & integrity* are held up to the admiration of all *good & benevolent minds,* of all true lovers of their *country & its liberties.* The author of that letter says: "The great variety of publications, new & old, which he procured & circulated, are a monument both of his wisdom & spirit at a very early age." And in another place – "It were endless to speak of the number of valuable writings of our countrymen, living or dead, which he published either wholly or in part, or encouraged others in the work". I wish this author had been more particular in giving us a list of the noble & useful works with which this truly eminent person enriched the world, that those, who venerate his memory & the principles which he endeavoured to establish with so much pains, might have had it in their power to embrace every opportunity of becoming possessed of them.[70] Perhaps you can supply the defect.[71] It would be doing an essential service to that public which he regarded & which I know you regard. I have his Sidney – Locke – Neville – Excellencies of a free State – Toland's Life of Milton, &c. I am glad that Mr Timothy

[70] The letter from 'Lycidas' in praise of Thomas Hollis was published in the *London Chronicle,* 12-15 Feb. 1774. It was reprinted, with the speculation that the author was 'an ingenious and respectable clergyman still living', in Francis Blackburne, *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, Esq.* (2 vols, London, 1780), I, 469-71.

[71] The 'defect' was supplied by Francis Blackburne in his *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis,* a work which mentions neither Fleming nor Timothy Hollis.

Hollis is well. Does he reside constantly in Town since the death of his sister Winnock? Who keeps house for him?

I am much obliged to you for your information concerning Mr Bury. His son, who died here, left in the hands of a friend of mine a MS. copy of the late celebrated Dr Gregory's Lectures on the Practice of Medicine, in 8 vols. 8vo.[72] My friend gave me leave to take a copy; but when I had taken part of 2 of the volumes, Mr Bury wrote to the gentleman desiring that these lectures (as one of the last testimonies of his son's industry) might be sent to him. My friend, afraid of offending Mr Bury, sent them away & I was thus deprived of an opportunity of becoming possessed of a work which I exceedingly esteem on account both of its own merit & of the superior excellence of its author, of whose character I may perhaps give you a sketch in some future letter. I have in this already touched upon one melancholy event: another, with which from several circumstances I was very much affected, would be too much for me in the present state of my spirits. My *request* then to you is, to ask the favour of Mr Bury to *lend* the MS. in question to a friend of yours, who will *undertake* for its *safety* in every respect, & send it home safe in a few months. A deal box, with paper between the volumes to prevent any bad effects from friction, would be the safest package. I shall willingly pay every expence attending it. Desire Mr Bury, if he *consents* to send the books, to direct them to you; and, when you inform me of your having received them, I will give you the necessary information for their further conveyance; but am unwilling to trouble you with more particulars, till I know the result of your application.

I am your most devoted friend & very humble servant,

S. Neville.

Edinb. March 26, 1774.

[72] John Gregory (1724-73), professor of medicine at Edinburgh University from 1766, had published *Elements of the Practice of Physic* in 1772, with a second edition in 1774. The *Dictionary of National Biography* describes his lecturing style as 'successful without being brilliant ... simple and direct'.

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Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

Edinb. July 16, 1775

Dear Sir,

I gladly seize the opportunity of writing to you by a very worthy young gentleman of a dissenting family in London, Mr Highmore, who has been here a year & is now about to leave us.[73] Nothing new of any consequence has happened here lately except in University matters in which you are not interested. I have therefore little entertainment or information to communicate, except that the people here in general are against America & warm friends of the *reigning system,* which (as you have long foreseen) is fast verging towards the ruin of liberty in Church & State, unless prevented by an exertion of the people themselves, which from their corruption & want of virtue I almost despair of. I hope the Americans *will fight boldly* for their rights. It is the only chance they have of establishing them on a sure & lasting foundation. Your opinion of these matters will oblige. You are more in the way of authentic information than I am.

As you have always expressed the kindest concern about me, I am now to inform you, that after taking much pains, & using the most effectual means in my power to qualify myself for my profession, I am soon to offer myself for a degree in Medicine, on which occasion, among other specimens of knowledge & proficiency in the art, every candidate must publish a Dissertation on a medical subject. It is usual to dedicate these Dissertations to one or more friends, to whom the author has been much obliged. I therefore intend joining your name to that of Mr Manning of Norwich, & hope I shall not publish any thing unworthy of your acceptance.[74]

As Mr Highmore intends seeing seats & other remarkable places in his way, it may be 2 or 3 weeks before you receive this; but I expect to hear from you as soon as convenient, as I am very

[73] William Reynolds Highmore, who graduated M.D. from Edinburgh University in 1778 and subsequently practised at Kingston, Surrey.

[74] There is a printed copy of Neville's thesis, with dedication to Fleming and Manning, in Norfolk R.O., Neville Papers, MC7/742.

anxious to know the state of your health since I heard from you last. I am, with best wishes for your family,

your obliged friend & obedient servant,

S. Neville.

P.S. I hope Mr Tim. Hollis is well. Remember me to him, when you have opportunity.

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Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

Edinb. Nov. 1. 1775.

Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to acquaint you, that after a good deal of labour & pains I have at last been honoured with a degree in Medicine. Upon this occasion I have taken the liberty of offering you my first public attempt in medical writing, not by any means by a complete Dissertation on the Prognostic in Fever, but as a small mark of the high esteem I entertain for your character, abilities & virtues, & of my gratitude for the great advantages I have derived from your advice & direction. I should be ashamed to submit so defective a performance to your perusal, if I did not know that your candour will make every allowance for a task undertaken from necessity & executed in haste. But, whatever it is, both the matter & language are entirely my own without any assistance. Therefore all its faults are to be imputed to me & to no one else.

I think the confusion in our political hemisphere increases; God knows in what it will end; I hope not in the establishment of Despotism either at home or over our brethren in America. It gave me much concern to observe in the public prints the heir of your late worthy & distinguished friend Thos. Hollis Esq., held forth by the corrupt themselves as a monster of corruption. I hope for his own sake & for the sake of his ever to be honoured memory whose representative he is, that he was not guilty, & that there was some misrepresentation in that affair – I mean the Hindon Election. I fancy you can inform me, what part Thos Brand Hollis Esq. really

had in that business.[75] An account of your health, with the news of your time & of your opinion of public matters (as far as you can give it with safety), will always be highly acceptable, as I am much out of the way at present of authentic information of the real state of things further than what is contained in the newspapers.

Your questions are marks of your affection for me. I wish it was in my power to give you positive & satisfactory answers to them. With regard to the place of my future residence, I have determined nothing yet & wish I may fix with prudence. I shall not be able to leave the University before January – wish I may be able to do it then, as I have many things to do in which I was interrupted in the summer by the business of my degree. This year I have written 7 papers besides the Dissertation which I have the honour to send you, 5 of them in Latin; consequently have been a good deal harassed; but I was determined to do every thing myself or never take a degree in Medicine. The fatigue has brought on a return of some of my complaints; but, as I have now more ease, I hope soon to get rid of them. I am just returned from an excursion into the High-lands, a part of this country which presents scenes entirely new & worthy the observation of every traveller.[76] I am exceedingly glad to find that your country-journeys have not been without the desired effect. But I must conclude, as the gentleman who does me the favour to carry this parcel is in a hurry. I am, with best wishes for you & family,

affectionately yours,

[75] At the general election of 1774 Thomas Brand Hollis was elected for Hindon in alliance with the nabob Richard Smith. There were widespread allegations of open bribery and the result was annulled by a House of Commons Committee in 1775. Brand Hollis, Smith and the two defeated candidates were prosecuted for bribery; the two former were convicted and each fined and sentenced to imprisonment for six months. At a new election for Hindon in 1776 Smith was re-elected, but Brand Hollis never stood for Parliament again. His friends attributed his involvement to naïvety rather than corruption; see Sir Lewis Namier and J. Brooke, *The History of Parliament. The House of Commons, 1754-1790* (3 vols, London, 1964), I, 415-6; II, 113.

[76] For this tour, see *Diary of Sylas Neville,* 228-36.

S. Neville.

P.S. However desirous I am of having your opinion of our political state, my dear Sir, be cautious, especially when you write by Post. Our ..... seem now disposed to proceed to the extremities of tyranny. Putting only the day of the month & omitting place & signature may be advisable.[77] Adieu.

20

Sylas Neville to Caleb Fleming,

Edinb. May 6, 1776.

Dear Sir,

I take the opportunity of a friend going to London to send you this. Your kind favor of December 2 I received,[78] & am exceedingly obliged to you for the very favorable opinion you entertain of me & my works. I assure you, you are considered by all good, unprejudiced & ingenuous minds, as deserving much higher compliments than those I have paid you. I did it *ex animo* – from a conviction of your great worth & a deep sense of your kindness to me. The friends of Truth & of God are now so rare, that the few we have cannot be too much prized.

I entirely agree with you in the prognostic you have formed of our political system. It is of the most fatal kind, & *political death* may soon be expected, unless Heaven interpose in a remarkable manner to save a sinking nation. Your opinion of the state of affairs has always been highly satisfactory; & a continuation of such communications (as far as they can be made with safety) will be most welcome to me. Dr Price's excellent performance gave me much pleasure:[79] he deserves the thanks of all the friends of Liberty both here & in America. I hope, for the sake of both countries, his

[77] For a note on official interception of correspondence, see K L Ellis, *The Post Office in the eighteenth century. A study in administrative history* (1958), 62-5, 71-5.

[78] Fleming's letter to Neville of 2 Dec. 1775 has not survived.

[79] Richard Price, *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty,* published in 1776.

prognostic of the fate of the war is a just one; for, if a certain party conquer, woe be to this country. How happy would it be, if our governors would take the excellent hints he gives them! But they love rather the works of darkness & the strong-holds of oppression.

The account you gave of your health made me very uneasy. But I hope soon to hear that the warmth of the spring & the approach of summer have had the happiest effects in removing your complaints. The justice of your observations concerning Death is striking & of great importance to all. But with regard to yourself, I trust that event is at some distance. But you have an unspeakable comfort, to which the wicked & ungodly are strangers – the consideration of a long life well-spent in cultivating & supporting "All truth, all righteous things". Would to God that I & all those to whom I wish happiness, were as well prepared for that day and hour!

I wish you had been with me in my Highland tour. I should have had the advantages of your company & conversation, & I think the journey would have tended to promote your health. I do not recollect that you ever mentioned Mr W. Dalrymple to me before; but I am glad to hear that North-Britain is possessed of so valuable a person. I should be glad to know him, but am afraid I shall not have an opportunity, as I shall leave this place in a few weeks & the distance to Ayr is near 70 miles.[80]

Adieu, dear Sir; may Heaven preserve you!

W.X.[81]

P.S. Pray favor me with a few lines in a Post or two, as I am anxious to know how you do, & am not certain of being here after the first of June.

[80] William Dalrymple (1723-1814), minister at Ayr, 1746-1814; Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1781. His trinitarian unorthodoxy was well known and his ministerial colleague at Ayr, William M'Gill, was prosecuted in the church courts for heresy in the 1780s. In his will Fleming bequeathed a ring to Dalrymple.

[81] This signature might indicate a desire on Neville's part to obscure his identity, in the light of his paranoia about the interception of letters written by such critics of government as himself.

P.S. May 7. By this day's Post a rumour of good news prevails. I hope it will be confirmed.

G.M. Ditchfield
University of Kent
at Canterbury

'THIS UNHAPPY COUNTRY OF OURS': EXTRACTS OF LETTERS, 1793-1801, OF THEOPHILUS LINDSEY*

Jenny Graham

For any student of the life of Joseph Priestley in particular, and of the 1790s in general, the letters of the leading Unitarian reformer, Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808) have a compelling interest. Lindsey was perhaps the closest of Priestley's many friends, and the two men maintained a regular correspondence throughout the years of Priestley's exile in America.[1] Lindsey's extensive correspondence with many other leading figures in Unitarian and reforming circles is valuable not only for its evidence of the author's political views, but also for the information he invariably provided of the state of the political atmosphere in London.

The pioneering work of Herbert M[c]Lachlan, in editing the letters of Lindsey[2] has been followed in recent years by two contributions of major importance, from John M[c]Lachlan[3] and G M Ditchfield.[4] John M[c]Lachlan, extolling Lindsey — 'the inveterate and irrepressible correspondent' — called for 'that much to be desired new life of "Lindsey and his Times".'[5] And in a recent Lecture, G M Ditchfield, declaring that there are some six hundred letters of

* The author is most grateful to the Librarians of Birmingham City Archive, Dr. Williams's Library, and Warrington Public Libraries, for permission to quote from material in their Collections.

1 This correspondence between Priestley and Lindsey is almost entirely in the Archive of Dr. Williams's Library, London. The correspondence on which this article is based is all in this Archive.

2 H M[c]Lachlan, *The letters of Theophilus Lindsey* (Manchester, 1920).

3 J M[c]Lachlan, 'The Scott collection: letters of Theophilus Lindsey and others to Russell Scott', *Transations of the Unitarian Historical Society* (hereafter, *T.U.H.S.*), xix, 2 (1988), 113-29.

4 G M Ditchfield, 'The Lindsey-Wyvill correspondence', *T.U.H.S.*, xx, 3 (1993), 161-76.

5 J McLachlan, 'Scott collection', 114.

Lindsey's extant, has announced a forthcoming edition of this correspondence.[6]

The annotated selection of Lindsey's correspondence presented below, is intended in part as a supplement to the author's previous work on Priestley,[7] and the reform movement of the 1790s.[8] The letters are addressed to two recipients, Robert Millar, a merchant of Dundee, and William Turner, the much revered pastor of the Unitarian Meeting at Hanover Square, in Newcastle.[9] To these leading Unitarian activists, Lindsey reported the travails of two persecuted members of their persuasion — Priestley, and the Rev.Thomas Fyshe Palmer. Fyshe Palmer, friend and disciple of Priestley, was the pastor of Millar's congregation in Dundee.[10] His sentence, in September 1793, to seven years transportation to Botany Bay, as result of his political proselytising amongst the working people of Dundee, was an instrumental factor in deciding Priestley to make his own precipitate departure from England in April 1794.[11] Lindsey's letters to Millar, who was left to take

6 G M Ditchfield, 'Theophilus Lindsey: from Anglican to Unitarian', Friends of Dr. Williams's Library Fifty First Lecture (London, 1998), 25. This edition is being prepared for the Church of England Record Society.

7 *Revolutionary in exile. The emigration of Joseph Priestley to America, 1794-1804*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 85, 2 (Philadelphia, 1995).

8 *The nation, the law and the king. Reform politics in England, 1789-1799* (2 vols., Lanham, New York, & Oxford, 2000).

9 For Turner, see H Nicholson, 'A brief account of the life and ministry of William Turner of Newcastle-upon -Tyne, 1761-1859', *T.U.H.S.*, xviii, 1 (1983), 22-32; and H Nicholson and J McLachlan, eds., 'Correspondence of Theophilus Lindsey with William Turner of Wakefield and his son, (1771-1803)', *T.U.H..S.*,xviii, 3 (1985), 152-64; H. Nicholson, 'A Unitarian vestry library', *T.U.H.S.*, xviii, 4 (1986); S Harbottle, *The Reverend William Turner. Dissent and reform in Georgian Newcastle upon Tyne* (Northern Universities Press, 1997).

10 L B Short, 'Thomas Fyshe Palmer: from Eton to Botany Bay', *T.U.H.S.*, xiii (1966), 42-9; and see the article in J O Baylen and N J Gossman, *Biographical dictionary of modern British radicals, I. 1770-1830* (Brighton, 1979).

11 Priestley to Wilkinson, 9, 25 January 1794, Warrington Public Libraries (W.P.L.); *Revolutionary in exile,* 36 and n.

charge of the Unitarians of Dundee, reflect the concern for Fyshe Palmer's considerable sufferings both before his departure, and throughout the six months' voyage to Botany Bay.[12] They also constitute a unique record of the effect of Fyshe Palmer's letters from Botany Bay, news of which was clearly quickly circulated amongst the dissenting community;[13] and they register, too, the clear confidence in his friends that Palmer would make a safe return to his native land — a fate which was not, in the event, to be his.

With regard to Priestley, Lindsey's letters to both Millar and Turner serve as a valuable corrective to the great gap created by the destruction of all his carefully numbered correspondence[14] to Priestley in America. None of his letters to his friend appears to have survived.[15] He realised very well how much Priestley depended on the receipt of his many letters and parcels, and he registers concern when it is known in England that these have gone astray. His sympathy with his friend's triumphs and travails in America is recorded; and also his hope that Priestley, too, would one day return to England.

The correspondence is testimony throughout to Lindsey's missionary zeal for the spread of Unitarianism; and, in political matters, for the implementation of peace and reform. The issue of the State Trials of 1794 is welcomed with rejoicing; the passing of the Two Acts is viewed with trepidation; and Erskine's now little known but at the time widely circulated pamphlet of 1797, defending the achievements of French republicanism, and advocating peace and reform at home, is applauded. Lindsey himself, however, professes his own moderate stance on reform: 'It

[12] T Belsham, *Memoirs of the late Rev. Theophilus Lindsey* (London, 1812), 351-7.

[13] See *Monthly Repository,* 12 (1817), 262-67, 576-7; Belsham, *Memoirs of Lindsey,* 522-5, for texts of letters. See also M Masson, 'Thomas Fyshe Palmer, a Political exile, 1793', *Scottish Historical Review*, 13 (1915-16), 162-6.

[14] See below, Lindsey to Millar, 5 October 1796.

[15] For the destruction of Priestley's correspondence, see Graham, 'Revolutionary philosopher, part one', *Enlightenment and Dissent,* 8 (1989), 48.

would not be the part of wisdom to set up for too violent a reformer and thereby hurt the cause he is desirous to promote,' he cautions Millar in December 1794.[16] In 1798, however, he writes of assisting a friend of Turner's, Thomas Bigge, by soliciting for material for the latter's periodical, *The oeconomist*, to add to the sowing of 'good seed that will spring up in this wretched country.' The suspension of Habeas Corpus he does not, he writes in 1799, expect to see lifted in his lifetime.

Lindsey's correspondence is imbued throughout with the sentiment so well expressed by Priestley to himself in 1798: 'When the times are so dark and serious with respect to nations, how can individuals expect to escape troubles.'[17] 'The times and the events of private life will often give a melancholy hue to our thoughts,' wrote Lindsey to Robert Millar in 1800.[18] He was not in the event to see either of his two exiled friends again, and it is in the words of Hannah Lindsey (who took over his correspondence after his own paralytic stroke in 1801), that their deaths, in very different circumstances, but both essentially still in exile, are recorded.[19]

1

Lindsey to Millar[20]

November 16 1793

Dear Sir,

About three weeks since or not quite so much I received a very friendly and affecting letter from our most valuable suffering

[16] See below, Lindsey to Millar, 9 December 1794.

[17] Priestley to Lindsey, 6 September 1798, J T Rutt, ed., *The theological and miscellaneous works of Joseph Priestley,* I.2, 407.

[18] See below, 12 December 1800.

[19] Fyshe Palmer died on 2 June 1802, a prisoner-of war of the Spanish, on the island of Guam, where he and his companions had been forced to land on their attempted return voyage to England. Priestley died peacefully at his house in Northumberland, Pennsylvania, on 6 February 1804.

[20] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 1.

friend Mr. Palmer,[21] in consequence of which I wrote to him, and sent him a few books which he wished for to alleviate his solitude, and a letter, in which I mentiond (sic) that myself and I was persuaded that others would be glad to send any pecuniary helps if wanted.

To this I have recd. no answer; but yesterday I had a letter from a friend in the country, acquainting me that he had heard that there were orders for our friend to be ready to depart the country at a moment's warning.

If this be so, you cannot fail to know it, and I will beg the favour of you to convey to him twenty pounds which is sent him for his kind acceptance by two of his friends, and the sum shall be repaid you immediately on your giving notice of it, either by the post, in a Bank Post Bill, or to any correspondent of yours in London.

I confess that I have some hope my friend's information is premature, as I was lately told that not only Mr. Palmer's but Mr. Muir's sentence would be mitigated, as over proportioned to their respective offences....[22]

P.S. Since writing the foregoing, the post is come in, and has brought me a letter from Mr. Palmer himself, about a matter relating to his fellowship.[23] I find with concern that he had not recd. the books I sent him by Johnson,[24] wch I shall go to inquire after. But I must beg the favour of you at all events to transmit to him the twenty pounds by a safe hand, and to let me know at the same time, that there may be no delay in returning the money to you.

[21] Lindsey almost certainly received this letter from Fyshe Palmer from the gaol in Perth, from which Fyshe Palmer was removed in November. Palmer wrote many letters to people of influence from Perth, asking them to intercede for him (Graham, *Reform politics,* 547, n.).

[22] For Thomas Muir, convicted by the Scottish courts to fourteen years in Botany Bay, for political proselytising, see C Bewley, *Muir of Huntershill* (Oxford, 1981); *Dictionary of radicals.*

[23] Fyshe Palmer had been a senior fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, and was deprived of it on his conviction.

[24] For Joseph Johnson, the bookseller of radical dissent, who was himself convicted in 1798, see G. P. Tyson, *Joseph Johnson. A liberal publisher* (Iowa City, 1979).

2

Lindsey to Millar[25]

January 13th 1794

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your friendly welcome epistle, which came in its due time, a few days ago, and tomorrow I expect by a friend to communicate its contents to Mr. Palmer. In the Morning Chronicle the 11th inst. it was said, that the King in council, had signed the warrants for his and Mr. Muir's transportation to Botany Bay: so, that it does not follow that they will be immediately sent away, and in delay there is hope.[26]

Three days since a particular friend paid a visit to both the prisoners.[27] Mr. Palmer is ever chearful, his health firm. Mr. Muir was ill in bed in a cold and fever, but would get up to see his visitors. His mind is always calm and firm, tho the bodily case will not allow him to shew such spirits. Money was pressed upon Mr. Palmer, but he declined taking any, saying that he had sufficient at present. But Mr. Muir accepted what was offerd (sic)....[28]

... Dr. Priestley is now preaching to his congregation at Hackney a series of Discourses on the evidences for the Mosaic and Christian revelations. I have seen many of them in M.S. and he intends to print them immediately and I shall take care you have a copy.[29]

... But I must not forget to tell you that a few days past Mr. Palmer sent a verbal message to me by a friend, desiring I would give my approbation to the printing of the Address of your congregation to him. To this I consented as I had that very day

[25] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 2.

[26] *Morning Chronicle,* 11 January 1794.

[27] For the many visits paid to Muir and Fyshe Palmer when on board the prison hulks at Woolwich, before their transfer to the Surprize transport, by their friends in London, see Belsham *Memoirs of Lindsey,* 352-3 and nn.; Graham, *Reform politics,* 549, 551n.

[28] For Palmer's eventual acceptance, and for details of the sum of money raised, see Belsham, Lindsey, 353 and n., 354n; Graham, *Reform politics,* 549, n.; and below, n. 44.

[29] J. Priestley, *Discourses on the evidence of revealed religion* (London, 1794).

recd. your last Letter, and I apprehend it will then make its appearance in the Morning Chronicle. I am persuaded it will do no discredit, but the contrary to your *religious* Society, as there is nothing political in it, and it may be of service to Mr. Palmer, and soften the minds of his adversaries towards him, to read the character of a truly christian pastor which is given him by those who had no idea of its being made public.

3

Lindsey to Millar[30]

27th January 1794

Dear Sir,

Having an opportunity of a frank by a friend calling at our house, I am glad to give you a sight of your Address to Mr. Palmer as printed in the Morning Chronicle,[31] which reflects much credit and honor on both parties.... I wish I was able to send you any certain good news of the mitigation of the sentence against both Mr. Muir and Mr. Palmer.[32] For the present we can only be in a state of hope. In the meanwhile, all that see the former, speak of his health as being very infirm, and inclined to be consumptive.

It has been a great satisfaction to hear from several members of the house of commons, that although on tuesday night last in the debate on the kings speech,33 there was so very large a majority with the minister and for the war, yet they never saw so heartless a majority....

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[30] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 3.

[31] *Morning Chronicle,* 13 January 1794. The Address was signed by, among others, Robert Millar, and testified to Fyshe Palmer's 'indefatigable zeal in the propagation of... religious truth,' and his 'active and extensive benevolence,' giving 'reason for the poor, the indigent, and the naked to mourn your absence ... we cannot describe those deep emotions of grief which your sufferings excite in our minds.'

[32] For accounts of attempts to have the sentences mitigated, see Graham, *Reform politics,* 550-2; A Goodwin, *The friends of liberty* (London, 1979), 290 and n.

[33] Cobbett, W., ed., *The parliamentary history of England* (London, 1813-19), (hereinafter *P.H.*), XXX, 1045-7, 1088-1287.

4

Lindsey to Turner[34]

24 March 1794

... Within the last fortnight I have received two letters from our friend on board the Surprize off Portsmouth. The first, when he complained of not being quite in health, but worse in spirits on account of the most injudicious hasty reflexion thrown out against him by Mr. Whitbread Senior in the house of Commons. But he would be consoled for this by the vindication of his character in the house some days after, in this and all respects, by Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Whitbread junr. and others.[35]

The other letter is dated monday last the 17th, in which he mentions his having a confirmed dysentery brought on by the wet and dampness of his situation, night and day, desiring me to mention his case to Dr. Blackburne, whom he had formerly consulted and ask his advice. His letter was answered by myself and Dr. Blackburne the next day, but we have heard no more, only that he continued ill. I forgot to add that in his letter, he said, that he was permitted to be in the cabin by day, and was to sleep that night in a dry place. I trust it will please the divine providence to spare him, as he is likely to be an instrument of great good in that country and goes with the most ardent dispositions to be useful in every way in his power.[36]

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[34] D.W.L. Mss., 12.44, 57.

[35] See *P.H.,* XXX. 1559, for Sheridan's and Whitbread's rebuttal of an unfortunate remark by the elder Whitbread, questioning Fyshe Palmer's sanity. Fyshe Palmer had declared to Sheridan that 'not all the severities of his unmerited fate had touched him so sensibly as this imputation'; and Whitbread bore 'testimony to the sanity of Mr. Palmer: he had seen him, known him, and had corresponded with him; he was a man of the most engaging manners, and of the most enlightened mind. The greatest proof of his fortitude, was, the undaunted and the philosophic mind with which he bore up against this unheard of oppression.'

[36] This hope of Lindsey's was to be frequently expressed while Fyshe Palmer was in exile. But cf. Palmer's letter to Rutt, shortly before he left England, declaring his intention of amusing himself in the study of natural history and chemistry: 'I am not Quixote enough to attempt reformation in religion or politics under a military government, with a halter around my

You will be glad to hear that Dr. Priestley keeps up his spirits and enjoys intire health in the midst of his great fatigue and harassings, attending the preparations for leaving the country. These however are now finished. They have evacuated their house. All his things, and Mrs. Priestley's, no less than 19 large bales are packed, and ready to be carried to the ship. They are in lodgings at Clapton (as they have sent away some of their beds) till every thing is sent off, and will then be at Mr. Vaughans in Dunster Court, Mincing Lane, Fenchurch Street.[37] Mrs. Finch is with them, but returns to her own home a day or two before they sail, which probably will be the beginning of April.[38]

You will have seen his Fast Sermon advertised...[39]

5

Lindsey to Millar[40]

April 17th 1794

Dear Sir,

A more than ordinary accumulation of business, and a reluctance to lose any moments I could spend with Dr. Priestley,

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neck'. (Fyshe Palmer to Rutt, 12 March 1794, *Monthly Repository*, 12 [1817], 576). And see below, n. 117.

[37] The Priestleys stayed with William Vaughan during their last few days in England (Rutt, I.2, 225), and he was with them on the night before sailing (*ibid.*, I.2, 229). For William Vaughan, whose support and hospitality to the Priestleys was proverbial, see *D.N.B.*

[38] Sally Finch was Priestley's eldest child, and, according to her father's account, much saddened by his departure: 'Poor Sally is most affected, as Mr. Finch seems more determined than ever not to follow us; but she hopes that circumstances may arise that will change his resolution...' (Priestley to Lindsey, 7 April 1794, Rutt, ed., I. 2. 229). For Sally Finch's consumption in 1800, after her husband's bankruptcy in 1797, see below, n. 106.

[39] J Priestley, *The present state of Europe compared with ancient prophecies; a sermon, preached at the Gravel Pit meeting in Hackney, February 28, 1794, being the day appointed for a General Fast. With a preface, containing the author's reasons for leaving England* (London, 1794).

[40] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 4.

from the time I received your last letter till he left us,[41] has prevented my writing again, and particularly answering your query about James Ellis;[42] but which however I did not wholly neglect, for I took an early opportunity of mentioning it to Mr. Palmer in my letter to him, and hope Mr. Ellis's friends have had satisfactory accounts of him. I may not omit however to add here as I am on the subject, that in several letters recd. within the last ten days from Portsmouth, one of them yesterday, James Ellis who is every day with my friend when on land is continually named with those commendations due to him for his attachment to Mr. Palmer and many valuable qualities; and I shall transcribe a paragraph out of Mr. Palmer's last letter to me, which I recd. on tuesday, which will give pleasure to all his and Mr. Ellis's friends.

'Providence, says he, has sent a young man of the name of Boston, one of general science and formerly belonging to the medical faculty. It was he who ran by night, and informed Dr. Priestley that his house would be burned. His whole time is spent among the sick and in supplying the deficencies of the government doctor. His labours are very successful. It is for him I want the books etc. He is going out Settler; and our greatest Comfort arises from the hope of living together. His experience in agriculture will be of infinite use to James Ellis, and his knowledge of the arts to all the colony.'

You see from this, that people of character are not discouraged from going voluntarily to Botany Bay, and to settle in the country. The grand objection is the distance, a six months voyage.

I will transcribe also for your satisfaction and that of others of Mr. Palmer, and Mr. Ellis's friends another paragraph of a letter from my friend at Portsmouth.[43] 'I understand, that forty pounds

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[41] For Priestley's departure, on 7 April 1794, see Graham, *Revolutionary in exile*, 35-6.

[42] For James Ellis, a Dundee working-man, befriended by Fyshe Palmer, who insisted on sharing his sentence of transportation, see L B Short, 45-9, 58.

[43] This friend, referred to on more than one occasion by Lindsey, was the Rev. Russell Scott, Unitarian Minister in Portsmouth from 1788 to 1834. Scott's efforts on behalf of the prisoners are recorded in J. McLachlan, 'The Scott collection', 113, 119-20.

each, has been paid to the Capt. out of the common stock subscribed by the friends of Liberty,[44] for Messrs. Palmer, Muir, Skirving[45], Ellis and Margarot[46], in order that they might have a proper supply of fresh provisions etc. instead of the common salt food given to convicts. For this the Capt. allows them every day... either roast or boiled beef, roast or boiled mutton etc. etc. a pint of port wine after dinner, with some bottled porter, and a proper proportion of these after supper. The provisions are good, and they have plenty of live-stock for the voyage.'

How much we feel Dr. Priestley's separation, in this house, where we comonly (sic) were happy in seeing him once or twice a week or oftener, is not to be described. For with all his other powers, he excelled eminently in the private virtues of a friend and chearful social converse. I have had two letters from him since he left us, the last in Falmouth road, and hope I shall hear no more till he gets to New York, unless a letter come by a ship they meet with by the way.[47] We trust that the Divine Providence leads him for greater good beyond the Atlantic, now he has finished all that seemed to be designed and laid out for him here. And I am glad to observe already, and others report to me the same, that people's minds begin to be softened and changed towards him, and some who were otherwise before disposed, to say, why should he have gone away: nobody would have hurt him. Mr. Johnson also notes a greater demand for his works.

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[44] The sum raised — 'a very handsome subscription'— was reported to have reached £5-£600 (Belsham, *Memoirs of Lindsey,* 353; Graham, *Reform politics,* 549, n.). For Priestley's annual subscription of five guineas for Muir and Palmer, see Priestley to Lindsey, 6 December 1795, Rutt, ed., *Works,* I. 2. 325.

45 For William Skirving, Scots reformer, and sentenced to transportation after the Edinburgh Convention of 1793, see *Biographical dictionary of radicals.*

46 For Maurice Margarot, the English reformer sentenced to transportation after his participation in the Edinburgh Convention, see *Biographical dictionary of radicals.*

[47] Priestley in fact wrote three letters to Lindsey: from Gravesend on 7 April, from Deal on 9 April, and from Falmouth on 11 April (Belsham, *Lindsey,* 376-9; Rutt ed., *Works,* I. 2. 229-31).

6

Lindsey to Millar[48]

2 May 1794

Dear Sir,

Many engagements of different kinds have hindred (sic) me from acknowledging earlier your long and friendly letter(s); several of them some way or other relating to our friend Mr. Palmer or his companions, that they might not sail away without every convenience that could be procured for them. A common friend, a minister at Portsmouth,[49] followed him with a small parcell (sic) and letter, in a boat, no less than 14 miles and was happy soon to find the Surprize amidst so many other ships on saturday afternoon last, and after staying two hours, took a final farewel (sic) as he thought, but the wind changing the whole fleet was forced to put back and has not yet sailed.

.... We seem to be driven by a strange compulsion to make ourselves principal in a war with which we have properly nothing to do, especially now the proposed object is changed from what it was at first to the settling of the interior government of the french and restoring the monarchy instead of leaving them to their own choice.... I enclose two copies of an address to Dr. Priestley50 which came since he left us. It has been reprinted here, with the little addition that you see at the end...

7

Lindsey to Turner[51]

10 June 1794

... Nothing has been known of or from Dr. Priestley since his being off Falmouth between seven and eight weeks since: but under the protection of a good providence, we persuade ourselves that he had ere this touched the American shores. And such have been the charges since, that some of his best friends, who sought to

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[48] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 5.

[49] See above, n. 43.

[50] For the many Addresses to Priestley, see Rutt, ed., *Works,* I.2, 212-22.

[51] D.W.L. Mss., 12.44, 58.

detain him here, are now glad at his departure.[52] For the prejudices against Dissenters, especially the more liberal sort, as enemies to their country because they are against the present war, are so violent, and would have been so much heightened against him, that it might have made his life unpleasant, though I hope not insecure.

8

Lindsey to Millar[53]

9 December 1794

Dear Sir,

Though I have nothing whatsoever to communicate directly to clear up the late calumny,[54] for so I will call it, of our dear and valuable friend, yet as I have received a letter from one I no less value, who lives at Portsmouth[55] and was very intimate with and serviceable both to him and James Ellis whilst the Surprize lay off that Port, which gave me some satisfaction with respect to the improbability of what is laid to his charge, I shall transcribe for you what relates to the subject. N. B. The writer had been many months from Portsmouth and had but just heard of our return to London.

'What an infamous account was lately given in one of the public papers concerning our worthy friend Palmer and the honest hearted Skirving? Whoever drew it up discovered the greatest ignorance of both their characters. For in my opinion, independent of the horrid imputation of having murdered their captain, they would be the two last men to excite or promote any insurrection or tumult on board

[52] In May 1794, Habeas Corpus was suspended, and the leading members of the English reform societies were arrested, and imprisoned in the Tower (Goodwin, *The friends of liberty,* 332ff.; Graham *Reform politics,* 605ff.).

[53] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 6.

[54] This is the first mention in this correspondence of the slanderous accusations made against Fyshe Palmer and Skirving – that they had connived in a mutinous plot against the captain, in order to gain control of the ship. See Belsham, *Lindsey,* 357, n.; Masson, 'Fyshe Palmer', 160-1; Short, 'Fyshe Palmer', 59; and *Biographical dictionary of radicals.* And for Fyshe Palmer's published refutation of them, see below, n. 88.

[55] See above, n. 43.

that * *floating hell* which imprisoned them. The whole story appears to me to outrage credulity itself; for the Suffolk, a 74 gun ship and their convoy is said to have been in company. In such a situation therefore even madmen would not have made the attempt to gain possession of the helm. Had not the Suffolk been said to be in company, I should have been inclined from the circumstances of the report to credit the existence of riot and even the attempt to get the command of the ship, but I could not even think Palmer or Skirving implicated in it.'

It will be curious if, as some think, the whole turn out to be a fiction fabricated here, not long before the late trials,[56] to increase the alarm and prejudices of the nation against the prisoners, who were associates and intimate some of them with Muir and Palmer. I congratulate you on the late verdicts of the three honest juries, who have acquitted the state prisoners, and vindicated them from the imputation of a conspiracy against the king and to overturn the constitution. The names of Erskine[57] and Gibbs[58] will be for ever to be honoured in the annals of our country, for the assistance given to them in their defence, and particularly the former, for his intrepidity, in asserting the rights of Britons, and not scrupling sometimes to go out of his way to impress it the more strongly.

An abstract of the recent trials is said to be preparing as brief as may be consistent with losing nothing of importance, and to be of as easy purchase as possible, and not less than fifty thousand copies are to be thrown off. You will be pleased to hear that these decisions of the juries appear already to have quieted the minds of many in this great city, and to have take(n) off that air of suspicion

* This alludes to some shocking scenes continually exhibited by the soldiers and men and women convicts on board

[56] The trials for High Treason brought by the government against the leading members of the London reform societies arrested in May took place in November and early December 1794 (Graham, *Reform politics in England,* 623-32).

[57] The eloquence of Thomas Erskine was instrumental in securing the acquittals of Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall, who were tried. After their acquittals, the Ministry decided not to proceed with the remaining trials.

[58] Vicary Gibbs was Erskine's chief assistant as defence counsel for the accused reformers.

and ferociousness with which they have been observed lately to have looked upon one another.

The accounts of officers and others whom we have seen within these few days arrived from the British army, all confirm the indisposition of the Dutch towards our troops and towards this country. Two thirds of them are supposed to favour the French, and should they in the issue make peace with and join them, the Stadtholder would be no more, and we in England have every thing to dread from their union.

... There is just come out a sermon, by Mr. Joyce, one of the late State prisoners, printed while he was in Newgate, with an appendix, which is one of those fugitive pieces I should be glad you could see at the time, without much trouble.[59] We know him well and esteem him, and so would you from this specimen of himself. We have taken 1/4 of a 100 to circulate. It is calculated to do much moral good, at the same time that it gratifies the curiosity of the reader respecting the writer.

Whilst a man does not himself give out any sinful compliances it seems to me that it would not be the part of wisdom to set up for too violent a reformer and thereby hurt the cause he is desirous to promote. This appears to me to be applicable to some circumstances intimated in your own situation. The *fisher* of *men* must watch the tides and the winds and adapt himself to them, to insure success.

No accounts are come from Dr. Priestley by these last Philadelphia ships which we attribute to his continuance at

[59] J Joyce, *A sermon preached on February 23 1794, by Jeremiah Joyce, twenty three weeks a close prisoner in the Tower of London, to which is added an appendix, containing an account of the author's arrest for treasonable practices; his examination before His Majesty's Privy Council; his commitment to the Tower, and subsequent treatment* (London, 1794). For Joyce, tutor to the sons of Lord Stanhope, see J. Seed, 'Jeremiah Joyce, Unitarianism, and the vicissitudes of the radical intelligentsia in the 1790s', *T.U.H.S,* xvii, 3 (1981); *Biographical dictionary of radicals.* For his publication of Fyshe Palmer's defence of his character from the accusations made against him, see below, n. 88.

Northumberland.[60] I saw a letter that came by one of them which takes no notice of the Doctor being there at the time... So alarmed are not a few at our present situation that they fear the French may pay us a visit: but may heaven avert the evil, and reform us that we may not feel such a scourge...

9

Lindsey to Millar[61]

7 February 1795

Dear Sir,

... My principal errand in writing is to inform you, that at last an authentic account is arrived, in a letter from James Ellis, of the whole affair, of which Mr. Palmer and Mr. Skirving have been accused, and have undergone much hardships and oppression. And it turns out to be intirely a false accusation, too much listened to by the Captain of the Surprize, coming from a worthless fellow, who had been much befriended by Mr. Palmer, of a mutinous intention in those two gentlemen, without any foundation whatsoever. The Letter concerning it, which I heard read, was written by a passenger in the ship who went over on some business of government, and sent to Mr. Joyce, (whose late publication62 I enclose as the frank will hold it) in the inside of which were a few words from James Ellis to Mr. Joyce, acquainting him, that he himself had sent an account of what happened to Mr. Gurney in Essex court in the Temple, and desiring that a copy of what he had sent might be communicated to some persons whom he names, and particularly he says (I took down his words) *to my Father, James Ellis, Staymaker Dundee, and tell him I never had better health in my life.*

It was dated Rio de Janeiro July 28 1794. Perhaps it might be a consolation to his father to mention this circumstance, if Mr. Joyce have not as yet apprized him of it.

[60] For Priestley's decision to remove to Northumberland, Pennsylvania, to live near the lands purchased by his sons see Graham, *Revolutionary in exile,* 60-1.

[61] D.W.L.Mss., 12.46, 7.

[62] See above, n. 59.

... no exertions can call back again to life those thousands who have perished or who are destined to perish in this fatal war, which it (is) absolutely determined by Administration is to be carried on through another campaign. When an eminent merchant who is an old friend, and I am sorry to say it, much for the war, tells me, that both we and the french must then seek for peace, and lay down our arms through mere inability to carry on the war any longer, I tell him, that his calculations may be just with respect to ourselves, but can by no means be depended upon respecting the French. Alas! humanity, christianity, all moral considerations and regard to the God and governor of the world, are laid aside....

Dr. Priestley in more than one of his letters, has expressed an earnest desire, that I could send him over a few such characters as you call out for at Dundee....[63]

I think my last told you of Dr. Priestley's having declined the offer made him of the chemical professorship in the college of Philadelphia, and of the hopes I entertained that it would still be made worth his acceptance.[64] His answer to Payne's Age of Reason, and some other lesser publications, wc. he mentions to have sent have never come.[65] If I have it in my power, and there are sufficient copies, you shall see them, when they do arrive.

10

Lindsey to Millar,[66]

19 December 1795

... Dr. Priestley's Observations on the Increase of Infidelity, which I have very lately reprinted here I shall certainly desire you

[63] For Priestley's description of America as a land ripe for the propagation of Unitarianism, and his suggestions to Belsham and Lindsey that they send out preachers, see *Revolutionary in exile*, 50; Priestley to Lindsey, 24 June, 5 July 1794, Rutt, ed., *Works*, I.2, 263-6, 268-70.

[64] For Priestley's declining of the chair of Chemistry in Philadelphia, see *Revolutionary in exile*, 64 and n.

[65] T Paine, *The Age of reason; being an investigation of true and fabulous theology (Part One)* (London, Paris, 1794); and see J Graham, 'A hitherto unpublished letter of Joseph Priestley,' *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 14 (1995), 100 and n., 101n., for Priestley's reply.

[66] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 8.

to receive from the Editor.[67] I have sent him Mr. Paine's second part of the Age of reason,[68] but it is written in such a manner, with such gross and unlearned ignorance of the subject, and with such a series of virulent abuse, that it will not be easy to make a reply to it: tho' I expect our friend will be desirous of vindicating prophets, apostles, and writers so unworthily vilified....

What a ferment has this unhappy country of ours been in since the beginning of Novr. when your letter was written, and the two fatal bills were brought in, which two days since were passed into laws, and had the royal assent by commission.[69]

The Duke of Leeds and Ld. Thurlow are said to have tried each their influence with a great personage to stop them in time, but could not succeed; though they urged that the bills were notoriously not so much for his safety, as that of his ministers.

The die however is now cast, and what will be the issue no one can tell. There certainly was a much greater opposition to the bills whilst they were pending, than the ministry expected, or others thought of, considering the suddenness of the measure and the unexampled rapidity with which it was hurried thro' the two houses.

Some bold measure also for the public at this momentous juncture is expected from the Whig Club, which meets today, by extraordinary appointment, to deliberate what is to be done, especially if their own meeting should be found to be within the restraint of these new laws.[70] Good, of the best kind, virtue and the

[67] J Priestley, *Observations on the increase of infidelity* (Northumberland, repr. London, 1796).

[68] T Paine, *The age of reason. Part the second. Being an investigation of true and of fabulous theology* (London, 1795).

69 On 6 November the Treasonable Practices Bill was introduced in the Lords; and on 10 November the Seditious Meetings Bill was introduced in the Commons. Throughout November and early December the Bills were debated in both Houses and in impassioned meetings throughout the country. The were passed into law on 18 December (J Ehrman, *The younger Pitt. The reluctant transition* (London, 1983), 455-9).

[70] For the Whig Club meeting, see Graham, *Reform politics*, 691. The Whig Club did continue to meet, and was to provide the most important forum outside the Commons for Fox's speeches against the government;

knowledge and spread of divine truth and the gospel, I have no doubt will in the end be produced by these commotions in our own and in all the countries around us. In the meantime, may we all be directed to act the right part and fill our places so as to approve ourselves to the sovereign master, who appointed them for us. You woud (sic) be pleased with Mr. Fox's reflections more than once on the injurious banishment of our friends to Botany Bay.

11

Lindsey to Millar[71]

30 May 1796

... In the Cambridge Intelligencer of Saturday last, May 28, you have a short letter of Jeremiah Joyce, introducing a letter which he recd. only 3 weeks since, from Sydney Cove, & dated Nov. 9 1794 and signed Muir, Fyshe Palmer, Skirving in vindication of themselves for having no more to do with Mr. Margarot.[72] Mr. Joyce also says he shall speedily publish a narrative he has received of the charges against Mr. Palmer and Skirving, with an acct. of their cruel unjust sufferings under them during their voyage on board the Transport.[73] We have had an account that a ship will sail to Botany Bay in a short time; but are anxious to hear of Governor Hunter's arrival there and of the state of our friends. I never remember a time when the aspect of things relating to the public created so much apprehension in all good men; and the more as they see no remedy.

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and after his secession from the Commons, became of even greater significance.

[71] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 9.

[72] *Cambridge Intelligencer*, 28 May 1796. In this letter, Muir, Skirving and Palmer declared that Margarot 'was an accessory to the wrongs' suffered by the two latter on board the Surprize; that he 'was even an instigator of their accusation, and acted in complete collusion with the master of the transport... He stands a *man rejected and expelled from our society...*'

[73] See below, n. 88.

12

Lindsey to Millar[74]

11 August 1796

... Together with your letter I had one from Dr. Priestley, and a copy of his Discourses preached and printed this spring at Philadelphia.[75] The last of these is printed and sold separately and not bound up with the others, as it contains his sentiments concerning the Divine Unity etc. which he would avoid obtruding upon those to whom they might be unacceptable. The title of the Volume is Discourses *relating* to the Evidences of Revealed Religion; of the last Discourse Unitarianism explained and defended. Mr. Belsham who you know was the principal Tutor at the college at Hackney, and Dr. Priestley's successor in the congregation there, sends me word in a letter I lately received from Birmingham;[76] that he had read this Discourse of the Doctor's from the pulpit at Hackney the Sunday before he came away, and had lent it to Mr. Edwards, Dr. Priestley's successor, who had repeted (sic) it in the Meeting there to a most crowded audience, and that the joy and delight was not to be described with which his former disciples and their families heard the words and message of their old leader. It was a word in season, and could not but have a good effect in reviving and cherishing good principles... I have not had time to look into the other discourses, but barely to read the Dedication to the Vice-president Mr. Adams, which like all his compositions of the kind, is excellently suited to the person and occasion. The Doctor's letter was from N--d, June 12, containing an acct. of his happiness in his family (tho' the wound from the loss of his youngest favourite son is not yet healed[77]) Mrs. Priestley well

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[74] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 10.

[75] J. Priestley, *Discourses relating to the evidences of revealed religion* (Philadelphia, 1796, 1797).

[76] Rev. Thomas Belsham, Lindsey's biographer, was a constant correspondent of Priestley's in America.

[77] Harry Priestley died of a fever in December 1795. He had been a student at Hackney College. In 1794-5 Priestley settled him, with his two brothers (below n. 78), on a farm near his own intended house in Northumberland. 'Harry drives his horses and cart, and works with his

and his two other sons virtuous and industrious characters —much employed in his experiments but chiefly in finishing his ecclesiastical history, intended to be carried down to the present times....[78]

13

Lindsey to Millar[79]

October 5th 1796

men, like one of them,' Priestley wrote to Lindsey (Priestley to Lindsey, 12 July 1795, Rutt, ed., *Works,* I.2, 310). 'Considering his youth, for he is not eighteen, his conduct is thought by every body to be extraordinary.' And informing Lindsey of his son's death on 17 December, he declared that: 'Had he been bred a farmer, he could not have been more assiduous than he was. He was admired by every body for his unremitting labour, as well as good judgment, in the management of his business, though only eighteen years old.... He was strictly virtuous, and was uncommonly beloved by all that worked under him; and it was always said that he was better served than any other farmer in this country' (*ibid.,* I.2. 328). For an account of the burial of Harry Priestley, see W. Bakewell, 'Some particulars of Dr. Priestley's residence at Northumberland, America (*Monthly Repository*, August 1806), 396: 'I attended the funeral to the lonely spot, and there I saw the good old father perform the service over the grave of his son. It was an affecting sight, but he went through it with great fortitude.'

[78] Joseph and William Priestley were both settled on farms in and around Northumberland by their father (*Revolutionary in exile,* 80 and nn., 81). Joseph was already married before his departure for America (see below, n. 85, for Elizabeth Ryland Priestley). William married in the winter of 1795-6, as Priestley reported to Lindsey in a passage omitted by Rutt in the letter of 17 December, cited in n. 77 (above). 'He (Harry) 'had divided his farm with William, who now takes the whole, and as he is about to be married to an amiable and sensible young woman, who has been used to the management of a farm, I hope he will do well. As to great things for my sons,' Priestley added, 'I never wished it, and their minds are well conformed to their situations, which is more than most persons expected. If by any contingency their fortunes should hereafter be improved, so as not to be under the necessity of personal labour, I hope they will be well qualified to behave with as much propriety as they do at present. But they are very happy without any such expectation' (passage omitted in Rutt).

[79] D.W.L. Mss., 12. 46, 11.

... I am happy to be able to inform you, that an opportunity offered soon after Mr. Ellis's letter for his son was left at our house, to send it to Botany Bay; and also that accounts have come thence lately and one or two months since, that things are going on much better with our friends, and that they experience much kindness and countenance from Governor Hunter: but I do not find any letter has been received from any of them the three months that we have been in the country.

I am sorry to find that peace is not a thing at all expected at present, either among the merchants or gentry, ministerial or anti-ministerial. Nor is much expected to be revealed about it when the king goes to the House tomorrow...

... I have this week recd. two letters from Dr. Priestley, which gave me the more joy as they brought an account of two out of nine letters with parcells (sic) that I had sent this year being come to his hands. Nr. 5(s) and 6 for I number them wch. gives me hope that the others may reach him in time. He himself was quite depressed, & thought something must have happened to us in hearing nothing.

I think I acquainted you with the very extraordinary attention that was paid to his Discourses this last spring, during the meeting of the congress; and the respect paid to the preacher, by a great proportion of the members of congress, and the rich and learned out of the diff. provinces. I do not wonder that the discourses were listened to so well, and approved. They form a very valuable addition to those he preached before he left England and printed, on the Evidences of christianity. Some of them appears to me equal if not superior to any thing he has written. Johnson is reprinting them,[80] and when finished I shall acquaint you and be glad to be put in way to convey them to you. I have now lying before me a letter from one of his hearers, who with some others joined in instituting a society for Xtian worship, in wch. the several members take their turning (sic) in presiding at the worship. When their nrs. increase, or when a proper Minister offers, they intend to adopt one.[81] I have

[80] J Priestley, *Discourses on the evidence of revealed religion* (London, 1796)

[81] See below, n. 83, for Priestley's report of the establishment of a Unitarian congregation in Philadelphia.

told them what you have done and the example you have set since Mr. Palmer went away from Dundee.

14

Lindsey to Millar[82]

19 November 1796

I received great pleasure from your favour of Octr. 21 ... with ... the affecting account of our friend and his sufferings under his own hand. I had heard most of the things recounted at different times and more dilated upon; but there is a singular though melancholy satisfaction in his own words to a friend, conveying the history of so horrid a plot against his life and reputation, without any undue passion or resentment against the vile agents employed in it. The account of this transaction, which he mentions in this letter to have been sent over by him, with a view of having it published; and also a subsequent account, sent off after the former, under the apprehension of that being lost; have both of them come safe, and that last received has been for some time in the hands of a Printer, and expected to be made public: but I am disposed to believe that the delay has been and is occasioned by the apprehension of exciting powerful enmities and adding to the load that already lies so heavy on innocent men: a danger, which you very wisely wish we should guard against, and you may depend upon my attention to it. But I shall take the liberty to keep our friends letter a little longer in my possession, as there are some persons not yet come to Town, whom I should be glad to gratify with a sight of it. And perhaps I may take the liberty to shew it to those who have in hand the publication of the case (at whatever time it may come out) if it can be of any assistance to them....

... You have a claim on account of your own efforts, and will be delighted with the account of his similar society, which I this very day since I began my letter have recd. from Dr. Priestley, dated Septr 15....[83]

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[82] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 12.

[83] For the establishment of the Unitarian congregation in Philadelphia, see *Revolutionary in exile,* 88 and n. Priestley's letter, from which

But alas! how uncertain are human things! Another letter is brought in from Dr. Priestley, written but 5 days after the former, in which he acquaints me that that very day Mrs. Priestley was to be buried.[84] At the close of the other he mentioned her having had a slight feverish indisposition , but was growing better; but soon after the disorder took an unfavourable turn. She had never recovered her wonted spirits after the loss of their youngest son nine months before. You would be greatly edified with the manner in which he speaks of this sad event, and the sudden unexpected dissolution of such an intimate union and friendship of 34 years duration; supported by the sure prospect of meeting again hereafter with all we loved and valued here. Happy is it for him, that he is not alone in that distant country to sustain the shock: but has two sons, both happily married and settled near him, so near as to be part of the congregation that are his weekly hearers. With his eldest son, who has only one child, and daughter in law, a very amiable sensible character,[85] I should imagine he will live; as he has no more idea of taking care of and providing for a family than a child. The late Mrs.

Lindsey quotes, is dated by Rutt, 11 September 1796 (Rutt ed., *Works,* I.2, 352-3). This letter is not in the collection at D.W.L.

[84] For Mrs. Priestley's untimely death, see *Revolutionary in exile,* 94 and n.; and also the letter of 19 September referred to in the text above, in Rutt ed., *Works,* I.2, 354. From this Rutt omitted much of the following passage: 'We were not, however, very seriously alarmed till the last day about noon, when there was a great change for the worse. She had, to appearance, suffered very much at some times, but died at last without any symptom of being in pain. William's wife, a most agreeable and excellent woman, and also a sister of hers, were with my wife almost all the time of her illness, and Joseph's wife was never long from her, so that every thing was done that we could think of for her relief.' Priestley also wrote, in another passage excised by Rutt, of his new house, planned by his wife: 'As it will be made very convenient for *me,* as well as for family uses, I shall live in it, and Joseph will live with me. For I am not capable of managing a house; my wife having taken all care of that kind to herself, so that I always said I was only a lodger in her house, and I could, without anxiety, give my whole time to my pursuits, which has been a singular happiness.'

[85] For Elizabeth Ryland Priestley, see J. Duprée Begos, *Joseph Priestley's feminist legacy* (Friends of Joseph Priestley House), 3-5.

P. was every thing to him that he could want, with a strong, well-cultivated virtuous mind, in a comely form, seemingly built for a longer duration....[86]

15

Lindsey to Millar[87]

21 February 1797

Dear Sir,

I begin to think it an age since I heard from you I trust you have received the Vol. of Dr. Priestley's Sermons and Mr Palmer's narrative of his horrid sufferings, which Mr. Johnson long ago engaged to get conveyed to you.[88] Within these 3 weeks past I have received two letters from our friend at B. B. The first recd., dated December 1795, the other brought only this day by the post, though dated 3 months before the other.[89] In both he speaks of the

[86] For a valuable account of Mary Priestley, see J. M[c]Lachlan, 'Mary Priestley: A woman of character,' in A T Schwartz and J G McEvoy, eds., *Motion towards perfection: The achievement of Joseph Priestley,* 251-64. Early in 1797 Priestley wrote of his gratification at the accounts sent him by Mrs. Galton and Mrs. Lindsey of his wife. He wrote again of his great sense of loss, 'and yet,' he added, in a passage wholly omitted by Rutt, 'she had not that sense of the great value of Christianity, and especially of christian ordinances, that I have. She would have been much happier if she had; but she attained the *end,* the most benevolent and disinterested disposition I ever knew, with but little of the means. She had to the last the most rooted aversion to my preaching, or doing any thing in the way of my profession; so that I had more difficulty on that account than you can well conceive. With all this, she had more of the true spirit of Xty than most persons I have ever known, and never lost sight of a future state of existence' (Priestley to Lindsey, 20 February 1797, D.W.L. Mss.).

[87] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 14.

[88] J Joyce ed., T F Palmer, *A narrative of the sufferings of T. F. Palmer and W. Skirving, during a voyage to New South Wales, 1794, on board the Surprise transport* (London, 1797).

[89] This letter, 15 September 1795, is reproduced by Belsham, in *Memoirs of Lindsey,* 522-5. In it, Palmer thanks Lindsey for a 'letter and parcel of books,' which had arrived safely. He describes his sufferings on board the Surprise, and the state of the colony at Botany Bay. He rejoices to hear of Priestley's reception in America, and he thanks his London friends for

delightfulness of the climate, and the health of all our friends, and the general plenty procured by their own industry, with some few drawbacks however to their happiness from the state of the country, which they hoped time wd. alleviate if not intirely remove. In both letters he speaks of the probability of their being recalled to their native country, and their sentence reversed; in the last, in so sanguine a strain as to look forward to shake hands with his friends probably before his letter was received. To this hope they were led by some letters written to them, but principally from some Newspapers sent them, of what stamp I cannot conjecture, for there has been no just ground for any such information. The reason of the two letters being such a long time in arriving, was the vessel that brought them going round by the East Indies Home.

As you will be pleased with a sample of the chearful happy disposition of your old Pastor in his exile, I shall transcribe a paragraph from the beginning of his letter.

'I have nothing material to say but that we have received two pounds of tea and three loaves of sugar each, with the Newspapers and several pamphlets. All of us enjoy good health as every one does in this climate. My eyes are a good deal better, wch. I attribute to bathing them with Port wine. You cannot expect news from a desart (sic) very interesting. The wheat is now getting in (Decr. 20) in excellent weather and is very plentiful. I believe the land in general greatly to exceed in fertility European soil. Word is sent home, I hear, that there is no occasion to send out any more flour: indeed with the least management and honesty it might not only be independent but abundant in the sustenance of human life.... '

There is a report in London, which gains credit, that Mr. Muir whose confinement was for 14 years has been enabled to make his escape by means of an American vessel that touched at the Bay. And I perceived it was given in the Cambridge Intelligencer of Saturday last.[90] Our friends look only for deliverance from the

sending him the latest political news. He describes how he, Muir and Skirving 'live in great cordiality; our houses at Sydney are contiguous, as also our farms in the country.'

[90] *Cambridge Intelligencer,* 18 February 1797; and see also *Morning Chronicle,* 13 February 1797. The report was from Thomas Hardy, who had received a letter from Margarot, dated 1 March 1796, stating that 'Mr.

justice of their country, or after having satisfied the law, and happily one half the period of their confinement is over.

I had a letter from Dr. Priestley dated in December last from Northumberland a little before his setting out to pass the winter at Philadelphia, as he had lost one that used to make his abode there pleasant and comfortable, not to return till he had preachd (sic) his promised Discourses before the congress, which will not be till May. Of those Discourses he has given me the subjects and heads, and they promise to be very original and most highly useful, still, as I might have intimated to you before, on the evidences of Christianity, but more indirectly.[91] I trust and believe, that he has an appointment on that Continent from heaven for the defence and propagation of the gospel, of that pure and holy and benevolent doctrine which our great mentor taught and exemplified, consisting in constant energies to promote the present and future happiness of our fellow creatures, on the largest scale.

You would see in the public papers that Dr. Priestley was a candidate for the Chaplainship to the Congress.[92] I have since heard, that he was put upon the lists by a friend without his privity, and I am not certain he would not be displeased at it, tho' the minority he was in, 27 against 34, voting for so notorious an heretic, was no disparagement to him.

I presume you must have seen Mr. Erskine's view of the causes and consequences of the war.[93] As I know him a little and most highly esteem, it is a pleasure to see and to hear with what avidity

Muir has found means to escape hence on board an American vessel, which put in here under pretence of wanting wood and water... it was reported she came in here for as many of us as chose to go...' For details of Muir's escape, see C. Bewley, 131ff.

[91] J. Priestley, *Discourses relating to the evidences of revealed religion* (Philadelphia, 1796, 1797).

[92] This is the only reference in Priestley's and Lindsey's correspondence, known to the author, of this brief episode in Priestley's life in America.

[93] T Erskine, *A view of the causes and consequences of the present war with France* (London, 1797). The *Morning Chronicle* reported, on 18 February 1797, the popularity of Erskine's pamphlet — its 'circulation... beyond all example in rapidity and extent. It has come to the tenth edition on the seventh day of its publication....'

and approbation of foe as well as friend, this pamphlet is read and most widely circulated. All agree that if our country is to be saved, it is only by a retrograde contrary course to that most fatal one of the present minister which he has traced out with such admirible (sic) temper, candor and truth. As no one has had a greater hand in the measures that have brought us to this wretched pass than Mr. Dundas, if it be true that that gentleman's state of health will not permit him any longer to take an active part, without the help of so able a collegue (sic) the minister will find it difficult to go on.

16

Lindsey to Millar[94]

3 March 1797

You talked in your last of the cloud around you being impenetrably thick. So dark a day in London, or one in which all faces were so full of consternation I never beheld, as Monday last; when it was first known that the payment of bills in cash was stopt at the Bank by a requisition of the Privy Council;[95] requiring the Bank to do that for the doing of which the Bank might be prosecuted at common law, as the Duke of Grafton told the Secretary Ld Grenville, on the evening of the same day, in the debate upon it in the House of Lords. The matter is now at issue in the House of Commons. The house has plainly lost its confidence in the minister, as an observant member tells me; but if by places and pensions and promises and the incalculable influence he has in his power, he be able to keep his majorities, as he still appears to do, though some few have fallen off, and if he succeed in the Parliament establishing Paper to be a legal tender, all is over with Britain, the security of its property and liberties. Some not weak or superstitious men, think that the credit of the country is utterly gone by this fatal blow given to it.

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[94] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 15.

[95] For the suspension of cash payments by the bank of England, see J Ehrman, *The younger Pitt. The consuming struggle* (London, 1996), 5-12.

17

Lindsey to Turner[96]

2 July 1798

... very recent relations of Dr. Priestley's good looks and good spirits are come over by a gentleman who had seen him not more than six weeks ago at Northumberland.

... I mentioned to your most valuable neighbour Bigge,[97] that I had hope(d) an ingenious friend who had promised, would enable me to supply him with some little pieces for his public-spirited useful design; and hope he is sowing good seed that will spring up in this wretched country, where there is such an universal dearth of all sense of liberty and good principle.

18

Lindsey to Turner[98]

1 April 1799

... I confess myself somewhat awkward and ashamed when looking towards the Banks of the Tyne, not only for remissness towards yourself, but for not acknowledging as I ought the very great civilities I received some time since from Mr. Bigge, particularly when I once intimated what I thought I could have been able to perform, in furnishing with some aid towards carrying on the Economist. But, my aids, whose names I would mention to you only, Mrs. Jebb,[99] and Mr. Wm. Belsham[100] failed me. Both greatly equal to the work....

His and Dr. Fenwicks judgment concerning the obnoxiousness of Mr. Wyvill's pamphlet on the Secession, has been confirmed by no

[96] D.W.L. Mss., 12.44, 60.

[97] Thomas Bigge, friend and political ally of Christopher Wyvill, was the editor of *The Oeconomist,* a periodical strongly advocating measures for peace and reform (below, n. 98).

[98] D.W.L. Mss., 12.44, 61.

[99] For Ann Jebb, widow of the reformer John Jebb, see *D.N.B.,* under her husband's entry.

[100] For William Belsham, brother of Thomas Belsham, see *D.N.B.*

reputable bookseller venturing to undertake the publication.[101] Johnson's fate deters them all, added to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, which I do not expect to see removed whilst I remain in the land of the living.[102]

... Within not many days I received a letter from Dr. Priestley, brought as I find by his eldest son, who sent it me by the post, and is gone to see his wife's father and mother and his sister at Birmingham. The Doctor's letter bespeaks him (in) good health and spirits: referring much to his Son for such particulars as he did not put on paper concerning himself.

19

Lindsey to Millar[103]

7 January 1800

... One has just causes of fear that greater calamities may be coming upon these nations than those, with which we are now visited, but I trust a kind providence will preserve you from being much involved in them. And I find the stoutest begin to entertain gloomy apprehensions from the particulars that were given to us in the different news-papers of yesterday as authentic, that, in answer to the overtures for peace sent over by the French Consul Buonaparte for a peace, in his letter to the king, and another letter from one in the Government to Lord Grenville, it is signified to him that we were not disposed to accept any terms or make any treaty but with the king of France meaning Louis XVIII, whence it is concluded that our expedition to the coast of France will not be given up.[104] But, no more of these matters, which I have involuntarily and undesignedly dropped into.

[101] C Wyvill, *The secession from parliament vindicated* (York, 1799).

[102] Johnson was sentenced in 1799 to nine months' imprisonment and a fine of £50 for the publication of a particularly outspoken pamphlet by Gilbert Wakefield.

[103] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 17.

[104] For Buonaparte's peace overtures, and the English Ministry's negative response, see J Ehrman, *Pitt. The consuming struggle,* 332ff.

Dr. Priestley's son, who came over with Dr. Ross,[105] is still detained by his attendance on his sister,[106] who is under Dr. Beddoes'[107] immediate care at Clifton near Bristol, and is enabled to live with comfort and a prospect of becoming well in time in a Cow house. It is expected that by the month of June the cure will be perfected. We are all much concerned for Dr. Priestley, from having received accounts of all the ships, in number 7, in which all the letters, books and parcells (sic) sent him for these last four months have been taken by the French, so that he will be quite in the dark about his son's detention in England and about all his friends unless he should get some knowledge by other friends, or by incidental means that we know not of.

None of Mr. Fyshe Palmer's friends here have lately had any communications from him. And we should be glad to know when you next write, if any thing has come to your knowledge by the way of James Ellis's friends. We think the present year will terminate his exile, and that he will probably be looking towards his native country.

20

Lindsey to Millar[108]

24 April 1800

[105] For Dr. Ross, who provided Priestley with books on the religion of the Hindus, see Rutt, I.2, 380.

[106] Sally Finch developed consumption almost certainly in 1799. (Priestley to Lindsey, 9 January 1800, Rutt, I.2, 424: 'Your account of my daughter's illness affects me much. So few recover from consumption...'). Sally's husband, Mr. Finch, had been declared a bankrupt in 1797, and throughout 1797 and 1798 her father's letters are full of anxiety for her situation (almost all the passages excised by Rutt, and one letter, 14 September 1797, D.W.L., omitted altogether).

[107] For Thomas Beddoes, physician and founder of the Pneumatic Institute in Bristol, see *D.N.B.;* R. Porter, *Doctor of society. Thomas Beddoes and the sick trade in late-enlightenment England* (London and New York, 1992); D A Stansfield, *Thomas Beddoes M. D. 1760-1808. Chemist, physician, democrat* (Boston, 1984).

[108] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 19.

I persuade myself that you have acted most prudently, on not spreading the report you heard of our Friends being on his return to England, as from circumstances it does not appear to be in way probable. In the latter end of May, the same year, 1799, I and several others received letters then written by him, in which he, to our surprise, makes no mention whatever of his coming back, tho' the time was approaching when he might naturally talk of it, and on the contrary complained of the neglect of his friends, and speaks of many books and various other things which he desires may be sent to him. So that unless some sudden impulse had seized him, on letters recd from his relations, for we are by no means certain of his having had intelligence of his brother's death, and of the fortune bequeathed him, the thing is hardly credible...

Since I last wrote to you Mrs. Finch has been worse and better again: but the last act. I had from Mr. J. Priestley was that Dr. Beddoes had declared that his sister might bear a voyage to America, and be much benefited by it; upon wch. he offers to take her along with him- but he cannot prevail with Mr. Finch to go or to allow her to go without him: so that probably Mr. Priestley will set out on the voyage himself soon, tho' with great concern not to leave his sister as he wish'd and had laboured to restore her health.[109]

21

Lindsey to Millar[110]

30 June 1800

Since I last wrote and sent Dr. Priestley's book for your obliging acceptance by Capt. Ross, Mr. Joseph Priestley has sailed for America, having had the satisfaction of leaving his sister Mrs. Finch so much amended in her health as to be encouraged by Dr. Beddoes to take a journey into Wales with a friend: We have not

[109] For Priestley's reaction to his son-in-law's behaviour, see his letter to Lindsey, 19 June 1800, D.W.L., passage omitted in Rutt: 'We are anxious about the return of Joseph, and much shocked at his account of the behaviour of Mr. Finch.'

[110] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 21.

since had any accounts of her, but if she had experienced any reverse, it would certainly have reached us...

I have also of late, once and again had letters from Dr. Priestley, the last of so late a date as May 8th which contains the best account of his health and happiness in his pursuits of philosophy and theological studies, and his desire to see his friends in England if peace would but come that he might make the journey safely; but under apprehensions that this blessed moment was still far distant. He mentions also that Mr. Cooper had been prosecuted for some writings which were deemed libellous, against the president, and condemned to an imprisonment for 6 months, and a fine of 400 dollars.[111]

I must tell you however that we have entertained hopes, since a confirmation has arrived of Buonaparte's great successes in Italy[112] and Moreau's in Germany, that the Emperor will find himself necessitated to make peace with the French, and the more as Prince Charles and many others have been from the first against the present war. The stocks certainly have risen within these last few days, and it is ascribed to the expectation of peace...

We have had no tidings of late from Botany Bay...

22

Lindsey to Millar[113]

7 July 1800

... The report of Dr. P. and all his family having lately been poisoned, may probably have reached you; and certainly something of the kind did take place, whether by some poisonous herb being boiled by mistake or from the copper vessel that was made use of, is uncertain; but the Letter, which I saw, and wh. was sent by Mr.

[111] For Thomas Cooper, the English political activist who accompanied Priestley into exile, see D. Malone, *The public life of Thomas Cooper (1783-1839)* (New Haven, Conn., 1926); and also *Revolutionary in exile.*

[112] For Buonaparte's campaign in Italy in May and June of 1800, and his victory over the Austrians at Marengo, see Ehrman, *Pitt. The consuming struggle,* 360-2. The news reached London on 24 June.

[113] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 23.

John Vaughan,[114] of Philadelphia to his brother Mr. W. Vaughan here, which brought an account of the accident, mentioned that by the use of Emetics etc. they were out of all danger....[115]

23

Lindsey to Millar[116]

13 November 1800

... I do not find that any of my friends, who are in the habit of hearing most frequently from him, have lately received any letter from Mr. Palmer, at which they rather wonder; but a friend of ours, only a week ago, met with a gentleman who had just come from Botany Bay, who, at the house where he met him, was giving a most favourable account of Mr. Palmer; that he was in health and spirits; had a good brick house of his own, sashed; a large farm in fine cultivation; a sloop ready to sail to Norfolk island or wherever necessary for articles of food or ?traffics; that he is upon the best terms with the gentlemen who govern the settlement, and that it is in a very improving state; but he did not intimate any intention to return. So far we were glad to get, though it was only so general information: but should have been glad to have inquired how Mr. James Ellis and particularly whether Mr. Palmer had found any means of teaching the knowledge of the one true God, and of his goodness to mankind by Jesus christ. If I should learn any thing of these things, or any thing further of him, you shall be acquainted.[117]

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[114] For John Vaughan, see *Revolutionary in exile,* 22 and n.

[115] For an account of this episode, see below, n.119.

[116] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 23.

[117] It seems unlikely, as L B Short, 'Fyshe Palmer,' points out, that Palmer did engage in missionary activity at all during his exile in Botany Bay. Not once, in his letters to Lindsey, Disney, or Rutt, does Fyshe Palmer speak of any activities in religious proselytising. And see above, n. 36. For an account of his potentially extremely profitable traffic to Norfolk Island, see Palmer to Rutt, 10 September 1799, *Monthly Repository*, 12 (1817), 267.

24

Lindsey to Millar[118]

12 December 1800

... The times and the events of private life will often give a melancholy hue to our thoughts....

I shall ... transcribe a part of a letter I yesterday recd. from Dr. Priestley, because I think it will minister satisfaction to that worthy person as well as to yourself. I preface it with mentioning that the Doctor is not only well in health but in some degree of cheerful spirits not withstanding a very great trial he has experienced some month(s) since from the behaviour of his youngest son, William, an ugly affair, of which the less is said the better.[119]

[118] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 24.

[119] The last, and possible the worst, of the many family trials endured by Priestley in America, was first reported in the local newspapers in April 1800, when it was alleged by an anonymous correspondent that William Priestley had attempted to poison the family by putting arsenic in the meal chest (F W Gibbs, *Joseph Priestley. Adventurer in science and champion of truth* [London, 1965], 240). By July, news of the near disaster had reached England, with much suspicion about the role of William Priestley and, in particular, his wife (although see above, Lindsey to Turner, 7 July 1800, where neither is mentioned. Cf. Lindsey to Belsham, 17, 31 July, 18 August, 15 September 1800, D.W.L. Mss., 12.57, 16, 17, 19, 21). In June, both William Priestley and his father felt it necessary publicly to deny the allegations (Gibbs, 240); and William Priestley did leave Northumberland at this time. His father's correspondence throughout the latter part of 1799 and in 1800 had been heavy with anxiety about his son's debts, and the now unsatisfactory behaviour of his wife. In September 1799, in a passage almost wholly omitted by Rutt, he had unburdened himself to Lindsey: 'it relieves my mind a little to open it to such a friend as you. Wm's wife appeared at first of a meek and placid temper, and we were all much pleased with her; but she has a long time appeared to be envious, jealous and malignant to an extraordinary degree towards Joseph's wife, and has so drawn her husband into her views, that we are at open variance. The women never see one another, and I see him very seldom. As Wm has written to his sister to complain of Joseph, I shall send her copies of all the letters that have passed on the occasion, and if you chuse you may see them. He manages his farm very ill, and what will be the end of the business, I cannot tell....' (Priestley to Lindsey, 12 September 1799,

He however enjoys a constant calm and happiness, by being able to be constantly and usefully employed and by looking always beyond the present scene of things... I find he intends to pass the present winter together with his son Joseph and his family in

D.W.L. Mss.; and see also same to same, 9, 16 January 1800, *ibid.*, with passages similarly omitted by Rutt). In August 1800, almost certainly, Priestley gave Lindsey some account of the whole affair, in which William Priestley undoubtedly was a guilty party. The end portion of his letter of 13 August 1800 has been completely torn out. In his succeeding letter, 16 October 1800, Priestley writes: 'In my last I gave you some hints of the afflicting story of my son Wm. This was a deep wound; but the belief that the hand of God is in every thing makes it easier to me. He is gone to seek a settlement on the Ohio. He has the greatest concern for his wife and children. This, indeed, was that which overpowered every other consideration; and it is a seed of *good* which may ripen to something better. I feel more of compassion than of resentment, and hope that his uncle will not abandon him. He is worth saving, and may yet be an useful member of society. I cannot help feeling as a father' (passage wholly omitted in Rutt). To Wilkinson in December he wrote similarly: 'He is gone to seek a settlement in the Western territory, and I do not expect, or wish, to see him any more; but I shall continue to write to him, and give him my best advice....' (Priestley to Wilkinson, 15 December 1800, W.P.L. Mss). The most conclusive piece of evidence on what has recently been described as 'a domestic scandal that has never been explained' (*P.M.H.B.*, July 1996, 263), comes in a hitherto unpublished letter of Thomas Cooper, of February 1801, writing to James Watt, Junior in England: 'You have probably heard of the most wicked attempt of W. P. to poison the family, from a jealousy of Joseph's influence with the Doctor. An influence never exerted but to do good to his brother & Sister at his own Expence. For a more purely honest and more generous Man than Joseph Priestley I have never known; and in every disinterested act of kindness toward others he is fully seconded by his wife. William will settle somewhere or other upon the Ohio or the Mississippi: the further he removes from the haunts of men the better. My second son who lives with the Doctor, narrowly escaped the fate of the family. There is no doubt of the substance employed being Arsenic. William has pretended to compunction of conscience, & Joseph has behaved to him with a degree of prudent considerate & generous forgiveness that ought to render the other eternally bound to pray for him if he had no religion before.' (T Cooper to J Watt, Junior, 1 February 1801, B.C.A.)

Philadelphia, where some farther opportunities of usefulness seem to be opening to him, and prejudices wearing away....

25

Lindsey to Millar[120]

16 June 1801

... I am sorry to acquaint you that I this day was informed by a friend who dined two days ago with a gentleman in constant correspondence with many persons at Botany Bay, who related that he was assured that Mr. Palmer not only was a great Brewer, but also retailed the Liquor himself, not in a very creditable way.121 Some other disparaging circumstances about him were also mentioned. But tho' I fear the report is true, it may be as well not to propagate it. Only I would not conceal it from you. Nothing whatsoever was said of Mr. James Ellis....

You will rejoice in knowing that I have had a letter from Dr. Priestley under his own hand, that he was perfectly recovered from his dangerous illness[122]... he adds the increasing satisfaction that

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[120] D. W. L. Mss., 12.46, 29.

[121] This report is discussed by L B Short, 'Fyshe Palmer,' 59-60. Short remarks only briefly, and does not quote, from the countervailing testimony as to Fyshe Palmer's character, from some officers who had visited the colony, in a further letter in the Millar correspondence (30 July 1801, below). It is true that, as Short points out, Palmer had openly written, in his published *Narrative* (which Lindsey cannot fail to have read) of trading in rum on the voyage to New South Wales (*Narrative of sufferings,* 41). He also wrote quite openly to J T Rutt (10 September 1799, *Monthly Repository*, 12 [1817], 267) that he had been engaged in brewing as well as farming. Whether this report, of which Lindsey must surely also have been eventually apprised, amounts to Fyshe Palmer being a 'publican,' and behaving 'not in a very creditable way,' seems a moot point. The testimony of the officers, in the second letter, below, even if they wrongly denied Fyshe Palmer's involvement in brewing, seems hard to deny.

[122] For an account of Priestley's nearly fatal illness in Philadelphia in March 1801, see Rutt ed., *Works,* I.2, 455, n.

Mr. Jefferson gives to all parties by his wisdom and moderation in his new office.[123]

26

Lindsey to Millar[124]

30 July 1801

You will have pleasure in reading and I no less in transcribing for you, a letter I lately received from a friend at Portsmouth dated the 25th. ins.

'On Monday last I was on board the Buffalo, a sloop of war which was in dock for some repairs, to examine some birds from New South Wales. As I was leaving the ship a gentleman of the yard who was on board, informed me that the man to whom the birds were intrusted had been a convict, and was from Port Jackson. I went to him and interrogated him respecting his knowledge of Mr. Palmer, and whether he left him at the settlement when he came away? Two of the officers of the ship hearing me very politely came forward and gave me every information I wished, which I take the earliest opportunity of transmitting to you. These gentlemen spoke of Mr. Palmer in the highest terms of approbation and respect, and assured me of his being in great estimation with governor Hunter. The report of his being a Brewer and a publican is without the least foundation;[125] the officers appeared indignant at such a report and said repeatedly, that never while they were at the settlement, nor before that, had they heard of his having acted in any manner, or in any capacity, that could possibly demean him as a gentleman; and that there was not a better bred man nor a person who conducted himself more like a gentleman thro' the whole colony.... I saw also a person on board the Buffalo, who had been in the colony for a considerable time and confirmed the whole of

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[123] For the bond of political friendship, and the mutual admiration between Priestley and Jefferson, see *Revolutionary in exile,* 149 ff.

[124] D.W.L. Mss., 12.46, 30.

[125] This statement appears to have been factually inaccurate (see above, n. 121). The general tenor of the officers' report, however, it seems hard to disbelieve.

what was told me by the officers. This person had built a vessel called the Matthew, of about 200 tons, I think he said, for Mr. Palmer, which was employed in procuring skins and conveying them to China. Mr. Palmer has had another ship built, which is called the Plumer, of 300 tons, commanded by a person of the name of Reed. In this ship Mr. Palmer, James Ellis, Mr. and Mrs. Boston and their children are on their passage to England. The Plumer was taking in her ballast when the Buffalo left Port Jackson, and the officers told me they supposed she must be ready to sail in a month or six weeks at the furthest after them. The Plumer was to touch at the Cape to dispose of part of her cargo, and thence to proceed to Europe: so that, in a few weeks we may expect to hear of or to see the living part of her cargo.'

You may rest assured, my good friend, that I shall diligently inquire after Mr. Palmer's arrival and shd. I be in London at the time should be anxious to see him and have pleasure in communicating all I see and learn to you. That he has been highly serviceable in civilizing and advancing the welfare of that country one can have no doubt, and will thereby become its great benefactor. That he has endeavoured to spread among them the knowledge of the one true God and the light of the divine truth of the gospel, I should be overjoyed to find....

Jenny Graham
Lucy Cavendish College
Cambridge

ELEVEN NEWLY-DISCOVERED LETTERS OF THEOPHILUS LINDSEY

Boyd Stanley Schlenther

The letters here published for the first time offer revealing glimpses of the developing thought of a Church of England clergyman who later was to become one of the chief founders of English Unitarianism. Theophilus Lindsey was born in Cheshire in 1723. Before her marriage, his mother had resided in the family of her distant relation, Frances, Countess of Huntingdon; indeed, Lindsey was named after Frances's son: his godfather, Theophilus, 9th Earl of Huntingdon. With the support of the Earl's sisters, Lindsey received advanced schooling under Thomas Barnard at the Leeds Grammar School and then went up to St John's College, Cambridge. Lindsey was ordained Deacon in 1746 and Priest in 1747; following two parish appointments, he was in 1756 presented to the living of Piddletown, Dorset, by Francis, 10th Earl of Huntingdon, who had appointed him one of his personal chaplains shortly after Lindsey's ordination as Deacon.

Letters 1 to 8 cover the period from October 1757 to April 1759. There is then a gap of four and a half years before the next, although it is clear that there had been at least some correspondence during that period. All the present letters were written from either Brighton or London, except for letter 8 (Piddletown) and letter 11 (Dublin). Throughout, Lindsey displayed an attitude of respectful deference towards his noble correspondent, Lord John Rawdon/ Moira, a deference *de rigueur* for the time, and carefully described visits to noble seats [letter 2]. He also fulfilled the typical clerical reporting of current political events [letters 9 and 10], as well as focusing on military operations against France [letters 1 and 3]. In the early letters he kept the Rawdons informed of the deteriorating health of Lady Rawdon's youngest brother, Henry; and it fell to Lindsey to write to inform them of Henry's death [letter 6].

Letter 11 is actually the first chronologically, dated 9 September [1757]. This gives the first evidence that Lindsey had visited Ireland. There, he had stayed with Lord and Lady Rawdon. (In 1762, during the course of this correspondence, Rawdon was

created the first Earl of Moira in the Irish peerage.) Elizabeth, Lady Rawdon, was the elder daughter of the Countess of Huntingdon. Lady Huntingdon had already emerged as a conspicuous leader of Calvinistic Methodism in England, the patron of her personal chaplain, George Whitefield. Her zealous attachment to religious enthusiasm had driven a deep wedge between her and Elizabeth. Unnerved by her mother's erratic religious temperament, early in 1752 Elizabeth had married Rawdon, a distant Irish relation. Now in charge of over thirty servants, she lived permanently in Ireland and apparently never again saw Lady Huntingdon. In a blatant rejection of her mother's principles, from her Dublin home, Moira House, Elizabeth became a focus of social life, staging remarkably elaborate costume balls. From the distance of this Irish retreat, she continued to view her mother with an irritable eye. Especially painful was Elizabeth Rawdon's separation from her beloved younger sister, Selina; indeed, the two had to correspond surreptitiously to avoid their mother's ire, and Lindsey hints at Lady Huntingdon's violent temper and passionate personality [letter 5]. Only once was the sisters' separation broken, when through the intervention of her elder son Francis, Lord Huntingdon, the Countess was browbeaten into allowing Selina to visit Ireland, where she arrived in the summer of 1757, just on the eve of Lindsey's visit [letter 1].

The fervently anti-Roman Catholic Lady Huntingdon was doubtless thoroughly shocked by her erstwhile elder daughter's increasingly active support for Catholic emancipation in Ireland. In fact, as a leader of Irish society, Elizabeth went on to take an active – even dangerous – part in attempting to apply her Whiggish political principles to the aiding of starving Irish peasants. It is worth wondering if Lindsey had had some influence with her on this matter. In any case, he believed – undoubtedly correctly – that Elizabeth was of a more 'catholic' spirit than any other member of her family [letter 7]. He was deeply disturbed by the virulent anti-Roman Catholicism he had observed in Ireland during his 1757 visit. 'I never loved the zeal against papists wch. I observed on your side the water. I wd. Rather be a poor deluded, nay besotted Papist, than a Protestant & the subject of such wrathful &

malevolent tempers' [letter 2]. In this letter he went on to develop his thought regarding religious toleration, stating that when Christianity is mixed with politics it is invariably corrupted. 'I never wish to see Parliaments meddle wh. Matters of religion as it referrs to men's private consciences.' He later expanded these thoughts by stating that he would 'not tamely give up any capital truth' of which he had been 'persuaded upon mature grounds. But I wd. not force it upon others by any other weapons than those of gentle persuasion & argument.' If this persuasion failed, he would commit them to God and 'leave them in the freedom & liberty wch. I claimed for myself. This is that latitude of opinion, & liberty of acting wh. I think is every Man, not to say every Christian Man & Woman's birth-right' [letter 7].

Lindsey had little hesitation in sharing his theological doubts with members of the Rawdon/Moira and Huntingdon families, even though he frequently encountered their displeasure for so doing. 'Your Lordship knows full well what a sad Heretic I am, as I used to talk very openly to you' [letter 5]. As early as 1755 he had been confidentially admitting in a series of letters to Lady Huntingdon his unease regarding certain of the doctrinal positions set forth in the Thirty-Nine Articles. In fact, he had revealed to her that he was in serious personal turmoil, considering himself totally dishonest when at his ordination he had, against his conscience, taken oaths to conform to the liturgy and doctrine of the Church of England – not least because he rejected any notion of a legally-established Church. In a rather startling off-hand comment, he now wrote that the 'character & religion of Jesus . . . helps to relieve our natural fears & miseries here & prepare us for a better existence, <u>if there be one</u>' [letter 3].

Not only did Lindsey's theological views make him sorely uneasy with his position in the Church of England, but he now had come to consider the Methodist movement within that Church to be flawed by a tendency to intolerance; and this contributed to his increasingly distancing himself from emotive faith. 'I am grown more & more into dislike of the peculiarity of our popular preachers' methods in laying such stress upon particular feelings . . . because I have observed more that this sadly misleads many; makes them mistake their own imaginations for the work of God's spirit, & so

go on highly his favorites, in their own opinion, whilst they belong rather to the enemy of God & all goodness, their hearts unchanged, their passions unsubdued, their affections narrowed & contracted, & damning all that have not the good luck to be clan'd & class'd with them' [letter 5]. Especially does he distance himself from the evangelicalism of the Countess of Huntingdon. 'My refrain is that we may not only be Hearers of the word but doers also' [letter 4]. To this point he frequently returns, especially in letter 7, where he is concerned about the great contention created by his friend, the Reverend Walter Shirley, the Countess's Irish cousin (who in later years would assume an important role in her English religious activities). Lindsey went so far as to make explicit what had been implied in some of these earlier letters: his specific disapproval of George Whitefield's preaching [letter 8].

However, Lindsey was able to report that he had received a letter from the Countess, '& sinner & Heretic as I am her Ladyship continues her goodness to me' [letter 8]. Lady Huntingdon became increasingly noted for the rigidity of her orthodox Calvinism; that, however, would not harden fully until the 1770s. More important, perhaps, was the fact that Lindsey was her deceased husband's godson (and distant relation), and such familial considerations always had the potential of overriding the Countess's orthodox religious views. (This point is poignantly underscored by the fact that many years later, after Lindsey had established his full Unitarian credentials, and she her Calvinistic ones, the Countess was temporarily tempted to accept his suggestion upon the death of her elder son, Francis – a noted religious sceptic – that he might avoid damnation. Lindsey told her that the state of future punishment well could be only a matter of God's exercising severe discipline, so that the greatest sinner might pass through this into final eternal bliss.)

As noted, Francis had presented Lindsey to the living of Piddletown, but during the period covered by these letters there was unrest between them, in which Lindsey had been 'such a disappointmt. to him' [letter 4]. The precise disagreement is unknown, but Lindsey's continued havering over whether he should leave the ministry of the Church of England lay at its root. By

1763, after his marriage to the stepdaughter of Archdeacon Francis Blackburne, Lindsey gave up Piddleton, but – swallowing his scruples – hoped to receive the living of Catterick in Yorkshire, in order to be close to his wife's father and friends. Lindsey reveals that he left Piddletown without knowing whether he would receive the Yorkshire parish but claims that in the end all was made well 'by my Lord Huntingdon's firmness & friendship to me' [letter 9].

A quite different perspective on these events was recorded by Elizabeth Moira many years later. Following the present eleven letters, we include the relevant portion of one she wrote to her daughter in 1802. While Lindsey may have honoured Elizabeth's 'catholicity', she displayed a seasoned hauteur when he was now brought to mind. Here she recollected that Lindsey and her brother, Francis, had 'quarrelled' when Lindsey gave up his Piddletown parish – to the extent that the Earl had sold the living, only to discover that Lindsey had second thoughts, obviously fearing that he would not secure Catterick. Whereupon, Huntingdon refused to unravel the matter, thinking 'it better that Lindsey shd. Starve'. According to Elizabeth, her brother 'called him many a Hard Name' and refused ever to see Lindsey again. This version of events is given some credence by the fact that at the height of his problems regarding the departure from Piddletown in 1763 Lindsey wrote to Lord Moira, asking him to 'be my advocate' with Elizabeth [letter 9]. On the other hand, Lindsey here reported that he had dined with Francis only the day before. Whatever is to be made of these conflicting claims, Lady Moira's memory may have become muddied with time; indeed, in the 1802 letter she reported that 'Lindsey has been dead many years', when in fact he would live until 1808.

* * * * *

Since a full printed collection of Lindsey's correspondence is currently in preparation, the present letters are here published without further comment or annotation. Permission to publish them is from the late Earl of Granard and, subsequently, Lady Georgina Forbes, with further acknowledgement to the Deputy Keeper of the Records of Northern Ireland. All eleven are from Theophilus

Lindsey to Lord Rawdon/Moira and are catalogued thusly: Granard Papers: T3765/M/2/20/1-11, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

1

My good Lord,

I have not been well of late or should not have been so backward in presenting my dutiful salutations to your Lordship. I wish I could send you the good news that wd. be most acceptable about your brother Mr Hastings[']s eyes, but I must own I cannot see any room to give great hopes from any advantage hitherto reapd by the methods his Doctors have put him into, tho' I think his general habit of body has been strengthend by them. However I do not despair as he is young & his eye-sight, that of his right eye especially, still tolerably good. My Lady Huntingdon is in better health than one wd. expect under her present circumstances, so well that it wd. surprise one who did not know that her Ladyship draws her supplies of comfort & relief from those sources wh. the things of this world can never wholly dry up. Her Ladyship was much comforted at the receit of some very kind & affectionate letters from your Lordship & Lady Rawdon upon the occasion of her present great distress, as Mr Hastings & yr humble servant found upon our return from Portsmouth on Thursday night last, having been absent upon that tour four days. I had not time or shd have sent yr Lordship the little news I could pick up when we were nearer the fountain head. Dr Edw. Hawke came down the night before we came away, & to day was to sail with 20 ships of the line to join the great fleet we have in the Bay & thence to part & cruize in separate Squadrons in order to intercept the St. Domingo & Martinico fleets & the very strong convoy that is coming from North-America to guard them. If providence gives success to this measure it may weaken our grand & powerful enemy so much as to shorten the war & prevent much bloodshed otherwise, & may a little help to wipe off the foul disgrace with which our late shameful [parade?] has coverd us both at home & abroad. We had opportunities at Portsmouth of talking both with the land & sea gentlemen concerned in the late expedition. It is not easy to express

the general downcast & shamefaced look it has given both to sailors & soldiers, officers & private men when you touch upon the affair. There are two principal sentiments about the point where the blame lay. The first that the land-officers might have landed at first, & have met with little opposition but that a Council of war of six days made a descent less practicable & far more dangerous. The other opinion, of wch. from hearing both sides, I am myself; is that the attempt was at first an ill-concerted one, & of most uncertain success - that in all probability we shd. have met wh. a shameful repulse & loss had it been made & that some of their settlements, Martinico especially (if Minorca & Corisca were no feasible objects) shd. have been the blows by wch. we might most assuredly have distressed them. Your Lordship has heard that the Duke has laid down his places & gone to Windsor. One party affect to blame him much for the late Neutrality. Others have that opinion of his bravery & known good sense that they incline the contrary way. Things must go ill, or the emergency very pressing for the King to send over old Baron Munchausen to Germany after the arrival the day before of a messenger from Col. Yorke dispatch'd by a fishing boat. I am sorry to find by your Lordps to Lady Huntingdon that Lady Rawdon's health is still so indifferent. I pray God to restore her & to bless you both & all your's. I beg leave to present my proper duty, compts & respects to Lady Selina, Miss Rawdon, Mad^{lle}. & particularly I beg your Lordship will indulge me wh. one more salute extraordinary to your daughter Miss Ann for her very flattering panchart to myself transcribed by my Lady Rawdon. This last Lady God willing I will have the honor to address the next post, & in the mean time & always remain,

My Lord,

Your Lordships much obliged & very dutiful huble servant

Theophilus Lindsey.

Brighthelmstone -
Octobr. 22. 1757

My Ld. H[untingdo]n was at Knowles, the Duke of Dorset's, the last we heard from his Ldp.

2

Brighthelmstone. Decr 16. 1757

My Lord,

After an absence from this place of somewhat more than a fortnight in a journey to Piddletown in wch. Mr Hastings & Mr Pitt honor'd me with their company, I find myself honor'd with your Lordship's kind remembrance from Dublin for wch. I beg leave to tender my due thanks & expedient acknowledgements. Mr Pitt had his post chaise all the way, & Mr Hastings preferring the open air & his own little mare to the being stew'd up in a box I very readily closed in with Mr Pitt's desire of company, & by that means made a most agreeable journey of it in passing commonly sixteen hours out of the twenty four with one who to say no more of him is a very great favorite both wth Lord & Lady Huntingdon, as I dare say your Lordship has heard already. I wish I could add that my journey has been of any service to Mr Hastings's eye-sight. But tho' his health seems mended by it, if it wanted amendment, his eyes seem no better, but to me rather worse, & he can but just distinguish night from day with his left eye. If you shd. not like this account, I beg your Lordship will tell Lady Rawdon that I am reckon'd a sort of screech-owl that love to deal in dismals - but however that in such a case I think it best that those concerned shd. be prepared for the worst, wch. I declare I apprehend myself.

In our journey to Piddletown we saw my Ld. Shaftsbury's at Winborne St Giles's, & his two capital Pieces of Salvator Rosa's wch are worth your Lordship's curiosity, who are a connoisseur. In our return, we passed a day at Salisbury, & saw Wilton, greatly worth seeing, but a place so fine & studded wh. ornaments that it looks like a place only to be seen & not to be lived in. The young Countess was there, said to be in her pregnancy, & to remain in the country on that account. We saw her traverse a lawn before us - beautiful she is & innocent in look & in reality like an angel & I pray God long to preserve her so, & to preserve her happy in her Lord's affections as they are at present. Salisbury fine cathedral & Winchester were not unseen; & in our approach homewards about 30 miles from this place we stopd at Cowdrey a seat of Ld.

Montacute's near Midhurst - a very fine old house, in the style of Harry the vii, built round a court - wh. many fine originals of Hans Holbens, two fine pieces of Iulio Romano's &c &c. The owner of the place a most worthy & valuable character, the apothecary of the district, affording meat & medicine & shelter & the best of his own skill to all that come, but maligned on this acct. by a world that cannot bear so much virtue as if all this was done not out of sincere benevolence but a zeal of proselytism because he is a Roman Catholic, & probably may have won over some few wretches with good hearts to think the better of a religion wch. can furnish an example of so much goodness. I never loved Popery, need I declare it? for I look upon it as a tyranny upon conscience for whose fullest liberty I think, I cd. die - but I never loved the zeal against papists wch. I observed on your side the water. I wd. rather be a poor deluded, nay besotted Papist, than a Protestant & the subject of such wrathful & malevolent tempers. I saw no zeal amongst either clergy or laity to make these papists better men. All seem'd either political, or flowing from that sort of prejudice wch. the mob here has against the Saracens from the terrible looks & whispers they have on your signposts & the traditionary lies of their cruelty. My daily prayer is & my poor endeavours would be, could they reach to do any thing, that the kingdom of christ, the kingdom of righteousness & virtue & true holiness may be established; but this can never be done by any other means than our Master himself used, & by wch. he & his first followers so greatly prevailed. As sure as ever his religion has been mixed with politics or handled by political men, so surely it has been corrupted, & this I reckon to be the great cause of the grand apostacy from it; & of that miserable outwd. face that it wears in most established forms of it in the world, not to except our own. Therefore I never wish to see Parliaments meddle wh. matters of religion as it referrs to men's private consciences, & never to meddle at all but to prevent or to abolish all kinds of impositions upon conscience. But I beg your Lordship's pardon for this preachment. I thought of nothing less when I sat down to write. Your Lordship inquires my opinion about Jones's book. I can only say that every text that he used I had seen in a difft. light, & that such impotent efforts have help'd more to confirm in heterodoxy than to draw men out of it. But these are

matters of private judgment, such as every one must see for himself, & with his own eyes; & the last appeal must always be at home. There is a commentary on Job, by one Peters, a minister in Cornwall, a six shillings book, that is much commended, & I believe worth yr Lordship's perusal. If I hear of any thing new worth communicating in this or any other way I shall be mindful of the duty I owe your Lordship, as I can wh. the utmost truth assure you that you know not the man who wd. more gladly sacrifice himself to do a real good to you or yours. I beg my humble duty to my good & much valued Lady Rawdon & to Lady Selina wh. sincerest respects to Miss Rawdons & M[lle]. & have the honor to be wh. very sincere regards,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's most dutiful & faithful hble servant

Theo: Lindsey.

My Lady H[untingdo]n & Mr Hastings charge me wh. her remembrance to yr Ldsp & every body. May I beg yr Ldp. to tell Mr T. Cobb that I am ashamed of not having wrote to him as he made me to promise, but that I meditate to acquitt myself soon.

Pray tell my Lady Rawdon that I blush to put my remembrances of God's little pledges to you as it were by way of after-thought in a postscript - but I do not love them the less for it. You will do well, both her Ladyship & your good Lordship, to see that with all your fondling & documenting you do not teach Miss Ann to cant a little - as to yr boys, I like em both much for they seem to have spirit & courage, & what cd. they do in the world we live in without these. My Lady Rawdon wd. give me a box of the ear, or if not her Ladyship, Mrs Mott, for the above insinuation about their darling, whom I own I love, & shd. love as excessively as you do if I saw the returns you do - but still I say there is some room for such a Caution - & so good night to your good Lordship & a thousand pardons for asking an audience.

3

Brighthelmstone. Janr. 3 [and 19]. 1758

My Lord,

I hope you received the last tender of my humble devoirs. If I was in the secret of affairs here, & could let your Lordship into any thing of consequence, I wd. write oftener & might afford more amusement; as it is, your Lordship will be so good as to take us as we are. My Lady Huntingdon informs Lady Selina this post of what regards her self & Mr Hastings. I shall therefore only add my seal that both of them are in tolerable health, only the latter's eye-sight not better.

My Lord,

The honest date of the above will acquitt your humble servant of a sincere intention at least to have paid his due respects many days ago. I am now called upon what I may not delay one moment to congratulate your Lordship & my Lady Rawdon on her Ladyship's safe deliverance of her little one, & I hope early admittance of the latter into a better scene of things without feeling much of the miseries of the present. How Parents feel upon such occasions I have no knowledge, but I trust your Lordship's & my Lady Rawdon's concern will be soon turned into joy for having had the favor of furnishing an inhabitant of a better world with whom I hope you will & will make haste to triumph together in the realms of light. I beg my regards of sincerest esteem & duty may be presented to the good mother already of so many hopeful little ones with my Lady Selina's account of all of whom my Lady Huntingdon is greatly charmed but most of Miss Ann for her little christian mind. Prejudice it certainly is, all our early education, before we can judge for ourselves, but a prejudice every ingenuous mind must own it to be on the right side, for what does the character & religion of Jesus recomend but what helps to relieve our natural fears & miseries here & prepare us for a better existence, <u>if there be one</u>. I fear I must correct my account above of Mr Hastings, & say, what certainly is the case, that his eyes are most apparently much worse, so that whatever glimpse of hope one might have flatter'd oneself with hitherto, yet it is now all gone, & I

have no hope, I declare. The only probability the Doctors in London & here declared of his amendnt was from his health being amended, but now that is obtained, & his eyes are worse. The news of the day wch. we have here I shall send your Ldp. as it comes in a letter from a friend - wch. is, tho' it may not be new to you - "that Boscawen is to command the American Expedition, that we are to have three fleets there wch. are to act all at the same time, station'd in different parts, Louisbourg is to be the grand object, & Mr Pitt makes no scruple to declare & intends to explain himself in the house this week that this is a point he aims at & is determined to carry if possible. All the sensible & disinterested world," adds my friend, "agree in condemning the conduct of the Gentlemen concerned in the secret expedition, & also the Court martial that tried them, with both wch. the King is much dissatisfied, & it is thought he will go farther than striking the three general officers off the Staff." Besides the common business of Parliament, three great points they say will be considerd, & alterations proposed; the method of Court martials, wch. are become scandalous & useless; the Militia-bill, & some regulations to restrain the daily tumults among the people, & to reconsider the Habeus Corpus-act. Books we have little news of to read - only your Lordship will take care of your books on the revelation, for we have been trapped here with one or two Octavos of blasphemy & nonsense. I hope Miss Rawdons & M^{lle} are well, & beg respectful compts. to all. We shall hope for a sheet or two of news from yr Lordp. in return for our communications. How ye Ld Lieut. is liked - what yr Parlt. is doing, & particularly what good Lady Rawdon chose just to hint to Lady H-n about yr. episcopal affair & left it to our divining spirit with wch. no doubt we are blessed to find out the rest. I am wh. sincere regards,

My Lord, Yr Lordship's much
obliged & faithful hble sert

Theophilus Lindsey.

Wolf & Amhurst, are to be sent over Genls. to America. The former has the very first character of any man in the British army.
Brighthelmstone. Jan. 19. 1758
[*A note at the end of this letter states that it was answered on 11 February*]

4

May 30. 1758
London

My good Lord,

I may not omitt the earliest expression of my best & most respectful regards & good wishes for your Lordship, & your safe arrival on your side the water & that you may find my Lady Rawdon, your lovely little daughters & all your family & friends in the best health & happiness. I can assure you that you & they have often been the subject of the friends you have left behind you & many wishes that you may, if not make yr. abode here, yet renew your visit amongst those who so heartily & earnestly are interested for your Lordship in particular & your family. I declare myself amongst the meanest of these but not the least sincere. And in particular I pray God that your endeavours to do his will may be prospered & that you may be blessed in your self & be a blessing to others.

My Lord Huntingdon came to Battersea to day after your Lordp went, was sorry his engagements in the country had prevented that attention which he owned to you - And I must tell your Lordship that with regard to myself all is now well betwixt my Lord & me, & I believe he rather rejoices at the choice I have made, tho it was, by my wavering, such a disappointmt. to him. And this I beg your Lordship will acquaint my Lady Rawdon wh. if you have mention'd or do mention my affair to her.

Mr. Wat. Shirley is every thing I could wish him, & I hope & trust will return to his Parish wh. the blessing of the Gospel of Peace & Reconciliation to God. He has not yet fixed his departure the time of it, but we shall not forget your books. He & I are to dine wh. Mr Venn at Clapham Thursday next. They all went to hear Mr

Jones of St Saviour's on Sunday last, & they & Lady Huntingdon also give him the preference of all the Preachers they have at any time heard, only Lady Huntingdon excepts Mr Whitefield. My refrain is that we may not only be Hearers of the word but doers also. I beg the help of your prayers in this & every other respect & to be continued as I am your Lordship's very faithful

dutiful & devoted beadsman

Theophilus Lindsey.

I beg my hble duty to Lady Rawdon & yt I hope soon to write to her Ladyship as also to Mrs. Mott. It is hoped ye expedition sailed on Sunday - some say 'tis agst. Port L'Orient & St Malos(?) at ye same time; others Brest; others &c &c.

5

My Lord,

I have no apology to make that will satisfy my own mind for my late neglect in writing to Lady Rawdon & yourself, & therefore I shall make none, but only promise, as all sinners do, to do so no more. & will not doubt of your Lordship's forgiveness. Lady Huntingdon has been much taken up & perplex'd abt. poor Mr Hastings, wch. I fancy has prevented her sending to & consequently receiving any letters from your Lordship lately, at least her Ladyship has not mention'd receiving any. I hope you are all well, & happy at Moyra, but why should I add the latter. A Christian must ever be happy himself, & like his divine Master, ever doing good & making all about him happy, & therefore I will only wish you an increase of this happiness, & that you may grow up in every thing that is good & excellent, & let your light shine before all to warm & comfort them, & direct & enlighten them in the same blessed Paths. Your Lordship knows full well what a sad Heretic I am, as I used to talk very openly to you; & I must tell you further, that since you left us I am grown more & more into dislike of the peculiarity of our popular preachers' methods in laying such

stress upon particular <u>feelings</u>, <u>feeling</u> the pardon of your sins & the like, because I have observed more that this sadly misleads many; makes them mistake their own imagination for the work of God's spirit, & so go on highly his favorites, in their own opinion, whilst they belong rather to the enemy of God & all goodness, their hearts unchanged, their passions unsubdued, their affections narrowed & contracted, & damning all that have not the good luck to be clan'd & class'd with them. <u>Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus</u> [i.e. we do not say great things, but we live (them?)]: was the apology of the first Fathers of the church, & I wish we could make the same appeal to the lives of those who now fill their place. And herein, my Lord, I lay claim to yr. prayers for me that after having preached to others I may not be αδοκιμος [i.e. rejected], myself.

I presume Lady Selina may have acquainted Lady Rawdon that Mr Hastings has quitted Ward with no benefit recd, & is now under the prescriptions of Dr. Hilmer, Physician & Aulic Counsellor to ye K. of Prussia - a Quack, as his great names denote, but Mr Hastings thinks he has done him some good; & I need not add how much I wish it may be confirmd unto a perfect case - tho' I declare, I think, & have long thought Mr Hastings's case quite hopeless. It will be a pleasure to your Lordship & his friends with you to hear that those oddities & heats of passion & obstinacy wch. you were but too much a witness unto in London are gradually weaning of & I hope better sense & a fixed good & benevolent temper will be formed. We have lately been in Kent for a fortnight, & are going again the next week to attend Lady Selina thither to Mr Whelers, & shall stay another fortnight till her Ladyship returns. Yr Lordship wd. be delighted wh. Ottenden. A venerable & comfortable old house - high, dry situation; the channel at seven miles distance, where you see ships riding out of ye dining room as you sit at dinner - the country near you beautiful in quality, skirted abt wth. woods &c in short a delightful scene. Pray tell Mad^{lle} Ligondes that I wd. be a month sick at Sea to marry her to young Mr Wheler its future owner who will be posses'd of an estate little short of three thousd. pounds a year - so much is the London & Wiltshire estate raised of late. I should be no less glad by a cast of my office to have the honor of contributing to make Miss Rawdons happy, & I beg yr

Lordship will assure them of this & every other respectful regard, & also be so good as to keep Lady R-n & Mrs Mott in patience wth me till the next post when I hope to write again, & in the mean time make my court by being civil to Miss Anne & your fine boys in whom I wish you both every happiness. No News. We are sadly dejected on acct. of ye K. of Prussia. Ld Chesterfield was to have follow'd my Ld to Donington-Park but this bad weather has deterr'd him. I am, my Lord, wh. most sincere & dutiful regards

Yr. Lordship's ever faithful & devoted humble servt.

Theophilus Lindsey.

Battersea
July. 25. 1758.
The inclosed is Mr Watt. Shirleys upon his own conversion.

6

Battersea.
Wednesday. Even twixt six & seven.
Septr. 13. 1758

My Lord,

I am sorry to give your Lordship so much concern as I am sure the account of your poor brother Mr Hastings's melancholy death will give you, which happened this afternoon about five o' clock, having been taken ill of a pain in his head only yesterday after dinner, which pain continued till his death, which was quite sudden & unexpected by the Doctors & every body, poor Mr Hastings having told his most afflicted mother not ten minutes before the fatal event that he was better.

Nothing can exceed the affliction of heart of the afflicted mother - whom I pray God to support & Lady Rawdon & yr Lordship & all the afflicted family. Your Lordship will not need that I shd. say how much it is wished that poor Lady Rawdon may be made acquainted wth. this most afflictive loss in the pret[t]iest manner you can think of. You will both forgive my not having wrote lately. I am your most dutiful

& most afflicted servant

Theophilus Lindsey

7

Brighthelmstone.
Novr. 9. 1758

My Lord,

I hope your Lordship is very well tho' you are very sparing of late to let your friends on this side the water know it. I had no title myself but I was in hopes you would have let my Lady Huntingdon know of your progress into the north to Derry, how you found the good Bp. there, & the cause wch. I hope he has at heart; & likewise how matters go on in your own Parish, whether you have any hopes that your own Rector will preach the gospel as our Lord & Master has left it us, drawing men out of their carnal muck-worn natures, & from their evil & turbulent passions to be pure & heavenly-minded, meek & gentle, & peaceful & forbearing towards all men, seeking to make each other happy, & for this end giving up their own selfish ease, & prejudices & passions. What an excellent institution wd. our most holy one appear if these were its effects, so that Beholders might cry out as they did at its first propagation, "see what excellent, & friendly and benevolent Beings these Christians are." I hope the good work is in deed going forwards in this kingdom, & tho' you know I do not always like the kind of seed that is thrown upon the soil, yet if it bring forth as it does, the excellent fruits of righteousness & peace, I do rejoice, yea & I will rejoice. I am rejoiced, that I may not omitt to mention it, tho out of its place, that my friend Mr Shirley retains his zeal, & his warm & honest heart amongst you. I am sorry however, tho' my Lady Huntingdon is glad & your Lordp perhaps too, that he has kindled so great a flame about his head, tho' I trust it will be extinguished without hurt to himself or hinderance to the free course of the word of God, & this I shall tell him soon in answer to a very kind letter I have received from him. I wish & pray for the time, tho' in vain, when disputes & contentions shall cease, when Xtians αληθευοντες εν αγαπη, speaking the truth in love, shall have no strife but that of who shall do most good to each other & contribute most to the general weal. Yet I wd. not tamely give up any capital truth of wch. I was persuaded upon mature grounds.

him twice the last time I was in London, but I canot say the word of God seemd to me at all rightly divided, & tho' I always like applications to ye Passions, yet surely some pains shd. be taken to inform the understanding. Therefore whilst I was in town I did not meet the good company at my Lady H-n's, as I had also forborn when yr Lordsp. was there, & yet good Lady H-n received me & lookd upon me as a Brother I believe, & therefore I lay it to the same claim from your Lordship. And I desire your prayers that I may be led into all truth, & may be bold to speak the truth as I ought to speak it. I flatter myself your Lordp. wd. not wholly disapprove of my manner of going on were you to be my Inspector. I wd. willingly spend & be spent for the sake of doing some little good both to ye souls & bodies of all men, but especially of those as it were committed to my charge. But too much on such a subject. I hope your Lordship & family are well, & Lady Rawdon free from her painful confinemt. This letter shall be followd wh. a longer as soon as Mrs Mott informs me where you are & how you all do. There is a treatise lately publishd abt the Logos in a series of letters, wh. makes a great noise, but I have not bought it. And there are some letters of a Bishop to a young Clergyman, supposed to be ye late Bp. of Cloghers that are much read & greatly applauded by many. Has yr Lordship seen Pilkington's remarks by way of preparation to a new Translation of the bible: It is greatly worth your Lordship's considering. I hope Mr Cummings was well when you heard from him. I am a letter in Mr Wat. Shirley's debt. If your Lordship sees him or writes to him, will you be so good as to tell him that I am a poor creature & forced to creep on obscurely as well as I can whilst He & some others have got that broad day light that I cd. wish for, but as yet see no way for it, till the night is past & ye morning of the resurrection dawns. Farewel, my Lord! I have the honour to be with sincerest attachments

Your Lordships ever most dutiful & obliged humble sert

Theophilus Lindsey

April. 21. 1759.
Piddletown.
Mr Hastings of ye admiralty will convey a letter to me.

9

London.
Oct. l. 1763.

My Lord,

The great anxiety we have been under, ever since we came out of Leicestershire, from the apprehension of being disappointed in obtaining the Yorkshire living of wch. I told your Lordship in a former letter, has prevented my writing sooner: But I have now the satisfaction of acquainting yr Lordship that, by my Lord Huntingdon's firmess & friendship to me, the affair is in a way to succeed soon, his majesty having given his consent to it. It is a point that we had at heart, full as much for the sake of my wife's friends as ourselves, for whereas Piddletown is near 400, Catterick is but four miles from Richmond where they all reside.

I promised in my last to send your Lordship some news, but am forced to break my promise, for there is nothing new worth sending. Many people still continue to think the present Ministry more established than any has been since his majesty's accession: and it is believed that report your Ldp. will read in the public prints of Lord Holland to the Privy seal at his return to England, will be very likely to take place. And we say here that all your disturbances amongst the lower people are composed, but that some disagreable oppositions are forming in the Parliamt. wch. may give yr new Ld. Lieut. a great deal of trouble. I am vexed to deal thus in generals. When I have any thing more particular worth sending, I will endeavour to atone for this by better materials. I had proposed to send a short letter to my Lady Moira, but have not left myself time for it: yr Lordship will be so good as to be my advocate with her Ladyship, & tell her that I dined with my Lord yesterday, when I found his Lordship as well in health as ever I remember him.

I beg leave to present my wife's humble duty (with my own) to yr Lordship, Lady Moira, & all yr. noble family; and I have the honour to be, with all respect & greatest regards,

My Lord,
Yr Lordships most dutiful, & faithful humble servt

Theophilus Lindsey.

I wrote the last post to the Castle, and had intended then to have sent this to your Lordship, but was too late for the post.
[*Note at end states that this letter was answered but no date given*]

10

Novr. 8. 1763
London

My Lord,

It is not many hours since I arrived here out of Dorsetshire, and received the honour of your Lordship's at my Lord Huntingdon's, for which I beg leave to thank you, and promise, if nothing extraordinary hinders, to thank your Lordship, in a post or two, more at large. As I am to write to Lady Moira, I will say nothing concerning the state of her Ladyship's health, wch. I am sorry to find, both by yr. Lordship, & others, is far from being what all that know her much wish it.

I found in the country, the common cry to be, that the present administration here, cannot continue: But, from better information I learnt here, that they are well settled, and as a proof of their power, propose to impeach Mr Wilkes, and 'tis believd he will be expell'd the house of commons. It is said that all in the ministry use great application in their respective departments, particularly Lord Sandwich, & yr Lordship's neighbour Ld. Hillsborough, the newcomers, the latter of whom has come into place with general approbation. Mr Ch. Townsend it is said at present is actively with the opposition; but of wch. side Ld. Shelburne will be, is uncertain, and in the opinion of most, of very little consequence.

I am, as I ought to be, a wisher of peace & public good, and shall rejoice to see both pursued, wch. never can be however, by pushing things to extremes.

Mrs Lindsey, who is here with me, joins in humble duty to your Lordship. Having evacuated Piddletown, we set out for Yorkshire in about a week or ten days, and when at our last gîte I shall be much hond. by a line sometimes from your Lordship, for which, in

my next from this place, I shall take the liberty to send the direction. I have the honour to be,

My Lord,
Yr Lordships truly devoted and dutiful hble servant

Theo: Lindsey

11

Dublin.
Septr. 9. [1757]

We are this moment only arrived at your Lordship's house when I take the first opportunity to present our joint acknowledgments & my own most particularly for our kind welcome at Moyra & the many favors there received. I was sorry not to be able to send a line by last night's post, but our hosts wd. have it that you might well stay 'till we got to Dublin, tho' whether that wd. have been the case I cannot say if we had not been almost by force driven away from Newbridge, such was the Archbp's kindness & peremptiveness in urging our stay till Monday. But behold this morning it appeared that the young Ladys illness who was with Lady Betty is the small-pox, & they say not of the best sort wch. gave me a very good handle for our not staying for fear of giving disturbance, & particularly when Mr. Cobbe was forced to flie, who accordingly set out this morning & came along with us as far as Swords when he went on with Mr Rawdon to his house near Trim. Mr Macquire & the sick Lady & Mr Rawdon were the only guests we found in the house, but Dean Owen & the Minister of [Balradlery?] were of the party to dinner yesterday, with which yr Lordship will believe a man that loves to see characters was not displeased. Lady Betty Cobbe's is a pretty lively little boy but not so lusty nor lively as my namesake & this I beg yr Lordp will tell my Lady Rawdon by way of making my court where I shall ever be ambitious to make it. We can say nothing when we take ship but I hope it may be to morrow night or Sunday morning. I hope to have time this evening to write a longer letter to your Lordship to go by to morrow's post & one to Lady Rawdon & to pass by my Lady Selina with her Ladyship's good leave till we are on the other side

the water. I cast many a longing wistful look behind me I declare after I left Moyra. My fellow-traveller had complained all the way hitherto of my lumpishness, 'Lindsey you are the dullest fellow in the world you used to be so merry – Let's laugh & sing, time's on the wing &c &c. But alas! we are still in the dumps.' This must answer for me instead of compts to the fair circle I left behind me. I beg your Lordship will say for me every thing that the most perfect esteem & sincerest attachment can dictate to my Lady Rawdon, & believe me ever my Lord, with most sincere regards,

Your Lordship's much obliged & dutiful humble Servant

Theo. Lindsey

End of Lindsey letters

The following is from a letter of Lady Moira to Lady Granard, 24 March 1802, also in the Granard Papers: T3765/J/9/2/35:

'Theophilus Lindsey has been dead many years & I never heard that he left any children; therefore I cannot conceive who sent me his books. He was a Unitarian or Socinian, or somewhat that is termed Heterodox. His Mother was some distant relation of my father's Mother. My father was his Godfather & he was educated by Him & my Aunt Lady Anne Hastings. Were he alive he must be past fourscore. The late Ld. Huntingdon quarrelled with him on the following Acct. He had a living of my Brs., Piddletown in Dorsetshire. He had a qualm of conscience respecting some point of faith & said he wd. throw it up. Ld. H- went & sold the presentation. His qualm went off, & a dread of his Wife & his starving seized him, & he recanted from his intended penance. Ld Huntingdon thought it better that Lindsey shd. starve, than he lose the money. Called him many a Hard Name & wd. not again see his poor cousin & I am curious to know who it is, wants to revive his Memory in my Mind.'

Boyd Stanley Schlenther
University of Wales
Aberystwyth

HUME'S CONNECTIONS

D O Thomas

*The kirk and the infidel** presents the inaugural lecture which Professor M A Stewart gave at Lancaster University on 9 November 1994 after his appointment to the Chair of the History of Philosophy there. He gives an account of David Hume's failure to be appointed to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh in 1745 and investigates the reasons why he failed. Stewart describes the background to the contest for the succession to the chair vacated by John Pringle, and introduces the various pretenders, who included William Cleghorn, the successful candidate, and James Wishart, the Principal of Edinburgh University. A full account is also given of the various parties in the contest and the religious and political forces involved in the struggle. Stewart criticizes the account of the matter given by E C Mossner and J V Price in the introduction to their edition of *A letter from a gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh*, the pamphlet in which Hume defended himself from what he conceived to be misrepresentations of his opinions. Stewart contends that Hume's rejection was due primarily to the clergy, who were deeply offended by his scepticism and what they believed to be his atheism and irreligion, but there were other opponents to his appointment who were sufficiently strong to have secured his rejection, and these were motivated by political considerations and not religious ones.

Francis Hutcheson, who was offered the chair but declined it, opposed Hume's appointment, and this must have been a disappointment because Hume was an admirer of him. Stewart makes it clear that the most serious opposition to Hume came from the liberal wing of the clergy because they feared the consequences for their own position from his assault on Natural Religion. William Wishart was also a strong opponent, having an eye on the chair himself. Stewart analyses Wishart's critique of Hume and shows how he misconstrues the implications of Hume's scepticism,

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* Full details of the works discussed in this article are given at the conclusion.

and maintains that it does not entail an aggressive atheistic stance. To deny that there are good reasons for believing a proposition to be true does not enable one to hold that it is false. But although this is true, Stewart, if I understand him correctly, points out that scepticism can undermine belief especially in an environment where it is thought that religious belief is supported by rational argument. The clergy were not without reason in fearing what might have happened if Hume were let loose in their classrooms. In an appendix Stewart includes a transcript of a manuscript originally written in speedhand containing Wishart's attack.

The first essay in the collection *Hume and Hume's connections*, by Roger L Emerson, also deals with Hume's failure to obtain the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh in 1745. He also deals with Hume's failure to obtain the Chair of Logic at Glasgow in 1752. Emerson agrees with Stewart that although the hostility of the clergy was decisive, the political forces arraigned against Hume would have been sufficient by themselves to secure defeat. The struggle is examined in detail by Emerson, and a great deal of light is thrown on the perennial conflict between the forces of the Squadrone led by the Marquis of Tweeddale and the Argathelian led by successive Dukes of Argyll. Hume, who was attached to the latter, was unfortunate in that this party was either not sufficiently powerful, as in the Edinburgh affair, or not sufficiently decisive, as in the Glasgow 'project' to secure success. Emerson points out that at both Glasgow and Edinburgh, Hume would have been required to sign the Westminster Confession, and that at Glasgow he would have had to lead students in prayers. If Hume was prepared to commit himself to doing these things, and his influential backers thought that he could, what are we to infer about his attitude to religion? Are the accusations of irreligion unfounded?

In his essay 'Hume and Hutcheson' James Moore challenges the long held belief that Hume's moral philosophy was inspired by and largely derived from Hutcheson. Although both thinkers shared the view that moral judgements are founded not in reason but in a moral sense, there are many elements in Hume's system that were directly opposed and alien to Hutcheson's teaching. Whereas Hutcheson found inspiration in the writings of the Stoics, Hume owed more to the Epicureans, particularly to their influence on

some French writers in the seventeenth century, notably Gassendi and Pierre Bayle. They differed in their use of the notion of the state of nature; as to whether justice is a natural or an artificial virtue; whether justice is founded in convention, whether the virtues are approved of for their utility and agreeableness, and on the role of sympathy. Hume's originality, according to Moore, lies not so much in the views he held on these points as in the way he found of clarifying and explaining them by what he termed 'the experimental method'. Hume criticizes Hutcheson on several points: on his interpretation of the role reason plays in moral judgement, on his belief that virtue can be its own motive and its own reward; that benevolence is the sole principle of virtue; and that some actions and affections are universally approved of. For the latter contention Hume would substitute the belief that it is the principles of virtue that win universal approval. The substitution of principles for actions allows him to account for the variations in approval and disapproval that are found in different societies and at different times. Moore's analysis of the divergences that ensue from following the Epicurean and sceptical tradition may be held to go a long way to explain why Hutcheson viewed with alarm the prospect that Hume might succeed to a chair in Moral Philosophy.

In 'Hume and the invention of utilitarianism', Stephen Darwall, presents Hume's moral philosophy as exhibiting a transitional stage between Hutcheson and Bentham. In Bentham's system the main focus is on the act and its consequences, and only derivatively on the motives and dispositions that produce it. In Hutcheson, on the other hand, moral judgement focuses on the motive and the character of the agent and only secondarily on the consequences of action. Hume follows Hutcheson in one fundamental respect, namely, that moral approval and moral disapproval focus on the character of the agent, but Hume does not follow Hutcheson either in the latter's distinction of the moral from the natural virtues, nor in supposing that moral approval is restricted to manifestations of the principle of benevolence. Hume, according to Darwall's sensitive tracking of the development of his thought, moves in the direction of establishing a more general principle of approval than the principle of benevolence. According to this reading, the actions we hold to be virtuous are those which, when we contemplate their

performance by others, produce feelings of pleasure either in the agent or in the person who benefits by the action, feelings which by the process of sympathy generate a disinterested feeling of pleasure in the spectator. The movement in this direction takes Hume nearer to Bentham's position in which the focus of attention is upon the pleasures and pains produced by actions.

In 'Hume and the natural lawyers: a change of landscape' Pauline C Westerman examines Hume's debt to the classical defenders of the theory of natural law in the seventeenth century, notably to Grotius and Pufendorf. The issue has been a controversial one: there are those who, like Duncan Forbes, argue that Hume presents a secular version of natural law theory and Knud Haakonssen who presents a 'more refined, sociological version' of the theory. On the other hand, there are those who, like James Moore, see Hume's account of the matter in the sceptical tradition. Westerman's resolution of the problem begins by drawing attention to the fact that the natural law theorists used the concept of nature in two ways, both to describe how men behave, albeit in ideal conditions, and to prescribe how they should behave. The tensions that arise from trying to unite both functions could only be resolved, Westerman argues, by jettisoning one or the other of these functions. Hume's contribution, she maintains, is to use the concept of nature in an explanatory mode. It is not the business of the moral philosopher to prescribe, but to explain why we make the judgements that we make, and why we act as we do. What needs to be borne in mind, it seems to me, in estimating Hume's debt to the theorists of natural law is the fact that they both share the notion of the universality of human nature. Human beings share a common nature, and it is this assumption that is the ground for one being able to describe and prescribe for, (in the case of the natural law theorists) or to explain (in the case of Hume) human behaviour. That human beings share a common human nature is something that is presupposed by Hume's experimental method not established by it. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if Hume had queried the assumption that the same methodological principles can be applied to human nature as exhibiting the same uniformity as the physical world.

In 'Butler and Hume on habit and moral character', John P

Wright establishes a debt owed by Hume to Butler's *Analogy* on the way moral character is conceived to be formed by the creation of virtuous habits. Constant repetition of an action strengthens the disposition to perform it, and while the habituation makes action easier, the feelings that motivated the action tend to grow weaker. Where fear is regularly confronted, the feeling grows less tense and the capacity to confront the danger grows stronger. According to Wright, Hume uses Butler's principle to show how by habituation a 'calm' passion is produced in which the feeling content is diminished, and the capacity of the will to influence action is strengthened. There seems to me to be a problem here. It is not difficult to see how a tempestuous passion can be disciplined by an established 'calm' passion, but where a habit has not been established how are tempestuous passions resisted and 'calm' passions established? Hume also uses Butler's principle in his account of the genesis of justice. Our long term interest, the object of a 'calm' passion, requires us to curb our immediate desires and passions so that we may acquire property and fulfil our ambitions. Again it is easy to see how established habits can discipline immediate desires in favour of a long term interest, but again the same problem appears. How is such a discipline initiated? How is a strong temptation to act unjustly resisted where a settled habit or custom has not been established? In these cases how does the calm, passion derive its strength? The claim that acting upon virtuous principles makes it easier to act on those principles raises the highly important question whether the agent is in any way free to initiate actions in accordance with virtue.

P B Wood's concern is to apply the techniques developed in Thomas Kuhn, *The structure of scientific revolutions* to the history of philosophy. He wishes to establish 'the canonical texts' which determined the framework within which Hume and Thomas Reid established their systems. For moral philosophy we have to examine the debt to Locke, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Hutcheson and Butler. For epistemology more generally, Bacon, Newton, Descartes, and Malebranche. Two themes in particular are investigated: the use of the natural-historical method in the study of human nature, and the scope of what was identified as the science of the mind. In the former Wood identifies ambiguities in the use

of the concept of nature, and in the latter he investigates to what extent their epistemology was influenced by physiological considerations. This might seem to be the traditional search for sources dressed up in a new guise, but this would be ungenerous, for in addition to identifying sources the technique draws attention to the restraints imposed upon the disciples by the disciplines they inherit. It is tempting to suggest that the techniques used here could be extended to determine to what extent the assumptions embodied in the canonical texts were utilised explicitly or implicitly to promote the secularisation of thought.

In 'Hume's doubts about probable reasoning was Locke the target?' David Owen examines Hume's debt to Locke and establishes the point at which Hume's account diverges from his mentor's. Owen cautions us not to assimilate the distinction between demonstrative and probable reasoning to the distinction between deduction and induction, and he reminds us that we have to bear in mind that argument for Locke concerned the relations between ideas, and not between propositions. The crucial point of departure for Hume lay in abandoning the assumption that argument proceeds by passing from one idea to another through the intervention of another idea, an intermediate idea, and maintaining that argument can consist in passing directly from one idea to another. The significance of the shift in position can be clearly seen in Hume's treatment of causality. In order to infer the cause from the effect one does not have to posit, as Locke thought one did, the principle of uniformity as 'an intermediate idea'. It is important to note that if arguments about probability are not rational in the way that Locke thought they were, it does not follow that they are in no way rational. Hume was giving a different account of how reason works, not denying that arguments about probability are rational.

In 'An early fragment on evil' M A Stewart introduces a hitherto unpublished Hume manuscript, which was acquired by the National Library of Scotland in July 1993, together with a transcription of the whole and a photograph of the document. The headings in the document, namely 'Section 7' and 'Fourth objection' and the substance of the fragment suggest that it is part of a larger work, now lost, dealing with the themes of the posthumous *Dialogues of*

Natural Religion (1779). Stewart believes that it was not composed before the *Treatise* (1739) and of the hypotheses he considers he favours the view that this fragment was one of the parts of the first version of the work that was not published for fear of giving offence.

The substance of the fragment centres on the difficulties the theist has in establishing the benevolence of the Deity. Does the good in the universe outweigh the evil? Do the pleasures we experience more than exceed the pains? Hume draws attention to the difficulties that there are in establishing comparability of pains and pleasures, but holds that the inference to a benevolent Deity fails if pains predominate and even if there is only a slight overbalance of pleasures. (It is surprising that Hume does not avail himself of a stronger sceptical argument. If the Deity is omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent, the existence of any pain cannot be justified unless pain is a precondition of the enjoyment of pleasure, or if evil is essential to the production of good.) A stronger argument lies in the contention that the existence of any degree of pain cannot be justified if God is omnipotent, because it would entail that God is not as powerful as He would be if He could achieve all his purposes without the existence of pain or any form of evil.

In 'Hume's historical view of miracles' M.A. Stewart delves into the writers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in search of those who anticipated the elements of Hume's position on the treatment of miracle and comes to the conclusion that there is nothing in the section 'On miracles' in the *Enquiry* that has not been anticipated in one or more of the works of Glanvill, Henry More, Bishop Wilkins, Arnauld, Stillingfleet and Locke. Hume's main purpose, Stewart maintains, was to make Locke's account of the matter self-consistent. Stewart's exposition of this indebtedness and Hume's own position, is admirably clear. Hume himself, it would seem, vacillated between a cautious scepticism and a much more aggressive and strident agnosticism. Stewart notes that in private correspondence Hume wrote that 'all the testimony which ever was really given for any miracle, or ever will be given, is a subject of derision'. At times Hume's presentation of his views moves in a direction which his analysis cannot sustain. His

definition of miracle as a violation of a law of nature is too tendentious. What he aims to establish is not that a miracle cannot happen but that no account of its having happened is credible. He aims to secure this position by showing that the weight of evidence in favour of a miracle having happened is and always will be overbalanced by the weight of evidence against it. On these grounds, however, it cannot be maintained that there never will be an instance in which the weight for is preponderant. (The sceptic might well be on stronger ground if he were to argue, not that an account of a miracle could never be credible, but that what purported to be a miracle could not be shown to be a product of divine intervention).

In 'Hume and the art of dialogue', Michel Malherbe examines Hume's use of the dialogue partly as a derivative from, and partly in contrast to, Shaftesbury's use of the form in his *Characteristicks.* Whatever the debt to Shaftesbury, who believed that the dialogue was a way of eliciting and presenting the truth, Hume maintains that the development of the empirical sciences had produced a better method, the experimental method which can be applied with success not only in the physical sciences but in the moral sciences as well. Where a conclusive determination can be established, as in the study of morals, dialogue writing is inappropriate. But in the study of the foundations of natural religion, where no questions can be finally determined, the use of the dialogue is appropriate. Thus Malherbe expounds a neat antithesis: whereas Shaftesbury believed that the dialogue was a suitable method for establishing and presenting the truth, Hume believed that it was appropriate precisely where there is no hope that the truth can be finally determined. Scepticism leaves us with and thrives upon an abiding mystery.

Christopher Bernard's aim in his essay 'Hume and the madness of religion' is to demonstrate that Hume's treatment of religion in his *The natural history of religion*, his *Essays* and his *History of England* is based on the principles of philosophical psychology first developed in the *Treatise*. The 'madness' in Bernard's title derives ultimately from Locke's attempt in the *Essay on humane understanding* to explain how error arises from misleading associations of ideas, a technique which Hume goes to great lengths

to elaborate. Bernard examines Hume's account of the ways in which through the exercise of the imagination we create a world in which we project our inner experiences on the objects 'which engage our attention', the ways in which we build up conceptions of ourselves which disguise our real motives and intentions; and how we enjoy the excitements caused by what Hume terms 'the principle of opposition'. Bernard thinks that less attention than is deserved has been paid to Hume's sceptical treatment of the alleged virtues of figures like Thomas Becket and Joan of Arc. Hume's analysis of Becket aimed to show that his pretended sanctity masked a fierce pride and ambition, and his analysis of Joan showed that her conduct was really inspired by patriotism and a love of the Dauphin. (The reader may well think that this type of scepticism might prove self-destructive for the claim that men, especially clerics, are hypocritical implies at least that there are some standards which some respect and wish to emulate). If hypocrisy is the tribute that vice plays to virtue, then the concept can only get a footing, so to speak, if some conduct is proof against scepticism.

In 'Kant's critique of Hume's theory of faith', Manfred Kuehn presents two complementary studies: Hume's attack upon the rationality of religious faith, and Kant's attempt in opposition to Hume, to demonstrate that it can be rational. Kuehn brings together the different strands in Hume's writings on religion and shows that it is no easy matter to make all that he has to say on religion self--consistent. For example, it is difficult to reconcile his reference to Christianity in the *Enquiry* as 'our most holy religion' with the claim in his section on miracles in the same *Enquiry* that not only is religion not founded in reason, but it contradicts reason. Neither is it easy to reconcile the claim that religious faith is irrational with the statement in *The natural history of religion* that 'no rational enquirer can ... suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion'. Kant, as is well known, denied that we have knowledge of necessary truths in religion, and, famously, denied knowledge to make room for faith, but he did not hold that religious faith is irrational. On the contrary, Kuehn claims, he advanced three different arguments to establish the rationality of faith. The first of these occurs in the *Critique of*

pure reason where it is maintained that we need to postulate the existence of God to account for the order we find in the world; the second argument which is found in *The critique of practical reason* is that we need to postulate a God who will ensure that the distribution of happiness throughout the world is proportioned to moral worth; and the third argument rather obscurely stated by Kuehn, is a pragmatic or political one that it would be imprudent to deprive men of the consolations that belief in God can bring. The first of these arguments, Kuehn claims, could have been accepted by Hume, but he would have rejected the second and the third because he did not share Kant's account of the role of reason in moral and political judgement.

In their introduction to this collection of essays, the editors, M A Stewart and John P Wright, stress the importance of avoiding the distortions that can easily arise through attempting to understand Hume in the light of the preoccupations of the twentieth century. through seeing Hume as a positivist or as an emotivist. To avoid such errors they emphasize the need to study Hume in the context of his own day; of estimating the debts to those he acknowledged to his mentors; and of his need to respond to the critics, friend and foe alike, of his own time. These essays are the product of a great deal of detailed research yielding new perspectives on old controversies. The main emphasis throughout is on setting the record straight, particularly by bringing to bear on the interpretation of Hume's teaching evidence supplied by careful appraisal of his debts to Locke, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Philosophers in the Epicurean tradition. There is relatively little evaluation of Hume's teaching: this is, perhaps, largely due to the stress placed upon exposition and interpretation and partly due to the orientation towards placing Hume in his historical context. In following these themes, the question naturally arises as to what extent he was entrapped by what he owed to those who influenced him most. For example it is interesting to consider to what extent was Hume confined by the epistemological framework of the 'canonical texts', to what extent was he influenced by Locke's empiricism as developed in the *Essay on humane understanding* to disregard or downplay the role played by education and contemporary culture in the formation of

our moral beliefs. Again it is interesting to ask to what extent, his treatment of conventions apart, was Hume heavily influenced by Locke's individualism in his moral philosophy. For a long time, moral philosophers have focused on the concept of autonomy, on the autonomy of the subject and on the autonomy of the individual. Doubtless Hume played an important part in the evolution of these approaches, but perhaps the time has now come for moral philosophers to redress the balance and pay attention to the extent to which our moral judgements are formed by the societies in which we live and by the cultures in which we are educated.

The David Hume Library was published by the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society in conjunction with the National Library of Scotland. After his death in 1776, David Hume's library passed eventually into the hands of his nephew, also named David Hume, who became a Baron of the Exchequer in Scotland. After the Baron's death in 1838, Thomas G Stevenson, an Edinburgh bookseller, was invited to draw up an inventory of the Baron's library. From a manuscript catalogue of the Baron's books the Nortons have drawn up a list of those published before 1777, and which therefore might have belonged to Hume. This list is prefaced by an introduction which contains a great deal of valuable information about Hume's friends and correspondents. It is particularly interesting on Hume's relations with the *philosophes*. Identifying what did belong to Hume is not an easy task, for only four copies bore his signature and only seventeen bore his bookplate (which was also used by the Baron). The Nortons have been assisted by references in Hume's own works, in his correspondence and by inscriptions showing that the book was a presentation copy. Consideration of Hume's own interests and experience suggest further identifications such as those written in French and in Italian, and those we know to have been possessed by Hume from records made by contemporaries, such as Boswell's famous interview when Hume was dying, in which he recorded that a copy of George Campbell's recently published *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* was open before him.

Readers of this journal may be interested to note that the following works by Dissenters appear in the list: James Burgh, *Crito, or essays on various subjects* (1766); Richard Price, *Four*

dissertations, 2nd edn. (1768) - this copy was presented by the author; A *review of the principal questions and difficulties in morals*, 2nd edn. (1769); Joseph Priestley, *An essay on the first principles of government* ... (1768); *An essay on a course of liberal education for civil and active life* (1768); *The rudiments of English Grammar* (1768); *Institutes of natural and revealed religion*(1773-4) and *An examination of Dr Reid's inquiry into the human mind, Dr Beattie's Essay on truth*; and *Dr Oswald's Appeal to common sense* (1774).

As the whereabouts of many of the items listed here are now not known, librarians will, doubtless, be stimulated by the Nortons' careful scholarship to investigate whether any items may be found in their collections.

D.O.Thomas
Aberystwyth

Works discussed:

M A Stewart, *The kirk and the infidel,* published by the author, Lancaster, 1995.

M A Stewart and John P. Wright (eds.), *Hume and Hume's connections*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1994; xvi + 266pp, £6.50

David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, *The David Hume Library*, Edinburgh, 1996. 156pp, £16.00

David Hume, *A letter from a gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh, 1745,* eds. Ernest C Mossner and John V Price (facsimile repr.), Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1967.

AN ARTISAN OF THE FLOATING WORD: THOMAS PAINE AND HIS HISTORIANS

*David Wilson**

During the last decade, the stream of studies on Thomas Paine flowing through British and American historiography has shown no sign of relenting. Back in 1975, anyone contemplating a graduate thesis on Paine was likely to be informed that over two hundred books and articles had been written on the man, and that there was nothing original left to say. Since then, Eric Foner's *Tom Paine and revolutionary America* (New York, 1976) proved otherwise, with its 'early attempt' to locate Paine's republicanism within its social context. Significantly, however, many subsequent scholars have not pursued this social-intellectual approach further, and have instead treated Paine above all as a political theorist. A conspicuous exception, it must be stated, is Mark Philp's short but stimulating *Paine* (Oxford, 1989), which reveals more about the man and his work than have most full-length biographies. In more recent years, however, the emphasis on theory has continued; there are even signs that the postmodernists have got hold of Paine, which is a disconcerting thought indeed.

Among the latest batch of books about Paine, there are two biographies, three major analytical studies, and three new editions of his selected writings. The most impressive of these works is John Keane's biography, *Tom Paine* (Boston, 1995). Critical of the school of thought that 'makes the mistake of severing and de-emphasizing the details of Paine's personal and public life from his social and political philosophy', Keane adopts a 'contextual approach' that emphasizes the connection between experience and ideas (xviii). Paine's democratic republicanism, writes Keane, 'did not derive primarily from books or formal education in the classics. Rather ... it stemmed from his firsthand experience of a maelstrom of overlapping, clashing, and colliding organizations, circles, associations, emotional commitments, personal contacts, everyday

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* David Wilson is author of: *Paine and Cobbett: the transatlantic connection*, Kingston, Ont., McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988.

events, and stubborn intellectual currents excluded from the mainstream polite society' (xx-xxi).

From this perspective, Keane shows how Paine's ideas developed under the pressure of events, and stresses that Paine's first thirty seven years in England were critically important in shaping his later career. Although other biographies have made much – sometimes too much – of Paine's Quaker background, Keane is the first to recognize the importance of his parent's Quaker-Anglican marriage. 'Growing up in [a] mixed-religion household,' he argues, 'Paine was taught his first lessons in the task of combating bigotry in circumstances of diversity' (19). Keane also provides evidence that Paine became a Methodist preacher in his youth, who tapped the revolutionary democratic potential hidden within an ostensibly loyalist religion. As he points out, Paine's radical egalitarianism and his rhetorical skills were strongly influenced by the popular religious culture in which he moved.

In his general discussion of Paine's English background, Keane effectively challenges the widely-accepted view that Paine lost his first job with the excise service for stamping his goods without personally inspecting them – the implication being that Paine was either lazy or corrupt. In fact, Keane argues, it was Paine's supervisor who was corrupt, and who tried to escape censure by shifting the blame onto his subordinate. Such direct exposure to petty tyranny did much to shape Paine's radical cast of mind, and helps to explain not only the anger that underlay *Common sense*, but also the phenomenal success of *Rights of Man*. Paine spoke to the condition of the people with similar experiences, rooted their grievances in the monarchical system of government, and politicized unprecedented numbers of artisans, tradesmen and shopkeepers in the process.

Well-written, thoroughly researched and carefully argued, Keane's biography is by far the best in the field. Nevertheless it is weakened by an unnecessary tendency to exaggerate Paine's originality and political stature – although Keane is positively restrained in comparison with earlier biographies like Moncure Conway. In discussing the American Revolution, for example, Keane plays down the transformation of thought that was already under way in 1775, and thus makes Paine appear more innovative

than he actually was. But the genius of *Common sense* lay not so much in its putative originality, as in Paine's ability to assimilate and articulate arguments that were circulating in coffee-house conversations, private correspondence and radical newspapers, throughout the colonies. Similarly, Keane's assertion that Paine was 'the greatest political figure of his generation' (ix) is very much a partisan judgement based on dubious criteria. One could put in a modest counter-claim for Edmund Burke, Alexander Hamilton, William Pitt or Napoleon Bonaparte, depending on one's viewpoint.

If Keane overstates Paine's originality, he also understates the dangers inherent in Paine's political attitudes and approach. Paine, writes Keane, 'dared to doubt most existing Grand Ideals – his faithful belief in progress, Newtonian science, and God-given reason were among the contradictory exceptions that got him into trouble – because they unleashed hypocrisy and deception, bigotry and power hunger, powerlessness and violence about the world' (xi-xii). But, as Groucho Marx once wrote about the Canadian Rockies, 'take away the mountains, and what have you got?' Far from being exceptions, Paine's faith in progress, Newtonianism and God-given reason were central components of his thought; without his own 'human-made Absolutes' (xi), Paine's writing would be flat and featureless. Viewing himself as the personification of 'plain truth' and 'common sense', Paine sincerely believed that only interested, weak, prejudiced or naïve men could possibly stand in the way of God-given reason. There was an unrecognized but very real potential here for intolerance in the name of intolerance, violence in the name of progress, and tyranny in the name of liberty. In short, Paine's Grand Ideals should be treated with the same degree of scepticism as those which he himself doubted.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of Keane's biography is that it welcomes and encourages such differences of opinion about Paine; the author has attempted to create a text that opens up avenues of debate, and in this he has succeeded admirably. The other recent biography of Paine, Jack Fruchtman Jr.'s, *Thomas Paine: apostle of freedom* (New York, 1994), pales in comparison, even though it sets out with similar intentions to those of Keane. Operating from the assumption that 'Paine's life and work were inseparable' (3),

and rejecting the view that Paine can be understood as a political philosopher, Fruchtman develops a four-stage model of Paine's thought that attempts to integrate narrative with analysis. In America, Fruchtman argues, Paine was deeply involved influenced by Lockean liberalism and classical republicanism; after this return to Europe in 1787, Rousseauist notions of community and virtue began to seep into his writings. Then came the Reign of Terror, and Paine's near-death in the Luxembourg prison; under these circumstances, he moved towards a 'new spirituality where he sought God's wholeness and oneness in the universe' (5), and became increasingly preoccupied with theophilanthropy. Back in the United States, his spirituality faded, and he finished his days in darkness and unhappiness. But throughout all these changes, Paine continued to possess an 'underlying faith that God's spirit and vitality permeated the universe' (5). The synthesis of deism and pantheism that found its most focused expression during the late 1790s was a 'constant thread' (5) that ran through all Paine's writings.

Despite promising much, Fruchtman delivers little. In effect, he has grafted a dubious analysis on to a flawed narrative. His treatment of Paine's early life retreads familiar ground, and adds nothing to our understanding of the man. When he discusses the trajectory of Paine's thought in America during the crucial year of 1775, Fruchtman relies on sources that Paine almost certainly did not write. Given historians' disagreements about Paine's authorship, Fruchtman writes, 'following his texts as they appeared in his collected works is the most logical strategy' (44). In fact, there is nothing logical about it at all; Fruchtman simply repeats Moncure Conway's and Philip Foner's errors of attribution, while relegating A O Aldridge's rigorous analysis of Paine's authorship to the footnotes. Thus Fruchtman uses a poem like 'The Tale of the Monk and the Jew Versified' (48-9) to reveal Paine's early hostility to organized religion, when there is not a shred of evidence to suggest that Paine wrote the piece. (Even then, the poem hardly supports the interpretation that it is forced to bear). Like many of Paine's earlier biographers and editors, Fruchtman assesses the authorship of particular articles in the light of Paine's later arguments. The

result is a self-validating and ultimately tautological form of reasoning.

As the narrative progresses, the mistakes multiply. The British general, Sir Heny Clinton, appears at one stage to be fighting on the American side (142, 540); the Irish radical, Blair M^{c}Clenaghan mysteriously changes his name to Hugh (125, 168); we are told in one place that stories about Paine's drinking began in America during the bank controversy of 1786, and in another that they originated with Chalmer's biography of 1791 (176, 448). Burke's specific reference to 'a swinish multitude' becomes generalized by misquotation into 'the swinish multitude'. The British government, we are informed, 'sponsored and led' (248) the Priestley riots of 1791; this would certainly have surprised William Pitt, who would also have been puzzled to hear Henry Dundas being described as his 'Interior Minister' (264). Meanwhile, in France, patriotic citizens would have been equally perplexed to learn of the National Convention's 'endorsement of the King's Speech' in which George III condemned their revolution (288). And it seems that Babeuf was such a threat to the Directory that he had to be executed twice, first in 1797 and again in 1798 (356, 490). None of these examples – and there are many others – may be particularly significant in itself. The cumulative effect, however, is to create an aura of carelessness. '[H]e can relate a fact, or write an essay,' Paine wrote of himself, 'without forgetting in one page what he has written in another.' Unfortunately, one cannot always say the same about Fruchtman.

More serious questions arise about the analytical structure that rests on this narrative foundation. The influence of Lockean political theory on Paine is clear enough, but Fruchtman runs into trouble when he attempts to connect the constitutional proposals in *Common sense* to classical republican traditions. In his plan, Fruchtman writes, 'Paine had included the major ingredients of a true republic as he knew it: the one, represented by a President, though controlled by the few, the Senate, and the many, the House of Representatives' (75). To prove his point, Fruchtman quotes Paine's statement that a constitutional convention should draw 'the line of business and jurisdiction between [the Senate and the House]' (75). But the words in square brackets, which Fruchtman

has put into Paine's mouth, bear no resemblance to what Paine actually said. Paine made no mention of a 'Senate', and it is clear from the context that he was actually referring to lines of jurisdiction between the central and the state governments. Far from favouring a classical republican balance between the one, the few and the many, Paine supported unicameralism at this stage of his career; indeed, that is why conservative patriots like John Adams were so angry with him.

Fruchtman's attempt to connect the *Rights of Man* with Rousseauist modes of thought is equally unconvincing. Fruchtman himself is aware of the difficulties in demonstrating Rousseauist influences on Paine, and notes that 'Paine's ideas in this period were not always consistently Rousseauist' (256). But that does not deter him from arguing that Paine absorbed a Rousseauist conception of communal responsibility during the early 1790s. Although it is true that Paine occasionally used the phrase 'general will' in these years, and referred more frequently than before to 'the nation', there is little evidence to suggest that he was profoundly influenced by Rousseauist thought. The differences between Paine and Rousseau over issues such as commerce, progress, representative government are much greater than any perceived similarities. Nor can the social chapter in the *Rights of Man* be taken as a sign of Rousseauist influence. Paine's social arguments were rooted in his own 'apprenticeship', occasionally appeared in embryonic form in his earlier American writings, and can just as plausibly be linked to English writers like John Acland as to Rousseau. The only area where Paine exhibits a clear indebtedness to Rousseau is on the formation of a General Council of Europe that would settle disputes by arbitration rather than war – but this does not get mentioned at all.

After the Terror, Fruchtman argues, Paine entered a period of disillusionment with revolution that took him in the direction of reform, social democracy and theophilanthropy. 'Paine had suffered enough,' explains Fruchtman, 'to know that revolution was not the answer any more' (358). This is all too neat and formulaic. 'It is not because right principles have been violated that they are to be abandoned,' Paine wrote after the Terror; he continued to support international revolution, and welcomed plans

to invade Britain and Ireland. And while he helped to found the Theophilanthropists in 1797, this did not mark a major break with his earlier deist views, and can hardly be described as constituting a new phase in his development. It is equally misleading to suggest that his 'spiritualism', as Fruchtman terms it, faded when he returned to the United States. The problem was not that his religious beliefs weakened, but rather that the American environment was becoming increasingly hostile to them. This, more than anything else, helps to explain the darkness and isolation of Paine's last years.

In short, the evidence cannot be forced into Fruchtman's model of Paine's intellectual development. What, then, of Fruchtman's view that a pantheistic form of deism was the 'constant thread' running through all Paine's writings? This position receives its fullest treatment in Fruchtman's previous book, *Thomas Paine and the religion of nature* (Baltimore, 1993). Many of the same problems that beset the biography are apparent; the book is marred by misattributions, misquotations, dubious arguments and inaccurate citations. His central thesis is that Paine's writing was 'profoundly religious in content and homiletic in style' (x). In emphasizing Paine's 'religion of nature', Fruchtman is following in the footsteps of Harry Hayden Clark, whose extended introduction to *Thomas Paine: representative selections* (New York, rev. edn., 1961), remains the strongest statement on the subject. Like Clark, Fruchtman argues that Paine's belief in God-given reason and feelings provides the key to his work, and maintains that Paine's overriding purpose was to restore men to their true, benevolent and natural selves. Unlike Clark, however, he does not treat Paine as a coherent thinker, and notes that 'consistency and systematic thinking were never among Paine's virtues' (3).

And yet, Fruchtman's analysis is not without own its inconsistencies. There is an underlying tension, for example, between Fruchtman's attitude to Paine and his actual analysis of Paine's ideas. On the one had, it is clear that Fruchtman admires Paine's 'bold dream' (176), and views him as a source of inspiration for modern democratic movements. On the other hand, Fruchtman agrees with J G A Pocock's observation that some of Paine's most effective writing was 'couched in absolutist,

totalitarian (to use a modern concept) terms' (181). According to Fruchtman, Paine displayed self-righteous attitudes, 'excluded doubt from his realm of vision' (ix), was 'one of the most biased men of the eighteenth century' (33), and simultaneously demonized and dehumanized his enemies. If this interpretation is correct – and the matter is certainly open for debate – Paine is hardly a figure to be admired.

Further difficulties arise from Fruchtman's treatment of Paine's religion. In discussing Paine's deism, Fruchtman rightly notes that Paine failed to account for the existence of evil in the world. Although Paine believed that kings and lords were inhuman, Fruchtman argues, he 'refused to see them as the product of the devil' (28). But elsewhere in the book, Fruchtman maintains that he did indeed see his enemies as Satanic figures. In this view, Paine believed that William Pitt was 'the Devil himself incarnate' (37), that 'monarchy and popery' were 'the devil incarnate' (37), even that 'the Devil himself had created the Federalists' (128). Paine himself did not use these words; Fruchtman is reading his own interpretation into the text, even though it contradicts his earlier position. One can only conclude that it is the author, rather than the subject, who is confused.

The confusion is compounded when Fruchtman discusses Paine's writing style. He locates Paine within 'a long tradition of preaching, which is at least as old as the ancient Hebrew prophets' (ix), but does not undertake the comparative analysis of Paine's rhetoric and eighteenth-century sermon literature that would highlight points of convergence and divergence. Fruchtman writes on several occasions that Paine believed himself to have been 'ordained' or 'appointed' by God to 'preach the coming perfection through man's agency' (xi, 8, 163, 173). But he provides no evidence to substantiate his argument, and even contradicts it by telling us that 'in Paine's eyes, God never personally intervened, nor had he ever intervened, in history' (4). One would have thought that the act of appointing a preacher did in fact constitute a form of intervention. Pursuing his religious theme, Fruchtman maintains that Paine appealed to a wide audience 'chiefly by using biblical language' (4), despite his utter distaste for scripture' (70). While earlier historians have generally underestimated the importance of

such language, Fruchtman has magnified it out of all proportion; biblical language was only one component of Paine's rhetoric, and was certainly not the principal source of his popular appeal. Whether conceived in specifically biblical terms or applied to the full panoply of Paine's rhetorical techniques, Fruchtman's interpretation of Paine's 'homilectic style', rests more on assertion than demonstration, more on faith than reason.

Paine's relationship to religion in general and scripture in particular is the subject of another recent study, Edward H Davidson and William J Scheick's *Paine, scripture, and authority. The 'age of reason' as religious and political idea* (Bethlehem, 1994). As the author's point out, *The age of reason* is the least studied of Paine's major works, although their argument that the book was really 'a political treatise with a strong religious design' (18) has already been made by historians like Edward Royle and Joel Weiner. Davidson and Scheick break important new ground, however, in placing *The age of reason* within its intellectual context, assessing its relationship to eighteenth-century biblical criticism, and discussing the ways in which Joseph Johnson's social-intellectual circle may have influenced Paine's religious thought during his London years between 1787 and 1792. The authors also provide a list of contemporary responses to *The age of reason*, which will be extremely useful to subsequent scholars in the field.

One can only hope and pray, however, that any such scholars will avoid both the abstruse language and bizarre psycho-history that characterizes this book. Davidson and Scheick write in a style that can most charitably described as High Academese; large sections of the book would find a comfortable home in *Private Eye's* 'Pseud's Corner'. The dust-jacket sets the tone. Here we learn that 'Paine never quite creates himself in any definitive sense. His identity, ever negotiating its authority through a linguistic performance of opposition, is necessarily left as incomplete as is the argument and text of the paratactic *Age of reason*.' 'For Paine,' the authors continue, 'a "spiritual" descent, such as his in *The age of reason*, into the interior of the mind reveals that a discredited external authority can be inverted and that a credited internal autonomy can be asserted in its stead. Such descent/dissent creates

the possibility for conversion, for the transformation of outmoded religious beliefs into a political paradise regained.' As one gets deeper and deeper into the book, Paine's remarks in the *Rights of Man* about Burke's (much clearer) language comes to mind: 'As the wondering audience, whom Mr. Burke supposes himself talking to, may not understand all this learned jargon, I will undertake to be its interpreter.'

Translated into the plain style, Davidson and Scheick's crtique of Paine can be summarized as follows. Paine, the authors argue, attempted to establish the authority of his own voice by presenting himself as an original, self-made thinker who relied on reason and nature rather than any external authorities. But he constantly contradicted this literary persona by citing other sources. Far from strengthening his position, David and Scheick believe, such citations subverted his self-image; they undermined his own claim to authority, and damaged the power of his argument.

Beneath Paine's democratic republicanism, and closely connected to his unsuccessful search for his own political voice, they continue, lay a deep desire to overthrow father figures. Originating in his struggle for independence against his father, but also reflecting an unconscious fear of becoming fatherless, Paine's rebellion against patriarchal authority came to characterize his whole career, according to this interpretation. In *Common sense*, it was manifested in Paine's attack on George III; in the *Rights of Man*, it took the form of an assault on Burke, who had apparently functioned as a father figure to Paine during the late 1780s; in the *Age of reason*, it assumed the guise of an attack on the Christian God.

But the act of rebellion was conditioned by that which was being rebelled against; the result, the authors argue, was that Paine actually reproduced the very patterns of thought that he attempted to overthrow. For example, his use of scripture to attack monarchy mirrored the use of scripture by loyalists to defend the institution. Similarly, Paine's use of the word 'we' in the pamphlet reflected the 'royal we' used by monarchs, and amounted to an assertion of 'kinglike supremacy' (33). Or again, Paine criticized monarchs for their subtlety, but used equally subtle rhetorical strategies himself. And *The age of reason* itself, Davidson and Scheick maintain, is

remarkably similar to early American conversion narratives – an argument that appears to bring us right back to Fruchtman's 'homiletic style'.

All this is too clever by half. Davidson and Scheick place an immense intellectual structure on slender evidence, with an effect not dissimilar to Bob Dylan's leopard-skin pillbox: 'it balances on your head like a mattress balances on a bottle of wine.' The view that Paine's citation of sources undermined his literary persona rests on a false dichotomy; there is no necessary contradiction between his image as a self-made thinker and his willingness to quote other authors when he felt that this would strengthen his case. 'I scarcely ever quote,' he wrote in 1776; 'the reason is, I always think.' The word was 'scarcely' rather than 'never'; Paine understood that thinking for oneself did not preclude reading, assimilating and occasionally quoting the work of others. Nor can this be seen as subverting his authority or damaging his argument; on the contrary, it was precisely this approach that made him a brilliant polemicist.

The argument that Paine was motivated by the desire to depose father figures is fraught with difficulties. For one thing, we know so little about his relationship with his father that it is impossible to draw conclusions about its impact. For another, this interpretation does not explain why the man who metaphorically killed George II tried so hard to save the life of Louis XVI. Moreover, Davidson and Scheick's attempt to show that Burke represented a father figure to Paine is contrived and unconvincing; apart from anything else, their argument that Paine needed a Burke to write the *Rights of Man* ignores the fact that Paine was already writing his book before he even knew that Burke opposed the French Revolution. The image of Paine as being in a state of arrested adolescence is difficult to reconcile with his continual efforts to find practical solutions for political problems, and with the fact that he wrote the *Age of reason* and *Agrarian justice* to save 'the theology that is true' and the rights of man from atheists and levellers. All in all, Davidson and Scheick's approach is dangerously reductive; it underplays the fact that Paine did indeed have many things to fight against, as he witnessed 'age going to the work-house, and youth to the gallows'. For the authors, the controversy generated by Paine

appears primarily as spectacle, as theatre. Political debate is indeed a species of theatre, but it is also about more than that; Davidson and Scheick forget the dying bird.

Equally problematic is the attempt to show that Paine subconsciously identified with the forces of authority that he sought to demolish. In making their case, Davidson and Scheick put great weight on Paine's quotation in *Common sense* from Milton's *Paradise lost*: 'Never can true reconcilement grow where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep.' Noting that these are actually Satan's words, Davidson and Scheick conclude that Paine was at some level aligning himself with Satanic rebellion. From this, they argue that 'A subterranean anxiety belies Paine's *obiter dicta* presented with the victims of his Satanic parricidal and regicidal impulses harbors (in some profound sense) suicidal implications buried deep within, where they undermine his declaration of independence' (24). Indeed. The only trouble is that Paine wrenched this quotation out of its original context to provide him with more ammunition in his attack on the British connection. Davidson and Scheick have taken a tactical quotation, treated it as a deeply resonant allusion, and drawn highly dubious conclusions. In the process, the living, breathing Paine has been intellectualised out of existence.

One more example will suffice. Discussing the *Age of reason*, the authors point to the passage in which Paine remembers hearing a sermon as child, and thinking as he walked down the garden steps that God had been portrayed as a passionate figure who killed his son as an act of vengeance. Davidson and Scheick: 'Rejecting the traditional notion of heavenly ascent out of paradise lost, Paine *descends* the garden steps to this scene of conversion. In this action one may glimpse a metaphorical harbinger of his manner in *The age of reason*: a confession of his loss of conventional religious belief that sometimes inverts and sometimes recuperates in decidedly 'descendant' political (secular) terms the authoritative tradition of the spiritual relation' (99). One may glimpse such a thing, albeit at the risk of severe eyestrain. On the other hand, one might conclude that Paine went down the garden steps because they were actually there.

After this, it is something so a relief to turn to Gregory Claeys's *Thomas Paine: social and political thought* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), which hits the reader with all the force of an intellectual cold shower. Claeys locates Paine's thought within 'Dissenting Protestantism, particularly deism and Quakerism' (thus raising some intriguing and probably unintended theological questions about the denominational status of deism), radical and republican traditions, and, most originally, natural law theory (5). As he develops his argument, Claeys is particularly concerned to examine Paine's ideas and impact in the context of changing eighteenth-century attitudes to commerce. In this sense, his approach has been influenced by the debate in American historiography over the respective influence of liberalism and classical republicanism in the late-colonial and early-national period. But Claeys focuses more on English than American affairs, and presents a thought-provoking analysis of the *Rights of Man* and its reception. Although previous scholars, such as R R Fennessy, have charted much of this territory before, none apart from Claeys has examined the possible links between between natural law traditions and Paine's social programme, and none has discussed in any depth the conflicting attitudes towards commerce, liberty and prosperity that characterized the controversy generated by the *Rights of Man*.

'The only difference between the two works (*Common sense* and *Rights of Man*),' Paine wrote, 'was that one was adapted to the local circumstance of England, and the other to those of America.' But in the very act of adaptation, Claeys maintains, Paine radically altered his position on the relationship between government and society, even if he never actually admitted it. 'By the 1790s,' argues Claeys, 'Paine became aware that the ideal of minimal government in fact only applied to "new countries" with little social inequality. "Old countries" indeed deserved less burdensome, more evenly distributed taxation and the curtailing of extreme landed wealth. But their greater inequality also meant that more governmental activity was needed to offset its effects, and this was the most important shift in Paine's thinking from *Common sense* to the *Rights of Man*' (95-6). Central to this shift, Claeys continues, was a recognition that the role of government increased

in proportion to the economic development of society, and an awareness that commerce in itself could not reduce the inequalities that inevitably accompanied economic growth.

In taking this position, Claeys attempts to pull Paine away from the Smithian libneral tradition in which Eric Foner and others have placed him. As early as *Common sense*, Claeys argues, Paine's views 'remained closer to classical republicanism than to the more purely commercial Whiggism of Hume and Smith' (46). The evidence for this interpretation, however, is very slim; it rests on a single paragraph in the pamphlet in which Paine argues that 'Commerce diminishes the spirit both of patriotism and military defence ... with the increase of commerce England hath lost its spirit' (Paine, *Common sense,* I, 36). Yet this runs against the entire grain of his other comments about commerce, and it is almost certainly another of Paine's tactical arguments to win his case; he began the paragraph by arguing that the 'infant state' of the colonies was actually an argument for independence, but had written the previous year about America's 'large advances to manhood' (*Pennsylvania Magazine*, February 1775). Claeys, it would seem, has fallen into the familiar trap of elevating the pragmatic to the level of the philosophical. One could just as plausibly argue on the strength of his remark in *Common sense* about William the Conqueror being a 'French bastard' (Paine, *Common sense*, I, 14) that Paine should be located within the 'Norman Yoke' tradition.

Turning to the *Rights of Man*, Claeys maintains that natural law concepts of 'positive liberty', and 'social reciprocity' provided the intellectual foundations of the book's welfare proposals, and moved Paine still further from the world of Adam Smith. 'Paine's "liberalism",' he believes, 'requires an entirely different context from that usually assigned it' (97). The argument is intriguing but inconclusive – although it is certainly stronger than Fruchtman's effort to find Rousseauist influences behind the social chapter. Part of the difficulty arises from Claeys's notion of an 'entirely different context' for Paine's thought. Paine and Smith did in fact have much in common, as Claeys himself recognizes; similarly, the contexts could easily blur into one another, and one can find the concepts of positive liberty and social reciprocity within Smithian liberalism.

Given the absence of direct evidence for the influence of natural law traditions on Paine, Claeys's argument necessarily remains speculative, although his inferences are of the highest intellectual order. Ironically, this may in itself constitute a problem, since the effect is to underplay the impact of immediate experience on Paine's social programme. Equally questionable is Claeys's assertion that Paine by 1792, 'began to conceive ... poverty was to some degree, and particularly in old countries, the natural result of commerce rather than of governmental wickedness' (99). The only evidence that Paine may have thought this way comes from one paragraph in *Agrarian justice*, which he wrote in the winter of 1795-6. And it remains significant that Paine's primary target was landed property, rather than commercial wealth.

More persuasive is Claeys's discussion of the debate that swirled around the *Rights of Man*. The analysis is perceptive and the research is comprehensive, although it is a pity that Charles Elliott's *The republican refuted* (London, 1791) escaped his attention; as a piece of scandal-mongering, muck-raking journalism, it far surpasses anything produced by the modern tabloids. As Claeys demonstrates, the loyalist case against Paine was full of misrepresentations, patronizing appeals to the poor, and 'crude moralizing' (153). He is careful to point out that loyalism should not be confused with Toryism, and shows that much of the reaction against the *Rights of* Man derived from reconstructed Whiggism. Strangely, though, Claeys has no problems in describing the American loyalists who reacted against *Common sense* as Tories, which most of them manifestly were not.

Central to the Whig position, Claeys contends, was the view that inequality of property was inextricably associated with Britain's commercial prosperity. Paine, of course, had not advocated social levelling. But his opponents feared that his democratic republicanism would subvert property relations, and were convinced that many of Paine's readers would interpret his writings to mean equality of property. As Claeys argues, 'the way in which books are read is often as important a part of their composite social "meaning" as what the author's intended' (110). And for the Whigs, who were rapidly moving away from natural rights theory towards 'a more deeply, determinately historical, sceptical and

utilitarian view' of society (154), it seemed clear that popular readings of the *Rights of Man* could easily culminate in social revolution *à la mode de Paris.*

Claeys finishes his book with an excellent chapter on Paine's legacies, and the 'creation of the mythical Paine' (211). This subject is clearly worth a volume in itself; Paine came to serve a variety of symbolic purposes, and his writings became a kind of magic box out of which almost anything could be taken. During the nineteenth century, there were Paine-Cobbett, Paine Carlile and Paine-Bone traditions; in our own time, Paine's writing have been quoted by Ronald Reagan to justify America's so-called 'Star Wars' programme, and by Michael Foot to defend Britain's welfare state from Thatcherite attacks. A social history of the transmission and transmutation of Paine's thought over the last two hundred years is crying out to be written, if anyone is courageous enough to answer the call.

It is also time for a comprehensive new edition of Paine's writings. The standard work is Philip S Foner's *The complete writings of Thomas Paine* (New York, 1945), which contains not only all of Paine's principal writings, but also most of his extant letters. Yet Foner has many flaws. It includes a number of pieces not actually written by Paine, abandons the original orthography, occasionally omits entire sentences, sometimes misdates letters, arranges the material in a thematic rather than chronological order, and is poorly indexed. Although it is the fullest edition, it is a slipshod work, and ought to be replaced. Above all, we need a published collection of Paine's papers along the same lines as those that exist for Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton. Richard Gimbel's collection at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia should provide the obvious starting point, and the task should be undertaken sooner rather than later.

In the meantime, Paine students can benefit from the new selected editions that have come out. Gregory Claeys's reproduction of the *Rights of Man* (Indianapolis, 1992) has a useful introduction, in which Paine is described as a 'major political theorist' (xxiv), along with good notes on the text; unfortunately there is no index. Eric Foner's *Paine: collected writings* (New York, 1995), is particularly strong on the American side, but omits

some of Paine's key English writings during the 1790s. The best recent edition is Mark Philp's *Thomas Paine: Rights of Man, Common sense and other political writings* (Oxford, 1995), which combines a fine introduction with excellent notes and a good index. After the dubious arguments of Fruchtman, the suffocating language of Davidson and Scheick, and the dense pack of analysis of Claeys, it is a joy to read the clear air of Philp's prose. Like Keane, he has an excellent feel for his subject. 'Paine was not an abstract political theorist.' Philp writes, 'nor is it easy to identify those thinkers by whom he was influenced ... His political philosophy is less the product of a system and more a response to the polemical cut and thrust of contemporary political controversy ... There is, however, a basic touchstone for Paine's thinking, namely, his enduring intellectual and personal investment in his distinctive understanding of the American Revolution.' Such words serve as a useful antidote to the excessive theorizing that characterizes so much recent Paineite historiography.

Precisely why the historiography has taken such theoretical turn – Keane and Philp notwithstanding – remains difficult to ascertain. Fruchtman claims that his work represents an advance over Eric Foner; in fact, it is more like a retreat from the social history of ideas that Foner espouses. Davidson and Scheick take Paine so far from earth that their book reads like the view from the flying island of Laputa. Claeys work is much more sophisticated, but his argument is too intellectual for its own good. The combined effect is to represent Paine as an artisan of the floating word, in an imagined world where ideas influence ideas, lived experiences assume secondary importance, polemics become translated into philosophy, and simple language is made to bear impossible interpretive burdens. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, historians like E P Thompson, Gwyn A Williams and Eric Foner were engaged in a serious effort to connect Paine to radical social movements that his own writings helped to transform. Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of their enterprise, it was at least informed by a sense of social engagement and contemporary political relevance. In our more conservative era, such sense is in a state of serious decline. And once Paine is detached form his social and political context, his work can easily become little more than

interesting intellectual fodder for academics, or a pawn in a postmodern game. Such a tendency is particularly pronounced in the Davidson and Scheick interpretation, although there are elements of it in Fruchtman as well, and Claeys is not totally immune. It is heartening, however, that people like Keane and Philp continue to write with their feet on the ground; in probing the connection between experience and idea, their work is characterized by nothing if not common sense. May the future lie with them.

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> 'The present Atheism is a promiscuous Miscellany of all the bold Notions that have ever been vented by those who are stiled Free-thinkers'.
> Francis Gastrell, *The certainty and necessity of religion in general* (2nd.ed., London, 1703), 248.

> 'Doth a detection of Knavery in some, prove all Men Cheats? Or because Mahomet was an Impostor, must needs Jesus Christ be no better.'
> Benjamin Bayly, *The Truth of the Christian Revelation, prov'd from the Nature and Greatness of its Miracles,; and of the Usefulness and Necessity of Creeds in general, in opposition to Deists and Free-Thinkers* (London, 1713), 7

> 'That the Notion of a God did not, nor could not, arise from Cunning and Contrivance; and that it was not invented by any crafty and politick Person. Though, that it did do so, is the constant Assertion of these Gentlemen; and they do it with as much Assurance, as if it were a self-evident Proposition. In all Companies they will nauseously tire you with this Battology, over and over again, That All Religion is a Cheat, and the greatest Cheat of all is Religion. . . . Now after all this bold and repeated Exclamation against Priest-craft and holy Shams, &c. would not one think they had some demonstrative Ground, to prove that the Notion of a God, and Religion is all a Cheat and Imposture?'
> Dr. J. Harris, Boyle lectures for 1698, in *A defence of natural and revealed religion* (3 vols., London, 1739), I,380.

In *The radical enlightenment* Margaret Jacob claims that the 'infamous' *Traité des trois imposteurs* — a clandestine work which circulated widely in manuscript and printed form in the eighteenth

century — is 'unsurpassed' as a guide to the radical enlightenment'.[1] In her account of the radical enlightenment and *Traité*'s role in illuminating it, Jacob focuses her attention on 'a cast of interesting, if so-called minor characters', consisting largely of 'literary journalists or political propagandists . . . intellectual and political radicals' in the Dutch Republic in the early decades of the 18th century.[2]

This cast includes the Rotterdam Quaker merchant, Benjamin Furly, a close friend of Locke, Shaftesbury and Bayle, who possessed a manuscript of *Traité*. Other members are Michael Böhm, who, with Gaspard Fritsch, purchased the publishing house of Reinier Leers and succeeded him as the premier publishers of Bayle's works, and the Huguenot bookseller and reputed Spinozist Charles Levier, who briefly succeeded Fritsch as Böhm's partner. In 1711 Levier transcribed Furly's manuscript which also included an hagiographic life of Spinoza, believed to be the work of a French émigré journalist strongly opposed to Louis XIV, Jean Maximilien Lucas. Levier published the manuscript in 1719 under the title *La vie et l'esprit de Mr. Benoit de Spinosa*, adding passages to the text of *l'esprit* extracted from Pierre Charron and Gabriel Naudé, 'deux célébres Modernes . . . qu'ils disent des Choses aussi libres & aussi fortes que nous.'[3] Levier sold few copies — his asking price was very high — and the remainders were destroyed after his death.[4] A second and seemingly independent edition was published by Böhm in 1721, under the more familiar title of *Traité des trois imposteurs*. That essentially

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1 Margaret Jacob, *Radical enlightenment*, (London, 1981), 55.

2 Jacob, *Radical enlightenment*, 20.

3 Silvia Berti, *Trattato de tre impostori, la vita e lo spirito del Signor Benedetto de Spinoza* (Turin, 1994), 152-54. Levier apparently collaborated in this venture with Thomas Johnson, a Scot bookseller in the Hague, famous for his pirated editions of English literary classics and works by free-thinkers such as John Toland and Anthony Collins.

4 Berti, 'The first edition of the *Traité des trois imposteurs*, and its debt to Spinoza's *Ethics*', in eds. Michael Hunter and David Wootton, *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, (Oxford, 1992), 197-99. More precisely, only copies of *l'esprit* were destroyed.

the same work could appear under both titles, jointly reflecting two illicit streams of thought, is itself significant.[5]

Valuable evidence about, together with acidic sketches of, those responsible for the early publication of *l'esprit* and *Traité* comes from the surviving papers and publications of another Huguenot refugee connected with the book trade, Prosper Marchand. Described by one acquaintance as 'un homme exacte',[6] he achieved a reputation as one of the principal guardians of Bayle's heritage. His study 'Impostoribus (Liber de tribus)', written in Bayle's historical-critical style and aptly described by Berti as 'an Ariadne's thread for any scholar lost in this labyrinth', is reprinted as an appendix to *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and free thought in early-eighteenth-century Europe*, a wide ranging and important book of papers arising from a seminar devoted to *Traité* in which Anderson participated and from which his book is a descendant.[7]

Jacobs' 'free-thinking' coterie was linked internationally to sympathetic thinkers elsewhere who, in England, included John Toland and Anthony Collins.[8] Jacob contrasts their outlook with another, better known stream of enlightenment culture centring on Newton and Newtonians like Samuel Clarke. However unorthodox the Newtonians seemed to contemporaries over the doctrine of the Trinity and however strong their advocacy of freedom of thought, religious toleration and the primacy of reason, they were strongly committed to a sophisticated dualism in which inert matter requires

[5] Jacob believes still another member, Jean Rousset de Missy, was the author/compiler of the core text of *Traité* (Jacob, *Radical enlightenment*, 218). Berti forcefully argues for the candidacy of Jan Vroesen ('The first edition', 205-9).

[6] So described by the Huguenot copy editor cum literary agent, Charles de La Motte, to Pierre Des Maizeaux, Marchand's rival to Bayle's heritage. See British Library, Add.Ms. 4286/167-68, La Motte to Des Maizeaux, 1 March 1712 (N.S.).

[7] Berti, 'The first edition', 194. S Berti, F Charles-Daubert and R. H. Popkin, eds., *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and free thought in early-eighteenth century Europe: studies on the Traité des trois imposteurs,* Dordrecht, 1996.

[8] For some of the English links, see R H Vermij, 'The English deists and the *Traité*', in *Heterodoxy*, 241-54.

the continuous intervention of an immaterial, intelligent and providential God distinct from the universe he created through his own unnecessitated free-will.

Notable in God's creation are human beings endowed with immaterial, immortal souls with free-will. In the corrupt state of the world, they need God's revelation, unique to Christianity, for salvation in a future state where those obeying God's will are rewarded while those turning their backs on him are punished. For Clarke, the intellectual achievements of the greatest ancients, such as Plato, are mere fumblings by comparison to the discoveries made possible by Christian revelation, even when truths discovered with its assistance might be discoverable in principle by reason alone. Christian revelation also supplies a motivational authority which powerfully strengthens the determination to live a virtuous life and considerably overmatches the best ancient ethics has to offer. The political extension of this Newtonian world view, Jacobs argues, is an enlightened, albeit monarchical, anti-republican social and political order.

Clarke's enlightened Newtonianism attacks the atheism it attributes to Hobbes, Spinoza and their followers like Toland. He sees his Boyle lectures — perhaps his most ambitious philosophical undertaking — as a crushing refutation of their philosophies.[9] In his turn, Clarke was challenged by free-thinkers like Anthony Collins, who is notable for his sustained defense of free-thinking and corresponding exposure of 'priestcraft', the power of his attack on revelation, his defense of the compatibility of liberty with necessity and his skeptical challenge to purported proofs of the soul's immateriality. Collins' magnificent library included a manuscript copy of 'La vie et l'esprit de Mr. Benoit de Spinosa' which he probably obtained during his first visit to Holland in 1710.[10] Immediately after his return, his intimate friend, Pierre Des

[9] Samuel Clarke, *A demonstration of the being and attributes of God: more particular concerning the unchangeable obligations of natural religion, and the truth and certainty of the Christian revelation* (London, 1706).

[10] Kings College, Cambridge, Keynes Ms.217, p.431 and cross-referenced on p.280. When Collins' library was eventually auctioned by his widow, the manuscript was not listed in the sales catalogues.

Maizeaux, began to include 'La vie de Spinosa' in the projected contents of a collection of lives, which he had been hoping to publish for some time.[11] In 1712 Des Maizeaux sent a fragment of 'La vie' to Charles de La Motte, who was so shocked that he remonstrated with Des Maizeaux not to ask him to use his good offices to arrange for its publication.[12] Des Maizeaux eventually published it in *Nouvelles littéraires* in 1719, the same year Levier — another friend of Collins — published the complete manuscript.[13] La Motte's reaction was in tune with the public pulse. The publication of 'La vie' produced an outcry, which the periodical's editor, Henri du Sauzet, attempted to silence with an abject apology.[14]

L'esprit, or *Traité*, totally rejects the Newtonian-Clarkean philosophy. It is materialist and necessitarian, and turns its back on providence through its rejection of final causes as human fictions. Its God, far from possessing the status of an independent creator, is immanent in nature and no creator at all. It is a mistake to attribute personal traits to God, moral ones such as justice and mercy included. Nor does its God reward or punish. If this sounds more like brash assertion than sustained argument, so, for the most part, it is. The work's power derives from the bare-faced assertion of propositions it does not view itself as having to defend. For it, once the powerful force of prejudice and superstition is removed, truths like these are easily discoverable (albeit not within everyone's

[11] The origins of this project reach back to Des Maizeaux's correspondence with Bayle who offered strong encouragement. Des Maizeaux's rival, Prosper Marchand, was well informed about the project, knowing that it included the life of Spinoza (Bayle, Pierre, *Lettres choisies de Mr. Bayle* (3 vols., Rotterdam, 1714), Bayle to Des Maizeaux, 29 June 1706 (N.S.), III, 932-36).

[12] British Library, Add.Ms. 4286/173, 19 April 1712 (N.S.). In his letter La Motte notes that he had recently rejected an opportunity to copy edit an edition of Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. Such was his scorn for Spinoza that he wished to have no role in any work favourable to him.

[13] Collins' surviving letters to Levier dating from 1713-14 testify to the warmth of their friendship. They are in the Marchand Papers at Leiden.

[14] British Library, Add.Ms. 4288/33, 17 October 1719 (N.S.), Henri du Sauzet to Des Maizeaux.

reach) — indeed impossible to miss — without need for speculation or unusual penetration. *Traité* betrays no temptation to embrace a skepticism about the possibility of knowledge or the human capacity to discover it.[15] When it argues, it argues crudely.[16] It rejects claims of the soul's immateriality based on a view of it as a harmony of parts of the body, for example, on the ground that 'one calls corporeal not only what is body, but also . . . form or accident, or [what] cannot be separated from matter.' For Newtonians, these positions are tantamount to atheism — the use of 'God' notwithstanding — since they deny to God attributes necessary to merit the designation.

Traité's metaphysical claims support its account of the origin of religious belief. For it, religious belief in general is antipathetic to natural law and right reason. It emerges as a response to human hopes and fears, projecting a realm of purposive, incomprehensible, incorporeal spirits modeled after ourselves by the exercise of imagination unconstrained by reason. This human vulnerability mires most people in ignorance and makes them prey to the impostures of masterful manipulators, the founders of religions, as well as of the priests and the politicians who are parasitic upon them. These manipulators pretend to a special relation with God and support their claim with bogus prophecies and miracles. *Traité* dismisses out of hand all claims that God has revealed his will to them.

It is not just the rejection of revelation, but its attacking style in spoofing Moses, Christ and Mohammed as three especially notable impostors and tricksters that makes *Traité* shocking. When *Traité* focuses on Christianity, it dismisses not only Christ's divinity, but prefers the morality and philosophical outlook of the ancient philosophers to that of Christ. For it, the story of Christ is 'a contemptible fable & . . . his law is nothing but a tissue of dreamings which ignorance brought into fashion, which interest maintains, & which tyranny protects.'[17] Indeed, Christ merited the punishment he suffered at the hands of his persecutors.[18] It

[15] See Berti, 'Scepticism', 217.

[16] See especially Anderson, 4, but the theme runs through *Traité*.

[17] Anderson, 26.

[18] Anderson, 5.

menacingly adds: 'If the people could understand into what an abyss ignorance throws it, it would soon shake off the yoke of its unworthy leaders, for it is impossible to let reason act without its discovering the truth.'[19] Imposture, however, takes care not to let this happen, doing its utmost to rid the world of esprits forts, that is free thinkers.[20] The stark choice for those who discover the absurdity of religion is to disguise the truth or risk persecution.[21] *Traité* declares for the latter.[22]

In reality, *Traité* is largely a 'pastiche' or 'collage' of texts drawn eclectically from the works of Spinoza (including the *Ethics*), Hobbes, Vanini, Gabriel Naudé, La Mothe le Vayer, Guillaume Lamy, and others.[23] Texts from Spinoza and Hobbes in particular support much of the work's philosophical framework and its general account of the origin of religion.[24] Little wonder, then, that it could bear the title *l'esprit de Spinosa*. But its account of the three impostors and of the theory of imposture, according to Berti and Anderson, draws on other sources, notably the French libertin érudit tradition and its paradigm apologist for the use of religious imposture to justify princely rule, Gabriel Naudé.[25]

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[19] Anderson, 4.

[20] Anderson, 21.

[21] Anderson, 3.

[22] Anderson, 42.

[23] Berti, 'Scepticism and the Traité des trois imposteurs', in eds. Richard Popkin and Arjo Vanderjagt, *Scepticism and irreligion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Leiden, 1993), 221-22; see also her valuable notes to *Trattato de tre impostori*.

[24] See Dr. J Harris, Boyle lectures for 1698, in *A defence of natural and revealed religion* (3 vols., London, 1739), I, 376-77, who also cites both Spinoza and Hobbes to much the same effect, as well as the source of their view in Lucretius.

[25] Berti, 'The first edition', 209-10; on Naudé, see Anderson, 76, where he describes Naudé as a religious and moral skeptic. Anderson does not distinguish what he characterizes as the court-Machiavellianism of Naudé from those like Vanini who may have recognized imposture for what it is without approving or seeking to justify it (Anderson, 98;100). For a contrasting account of Vanini, see Giovanni Papulo's entry in *The encyclopedia of unbelief*, (2 vols., Buffalo, 1985), II, 710-13, who

The theory of imposture can also be grounded in Hobbes' *Leviathan*. Hobbes pointedly remarks: 'the first Founders, and legislators of commonwealths . . . have in all places taken care; First, to imprint in [the minds of the people] a beliefe, that those precepts which they gave concerning Religion, might not be thought to proceed from their own device, but from the dictates of some God, or other Spirit; or else that they themselves were of a higher nature than mere mortalls, that their Lawes might the more easily be received: so Numa Pompilius pretended to receive the ceremonies he instituted among the Romans, from the Nymph Egeria'.[26] Hobbes, however, is careful to disallow *Traité*'s application of the theory. He restricts his account to gentile religion and, perhaps more significantly, views the objective of imposture as not just securing personal obedience to a sovereign, but civil peace. The Hobbist sovereign enjoys a right to impose a civil religion. The notion that his successful exercise of this right can confer on the people a basis to shake off his yoke is a thought foreign to his philosophical intentions.

Traité, by contrast, offers no hint of such a possible justifying purpose. Nor does it countenance libertine justifications based on the limits of the rational capacity of people generally, an argument which can trace its ancestry to the 'noble lie' of Plato's *Republic*.[27] The people are not as incapable of right reason as this self-serving view supposes.[28] For *Traité*, religious imposture aims at despotic subjection, pure and simple. The role of those who would teach the people is to open its eyes and mind by 'rectifying its false reasonings, & . . . destroying its prejudices'.

If *Traité* is a collage, it is as notable for what it does not adopt from its sources as for what it does. This is true not just of Hobbes, but of Spinoza, whose view is straightforwardly assimilated to materialism, appropriated without the metaphysical arguments which made his position philosophically compelling and used to

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represents him not only as exposing the 'unjust privileges' of imposture, but also as a proselytiser for his own views.

[26] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I, 12.

[27] Anderson, 76; 98. See also 116, n.48 where Anderson cites Naudé's appeal to Plato for support of this argument.

[28] Anderson, 4.

attack even Christ's moral credentials.[29] Rejecting final causes, moreover, *Traité* praises Plato's non-creationist account of the establishment of the world order by a divine craftsman. It appropriates whatever suits its largely destructive purposes, not those of its sources. This, indeed, is what collage aspires to do: illuminate the possibilities of its materials by placing them in unexpected settings and juxtapositions.

The tradition of the three impostors reaches as far back as Averroës and Frederick II, and was skeptically examined by the French poet and antiquarian, Bernard de la Monnoye. He concludes that a printed book entitled *de tribus impostoribus* never existed, notwithstanding persistent claims linking it to numerous authors. An early version of his inquiry was sent to Bayle who praised it, embraced its conclusion and encouraged its publication.[30] An expanded version eventually appeared in *Menagiana* (1715).[31] La Monnoye argues that claims about such a book — he is careful to distinguish those like Averroës who subscribed to such a thesis from the existence of a printed book — have been persistently made by writers who accuse intellectual adversaries of being its author and rely on public credulity to accept their claim. Anyone who subscribed to the thesis of the three impostors, of course, would tell the same story about how they achieved their own influence. Among the free-thinking figures to whom it was attributed, according to La Monnoye, were Michael Servetus, Bernard Ochin and Vanini, notorious as a martyr for his alleged

[29] See Berti, 'Scepticism', for telling examples; see also 'The first edition', 189-90 and the reference to Vernière's account of the relation between Spinoza and *Traité* in *Spinoza et la pensée Française avant la Revolution* (2 vols., Paris, 1954), II, 362-65.

[30] *Mr. Bayle's Historical and critical dictionary*, (5 vols., London, 1734-38), I, 437, n.G; V, 536-37, n.B. Bayle was impressed by La Monnoye who provided him with valuable help with the second edition of his *Dictionnaire* in particular. See the references to and the letters Bayle addressed to him in *Pierre Bayle: oeuvres diverses*, ed. Elisabeth Labrousse (4 vols., Hildesheim, 1968), IV.

[31] Anderson, 81, n.2, claims that a version of La Monnoye's piece was also published in *Mémoires de littérature*, vol.1, pt.2, art.vii. It does not appear there in the copy I consulted.

atheism. La Monnoye also notes variants of the thesis which identify the impostors with heterodox figures and, in one version, the English deist Herbert of Cherbury, Hobbes and Spinoza. *Traité*, whose text was contemporary, combines the original thesis with its inversion: the philosophical 'impostors' Hobbes and Spinoza are impressed into service to expose the religious ones: Moses, Christ and Mohammed, whatever their own philosophical intentions.

Anderson's book includes a translation of *Traité* based on an edition published in 1777.[32] He selects it not because of any special feature of its text of *Traité*, but because of three pieces published with it in the same volume, as in the 1768 edition from which the 1777 edition derives.[33] For Anderson, these pieces constitute a 'dossier' which illuminates the meaning and significance of *Traité*. For him, *Traité* is anything but 'a free standing work of radical propaganda. Rather, its publication forms part of a satirical campaign directed against the conformist libertine intelligentsia of the France of Louis XIV, who saw religion as a device for enforcing monarchical control.'

The 'dossier' includes La Monnoye's dissertation on the three impostors which issues a challenge to those skeptical of its thesis to 'show & demonstrate that one has seen [the three impostors' treatise], otherwise this is no more authentic than hearsay, to which one must reduce all the Authors, of whom mention has been made up to now in this dissertation.'[34] It also includes a satirical acceptance of this challenge, *Réponse* (1716), whose author not

[32] The translation is intended for non-specialists. But while it translates from the French, it oddly leaves occasional Latin passages in the original. For the needs of the non-specialist, textual notes are economical to a fault; and, given the work is a 'pastiche', it does not supply a key to the borrowings as does Berti in her edition. Anderson refers interested readers to her edition, but that is an awkward expedient, since her notes are in Italian for a different text. Her translation has the merit of having Italian translation and French text on facing pages.

[33] Anderson selects the 1777 edition in particular because it has already been reprinted in Pierre Rétat, ed., *Traité des trois imposteurs, manuscript clandestin de XVIIIe siècle* (Saint-Étienne, 1973).

[34] Anderson, 46.

only claims to have read the medieval Latin manuscript of *de tribus impostoribus*, but to have translated it — claims contemporaries like Marchand dismissed as preposterous. He describes its contents, chapter by chapter. The third item is a note of uncertain date and provenance which falsely claims to have originated from *Mémoires de littérature* and exposes *Réponse* as itself fraudulent, since *Traité* plainly reflects the 'new philosophy' whose rise traces back only to the mid-17th century. Exposé of exposé: how much do they really help us understand *Traité*?

Anderson's approach is entirely conditioned by his characterization of La Monnoye's dissertation as itself a prime instance of 'the game of libertine erudition' in which 'subversive or forbidden thoughts' are expressed 'under a learned disguise', in this case denial of the existence of a printed book which expresses them.[35] The rubric 'libertin érudit' — coined to cover the early seventeenth-century standard bearers of skepticism such as Gabriel Naudé and La Mothe le Vayer — applies to La Monnoye even if he is a paler version.[36] *Traité*'s 'deeper purpose' is to expose him together with the libertin érudit tradition he represents, and reveal the ancient secret they accept, but seek to conceal: the imposture that is religion and acceptance of its necessary political role.[37]

This account of *Traité*'s purpose may strike some, myself included, as obscuring a more obvious aim: stripping the disguise from the three impostors. To strip the disguise from the libertins érudits who grasped this 'truth' *may* be part of what *Traité* does, although the recognition of the political role of imposture — whether or not with approval — extends well beyond them as La Monnoye himself was at pains to make clear. But to identify it as central is to approach *Traité* more as a literary text — whether itself a satire or an element in a satirical campaign — than as a deeply anti-religious, anti-

[35] Anderson, 94.

[36] For the relation of the libertins érudits to the skeptical tradition, see R H Popkin, *The history of scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (rev.ed., Assen, 1964), 89-112. Popkin notes instructively about Naudé that 'it is almost impossible to determine the religious views of Naudé', who may have been a libertine or a Catholic fideist (92).

[37] Anderson, 103.

Christian tract whose threat to believers as victims of a hoax is palpable. Moreover, whether *Traité* strips a disguise from religious libertines who hide what they believe to be true, or whether, more opportunistically, it exploits what it finds useful in their writings, whatever their authors believed, by stripping away saving contexts or crucial qualifications matters little to its effect. Popkin instructively notes that 'it is almost impossible to determine the religious views of Naudé', who may have been a libertine or a Catholic fideist.[38]

In any case, by the time the 1768 edition of *Traité* was published, Naudé — Anderson's paradigm of the libertin érudit — was largely forgotten, according to Voltaire.[39] This points to a lacuna in Anderson's analysis. For in analysing the 'dossier', he focuses on events and publications prinicipally from 1715-1716, close in time to the 1719 and 1721 editions of *l'esprit* and *Traité* respectively.[40] We are not told, however, about what significance their republication would have in 1768 or 1777.

In any event, Naudé can be directly linked to *Traité* independently of La Monnoye, since the 1719 edition of *l'esprit*, extensively borrows from him as well as from Montaigne's protégé, Pierre Charron. In Charron's case, Silvia Berti has compellingly shown through a comparison of passages in *l'esprit* and Charron's own writings that *l'esprit* quotes selectively, scrupulously ignoring 'the passages in favour of Christianity', a characteristic fate of apologetical works.[41] Given Naudé's centrality to Anderson's commentary, the 1719 edition seems better suited for his purposes, even if it does not include the 'dossier'. Even so, it represents the passages it appropriates from him and Charron as accessories which assert 'des Choses aussi libres & aussi fortes que nous.'

Back to the "dossier" and Anderson's characterization of La Monnoye as a libertin érudit. Anderson defends his view through a series of increasingly speculative 'suggestions', 'suppositions' and

[38] R H Popkin, *The history of scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes*, (rev.ed., Assen, 1964), 92.

[39] *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, XIV, 110.

[40] Anderson, 102.

[41] Berti, 'Scepticism', 227-29.

'almost seems' — the expressions are his — which take their start from Albert Henri de Sallengré's parody of La Monnoye in the pages of *Mémoires de littérature* and elsewhere. This parody sets the stage for processing the dissertation's claims through the psychology of denial. In this light, La Monnoye's defence of authors against the charge that they wrote this treatise shows that he not only agrees with the thesis that religion is an illusion, but also that he is determined to hide or repress it. Indeed, 'it almost seems' to Anderson that La Monnoye's real intention is to show, albeit self-refutingly, that the thesis is unthinkable.[42] What else motivates his determined hunt for and rejection of claims about the existence of such a treatise? Has not his own scholarship been devoted to the prudish censoring of the work of Gilles Ménage in the *Ménagiana*?

By means of this thread-bare psychoanalytic scaffolding, Anderson sketches a picture of La Monnoye as a libertin érudit bent upon repression. The charge might be in order if La Monnoye knew that one or more of the putative authors of this work had actually written it. But there is no such showing. This sketch, moreover, does not even cohere well with La Monnoye's method of defending his thesis. For even as he denies that such a book was *printed*, he expressly catalogues and brings to light those like Averroës who stated, indeed publicly subscribed to, either its thesis or a similar one. He plausibly contends that if the work had been printed, there ought to be more compelling evidence of its having existed, whether or not copies survive, because it would have been placed on the Index or prosecuted. It is a sentiment with which *Traité* agrees. In reality, the 'dossier' is more plausibly viewed as illuminated by *Traité* rather than vice versa.

In contextualizing *Traité*, Anderson's commentary constantly leads the reader away from its text to the 'dossier', the *Mémoires de littérature*, Sallengré, Marchand's catalogue to his private library and beyond. The critical analysis of Marchand's catalogue, however, serves a useful purpose by challenging one of Jacob's arguments. For her, *Traité*'s significance lies in its blend of Spinozist pantheism and political radicalism. For it views all laws not sanctioned by natural law as 'human fictions, & pure illusions

[42] Anderson, 95-97.

given birth . . . by the politics of Princes & of Priests.'[43] If the people could properly grasp this, in a remark quoted earlier, 'it would soon shake off the yoke of its unworthy leaders'.[44] In *Traité*'s politics Jacob finds 'the philosophical foundation for republican and even democratic philosophies of government.'[45] For her, *Traité* is anti-absolutist, sanctions political rebellion, accepts religious toleration and views legitimate political authority as based on a contract among social equals.[46]

Since the text of *Traité*, while suggestive, doesn't easily yield this theory and is largely silent on what natural law sanctions, Jacob relies on other arguments to support her view, notably an analysis of Marchand's bibliographical scheme which juxtaposes *Réponse* with an earlier republican tract, *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*. She argues that it asserts the people's right through their magistrates to rise in rebellion against their persecutors.[47] For her, Marchand's juxtaposition of *Réponse* with *Vindiciae* shows that he viewed them as asserting the same political doctrine, *Réponse* serving as a surrogate for *Traité*.

Anderson refutes Jacob's claims by observing that the work Marchand lists is not *Vindiciae*, but one about its authorship. What links it to *Réponse* is their mutual concern with the *authorship* of political works, not a joint commitment to a program of political radicalism. This point, however, does not occasion a deeper search of *Traité*'s text for its political theory or a consideration of whether it has one, aside from the exposure of the political use of religious imposture and musings about the possible consequences of that uncovery: points obvious from the face of the text alone. The conclusion Anderson draws, however, is instructive: 'The fact that Marchand treats the *Réponse* as a work of bibliography should perhaps be a sign to us: a sign that, in assessing the concerns of the *Traité des trois Imposteurs*, we should look first to the use of

[43] Anderson, 13; Jacob, *Radical enlightenment*, 221.
[44] Anderson, 4.
[45] Jacob, *Radical enlightenment*, 224.
[46] Jacob, *Radical enlightenment*, 226; 228.
[47] Jacob, *Radical enlightenment*, 225-28.

literature in the service of orthodoxy, and not of revolution.'[48] But why should it?

Anderson refutes the premise of Jacob's argument, but he retains its structure. As she draws inferences about *Traité* from Marchand's classification of *Réponse*, so likewise, it seems, does he. Berti has characterized *Réponse* as part of a 'brilliant advertising campaign' designed to promote interest in the *publication* of *Traité*.[49] All the more reason not to see them in the same light, for that risks confusing the advertisement with the copy advertised. After all, the former, far from illuminating the latter, may as easily serve to mask its force and significance, as authors have been known to complain.

Postscript: Since writing this review, there has appeared the important study of Françoise Charles-Daubert, *Le 'traité des trois imposteurs' et 'l'Esprit de Spinosa': philosophie clandestine entre 1678 et 1768*, (Oxford, 1999). Charles-Daubert not only examines the history and relations of the differing texts which circulated under titles like *l'Esprit de Spinosa* and *Traité des trois imposteurs*, which provides the foundation for a sophisticated living account of the texts and their sources, but publishes the major texts with an apparatus of variants.

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[48] Anderson, 81.
[49] Berti, 'The first edition', 197.

REVIEWS

Hartmut Lehmann & **Guenther Roth** eds., ***Weber's Protestant ethics: origins, evidence, contexts***, German Historical Institute, Washington D.C.; Cambridge, Cambridge University, 1993, hdbk, £50.00; 1995, pbk, xii + 397 pp, £17.95.

Few modern studies have generated more controversy than Max Weber's *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, first published in 1904-5, and this recent guide to Weber's work offers readers the best single point of entry into the debate. The book emerged out of a 1990 international conference that drew together eighteen scholars for the purpose of evaluating the current state of the discussion; historians and sociologists were evenly divided, as were American and European scholars. The book is organized around two themes: Part I examines the origins of Weber's thesis, particularly his use of resources and his development as a scholar, and on the whole, these studies make the more original contribution. Most of the articles are well documented, providing references for the most important studies of the last decade, especially in German. In the introductory survey, Guenther Roth helpfully provides detailed bibliograhical references and provisional insights on two aspects of the thesis neglected by other contributors to the volume: the use Weber made of Benjamin Franklin and Weber's dependence on George Jellinek's *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizen* (1895). Friedrich Wilhelm Graf examines Weber's working friendship with liberal theologians and church historians, giving particular attention to the contrast Weber drew between Calvinism and Lutheranism. In an essay based on an impressive range of reading, Paul Münch explores the long pre-history of the connection between Protestant religion, toleration and economic progress in the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. The late Thomas Nipperdy then looks at the immediate context of Weber's work in 1900 in terms of partisan confessionalism. Graf, Münch, and Nipperdy all illumine the anti-Catholic assumptions that reigned in Weber's writings. In a more biographical vein, Guenther Roth throws further light on the German ideological context and especially Weber's extended family connections with English capitalism, helpfully comparing

Weber's *Protestant ethic* with the less than pious practices of his more wealthy relatives.

Harry Liebersohn writes briefly on Weber's understanding of national identity, as separable from language, ethnicity, and race, while Hubert Treiber compares Nietzsche and Weber on the emerging disciplines of the humanities as over against the natural sciences, further contextualizing Weber's emphasis on the connection between religion and rationality through the exercise of self-control. Harvey S Goldman studies Weber's concept of the empowerment of the self for mastery of the world, and once again we see Weber writing with an eye on contemporary Germany. Klaus Lichtblau looks at the 'elective affinities' between Weber, Georg Simmel and Sigmund Freud and thereby shows that Weber's idealization of the this-worldly asceticism went far beyond a mere historical interest in historical explanation. Finally, Hartmut Lehmann examines the dialogue between Weber and Sombart and evaluates it in terms of mutual influence.

Part I reveals how profoundly Weber was a product of his age, and how thoroughly he was conditioned by the issues of the day; his ardent German nationalism; his Anglophilia; his reliance on Jellinek and others; his assumptions concerning the self and ascetism; and the ready reception his ideas enjoyed in an Anglo-Saxon audience will assist the critical reader in weighing the validity of a thesis that was so completely a product of its time. Throughout these essays we find clarifying references to the intellectual, political, and social contexts in which Weber worked, both broad ranging and specific. The rich texture of Weber's life is fully appreciated and his indebtedness to others is powerfully illumined. The last two essays of Part II really belong in the first half of the book as they deal with Weber's background and interests. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer looks at *The Protestant ethic* in connection with other aspects of Weber's thought, especially his work on world religions, and Hans Rollman concludes the volume with a fascinating narrative of the trip to America that Max and Marianne Weber took with Ernst Troeltsch in 1904.

Part II of the book takes up the old discussion of the viability of the thesis itself by bringing new evidence to bear from a variety of perspectives. Malcom H Mackinnon contentiously argues that the

thesis is wrong because Weber's assumptions concerning Puritan religion were wrong. Mackinnon attempts to demolish the thesis by the astonishing claim that the Puritans abandoned predestination and adopted a purely voluntaristic scheme of salvation. The essay is partially redeemed by a useful, if brief summary of the state of the debate through the 1980s with citations to most of the major studies. The following three essays respond in various ways to Mackinnon's attack. Mackinnon's misunderstanding of Puritan soteriology is thankfully corrected by David Zaret who convincingly re-establishes the traditional Calvinistic framework of thought upon which Weber relied. Kaspar von Greyerz's studied some sixty Puritan diaries and autobiographies and was impressed with the overall absence of direct references to predestination. Unlike Mackinnon, however, von Greyerz concludes that the Puritans were very interested in God's special activity in their daily lives and he thus detects an inner-worldly asceticism based upon God's love and providence that probably did contribute to rigorous self-control. But von Greyerz declines to infer any connection between such asceticism and the 'spirit of capitalism'. Guy Oakes provides an insightful rebuttal of Mackinnon by comparing Weber's work on *The Protestant ethic* with his later work on Protestant sects. In Weber's later work, the connection between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism does not rest on the doctrine or predestination, but on proof of one's belonging to the true church. Weber's thesis thereby rests, not on the precision of his analysis of Puritan theology, but on how a distinctive religious ethos influenced the rational conduct of life. In their attempt to understand Weber's contribution, both von Greyerz and Oaks convincingly emphasize the behaviour of the laity rather than the religious ideas of the elite.

Philip Benedict studies the reception of Weber's ideas in a broad survey of scholarship on Calvinism in early modern Europe. This essay shows that there is little connection between mainstream research on Calvinism and the Weber thesis outside of England, and Benedict concludes that the reason Weber has exerted only a small and declining influence on continental studies is connected in part to his own emphasis on English materials. In an examination of Puritans and Quakers in colonial America, James A Henretta

defends the basic structure of Weber's thesis when it is located in specific, socio-economic contexts. He finds sea-coast urban colonial society providing the necessary conditions that the rural countryside lacked. The essays by von Greyerz, Oaks and Henretta suggest that Weber overemphasized the necessity of a predestinarian scheme in the development of an inner-worldly asceticism. Henretta's research on the Arminian Quakers, for example, isolates the same essential psychological structures for the success of capitalism as the Calvinistic Puritans. Oakes and Henretta opt for a theoretically less detailed variety of the thesis, namely that the ethos of inner-worldly asceticism was incorporated into the lives of the common people through a variety of religious expectations. Indeed, Oakes astutely argues that this more generalized 'Protestant ethic' is an illustration of Weber's own awareness of the discrepancy we commonly find in history between people's intentions and the outcome of their actions. This broader appreciation of Weber's is highly compatible with Gianfranco Poggi's essay on the interior logic of the thesis and its connections. As with so many sociologists, Poggi defends Weber's thesis, not on the grounds of its power to explain the events of history in every case, but for its theoretical boldness and elegance. Taken together, for historians and sociologists, these essays go some distance to reaffirming the genius of Max Weber and they help account for the long-standing viability of his thesis.

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William McCarthy and **Elizabeth Kraft** eds, ***The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld*** (University of Georgia Press, 1994), 399 pp, 8 illus.; £58.50; $65.00.

'At century's end Barbauld may well have been the most eminent living poet, male or female, in Britain.' This is a large claim indeed but one which these enthusiastic editors surely substantiate in this authoritative volume. Barbauld was 'one of the most underrated writers of any sex from the period' claims Terry Castle in her review of Roger Lonsdale's *Eighteenth-century women poets* and

there is plenty of evidence here that her contemporaries thought so too. Praised by Joseph Priestley and envied by Oliver Goldsmith, she was often compared favourably with Dryden and Pope. Coleridge admired her greatly, Wordsworth confessed that he wished the final eight lines of her poem 'Life' had been of his own composing, and Dr Johnson lamented the severe loss to the literary world when she turned to teaching rather than writing. So why, one wonders, has it taken over one hundred years to produce an edition of her poems in her home country? Some it seems, while admiring her poems' 'justness of thought, and vigour of imagination', were nevertheless troubled by their lack of femininity. But it seems, rather predictably, that she suffered more from the age of the 'Major Romantics' and their resultant place in the canon which was working its way into the vitals of women's writing once more. But this was not the only reason for her obscurity. She was also the victim of a nineteenth-century reaction against the Enlightenment radicalism she and her milieu embodied, including the influence of Mary Wollstonecraft. (Inauspiciously, her future husband, Mr Barbauld refused to meet Mary Hays because she was stigmatized as a 'Wollstonecraftian'.) Versions of her hymns are still sung today. The editors offer a very compelling account of the publication history of attributed poems. Anna Aikin is known to have collaborated with her brother John on *Evenings at home, or the juvenile budget opened* (1792-6) but soon outstripped him. Nevertheless he probably, indirectly contributed to *Poems* (1773), by selecting, revising and arranging them into a collection. Six editions of *Poems* were brought out, 5 between 1773 and 1786 and 1 in 1792 and an American edition in 1829. The editors claim to offer this volume, in 'partial compensation for too many years of neglect'. This volume contains twenty-four poems additional to those previously published. We should be grateful to them for their meticulous searching and enthusiastic annotations. There is much evidence of fastidious editing.

The first time reader is assured a delight from the skilful blend of domestic detail, mock-heroic convention, autobiographical confession, and enthusiasm for technological innovation that characterizes just one poem: 'Washing Day' the opening lines from which follow:

The Muses are turned gossips; they have lost
The buskin'd step, and clear high-sounding phrase,
Language of Gods. Come, then, domestic Muse,
In slip-shod measure loosely prattling on
Of farm or orchard, pleasant curds and cream,
Or drowning flies, or shoe lost in the mire
By little whimpering boy, with rueful face;
Come, Muse, and sing the dreaded *Washing-Day*.

But it is the sheer range of subjects and tones which impresses: the rousing optimism of 'Corsica', the playful silliness of 'Surnames', the indignation of *Eighteen hundred and eleven* and so on.

Barbauld offers descriptions of domestic life and of nature, hymns and prayers as well as biting satire, riddles, odes and mock-heroic poetry. Not averse to remonstrating with Priestley about his use of animals in his experiments in 'The Mouse's Petition' she frequently used animals as metaphors for man's cruelty as in 'The Caterpillar' where the narrator is made to confront him/herself as oppressor. The poem is not an abstract petition but based on the physicality of close observation of the caterpillar which awakens a mercy which collective misery is powerless to inspire. In 1775 Anna Barbauld declared: 'It is the character of the present age to allow little to sentiment, and all the warm and generous emotions are to be treated as romantic by the supercilious brow of a cold-hearted philosophy'. A common occurrence is turned into a philosophical yet private debate and 'The Caterpillar' suggests the expansive humanity she displayed towards the underdog yet with little of the sentimentality which dominated the age.

No, helpless thing, I cannot harm thee now;
Depart in peace, thy little life is safe,
For I have scanned thy form with curious eye,
Noted the silver line that streaks thy back,
The azure and the orange that divide
Thy velvet sides; thee, houseless wanderer,
My garment has enfolded, and my arm
Felt the light pressure of thy hairy feet;

Thou hast curled round my finger; from its tip,
Precipitous descent! with stretched out neck,
Bending thy head in airy vacancy,
This way and that, inquiring, thou hast seemed
To ask protection; now, I cannot kill thee.
Yet I have sworn perdition to thy race,
And recent from the slaughter am I come
Of tribes and embryo nations: I have sought
With sharpened eye and persecuting zeal,
Where, folded in their silken webs they lay
Thriving and happy; swept them from the tree
And crushed whole families beneath my foot;
Or, sudden, poured on their devoted heads
The vials of destruction. -- This I have done,
Nor felt the touch of pity: but when thou, --
A single wretch, escaped the general doom,
Making me feel and clearly recognise
Thine individual existence, life,
And fellowship of sense with all that breathes, --
Present'st thyself before me, I relent,
And cannot hurt thy weakness. -- So the storm
Of horrid war, o'erwhelming cities, fields,
And peaceful villages, rolls dreadful on:
The victor shouts triumphant; he enjoys
The roar of cannon and the clang of arms,
The work of death and carnage. Yet should one,
A single sufferer from the field escaped,
Panting and pale, and bleeding at his feet,
Lift his imploring eyes, -- the hero weeps;
He is grown human, and capricious Pity,
Which would not stir for thousands, melts for one
With sympathy spontaneous: -- 'Tis not Virtue,
Yet 'tis the weakness of a virtuous mind.

This important edition not only presents long-lost poems but also reinstates an obscure milieu (there are 122 pages of welcome annotations). The edition is made up of the poems from *Poems* (1773) which were expanded by her niece, Lucy Aikin, into *Works*

(1825) and *A legacy for young ladies* (1826). However it is known that Lucy Aikin unfortunately suppressed some poems 'under the guidance of principles, both moral and literary'. Of the one hundred and seventy one poems contained in this edition twenty-four are previously unpublished. They also add eleven conjectural (and convincing) never published poems.

Barbauld's epitaph reads: 'In memory of Anna Laetitia Barbauld ... endowed by the giver of all good with wit, genius, poetic talent, and a vigorous understanding, she employed those high gifts in promoting the cause of humanity, peace and justice, of civil and religious liberty...' This volume amply demonstrates these features. It should be welcomed by all interested in women's poetry as well as late eighteenth / early nineteenth-century life and we should be grateful to the editors both for their fastidious editing and for removing Barbauld from the obscurity of unmerited neglect.

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Ruth Watts, ***Gender, power and the Unitarians 1760-1860***
Longman Higher Education, 1998, 236 pp, £19.99.

Although commentators such as Kathryn Gleadle, have done fine work in opening up the place of women within Unitarianism, Ruth Watts has again extended this study by looking at a period of one hundred years during which Dissenting women gained the confidence and courage to seize the education which was being offered to them. In this she has advanced the scope of her pioneering articles: 'Knowledge is Power - Unitarians, gender and education in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', 'Radical Dissent and the Emancipation of Women 1780-1860' and so on, which had already shown the 'coincidence' between Dissenting education interests and the development of a more emancipated female population.

This volume is in the Longman series 'Women and Men in History' and, like others in this series, is both readable and illuminating. Dr Watts shows that gender issues were an integral part of the larger fight for female acceptance which looked forward to feminism. The author makes this clear from the start when she

states that 'it will be the contention of this book that Unitarians played a significant role in changing ideas on women's abilities and what they could do'. She is successful in this by showing the reasons why this sea-change should occur at this particular time and then by offering well-known as well as more obscure examples to demonstrate the developments taking place.

The book is divided into two parts '1760-1815' and '1816-60' and into ten chapters covering general topics such as 'Unitarianism and education' to more specific ones such as 'Unitarians and education for the working class' which looks at the pioneering work of Mary Carpenter in her school at Bristol. Impressively, Dr Watts manages to capture the excitement of these hundred years. As well as an introductory context, each chapter demonstrates its arguments through a range of examples: Mary Wollstonecraft, Anna Barbauld, Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Carpenter and so on. Mary Wollstonecraft's inclusion is interesting as she held a very ambivalent stance towards the conventional religion of her youth, with its deistic tendencies, and towards Dissent. Indeed, her funeral service (which some refused to attend) was an Anglican one. However, Dr Watts argues convincingly that Wollstonecraft's attraction to Dissent and affinity with Unitarianisn was a simple and logical one: a foundation in sexual equality and its principles of education. As Watts puts it 'Education was the crucial agency of change leading to the growing of Unitarianism and giving its adherents the tools to forge the power they craved. Unitarians eagerly sought knowledge of all aspects of existence, optimistically certain that a millenarian dawn of peace, brotherhood and justice could be won by the unrestrained pursuit and propagation of truth'. With this agenda Unitarianism had to have developed out of earlier radical views, whether on religious, political or social issues. Indeed a strength of the book is that Dr Watts is able to securely position Unitarianism as a religious belief very clearly within the wider context of post-Enlightenment enquiry.

Perhaps the most attractive feature of Dissent for radical women was that they were psychologically able, indeed obliged, to question all assumptions including those about themselves, at least they were able to systematize ideas they had already formulated. One such idea was the inadequacy of female education. The

examples demonstrating changes in thinking are Joseph Priestley, William Frend and Robert Robinson of Cambridge who educated his daughters in the same way as his sons arguing that 'certainly the minds of women are capable of the same improvement and the same furniture as those of men'. Of course, underpinning this conviction was the link between virtue and morality and knowledge. Ruth Watts lucid exploration of this material is expressed with a clarity of prose which ensures that the book has something to offer to those familiar with the topic and to the newcomer. The general reader will probably be most interested in the final chapter 'Unitarians and gender issues in the 1850s: the seeds of feminism' which uses Elizabeth Gaskell as an example 'not only of the continuing networks which were so important to the development of Unitarian ideas and activities' but also, through for instance her access to the education and milieu of Manchester College, of the broader issues discussed in the book.

The series is directed at students, scholars and interested general readers and aims to 'redress the gender imbalances of the past' whilst this book is intended to make a 'substantial contribution to that process'. And it does.

A full bibliography covering general education and the Dissenting Academies, directs the reader to material as diverse as 'Joseph Priestley' and 'Unitarian Domestic Missions'. There is also an extremely useful glossary at the front of the book.

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Robert E Schofield, *The Enlightenment of Joseph Priestley. A Study of his Life and Work from 1733 to 1773,* The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1997. £39.95; $45.00.

In his *Essay on the First Principles of Government*, published in 1768, Joseph Priestley looked forward to the long-term effects of the Enlightenment:

> Thus all knowledge will be subdivided and extended; and *knowledge*, as Lord Bacon observes, being *power*, the human powers will, in fact, be enlarged; nature ... will be

> more at our command; men will make their situation in this world abundantly more easy and comfortable, they will probably prolong existence in it, and will grow daily more happy ... Thus whatever was the beginning of the world, the end will be more glorious and *paradisiacal*, beyond what our imaginations can now conceive.

Looking back from the disillusioned vantage point of the late twentieth century we need an effort of imagination to recover that sanguine faith in progress. Perhaps it is easier to understand if we remember the natural buoyancy of those on the rise. For the story of Priestley's early life is of social mobility, the tale of a gifted young man making his way in the world through hard work, character and personality. Born into a comfortable milieu of Yorkshire clothiers, Priestley had by 1773 made such a name for himself that he had received a pressing invitation to join the household of one of the most prominent members of the ruling class. This first volume of Robert Schofield's biography takes leave of him just as he is about to join Lord Shelburne as librarian, intellectual companion and superintendent of the education of the aristocrat's children.

The Enlightenment of Joseph Priestley is a happy choice of title, for in describing Priestley's escape from his inherited orthodoxies, the widening of the intellectual and social horizons and his insatiable faith in rational enquiry, Schofield well illustrates what 'enlightenment' meant in eighteenth century England, and especially its close and in some ways paradoxical relationship with Dissent. The strains involved in the development of 'Rational Christianity' are apparent right at the start of this book, for it begins with a personal drama: the day when, at the age of nineteen, Joseph Priestley was refused membership of the independent Chapel of Heckmondwicke to which all his family belonged, because the elders of the congregation considered him unsound on the sin of Adam. Having doubted Original Sin so young he would in later years grow more and more heretical, pushing Rational Dissent right into the territory of materialist Unitarianism. Crucially, however (and in sharp contrast to contemporaries like Bentham), Priestley's intellectual radicalism did not lead him to doubt Christianity itself,

still less to reject religion for atheism, and his humanistic faith in reason and progress was backed up by divine guarantees. He was able to pursue his critical enquiries inside Christian belief and ministry, above all because he could do so within the framework of the Dissenting academies.

Two of the most liberal academies figure prominently in the book; first that at Daventry, which Priestley attended as student, and then Warrington, where he worked as tutor in languages and *belles lettres* from 1761-1767. In between, his lack of success as a minister (to which heterodoxy and a stammer both contributed) prompted him to open a school and to embark on the pedagogical activities that were in some ways at the centre of his life. Schofield's account reminds us how much of Priestley's energies went into education. Many of his publications were explicitly pedagogical, for he was continually devising new courses or new ways of teaching, and whenever he did so he wrote up and published his findings. (On the very threshold of Britain's industrial and imperial expansion, we find him arguing like so many subsequent reformers that the country was falling behind foreign competition on account of the failings of its educational system). Many of his most widely read and republished writings were teaching aids, including the biographical chart that earned him his cherished LL.D. This pedagogical bent is visible throughout his career. Schofield observes that 'when Priestley learned something, he immediately wanted to teach it'. His first venture into natural science, *The History and Present State of Electricity,* published in 1767, can be seen as an extension of his work as a teacher and writer of textbooks, showing his talent for popularisation. That particular book went through five English editions and was translated in French and German. The downside of his skill as a publicist was a tendency to bite off more than he could chew, leading him to embark on ambitious projects and produce superficial results. Schofield is particularly severe on the sheer carelessness of his *History of Optics.*

But Priestley did of course have qualities that made him a genuinely creative scientist. Schofield comments on his independence of mind, and especially the 'fertility of experimental imagination that was to characterise his entire research career.'

One should perhaps add his infectiously exuberant interest in his discoveries (another pedagogical virtue), to say nothing of his energy and his capacity for sheer hard work. The amount of writing, teaching and preaching Priestley got through leaves one wondering when he ever had time to do any experiments. Schofield stresses that his great deficiency as a scientist lay in his weakness in maths. In that respect at least he was not in tune with the trend of intellectual progress in which he had so much faith.

That faith, together with the happy confidence in human nature that had expressed itself in his early unsoundness on Original Sin, no doubt accounts for his most quintessentially 'enlightened' characteristic, his conviction that the way to truth lay through public controversy. 'Whenever any opinion is freely canvassed in open daylight', he wrote in 1769, 'it will be easy to seen on which side truth lies.' In the later years covered by this volume, during his ministry at Mill Hill Chapel in Leeds, he became increasingly prominent as a controversialist on a wider variety of topics, especially theological and political. When he writes to his friend Lindsey, 'I heartily wish I had done with controversy', one may perhaps grant him sincerity while giving him low marks for self-knowledge. Two decades later the hostility he had attracted to himself by his polemical attacks on the established Church was revealed when a 'Church and King' mob destroyed his personal paradise, perhaps making him wonder whether the elders of Heckmondwicke had after all known a thing or two about the old Adam. As this volume ends, Priestley's chemical experiments have only just got into their stride, and he has just published the 'Observations on different kinds of Air' that made his international scientific reputation. Most of his mature work remains to be treated in the second volume. Readers of Robert Schofield's earlier publications on Priestley will not be surprised to find here a meticulously scholarly and readable account of the first forty years of his life, and will eagerly await the next instalment.

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Youth and Revolution in the 1790s. Letters of William Pattisson, Thomas Amyot and Henry Crabb Robinson, edited by **P J Corfield** and **C Evans** (Alan Sutton, 1996), vii + 200 pp, £24.48; $35.95. ISBN: 0750911638

Recent scholarship on the much researched period of the 1790s has focused intensively on what has been termed the 'loyalist response' to a period of quasi revolutionary turmoil. Successive studies by H T Dickinson, J C D Clark, T P Schofield, R Dozier, and the Ford lectures of 1984 by I R Christie – followed by his survey, 'Conservatism and stability in British society', published in 1991 – have not only emphasised the factors making for stability in England, but have concentrated on the apparently overwhelming loyalist response to the propaganda of the reformers. This 'Dickinsonian consensus', as the late John Dinwiddy termed it, was, as he also pointed out, a useful corrective to the work of earlier historians, who had devoted few pages to the ideological response to radical ideas in the aftermath of the French Revolution. It has recently been re-stated by Gegory Claeys, in his eight volume *Political writings of the 1790s.* 'From the outset,' Claeys writes, 'the contest to influence public opinion was a highly uneven one. Loyalists were usually better educated,' although, he concedes, there were a few, such as William Frend, Joseph Gerrald, and Thomas Muir, 'to put their case'. It was the 'social and political power' of the loyalists, as much as the vindication of Burke by events in France, and a continuing belief in the excellence of the British Constitution, that ensured that they 'won' the propaganda campaign. In Claeys' selection of tracts in the 1790s, there are none from the radicals after 1795. Their influence, it can be inferred, was correspondingly negligible during these years.

The contribution from Corfield and Evans is in many ways a welcome corrective to this viewpoint. Their work consists of a valuable collection of manuscript material, consisting largely of letters from the Pattisson family – first recorded in Volume III of Edith J Morley's *Henry Crabb Robinson on books and their writers* (London, 1938). In an Appendix to that Volume are described letters from Crabb Robinson to the Pattissons, culled from the then extant nineteen volumes known as the Pattisson Collection. It is

from the remnant of this Collection – sadly depleted as a result of being pulped in World War Two – but now carefully tended by the family, that the present volume largely consists. The publication is generously sponsored by the Pattisson family, and is in many ways a fitting tribute to the pertinacity of the late E P Thompson, who first traced its whereabouts for the benefit of historians. The work also includes eight letters – some of great interest – from the Correspondence of Crabb Robinson, from Dr. Williams's Library in London.

In his *Making of the English working class,* published in 1963, E P Thompson defined the reform movement of the 1790s in terms which have left a lasting imprint. Building on the work of Philip Brown, Thompson claimed an overwhelming working class presence in the movement, and effectively denied any influential middle-class influence. In his study of the apostacy of the Jacobin poets, however ('Disenchantment or Default?', 1969) and in his much later work on Thelwall (*Past and Present,* 1994) – surely strangely omitted in the Select Bibliography of these letters – Thompson did, implicitly move towards a modification at least of this stance. His study of Thelwall in the context of the repression of English radicalism, in particular in the provinces of England, in 1794-7, described him as a significant 'link figure' in a highly literate and at times very vocal section of England's middle-class reformers. Prominent amongst these were the reformers of Liverpool, Manchester, Derby and Bristol, but above all the 'friendly, the intelligent, the beloved society', of the 'Jacobin City' of Norwich.

It is in this context that the study of Corfield and Evans (who have themselves published material on Thelwall) is of great interest. For the letters of the youthful literary and legal triumvirate which they edit serve as further valuable evidence of the extent to which a persistent and enthusiastic adhesion to the principles of government widely propagated in the aftermath of the outbreak of Revolution in France, was sustained throughout the 1790s in England. They are supplemented by those of the older Pattissons, who were prominent in Dissenting circles in Essex. (The connection between radicalism and dissent is usefully discussed by Chris Evans, 22-5). Certainly in 1794, and, as Evans surmises,

earlier, the extremism of Jacob Pattisson's political principles matched that of his son. Although the years 1789-92 are not covered at all in this correspondence, this is, paradoxically, not entirely to be regretted. For it was in the years after 1792 that the government's policy of repression led to much unwillingness to confide political principles in writing; and much of the value of some at least of the letters in this volume lies in their comparative rarity for expression of political sentiment.

William Pattisson, Thomas Amyot, and Henry Crabb Robinson, 'all articled clerks training as attorneys', in Diss, Norwich, and Colchester, first met in 1793-4. In the autumn of 1793 Pattisson and Crabb Robinson, who shared a common democratic political sympathy, were introduced. On 25 March 1794 young Pattisson and Thomas Amyot, almost certainly under the auspices of one of Norwich's leading radicals – Charles Marsh – met each other, and immediately began a correspondence. Amyot, by far the most conservative of the three (he was an admirer of Windham, and later became his secretary and author of a brief *Memoir*) himself met Crabb Robinson when all three men visited the house of Amyot's father in Norwich, in December 1795. The two men had, however, already been in correspondence: Pattisson, Crabb Robinson recorded, 'communicated the letters of each to the other, and from first writing on Pattisson's letters we began to write to each other directly, and became correspondents without having seen each other.' (T Sadler, *Diary, reminscences, and correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson* [London, 1869], I, 25). The date of this meeting, implied by Crabb Robinson to have been in 1794, does seem to have been decisively established by Corfield from the correspondence in Dr. Williams's Library (p.13 and n.34; and see also the internal evidence from the letters of 29 November 1795, 3 February 1796, also from the library).

The sequence of the letters between this triumvirate, intended for their mutual improvement and as an exchange of views on matters not only political, but religious, legal, and literary, is far from complete. Crabb Robinson, for instance, later recorded that he and young Pattisson first began to correspond in the spring of 1794, a correspondence in which there were 'occasional outbursts of jacobin politics' (Sadler, I.24). The only letters between the two

men reproduced in this volume, however, are those from Crabb Robinson to Pattisson, of 1798-9, together with one from Pattisson to Crabb Robinson from the Collection in Dr. Williams's Library. They are of particular interest for the surviving 'jacobinical' principles of Crabb Robinson at so late a date, supplementing the material in his later published *Diary and Reminiscences.* Pattisson and Crabb Robinson had moreover been on terms of some intimacy in London in the winter of 1797-8, when invasion from France seemed imminent. And from Pattisson's correspondence with his father and step-mother at this time (9 March 1797-23 February 1798) the depth of both men's continuing opposition to Pitt's Ministry can be seen. Two of Crabb Robinson's letters, 22 November 1798, 19 February 1799, speak movingly of the prosecution and trial of Gilbert Wakefield, for his outspoken attack upon the policies of the English government. It was only in the years after 1800, on his departure for self-imposed exile in Germany, after first visiting Thelwall in his retreat in Wales, that Crabb Robinson fully developed his particular mode of recantation from his former principles. His comments upon Burke and Mackintosh, also in these letters are, however, in this regard, of great interest.

William Pattisson's lapse into political quietude after the traumatic events of the spring and early summer of 1798 is well described by Chris Evans. The extent of his democratic principles in 1793-5 is made plain in a further sequence of nineteen letters exchanged between him and his parents (18 February 1793-20 February 1795). There is much material in these letters, however, which is of far from political interest, although one letter, in particular, that from Elizabeth Pattisson to her step-son, 12 February 1794, is surely of some significance. Elizabeth Pattisson is well described (3-4) as a woman of great character, a literary correspondent of Crabb Robinson, and a sympathiser with the reform movement. Her one letter reproduced in this correspondence, however, perhaps deserves more credit than it receives in the discussion by Corfield, 'Letters as an Art Form,' in the Introduction. Her style – delighting 'in the graceful familiarity of affectionate diction, rather than high flown compliments and studied periods,' as her step-son rightly described it – comes as a

relief from the frequently somewhat turgid productions of the young law clerks. If Mary Priestley has been described as writing 'the best letter of any woman of her time,' then surely Elizabeth Pattisson deserves a mention in this genre also. Her letter of 12 February 1794 relays news from John Towell Rutt (biographer of Priestley, and cousin of the Pattissons, who had just returned from visiting his friends in Newgate, destined for a harrowing fate in Botany Bay), and it has a courage and wit, as well as an instinctive feel for events, of its own: in the 'honourable mansion' of Newgate, she quotes Rutt as writing, he met not only Thomas Muir, but several other reformers, both those who were convicted, and those merely visiting their friends; 'fine Newgate Birds he says. And I would ask what Palace can shew a more respectable party?' In a later passage, she quotes from the newspaper reports of the treatment of the reformers, handcuffed with the convicts: '*malice,*' she comments, 'seems to have been at work in treating them with that indignity.'

Throughout 1794, as Pitt's Ministry in England put men on trial for their lives, the Pattissons maintained a remarkable and informative correspondence on the reaction in the country. It is supplemented by a valuable and thoroughly political letter of 19 May 1794 from the Rev. Samuel Newton. And it is of particular interest, as Chris Evans points out, on the subject of emigration – contemplated and indeed acted upon by many in East Anglia in 1794, in view of the 'dark Clouds' covering the 'political Hemisphere,' as Newton described the political scene. 'I think a good Parallel may be drawn between the Times of Charles the 1st & Geo: the 3rd,' wrote young Pattisson, reporting the departure of one large family to America (8 February 1794). And Elizabeth in her letter, clearly in reply, mentioned several others preparing to leave, and justified to her step-son this exodus from England: 'things are now arrived to such a crisis that there are difficulties on either hand, opposition conducted by moderation seems useless, or worse than useless, it appears as if it encouraged our governors to be more oppressive, on the presumption that good-men will suffer much rather than hazard the dreadful scenes as have been exhibited in France. Our Saviour you know permited (sic) the first disciples when persecuted in one place to flee to another the case is not

entirely paralel as we live under a government which we have a legal as well as natural right to reform.'

On 22 July 1794, Jacob Pattisson commented bitterly on the violent attacks upon the Dissenters' Meeting House in Witham, during the rejoicing on Howe's victory of 1 June. In Diss, too, as his son reported, there were 'the greatest rejoicings,' which he had 'with pain ... contemplated.' (William to Elizabeth, cited 27, but surely strangely not reproduced). Jacob Pattisson commented bitterly also upon the continuance of the war, and described, too, the continuing emigration from East Anglia. Only after the acquittals in the Treason Trials of November and December 1794, was this subject apparently dropped. Describing the rejoicing on this news in East Anglia, is a further letter from William to Elizabeth: 'the acquittal of Messrs. Hardy & Tooke revived the drooping spirits of democrats, at Norwich they had an Illumination, but at Diss, we rejoiced in secret without any external demonstration of Joy. We rejoiced as men, as Citizens of the World; & as the particular Citizens of England, to see that there still remained some Energy in our Constitution.' (4-5 December 1794).

The third member of the legal triumvirate, as distinct from the Pattisson Family, was Thomas Amyot, the son of a watch and clockmaker of Huguenot extraction. Amyot's letters were later described by Crabb Robinson (Sadler, I.25), as 'far the best of the Collection, as in ability and taste he was far the superior of the three.' This is surely a debatable point. From the point of view of a work entitled *Youth and Revolution,* all too many of Amyot's letters are of interest at best for his contesting of his friends' political opinions (a particularly good example of this is his comment (21 October 1797) on Crabb Robinson's francophile feelings in connection with Duncan's victory over the Dutch in that month. They are also valuable occasionally as a source of information. They are, however – certainly the seventeen letters to Pattisson, included in this Volume (13 May 1794-14 July 1795) – in spite of editorial omissions, interminably long, and frequently turgid. Interestingly, this epistolary style undergoes a marked transformation after Amyot's long hoped for introduction to Crabb Robinson in December 1795. His strictures on his friend's

'*Godwinomania,*' as he termed it, his comments on the Two Acts, on the Westminster Election of 1796, and on Thelwall's lectures in Norwich in that year, are all of great interest, even if, predictably, frequently critical: 'the most ranting Actor in the most ranting Character never made so much Noise as Citizen Thelwall.' It is from a letter of Amyot's, nevertheless, that there comes the valuable description of the reconciliation of Godwin and Thelwall after the former's strictures on the latter in his pamphlet of 1795. These letters to Crabb Robinson are all from the Collection in Dr. Williams's Library. One omission from this series which is surely regrettable is a letter from Amyot to Robinson (11 July 1798), cited 17, n.48, as demonstrating 'the evident coolness' which had developed between the two men as a result of their 'political differences.' In the context of Crabb Robinson's continuing extremism at this time, this letter would surely have been well worth reproducing.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Amyot, certainly at first, found little congenial companionship in the 'jacobinical city' of Norwich (Amyot to Patterson, 28 August 1794, cited but, again, not reproduced in the volume). It is, however, from his correspondence with Pattisson in 1794-5 that there are some clues as to the authorship of *The Cabinet,* the periodical launched by the Norwich intelligentsia in the autumn of 1794. *The Cabinet* denounced the war policy of Pitt's Ministry, urged that a stop be put to the prevailing desire for emigration, and advocated the now dangerous policy of calling a Convention in England. Its articles were composed by some forty anonymous authors; and among its leading contributors was Charles Marsh, who wrote the impassioned articles in its opening numbers, echoing Pattisson's opposition to emigration. Both Crabb Robinson and Pattisson, who was, as he wrote to his father, 'acquainted with some of the suspected editors, who are a Society of Young Gentlemen in Norwich' (1 November 1794) contributed single articles to *The Cabinet.* Amyot, as early as September 1794, was sending Pattisson a prospectus; he was later, as he wrote, to 'most nobly contribute my sixpence every fortnight to its support,' although 'the general political Sentiments of its Conductors are so dissimilar to my own, that notwithstanding my esteem for the Talents of some of them my

Impartiality will not carry me so far as the wish to rank as their Colleague.'(18 February 1795). Nevertheless, Amyot on more than one occasion hazarded guesses as to the names behind the symbols used by the anonymous authors, and in an Appendix it is his attributions, together with others from two actual marked copies of *The Cabinet,* which are to some extent used for the most complete list to date of the authors of this publication.

Amyot, however, was occasionally mistaken in his attributions (12 November 1794); and it is indeed stated in the Appendix that the 'contributors have been identified via three different sources, which provide overlapping and mutually corroborating information.' The other two are a marked copy of *The Cabinet* in the University of Michigan, which belonged almost certainly to one of the sons of John Taylor of Norwich. Its attributions were described by Walter Graham, 'The Authorship of the Norwich *Cabinet,* 1794-5', *Notes and Queries,* 162 (Jan.-June 1932), 294-5. Only one of Graham's attributions is altered by Corfield in her Appendix; and the additions that are made are relatively minor. The identification of Rusticus as William Pattisson comes from Sadler, I.25; and the only other additions are John Pitchford's collaboration with Charles Marsh as 'P'; the conjectural attribution of 'A. C.' as Anne Plumptre; the attribution of a Rhapsody to Philip Meadows Taylor; and some hymns to John Taylor. The other source for the attributions, another marked copy of *The Cabinet,* tragically destroyed by fire in the Norwich Library in 1994, was fortunately partially summarised by C B Jewson, *The Jacobin City* (Glasgow and London, 1975).

This is not to devalue the intrinsic worth of the lists and attributions in the Appendix to *Youth and Revolution,* together with the reproduction of the articles by Crabb Robinson and Pattisson, and a valuable Introductory Essay (187-8). It does, however, call into question the claim, made elsewhere in the publication, that 'the correspondence provides enough clues to the identity of the anonymous authors of *The Cabinet* ... to enable the editors to provide a list of the contributors to this key publication and to throw new light on the excitements and tensions of English radicalism in this period.' The attributions made by Graham in 1932 were used by Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty (*London,

1979), in his detailed treatment of Norwich radicalism (375-7 and especially n.88). Graham's article, so much relied upon, should also surely have been included in the Select Bibliography of *Youth and Revolution.*

It was in 1804 that Crabb Robinson wrote to a friend of his now changed opinions from those recorded in *Youth and Revolution:* 'With a smile rather of complacency than of reproof, I recollect the days when it would have been a mortal offence had any one of us been guilty of a 'Mister' or 'Miss' or 'Sir' or a 'Madam' - when republicanism was the first virtue and a smack of infidelity the first essential ingredient to Wit or Understanding!!!' (H C R to Mrs Clarkson, 30 October 1804, cit. E J Morley, *The life and times of Henry Crabb Robinson* [London, 1935], 3, n.). The publication of *Youth and Revolution* is a valuable testimony to the strength of this revolutionary enthusiasm, and its continuing appeal throughout the 1790s, even while, as Corfield's Introductory Essay on *The Cabinet* points out, the demise of this 'jacobinical' periodical signalled the apparent success of the government's policy of repression. As a collection of letters it would have benefited greatly in many ways from a proper Contents Table, indicating authors and provenance. It is generously illustrated, although to find a portrait of Thelwall (Fig.12), described as Godwin, 'showing the author of *Political Justice* ... with a lofty brow and intent, brooding gaze,' is a little startling; as is, conversely, the attribution of a portrait of Godwin (Fig.26) as 'the thoughtful visage of the radical orator John Thelwall.' The footnotes are in general full and helpful, but surely the statement (75, n.1) that the suspension of Habeas Corpus was 'a measure of such rarity that the law clerks could not quickly find constitutional authorities to justify the government's action' is misleading: Habeas Corpus was suspended on nine occasions in the century after 1689.

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Lisbeth Haakonsssen, ***Medicine and morals in the Enlightenment: JohnGregory, Thomas Percival and Benjamin Rush***, Amsterdam-Atlanta G A, Editions Rodopi B.V., 1997, x + 248 pp; hdbk, $79.00, pbk, $27.00.

Medical ethics today has a remarkably high profile. Seen cynically the ethicists are modern medicine's humanist dressing. Certainly some of them have been responsible for some of the worst precedent-seeking, discovering modern ethics in eighteenth-century authors notably John Gregory and Thomas Percival. In this refreshing study of these figures and the American Benjamin Rush, Lisbeth Haakonssen delivers them back to the Enlightenment. Haakonssen begins with a judiciously historiographical review acknowledging that not all her precursors were simply carrying out legitimation exercises and that several valuable studies have shed light on the context of eighteenth-century writings about morals and medicine. Put briefly Haakonssen's claim is that all three authors need to be seen in the Scottish tradition of practical ethics established by Francis Hutcheson and continued by such figures as Thomas Reid. What links them was their classical education at Presbyterian colleges and a medical education at the University of Edinburgh even though Rush and Percival practised outside Scotland. Briefly again, Haaksonssen argues that the doctors attempted to 'create -- and to understand -- a public sphere in which their profession could operate'.(12) Essential to this was their political conservatism, all three 'saw preservation of the basics of their political society as the only foundation for civilized life'.(12) In other words all three were grappling with the question of the doctor's role in wider society: what was the place of medicine in a modern civilized community? A question to which issues of, for example, education and monopoly were crucial.

Without spelling out the details here it is worth noting how Haakonssen shows that the systems of these practical moralists were rooted in Stoic writings, Christianity and Roman law, and that the terms used by them such as 'duty', 'office', 'contract' and 'public good' are deeply embedded in Protestant natural law theory. In the case of John Gregory, professor of medicine at Edinburgh after 1766 and author of *Lectures on the duties and*

qualifications of a physician in 1772, she correctly identifies Common Sense philosophy as the key to his pronouncements and rightly rejects Laurence McCullough's interpretation of Gregory in which he is viewed as having used David Humes's theory of sympathy. Much though he liked Hume as a person he would have little truck with the unadulterated ideas of an atheist and Haakonssen shows this quite convincingly. Haaksonssen lucidly expounds Gregory's writings which are too rich to sum up here except to note that, again quite rightly, she views Gregory as developing the opinion that the physician should be a man of science and letters who holds that medical knowledge should be, in Common Sense terminology, 'laid open' to the public. Gregory in other words was opposed to medical professionalism in the elite, factionalist sense. This too is borne out by his pronouncements but Haakonssen does not, I think, go far enough. A point to which I will return.

Her interpretations of Percival, the Manchester physician, and Rush, the Philadelphian, follow similar lines. Percival's ideas are grounded in the Warrington Academy where pedagogical views similar to those held by Hutcheson and others prevailed. Like Gregory, Haakonssen, shows that much of Percival's *Medical ethics* of 1803 (a very rare book), was devoted to examining the duties which a liberal profession owed to a wider society. Personally, Percival carried out these duties in, for example, his work with the Manchester hospitals. Rush's views were in some ways almost a parody of those of Gregory and Percival in that, although asking the same questions, his solution was to medicalise the public sphere.

This is a rich study and an extremely welcome corrective to historical works which have interrogated those authors for their answers to our current medical ethical conundrums. Although explicitly 'intellectual history' (2), Haakonssen draws freely on the social context to show why these authors came up with the sorts of answers they did even if intellectual history is a major key to their questions. In the case of Gregory, I think the context could have been drawn out more finely. Gregory's views have to be seen in relation to William Cullen with whom he alternated the two Edinburgh medical professorships until Gregory's death in 1773.

Cullen is noted here, but the nature of his relation to Gregory is not revealed. Gregory may have admired Hume as a man, but Cullen was one of Hume's sceptical friends who admired him as a philosopher too. Haakonssen correctly appreciates how important Francis Bacon's works were to the Common Sense philosophers and Gregory in particular. But if Bacon represented cautious inductivism, Hume symbolised its antithesis: genius and wild theorising. For his materialist speculations on the workings of the nervous system, Cullen was tarred with the same brush. Atheism and scepticism were seen as corrupting Scottish society not least by bringing with them luxury, well known to be perceived by Hume as a stimulus to commerce. Laying medicine open, as for instance in the publication of William Buchan's *Domestic medicine* of 1769, which Gregory encouraged (Haakonssen recognises this), was to fight philosophical obscurantism. Medicine needed educated lay guardians to prevent it becoming an inbred professional clique. Cullen, however, who almost certainly deplored Buchan's work, was the champion of professionalism and tight self-regulation. Gregory's work then was more than an intervention into a general debate, it addressed questions about specific alternative Scotlands, even though, as I recall, a discussion of Scotland appears nowhere in the *Lectures*. These remarks simply represent a bit of fine tuning, but they do indicate the delicacies of the context that need to be plumbed for textual interpretation. Haaksonssen has gone a long way to liberating all these authors from presentist approaches. Eighteenth century scholars should be grateful.

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Jack Fruchtman Jr. ed., ***An eye-witness account of the French Revolution by Helen Maria Williams: Letters containing a sketch of the politics of France,*** New York, Peter Lang, 1997, 272 pp, $49.95. ISBN 0-8240-3120-6

Helen Maria Williams (1761-1827), novelist, essayist, translator and letter-writer, produced some of her best known work after she was stimulated to write it by what she declared was her 'love of the

French Revolution'. She published eight volumes of *Letters from France* between 1790 and 1796, conveying her view of the progress and decline of the French Revolution. During this time she lived mostly in France, visiting friends in Rouen and Paris first between July and September 1790, again between the summer of 1791 and April 1792 and emigrating permanently from Britain in August 1792. She, her mother and sister took an apartment in Paris, and she lived in the French capital for most of the rest of her life, moving in French, British, American and Irish reformist circles. She met the English radical John Hurford Stone shortly after she moved to Paris, who became her lover.

Williams's 'love of the French Revolution' was similar to Charles James Fox's famous enthusiasm for the revolution. She was elated by the events and achievements of its first months and years and was an ardent supporter of the Girondin faction in the French National Assembly (and, later, the National Convention). Their fall from power, the rise of the Jacobins and a new hostility towards foreigners, presaged danger for her and her mother and sister, and they spent several weeks between October and November 1793 in the Luxembourg Palace and the English Conceptionist Convent, now both turned into prisons. Between June and December 1794 she and Stone removed to Basel, Swizerland, but they returned to Paris thereafter. Like Fox, Williams never stopped proclaiming her support for what she called the original ideals of the French Revolution and this lost her many friends in England after 1792.

In 1795 Williams wrote the fifth and sixth volumes of her series of letters on the French Revolution, which are the volumes reprinted here. She entitled them *Letters containing a sketch of the politics of France. From the thirty-first of May 1793, till the twenty-eighth of July 1794, and of the scenes which have passed in the prisons of Paris* (two volumes), and they thus cover the period from the expulsion of the Girondin deputies until the execution of Robespierre. Almost immediately she gives an account of her own imprisonment in the autumn of 1793, before moving back in time to recount the history of the revolution from May 1793, interspersed with anecdotes of the experiences of her friends and acquaintances during the Terror. As Fruchtman observes in his

introduction (14), her writing falls somewhere in between fiction and history. It is written in the form of a series of letters to an unidentified recipient, a favourite genre for eighteenth-century female writers. Williams, however, does not confine herself to the religious, the sentimental, the emotional, the moral, or the didactic, as most women writers were expected to do – although all of these feature in her work to some extent. The *Letters* are given heightened tension by the addition of poignant anecdotal evidence and individual experiences she uses and, as Fruchtman comments, the reader is transported 'from elation to despair' (1). However, her work is also overtly political journalism, both a record of and personal commentary upon events and her willingness, as a woman writer, to enter the arena of political writing was as much a cause of the criticism her work received as was its particular political bent towards sympathy for the French Revolution. Moreover, as William Stafford has pointed out (*History*, 265 [January 1997], 33-4), Williams's inclination towards recounting tales involving women is not as conventional as it may seem, since in this context she is usually writing them into the story of political events.

This is the first modern reprinting of these volumes, although they already have been reprinted in a modern facsimile edition by Janet M Todd (1975). The printing is clear and Fruchtman has provided a liberal accompaniment of helpful notes (although some seem a little fuller than necessary). He also provides an introduction which covers the life and works of Helen Maria Williams, brief summaries of the lives and works of contemporary British women writers with an interest in politics, the French Revolutionary context and some notes on the style and rhetoric employed by Williams in the *Letters*. They are further supplemented by a very useful bibliography, both of works written by Williams herself and of the relevant secondary literature, and a note on the text used by Fruchtman in preparing this edition.

Fruchtman's observations are generally helpful, especially to readers who may be unfamiliar with Williams's life and writings, and his comparison of these *Letters* with the description of events published by the Girondin writer Honoré Riouffe (1764-1813) is most interesting. There are minor irritations, however, such as his reference to Britain as 'England' (16); his implication that Charles

James Fox visited Paris in 1792 (he was there in 1788 and in 1802, but not in between, and therefore he was certainly not a guest at Williams's Parisian salon in 1792, as Fruchtman suggests (7)); his assertion that Thurlow was the 'first' chancellor of 'England' (unless by 'first' he means 'Lord' rather than first in time (241, n.43)); and his confusion over whether the Athanase Coquerel whom Williams's sister married in 1793 was their friend Monique's brother or her nephew (6, 9). Words are occasionally omitted, which may be a fault of the original text but one which Fruchtman claims to have corrected. Nor is there an index. Nevertheless, with scholarly interest in the French Revolution showing no sign of losing any acceleration, and the body of work on eighteenth-century women writers increasing steadily, an easily available edition of these lively and detailed eye-witness accounts is to be welcomed.

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James E Crimmins ed., ***Utilitarianism and religion***, Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1998, 512pp., £75.00 / $120.00, ISBN 1 85506 5703; **Alan P F Sell** ed., ***Mill and religion***, Thoemmes Press, Bristol, 1997, 268pp; £58.00 / $72.00, ISBN 1 85506 541 X

In his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, which is judiciously excerpted in the first of the books under review, William Paley claims the superiority of modern moral philosophy over its counterpart in antiquity on the grounds that it is well founded, that it is rule based and that has been perfected by Christianity revelation. The term 'modern moral philosophy' clearly had a different meaning for Paley from the one that has been attached to it by recent philosophers, in particular by Elizabeth Anscombe and Alasdair MacIntyre, who have come to view it disapprovingly through the filter of Thomas Aquinas and Wittgenstein. They regard modern moral philosophy as a failed secular endeavour, disdainful of theism and traditional moral wisdom, to found morality on merely natural or purely rational principles. One can begin to understand how this change of mood and meaning occurred by reading these books. Indeed, anyone with

more than a passing interest in modern moral philosophy and its fate should acquire them and study them carefully, for they contain important writings, not easily available elsewhere, that illuminate the course of utilitarian theory in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Utilitarians and religion is divided into two parts. The first documents religious utilitarianism in the eighteenth century. Here one will find, in chronological order writings by John Gay, John Browne, Edmund law, Soame Jenyns, Abraham Tucker, and William Paley. This is a very good selection and Crimmins is justified, in the light of the affinities and connections between these authors, to treat them as representatives of a distinctive school. John Gay and Edmund Law attempted to found moral theory on the empirical principles of Locke and against the rationalism and the moral sense theories of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. John Brown did the same thing independently in his *Essays* on Shaftesbury. Paley, Law's protégé, completed the moral programme that they had begun, but also borrowed from Abraham Tucker and Soame Jenyns. Paley's use of Jenyns is particularly instructive, for it confirms Crimmins' important claim that utilitarian theory is more complex and dialectical than is ordinarily supposed. In his *Evidences of Christianity* (Part II, ch.2), Paley cites Jenyn's comparison of 'Heroic' and 'Christian' morality as proof of the superiority of the latter and as evidence of its supernatural origin. What is characteristic of Christian morality, as described by Jenyns in a *View of the internal evidences of Christianity*, is its 'meek, yielding, complying, forgiving' nature, that is, its disinterestedness. Neither work is excerpted in Crimmins' book.

Part Two documents the progress of secular utilitarianism during the nineteenth century. Jeremy Bentham is featured with three little-known selections that by themselves are worth the price of the book. *The Church of England catechism examined* is vintage anti-clericalism. The James Mill and John Stuart Mill follow with one selection each.

In his general introduction to Part Two Crimmins contends that the progress of utilitarian theory was not a linear development from a religious to a secular outlook. Rather it was dialectical. There were secular elements in religious utilitarian theories, not least the

principle of utility itself. On the other hand, notwithstanding the strong secular advocacy of Bentham and James Mill, their successors, among them the jurists John Austin and James Fitzjames Stephens, looked back to the older form of religious utilitarianism for a more adequate theory of moral obligation; and John Stuart Mill, whose religious sensibilities were aroused by reading Coleridge, capped his own version of utilitarianism with religious, albeit godless, sentiment. This seems right. A religion of humanity imbued with the pure disinterested virtues of Christianity, separated from theism and the Christian scheme of sin and redemption, seems an appropriate conclusion of a moral theory whose main principle is benevolence. Readers of this book will want also to read Crimmins' magisterial study of Bentham, *Secular utilitarianism* (Oxford, 1990) and having done so may hope that this anthology is a prelude to a sequel to that book.

Crimmins' introductions (his general introductions to the particular authors) are accurate, informative and well documented. However, in his general introduction to Part One (17), I believe he errs in his account of Edmund Law. He writes that Law 'came very near to denying the consequentialist character of utilitarian ethics', and in defence of this claim cites Law's 'On Morality and Religion' (153). It is clear, however, that in the passage cited Law is not denying the consequentialist principle, rather he is denying that benevolent actions done for the sake of temporal rewards have any moral value. In the same passage, Law also denies that disinterested benevolent actions have any moral worth. Rather he asserts that only those actions that are performed with regard to the deity are truly virtuous. In short, he is asserting the essentially theistic nature of morality, a doctrine that was the hallmark of his school and is one of its important inheritances from Locke.

Mill's 'Utility of Religion' is one of three essays on religion published posthumously (in 1874) by his stepdaughter Helen Taylor. These essays are the subject of the second book under review. Alan Sell has compiled a copious selection of British and American response's to Mill's essay (most of them reviews) written during the quarter century following their publication. The religious situation surrounding the appearance of Mill's essays is well documented here and what is shown by it is how disinclined

religious thinkers, even of the most liberal sentiments, were to give Mill's reflections about theism and religion serious consideration. Sell's introduction provides a concise and accurate summary of Mill's essays and useful notes on the authors of the selections, most of whom will be unknown to most readers.

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Alan P F Sell, ***John Locke and the Eighteenth-Century Divines***, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1997, 444 pp, hdbk, ISBN 0-7083-1409-0, £40.

'It is no much of an exaggeration to say that one cannot pick up a sermon, a novel, pamphlet or a treatise and be in any doubt after reading a few lines, whether it was written before or after Locke's *Essay concerning human understanding*.' So said Gilbert Ryle in 1965. With regard to theological writings Alan Sell demonstrates in his book how precisely true this is. He has provided us with a survey of Locke's impact on eighteenth-century theologians which reveals the breadth and depth of that philosopher's influence on at least a whole century of Protestant theology. And that the influence of Locke extended well into the nineteenth century, at least, detracts not at all from his achievement. He takes us from the first reactions to the *Essay concerning human understanding* and the *Reasonableness of Christianity* right through to the writers at the end of the century. His thoroughness is impressive: in the index there are of the order of 650 names and I estimate that over half are the names of divines. In other words the book is the product of prodigious reading. Nor would Alan Sell claim to be offering a definitive account for he is well aware that not everybody who read Locke wrote about him and not all who, patently, were influenced by him mentioned his name in their publications. Nor is Sell's reading confined to the eighteenth century for his knowledge of modern literature on Locke is also impressive as the one hundred and fifty pages of notes and bibliography testifies.

And what is it to be influenced by a philosopher? Many took something from Locke; at least as many, and sometimes the very

same people, were hostile to his views. And there is the problem of whether they understood him correctly anyway. Was he a Socinian? A materialists? A Latitudinarian? A Unitarian? Was he even a Christian? William Carroll thought him an Atheist to be ranked with Spinoza. Of one thing we can be certain: he was often misunderstood. But whether that misunderstanding was in part his own fault is another matter. Was he as open with his views as we might hope? Was his fear of controversy a reason why he refrained from absolute clarity? Or was it because he believed the issue incapable of final resolution. In short there are as many puzzles as there are answers to issues raised by Locke's account of religion. Sell's opening chapter is with good reason called 'an intellectual minefield': he is well aware of the problem of 'influence'.

It is not only Locke's influence, however, with which this book is concerned. It is also offered as a contribution to posing some questions which arise form the intellectual legacy as to whether epistemology (Lockean or otherwise) is the best place to begin a defence of Christian thought in the third millennium. This wider question is linked to the approach offered by Professor Sell in his earlier book *Philosophical idealism and Christian belief* (1995) and which will be brought to a conclusion by his third volume of the trilogy which will address the following: since neither Lockean empiricism nor Hegelian idealism provide a wholly satisfactory starting point for 'the articulation and the defence of a Christian view of the world' the question arises as to what other way is there? It is to this question that the third volume of the trilogy, now nearing completion, will offer an answer.

Sell begins with an examination of Locke's first contentious epistemological claim and its reception: the rejection of the doctrine of innate ideas. That the doctrine is itself unclear goes no way to undermining Locke's claim that it was widely accepted to provide some kind of answer to diverse questions about justifications of religious belief, objective morality, and the certainty of a priori truths. That it was widely accepted is given ample testimony in the response Locke's rejection aroused. Whether Locke was wise to begin with this assault can be doubted. In important ways it was not in keeping with his character to begin so directly with an issue that he knew would be so controversial

and it interesting that John Wynne's Abridgement of the *Essays*, and with Locke's concurrence, omits the first book entirely because, Wynne said, the rest of the argument of the work made the assumption of innate ideas anyway unnecessary.

Professor Sell reminds us of the hornet's nest that Locke's first book disturbed before passing on to the wider theological implications of Locke's epistemology, and especially the sceptical implications that many found in his subscriptions to the 'new way of ideas'. What, for example, as Stillingfleet observed, were the implications for the doctrine of substance of Locke's account? What, indeed, were the implications for belief in an external world at all. Those divines finding unacceptable sceptical implications in Locke's work were thick on the ground in the eighteenth century: Henry Lee, William Carroll, John Witty, George Cheyne are only a few of these and George Berkeley and Thomas Reid were only the most famous. Others, however, were quite prepared to defend Locke (or at least Lockean positions). Overall we might even attribute to Locke's empiricism a rising commitment on the part of the clergy to support a religious position with arguments drawn from natural religion: if Locke was right to regard sense experience as the ultimate foundation of knowledge then one would expect to discover religious implications in the show that nature provides to us on a daily basis.

It is an interesting fact, not explored by Professor Sell, that Locke himself did not in the *Essay concerning human understanding* overtly draw on the Argument from Design to support his theistic beliefs, even though it was Lockean empiricists such as William Paley who made much of natural religion in their theology. I would hold that the reason why Locke did not draw was because he believed that there was a much better one: his version of the causal argument given in Book IV, Chapter X of the *Essay*. It seems to me that Professor Sell misunderstands Locke's intentions in an important way when he discusses Locke's proof(s) of God's existence. He refers to Locke's deployment of the Argument from Design in the *Essays on the law of nature* (63), but it must be remembered that these were given by Locke as lectures in Christ Church and not published until 1954. To suppose that they directly influenced anybody in the eighteenth century is stretching

credulity. Moreover, to talk of Locke's 'proof' here as amounting to a 'demonstration' is quite at odds with Locke's own understanding of a demonstrative proof as we have it in the *Essay concerning human understanding*.

My point can perhaps be better made like this: in the *Essay concerning human understanding* it is no accident that Locke claims to be able to prove ('demonstrate') the existence of God. It is not for Locke a matter of probability or faith that God exists but the conclusion of a valid argument from true premisses, as certain as a proof in Euclid. Locke is quite clear about this in Chapter X and it is one of the few examples of demonstrative knowledge that Locke offers: we know of our own existence by intuition, of the existence of God by demonstration and of the existence of particular finite things 'without us' by sense experience. Apart from these, knowledge, in Locke's epistemology, is in remarkably short supply. Excepting mathematics, most everything else, is a matter of probability. Locke's proof of Chapter X occupies a special place in his work. It is offered as an example of that rare commodity in Locke's account of things – *knowledge*. We must not, as Sell appears to do, turn the less than certain Argument from Design, which offers only probably evidence, not proof, into Locke's certain demonstration.

It is, I think, very important that Locke held that an *a priori* proof of God's existence could be given before he moves on to consider the truth of any particular religion. The truth of an historically based religion such as Christianity, could on his own principles never rise above a matter of probability. There is another question as to whether Locke's Chapter X 'proof' was itself influential in the eighteenth century. I rather suspect it was not but it would be interesting to know. I suspect that most readers of the *Essay* were unconvinced by it and already were much more persuaded by the argument from design, which on Locke's premises, did not deliver knowledge. The rationalist Leibniz was also unconvinced, as we know from the *New essays on human understanding*, but that was not published, in French, until 1765 and its impact in England was almost certainly minimal until recently. So the question remains: was Locke's proof itself of any influence on the English divines of the eighteenth century? It is perhaps worth adding that Locke's

commitment to the proof of the existence of God as something to which all rational men could give their assent goes some way to explaining why he was not prepared to tolerate atheists in civil society. On his principles atheism was necessarily a kind of self-deception for which the unbeliever was himself, in part at least, responsible.

The last paragraph takes us into the subject-matter of Professor Sell's third chapter, 'Reason, Revelation, Faith and Scripture', issues central to Locke's epistemology of theology. One of these is the relationship between reason and faith in Locke's thought. Locke shared with the Cambridge Platonists the position that we must carefully examine our putative beliefs to see that they pass the test of reason. Although he held with most English theologians that there could be things above reason which we should accept, he did hold against the Enthusiasts whom he of course totally rejected, that 'if there be nothing but the Strength of our Perswasions, whereby to judge of our Perswasions' (*Essays* IV. XIX. 14) then we shall not be able to distinguish between truth and falsehood. And Locke's two tests for such beliefs are that they should either conform to the principles of reason or to attested revelation.

Of Locke's remark that in matters of probable determination '*Revelation*, where God has please to give it, *must carry it, against the probable Conjectures of Reason*' (quoting *Essay* IV. XVIII. 8). Sell writes (93): that this does not sit well with his 'Reason must be our last Judge and Guide in every Thing' (*Essay*, IV. 19. 14). But this to me seems to misrepesent Locke's position. The 'probable conjectures of reason' are not knowledge, only probabilities, and *knowledge* of God's word will always defeat a probability. This is just why miracles, by definition contrary to the probabilities of reason, as reported in the Bible can be accepted because any certainty, no matter how unlikely, (in this case God's word) defeats any, even very high, probability (law of nature).

Chapter 4 is titled 'Morality and Liberty'. Notoriously Locke's moral theory is at best patchy. This is not because he does not have one but because it is difficult to reconstruct in a plausible way. His position on this matter is not dissimilar to that of Descartes, Leibniz and Berkeley and contrasts sharply with those of Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume and Kant. Although Locke held that a science of morals

more geometrica was possible, he never provided it and compared the task to that of Newton's achievement in producing the *Principia*. But Christians have a more direct and intellectually less challenging route to moral knowledge, namely through attention to Scripture. It is because this short cut is available that Locke does not need to refer in the *Paraphrases* to the intellectually over-challenging route of demonstration and not, as Professor Sell suggest (111), because he has abandoned the other route as ill-founded. What he has in mind is quite clear: granted that we know God's purpose for us (which must also be our purpose in being on earth) which is to achieve eternal happiness in a future life, anything which is conducive to that end becomes our duty. Locke's teleological hedonism was not accepted by many, because it was never fully articulated, and partly because he was regarded as approaching too close to Hobbes. Newton and Locke's erstwhile pupil, the third earl of Shaftesbury, were only two of the most famous who found such difficulties in his work.

Where then are we to place Locke with regard to ethics? Surely where he stands is at the beginning of modern utilitarianism, which is where one would expect an empiricist to be situated. But he never sorted out his own position sufficiently clearly (or perhaps never articulated it fully enough) to provide a theory of morality that was cogent and fitting with the temper of his times. With free will (the second Lockean theme covered in Chapter 4) and the response of the divines to Locke's account, we once again have a topic with which he struggled over many decades without producing that definitive version which others found wholly convincing.

In Chapter V, 'Toleration and Government', we have consideration of Locke's political philosophy and its influence within the Christian community. On the whole he is much clearer in his account of political liberty than in his writings on free will. On the former his influence was enormous: his political philosophy became that of the revolutionary movements of America and France and, with some qualification, his liberal views on toleration became the foundation of modern civilized living (including that of the Anglican church). But to grant Locke the whole credit for that would be an exaggeration. Certainly discrimination against religious

minorities did not disappear with the eighteenth century in any country, though where Locke was closely read it did discernibly decline. It would be expecting too much of Professor Sell to have given us more of a social breakdown of those whom Locke influenced and how his views impacted if at all, on English social history in the eighteenth century, but it would be good to know precisely what his actual impact on Christian practice was.

The last topic covered in the book is Christian doctrine. As Sell says, Locke has to operate within tight margins. He is in favour of freedom of conscience but he also sought ecclesiastical comprehension within the Anglican church: it was this that the *Reasonableness of Christianity* was written to achieve. But Locke was well aware that many held dear doctrines for which he believed there to be no justification. Both Locke's philosophical and theological writings were seen as doctrinally controversial by leading Christian thinkers. John Edwards was one of Locke's most vociferous early opponents but there were many others through the century. Locke, of course, found defenders, more numerous among liberal Anglicans and Presbyterians than Independents and Baptists. Two important ones were Samuel Bold and the redoubtable Catherine Cockburn, but there were many others. A crucial question was where exactly did Locke stand with regard to the Trinity? It was a question which puzzled many, as well it might, for it is clear from Locke's manuscripts that his own position was not quite orthodox. When Stillingfleet took him to task in *A discourse in vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity* (1697) he was raising issues that Locke himself seems to have felt uncertain about. His reply to Stillingfleet suggests a defensiveness that reflected Locke's own troubled thinking on the matter. But this takes us, as I see it, to the heart of Locke's own liberal theology. He was sure that the central message of Easter was true, but he was aware of the difficulties for several generally received doctrines. That he was not able to square the texts to own satisfaction did not threaten his personal faith but it did leave him vulnerable. His own position was that he was not prepared to commit himself in public on these doubts when he believed that there was sufficient firm ground on which the Christian could build his faith.

Alan Sell has given us a great deal of information in his account. That it does not add up to one story but to several different ones is in part because of the disparate nature of its elements, the slippery notion of 'influence' and the enormous range of the impact of Locke's thought on the eighteenth century. To have packed so much into one volume is a great achievement.

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Thomas C Pfizenmaier, ***The Trinitarian theology of Dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729). Context, sources and controversy***, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, vol. 75, Leiden, Brill, 1997, 235 pp, $84.50.

Dr. Pfizenmaier's title conjures up a vision of a rather large number of eighteenth-century high Calvinists and evangelical Arminians turning in their graves and expostulating, 'Dr. Samuel Clarke – a trinitarian?' In this Fuller Theological Seminary dissertation Pfizenmaier returns a carefully qualified affirmative response. If it were only because this is the first full-scale published monograph on Clarke since 1976 this study would be welcome. What makes it intriguing is the author's determination to demonstrate a thesis (something not all doctoral candidates seem to do these days) which will require intellectual and doctrinal historians to tread more carefully in the future when attempting to locate Samuel Clarke on the map of theological 'isms'.

Was Clarke an Arian? The label has been frequently attached to him. Is it justified? Pfizenmaier argues that it is not. Indeed, he believes that the customary options: Sabellian (Socinian), Arian, Orthodox, are inadequate, for they do not accommodate the 'Semi-Arian', *homoiousian*, position which Clarke, in the wake of Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea and the Cappodocian fathers, adopted. Pfizenmaier resolves to restore Clarke to the trinitarian fold by investigating, in good ante-Nicene and eighteenth-century fashion, the relations of the first two persons of the Trinity.

Following an introduction in which he reproduces Clarke's fifty-five Propositions on the Trinity, Pfizenmaier turns to Clarke's intellectual context, with particular reference to the rise of modern

science and the Reformation. Homage is paid to Bacon – his books of nature and of God – and to his significance as a pioneer of inductive science. Descartes is presented as one whose sceptical method led him to the indubitable, clear and distinct idea of God. Both Bacon and Descartes maintained a belief in a revelation from God whilst at the same time laying the foundation of ensuing challenges to it. Locke's special contribution was to argue for the reasonableness of Christianity in such a way as to require the rational scrutiny of revelation. With Newton the inductive method reigned supreme and, against Descartes and Leibniz, the universe was conceived as a vacuum, not as 'an enormous plenum filled by visible and invisible matter'.

The post-Reformation fragmentation of the Church prompted Locke and others to seek a rational foundation of belief on which all people of goodwill could stand. This objective was shared by Calvinists, Arminians, deists, Socinians, though their disparate doctrinal findings were the subject of keen debate. Pfizenmaier's focus is upon deism, Cambridge Platonism and the Great Tew Circle, and Latitudinarianism. The deist Toland, indebted to Locke, surpassed his master in holding that nothing contrary to, *or above*, reason could be part of Christian doctrine. The Cambridge Platonists, supporters of the 'new science', elevated the 'light of reason', and sought to avoid metaphysical disputes by grounding theological assertions in the Bible. Chillingworth, a leader of the Great Tew Circle, posited moral certainty grounded in the evidence of testimony as proof of faith – albeit this proof lacked the certainty of mathematical, scientific or metaphysical proof. This last position became characteristic of the Latitudinarians, of whom some were more, others less, doctrinally orthodox. If Stillingfleet and Thomas Sherlock exemplify orthodox Latitudinarians, Clarke, like Benjamin Hoadly, is among the 'heterodox Latitudinarians'.

The scene set, we turn to 'Clarke within his context'. Clarke holds that the deists' natural reason has been eclipsed by the Gospel – a revelation which does more than clarify (though it does not contradict) reason: it supplies additional information concerning salvation. Influenced by the Cambridge Platonists and the Great Tew Circle, Clarke deems moral virtue to be the heart of natural and revealed religion. Against Hobbes, who contended that the

state of nature was a state of war, Clarke maintains that virtue is at the heart of the universe, and that the state of nature is 'a perfect expression of the nature and attributes of God'. Further, Clarke is at one with the Latitudinarians in making an appeal to Scripture alone on controverted points. He bolsters his case for the existence of God with *a posteriori* considerations drawn from Newton and he understands miracles not as supernatural interruptions of the natural order, but as 'unusual and unexpected exhibitions of God's providence upon an order which was constantly maintained supernaturally'.

Clarke's project now was to apply his rational method to theology. Particularly in respect of the trinity, his efforts attracted strong opposition. In *The Scripture doctrine of the Trinity* (1712) he has recourse to patristic authors, and his indebtedness to these brings us to the crux of Pfizenmaier's case, and to his longest chapter. A careful examination of the relevant texts reveals Clarke to be not an Arian, not a Sabellian, not Orthodox, but a Eusebian. That is, he refutes the Arian idea that the Son was a creature, or work, and that there was 'a time when he was not'. He is not a *homoian* because he believes not simply that the Son is like the Father, but that he was 'like in all things' except ingenerateness. And he was not Orthodox because he retains a certain subordination flowing from Origen, and denies that the Father and the Son are of the same substance (the *homoousian* position). He is a *homoiousian* in the line of Eusebius, affirming the pre-existence of the divine Son, who is the *like* substance with the Father. Pfizenmaier thus identifies the following relationship as between the early centuries and the eighteenth: neo-Arians / deists; *homoian* Arians / Socinians; *homoiousians* / Clarke; and *homoousians* / 'Orthodox' majority. He regrets that both theologians of Clarke's period and their nineteenth-century successors reduced these options by conflating the Arian with the Semi-Arian (*homoiousian*) position.

Clarke also draws upon a wide range of contemporary sources, and in his fourth chapter Pfizenmaier finds himself especially indebted to Newton's view that both Arius and the *homoiousians* had introduced metaphysical considerations into the church's doctrinal teachings. Neither Newton nor Clarke could endorse the

Arianism of their friend William Whiston. Pfizenmaier's tentative view – tentative because there is not the hard evidence which correspondence between Newton and Clarke might have supplied – oscillates between saying that the older Newton 'must have been' a key source of Clarke's trinitarianism, and saying that it is probable that he was such a source.

There follows a discussion of the literature of the eighteenth-century trinitarian controversy, which Pfizenmaier dates from Bull's *Defensio* of 1685. He discusses the views of Thomas Burnet, Waterland and others, finding that the 'centrepiece' of the trinitarian controversy is the debate between Clarke and Waterland – the subject of his penultimate chapter. Waterland understands that there are three doctrinal options only where the trinity was concerned: the Catholic = Athanasian; the Sabellian = Socinian; and the Arian. To him the Son is either God or a creature. Clarke resists this strong disjunction, contending that while the Son is not the supreme God, he is God in all respects save for self-existence and the supremacy. Both appeal to the Bible in justification of their respective positions.

In a brief conclusion, Pfizenmaier summarizes his findings, and expresses the hope that future evaluations of Clarke will be guided by his findings that Clarke was in the line of Origen, Eusebius and the Cappodocians, and hence that he was 'within the broad scope of doctrinal orthodoxy'.

A number of comments may be offered on this robust work. First, Pfizenmaier writes, 'Clarke's position on the trinity developed in the midst of the shift from external to internal constructs of authority which took place in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth centuries in England'(13). As well as overlooking the fact of those timelags which are so prominent a feature of intellectual movements, this sentence is a little unsubtle; for if there was a turn from ecclesiastical authority to the authority of conscience and the right of private judgement, there was also, on the part of orthodox and heterodox divines alike, an appeal to the authority of Scripture. It is not an insignificant that the title words, *The Scripture-Doctrine of* ... are reiterated time and again by liberal Anglicans and Dissenters alike. Moreover, in the nineteenth

century many apologists appealed eclectically to Church, Bible, conscience and experience.

Secondly, Pfizenmaier sometimes misleads by offering only partial summaries or incompletely qualified statements of a writer's position. Thus, for example, he tells us that Locke 'helped to complete the demolition of the Cartesian emphasis on innate ideas, and fostered the empirical method'. But Locke did more than this. He made a place for both sensation and reflection in the acquisition of knowledge, and in ethics he appealed, *inter alia*, to intuitive principles. Again, Pfizenmaier skates too swiftly over Locke's 'very significant' ideas on the trinity, and over the question how far Locke was a trinitarian – matters on which much ink has been spilled before the original submission of this thesis, and between that date and the publication of this book. Yet again, Pfizenmaier refers to 'the Latitudinarian doctrine of toleration' (72). Some readers might take this as implying (*pace* John Owen and countless others) that the Latitudinarians alone advocated toleration, or that they espoused a particular view of toleration.

Thirdly, while it is shown that Clarke is in the wake of Origen, for example, the contrasts between their respective intellectual environments is not brought out. To accommodate a trinity within the Alexandrian philosophical framework which Origen inherited was, no doubt, a challenging task. But this was not Clarke's intellectual challenge. Why did he and others launch into the trinitarian debate when they did? Was it, perhaps, because of a desire to uphold the principle of the sufficiency of Scripture in the face of a doctrinal scholasticism which seemed to introduce, and to make badges of separation of, terms like 'trinity', 'substance' and the like which were unscriptural in the sense that they were not to be found in the Bible?

Fourthly, why, apart from a brief reference in a footnote (208), do the Dissenters not figure more largely in respect of Clarke's intellectual context and the literature of the trinitarian controversy? There is no mention of Salters' Hall, or of John Taylor, or of any of the 'Arian' Presbyterians whose indebtedness to Clarke was so clear, and whose impact upon the ecclesiastical situation in England and Wales was so far-reaching. One might also ask how the Church of England managed to avoid most of the secessionist

tendencies which afflicted the eighteenth-century Presbyterians greatly and the Congregationalists and Baptists to a lesser degree?

To offer the above observations is to indicate the stimulating nature of this book. Nor can the question be suppressed (though, given his objectives, Pfizenmaier was in no way bound to address it): How far does Clarke's trinitarian position stand up in the wake of modern biblical criticism, and in relation to the renewed emphasis upon the trinity in current theological discussion?

Some slips were noted, among them: the date of the Toleration act is 1689 (28); Woolston died in 1733, and his title is mangled (36); read Emlyn for Emlin (51); read McLachlan for McClachlan (53); read Worcester for Gloucester (54); read 1660 for 1160 (231). Some works mentioned in the footnotes do not appear in the bibliography.

Indices of name and places, and subjects, complete this sturdily-produced book.

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W M Spellman, ***John Locke***, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997, xi + 165 pp, hdbk, £37.50, pbk, £10.99.

This addition to the series, *British history in perspective*, is most welcome. Dr. Spellman is equally familiar with Locke's text and contexts, and for the most part he does justice to both.

In opposition to narrow views of Locke as just a political theorist, or just an epistemologist, Spellman argues that the problem of authority in religious and moral experience was Locke's constant concern. For all his interest in this world, Locke's overriding objective was the next, and he set out to defend Christian teaching concerning the route thereto.

Following a description of the 'God-ridden' seventeenth century, Spellman proceeds to sketch Locke's life, emphasizing the importance of his many contacts – latitudinarians, deists, Remonstrants, Lady Masham – and the religio-political environment in which he worked. Locke's conversion to the principle of toleration is particularly noted.

There follow chapters on epistemology, morality and Scripture; doctrine – an increasing interest of Locke from 1683 onwards; education; and the (patchy) reception of Locke in the eighteenth century and today. Spellman justifiably opposes revisionist attempts to 'remove Locke from the story of American revolutionary intentions'. Useful notes, a helpful bibliography, and an index complete the work.

Scholars will query some of the interpretations offered. It is more obvious to the author than it is to me that Locke came to embrace Unitarian views; there is more to be said concerning his elevation of 'Jesus is the Messiah' into the indispensable minimum of belief; and contrary to Spellman's implication, the curriculum of some early dissenting academies was more than a little scholastic in character.

But negative observations are outweighed by positive ones. The point that the Church of England was not in terminal decline in the seventeenth century is well taken; Locke's relationship to latitudinarianism is treated in a discriminating way; his importance in linking conscientious convictions with outward behaviour (not least in public worship) is underlined; and the significance of the widespread *shelving* of Locke's view of politics as God-directed, and the un-Locke-like divorce of the ideas of toleration and autonomy from those of sin and the need of salvation, is clearly indicated.

In all, this is a well-researched, clearly-stated, and an illuminating account of the politically and intellectually turbulent period in which this man of faith and man of the world lived.

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Quentin Skinner, ***Liberty before liberalism***, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, xiv + 142 pp, hdbk, £19.95; pbk, £7.95.

This essay is an extended version of the inaugural lecture which the author gave as Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge in November 1997. The main purpose of

the essay is to excavate and reburnish what the author terms the neo-Roman concept of liberty. The archaeological metaphor is not inappropriate for the author sets out to rediscover a concept that has lain buried and neglected after the rise to dominance of different and alien notions. The title of the essay exploits two uses of the word before: (a) to locate that which is temporally prior, and (b) to indicate a preference as in 'guns before butter'. The notion that liberty or freedom consists in 'free citizens in a free state', which the author maintains has been eclipsed by the concept of negative liberty needs restoring to its once hallowed status in political philosophy.

'Negative liberty' is defined as the absence of coercive interference, and although this is a value to be prized, it is not by itself enough to secure the wellbeing of the community. What is needed in addition are securities against the invasion of such liberties. Without such assurances the enjoyment of 'negative liberty' is too precarious. So the concept needs to be widened or developed to include absence of dependence. A people are not to be thought of as enjoying liberty where their rights may be invaded on the whim of an absolute Monarch. Skinner lays a great deal of stress on his contention that without the guarantees of independence the degree to which negative liberty will be enjoyed will be limited. Even where the rule of an absolute monarch may in fact be mild and unoppressive, the fear that indulgences might suddenly disappear will act as a constraint on the expression of opinion and what might be taken to be subversive behaviour. Skinner's heroes are to be found in the seventeenth and in the early eighteenth century: Milton, Marchmont Nedham, Henry Neville, Harrington and Algernon Sidney. They derive their inspiration via Machiavelli's *Discorsi* from Seneca, Sallust, Tacitus and, pre-eminently, Livy. Skinner's scholarship is wide-ranging and deep: he illustrates his thesis with a wealth of detail, noting on the way the divergences of view among the main promoters of the ideal of 'free citizens in a free state', whether they are in favour of a mixed government or whether they favour undiluted republicanism.

The uses of the terms liberty and freedom are so protean that it is difficult to do justice to them even in so well packed a monograph as Skinner's. Why this is so can be seen from an analysis of some

of the features of the use of the term 'free'. To be free is not a complete description: it can be completed in a multitude of different ways. Generally and basically to be free is to be without something that is evil or undesirable. To know what is meant in any particular context we need to know who is said to be free and what he or she is free from. We need to note, however, that some thinkers have preferred to think of freedom or liberty not simply as not being restricted but as being empowered or enabled in some way. Impecunious philosophers – those who seek for wisdom on a bread and water diet are free to buy a Rolls-Royce in the former sense of not being restricted by law or the moral sense of the community from doing, so but they are not free in the latter sense. This distinction is often referred to in the literature as one between 'negative' and 'positive liberty'. It is quite possible for a person to be free in different senses at the same time. One can be free from restrictions or restraints upon a form of religious worship and at the same time empowered to open a new church or chapel. One can be free to express a political opinion and have a vote in the election of a representative to a governing body. And the same is true not only of individuals but of whole communities. But not all freedoms are compatible. In *Roman citizenship* A N Sherwin-White pointed out that when the Romans granted a client state *libertas* it meant the abolition of restrictions suffered under previous rulers, not a grant of autonomy. James I was in favour of a free monarchy, but what was freedom for James might not have been freedom for others. Sometimes a freedom is seen as instrumental, sometimes it is seen as a value in its own right. Joseph Priestley, for example, thought that the possession and enjoyment of political rights was crucial to the enjoyment of civil rights. Richard Price, on the other hand, thought that the possession of political rights was of value not simply because they were essential to the enjoyment of civil rights but because they are of intrinsic merit as a constituent of fully developed moral personality.

Skinner makes a radical distinction between enjoying liberty in the sense of not being coercively restricted, and liberty as possessing securities for the enjoyment of such liberties. Having such securities is to be independent of, or not being dependent upon, the will of another. But I think that, following his heroes,

Skinner tends to conflate not being dependent upon the will of another with being governed through representative institutions. One progresses from thinking of freedom as not being subject to the will of another, to think of it as being under one's own will, and thence to being subject to a government in the formation and conduct of which one has played some formative part. It is understandable why not being dependent upon the will of another should be assimilated to being possessed of representative institutions in the seventeenth century where the main enemy was seen to be a monarch with pretensions to absolute power. But the two senses need to be kept apart for two different sets of reasons. First, not being dependent does not entail nor is entailed by possessing representative government. A citizen may be secure in his enjoyment of non-interference by established traditions which a monarch might be unable or unwilling to breach and where the attempt to do so would unleash hostile political forces. Secondly, there is no inbuilt guarantee that those who hold power through representative institutions will not invade the rights of the subject. The claim that the people, or their representatives, will never invade the rights of the people is not just an illusion it is a very dangerous one. This is not to deny that representative institutions play an important role in the preservation of the enjoyment of liberties, but that forms of government are not the whole of the story. What in the end keeps the individual secure in the enjoyment of his liberties is the preservation of a deep-seated respect for the maintenance of the traditions that embody those rights, a determination not to tolerate breaches of them, and institutional checks against the abuses of power.

In the conclusion of his essay, Skinner refers to two theses on the history of ideas which have become closely associated with his name: the importance of studying ideas in their historical context, and the importance of the study of ideas in historical explanation. To some extent Skinner's own success in analysing and distinguishing different uses of the terms freedom and liberty blunts the edge of the general application of the first of these theses. There are different ways of studying ideas, some of which can be relatively independent of the context in which the ideas occur. Works which are written to promote a particular political agenda

need to be studied in the light of what those politicians hoped to achieve. John Locke's *Two treatises* is a case in point. But other ideas and their inter-relationships with other ideas can be examined for the contribution they make to understanding political systems, ideas such as sovereignty, legitimacy and authority.

There is no need for any such qualification in considering Skinner's other thesis: we cannot hope to understand why a politician acted as he did without knowing what he hoped to achieve, and we cannot understand that without knowing the intellectual framework in which his aims and purposes were located. And to understand that we must be acquainted with the ideas that define that framework. If among historians the historian of ideas is an endangered species, Skinner has made a significant contribution to saving him from extinction.

D O Thomas
Aberystwyth

Books received:

We have received the following works, some of which will be reviewed in future numbers:

Alan Argent, *Isaac watts: poet, thinker, pastor*, The Congregational Lecture 1999, The Congregational Memorial Hall Trust, London, 32pp.

David Armitage, *The ideological origins of the British Empire,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, xi + 239pp.

Richard C Allen, *David Hartley and human nature,* State University of New York Press, Albany, 1999, xxiv + 469pp.;

S J Barnett, *Idol temples and crafty priests. The Origins of Enlightenment anticlericalism*, Macmillan Press Ltd., Houndsmill, Basingstoke, 1999, xii + 197 pp.

Russell A Berman, *Enlightenment or empire. Colonial discourse in German culture*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1998, 270pp.

Peter G Bietenholz, *Daniel Zwicker 1612-1678. Peace, Tolerance and God the One and Only*, Studi e Testi per la Storia della Toleranza nei secoli XVI-XVIII, no.1, Leo S Olschki Editore, Firenze, 1997, viii + 330pp.

Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth-Century Europe,* Macmillan, Houndsmill, Basingstoke, 2nd edition (revised), 1999, xxv + 594 pp.

Derek R Brookes ed., *Thomas Reid: An inquiry into the human mind on the principles of common sense,* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1997, xxv + 345pp.

Marilyn L Brooks ed., *Mary Hays: Memoirs of Emma Courtney,* Broadview Literary Texts, Peterborough, Ontario, 2000, 340pp.

Stewart Brown ed. *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire,* Ideas in Context, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, xii + 276pp.

David E Cooper ed., *Aesthetics. The Classic Readings*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1997, 276pp, available in hdbk and pbk.

William Clark, Jan Golinski, & Simon Schaffer, *The sciences in Enlightened Europe*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1999, xi + 566pp.

Michael T Davies, *Radicalism and revolution in Britain, 1775-1848. Essays in honour of Malcom I. Thomis*, Macmillan, Houndsmill, Basingstoke, 2000, xv + 242pp.

Horton Davies & Marie-Hélène Davies, *French Huguenots in English-speaking lands*, Studies in Church History, vol. 11, Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. New York, 2000, x + 147pp.

Stephen B Dobranski and John P Rumrich eds, *Milton and Heresy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, x + 272.

Joris van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianoruam Tolerantia. Irenicism and toleration in the Netherlands: the Stinstra affair, 1740-1745,* Studi e Testi per la Storia della Toleranza nei secoli XVI-XVIII, no.2, Leo S Olschki Editore, Firenze, 1998, viii + 355pp.

William Gibson ed., *Religion and Society in England and Wales 1689-1800*, Leicester University Press, London, 1998, x + 241 pp; available in hdbk and pbk.

Jenny Graham, *The nation, the law and king, Reform politics in England 1789-1799*, two vols., University of America Press, Lanham, New York, & Oxford, 2000, 1093pp.

Jonathan Brody Kramnick, *Making the English Canon. Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700-1770*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, viii + 287pp.

Bruce Kuklick ed., *Thomas Paine: political writings. Revised student edition*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, xxx + 338pp; available in hdbk and pbk.

Stephen Harbottle, *The Reverend William Turner. Dissent and reform in Georgian Newcastle upon Tyne,* Northern Universities Press for the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1997, viii + 200pp.

H S Jones ed. and trans, *Early political writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, xli + 244pp; available in hdbk and pbk.

William Kolbrener, *Milton's warring angels. A study of critical engagements*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, xii + 214pp.

John Locke, *The reasonableness of Christianity,* ed. with intro and notes John C Higgins-Biddle, The Clarendon Edition of the

Works of John Locke, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999, cxxxix + 261pp.

Nikola Skrlec Lomnicki (1729-1799), volume one, *Treatises*; volume two, *Proceeding of the Zagreb Conference on Lomnicki,* Zagreb, 1999, vol. one, xvi + 468pp; vol. two xxxiii + 688pp. The volumes are in Croatian, with a bilingual text (with Latin) of the treatises of this enlightened cameralist administrator.

Andrew M^{c}Cann, *Cultural politics in the 1790s. Literature, radicalism and the public sphere*, Macmillan Press Ltd., Houndsmill, Basingstoke, 1999, xi + 226pp.

Thomas More, *Utopia* with Erasmus's *The Sileni of Alcibiades*, ed. and trans. with intro. by David Wootton, Hackett Publishing Co., Indianapolis, 1999, 203 pp.

Thomas Munck, *The Enlightenment. A comparative social history 1721-1794*, Arnold, London, 2000, xii + 249pp; available in hdbk and pbk.

Annabel Patterson, *Early modern liberalism*, Ideas in Context, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, ix +314pp.

J G A Pocock, *Barbarism and religion:* volume one, *The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon*; volume two, *Narratives of civil government,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, vol. one, xv + 339pp; vol. two, ix + 422pp.

Wilfrid Prest, *Albion Ascendant. English History 1660-1815*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, xix + 363pp

Patrick Riley ed. and trans., *Bossuet: Politics drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scriptures,* Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, hdbk; 1999, pbk, lxxix + 415.

John Robertson ed., *Andrew Fletcher: Political works*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, xlix + 243pp; available in hdbk and pbk.

Uday Mehta Singh, *Liberalism and empire. A study in nineteenth-century British liberal thought*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1999, xii + 237pp.

Hilda L Smith ed., *Women writers in the early modern British political tradition,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, xiv + 392pp

Raymond D Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination. Nationalism, Religion and Literature*, 1600-1745, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, ix + 254 pp.

Jacques Roger, *The life sciences in eighteenth-century French thought*, ed. Keith R Benson, trans. Robert Ellich, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1997, xliv + 760pp.

James Sharpe, *Instruments of darkness. Witchcraft in England, 1550-1750*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1997, xiv +365.

John Sweetman, *The Enlightenment and the Age of Revolution, 1700-1850*, Arts, Culture and Society in the Western World, Longman, London and New York, 1998, xx + 295pp.

W R Ward, *Christianity under the ancien régime 1648-1789*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, xii + 269pp.

D Weinstein, *Equal freedom and utility. Herbert Spencer's liberal utilitarianism*, Ideas in Context, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, xii + 235pp.

David Williams ed., *The Enlightenment*, Cambridge Readings in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge University Press, 1999, xii + 529pp.

Thomas Woodman ed., *Early romantics. Perspectives in British poetry from Pope to Wordsworth*, Macmillan, Houndsmill, Basingstoke, ix + 276.

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Like Locke, Toland excludes Papists from toleration.[52] In his writings his reasons are overdetermined. Not only do they deny liberty of conscience to others, they also subordinate themselves 'to a foren Head whose Authority they prefer to that of their native Magistrats' and claim a dispensation from holding faith with heretics.[53] Defoe attacks Toland over the consistency of this exclusion with his general ground for toleration, since, as he notes, many Catholics are peacable citizens.[54] But the closest Toland comes to such a view is in his admiring account of Dutch toleration in which he claims that Protestants not belonging to the established Church are tolerated while 'Popery [is] conniv'd at.'[55]

What is more unusual, in his works, although not unexampled, is Toland's concession that toleration can be denied to those who reject God's existence or providence or accept the soul's 'absolute mortality'.[56] Like Locke, he claims that oaths from atheists are worthless, but he adds that without the expectation of personal survival 'the Dread of Secret Villainy [is] quite extirpated'.[57] Elsewhere, however, he observes that Bayle 'manifestly *prov'd* that even Atheism does not necessarily lead a Man to be wicked, tho he acknowledges . . . that the Considerations of Safety, Reputation, and Interest, are not such effectual restraints against Immorality, as the Doctrine of Religion.'[58] This concession notwithstanding, Toland defends works such as Spinoza's as 'mere Speculation'.[59] He concedes more to the Dissenting Ministers than

[52] 'Letter concerning toleration', 425-26.

[53] *Life of Milton*, p.113; 147; *Anglia libera*, (London, 1701), 101-2; *Memorial of the state of England*, 56; *State anatomy*, 21; 32; *Reasons for naturalizing the Jews*, (London, 1714), 4-5.

[54] *An argument proving the design*, 80-82.

[55] *Collection of John Toland*, II, 368.

[56] See *Adeisidaemon* (Hague, 1709), 77, for another exclusionary passage. The phrase 'absolute mortality' is used to insure that materialism as such is not a sufficient condition for atheism.

[57] 'Letter concerning toleration', 426. Locke also claims that atheists who undermine religion generally cannot consistently appeal to the principle of religious toleration.

[58] *Letter to Serena* (London, 1704; rpt. Stuttgart-Bad Constatt, 1964), 134; my emphasis.

[59] *Letter to Serena*, 135.

he might otherwise. As a defender of Dissent, he aims to insure that his own supposed infidelity does not become the issue. Defoe made certain, however, that it always would be.

These exclusions contrast with the inclusion of *all* Protestants within the scope of toleration. For Toland uses the distinction between toleration and indifference to argue that the opinions criminalized by the Blasphemy Act — notably ones concerning Christ's nature and the authority of Scripture — can be disapproved while tolerated. He cleverly substitutes Papist beliefs about absolution, for example, as more plausible candidates for blasphemies, although they lie beyond the scope of the Act. His intention is plainly to provide the Dissenting Ministers an opportunity to distance themselves from Dissent's earlier support of the Act.

Toland is off-hand in conceding that communion can be denied not only to the disorderly, but also 'enormous sinners'. Matthew Tindal's *Rights of the Christian Church* had not yet appeared in print, but it argues against such exclusions as uncharitable and insupportable by reason or religion: 'Tho an immoral Person may be punish'd by Peoples shunning his Company and Conversation; [having] forfeited his Right to the Society of rational Creatures: Yet 'tis contrary to the Rules of Charity, to hinder him from coming to Church'.[60]

Toland's qualifications are incorporated into the first of his three demands, which identifies the scope of toleration.

The second demand is to acknowledge that diversity, whether among religions or even within a religion, lies within the scope of toleration. For Toland, it is a long-standing principle that differences of belief are natural and unavoidable. But reason and experience, whether among the ancients or nations like Holland, show them to be compatible with good government.[61] Indeed, they are reliable indicators of a free-government.[62] When they seem not

[60] Tindal, *Rights of the Christian Church* (London, 1706), 92.

[61] *Art of governing by parties*, 11-12; *Collection of several pieces of Mr. John Toland*, II, 106 (where, as so often, his modern paradigm was the experience of Dutch toleration); *Memorial of the state of England*, 50-52; *State anatomy*, 28.

[62] *Memorial of the state of England*, 44.