

SOCINIANISM,
THE ENLIGHTENMENT, AND VOLTAIRE:
A PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE
SOCINIANS, OF THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE
ORIGINS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT, AND OF
THEIR PLACE IN THE LIFE AND WORKS
OF VOLTAIRE FROM 1694 TO 1734

By

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: This thesis has three major goals:
first, to present a historical sketch of the So-
cinian movement, and second, to show how Socinian
thought influenced the climate of opinion around
the beginning of the eighteenth century. The
third and major portion of this work traces the
influence of Socinianism on Voltaire in the first
part of his life (1694-1734). Both his biography
and works are examined in detail for evidence of
Socinianism. OEdipe, the Fête de Bélébat, the
Henriade, the Épître à Uranie, and above all the
Lettres philosophiques are the primary works ana-
lyzed.

PREFACE

This is a historical rather than a philosophical study. There are many philosophical points raised implicitly or explicitly--for example, the truth of the doctrine of the trinity--that are beyond my capabilities to treat in the profound manner they deserve.

I have, therefore, tried to do three things: first, to show what Socinianism was historically; and second, to show what men around the beginning of the eighteenth century thought it to be and how Socinian thought influenced the climate of opinion at the beginning of the Enlightenment.

In the course of this historical exposition, many great men in the history of Western thought appear--far too many even to pretend to discuss their philosophies adequately. What I have done is to report as accurately as I could what Socinians taught, to what extent Socinian ideas can be found in some very restricted areas of these great men's thought, what these men said about Socinianism, and what their contemporaries and Enlightenment figures said about their personal relationship to Socinianism.

Third, I considered the extent of Socinian influence in Voltaire's life and thought from his earliest years through the aftermath of the appearance of the

Lettres philosophiques in France in 1734. Voltaire, both as a representative figure of the Enlightenment and as a fascinating and important man in his own right, was an appealing subject on which to focus. And, of course, it is well known that at three times in Voltaire's work and life "Socinians" were important.

The major literary fruit of his English sojourn, the Lettres philosophiques (1733/34), gave the seventh Lettre to a discussion of the English unitarians or Socinians. Here he annointed Locke, Le Clerc, Clarke, and Newton leaders of that heresy and did not hesitate to praise them. Since the Lettres philosophiques mark the terminal point in time of this study and since they were one of Voltaire's most influential works, the place of the Socinians in them was given, here, quite a detailed treatment. Also, contemporary reaction to his praise of Socinians was noted.

For the next ten years, chiefly because of the extremely unfavourable official reaction to the Lettres philosophiques, Voltaire was unable to live at either Paris or the court at Versailles. During this period of philosophic liason with Madame du Châtelet at Cirey, Voltaire followed Clarke into the laybrinth of metaphysics; eventually Locke and Newton led him out again. These Socinians' (Clarke's and Newton's) names and ideas fill the pages of philosophy that Voltaire wrote in the Cirey years.

When Voltaire returned from his tour of duty at Frederick the Great of Prussia's court, he thought he had found the ideal refuge at Geneva (1755). However, the Genevese took offense at his comments in the Essai sur les mœurs about Calvin's killing the antitrinitarian Servetus, at a remark in a letter of his on the same subject, and at d'Alembert's Encyclopédie article (for which Voltaire was blamed) where d'Alembert called the Genevese clergy "Socinian". Voltaire soon felt obliged to buy a French refuge from his Swiss refuge.

Voltarian scholars have not, I think, adequately understood the nature of Socinianism and have not, therefore given satisfactory explanations of its recurrence in Voltaire's works. One of my major goals, therefore, was to offer a reappraisal of the rôle of Socinianism in his early works, based on a critical examination of all his references to the Socinians, his biography, a close acquaintance with Socinian history, and references to the intellectual concerns of his contemporaries.

In all three aspects of this work, I chose to offer the reader enough data to check my formulations rather than to present only the conclusions of the historical authorities. Again, for all three aspects, I presented the facts in two patterns: first, to sketch the history; and second, to show the terminology with which the antitrinitarians referred to themselves and with which others named

and/or slandered them.

My emphasis on the concrete historical facts comes in part from my belief that "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 8:20): that is, the actions of the believers rather than their professed beliefs best reveal the nature of a religious movement. Also, the detailed account of antitrinitarian history in the early chapters made it relatively easy to annotate Voltaire's references to "Socinians" and "Socinianism" discussed in the last chapters. Finally, the defining characteristics of Socinianism found at the end of the second chapter (pp. 54-58, below) guided the later discussions of Voltaire and of the four men he called "Socinian" in the seventh Lettre philosophique.

With three consistent exceptions, all modernizations, the quotations in this study are reproduced as they appear in the cited texts. The exceptions are that the ampersand has been replaced with "and" or "et", that the modern "s" supplants the ancient, and that abbreviations which have their terminal letters printed above the line of type in the original texts have been reproduced in a single line: for example, "M^r" becomes "Mr". "Sic" was used only to indicate a modern writer's (or printer's) error in a language other than that of his text.

Since it is important for understanding to know when Voltaire wrote something and since his letters are

so manifestly tailored to their recipients, I have provided the titles and publication dates of Voltaire's published works cited and the dates and addressees of his correspondence. For similar reasons, although I have adopted a short form of footnote, I have made full reference to eighteenth-century periodicals.

This study, while an entity in itself, is also the prolegomenon to a proposed doctoral dissertation. Therefore, in some places, the present work is the report of preliminary studies which will later be improved. The work to come will be expanded to include Voltaire's relations with Socinianism later in his career: at least through his Geneva period.

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I.

SOME IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS OF ORGANIZED ANTITRINITARIANS

A. The Radical Reformation: The Reformation of the sixteenth century can be conveniently divided into two branches: the Magisterial Reformation and the Radical Reformation.¹ Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and their churches on the continent and Henry the Eighth's Church in England all were closely connected to the state and were eager to use its magistrates' powers of coercion to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy and church discipline--hence, the "Magisterial Reformation". This branch of the Reformation, certainly the dominant one, was also marked by an extreme reluctance to change or even to consider changing those doctrines formulated by the early church councils. Each of these aspects of the Magisterial Reformation seemed to some to be in conflict with one of the fundamental principles of the Reformation: the use of civil authority to enforce belief with sola fide and the reliance on traditional doctrinal formulae with sola scriptura.

1. Williams, Radical Reformation, pp. xxiii-xxxi, defends this division upon which he bases his entire study.

On the other hand, the Radical Reformation can be interpreted as the branch that carried the Reformation towards its logical conclusions. The ideal of sola fide, modified by a strong emphasis on the authority of personal religious experience, led the Radicals to reject the authority of the state to compel a man's religious conscience and to assert instead that church (made up of regenerate Christians who needed no outer impulse to live upright, holy lives) and state must be separate. Since being a Christian involved some sort of personal religious experience and moral regeneration, infant baptism into the church was opposed. It was also pointed out that the New Testament model was for adult (or believer's) baptism; Jesus, for example, was baptised at the age of thirty.

In addition to being antipedobaptist, many of the Radical Reformers were anabaptists; that is, they taught that one's infant baptism was invalid and that one must be rebaptised into the regenerate church. This practice gave one of the three major groupings within the Radical Reformation their name--Anabaptists. The Anabaptists generally were drawn from lower levels of society, had relatively uneducated ministers (though they were most proficient with the vernacular Bible), and tended to draw completely away from civil society to form their own communities, frequently communistic, of purified believers.

The other two groupings in Williams's typology were the Spiritualists and the Evangelical Rationalists--² the latter chiefly Italians. While all three shared some doctrines and approaches to religion and while all three made some contribution to the religious bodies which concern us, the Socinians derived for the main from Evangelical Rationalism. Of the three, the Evangelical Rationalists were the least prone to pull altogether out of the world. They were adamant that a perfected Christian should not bear arms, go to war, or invoke the powers of the magistrate in case of personal harm; yet they were willing to live in society, to hold property, and to work at trades or professions that did not conflict with Christian ideals.

Long before Luther posted his famous theses, humanistic scholars were examining church doctrine and practice³ relying only on scripture and their own reasoning. Their scorn for the current state of religious thought was clear when Scholasticism was described as the "puddles of neo-barbarians".⁴ The Evangelical Rationalists drew on this brilliant Renaissance scholarship and spirit of intellectual freedom; they were fluent in Greek and Hebrew and used

2. Ibid., p. xxiv.

3. Ibid., chapter 1; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, chapter 6.

4. Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 19.

the latest critical texts for their implementation of the sola scriptura principle. For the Anabaptists, sola scriptura generally referred to the popular translations of the Bible that proliferated in the early sixteenth century. However, both the high and low scriptural roads led to antipedobaptism, and some of the Evangelical Rationalists were also anabaptists.

Erasmus, whose Greek New Testament and other works were primary sources for the Evangelical Rationalists, led or rather reinforced two tendencies of this group: first, the emphases of a Christian life over creedal orthodoxy and second, the belief in religious tolerance. A passage from the preface to his 1523 edition of Hilary of Poitiers's "On the Trinity" witnessed his irenic, undogmatic stance:

Is it not possible to have fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit without being able to explain philosophically the distinction between them and between the nativity of the Son and the procession of the Holy Ghost? . . . You will not be damned if you do not know whether the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son has one or two beginnings, but you will not escape damnation, if you do not cultivate the fruits of the Spirit which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, long-suffering, mercy, faith, modesty, continence, and chastity. (5)

He continued, arguing that the interjection of philosophy into simple Christian faith led to an increase in dogma and a corresponding decrease in sincere belief and practice.

Also he suggested that the government's proper sphere of influence should not extend to creedal matters: "The injection of the authority of the emperor into this affair did not greatly aid the sincerity of faith. . . . That which is forced cannot be sincere, and that which is not voluntary cannot please Christ."⁶

Clearly Erasmus here set aside the Nicene formulation of the doctrine of the trinity as irrelevant for salvation. In fact, he implied that such philosophical subtlety may even stand in the way of saving faith. Further he cast doubt on the authority of the Council itself by casting doubt on the propriety of the state's interfering in articles of faith. And, as everyone knew, the Nicene Council was called in 325 a.d. by the Emperor Constantine to insure civil tranquility, threatened at the time by the Christians' quarrels over the relationship between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Constantine promised the power of the state to enforce whatever decision the Council might arrive at, which promise eventually led to the first persecution (or prosecution, depending on one's theological point of view) of heretics in Christendom.⁷

6. Ibid., p. 35.

7. Voeglin, Politics, pp. 97-106, is a superb analysis of Constantine's role at Nicea.

Such pious terrorism, Erasmus concluded, did not promote true Christian faith. In short, Erasmus recommended that faith be based on "solid knowledge of Sacred Scripture",⁸ that a pure life count more than verbal affirmation of creeds (poorly understood at best), and that the magistrates should not compel doctrinal uniformity--all this at a time when in nearly all Europe denying, or even doubting the Nicene Creed was a capital offence.

Earlier, in his 1516 critical edition of the Greek New Testament, Erasmus had eliminated another prop for the traditional (Nicene) doctrine of the Trinity. I John 5:7 in the King James version reads, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."⁹ Since Erasmus could find this passage neither in the earliest Greek manuscripts nor in the early fathers, he omitted it--thus eliminated the prime proof-text for the Nicene doctrine of the trinity.

The Evangelical Rationalists used these sentiments and researches of Erasmus to develop their best known and most conspicuous doctrinal characteristic, an unorthodox

8. Bainton, Heretic, p. 35.

9. Ibid., pp. 10-11; Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 9; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, p. 14. Compare the New English Bible or the Revised Standard Version to the King James.

(anti-Nicene) approach to the trinity. Here it should be noted that the contemporaneous opponents to the decisions of the Council of Nicea were the followers of Arius and that the Nicene Creed itself was couched in terms chosen to refute particular teachings of Arius. Since the Evangelical Rationalists were also anti-Nicene, their orthodox opponents called them Arians, a name the Rationalists never used for themselves. Indeed, the term Arian was most imprecise; the sixteenth century anti-Nicene Reformers did not hold to Arius's theological system, and there was no historical link between the ancient and the Reformation

¹⁰ heretics. It was not an examination of ancient heresies, but rather the principles of sola scriptura and freedom of conscience that led the Evangelical Rationalists to oppose the Nicene formulation with its "ultimately Greek philosophical terminology enforced by the authority of the Roman
¹¹ Empire and Constantine."

Until 1542, the date of the establishment of the Roman Inquisition, Italy allowed Catholic intellectuals a great deal of freedom of thought in religion and was not

10. Williams, Radical Reformation, pp. 319-320; here Williams introduced the term "Anti-Nicene"; see also Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, chapter 1.

11. Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 319. Williams further comments that the Reformers were not nearly so well educated in philosophy as the church fathers who formulated the creed. (Ibid., p. 320.) The Radicals thought their ignorance enabled them to recapture primitive faith.

overly zealous in searching out Protestants.¹² Thus most of the immediate groundwork for the Evangelical Rationalists' theology was done in Italy in the period c. 1500-1542. In contrast to Italy, in the Holy Roman Empire, the Magisterial Reformers and the Catholics agreed at the Diet of Speyer in 1529 that those who professed anabaptism should not be suffered to live. Emperor Charles V decreed on 23 April 1529 the following: "that . . . every anabaptist and rebaptised man and woman of the age of reason shall be condemned and brought from natural life into death by fire, sword, and the like."¹³ Immediately this decree was enforced throughout the Empire; in fact, it was used to persecute any Christian, even though not formally an Anabaptist, who was suspected of radical views.

In some parts of the Empire, Anabaptists, imbued with millenarian fervour, became antinomian; thus the magistrates, both Catholic and Protestant, feared general civil disorder. Also in the overheated atmosphere of the beginning of the Reformation, Catholics and Protestants were trying to outdo one another in doctrinal orthodoxy. At this early point the Reformers still hoped to reform the Church rather than to establish new Churches, thus they tried to

12. Ibid., pp. xxvi, 2, passim.

13. Ibid., p. 238.

avoid fundamental creedal divergencies. Although some few city states evaded the enforcement of this decree, most Anabaptists faced the alternatives of recantation, migration to the East, or martyrdom. Thus, after 1542 Italy and the Holy Roman Empire were closed to theological radicals. They, for a while, could feel safe in Protestant Switzerland or Eastern Europe, but Switzerland with the execution of Servetus in 1553 also became dangerous territory.

14

B. Michael Servetus (c. 1511-1553): Servetus, a Spaniard, was a man after the spirit of his times; he studied law, practiced both medicine and astrology, made some real advances in the study of geography, discovered the pulmonary circulation and the oxygenation of the blood, edited an excellent Latin Bible, and laid the foundation for a system of theology that was independent of both Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy. Yet for none of these is he most remembered, for Servetus had the supreme, unforgettable honour of being prosecuted, condemned, and burnt in effigy by the Inquisition and of being prosecuted, condemned, and burnt alive by Calvin. The charge, in both cases, was that of heresy concerning the trinity.

14. Bainton, Heretic, is a full-scale biography of Servetus; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, chapters 5 and 9-17 are a good account of his life and posthumous influence; (cont.)

While Servetus never left the Roman Catholic Church and considered himself a loyal son of it,¹⁵ he was enough caught up in the religious ferment of his era to call the Pope "vilest of all the beasts, most brazen of harlots"¹⁶ and to identify him with the Antichrist. Though burnt for¹⁷ his views on the trinity, he never denied that doctrine. Servetus was anti-Nicene rather than anti-trinitarian; he regarded the Nicene formulation of the trinity and the Scholastics' manipulations of it as abominations that set up philosophical monstrosities to be worshipped in place of the simple truths and the Jesus of the New Testament.¹⁸ He was so convinced that the Nicene doctrine of the trinity was pernicious that he counted the year of the Nicene Council, 325 a.d., as the year of the fall of the Church in his

(cont.) Williams, Radical Reformation, chapters 10.3f, 11.1d, 11.2, 11.3c, 11.4, 23.4, and 24 treat some aspects of his theology, life, and influence.

15. Bainton, Heretic, p. 104; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 127.

16. Bainton, Heretic, p. 20, from Servetus's Restoration of Christianity (1553); also quoted in Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 55.

17. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 62; see also Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 319.

18. "Three-headed Cerebus" was one of Servetus's favourite labels for the monster.

19
 eschatological calculations.

When Servetus, who had been taught Christianity as a system of abstract philosophical propositions centering on the trinity, first read the Bible (in secret), he was thunderstruck as he found that "Not one word is found in the whole Bible about the Trinity nor about its persons, nor about the essence nor the unity of substance, nor of the one nature of the several beings nor about any of the rest of their ravings and logic chopping."²⁰ This discovery, made while in college at about the age of fifteen, shaped his entire life. He soon learned Greek and Hebrew with the object of coming into first-hand knowledge of the Bible and became convinced it was his rôle to restore Christian doctrine to its primitive simplicity.

The first fruit of his mission to reform Christianity was a book published in 1531, when Servetus was only twenty. He called it On the Errors of the Trinity and set out to expose the contradictions and useless subtleties of

19. Bainton, Heretic, pp. 31-32 and 147; see also Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 323, and Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 112-113. Like most of the Radicals, Servetus was convinced he was living in the last times.

20. Bainton, Heretic, p. 24, from Servetus's On The Errors of the Trinity (1531)--also quoted in part in Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 53. Servetus was right in that the technical language of the Nicene Creed is not found in the Bible; however, is it possible to construct and defend a Biblical theology without using extra-Biblical terminology?

the Scholastic doctrine of the trinity by contrasting it to scripture which he took in its literal sense. Through the influence of this book, Servetus hoped to draw the Reformation to his side, to cleanse dogma of all non-Scriptural ideas and terminology.

The book was written in far from perfect Latin and was poorly organized. On the other hand, it showed an encyclopedic knowledge of the Bible in the original tongues and a very wide acquaintance with the church fathers and the late scholastic theologians; in fact, anti-Nicene Christians in the sixteenth century did not bother to examine the Scholastics, they merely quoted Servetus's On the
²¹
Errors of the Trinity. A typical example of the kind of reasoning Servetus detested is this syllogism of William of Occam, "God is a Trinity, the Father is God, therefore
²²
the Father is a Trinity." After collecting scores of similar illustrations which either resulted in logical fallacies or conflicted with scripture, Servetus concluded that the Nicene formulation of the trinity could be defended only by sophistry and was in direct opposition to the Word of God, the Bible.

One of Servetus's objectives was achieved by the

21. Bainton, Heretic, pp. 28-29.

22. Ibid., p. 28.

publication of this book. The Reformers began to consider the doctrine of the trinity; they rose to a man in defense²³ of the Nicene formulation and in opposition to Servetus. Some began to call for his blood. And as they had done two years earlier against the Anabaptists, the Catholics joined with the Magisterial Reformers in an attempt to eradicate heresy.²⁴ Servetus most prudently went underground after pausing to publish The Dialogues on the Trinity early in 1532. This small work was essentially a restatement of the arguments of On the Errors of the Trinity in less violent language. No one was placated.

Under the name Villeneuve (Latin, Villanovanus); Servetus lived in France safely and peacefully for twenty-one years with no one suspecting he was a wanted heretic. It was in this period that he worked as an editor and physician; he eventually (1540) settled in Vienne after having studied medicine in Paris. Had Villeneuve stayed clear of theology, he most probably would have died an honoured man, for he was respected for his scholarship and for being a competent, dutiful doctor. His reputation was so high at Vienne that he lived in an apartment in the palace of the

23. Bainton, Heretic, pp. 66-67; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 63ff.

24. Bainton, Heretic, pp. 68-69; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 71ff.

Archbishop and treated most of the local gentry. Nonetheless, Villeneuve began working in secret in the early 1540's on his greatest theological work, The Restoration of Christianity. Perhaps it was his duties as editor of the Pagnini Latin Bible, published in 1542, that rekindled his sense of mission in theology.²⁵

At any rate, in 1546, Servetus entered into theological correspondence with John Calvin, where he tried with absolutely no success to convince Calvin to abandon Nicene theology. Eventually, in 1553, Servetus published again; this time the book, The Restoration of Christianity, had fatal consequences. Calvin recognized the work as Servetus's from their earlier correspondence and denounced him through an intermediary to the Inquisition at Vienne.²⁶

After Servetus escaped from prison in France, the courts found him guilty in absentia of "scandalous heresy, sedition, rebellion, and evasion of prison."²⁷ The sentence was death by fire; it was duly carried out in effigy. Along with a picture of Servetus, they burned as many of his books as they could find.

25. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 130.

26. For Calvin's rôle in Servetus's trouble with the Inquisition, see Bainton, Heretic, chapter 8; McNeill, Calvinism, pp. 173-174; and Le Clerc, Toleration, I, 325-328.

27. Bainton, Heretic, p. 164. The date of the decision was 17 June 1553.

As it turned out, Calvin did not need the Inqui-
²⁸sition's help to eliminate Servetus. On 13 August 1553,
 five months after he escaped from prison at Vienne, Ser-
 vetus was recognized while attending church in Geneva. He
 was arrested at once, and Calvin personally laid charges
 and at one stage of the ensuing trial acted as prosecutor.
 By the standards of the times it was a fair trial; and af-
 ter all the Swiss Protestant cities had advised that Serve-
 tus be punished most severely, he was sentenced to death on
 26 October 1553 and executed by slow fire the following

²⁹day. Although there were many civil and theological
 points raised in the trial, anti-trinitarianism and anti-
 pedobaptism were the two heresies for which he was con-
³⁰demned.

28. For Calvin's rôle in executing Servetus, see
ibid., chapters 8-11; McNeill, *Calvinism*, pp. 175-177; and
 Le Cler, *Toleration*, I, 328-332.

29. Calvin asked for a more humane form of execu-
 tion. Throughout the trial Servetus acted with supreme ar-
 rogance; he felt his theological position was unassailable
 and would not yield at all. Under the laws of the city, the
 court had no alternative but to condemn Servetus. But
 since he had done no wrong in Geneva, did the city have the
 right to try him for heresies promulgated in France? Also
 at this particular instant Calvin was in a precarious
 political position; the anti-Calvin party was challenging
 his authority. Therefore, once he had charged Servetus,
 his prestige would have been severely damaged had Servetus
 been acquitted. However, here as always in matters of
 faith, political considerations were secondary for Calvin;
 God's honour was at stake.

30. Bainton, *Heretic*, pp. 207ff, for the verdict.

The Restoration of Christianity restated the anti-Nicene arguments of his earlier works and showed influences from two new sources, Anabaptists and Renaissance Neoplatonism.³¹ From the former came his antipedobaptism, though he rejected the radical social teachings of the Anabaptists, and the latter reinforced his opposition to the traditional system of doctrine. His theology in detail is not too important since he died without a single convert and since his last book was so suppressed that only three copies survived, but some general tendencies of his thought should be mentioned.

First was his freedom from the authority of tradition and councils in theology; for Servetus the literal sense of the scripture interpreted by reason alone was sufficient authority. For instance, in the Dialogues of 1532 Servetus had interpreted the Gospel accounts of the virgin birth in a literal, physiological sense: "God the Father sent the Word forth from his mouth, a seed which like a cloud of dew contained the elements of fire, water, and air and, passing through the nostrils of the Virgin, had the power to bring forth a manchild in her womb."³² His

31. Bainton, Heretic, pp. 130ff; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 140ff; Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 612.

32. Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 336, Williams's paraphrase; see also ibid., p. 612, and Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, pp. 146-147 for more of his theological medical research.

later discovery of the pulmonary circulation and the oxygenation of the bloodstream may have been theologically motivated; it revealed the physiological mechanism by the Virgin could be impregnated by the cloud-like Word (this medical landmark was first published as an illustration for a doctrinal point in the Restoration). It also tied together such Old Testament texts as Genesis 2:7, where God breathes life into the figure of dust to create man, and Leviticus 17:11, which states that "the life of the flesh is in the blood."

This example was typical of the method of Servetus and the other Evangelical Rationalists who rejected theological formulations in terms of Greek philosophy for Biblical literalism understood in the light of Renaissance science and philosophy. Servetus's trial and death led many to reconsider the speculative doctrine of the trinity, and--among the Italians especially--many reached unorthodox conclusions. Although his specific teachings did not make many converts, Servetus had succeeded indirectly in his design to promote an anti-Nicene Christianity.

Second, Servetus had the most influence, again posthumously, in the area of religious tolerance. He objected to the Nicene Council not only for its establishment of a philosophical creed as the normative Christian belief, but also for the introduction of magisterial authority and coercion into Christian faith. Throughout his

trial at Geneva, Servetus forcefully argued that according to scripture and the ante-Nicene fathers, doctrine should not be enforced by the state and that in case of error, persuasion and argument from scripture were the proper recourse; banishment was the maximum punishment.³³ However his plea for tolerance was easily crushed to dust and swept away by the hostile court; they even took it as an admission of guilt on his part.

Shortly after the execution others began to speak in favour of toleration. In Geneva itself there were murmurings in the Italian refugee community against Calvin's actions; even more trouble was brewing among the Italians in Basel. The Italian Protestants in Switzerland were generally highly educated humanists already disposed to rethink the doctrine of the trinity; and having just fled the Roman Pope and Inquisition, they were not eager to face a new pope and inquisition in Geneva. There had also been persistent reports, dating from the time of the publication of On the Errors of the Trinity, that Servetus had a following in Italy, but these were never adequately substantiated.³⁴

33. Bainton, Heretic, pp. 188ff and p. 200.

34. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 70-71. See Le Cler, Toleration, I, 365-380, and Williams, Radical Reformation, chapter 24, for accounts of the reaction of the refugee Italian Protestants to the burning of Servetus.

Nonetheless, all these factors worked together to make Calvin uneasy enough to feel the need to justify his treatment of Servetus. The other Magisterial Reformers, including those outside Switzerland, all were pleased that a heretic had been silenced, and some urged Calvin to publish a full account of the trial and to refute publicly such dangerous heresies. About four months after Servetus's death, Calvin published his Defensio which was both a general defense of the right of the state to kill unrepentent heretics and a specific defense of Geneva's killing of Servetus. It "throughout shows the utmost loathing and contempt for Servetus as a very monster of iniquity, applying to him the foulest epithets."³⁵ One might have wished that Calvin would have shown a bit more posthumous mercy to Servetus since he had already been instrumental in delivering the man to the Inquisition in France and to the stake in Geneva.

Calvin's anxieties had been well founded, for only a little more than a month after the Defensio appeared, Sebastian Castellio, an Italian intellectual refugee, published anonymously in Basel his Concerning Heretics which eloquently argued for toleration.³⁶ This work was not an

35. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 191. Le Cler, Toleration, I, 333-335 has a good account of the Defensio.

36. See Bainton's introduction to his (cont.)

answer to Calvin's Defensio--they were under preparation at the same time--but was rather a general call for Christian charity in the treatment of doctrinal divergencies.

Castellio argued that the New Testament offered no examples of Christians as persecutors, which alone "ought to fill us with fear and trembling when it comes to persecuting a man for his faith and religion."³⁷ Further, the contentious doctrines were obscure and speculative so that the executioner might be in error as much as his victim.³⁸ Since there was no certainty in such matters, Castellio concluded that "the meaning of the term heretic [is] . . . that we regard those as heretics with whom we disagree."³⁹ Therefore, one should refrain from imposing his beliefs on another.

After all, a life lived in love and peace was a much better witness to Christ than rigorous doctrinal purity:

Who would not think Christ a Moloch, or some such god, if he wished that men should be immolated to

(cont.) translation of Concerning Heretics, pp. 107-117; Le Cler, Toleration, I, 336-347; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 193ff and chapter 14; and Williams, Radical Reformation, pp. 628ff, for discussions of the importance of Castellio's work.

37. Castellio, Heretics, p. 139.

38. Ibid., pp. 122, 132, and 139.

39. Ibid., p. 129.

him and burned alive? Who would wish to serve Christ on condition that a difference of opinion on a controversial point with those in authority would be punished by burning alive at the command of Christ himself . . . even though from the midst of the flames he should call with a loud voice upon Christ, and should cry out that he believed in Him? (40)

This last rhetorical question may well be a reference to Servetus's last words, cried from the stake: "O Jesus, Son of the eternal God, have mercy on me!"⁴¹ In addition to Castellio's own arguments for toleration, Concerning Heretics was also an anthology of ancient Christian writings and passages from moderns (including Calvin) that argued for tolerance.

Magisterial Reformers, especially those in Geneva,

40. Ibid., pp. 133-134.

41. Quoted in Bainton, Heretic, p. 212; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 181; and Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 614. Williams (ibid., p. 614) rather dryly comments, "In his extremity he was explicit in his belief, still refusing to ascribe eternity to the person of Jesus Christ the Son." Farel, the minister who attended to Servetus at the execution, noted that had Servetus shifted "the position of the adjective and confess/ed/ Christ as the Eternal Son rather than as the Son of the Eternal God" he might have been spared. (Bainton, Heretic, p. 214, Bainton's wording.)

Calvin, in his Defensio, had foreseen the rhetorical question asked by Castellio, and he had answered that Servetus's cry from the pyre was not really to Christ at all since Christ was defined by Calvin as the "eternal Son of God." (Castellio, Heretics, p. 287.) In his subsequent Reply, Castellio suggested that Calvin's reasoning would mean "all who bear the Christian name would be killed, except Calvinists." (Ibid., p. 265; see also ibid., pp. 281-282.)

were very upset by Castellio's book--they correctly guessed he was responsible for it. Calvin's theologico-political system centered on the doctrine of the trinity on which he believed all religious and civil order depended. Therefore, Servetus's attack on and Castellio's defense of toleration concerning this dogma were seen as extremely dangerous. Theodore Beza, Calvin's leading disciple, published a refutation of Concerning Heretics in September, 1554, which Castellio ignored to attack Calvin's Defensio instead.

His new work, Reply to Calvin's Book in Which he Endeavors to Show that Heretics Should be Coerced by the Right of the Sword, was written perhaps in 1562,⁴² but the climate of opinion was too inflamed for it to be printed then. However, other works hostile to Calvin soon circulated; Camillo Renato reproached Calvin in a long poem for causing the Italians to find "a fiery stake erected where they had thought to discover a haven."⁴³ Then in 1555, Servetus's first known follower published an apology for his doctrines and roundly condemned Calvin.⁴⁴

42. In Castellio, Heretics, pp. 265-287, Bainton has translated excerpts from the Reply. The dating is Bainton's, ibid., p. 265.

43. Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 616; see also ibid., p. 566, and Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 201. Wilbur dates the poem September, 1554.

44. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 201; see (cont.)

For the rest of his life Calvin was hounded by charges of cruelty and fanaticism arising from the Servetus case. Castellio's work was very popular; and much to Calvin's discomfort he had imparted to Servetus a notoriety which led to a great demand for his books. But for the time being, the Magisterial position carried the day; capital punishment remained the penalty for heresy in most of Protestant Europe, and in 1566 Giovanni Gentile was beheaded in Bern for heresies concerning the trinity.⁴⁵ The Swiss Magisterial Reformers had begun to look suspiciously at all their Italian brethren, and soon the free-thinkers among them either left the country on their own initiative or were expelled. However, by the turn of the century, capital punishment for heresy was a dead letter in Switzerland; after Servetus, for example, no heretics were executed in Geneva.⁴⁶

(cont.) Williams, Radical Reformation, pp. 623ff for a summary of its contents; Williams attributes the Apologia to Gribaldi, but the attribution is not certain.

45. Ibid., p. 745. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 235ff. In this case, strangely enough, hardly anyone protested.

46. McNeill, Calvinism, p. 173. That is, no heretics were executed after Servetus unless one classes witches as heretics. Calvin's Geneva burnt many witches.

Around 1612, in a controversy in which Calvin and Beza as well as anti-Calvin books were reprinted, Castellio's Reply was finally printed in the Netherlands where it helped in eventually securing religious toleration in that country.⁴⁷ Castellio, as one of the first Protestants to call publicly for humane treatment of heretics and to make behaviour rather than belief the center of religion, even more than Servetus deserves to be remembered as one of the founders of liberal Protestantism.

The third area of Servetus's influence is that of terminology. He coined the term Trinitarius (trinitarian) in his On the Errors of the Trinity; it referred, in Servetus's language, to those who worshipped the three-headed Cerebus of the traditional, philosophical trinity in place of the living God and his compassionate Son, Jesus.⁴⁸ During his trial in Geneva, Servetus repeatedly accused Calvin of "trinitarianism" which, of course, infuriated Calvin. Many of those, like Castellio, who examined the case of Servetus were inclined to take his execution for the honour of the trinity as proof that sophisticated doctrines had corrupted simple Christianity. Perhaps Calvin was guilty of "trinitarianism".

47. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 202; Le Cler, Toleration, I, 350-356.

48. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 168.

II

ORGANIZED ANTITRINITARIANS

1

A. Transylvania, Unitarians: Transylvania, in the period of the Reformation, was subject to a confused tangle of political, racial, and religious forces--both internal and external. There were three privileged nationalities within the country: the Szeklers, descendants of the fifth-century invading Huns; the Magyars, who had invaded in the ninth century; and the Saxons, German speaking descendants of twelfth-century settlers. All of these groups kept to their own customs and areas of the country. In addition to these three, there were several other minority peoples who were more-or-less tolerated but who had few civil rights: for example, Gypsies, Jews, and Wallecks (Balkan people of the Orthodox faith).

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Transylvania was a province of the Kingdom of Hungary, but in 1543 declared itself independent, elected a king, and placed

1. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, chapters 1-6, trace the religious history of Transylvania in the sixteenth century. This is historical territory not much known in the West and Wilbur offers the most extensive coverage. However, in matters of detail and even matters of primary importance, there are disagreements; see Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 708, n. 1. Williams, ibid., chapter 28 is a condensed treatment of this era.

itself under the protection of the Ottoman Turks; the rest of Hungary allied itself with the Hapsburg Empire. This left the roughly square country bordered on two sides by the Ottoman Empire (then at its highest point under Suleiman I) and on its other two sides by the Hapsburg Empire and Poland (both very strong), respectively. All three neighbors were continually involved in Byzantine intrigues, and the Turks and Hapsburgs in imperialist wars, to gain control of Transylvania; and, of course, internal political ferment was high. In 1551, under pressure from royal advisers, who had usurped all the real power, the rightful rulers, Queen Regent Isabella and her son King John Sigismund, went into exile in Poland. They were accompanied by the court physician Dr. Giorgio Biandrata, a specialist in women's diseases. Biandrata, a Piedmontese, was at this time a Catholic but of the Italian speculative humanist hue; later he will prove important in the religious history.

On the religious front, the Saxons in Transylvania imported Lutheranism through books from the German trade fairs in the early 1520's and were soon converted. By 1542 the Szeklers and Magyars had followed to such an extent that the Catholic diocese of Transylvania was secularized; the Lutherans were subject to one general superintendent but were divided into German-speaking (Saxon) and Hungarian-speaking (Szekler and Magyar) sections. However, in the

1550's, the Hungarian section began to favour Calvinism, perhaps because it was not German. In 1556 Francis David became general superintendent of the Lutherans.

The same year, on the Sultan's urging, the Queen² Regent and the young King were recalled from Poland. Since nearly all of the members of the Diet were Lutheran or Calvinist and since the Queen Regent was a devout Catholic, the Diet wanted to insure that she would not try to impose her religion on the country, which indeed was probably her plan. Isabella's character and intentions are one of the issues on which there is little agreement. Wilbur says that she desired toleration to protect the Catholic minority while Williams argues that the Protestants forced her hand to secure religious freedom for

2. Dr. Biandrata had left the service of the Queen Regent to return to Italy (1553-1556). There he came under the suspicion of the Inquisition and fled to Geneva in 1556, where he was elected an elder of the Italian refugee church. He shortly began to smother Calvin with doctrinal questions--especially about the trinity. Calvin was then very touchy about the orthodoxy of the Italians in his city, and the Servetus controversy was still burning. Therefore, Calvin drew up a very strict confession for the Italian congregation and asked that they all sign. After an open debate with Calvin, which showed Biandrata to be quite unorthodox, Biandrata fled Geneva in May, 1558, without signing the confession. The city decreed that he should be arrested if ever he returned. Later in 1558, Biandrata along with Laelius Socinus (Lelio Sozzini) went back to Poland. (Williams, Radical Reformation, pp. 634-636; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, pp. 223ff.) There he was quite active for several years in organizing the Polish anti-trinarians.

3
themselves.

At any rate, in 1557, she decreed that:

Inasmuch as We and Our Most Serene Son have Assented to the most instant supplication of the Peers of Realm, that each person maintain whatever religious faith he wishes, with old or new rituals, while We at the same time leave it to their judgement to do as they please in the matter of their faith, just so long, however, as they bring no harm to bear on anyone at all. (4)

In spite of its very liberal wording, this decree was intended only as a practical way to ensure peace between the Lutherans and Catholics, for the Calvinists were specifically censured by the Diet of 1558. Nonetheless, a pattern of toleration as the way to handle religious controversy had been set; this, along with the availability of Turkish sanctuary for religious deviates and the geographical isolation of Transylvania, made possible the development of an explicitly antitrinitarian Christianity there.

John Sigismund II took the throne on the death of his mother in 1559 and was soon caught up in religious controversy. In 1563 he recalled Biandrata from Poland to be court physician and renewed the edict of toleration of 1557, expanding it to include the increasingly numerous Calvinists. Biandrata, experienced in religious affairs

3. Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 712; Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 22.

4. Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 712f; one phrase quoted in Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 22.

and statecraft, was soon one of the King's most important advisors. A special Diet was convened in 1564 to try to heal the differences between the Augsburg Confession Lutherans and those following Calvin in the Hungarian-speaking church; Biandrata was the King's personal representative. However, rather than repairing the damage, the Diet succeeded in splitting the church forever; Francis David, who had earlier been the chief anti-Calvinist Lutheran, emerged as superintendent of the Calvinist faction and became good friends with Biandrata. Very shortly, in 1565, David began to preach publicly against the Nicene formulation of the trinity. David may have had trinitarian doubts before he met Biandrata--this is another point open to question ⁵⁻--but in association with Biandrata, his theology rapidly became more and more radical.

And as David became more and more radical, his Calvinist colleagues became more and more alarmed. They petitioned King John Sigismund II to call a synod of the Transylvanian and the Turkish Hungarian Calvinists to debate the doctrines in question. The King complied and the debaters agreed to Biandrata's suggestion that they confine themselves to Biblical terminology alone. Nothing was settled at this debate (February, 1567), but it was the

5. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 29f; Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 716.

beginning of the trinitarian controversy in Transylvania, a favourable beginning for the anti-Nicene side since the Nicene doctrines were extra-Biblical in terminology.

David and Biandrata collaborated on some of the books for the anti-Nicene party (which books were printed on the King's press); the orthodox side replied with their own publications. As the controversy continued and grew more volatile, David pressed for toleration to be extended to the anti-Nicene party as well. Reaffirming the edicts of toleration of 1557 and 1563, the King broadened their terms of reference in his proclamation of 28 January 1568:

Our Royal Highness . . . now again confirms that in every place the preachers shall preach and explain the gospel each according to his understanding of it. . . . Therefore none of the Superintendents or others shall annoy or abuse the preachers on account of their religion, . . . or allow any to be imprisoned or punished by removal from his post on account of his teaching, for faith is a gift of God. This comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (6)

After this Transylvania had the most freedom of religion of any nation in Christendom.⁷

There followed a series of great theological debates in the Calvinist church by which David and Biandrata's

6. Parke, Epic, 19-20; Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 719; Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 38.

7. It is therefore peculiar that Le Cler (Toleration) does not devote a section of his otherwise thorough study to Transylvania. Many place the beginnings of Unitarianism in Transylvania at this proclamation.

party made many converts. The series culminated in a meeting called by the King for October, 1569, where the primary issues were to be discussed in the vernacular so that the common people could settle their religious doubts. Following this debate at Varad, the radical and the conservative wings of the Calvinists were irrevocably split, which means that 1569 can be considered the beginning of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania. Francis David's religion was in control as the anti-Nicene arguments convinced both the King and the majority of the Calvinists. John Sigismund thus became the only unitarian king in history, and Francis David was now the informal leader of the unitarian faction of the Transylvanian Calvinists.

A word about doctrine: Biandrata and David were both influenced by Servetus; David's last important work (1569) was in large part--265 of 350 pages--a reprint of Servetus's The Restoration of Christianity.⁸ Thus we are not surprised to find the same points emphasized: a reliance on literally interpreted scripture as the only authority with a corresponding rejection of philosophical theology (especially the traditional doctrine of the trinity), a tendency towards antipedobaptism, a ranking of Christian living as more important than doctrinal subtlety,

8. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 41f; Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 722.

and even more than Servetus a stress on the importance of tolerance and the denial of magisterial power in matters of conscience because, as the King said in his decree of 1568, "faith is a gift of God."

Under the protection of the King and the law, and with David's oratorical skill, the unitarian Calvinists made even more converts. However, David's organizational ability was not nearly on the same level as his preaching, and his group still had no legal status as a church body though the individual believers had legal freedom of conscience. This was remedied at the Diet of January, 1571, where the King ordered that the churches following David be formally recognized as one of the "received religions" of Transylvania along with the Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists.

Now organizational freedom from harrassment for the radicals was the official policy of the nation; this was confirmed by later Diets and eventually was written into the constitution. And, indeed, for four hundred years the Transylvanian churches have refrained from outright persecution of one another, observing at least the letter of the law in respect to toleration. Exactly one day after the Diet closed, King John was injured in a carriage accident and died after two months; so the unitarian Calvinists had secured their official status just in time. Francis David, of course, was the first superintendent of the

new church (officially confirmed in 1576), which gave him the distinction of having served as the head of all three Protestant bodies in Transylvania.

Such was the beginning of the oldest surviving Unitarian Church; in Voltaire's time it was the only unitarian organization. However, it was then far from an effective voice for religious liberalism in Europe, having been stifled for centuries and being so geographically isolated. King John Sigismund II's Catholic successor, Stephen, rigorously upheld the various edicts of toleration and honoured the protected status of David's church, but within a year had forbidden the unitarians the use of a press⁹ and at the Diet of 1572 decreed that any unitarians found making innovations in the faith of John Sigismund would be open to prosecution. That is, David's party would be protected as one of the "received religions" only so long as it remained just as it was at the time it had been granted official recognition.

Francis David could not force his restless religious mind to operate within such rigid limits, and after all, the unitarians had only reconsidered a very few doctrines. Accordingly David called for a synod in 1578 to consider some new doctrines; his major proposed innovation was that the worship of Jesus be abandoned as it lacked

9. The prohibition lasted some two hundred years.

scriptural warrant. Biandrata, who had retained his position as court physician under the new ruler and who was temperamentally more inclined to moderation than David, knew the mood of the court and was well aware of the dangers that awaited innovators--the Jesuits were baying for blood. Therefore, he warned David to desist; and when David continued in his plans, Biandrata called Faustus Socinus (Fausto Sozzini) from Basel to try to convince David theologically that adoration of Jesus was proper and at the same time took legal and political steps to silence David if persuasion failed.

Nothing worked, Socinus gave up and went to Poland; David persisted and was brought to trial at the Diet of April, 1579, where he was found guilty of innovation and was sentenced to prison. Prisons in sixteenth-century Transylvania were none too wholesome, and David died in the winter of the same year on 15 November 1579. Biandrata had grown to hate David for his obstinacy, thus fifteen years of friendly collaboration ended in persecution and death. As unpalatable as Biandrata's actions against David were, it must be remembered that Biandrata knew the unitarian party was under attack at court from Calvinists and Jesuits alike and that his prompt action insured the survival of the church.

With David out of the way, Biandrata set about to tighten up church discipline, which had been negligible

theretofore, by securing the position of superintendent for a good administrator and theological conservative. Then at the synod of 1579, he got the unitarian pastors to adopt a confession of faith and his manual of church discipline as normative for the Unitarian Church.¹⁰ These documents remained in force for two hundred years as the standard to which the unitarians had to conform in order to retain their legal protection. In this way, Biandrata, who retired from public life in 1580, guaranteed that the antitrinitarians would be able to carry on without suffering legal persecution.

However, the terms of survival were intellectually harsh. The unitarians were neither allowed to print books nor to discuss fundamental theological questions. Naturally this meant they had no chance for influence outside Transylvania and that internally the thought of the church could not grow. Also, under both Calvinist and Catholic rulers, they suffered unofficial, though sometimes officially inspired, harassment and even persecution. By the end of the eighteenth century, the church had dropped to 125 congregations and one school from the sixteenth-century high mark of 425 congregations and thirteen religious

10. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 86-88. In 1638 the decisions of the 1579 council were reconfirmed. (Ibid., II, 117-119.)

¹¹
schools. Most of the members were rural Szeklers, isolated in the mountains, in the later history of the church. Perhaps Hungarian nationalism more than theology explains their persistent survival.

Voltaire was indirectly instrumental in freeing the Transylvanian unitarians from all restrictions and persecution. Emperor Joseph II of the Austrian Empire, which had annexed Transylvania in the seventeenth century, was a disciple of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists and was consequently a firm believer in religious toleration. He took the throne in 1780, two hundred and one years after the unitarians' stultification, and within a few years freed all the Empire's churches.¹² It was really too late for the unitarians to regain their position in the theological vanguard; they had been repressed too long, and the course of religious thought had passed them by.

¹³
B. Poland, Socinians: Though the only anti-trinitarian church of the sixteenth century to survive

11. Ibid., II, 143.

12. Ibid., II, 145. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Transylvanians suffered again in religiously, racially, and politically motivated purges.

13. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, is a complete history of the Polish anti-trinitarians; Williams, Radical Reformation, chapters 25, 27, and 29, deal with the Polish "anti-Nicene, antipedobaptist church" in the sixteenth century; Kot, Socinianism, is an important study of (cont.)

today, the Transylvanians were neither the first nor the most important body of Christian churches to have an anti-Nicene theology. Poland, like Transylvania in the sixteenth century, had a most complex history, and like Transylvania Poland was swept by the Reformation, both the Lutheran and the Calvinist. However, in Poland the Catholics never lost all their power and the Lutherans never became very powerful. The parallel continues in that the traditional doctrine of the trinity come under question in the Reformed (Calvinist) church in Poland with the church splitting irrevocably after a series of synods. The last combined synod was in 1565 which makes the Polish antitrinitarian church precede the Transylvanian by four years.

Biandrata, here too, was a primary figure in the birth of the church although he departed for Transylvania before it was born.¹⁴ Another Italian in Poland, Stancaro, instigated a number of debates to defend the doctrine of the trinity. As Biandrata established the principle that the arguments should be based on scripture and the Apostolic fathers alone, the Nicene formulations were made

(cont.) of Socinian social thought; and Le Cler, Toleration, book 5, treats the history of Polish tolerance with regard to the antitrinitarians. There are many points where the several historians differ.

¹⁴. Recall that he spent the years, 1558-1563, in Poland. (Note 2, above.)

exceedingly vulnerable. Other Italian Evangelical Rationalists--including Alciati, Gentile,¹⁵ and Laelius Socinus, who were all double-exiles, first from Italy then from Switzerland--were allied with Blandrata and the Polish radicals.

What drew them to Poland was the promise of liberty of conscience, for in 1555, the Diet had proclaimed religious freedom for commoners and peasants. In effect, the nobles had always had this right since there still existed the feudal privilege of inviolability of a magnate's estate so that he could do anything he liked with impunity on his own land--even shelter a heretic. Later, in 1573, the Diet forced the new monarch to guarantee freedom of religion in the constitution before he could take the throne; Poland had no desire to sample the religious bloodshed then afflicting Europe. The Polish radicals, unlike the Transylvanians, were influenced by Anabaptist thought as well as by Evangelical Rationalism and were, therefore, quite socially radical. When the Reformed Church divided in Poland, the anti-Nicene party was the weaker, which fact is reflected in the official name of their church: The Minor Reformed Church of Poland.

Although the Transylvanian Unitarians had a very

15. Gentile returned to Switzerland and was beheaded to protect the honour of Jesus, consubstantial, co-eternal, etc. with the Father. See page 23 above.

promising beginning as the dominant religious body in the country, within a year of being officially recognized, they lost the means necessary for further growth. On the other hand, the Minor Reformed Church of Poland was numerically the weakest Protestant body but was able to develop a comprehensive system of thought. It should be noted that even before the establishment of the Church, in 1564 to be exact, all non-Catholic foreigners were expelled from Poland. Therefore, the Minor Reformed Church was deprived of the intellectual leadership of their Italian friends in the earliest portion of its organized life. When the Calvinists split in 1565, the Minor party agreed only that the traditional doctrine of the trinity was non-scriptural and a sophistical corruption of Christianity. In that same year, they began meeting to work out their theology and soon established that mutual toleration within the Minor Church was necessary for their survival.

There was in this early stage a wide divergence in attitudes towards the state; the most radical followed the Anabaptist example and established a Christian, near communal way of life in Rakow while others were most conventional. Similarly, there were disagreements over infant baptism, the legitimacy of the use of the sword by the state, the owning of property, Christology, etc. In general, the western (Polish) churches were socially radical

and theologically conservative while in the east (Lithuania) the situation was reversed.

After 1570, the Minor Church was excluded from the confederation of Protestants in Poland and had to defend itself from both the Counter-Reformation and the Magisterial Reformers while at the same time developing its own thought and healing internal rifts. The church leaders were hard pressed to cope with all their problems. When Faustus Socinus arrived in Poland in 1579, after failing in his Transylvanian mission, the Minor Church soon recruited his scholarship to its aid; and within a few years Socinus had become their acknowledged spokesman.

This is not to say that in their first fifteen years the Polish theologians had made no doctrinal progress; for when Socinus arrived they had agreed that Christ was not eternally divine but his teachings were to be followed in their literal sense without qualifications or exceptions. Their attempt to live the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount was what lay behind their rejection of social honours and certain social responsibilities (armed service, magisterial coercion); as in most of the groups of the Radical Reformation, Christian life was more central to their faith than dogma. Also they all affirmed individual freedom of conscience, mutual toleration of divergent views both within and without the Minor Church, and were developing their distinctive, rationalist approach to

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scripture.

Yet, in spite of these areas of agreement, the Church was dangerously disordered; the original leaders were very old and dying one by one with no replacements in sight; the doctrinal differences sketched above were not healed; their beliefs needed to be put into systematic order; and many doctrines needed to be reformulated. Socinus became the leader they needed, acting as conciliator and theologian, although he never had an official position. In theology his major contributions to the movement were in rethinking and expanding the place of reason in religion and in the doctrine of the atonement.

Faustus Socinus was born into a very distinguished Sienese noble family in 1539. His uncle, Laelius, we have already mentioned as a companion of Biandrata on a trip to Poland.² Laelius was a secret antitrinitarian who chose to preserve his freedom by following the outward rites of an orthodox faith. When he died in 1562, Faustus, who probably was already deeply influenced by radical Protestant thought (the whole family was under the suspicion of the Inquisition), went from Lyon where he had lived a year to Zurich to pick up his uncle's papers. In these papers, Faustus found some theological writings which inspired him to enter theology even though he had no formal theological

training.

Before devoting himself to religion, he first spent another year in Geneva (where he was associated with the Italian church) and Lyon then returned to Italy where he was a courtier in the Medici court for twelve years (1563-1574), which he later considered wasted time. Then Faustus went to Basel, the most liberal Swiss town, to stay for three years; there he devoted his time to studying the Bible and wrote his De Jesu Christo servatore (written 1578, published 1594), his single greatest work. It was this book, circulated in manuscript, that led Biandrata to think that Socinus could argue Francis David away from innovation and led him to summon Socinus to Transylvania. We see, then, that Socinus was another Italian Evangelical Rationalist who travelled to Eastern Europe by way of Switzerland. Socinus remained in Poland from 1579, when he was forty, until his death in 1604.

17

De Jesu Christo servatore taught that Jesus was in nature purely human and that He assumed an adoptive deity at the moment of the ascension. As the ascended Christ, Jesus was divine, though secondary to the Father in all ways; He was to be worshipped as the secondary author of salvation; those who refused divine adoration

17. Williams, Radical Reformation, pp. 752-756; Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 392.

18

to Jesus Christ were not Christian at all. Socinus substantiated this doctrine of Christ which is counter to traditions, councils, and creeds by extensive quotations from the Bible and by arguing that the traditional Christology was irrational and incomprehensible. Further, using the same modes of argument, he rejected the judicial or penal concept of the atonement and brought forward the notion that Jesus's life and teachings offered the example which would lead to salvation when followed. The specific proof for this was that Jesus was resurrected and ascended to share divine attributes with the Father.

Socinian theology, then, emphasized Christ's humanity, life, and resurrection over against the usual stress on His deity and death. Since Christ was held to be fully human, Socinus had a very exalted view of man which logically led to his denial of original sin, total depravity, predestination, and the like; and since salvation came by following Christ's example, man must have the necessary high moral and reasonable facilities to be able to do so. Altogether his was a most radical--and simple--system.

Although the Minor Church had established an excellent press at Rakow around 1585,¹⁹ most of Socinus's works

18. Since Francis David's innovation was that of non-adoration, it is easy to see why Biandrata called Socinus to Transylvania.

19. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 359, n. 12; (cont.)

were not printed until after his death, but they continued in print then for some three quarters of a century to spread Socinian ideas. The single most effective Socinian book was the Racovian Catechism, first published in 1605 (Polish), based on notes left by Socinus. Rather than an ordinary catechism consisting of pat questions and answers, this was more "a course of instruction for producing theologians,"²⁰ based only on the New Testament as interpreted by unaided human reason.

21

Over the years it was republished many times and showed the gradual modifications in Socinian thought. However, one major point remained constant: that is, Socinus's emphasis of the place of reason in religion. The Bible was

(cont.) Kot, Socinianism, p. 132, n. 3, argues for a slightly later establishment of the press.

20. Harnack, Dogma, VII, 138-139. Harnack later referred to the Socinian church as having "the form of a theological academy." (Ibid., VII, 163.)

21. Polish, 1605 and 1619; German, 1608 and 1612; Latin, 1609 (this edition was dedicated to King James I of England, who expressed his gratitude by threatening to execute its authors if they ever came to his country and by having burnt all copies that could be found--by act of Parliament, 1614; incidentally this shows the wide and rapid penetration of Socinian books and thought in Europe), 1651, 1665, 1680, and 1684; English, 1652 and 1818; Dutch, 1665, 1666, and 1667. Those editions before 1650 were printed at Rakow; those seventeenth-century editions after 1650 in the Netherlands, except the 1652 English edition which was probably translated by John Bidle and was certainly published in London (McLachlan, Socinianism, pp. 190-191) and the 1651 Latin edition--also probably Bidle's and in London (ibid., pp. 187-190); the 1818 English (cont.)

God's revelation of His will and plan to man and contained all that was necessary for salvation; and although the Bible contained some things above reason, there was nothing in it contrary to good reason. As the 1818 English edition of the Catechism put it:

It /reason/ is, indeed, of great service, since without it we could neither perceive with certainty the authority of the sacred writings, understand their contents, discriminate one thing from another, nor apply them to any practical purpose. When therefore I stated that the Holy Scriptures were sufficient for our salvation so far from excluding right reason, I certainly assumed its presence. (22)

Scripture, in its plain sense, interpreted by ordinary reason was the only authority. If received creeds, ancient councils, or venerable traditions could not be supported in scripture, or were unreasonable, then they must be discarded. And, of course, if the doctrine was unreasonable, it could not be Biblical for there was nothing irrational in the Bible. Here was the full development of the principle of sole scripture, and here too the individual Christian was called upon to be fully responsible. To illustrate the freedom from tradition, this passage from the 1652 English translation of the Catechism;

(cont.) at London. (Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 410 and 410, n. 7-10.)

22. McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 12, n; see also, Harnack, Dogma, VII, 141.

the questioner affirmed that the two Testaments are "firm and certain" then asked whether or not they are sufficient for eternal salvation:

A. They are altogether sufficient . . . , inasmuch as Faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, and obedience to his Commandments, (which twain are the requisites of eternall life) are sufficiently delivered and explained in the Scripture of the very New Covenant.

Q. If it be so, then what need is there of traditions, which the Church of Rome holdeth to be necessary . . . ?

A. You rightly gather, that they are unnecessary to eternall life.

Q. What then must we think of them?

A. Not only that they were fancied and invented without just cause and necessity, but also to the great hazard of the Christian Faith.

Q. What may that hazard be?

A. Because those Traditions give men an occasion of turning aside from divine Truth to falsehood, and the imaginations of men. (23)

Socinus's first publication for the Minor Church²⁴ (1581) defended the radical social teachings of the Radvians against some bitter attacks that threatened to inflame the government against them. In the main, Socinus here adopted an austere world-rejecting Christian morality. Since Christ commanded that one must love one's enemies, any recourse to violence is inadmissable for the Christian; thus he can neither go to war or take any civil office

23. Parke, Epic, p. 25.

24. Kot, Socinianism, p. 83, n. 3. Kot (ibid., chapters 7 and 9) recounts Faustus Socinus's changing views on Christians and society.

which might involve him in bloodshed--for example, the magistracy. For the most part, the Christian should avoid too close association with the unregenerate society at large; however, Socinus affirmed that the Christian owed strict obedience to the state. He must pay taxes, even when they go to support war; he must never engage in rebellion or revolution, even if the government tried to force a false religion upon him in which case the proper course was martyrdom. Socinus avoided the Racovian extremes of denouncing all wealth, social position, any recourse at all to the courts, the loaning of money for interest, and absolute non-violence. While affirming the fundamental Racovian belief that Christ-like love was to be the rule for Christian life, Socinus was moderate enough to allow that a true Christian could rightfully discharge most ordinary social duties and be a loyal subject.

Sometime during the last decade of the sixteenth century the tenor of the Minor Church subtly changed; the younger generation had lost the sectarian fervour of their fathers. Voltaire's description of second-generation Quakers fits the situation in Poland too: "leurs enfans enrichis par l'industrie de leurs peres, veulent jouir, avoir des honneurs, des boutons et des manchettes."²⁵

25. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 51, final paragraph of the fourth lettre.

Socinus, in his correspondence and in a number of religious seminars held in the last years of his life, moderated his stand on church and state even more. His final position was that holding any office was compatible with a Christian life, provided only that the office holder be responsible for shedding no blood. For example, a Christian could go to war if he struck no blows; or he could assume the office of magistrate so long as he prescribed no corporal punishment.

This change of position was consistent with Socinus's tendency to spiritualize all external observations and sacraments; if one lived in the spirit of Christ's teachings, it was permissible to compromise on the details of outward behaviour. Such social questions were considered by the Minor Church in eight synods (1597-1599 and 1601-1605) with the result that the exclusive sectarian nature of the church was mostly abandoned; no one any longer would be denied membership due to his office or position in society.^{26.}

To return to the history of the Minor Church: the Counter-Reformation in Poland was quite strong very early. As early as 1598, Faustus Socinus was manhandled by a mob in Krakow who wrecked his home and destroyed his papers.

26. The revised social teachings here described were also those of the first editions of the Racovian Catechism.

Socinus barely escaped with his life and spent his last years sheltered on the estate of a sympathetic nobleman. In 1638 two Socinian schoolboys in Rakow knocked over a roadside crucifix; the national Diet, after an irregular trial, ordered that the Racovian school and press²⁷ be destroyed and never rebuilt, that all members of the Minor Church leave the town within four weeks, and that no ministers ever return as just retribution for the schoolboys' crime. In short the intellectual, spiritual, and administrative centre of the Minor Church was wiped out. For the next decade, there were persistent efforts to abridge the constitutional rights of the Minor Church, but it was war that finally led to the extermination of the Polish Socinians.²⁸

From 1648-1651, eastern Poland was ravaged by intermittent raids by the Cossacks and Tatars; the Minor Church in the East disappeared. Then from 1655-1657, all Poland was overwhelmed by the Cossacks, Russian, Swedes, and Transylvanians; at the lowest point in Poland's fortune they only held one major town--the King then took a vow to the Virgin Mary, promising to extend the Catholic

27. Thereafter all Socinian books had to be printed "underground" in Poland or in the Netherlands to be smuggled in.

28. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, chapter 36.

faith in Poland should he regain his kingdom. He began to do much better and was soon (1656) ready to try to take Warsaw; he then vowed, as suggested by his Jesuit advisers, to expel the Socinians from Poland should he win. He did.

The Socinians were ordered to leave on 10 July 1660, in violation of the constitution, after having had two years in which to settle all their affairs.²⁹ Actually there were not many Socinians left to banish; most of their churches had been in the area of Swedish occupation where they had been pillaged and their members slain--not by the Swedes--but by Catholic peasants, led by their priests who encouraged them to kill all Socinians who refused to give up their faith.³⁰

On the designated day, only a few hundred families left the country; perhaps a thousand families were left behind in Poland, too destitute to be able to leave the

29. Understandably, the Socinians' pacifism was hardly popular in a period of such terrible warfare and national suffering; nonetheless, the major reason behind their exile was antitrinitarian theology. The Reformed and Lutheran Churches supported the Catholics in their persecution of the Minor Church, the weakest Protestant confession, only to meet the same fate through the same tactics a few years later.

30. Many of the peasants had been forced by their noble patrons to abandon their Catholic faith for the new religion of their masters and had good cause for their anger, though hardly justification for murder. See above, p. 38, for the nobleman's powers on his estate.

country.³¹ In fact, all the Socinians were impoverished, for who would pay a refugee a decent price for his property? Those left behind were forced to conceal their true faith and to become outward Catholics. After a generation, inevitably, this group was lost to the Socinian faith, and the Minor Reformed Church was dead in Poland.

Although the number of heretics liquidated was not great, the expulsion of 10 July 1660 was commemorated as one of the outstanding spiritual triumphs of the Counter-Reformation in Poland. Jan Casimir, the ex-Jesuit king of Poland from 1648-1668--whose reign saw the Cossacks, Russians, and the Swedes defeated and Poland saved--had inscribed on his monument as his greatest achievement the³² expulsion of the Socinians. And in 1662, the Jesuits celebrated their centenary in Poland with a volume called Triumphus sanctissimae et aeternum adorandae Trinitatus, de Socinistis, vulgo Arrianis.³³

Transylvania, where Unitarianism was a protected religion, was the goal of the largest party of Socinian refugees. Perhaps 200 of the 280 who started out reached

31. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 483; however, on pp. 426-427 of the same volume, Wilbur estimated that at the Socinian's peak they only numbered a thousand families. It is too bad that so many such contradictions and so many typographical errors mar Wilbur's history.

32. Ibid., I, 468, n. 5.

33. Ibid., I, 492, n. 25.

their destination; they established Polish-speaking congregations of which the last disbanded in 1792.³⁴ The next largest number of exiles headed for various German-speaking lands near Poland where they tried to establish churches. Only in East Prussia,³⁵ where they were tolerated so long as there was no attempt to make converts and where they were forbidden to hold office or to enter the professions, did they last any time at all. By no means were they important; they never numbered more than a few families of farmers.

Voltaire, who was always distressed by the plight of those who suffered at the hands of the defenders of the Christian faith, was troubled by the fate of the Polish Socinians. On 13 February 1773, he wrote to Catherine II, empress of Russia, to ask her to relieve the oppression of the Brethren (Socinians) in Lithuania:

J'espère même que les Sociniens auront bientôt en Lithuanie quelque conventicule public, où Dieu le père ne partagera plus avec personne le trône qu'il occupa tout seul jusqu'au concile de Nicée. Il est bien plaisant que les Juifs qui ont crucifié le Logos aient tant de sinagogues chez les Polonais, et que ceux qui diffèrent d'opinions avec la cour romaine sur le Logos ne puissent avoir un trou pour fourrer leurs têtes. (36)

34. *Ibid.*, I, 486. 35. *Ibid.*, I, chapter 39.

36. Best. 17131. Note how Voltaire in the first sentence quoted accepted the anti-Nicene party's interpretation of Christian history.

Unfortunately, Voltaire's letter was at least 113 years too late to help the antitrinitarians in Lithuanian, but he was only repeating his consistent error of believing, or hoping, that there still were Socinians in their homeland. This mistake first appeared in his first serious discussion of the Socinians in the Lettres philosophiques (1733/34)³⁷ and periodically reappeared for forty years. However, in the light of the general lack of information from Eastern Europe, his hope, or error, was understandable.

In fact, his misapprehension may have been instrumental in securing liberty for the last Socinian congregation in East Prussia. Later in 1773, Voltaire wrote to his none-too-reliable friend and disciple, Frederick II, king of Prussia:

Tout ce que me fâche c'est que vous n'établissiez une église de Sociniens comme vous en établissez plusieurs de jésuites. Il y a pourtant encor des Sociniens en Pologne, l'Angleterre en regorge, nous en avons en Suisse. Certainement Julien les aurait favorisez. Ils haïssent ce qu'il haïssait, ils méprisent ce qu'il méprisait, et ils sont honnêtes gens comme lui. De plus ayant été tant persécutés par les Polonais, ils ont quelque droit à votre protection. (38)

Of course, there were no Polish Socinians for Frederick to establish; but when the only surviving exile church

37. See below, Chapter VII, Section C-1.

38. Best. 17523, 8 November 1773.

entreated Frederick in 1776, he granted them full religious freedom and the right to build a new church. They were too weak to take advantage of their new status. At the death of their last minister, in 1803, this last Socinian church in the world closed. Its last member, the last Socinian, died in 1852.³⁹

A very few Polish Socinians went to the Netherlands in 1660; others from failed colonies in Eastern Europe joined them over the next several years. Wilbur estimated that the total migration there was not more than two hundred and perhaps as few as twenty.⁴⁰ Since both the Remonstrants and the Mennonites accepted the Socinians into their fellowship, the refugees never felt the need to establish churches there. Therefore, organized Socinianism was effectively dead in Voltaire's lifetime.

C. The Disembodied Spirit of Socinianism: One can study a religious movement in several ways; I have chosen to stress the most important historical details of the early manifestations of radical, anti-Nicene thought. It is now proper to consider some assessments of the general principles that lay behind all these particular events. Wilbur, in the introduction to the first volume of his A History of Unitarianism argues that the movement he records

39. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 520.

is neither best understood as a doctrinal nor as a sectarian phenomenon; rather it is characterized by:

first, complete mental freedom in religion rather than bondage to creeds or confessions; second, the unrestricted use of reason in religion, rather than reliance upon external authority or past tradition; third, generous tolerance of differing religious views and usages rather than insistence upon uniformity in doctrine, worship or polity. (41)

H. John McLachlan, the leading authority on British antitrinitarian thought, and Stanislas Kot, the foremost continental authority, both agree with the American, Wilbur's, ⁴² three-fold summation and use it in their own works.

While in some sense Wilbur's formulation is sound, it is, I have come to think, quite inadequate theoretically. What does it mean to say that one has "complete mental freedom in religion"? Even if complete mental freedom were a possible state, it is clear that the anti-Nicene thinkers studied were far from attaining it. The early antitrinitarians did reject the ancient creeds, but they were bound much more tightly to the closed world of thought of the Bible than were their orthodox opponents. Their reason was restricted to interpreting Biblical texts as they did not allow natural theology a place in their religious system. Thus, even though they were eager to

40. Ibid., I, 567-568. 41. Ibid., I, 5.

42. McLachlan, Socinianism, especially chapter 17, "Conclusion"; Kot, Socinianism, especially p. xxiii.

reconsider all the received Christian doctrines, the antitrinitarians actually gave reason a much lesser status and scope than it had in medieval and ancient theology.

Wilbur nearly always assumes that the anti-Nicene thinkers' moving away from the old doctrines and traditions marked a progressive improvement, but it could also be interpreted as a gradual wandering away from philosophic depth and religious insight. However, this is an historical rather than a theological study, and Wilbur's summation is a good description of how the Socinians and other Evangelical Rationalists thought of themselves. They were dedicated to freedom in examining doctrine and scripture, were rational in the sense that they would be guided in their searches only by their own understanding, and were perhaps the most dedicated and persistent defenders of religious toleration in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe.⁴³

These three principles, for better or for worse, along with their teaching that what a man does more than what he believes best demonstrates his Christianity, today are commonplace in Western Christendom. Yet we should

⁴³. To forestall the sour-grapes argument (as in Le Cler, Toleration, I, 421) that these groups preached tolerance only because they needed it for survival, we point to the first years of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church. It was for a short time the dominant church but did not then waver in its support for toleration.

not be misled to think that the men we have spoken of were "modern" men. Servetus and Francis David were courageous, even foolhardy, in holding fast to their convictions. Why? One reason was that they--like many other of the Radical Reformers--were both convinced that the Second Coming was imminent.

Finally, the anti-Nicene Reformers believed that all true religious knowledge was in the Bible and that everything in the Bible was literally true. Socinus made explicit that nothing in it was irrational so that man's unaided reason reflecting on the Holy Writ could discover all that was necessary for salvation. Perhaps this basic principle of Socinian exegesis was the Socinian's major contribution to religious thought; it certainly was a momentous step for its time.

Historically, then, there were three determining characteristics of Socinianism and Unitarianism established by the last quarter of the seventeenth century. First was the belief in the general principles of freedom, reason, and toleration in religion. The first two of these principles, combined with strict Biblicism, humanistic critical literary scholarship, and an attempt to reject philosophy and traditions, led to the second critical defining factor of Socinianism: their method of rational exegesis of the scriptures. From this exegesis came the

third, the doctrinal distinguishing mark: an unorthodox Christology with a negative component--an attack on the Nicene formulation of the trinity--and a positive one--a doctrine of atonement by example. Therefore, in the late seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century, "Socinian" or "Unitarian" could, strictly speaking, be correctly applied only to persons or movements that had all three of the above marks.

III

SOCINIANISM IN EXILE

A. On the Continent: Although not many Socinians fled to the Netherlands, among those who did were some leading theologians.¹ There they already had many friends and some influence; as early as 1598 two Polish Socinians had been expelled as suspected antitrinitarian missionaries. Polish students, especially at the University of Leyden, had continued to spread radical ideas and books, and after the destruction of Rakow in 1638 most Socinian books were printed in Holland, which had the most freedom of the press in Europe.

Their best friends, the Remonstrants (the liberal Dutch Calvinists), were indebted to the Minor Church; for in 1620, when--following the Synod of Dort of 1619--the States General denied the Remonstrants the right to worship and forced many to emigrate, the Minor Church offered them refuge in Poland, which offer they refused but appreciated. As the Remonstrants gradually returned to the

1. For accounts of the Socinians in the Netherlands, see Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, chapters 41-44; McLachlan, Socinianism, chapter 3; Barnes, Le Clerc, pp. 90ff; and Kot, Socinianism, especially the introduction and chapters 12-14.

Netherlands, the States General saw they were no threat to civil tranquility so granted them full toleration in 1630. When thirty years later their Polish friends had to leave home, the Remonstrants raised some money to help them and welcomed those few who came to Holland into their churches. The Dutch Mennonites (anabaptists), who along with the Remonstrants were the only Dutch Christians who preached tolerance, also helped the Socinians financially and opened their worship to them.

Candide, one remembers, arrived in Holland penniless and starving; an orthodox minister, after preaching for an hour on Christian charity, refused him food because Candide allowed that he was not sure whether or not the Pope was the Antichrist. The minister said, "Tu ne merites pas d'en manger; . . . va, coquin; va, misérable, ne m'approche de ta vie." Then "le bon anabaptiste Jaques" took Candide in without question and attended to all his needs.² Voltaire's fictional account of Candide's reception in Holland incidentally described the actual reception of the Socinians and illustrated that Dutch tolerance did not live up to its reputation.

Socinian influence in Holland can be gauged by the reactions of the Calvinists. As early in 1628 they had

2. Romans, Bénac, p. 143. Candide, chapitre troisième, near the end.

petitioned the government to take strong action against the import of Socinian literature and against any who held Socinian ideas. The States General was made up of liberal-minded men who favoured a policy of strict toleration; thus they postponed and evaded any action on a number of petitions that called for crushing Socinianism. They had learned that their suppression of the Remonstrants, which had been forced on them by the Calvinists, was foolish and unnecessary and were not eager to repeat their mistake. But when the National Synod, supported by the theological faculty of Leyden, demanded action in 1651, the States General yielded. Significantly they did not pass their bill--which forbade the printing, import, or circulation of Socinian literature in any language and forbade any Socinian meetings with banishment as the penalty--until 1653 and did not pass it on to the magistrates for yet another year. And neither did they encourage its enforcement, leaving the local authorities to their own discretion. It was, then, except in a few minor towns, a dead letter.

Within a few years of arriving in the Netherlands, the exiled theologians of the Minor Church began publishing. New Latin works, Dutch translations of various earlier writings, and the Racovian Catechism appeared with "official" Socinian approval as well as many unauthorized works. Perhaps the major literary achievement of the

Polish exiles was the Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum,³ which in eight large volumes presented many of the major works of the best theologians of the Minor Church. Only now were all the writings of Faustus Socinus printed. This set was intended to make Socinian ideas more easily available since it had been nearly thirty years since the Rakow press had closed and its products were no longer plentiful. In that respect, the Bibliotheca was successful as it widely circulated, especially in Holland and England.

As to the original works of the exiles, they continued the dual tendencies of Socinian thought towards increasing theological radicalism and decreasing social radicalism. No doubt the major theological innovation was the admission of natural theology as a source of religious knowledge. Previously, as we have noted, Socinians were the strictest Biblicists; the Bible was considered the only revelation of God. Andrew Wiszowaty, the leader of the exiles, in his last work (1685) taught reason's precedence over scripture and that unreasonable passages of the Bible must be excised.⁴

3. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 569, n. 20; two volumes and a section of one were published in 1665; the other five and the remaining section in 1668. In 1692 a ninth book was published which is sometimes considered a supplement to the Bibliotheca.

4. Ibid., I, 572.

The later editions of the Racovian Catechism also gave reason a much higher place than did Socinus and the early catechists. However, the 1665 edition of the Catechism shows that the exiles remained true to their basic principles. In the preface we find: "While we compose a Catechism, we prescribe nothing to any man; while we express our own views, we oppress no one. Let each man be free to express his own mind in religion."⁵ Freedom, tolerance, and reason.

Holland was the primary place for Socinian influence on the Continent.⁶ In Germany hundreds of anti-Socinian tracts and dissertations witness that the universities and theological schools were concerned with the Socinian threat, but the Lutherans were so vigilant that heresies had no chance to root. Catholics outside Poland and Transylvania mainly ignored the later antitrinitarians; thus we find little interest in them in France. However, Bayle and Le Clerc, French-language writers in the Netherlands, both wrote about Socinians; they will be considered later in this study.

5. Ibid., I, 583. The 1665 Latin edition was the basis for all the later authorized Dutch-printed editions; see p. 44, n. 21, above. Most of the exiled theologians worked on the new version which was much longer than the original (1609 ff.) editions as it answered objections to Socinian teachings that had been raised over the years.

6. Ibid., I, chapter 40, traces the fortunes of Socinianism in France and Germany.

B. In England:⁷ With the advent of the English Bible came an intensification of English heterodox tendencies; in the sixteenth century there were several isolated individuals who cast away the creedal trinity as unscriptural. Some were burnt; nothing came of their rustic formulations. Not until Rakow prints, via Danzig then Holland, reached England in some numbers did the authorities feel that there was a danger of organized antitrinitarianism. James I, in 1612, wrote in refutation of Vorst, the leading Dutch Arminian (Remonstrant) theologian, denouncing him as a Socinian; and, as noted earlier, the King in 1614⁸ attacked the Racovian Catechism as blasphemous.

Though the authorities were most vigilant against Socinian thought and books, it proved impossible to keep them out as there was such extensive trade with Europe; both men and goods move freely between England and the Continent. H. John McLachlan--by examining library catalogues, tutors' notes, booksellers' records, the books themselves, and the like--has demonstrated that Socinian publications were widely circulated in seventeenth-century England, especially in the universities and especially after 1638⁹ when they were printed in Holland. And even harder to

7. H. John McLachlan's Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England is by far the best treatment of the early antitrinitarian movement in England. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, chapters 10-19, presents the full history of English Unitarianism.

regulate was the theological speculation of individual students. These three sources--personal contact with Socinians, imported books, and original thought--are each represented in the first concrete manifestations of English antitrinitarian thought.

In 1646, Thomas Lushington published a translation of a Socinian commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews; he published anonymously without indication that the book was Socinian but was dismissed from Oxford nonetheless.¹⁰ Paul Best¹¹ travelled widely in Europe, including Poland and Transylvania, and returned to England a convinced Socinian. He was imprisoned for heresy early in 1645 and languished without trial until July, 1647, when he decided to bring his case to a head by publishing a radical book. Thus, Mysteries Discovered, Or a Mercu-
rial Picture pointing out the Way from Babylon to the Holy City, for the good of all such as, during the Night of

8. See above, p. 44, n. 21.

9. McLachlan, Socinianism, chapter 8, "The Distribution and Currency of Socinian Books."

10. Ibid., p. 108; in 1650 he published a similar commentary on Galatians (ibid., pp. 115-116.) See also, Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 201.

11. McLachlan, Socinianism, chapter 9; Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 191 ff.

generall Errour and Apostacy . . . have been so long misled with Rome's Hobgoblins. By me Paul Best, Prisoner in the Gatehouse- Westminster, the first "Socinian" book written by an Englishman, came to be printed. Best attacked the Athanasian Creed, the Nicene Council, and the scholastic doctrine of the trinity all on scriptural grounds; also he specifically praised tolerance and the anti-Nicene Churches of Eastern Europe.¹²

John Bidle,¹³ "the father of English Unitarianism," came to his antitrinitarian convictions through independent Bible study, having at first never seen Socinian writings. Still the publishing history of his first book is most similar to Best's. Bidle, too, had been put into prison for heresy in 1645, where he stayed--with intermittent, negligible respite on bail--until 1647 with no formal hearing. Like Best, he resolved to force his case to be heard by printing, while in prison, an anti-Nicene book; it appeared in September, 1647, entitled, Twelve Arguments drawn out of Scripture; Wherein the commonly-received Opinion touching the Deity of the Holy Spirit is clearly and fully refuted. Although Parliament acted quickly in both cases to suppress,

12. That is, "that third Reformation which succeeded the Calvinian upon the Turkish Territories more remote from the Romish tyranny, especially about A.D. 1560, in Transylvania, Lithuania, Livonia, and Polonia" (quoted, McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 159).

13. Ibid., chapter 10; Wilbur, Unitarianism, (cont.)

by burning, their books, they ignored both Best's and Bidle's pleas for due process of law. Best was quietly released late in 1647¹⁴ while Bidle remained in prison until February, 1652.

While Parliament did not deign to honour these two men's crazy courage with an official confrontation, they did take notice. On 2 May 1648, Parliament passed the "Draconian Ordinance" which prescribed "the paines of death . . . without benefit of clergy" for any who "maintaine and publish that the Father is not God, the Son is not God, or the Holy Ghost is not God; or . . . that Christ is not God equal with the Father."¹⁵ Once again we scent the sweet odour of Calvinist sanctity, for the Presbyterians¹⁶ were behind this act; Anglicans were well disposed towards

(cont.) II, 193 ff.

14. Best then retired from religious controversy to die peacefully in 1657.

15. McLachlan, *Socinianism*, p. 177, n; also quoted in Wilbur, *Unitarianism*, II, 192. Keeping in mind British pride in their democratic heritage, one is amused to compare this ordinance with the acts of tolerance in Transylvania and Poland--some one hundred years earlier.

16. Voltaire's sixth *Lettre philosophique*, captures something of the tenor of English and Scottish Presbyterians: "un Presbiterien d'Ecosse . . . affecte une démarche grave, un air fâché, porte une vast chapeau, un long manteau par dessus un habit court, prêche du nez. Because of them, "il est défendu ce jour-là (Sunday) de travailler et de se divertir, ce que est le double de la sévérité des Eglises Catholiques." *Lettres philosophiques*, Lanson, I, 73.

tolerance.

Fortunately for Bidle, the Presbyterian party shortly thereafter lost power and the "Draconian Ordinance" became a dead letter, as his reply to it was his Confession of Faith touching the Holy Trinity . . . and his The Testimonies of Irenaeus, etc. . . . concerning that One God, and the Persons of the Holy Trinity, both published in 1648 when he was still imprisoned. Certainly either work would have been sufficiently heretical to insure his conviction under the act of 2 May 1648; he was, however, not tried.

Note the similarity in his theological method to that of the Socinians as stated in this passage from The Testimonies of Irenaeus: "[I] make use of no other rule to determine controversies about religion than Scripture; and of no other authentic interpreter, if a scruple arise concerning the sense of the Scripture, than Reason."¹⁷ Bidle¹⁸ continued in his antitrinitarian campaign all his life and died in prison in 1662, having spent ten of his last seventeen years in custody.

17. McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 172.

18. Bidle was probably responsible for the London prints of the Racovian Catechism (see above, p. 44, n. 21). He also published a catechism of his own. Though Bidle independently "discovered" the errors of the received doctrine of the trinity, he later was influenced by Socinian books. Bidle's theology was much less sophisticated than Socinianism.

The three sources of antitrinitarian thought in England exemplified by Lushington, Best, and Bidle did not result in a Church in the seventeenth century. Obviously the law was too severe to permit Bidle's followers --never numerous--to organize openly. There was, however, an unorthodox underground in the second half of the century that sustained itself through extensive correspondence, received Polish Socinians and Transylvanian Unitarians, had secret, informal services of worship, and raised money to aid the Socinian refugees after 1660.

Socinian books continued to be read widely, and the principles of freedom, tolerance, and reason gradually became more acceptable in religion, especially in the universities and among high-church Anglicans. Both the Cambridge Platonists and the Oxford rationalists¹⁹ showed these liberal tendencies; some of them, perhaps all, were directly influenced by Socinian thought. At any rate, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, any well-educated Englishman would have known something of Socinianism, and the general climate of opinion turned against religious coercion.

19. McLachlan, Socinianism, chapters 6-8; see also, Willey, Seventeenth Century, chapter 8, for the Cambrians. McLachlan has shown that the libraries at Cambridge and Oxford at this time had extensive collections of Sociniana.

Indeed, in 1689, the Act of Toleration allowed non-conformist congregations to worship publicly; however, those who denied the trinity and Roman Catholics were explicitly excluded from the benefits of this act. And, in fact, in 1698 the Blasphemy Act²⁰ threatened antitrinitarians with the loss of all their civil rights and imprisonment. Under the latter act, no one was ever convicted while the exclusion of antitrinitarians from the Act of Toleration led to the imprisonment for two years (1703-1705) of Thomas Emlyn, a Presbyterian minister. Emlyn was the last man in England to be imprisoned for his views on the trinity; others suffered from harassment and fines, and all antitrinitarians lived under the threat of imprisonment until 1813 when toleration was extended to Unitarians and the Blasphemy Act repealed.

Scotland, a Calvinist stronghold, proved her superior Christian zeal in defense of God's honour. Thomas Aikenhead, a student at the University of Edinburgh, was tried in 1697 for the blasphemy of denying the common notion of the trinity. He was denied counsel, repented and pleaded for mercy, and was hanged by the neck until dead.

20. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 235, 246, n, and 340. See Abbey and Overton (Church, pp. 12-15), who note an undercurrent of intolerance in England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

21

He was the last heretic executed in Great Britain.

From 1691-1698 the Unitarian Tracts were the focus of a theological struggle within the Church of England. These tracts, written mainly by Stephen Nye--an Anglican rector--and financed by Thomas Firman--a bourgeois convert of Bidle, argued the usual antitrinitarian points from the usual sola scriptura, with reason as the only interpreter, point of view. To avoid possible prosecution and to avoid the bitter ad hominem attacks that were then ordinary in Christian apologetics, the Unitarians published these works anonymously. Further, they were marked by their conciliatory tone; the authors obviously wished to remain within the Church and argued merely that their interpretations were true to scripture and not harmful to the church.

And, indeed, the Church did not try to cast out this small group of anti-Nicene propagandists. Not only was the Church of England tolerant, or perhaps indifferent, at this time, it also was unsteady as to its own doctrinal position concerning the trinity. In 1689 the Commissioners of the Church thought seriously of deleting the Athanasian Creed from the liturgy, which H. John McLachlan

21. Had Servetus, nearly a century and a half earlier, repented of his errors, he surely would have been spared the stake.

takes as an example of the pervasive influence of Socin-
 22
 ian-Unitarian ideas in seventeenth-century England.

John Locke's (1632-1704) literary production coincides in date closely with the appearance of the Unitarian Tracts. From 1689-1693, he published his three Letters on Toleration; the Essay Concerning Human Understanding appeared in 1690 in English (there was an earlier French abridgement) and The Reasonableness of Christianity in 1695. Locke, always a reasonable, prudent man, wished to avoid controversy so released his writings on religion (Toleration and Reasonableness) anonymously; of course everyone guessed correctly that he was the man responsible. A few other works concerning religion were kept secret while he lived.

Locke had been raised a Dissenter but conformed to the Anglican Church most of his life; he, like the Unitarian tractarians, had no desire to separate from the Church. As is evident from the titles of his works, Locke wanted tolerance and reasonably interpreted scripture as primary principles in religion; and, although he generally avoided direct consideration of the doctrine of the trinity, his tolerant, rational approach to Christianity led to untrue allegations that Locke was an author of the Unitarian

23 Tracts. The Blasphemy Act of 1698²⁰ closed the debate concerning the trinity that had been stirred up by the Tracts and by Locke's writings; in fact, by the time of the Act, the controversy had already subsided.

Sir Issac Newton (1642-1727) a close friend of Locke, though best known for his scientific and mathematical discoveries, was really most interested in theological studies. However, his major religious writings, even less orthodox than Locke's remained hidden until well into the present century. William Whiston (1667-1752), Newton's successor to the chair of mathematics at Cambridge and an Anglican minister, became an anti-Nicene theologian, preached against the orthodox trinity, eliminated the trinitarian parts of the liturgy in his church, and campaigned to return the Church to its "primitive" doctrinal position. He was, understandably, removed from his parish and his chair at Cambridge in 1710. Whiston thus began the "Arian Controversy" which occupied the established Church for a decade, then spread to the Dissenters for the remainder of the century.

After Whiston lost his position, Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), a close friend of both Whiston and Newton

23. McLachlan, Opinions, pp. 79 ff.; McLachlan, Socinianism, pp. 325 ff.; Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 232 ff. See below, p. 96, for one passage where Locke did comment on the trinity.

and the most highly regarded Anglican theologian of the time, was the centre of controversy. As a result of Whiston's pricking his conscience about subscribing to the Athanasian Creed, Clarke determined to look into the doctrine of the trinity in detail. He searched the New Testament for verses relevant to the nature and relationship of God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, found 1251 of them, and published them with commentaries as The Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity in 1712. In going straight to the scriptures and ignoring traditions and councils, Clarke was following the path of the Radical Reformers.²⁴ We are not surprised then that his "Scripture-doctrine" was much closer to the Socinian-Arian position than to that of orthodoxy.

Clarke also wanted to preserve church unity and to avoid any unseemly arguments, so he proposed that the liturgy and creeds in current use were to be retained since "every person may reasonably agree to such forms whenever he can, in any sense at all, reconcile them with Scripture."²⁵ When the Upper House of Convocation decided not

24. His general view of the sources of religious knowledge was, however, not at all like that of the Radicals. Clarke was primarily a natural theologian and had some difficulty in finding a place for the scriptures in his system; nonetheless, when he examined them, he did so in the Socinian manner. (Stephen, History, I, 105-108.)

25. From the introduction to the Scripture-doctrine, quoted in Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 241.

to act against Clarke for his views even though he did not withdraw them, the Church, in effect, opened its doors to men of practically any theological opinion. The Church, then, in its indiscriminate amoebic way, was able to absorb yet another theological body by the simple expedient of allowing the individual to ascribe whatever meaning suited him to the official theological affirmations. Not all Anglican were pleased with this "Arian subscription" although it was an effective way to keep the Church intact.

When Voltaire came to England in 1726, the most brilliant English scientist, the greatest English philosopher, and the most respected English theologian--that is, Newton, Locke, and Clarke--were all anti-Nicene, rationalist Christians. Voltaire noted this peculiar phenomenon in the seventh Lettre philosophique. Certainly the religious opinions of these three men show that antitrinitarian thought in England had penetrated deeply since the beginning of the seventeenth century when independent thinkers first turned to the doctrine of the trinity and when the Racovian Catechism first entered the country.

C. Postscript: While to their contemporaries, the Socinians and fellow travelers seemed very dangerous radicals, they were actually rather conservative. H. John McLachlan noted their common theological starting point: the "attachment to a purely scriptural basis of belief

is characteristic of all who in the seventeenth century made their protest against the accepted doctrines of the Trinity and the atonement."²⁶ To them the Bible was the infallible word of God and comprised his unique revelation to man; natural theology was not usually an important source of religious knowledge. Not all of these antitrinitarians would admit critical studies of the sacred texts, and those who did proceeded in fear and trembling. All this is to say that the Socinians were rational-fundamentalist Christians and were very tame indeed, compared²⁷ with the emerging deists and freethinkers.

26. McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 39.

27. Colligan, Arian Movement, pp. 92 ff., pp. 136-

IV

TERMINOLOGY

We will now sort and trace the names used to describe and slander the movements whose history we have sketched above. The task is complicated by the number of names, by the long span of years to be considered, and by the polemical nature of so much of sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century religious literature. That is, the antitrinitarian parties were often branded with names that they had no desire to accept and which they refused to use in referring to themselves. Thus we find parallel systems of names for one group.

A. Names:

1. In Transylvania: As usual, in Transylvanian history, the authorities conflict. Kot implies that the Calvinists named the radical party "Unitarians" in 1569, very soon after the church split.¹ Wilbur, on the contrary, argues that Francis David's party only settled on a name after some decades of terminological

1. Kot, Socinianism, p. xxiv. Kot cites the Calvinist book, Consensus ministrorum in Hungaria orthodoxum contra Unitarios Transylvanos (1569), but see note 2.

2
 confusion. Since the men of the radical party were called "of the Kolozsvar profession", "of Francis David's religion", or simply "of the other religion or church" for a long period, and since it was not until 1600 that the term "unitaria religio" was unquestionably used in writing,³ Wilbur is probably correct. At any rate, after 1600, official documents, orthodox divines, and the radicals themselves adopted the word "Unitarian" to describe the anti-Nicene church and its members. Sand's first reference to the term was to a manuscript dated April, 1624, "Epistola ad Valentian Radecium Episcopum Unitariorum per Transylvaniam" by Ioachim⁴us Rupinovus.

The etymology of "Unitarian" is clear enough; it affirms the unipersonality of deity in opposition to the orthodox "trinitarian" position.⁵ It may come from the

2. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 47n. He thinks that the 1569 publication, mentioned in note 1, was probably titled by a much later editor. At any rate, it was an isolated example. (Ibid., p. 44n.)

3. Ibid., pp. 47n and 100n; he mentions a letter from 1585, which may have used "unitarian." (Ibid., pp. 93-94.) The name was firmly established by 1638. (Ibid., p. 118.)

4. Sand, Bibliotheca, p. 126. Sand's Bibliotheca Anti-Trinitariorum (1684) was an attempt to list all the writings--printed works, manuscripts, and letters--that had appeared in favour of the antitrinitarian cause. Unfortunately, he did not list the works attacking the antitrinitarians which would have been very useful in the study of the history of terminology.

5. In the Servetan sense of "trinitarian".

1568 debate of that series which led to the establishment of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church, where the leading Calvinist spokesman often rested his case with the phrase, "Ergo Deus est trinitarius." Wilbur theorizes that the Calvinists thus became known as "trinitarians" and the radicals as "unitarians". However, there is a problem in this explanation as for most of the sixteenth century Catholic writers used "trinitarian" to refer to Francis David's theology and called their own simply "orthodox".⁶ Again, the historical steps leading to the established terminology of the seventeenth century are unclear.

2. In Poland: In the records of the first synod of the radical branch of the Reformed Church after the split of 1565, the radicals called themselves "the brethren in Poland and Lithuania who have rejected the Trinity."⁷ Obviously this was too cumbersome a name, and the anti-Nicene group wanted to avoid worldly titles; so they most often spoke of themselves as "brethren" or "Christians". Such was their custom as long as they remained in Poland. The legal name of the Church, the Minor Reformed

6. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 47n.

7. Ibid., I, 327; Williams, Radical Reformation, p. 669, gives the precise date, 10 June 1565. The names of Polish Minor Reformed Church are discussed in Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 3n, and 327 f; ibid., II, 47n; Williams, Radical Reformation, pp. 319, 669, and 746; Kot, Socinianism, pp. xix ff.

Church of Poland, was used soon after the 1565 schism; it referred to the numerical inferiority of the anti-⁸ Nicene party.

The orthodox adversaries of the Polish Brethren dredged up the names of several Christological heresies of the early church and applied them to the Minor Church. "Arian", though theologically and historically incongruous,⁹ appeared as early as 1591, and eventually won out; and from about the turn of the seventeenth century to the present, the ordinary word used in Poland (in both the Polish and Latin languages) to refer to the Minor Church, its teachings, and its members has been "Arian".¹⁰ As much as possible, considering their political weakness, the Brethren protested against the slander implicit in this term.

Occasionally their Polish opponents called the Brethren "Unitarian" as did the Brethren themselves. For example, the Minor Reformed Church commissioned a treatise

8. See page 38 above. I have not been able to find an exact date for the establishment of their official title.

9. Sand, Bibliotheca, p. 43, in the title of a work by Gregorius Pauli who died in 1591.

10. See page 7 above. The Brethren in the sixteenth century transiently bore the names of some of their leaders--for example, Farnovian or Budneans--or of their primary cities--Racovians or Pinczovians. See Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 404-405, for Socinus's objections to "Arian".

entitled, De Concordia et unione inter coetus Evangelicos et Unitarios, in 1624.¹¹ Thus Wilbur's claim that "the name /Unitarian/ was never used by the Socinians in Poland"¹² is wrong. We know that the Brethren were in continual contact with the Transylvanian Unitarians, and the Brethren apparently borrowed the name. No doubt the secure status of the Transylvanians appealed to the besieged members of the Minor Church in Poland; perhaps the name was taken to try to gain more tolerance for the Polish Brethren; or perhaps because unitarian was theologically appropriate. Whatever the reason, writers for the Minor Church in Poland sometimes called themselves "unitarian" though not nearly as often as "Christian" or "Brethren".

As early as 1614, it seems that the Minor Churchmen were called "Socinians"; for that year, Smalcus, one of the Brethren's leading spokesmen, published his Responsio ad librum Ravenspergeri, cui titulus: "Par unum sophismatum Socinianorum, ad amussim veritatis examinatorum"¹³ (Rakow, 1614). Then in 1619 Smalcus objected to a

11. Ibid., I, 450; see ibid., I, 427n and 476n, for examples in Poland around the time of banishment.

12. Ibid., II, 47n. Kot, Socinianism, p. xxiv, is correct on this point. H. John McLachlan, Socinianism, pp. 311 f, where he discusses the term "unitarian", does not mention the Polish use.

13. Sand, Bibliotheca, p. 103.

Calvinist's calling his coreligionists "Socinian".¹⁴ Apparently, then, Kot's statement, "The name 'Socinians' was not coined until the seventeenth century, and even then was adopted only abroad--not in Poland",¹⁵ is too strong. Rather one should say that in Poland the Christians of the Minor Church were rarely called "Socinian" by their foes and that they always rejected the name for themselves.

There were two very good reasons that supported the Brethren's objection to "Socinian". First, the principles of freedom, reason, and tolerance did not make for a static theology; and, indeed, very soon after Socinus's death in 1604, many of his teachings were superseded by new ones. This process was manifested in the first edition of the Racovian Catechism (1605) which already departed from Socinus's positions and in the subsequent editions which continued to develop theologically.¹⁶ From

14. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 409n and 381n. The Calvinist work's title, originally in Polish, translates: Fire with water: that is, a little book about union in which reason is given why those that call themselves Christians of the Minor Church, so long as they persist in their errors, can never come into union with the orthodox Protestants. (*Ibid.*, p. 381n.) The title illustrates the generally accepted way which the Brethren referred to themselves. In refraining from "Arian", the orthodox writer was more polite than usual. See, *ibid.*, p. 492n, for a Catholic publication of 1662 which uses both "Socinian" and "Arian" in the Latin title.

15. Kot, Socinianism, p. xix.

16. See above, pp. 44-46.

the point of view of the Minor Churchmen, this doctrinal fluidity was an outward and visible mark of their inward freedom from the idolatry of regarding man-made creeds and systems as the eternal and unchangeable word of God. They were clear sighted and humble enough not to deify their own works. Therefore, when called "Socinians", they denied the appellation on the true grounds that their beliefs differed substantially from those of Socinus.

Second, Socinus was never admitted into membership of the Minor Reformed Church. He was not convinced that baptism had a firm scriptural sanction as a necessary condition for church membership and tended, in fact, to regard all outward observances as relatively unimportant. The Brethren, at this time highly influenced by anabaptists, insisted that Socinus be publicly baptised with no verbal reservation. He refused and was neither allowed to join the church nor to participate in the Lord's Supper with the Brethren. Although distressed to be cut off from all formal Christian communion, Socinus stayed on to become the recognized theological spokesman for the Minor Church. ¹⁷

17. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 393-395; Williams, Radical Reformation, pp. 757-762; Kot, Socinianism, p. xix. There were other doctrinal differences between Socinus and the Brethren, but baptism was the most important. Incidentally, the first Racovian Catechism, published the year after Socinus's death, adopted his baptismal ideas. Nonetheless there is no record that he ever was accepted into the Church.

Thus the Brethren could deny being "Socinians" since Socinus had not been a member of their Church. As the Polish Catholics and Calvinists were well aware of both these facts, the term "Socinian" was relatively rare in Poland.

3. In Western Europe: In seventeenth century Germany, orthodox scholars used the term "Photinian" to describe the Minor Church. Though this name was at least as inappropriate as "Arian", it became the characteristic word in Germany to indicate antitrinitarian thought and antitrinitarians in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. It was occasionally used in other languages and is even seen today in Germany.¹⁸ However, throughout this period, Germans also used "Socinian" which was the usual term in Western Europe outside Germany.

a. The Netherlands and France: Along with the political reaction against the Socinians in seventeenth century Holland,¹⁹ orthodox divines attacked by publishing many anti-Socinian books. Dutch-printed books had very

18. Wilbur, *Unitarianism*, I, 3n and 8. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 525 ff, mentions the titles of many seventeenth and eighteenth century anti-Socinian books published in Germany. "Photinian" and "Socinian" both appear often.

19. See chapter 3, section A, above.

wide circulation due to the Netherlands's pre-eminence in trade, central location, and liberty of press. Through these books, such as Professor Hoornbeek's Socinianismus confutatus (3 vols., Anstelodami, 1650-1664) and his Disputationes theologicae Anti-Socinanae (2 vols., Lugduni Batavorum, 1654-1662),²⁰ Western Europe was alerted to the dangers of Socinianism and from them took "Socinian" as the name to apply to all manifestations of antitrinitarian²¹ thought--or even to all rationalistic theology.

The last point is a conjecture. The facts are that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, "Socinian" was a word rarely used in Poland. By 1622 it appeared in Dutch²² and in 1624 in a Latin work published at Leiden.²³

20. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 557. Ibid., I, chapter 42, lists several of the anti-Socinian titles out of the hundreds published in Holland around the middle of the seventeenth century. "Socinian" appears in most of them; "Photinian", "Arian", and "Unitarian" are all absent. Note that some of Hoornbeek's books appeared before the Minor Church was driven from Poland.

21. Except, of course, in Germany. The spread of the term "Socinian" is not altogether clear; what follows is a rough preliminary effort to trace the term.

22. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 558, de Witte's Weerlegginge der Socinieansche Dwalingen (Amsterdam, 1622). In 1630 Vorst published a Dutch summary of Socinian teaching which had "Socinian" in the title. (Sand, Bibliotheca, pp. 98 f.) Sand, (ibid., pp. 99f), gives 1593 as the date of the first work in Dutch to favour the Socinians.

23. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 558n. Bodecher's Sociniano-Remonstrantismus (Leiden, 1624), wherein Bodecher tried to prove that the Remonstrants were Socinians.

The earliest use in English I have found was in 1637;²⁴ and in French, "Socinian" was in the title of a book published in 1687 by a Frenchman living in Holland.²⁵ At the end of the century, "Socinian" was used regularly in all the languages here mentioned. That Socinian thought and books found their way to England through the Netherlands, that the Netherlands was the favoured place of exile for French- and English-speaking refugees, and that at the end of the century a French-language controversy about the dangers of Socinianism centred in Amsterdam²⁶ all lend weight to the theory that "Socinian" became the dominant name through Dutch influence; but the case is not conclusively proven.

As in Poland, the Brethren in the Netherlands refused "Socinian" as their name. Rather, expanding their

24. H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism*, p. 65n, Sir John Suckling, in the preface to his *An Account of Religion by Reason*, (1637). After Best and Bidle (fl. 1640-1650), "Socinian" appeared often in English religious controversy.

25. Wilbur, *Unitarianism*, I, 532n. Noël Aubert de Versé, *Le Tombeau du Socinianisme* (Francfort, 1687). There may well be earlier examples in French, but de Versé's antedates that of Bossuet (1688) cited in both Littré's and Robert's historical dictionaries of the French language. See Littré, *Dictionnaire*, IV, 1958 and Robert, *Dictionnaire*, VI, 460. Sand's *Bibliotheca* does not list an earlier use of "Socinian" but gives 1592 for the first Socinian book in French, a translation of Faustus Socinus's *De Autoritate Sacrae Scripturae liber*. (Sand, *Bibliotheca*, pp. 66 f.)

26. Wilbur, *Unitarianism*, I, 530 ff, ca. 1680-1705.

earlier Polish practice, they more and more took "Unitarian" as their own. Take, for example, their definitive work--the Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum (1665-1668), subtitled quos Unitarios vocant--where, as H. John McLachlan translated, "they denominated themselves 'Polish Brethren whom people call Unitarians!'"²⁷ Obviously, they preferred to be called "Brethren" but would accept "Unitarian".

French writers used "unitaire" and "socinien" as synonyms without regard for theological or historical niceties. Bayle's Dictionnaire article "Socin", which still deserves to be read today as an excellent capsule history of the Polish Brethren and the Transylvanian Unitarians, did not distinguish between the two terms and did not use "antitrinitaire" or "arien".²⁸ However, his article "Arius", quoted this passage, "Ces Arriens l'importunoient néanmoins, aussi bien que les Phanatiques d'aujourd'hui, les Sociniens et ceux qu'il nomme Photiniens de Pologne et de Transylvanie",²⁹ which clearly linked the ancient Arians to

27. McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 312. See also, p. 62, above. Sand's Bibliotheca habitually uses "Unitarian".

28. Bayle, Dictionnaire, III, 2606-2616 (1697). Not only is this article historically sound, it also raises some interesting theological and political questions.

29. Ibid., I, 329, note F. Bayle is quoting Nicole, l'Unité de l'Eglise, pp. 15 f.

the contemporary antitrinitarians. This line also showed
the terminological muddle in the French language.³⁰

b. England, Locke a Socinian?: Sir John Suckling wrote in 1637, "I am not ignorant that the fear of Socinianism at this time renders every man that offers to give an account of religion by reason suspected to have none at all."²⁴ Here, in the first example of the word "Socinian" I have found in print in the English language, were two of the characteristics that marked its use for the next two centuries. First, the specific doctrines of Socinus or the Polish Brethren were not in question; "Socinianism" was thought to be something sinister, something fearful; Socinians were in the same class as atheists.³¹ We are not surprised to find that, as on the Continent, liberal Christians did not call themselves "Socinian" and usually defended themselves when so charged. Similarly,

30. See also Littré (Dictionnaire) where "Socinien" (IV, 1958) and "Unitaire" (IV, 2394) are given as synonyms for one another.

31. "Few people in the middle of the seventeenth century could distinguish between the broad, rational, and tolerant attitude of the latitudinarians . . . and the full Socinian scheme." (McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 76; see also pp. 3 and 73.) Wilbur (Unitarianism, II, 222) says, in England "the name [Socinian] when employed by the orthodox was used only as a term of reproach and contempt." Abbey and Overton (Church, pp. 215 f) similarly point out the imprecise and slanderous use of "Socinian" around the turn of the eighteenth century in England.

"Arian" was applied to and rejected by the English latitudinarians.

Throughout most of the seventeenth century, there was, therefore, great confusion in the names used for the anti-Nicene Christians. Not only were the terms used loosely, but "The fluxuations of opinion [made] it difficult to fix with certainty a title to a man, or to a party. . . ." ³² John Milton (1608-1674), for example, who died alienated from all organized churches, in his final writings presented an Arian Christology. Earlier he held orthodox and then Sabellian opinions; and his exegetical method was that of the Socinians. ³³ The old terms were too theologically precise and too rigid to be of much use in this age of volatile eclecticism.

"Unitarian", the omnibus word that came to represent all those individuals and groups who emphasized the divine unity at the expense of the traditional trinity, entered the printed language in 1673. Henry Hedworth, an antitrinitarian, had written some unflattering, though true, things about George Fox and thus initiated a pamphlet war with William Penn. ³⁴ Penn, of course, tried to

32. Colligan, Arian Movement, p. 3.

33. McLachlan, Opinions, pp. 3-66; see especially, pp. 11, 35, and 62-66.

34. This discussion of the first use of (cont.)

discredit his opponent by calling attention to his "scattered seeds of Socinianism."³⁵ Hedworth replied that though he was accused

under the name of Socinian, Bidlean, and the like, although I wrote nothing but what was approved by men of learning and piety . . . I will present to the Reader a short account of those men's opinion concerning Christ, who for distinction sake call themselves Unitarians, being so called in those places, where by the Laws of the Country they have equal Liberty of Religion with other men, or because they own but one Person, and one substance or Essence of the most High and Independent God and to distinguish them from other Christians, that hold three Persons and one Essence of God, and are therefore denominated Trinitarians. (36)

In this short passage Hedworth gave three obvious reasons for introducing the term "Unitarian": it avoided the slander implicit in "Socinian"; it was already used in Transylvania;³⁷ and it was theologically appropriate. He may also have been influenced by the practice of the Polish Brethren refugees in the Netherlands, who had accepted the Unitarian name by the late 1660's.²⁷

(cont.) "Unitarian" is drawn primarily from McLachlan, Socinianism, chapter 15. See also Colligan, Arian Movement, p. 2n, and Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 199.

35. McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 309, from Penn's The Spirit of Truth Vindicated . . . (1672).

36. Ibid., p. 312, from Hedworth's Controversie Ended . . . (1673).

37. A Transylvanian Unitarian had stayed with Hedworth in 1663-1664 (ibid., p. 312).

Penn behaved in an uncharacteristically un-Friendly way in this controversy with Hedworth. Perhaps he was compensating for his earlier flirtation with Socinian thought. In 1668, he had published The Sandy Foundation Shaken where he set forth the anti-Nicene arguments against the ordinary doctrine of the trinity; for this, he was put in the Tower. While still in prison, he wrote Innocency with her Open Face, presented by way of apology for . . . 'The Sandy Foundation Shaken' (1669). Both of these books employ the Socinian exegetical method, but Penn said in Innocency with her Open Face . . . :

As for my being a Socinian, I must confess I have read of one Socinus . . . whose parts, wisdom, gravity and just behaviour, made him the most famous with the Polonian and Transilvanian churches: but I was never baptised into his name, and therefore deny that reproachful Epithite; and if in anything I acknowledge the verity of his Doctrine, it is for the Truth's sake, of which, in many things, he had a clearer prospect than most of his Contemporaries.
(38)

Since no one was ever baptised into Socinus's name, Penn's disavowal was most disingenuous. However, it was brave for a man in the Tower, charged with Socinianism, even to affirm the truth of Socinus's doctrine.

These passages from Hedworth and Penn show how far seventeenth-century Englishmen would go to avoid being called Socinian. Accordingly, the new word "Unitarian"

soon became the name acceptable to the anti-Nicene party. In 1687 Nye published A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians . . . , the first work in English with "Unitarian" in the title.³⁹ He was also probably the author of the 1691 Unitarian Tract where we find, "I am neither a Papist, nor a Lutheran, nor a Calvinist, nor a Socinian . . . I am a Christian"; and of the 1695 collection published anonymously "By the Author of that manuscript no Socinian but a Christian and a Unitarian."⁴⁰

After these tracts, "Unitarian" became the inclusive term for all shades of anti-Nicene thought--Sabelian, Arian, Socinian, and Unitarian (in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sense indicating a humanitarian Christology.)⁴¹ The name was now ready though it had to wait more than a century for a church.

Abbey and Overton objected to "unitarian" as the name for the antitrinitarians as it implied that the orthodox party did not affirm the unity of God.⁴² However, Hedworth's introduction of the term made it clear that unitarian referred to the unipersonality of God.³⁶

39. Ibid., pp. 320-321. See above, p. 71, for Nye and the Unitarian Tracts.

40. Ibid., p. 320n.

41. Ibid., p. 322; Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 222.

42. Abbey and Overton, Church, pp. 225-226.

Further, the name should not be taken by itself but should be considered in historical context where it filled the need for a new, inclusive term and where it was not intended to be polemical.

While the name "Socinian" lost out completely in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Socinian method of rational Biblical exposition won out in England. Amongst the unitarians and even some of the more conservative theologians,⁴³ this exegetical debt was openly acknowledged. An anonymous unitarian pamphlet of 1697 said:

Those in England, who call themselves Unitarians, never were entirely in the sentiment of Socinus, or the Socinians. Notwithstanding, . . . we have not always declined the name; because in interpreting many texts of Scripture, we cannot but approve and follow the judgement of those Writers.

(44)

However, under the influence of Clarke, Locke, and Newton, churchmen gradually and silently adopted rational criticism of the Bible and preached natural religion, until "by the middle of the eighteenth century, the Socinian method of dealing with the Scriptures was universally adopted."⁴⁵

43. See the above passage from Penn (p. 91), for example. See also, Stephen, History, I, chapter 2.

44. An Account of Mr. Firmin's Religion and of the Present State of the Unitarian Controversy (1697), in McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 297.

45. Colligan, Arian Movement, p. 151. "Universally" was too strong a word.

And after Clarke was permitted to stay within the Church of England, the Arian interpretation of the trinity became quite widespread.

Locke's The Reasonableness of Christianity (1695)⁴⁶ was a perfect example of Socinian exegetical method and of English latitudinarianism. In this book Locke sought to prove, using reason alone, that the four Evangelists and the book of Acts taught that one only need accept Jesus as the Messiah to be a Christian,⁴⁷ which minimal creed would extinguish the fires of religious controversy. As could have been predicted, Locke's attempt at conciliation immediately began an ill-humoured controversy. John Edwards (1637-1716), a low-church Anglican of Calvinist persuasion, published The Several Causes and Occasions of Atheism which attacked Locke only a few months after the Reasonableness appeared. Locke answered with A Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity (1695), which Edwards countered with Socinianism Unmasked (1696). A Second Vindication of

⁴⁶. See above, pp. 72-73. See below, pp. 151-154, for Voltaire's evaluation of this example of Locke's biblical theology. The goal of the following discussion of Locke's religious beliefs is to show whether or not his contemporaries had good grounds to call him Socinian. Accordingly, The Reasonableness of Christianity receives the most attention although it is not by far the most important of his works.

⁴⁷. Locke, Reasonableness, paragraphs 1, 247, 252, and passim.

the Reasonableness of Christianity (1696) by Locke was the
⁴⁸
 final word.

Locke's two defences made very clear how much he wished to avoid being known as a Socinian. In the first Vindication he denied it point-blank: "For I repeat it again, there is not one word of Socinianism in it."⁴⁹ He was even moved to lie:

I know not but it may be true, that the anti-Trinitarians and Racovians understand those places as I do: but it is more than I know, that they do so. I took not my sense of those texts from those writers, but from the Scripture itself, giving light to its own meaning . . . [which] true meaning, I shall not decline, because I am told it is so understood by the Racovians, whom I never yet read. (50)

Yet Locke's personal library was rich in Sociniana, and we know from his commonplace books that he read the Socinians carefully. The falsehood was repeated in the Second Vindication.⁵¹ That Locke felt it was necessary to lie to avoid the label "Socinian" indicated the extremely pejorative nature of the term.

In the Second Vindication, there was an excellent

48. Cranston, Locke, pp. 389-392 and 409-410, gives a short account of the controversy. See also McLachlan, Socinianism, pp. 327-329.

49. Locke, Works, VII, 167.

50. Ibid., pp. 171 f. Note that "anti-Trinitarian", "Racovian", and "Socinian" are synonymous in the quoted passages. In the Vindications Locke also used "Unitarian" synonymously.

explication of the fundamental idea behind anti-Nicene theology. Edwards in his Socinianism Unmasked had written of the doctrine of the trinity that "we shall never be able to comprehend [it] . . . but there is no difficulty as to the reality and certainty of [it], because we know [it is] revealed to us by God in the holy Scriptures."⁵² Locke pointed out at once the enormous difficulty where Edwards said there was none:

The question is about a proposition to be believed, which must first necessarily be understood. For a man cannot possibly give his assent to any affirmation or negation, unless he understands the terms as they are joined in that proposition, and has a conception of the thing, concerning which it is affirmed or denied, as they are there put together.
(53)

Here Locke struck at the heart of the problem of the Nicene doctrine of the trinity. If, as its proponents all admitted, the doctrine were incomprehensible, then to affirm it was nonsense. "[A] man cannot possibly give his assent to any affirmation or negation, unless he understands the

51. Ibid., pp. 300 and 362. 52. Ibid., p. 239.

53. Ibid., pp. 239 f. It seems that earlier studies have missed this attack on the Nicene trinity. McLachlan (Socinianism, p. 327), citing Worcester's judgement in The Religious Opinions of John Locke (1889), commented: "Nowhere in his writings does he profess his faith in it [the trinity], though nowhere does he specifically attack it." Cranston (Locke) does not note Locke's discussion of the trinity. Locke in his controversy with the Bishop of Worcester (Works, IV) nowhere, that I have found, so openly discussed the trinity.

terms as they are joined in that proposition."

From Locke's well-known defense of tolerance, freedom, and reason in religion, from the exegesis of The Reasonableness of Christianity, and from his linguistic mauling of the orthodox doctrine of the trinity, Locke can be called "Socinian" or "unitarian" in the historical sense used in this study. We must agree with Locke's biographer, who wrote:

The Reasonableness of Christianity is a Unitarian or Socinian book in everything but name, and it is, in a way, odd that Locke, who was so scrupulous about the proper usage of words, should have failed to admit it. He did not want the bad name of Unitarian or Socinian, and so he managed to persuade himself he was not a Unitarian or Socinian.
(54)

Or, as, commenting on Locke's reflection--"Whatsoever God hath revealed is certainly true. . . . But whether it be a Divine Revelation or no, Reason must judge"--H. John McLachlan said, "Faustus Socinus could have said no more."⁵⁵

54. Cranston, Locke, p. 390. Since professing Socinianism was a crime, it is not odd at all that Locke would not admit it.

55. McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 329. Locke's passage is from Book IV, chapter 18, paragraph 10 of the Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Chapters 17, 18, and 19 of Book IV are all good illustrations of Locke's "Socinian" methodology in religion. McLachlan's and Cranston's judgments are true on the face of Locke's writings, but his ulterior religious opinions were perhaps considerably more radical than he could openly express. However, for the purposes of this study, what matters is the surface for that is on what his critics based their opinions.

B. Sticks and Stones: Early in the Jesuit campaign that eventually led to the expulsion of the Brethren from Poland, the reverend fathers christened the "Arians" the equivalents of Tartars, Jews, and Turks. ⁵⁶ In the time and

56. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 437, in debates in 1592. Little can be said in favour of the behaviour of the Tartars of the time, but they had precious little resemblance to the pacific Brethren. Jews, though universally despised, were harmless and kept to themselves to worship God in their own way.

The Turks were indeed a political threat, and they often failed to live up to their religious ideal of tolerance in territories they had conquered. But in light of the Christian bloodlust of the era, the terrible Turks appeared most humane. Wilbur (Unitarianism, II, 83 f) and Williams (Radical Reformation, p. 724) report an incident that happened in 1574 in Turkish Hungary. After a debate between some Calvinists and two Unitarians, which the Unitarians apparently lost, the Calvinist Bishop had one of the Unitarians hanged--the other escaped. When the Pasha at Buda investigated the case, he ruled that the Calvinist Bishop and his two accomplices were guilty of inhuman murder and sentenced all three to hang. The Calvinists appealed for mercy and the Unitarians said they wanted no revenge, so the Pasha let the Calvinists go on payment of a fine--thereafter levied annually.

And while the Pope "exulta de joie, fit tirer le canon du Château-Saint-Ange, commanda une médaille commémorative et . . . des peintures rappelant le massacre pour en orner le Vatican" when he heard of the Saint Bartholomew Massacre (1572), the Sultan was moved to protest. (Léonard, Protestantisme, II, 125; Le Cler, Toleration, II, 93-96.)

Under Turkish rule in Hungary, all Christian Church bodies were treated equally (the Turks were not, however, gentle with Islamic nonconformists) and the Unitarians flourished for more than a century. Within a generation of the Catholic capture of Hungary (in the 1680's), the Unitarians had been hounded to extinction. (Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, chapter 6.) Today, perhaps, it seems that the Jesuits payed the antitrinitarians a compliment by classing them with Jews and Turks. Even at the Turk's worst hour--their extermination of the Armenians during the First World War--they looked to the records of the Inquisition (cont.)

place, these titles were extremely defamatory, and we must not forget that "Arian" itself was meant to discredit the Minor Reformed Church by identifying it with an ancient heresy. Two early seventeenth-century Catholic apologists chose their titles well for this effect: The Shame of the Arians (1604) and Nova monstra Novi Arianismi (1612).⁵⁷ Unfortunately these tactics were successful; in the popular mind in Poland, the Arians became something less than human and fair prey for the massacres of the 1650's and the exile of 1660.⁵⁸

Unitarians in Transylvania were protected by law, thus their name never quite took on the evil connotations that helped destroy the Polish antitrinitarians. However, the Transylvanian Unitarians did suffer their share of abuse. The most famous attack on them was in an early seventeenth-century letter from a Catholic bishop to the Austrian Emperor, where he denounced the Unitarians for being "thrifty, industrious, moral, and well-behaved."⁵⁹

(cont.) for spiritual guidance. (Housepian, "Genocide", p. 57.)

57. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, 439.

58. Similarly, one may suspect that centuries of Christian anti-Jewish propaganda bore its strange fruit under the Nazis.

59. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 162, in Wilbur's paraphrase.

Their morality might have attracted their neighbours to their dangerous doctrines.

We have already seen that "Socinian" was an insulting word in England. Typical early examples include Thomas Edward's Gangraena: or a catalogue and discovery of errors, Heresies, Blasphemies . . . vented and acted in England in these last four years (1645),⁶⁰ E. Pagitt's Heraesiography (1645) where he said "Socinianism is a compound of many pernicious and antiquated heresies",⁶¹ and T. Chynell's Rise, Growth and Danger of Socinianisme (1643).⁶² At the beginning of the eighteenth century, this line appeared in an English sermon, describing those "execrable miscreants, Arius and Socinus, whose bodies though so many years rotten in their graves, still stink above the ground."⁶³

But English antitrinitarians could not always escape verbal abuse by calling themselves Unitarian rather than Socinian. See, for example, the third verse of Wesley's hymn, "Sun of unclouded righteousness" (1780):

60. Ibid., II, 190.

61. New English Dictionary, IX, 361; quotation from Haeraesiography, 2nd edition, p. 123.

62. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 188.

63. From 1705, quoted in Colligan, Arian Movement, p. 29.

"Stretch out thy arm, thou triune God, the Unitarian fiend
 expel And chase his doctrine back to hell."⁶⁴ "Unitarian",
 though, never sounded quite so depraved as "Socinian".

In England Sir John Suckling was afraid that his
 reasonable look at religion would label him "Socinian".²⁴
 Among French-speaking Protestants, an espousal of toler-
 ance could be enough to gain that same honour. Jurieu, the
 self-appointed watchdog of orthodoxy, in 1687 described
 toleration as, "ce dogme socinien, le plus dangereux de
 tous ceux de la secte socinienne."⁶⁵ A few years earlier,
 during a short visit to the Netherlands, Jean Le Clerc
 spoke well of tolerance in a theological chat with Jurieu.
 When Le Clerc returned to Geneva, he found the whole town
 in an uproar over him. Jurieu had written ahead, denoun-
 cing Le Clerc as a Socinian. After a month of investiga-
 tion, la Vénérable Compagnie des Pasteurs of Geneva with-
 drew Le Clerc's right to preach, and Le Clerc left Geneva
 on 17 September 1683; he never returned.⁶⁶

Le Clerc then went to Amsterdam where he eventually

64. New English Dictionary, X, part 1, 237-238.

65. McLachlan, Socinianism, p. 9n, quoted from
 Jurieu's Droits des deux souverains, en matière de reli-
 gion, la conscience et l'expérience.

66. Barnes, Le Clerc, pp. 81-86.

established himself as a teacher in the Remonstrants' Academy, as a leading Biblical exegete, and as the editor of a series of popular journals. Two years after leaving Geneva, he published his Sentiments de quelques théologiens de Hollande sur l'Histoire critique du Vieux Testament, composée par le P. Richard Simon de l'Oratoire (1685).⁶⁷ Despite the title, this was all Le Clerc's work, a review of Simon's very important documentary hypothesis on the structure and authorship of the Pentateuch. Le Clerc generally supported Simon's hypothesis but went even farther in the free application of reason to Holy Scripture. Simon was alarmed and soon published an attack on Le Clerc's Sentiments which Le Clerc answered with his Défense des sentiments . . .⁶⁸ (1686).

Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), the most famous French-speaking Protestant in Holland, saw in Le Clerc's free,

67. Ibid., p. 109.

68. Ibid., p. 112. John Locke, who was a political exile in the Netherlands from September, 1683, to February, 1689, had as his closest Dutch friend Philip van Limborch, the Remonstrant professor and Le Clerc's protector. Le Clerc and Locke became rather good friends, to the extent that Locke wrote the major portion of three volumes of Le Clerc's Bibliothèque universelle et historique (Cranston, Locke, p. 293). Nonetheless, Locke claimed to be shocked at the Sentiments which he said attacked the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, a cornerstone of his public religious position (ibid., p. 255).

reasonable approach to the Bible in the book on Simon nothing but the dreaded taint of Socinianism. Bayle wrote to a mutual friend, who--of course--passed the letter on to Le Clerc, this warning:

M. Le Clerc vient de faire un livre contre M. Simon: il y a de bonnes choses, mais trop hardies. Vous devriez l'avertir, qu'au lieu de faire du bien au Parti qu'il a embrassé, je veux dire aux Arminiens il servira à les rendre plus odieux: car il ne servira qu'à confirmer les gens dans la pensée où l'on est ici, que tous les Arminiens savants sont sociniens, pour le moins.

"Pour le moins", indeed, for Bayle went on to say that the Arminians [Rémonstrants] had poisoned all their books with Socinianism, and to add insult to insult, suggested that the true Calvinists should "s'éloigner d'une Secte, qui est l'égoût de tous les Athées, Déistes et Sociniens de l'Europe."⁶⁹ Thus began a feud between Le Clerc and Bayle that continued even after Bayle's death, carried on by his friends.

No wonder poor Le Clerc was ready to fight; only two years before he had lost his position as a member of the Genevese clergy due to Jurieu's accusing him of Socinianism. And now Bayle, as Jurieu had taken tolerance, took one aspect of Socinian thought--its, free, rational exegesis--as its defining (and dangerous) characteristic.

69. Barnes, Le Clerc, p. 230. Bayle's letter was written in 1685.

Then, again like Jurieu, Bayle damned Le Clerc as a Socinian, and worse, linked Socinianism to deism and atheism. This was quite unfair to Le Clerc.

But Bayle was not arbitrarily singling Le Clerc out for abuse; he consistently defined Socinianism in terms of exegesis. In his Dictionnaire article "Socin", he wrote;

L'Objection la plus général, que l'on propose contre eux, est qu'en refusant de croire ce qui leur paroît opposé aux Lumieres Philosophes, et de soumettre leur Foi aux Mysteres inconcevables de la Religion Chrétienne, ils fraient le chemin au Pyrrhonisme, au Déisme, à l'Athéisme. On pourroit peut être leur objecter qu'ils ouvrent la meme porte du moins indirectement par la maniere dont ils expliquent les Passages de l'Ecriture, qui concernent la consubstantialité du Verbe. . . . Or, en ruinant la divinité de l'Ecriture, on renverse toute la Révélation, ensuite de quoi tout n'est que Dispute de Philosophes. (70)

In Note H to the same article, he made the identification of rational theology with Socinianism even more explicit: "Leur principe avilit la Religion et la convertit en Philosophie. La grandeur, l'autorité, et la souveraineté de Dieu demandent que nous cheminions ici par foi, et non point par vue."⁷¹

70. Bayle, Dictionnaire, III, 2614-2615. In this article, Bayle used several clever and sound arguments to show how Socinians were harmless to the state and should be tolerated. Ironically, Bayle's general support of toleration led to his being persecuted, like Le Clerc, by Jurieu.

71. Ibid., III, p. 2610. See further, Note I, loc. cit., where he said, "on peut assurer avec quelque vraisemblance que le Systeme des Sociniens n'est guerre propre à gagner les peuples. Il est plus propre à (cont.)

If this were Socinianism, then Le Clerc was guilty as charged. He described his exegetical method in his Parrhasiana (1699) as follows, "La Raison et la Révélation sont, pour ainsi dire, deux Filles du Ciel, qui ne se querellent jamais l'une avec l'autre . . . ceux qui sont capables de consulter l'Ecriture Sainte et de raisonner avec quelque justesse le reconnaissent facilement."⁷²

Certainly this was the same exegetical doctrine as found in the Racovian Catechism, in John Bidle, and in all the anti-Nicene rationalist theologians of the time.⁷³ And certainly, Le Clerc shared the general principles of freedom, reason, and toleration in religion; further, his christology was not altogether orthodox, and he had little to say in favour of the Nicene idea of the trinity.

Had Le Clerc not gone to such great pains to disprove the accusation, it would be tempting to follow the lead of his enemies, call him a Socinian, and let it go at that. But Le Clerc went to the trouble to publish a

(cont.) conduire au Pyrrhonisme les gens d'étude." In the debate as to what Bayle really thought about religion, I take the side that says he was a philosophical skeptic and a sincere Christian fideist. Therefore, in his attack on Le Clerc, I think Bayle felt he was defending the Christian faith. Le Clerc, on the other hand, was convinced that Bayle was a reprehensible hypocrite. (Barnes, Le Clerc, p. 231.)

72. Barnes, Le Clerc, pp. 150-151.

73. See above, pp. 44-46 and 66-69.

commentary on the first eight verses of the Gospel of John (1695) to prove his christology was not Socinian,⁷⁴ and his heterodoxy was not identical with the Socinians'. Therefore, though very close to Socinianism, Le Clerc did not quite deserve the label.⁷⁵

But justly or not, "Après sa mort, 'Le Clerc socinien' fut définitivement consacré par Voltaire."⁷⁶ In the seventh *Lettre philosophique*, Le Clerc appeared along with Newton, Locke, and Clarke as one of the "plus grands Philosophes et les meilleures plumes de leur temps",⁷⁷ who tried--in Voltaire's telling--unsuccessfully to establish an antitrinitarian church. Lanson's annotation presented

74. Barnes, *Le Clerc*, p. 241.

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 228-243, agrees that Le Clerc was not a Socinian: "Le Clerc n'était pas socinien. Hétérodoxe, il l'était certainement. . . . Mais il avait gardé les autres dogmes centraux du christianisme, il croyait à la divinité du Christ, et à la rédemption." (*Ibid.*, p. 243.) True, but she lamentably misrepresents the nature of Socinianism, in the same way Bayle did: "Les Sociniens se disaient chrétiens, sans avoir guère droit à ce titre. Leur religion n'est plus en somme qu'une philosophie." (*Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.) But we have already seen that the Socinians were the strictest Biblicists and wanted to expel all philosophy--even fourth and fifth century Greek philosophy--from Christian thought. See above, pp. 54-58, for my appraisal of what Socinianism actually was.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

77. *Lettres philosophiques*, Lanson, I, 80. Voltaire's estimation of Le Clerc in the "Catalogue de la plupart des écrivains français" in his *Siècle de Louis XIV* was considerably less enthusiastic: "Son plus grand mérite est d'avoir alors approché de Bayle, qu'il a combattu (cont.)"

some of the accusations of Socinianism against Le Clerc and noted only that he "protesta vaguement" against being called an antitrinitarian.⁷⁸ Naves's edition of the Lettres philosophiques accepted Voltaire's statement without comment while F.A. Taylor's explication was wildly inaccurate: "Leclerc was, for a time, a Unitarian minister in Amsterdam."⁷⁹ It would seem that Voltaire's consecration was effective.

But as in English "le terme de socinien devint vite une insulte qui ne correspondait guère à aucune conception théologique."⁸⁰ Bayle, then, was merely canonizing popular usage when he began his Dictionnaire article, "Socin . . . le principal Fondateur d'une très mauvaise Secte qui porte son nom."⁸¹ Poor Le Clerc, who was called Socinian in all of his many controversies⁸² and who perhaps

(cont.) souvent. Il a beaucoup plus écrit que ce grand homme; mais il n'a pas connu comme lui l'art de plaire et d'instruire." (M. XIV, 96, published in 1742.)

78. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 87, n. 18.

79. Lettres philosophiques, F.A. Taylor, p. 153, n. 13. I have found nothing to show that Le Clerc was interested in founding a new sect.

80. Barnes, Le Clerc, p. 238.

81. Bayle, Dictionnaire, III, 2606.

82. Barnes, Le Clerc, p. 237: "au cours de chaque querelle, Le Clerc est tôt ou tard accusé de socinianisme." This was a serious accusation too; Barnes (*ibid.*, p. 238) compares "Socinian" in 1700 with "Communist" as used by the bourgeoisie in the twentieth century.

suffered more than any other literary figure from this charge, deserves the last word. He complained in 1700, "On accuse de socinianisme toute personne qui enseigne quoi que ce soit de nouveau."⁸³

83. Ibid., p. 238.

V

VOLTAIRE'S RELIGION AND
SOCINIANISM BEFORE HIS ENGLISH EXILE

A. Childhood and Youth: Having now established what the status and nature of Socinianism were at the turn of the eighteenth century, we will show whether or not young man Voltaire adopted his religious attitudes from the Socinians. Voltaire's biographers, including the chronicler of his religious life, René Pomeau, seem to be in general agreement as to the general outline of young Arouet's religious development. His solidly bourgeois family were influenced both by the Jansenists and the libertines. Armand Arouet, the elder son, who went to study at the Jansenist séminaire de Saint-Magloire, became an enthusiast ; François-Marie, the younger Arouet, who studied at the Jesuit collège Louis le Grand, became Voltaire.

How much credit should we give the Jesuits for this transubstantiation, or was it a transubstantiation at all? After all, the first credible anecdote about François-Marie we have relates that the libertine abbé de Châteauneuf taught him to recite the Moïsade, a then unprintable poem that attacked religion on rational grounds, when

young Arouet was only three.¹ So, when François-Marie² entered Louis le Grand in October, 1704, he had already had some six or seven years' training in impiety.

Yet, though the teachers of Louis le Grand were undoubtedly devout and wanted their pupils to be good Catholic Christians, the college was one of the primary producers of philosophes. Voltaire's favorite professors also taught d'Argenson, Richelieu, Malesherbes, Helvétius, and other freethinkers.³ The Jesuits' educational goal was to mold Christian humanists, to combine a taste for belles-lettres with liberal Catholic thought in their pupils. They were half successful, not a bad record for a system of schooling; unfortunately, from their religious point of view, their half-success was in forming "le bon goût"⁴ rather than piety.

And in Arouet's case, his Christian sensibilities continued to be undermined by the libertines. As early as

1. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 13; Pomeau, Religion, pp. 30-31. Both Desnoiresterres and Pomeau think this story authentic, though Pomeau thinks Arouet's youth was exaggerated. Voltaire was born on 21 November 1694.

2. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 15.

3. Pomeau, Religion, p. 39.

4. Lanson, Voltaire, p. 12. See also Pomeau, Religion, Part I, chapter 2, especially p. 45. Pomeau pointed out that the Jesuits' emphasis on natural theology and the overwhelming glory of God tended towards deism.

1706, l'abbé de Châteauneuf introduced François-Marie into the society of the Temple, a group of men informally led by l'abbé de Chaulieu, known for their intellectual daring.⁵ They were skeptics in the French tradition of Montaigne, Bayle, Saint-Evremond, and Fontenelle, who were quite happy to scoff at religious superstition and fanaticism--even at faith itself, but since most of them drew more-than-ample stipends from the Church, they were not eager to upset the religious establishment.⁶ François-Marie probably continued to frequent this society during his vacations from the Collège Louis le Grand even though their debauchery was too much for him physically.⁷

Ira O. Wade in his The Clandestine Organization and Diffusion of Philosophic Ideas in France from 1700 to 1750 has shown that great numbers of manuscripts criticizing religion circulated in Arouet's collegiate years and youth.⁸

5. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 39-40.

6. Ibid., I, 89-102; Hazard, European Mind, pp. 128-129; see below p. 115, n. 18.

7. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 39-40, 99. See Best. 31, 33, and 35, letters exchanged between Voltaire and Chaulieu in 1716, which show Voltaire's considerable respect for the philosophical and literary judgement of the old templar.

8. Wade, Clandestine, see especially the tabulations on pp. 10-19 and 263-264.

Most of them were radically anti-Christian and had little in common with the tenor of Socinian writings although the clandestine authors borrowed Socinian critical biblical studies to turn against religion in general. With Arouet's curiosity and the company he kept, it is most likely that he read some of them. There are some marked similarities between some of the ideas in his early poetry and prose and the ideas in the secret papers. Finally, his later interest in these documents (he edited several for publication) suggests that he read them as a young man.⁹

When he left college on 5 August 1711, "Arouet n'est déjà plus chrétien."¹⁰ Exactly why he was no longer Christian has not been satisfactorily explained. One must agree with Pomeau that it is too easy to posit that "Voltaire naquit déiste" so that "on est dispensé d'expliquer comment il l'est devenu."¹¹ Three major threads in Arouet's religious sensibilities at this time are clear: a reaction

9. Best. 920, 30 November 1735, Voltaire to Thieriot. Here he first expressed his interest in Jean Meslier, whose Testament he eventually edited.

10. Pomeau, Religion, p. 73.

11. Ibid., p. 21. Compare with Torrey (Deists, p. 1), "In so far as deism means the adoption of a natural religion based on the common ideas of morality and including the worship of a rather indefinite Supreme Being. . . . Voltaire was a deist, one might say, from birth." A few years later (1930 to 1938), Torrey must have abandoned idées inées, for he gave quite a good sketch of Voltaire's religious development in The Spirit of Voltaire, chapter 2.

against familial Jansenism, a facile anti-Christianity from the libertines, and a positive inclination towards a natural religion with a clement God from both the Jesuits and the libertines. Thus the Jesuits were not guilty of a miracle.

It would be beyond the scope of this study to try to explain the process by which Arouet became Voltaire;¹² we must limit ourselves to outlining his religious development and to showing how (or whether) Socinian thought influenced it. When François-Marie left college, he had¹³ had no personal contact with protestants. And probably he had read little about them; Mason conjectured that he might have read and discussed Bayle surreptitiously at college and openly at the Temple,¹⁴ but there is no direct

12. I suspect that Pomeau (Religion, pp. 34-36) and his satellite in this matter, Gay (Politics, p. 37n), are wrong in arguing that there are insufficient data for a psychoanalytic interpretation of Arouet's development. After all, Erikson's Young Man Luther, a breath-taking Freudian reading of Luther's interior growth in the light of historical and social influences, could draw upon considerably fewer established facts about Luther's childhood and schooling than we have for Voltaire. Lanson, who always deserves careful consideration, said of Voltaire's mother's death when he was only seven: "on peut raisonner des conséquences qu'eut l'absence d'une mère sur la formation morale de Voltaire." (Voltaire, p. 7.) "On peut raisonner", indeed. Torrey (Spirit, p. 22) rejects Freudian interpretation in a strange paragraph which allows that Voltaire was probably not a virgin.

13. Pomeau, Religion, p. 131.

14. Mason, Bayle and Voltaire, pp. 2-4.

proof that he read Bayle before 1723.¹⁵ Similarly, there are grounds to believe that he read clandestine manuscripts but no documentary proof. Certainly one was not ordinarily well educated in protestant thought in a Jesuit college.

Moreover, on his first trip to the Netherlands in late 1713,¹⁶ François-Marie was so thoroughly immersed in his rôle of buffoon in the glandular comedy he played with Mademoiselle Pimpette that he did not notice the religious situation in Holland.¹⁷ Any influence, then of Socinianism or of any protestantism on Arouet at this early stage was extremely indirect and diffused.

As we have tried to show, the Socinian rationalist approach to religion had some influence in the growth of universal critical spirit that characterized the Enlightenment and which was the spirit of the future Voltaire.

15. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 34 and 92-93.

16. Best. 7-23.

17. Bengensco ("Hollande", p. 797) said of this visit, "Quelque rapide qu'ait été ce premier contact de Voltaire avec la Hollande . . . il est impossible que son esprit curieux et observateur n'ait pas été vivement impressionné par l'aspect, la physionomie, les mœurs de cette terre 'de liberté, d'égalité de propriété'. . . . La tolérance l'humanité! C'est en Hollande que tout jeune encore, Voltaire en eut la fugitive, mais très précise intuition." Well said, but where is the evidence?

Incidentally, "Mademoiselle Pimpette" was really Madame Winterfeldt and had had a daughter in 1710. (Val-khoff and Fransen, "Hollande", II, 1071 n.)

Like all historical phenomena, this general spirit was overdetermined: fathered by Cartesian doubt, Locke's philosophy, Bayle's skepticism, Spinoza's thought, scientific advance,¹⁸ increased international contacts, etc. I do not know how to determine with any precision the relative weights of these general forces in forming young Arouet's ideas.

Even though the Pimpette affair best typified this period of adolescent dissipation, Arouet was already concerned with religious questions. He had begun work in 1713 on his play OEdipe,¹⁹ where he exorcized the terrible heavenly father, and in 1716 his epic the Ligue,²⁰ where he pled for religious tolerance in France. One of his earliest published works, the ode Le Vrai Dieu (1715), took the atonement as its theme. In light of its ironic conclusion,

Grand Dieu! grâce aux fureurs humaines,
L'univers a changé de sort.

.....
L'homme est heureux d'être perfide,
Et, coupables d'un déicide,
Tu nous fais devinir des dieux, (21)

18. Descartes, Locke, Bayle, and Spinoza, that is, as they were taken by the early eighteenth-century men of letters.

19. Perhaps his terrible earthly father, too.

20. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 82-83; Henriade, O.R. Taylor, pp. 18-21. Pomeau cites 1715.

21. M. VIII, 417.

Le Vrai Dieu deserves Pomeau's description as "le premier²² texte déiste de Voltaire."

When we recall the importance of biblical studies to the Socinians and their reverent, though rational treatment of the scriptures, it is clear that the irony of Le Vrai Dieu was enough to set Arouet far from the Socinian camp. However, the theological content of the poem, against the usual doctrine of Christ's atonement and deity, was most Socinian. Stronger yet in anti-biblical tone was his short poem "La Bastille" (1717) where he whimsically compared the descent of the police on himself during pentecost in 1717 to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in the New Testament.²³ Strongest in this period was his "Epître à Madame de G . . ." (1716), where he denounced "la chimérique²⁴ histoire, / Et les songes sacrés de ces mystiques fous" of the Bible. Arouet denounced them, of course, because Madame de G . . . had broken off their affair as the result of religious advice. He countered the chimerical laws of

22. Pomeau, Religion, p. 78.

23. M. IX, 353. In a letter to Thieriot on 2 June 1721, Voltaire rather off-handedly cast doubt on the historicity of the Old Testament. "Avez vous toujours mon cher ami la bonté de me faire en ma faveur ce qu'Esdras fit pour l'écriture sainte, c'est-à-dire d'écrire de mémoire mes pauvres ouvrages." (Best. 91.) These examples were suggested by Pomeau, (Religion, p. 82).

24. M. X, 231 f; also suggested by Pomeau (Religion, p. 82).

scripture with "la loi de la nature . . . : Elle parle plus haut que la voix de vos prêtres, / Pour vous, . . . l'amour et pour moi."²⁵ Apparently, Arouet never had much respect for the Bible. In this aspect of his religious thought, Chaulieu, the libertines, and the Temple were dominant; perhaps François-Marie never forgot the Moïsade.

B. Literary Success: When Arouet was arrested and sent to the Bastille (16-17 May 1717), the Comédie Française was ready to play OEdipe. They prudently decided to withhold the play until its author was rehabilitated, so OEdipe was not produced until 18 November 1718.²⁶ It had an unparalleled success with the public and immediately established Voltaire (he had taken his new name as early as 12 June 1718²⁷) as a leading man of letters in France.

OEdipe has some memorable lines where Voltaire railed against the idea of vengeful, persecuting deity. In the first scene, the general effects of such gods are described as "Funeste à l'innocent sans punir le coupable."²⁸

25. M. X, 231 f; also suggested by Pomeau (Religion, p. 82).

26. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 137-138 and 141. He was released from the Bastille on 11 April 1718 (Best., 57) but was not given complete freedom of movement until 12 October of the same year (Best., 67).

27. Best., 62. 28. M. II, 62.

OEdipe's last speech (Act V, scene IV) indicts the gods in his specific case:

Le voilà donc rempli cet oracle exécration
 Dont ma crainte a pressé l'effet enévitable!
 Et je me vois enfin, par un mélange affreux,
 Inceste et parricide, et pourtant vertueux.

 Un dieu plus fort que toi /la vertu/ m'entraî-
 nait vers le crime;
 Sous mes pas fugitifs il creusait un abîme;
 Et j'étais, malgré moi, dans mon aveuglement,
 D'un pouvoir inconnu l'esclave et l'instrument.
 Voilà tous mes forfaits; je n'en connais point
 d'autres.
 Impitoyables dieux, mes crimes sont les vôtres,
 Et vous m'en punissez! (29)

Jocaste's final four lines, the last lines of the play, complete the case against the cruel god:

Prêtres, et vous Thébains, qui fûtes mes sujets,
 Honorez mon bûcher, et songer à jamais
 Qu'au milieu des horreurs du destin qui m'opprime,
 J'ai fait rougir les dieux qui m'ont forcée au
 crime. (30)

Of course, as Pomeau pointed out,³¹ what the gods did to their innocent pawns, OEdipe and Jocaste, was exactly what God in the Jansenist (or Calvinist) theological scheme did to his subjects. Now, although Arouet de Voltaire was almost certainly unaware of it at this time, Socinian theologians objected to the concept of a vengeful God who predestined some men to sin, then punished them

29. M. II, 107-108. 30. M. II, 111.

31. Pomeau, Religion, p. 85. Ridgway, Propagande, pp. 61-65, agrees with Pomeau's analysis. For his contemporaries' reaction, see: Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 143-144; and Pomeau, Religion, pp. 85-89.

eternally for this sin, which, indeed, they could not have avoided. Redemption, for the Socinians, came by following the moral example of the man Jesus and through the mercy of a clement God. All the passages from OEdipe quoted above showed Voltaire's major objection to the cruel god was that his arbitrary punishments took no account of the individual's virtues. Thus, here, Voltaire's thought and Socinian theology were in harmony.

In addition to the assault on the terrible god, OEdipe also had some audacious insults to superstitious priestcraft. The two best-known couplets of the play speak for themselves:

Nous nous fions qu'à nous: voyons tout par nos
yeux:
Ce sont là nos trépieds, nos oracles, nos dieux.
.....
Nos prêtres ne sont pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense,
Notre crédulité fait tout leur science. (32)

Further, there was an impassioned denunciation of religiously inspired civil disorder:

Fortement appuyé sur des oracle vains,
Un pontife est souvent terrible aux souverains;
Et, dans son zèle aveugle, un peuple opioniâtre,
De ses liens sacrés imbécile idolâtre,
Foulant par piété les plus saintes des lois,

32, M. II, 80; 93. I felt constrained to quote the latter couplet to fulfill Ballantyne's oracle: "Every one who has his word to say on this matter puts his finger on two lines in Voltaire's earliest play." (Visit, p. 326.)

Crois honorer les dieux en trahissent ses rois;
Surtout quand l'intérêt, père de la licence,
Vient de leur zèle impie enhardir l'insolence.
(33)

This last theme, the hatred of religious bloodshed, returned again and again in the works of the author of OEdipe and inspired many of his most moving passages. Voltaire argued his case on the grounds that the civil power should be supreme. Socinians rejected all violence on the grounds that it violated Christian teachings. However, the end result of Socinian and Voltarian theory was the same: the church could not rightfully meddle in the political sphere; and there could be no religious justification for bloodshed or revolt. Again, it was extremely unlikely that Voltaire knew Socinian theory at this time. Both the doctrine of the clement God and the rejection of religious fanaticism were also Chaulieu's;³⁴ Voltaire probably took them from the Temple or from libertine manuscripts.

Voltaire's epic poem, the Ligue, elevated Voltaire to the position of the number-one writer in France. Although completed in 1721 as a work with nine chants, the Ligue was only published in 1723--and then clandestinely.³⁵

33. M. II, 89-90.

34. Ascoli, "Voltaire", II, pp. 21-22.

35. Henriade, G.R. Taylor, pp. 37, 43, and 48;
Best., 94.

Its overwhelming popularity led to some sixty editions in Voltaire's lifetime;³⁶ the author, as was his custom, continually reworked it. The greatest change came in the 1728 London editions, where the Ligue was increased to ten chants, added some 1100 lines, and took on its final name, the Henriade.³⁷ It may have been for the first rewriting of the epic that Voltaire asked Thieriot to send him Jurieu's Histoire du Calvinisme . . . in September, 1724;³⁸ this request was one of the first references to Voltaire's sources of information about the Protestants.

One chant, the second, invoked the horrors of the St. Bartholomew's Night massacre. Voltaire wrote this section in a state of agitation, while he was in the Bastille in 1717. In fact, Voltaire always reacted physically on the twenty-fourth of August, the anniversary of the massacre. His hatred of intolerance reached what may be called a mystical level.³⁹ Whatever the source, the second chant of the Ligue was inspired; this chant was the most

36. Henriade, O.R. Taylor, tome i, chapitre vi.

37. Ibid., pp. 51, 60, and 244. Voltaire completed the first version of the Henriade in July, 1725 (Best., 232, 234, and 235); he was, however, unable to print it until he went to England.

38. Best., 201.

39. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 107-109.

poetically moving and was the only chant that was not re-
 40
 vised significantly in later editions.

These lines show Voltaire's dead-earnest hatred of
 superstitious priests and religious crimes:

Je ne vous peindrai point le tumulte et les cris,
 Le sang de tous côtés ruisselant dans Paris,
 Le fils assassiné sur le corps de son père,
 Le frère avec la soeur, la fille avec la mère,
 Les époux expirans sous leurs toits embrasés,
 Les enfans au berceau sur la pierre écrasés:
 Des fureurs des humains c'est ce qu'on doit at-
 tendre.
 Mais ce que l'avenir aura peine à comprendre,
 Ce que vous-même encor à peine vous croirez,
 Ces monstres furieux de carnage altérés,
 Excités par la voix des prêtres sanguinaires,
 Invoquaient le Seigneur en égorgeant leurs frères;
 Et le bras tout souillé du sang des innocens,
 Osaient offrir à Dieu cet exécrable encens. (41)

Voltaire offered a trinitarian formulation for God
 in the Ligue, which remained in all the subsequent editions.

 40. Ibid., p. 108. Henriade, O.R. Taylor, p. 51.
 Not everyone agrees that even Chant II is good verse. G.
 Ascoli analyzed lines 173-190 (O.R. Taylor edition) of this
 chant and concluded: "On ne saurait trop insister sur la
 pauvreté de l'invention verbale dans un passage comme celui-
 ci." ("Voltaire", VI, 423.) I was moved by my first read-
 ing of the second chant; in fact, I, thinking it was good
 verse, copied out part of the above mentioned passage all
 of which Ascoli has shown to be palely derivative in image-
 ry and rhyme from earlier poets. (Ibid., VI, 422-424.)
 Ignorance is bliss. Nonetheless, I still am moved by the
 second chant. Invincible ignorance is truest bliss.

41. Henriade, O.R. Taylor, II, 259-272. All cita-
 tions of the Ligue and the Henriade are from O.R. Taylor's
 critical edition. One can determine in which eighteenth-
 century edition a line appeared from Taylor's critical ap-
 paratus. The Roman numerals refer to the chant and the Ar-
 abic numerals to the verse.

La puissance, l'amour, avec l'intelligence,
Unis et divisés composent son essence. (42)

Of course, Voltaire did not personally accept the received doctrine of the trinity,⁴³ but such an inclusion was cheap theological insurance. Note, however, that his expression of the doctrine involved theological abstractions rather than biblical "persons".⁴⁴ There was nothing particularly suspect about such an impersonal discussion of dogma, but a later critic (1731) found several Athanasian nits to pick from this couplet:

on cite une définition de la trinité, et cette définition est très mauvaise: . . . [he then quoted X, 425-426]. Car il faut dire que les trois personnes adorables de la sainte trinité sont, non pas unies, mais une seule substance, un seul dieu, quoiqu'elles soient, non pas divisées, mais distinguées. On ne sert des termes unis et divisés qu'à l'égard des substances différentes. Ces termes sont donc impropres à l'égard de la trinité, et plus propres à altérer le dogme qu'à l'établir et l'enseigner. (45)

With so many theological fanatics active, it was clear that no matter what Voltaire wrote about religion someone would attack him.

42. Ibid., X, 425-426.

43. See below, pp. 127-129, the discussion of the Epître à Uranie.

44. See Ascoli, "Voltaire", II, 21.

45. Best., 397, May, 1731, ? to the Journal de Trévoux. See below, pp. 168-169.

C. The Netherlands, 1722: From July through October, 1722,⁴⁶ Voltaire travelled in the Netherlands with a young widow, "Une Beauté qu'on nomme Rupelmonde."⁴⁷ As in his earlier visit to the Lowlands, Voltaire was again busy with affairs of the heart. This time, however, he was not overcome by a frenzy of unrequited passion. Older and less impetuous than in 1714, he seemed to have divided his time roughly evenly between lubricity and literary work. "J'y passe ma vie entre le travail et le plaisir et je vis ainsi à la hollandoise et à la françoise."⁴⁸ Typically, in the first half of his letter to Thieriot in mid-September, 1722, Voltaire celebrated his visit to "le plus beau bordel de la ville" with some licentious verse while the second half gave detailed instructions (which were not followed) for the illustrations to the Ligue.⁴⁹

From this voyage came the "lettre hollandaise"⁵⁰ where we find Voltaire's first use of the word "socinien":

46. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 223-244. Best., 112-130.

47. Best., 114, Voltaire to Cardinal Guillaume Dubois, ? July 1722.

48. Best., 126. His life in this period is not known in detail. See note 50 below for Best., 126.

49. Best., 119 and 119, note 6.

50. Lanson, Voltaire, p. 35. Best., 126, Voltaire to the marquise de Bernières, 7 October 1722.

"Nous avons ici un opéra détestable mais en revanche je voi des ministres calvinistes, des arminiens, des sociniens, des rabbins, des anabaptistes qui parlent tous à merveille et qui en vérité ont tous raison." This short letter, with its moral that religious toleration leads to prosperity, with its light-hearted treatment of theology, indeed had "l'accent des Lettres anglaises."⁵¹ And certainly it reflected Voltaire's first significant personal contact with protestants.

However, Voltaire's reference to Socinians cannot be taken literally; there were never any Socinian congregations in Holland,⁵² and in 1722 there were not even any Socinian spokesman active there.⁵³ Had he not included both Arminians and Anabaptists in the list of sects, we might easily conclude that Voltaire had confused the liberal Remonstrants and Mennonites with Socinians or that,

51. Lanson, Voltaire, p. 35. 52. Above, p. 54.

53. Wilbur, Unitarianism, I, Chapter 44. Samuel Crellius, the last Polish Socinian in the Netherlands arrived there from England around 1727. Before going to England in 1725, Crellius had been the minister of the Königswalde (Germany) refugee church for nearly forty years. (Ibid., I, 497-499, 575-577.) He was born in the year of exile, 1660; from the time of the death of the first-generation Brethren exiles--around 1680-1700--to Crellius's settling in the Netherlands around 1727, there were no full Socinians in the country. And after he died in 1747, there were again no Socinians in Holland.

perhaps, he took the Collegiants for Socinians.⁵⁴ In view of the ironic conclusion that all the marvelous, contradictory preachers were right, perhaps we should not take the careful differentiation of the list so seriously. To make his points about toleration and the futility of dogma, Voltaire may well have assembled the most fearful series of heresies imaginable to a French Catholic. That "Socinian" was most often used as a frightful word supports this conjecture. Could the term have been suggested by Bayle's Dictionnaire, which we know from a note in the Ligue he had read by this time?⁵⁵

Might not, though "Socinian" in this letter refer to Jean Le Clerc, who was still most active in Amsterdam? After all, it would have been natural for Voltaire and Le Clerc to seek one another out as men of letters, and Le Clerc was popularly thought to be a Socinian.⁵⁶ Desnoires-terres reported J.B. Rousseau's accusation that Voltaire

54. Ibid., I, Chapter 43. The Collegiants were a lay-led movement that drew its membership chiefly from the Remonstrants and Mennonites. They met for free discussions and had no dogma prescribed; here the Polish Brethren found the most congenial surroundings. When Spinoza was expelled from the synagogue, he was welcomed into the fellowship of the Collegiants, which illustrates their liberal spirit. (Ibid., I, pp. 566-567.)

55. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 34 and 92-93.

56. Above, pp. 101-108.

attempted to start a quarrel between Le Clerc and Basnage (the third most important journalist, after Bayle and Le Clerc, in the Netherlands). Since it was during this trip that Voltaire and J.B. Rousseau began their life-long enmity and since there was no other evidence for this incident, it was most likely apocryphal.⁵⁷ Annie Barnes did not mention that Le Clerc and Voltaire ever met in her biographical study of Le Clerc, and I have not found such a claim in Voltaire's writings. So Voltaire very likely saw no "Socinians" in Holland, and the "Socinians" of the "lettre hollandaise" were fictional.

Madame de Rupelmonde, puzzled about what to believe, asked Voltaire for advice. His answer, l'Epître à Julie,⁵⁸ which was written around the time of their visit to Holland, was a brilliant summary of his religious position. He rejected the "mensonges sacrés" of scripture, the tyrannical god, original sin, and the divinity of Jesus while affirming natural religion, the beneficent god, and the primacy of morality over ritual. In short, l'Epître à Julie tied together the themes of OEdipe, la Ligue, and the early heterodox short poems, and it marked the turning from the hatred of the tyrant-god to the love of the good-god:

57. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 231-244.

58. M. IX, 357-362. It was later called l'Epître à Uranie and the Pour et le contre.

L'insensé te blasphème, et moi, je te révère;
 Je ne suis pas chrétien; mais c'est pour t'aimer
 mieux. (59)

The "te", of course, referred to Dieu. Pomeau, correctly, I think, emphasized the sincerity of this adoration of the just God.⁶⁰ Wade noted that while the "contre" of the Pour et le contre, directed against revealed religion, predominated,⁶¹ Voltaire did not intend to discredit it completely. This good-natured poem is "pour" in spirit, more "pour" than Voltaire's previous works.

L'Epître à Uranie was so much in the spirit of the Temple that, when it circulated widely in manuscript some ten years later, the police readily accepted Voltaire's attribution of it to Chaulieu, who had died in 1720.⁶² Indeed, as I.O. Wade has shown, not only was the spirit of the poem like that of Chaulieu, Voltaire also borrowed "the form, content, and expression" of Chaulieu's Les trois façons de penser sur la mort.⁶³ There were no radically new ideas in l'Epître à Uranie; they could all be found in any number of those clandestine libertine manuscripts that were so plentiful in the Régency. What Voltaire did in this philosophical not to his attractive travelling

59. M. IX, 361.

60. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 109-112.

61. Wade, "Uranie", p. 1096.

62. Conlon, Literary Career, pp. 36-37; (cont.)

companion was to summarize his own thoughts but also to express "in compact form and good verses"⁶⁴ the thought of the libertine movement.

Pomeau has printed the first version of a short poem "A Louis Racine", which dates from late 1721.⁶⁵ This verse also rejected the Jansenist, vengeful God, "ton Dieu n'est pas le mien./ Tu m'en fais un Tyran, je veux qu'il soit mon père" (Pomeau's edition).

In assessing Voltaire's religious position in his early works, one should perhaps give greatest weight to the Epître à Uranie and the "lettre hollandaise." Both were personal works, not intended for publication, so Voltaire was free to express his true opinions spontaneously--without fear of the censor. OEdipe must be approached carefully for two contradictory reasons. First, there was the danger of poetic and dramatic exaggeration;⁶⁶ and, second, was that Voltaire had to be careful not to offend the authorities if the play were to be performed and published.

(cont.) Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, I, 231.

63. Wade, "Uranie", pp. 1079-1081.

64. Ibid., p. 1085. Wade (ibid., pp. 1082-1083 and Clandestine, p. 163) shows particular influence from the clandestine manuscript, l'Examen de la religion on the Epître.

65. Pomeau, Religion, p. 99; see M. X, 479 for a slightly revised version.

66. Ballantyne, Visit, p. 326.

Similarly, the Ligue was written with the author keeping one eye on the Court in the vain hope of royal patronage.⁶⁷

D. The Road to England (1722-1726): On leaving the Lowlands, Voltaire went to la Source to visit "milord Bollimbrock",⁶⁸ then a political exile from England. His short visit, around 3 December 1722,⁶⁹ was long enough for Voltaire and Bolingbroke to form very high opinions of one another. Voltaire, on the fourth of December, wrote to Thieriot: "J'ai trouvé dans cet illustre anglois, tout l'érudition de son pays, et toute la politesse du nôtre."⁷⁰

The same day Bolingbroke wrote to a friend about Voltaire and his poem, the Ligue: "J'ay été charmé et de lui et de son ouvrage. . . . je ne me suis pas attendu à trouver l'auteur si sage, ni le poème si bien conduit."⁷¹

Their mutual esteem apparently continued for some time. A year and a half after their first meeting, Bolingbroke wrote Voltaire a lengthy philosophical letter where he most highly praised the fecundity of Voltaire's poetic imagination and where he diplomatically suggested that Voltaire cultivate his powers of judgement as well. How? Any

67. Ascoli, "Voltaire", II, pp. 16-17.

68. Best., 132, c. 1 December 1722, to Thieriot.

69. Best., 133, notes. 70. Ibid., text.

71. Ibid., commentary.

to follow nationalistic prejudices: Englishmen claimed Voltaire was a bubble-headed poet when he came to England and a philosopher when he left; Frenchmen countered that he was already a philosopher in the French-skeptical mode before he went to England and was not significantly molded by English thought. The argument came to focus more-or-less on the weight of Bolingbroke's influence on Voltaire and over the years lost most of its chauvinistic overtones.

In 1930, Norman L. Torrey published his Voltaire and the English Deists, the sixth chapter of which reported the results of a very careful, thorough reading of those Voltarian passages that Voltaire himself attributed to Bolingbroke. Torrey discovered that all such attributions were false. From this he made the plausible conclusion that: "Critics have spoken so long of Bolingbroke as master and of Voltaire as pupil that a tradition has been established, for which there seems to be little foundation in fact."⁷⁴ So the argument seemed to close in favour of Voltaire's independence from English thought, but we have already seen from Bolingbroke's letter to Voltaire (Best.,⁷⁵ 185) that Voltaire was indeed Bolingbroke's pupil.

74. Torrey, Deists, p. 135.

75. Best., 185 was not widely known until 1953 when published in Besterman's edition of Voltaire's letters.

vérités; et, ce qui rend l'ouvrage parfait, toutes ces vérités sont claires. (78)

Finally, Voltaire's "Discours sur la tragédie: à mylord Bolingbroke" attached to the play Brutus (1730) acknowledged his intellectual debt to Bolingbroke:

Souffrez donc que je vous présente Brutus, . . . à vous qui m'apprendiez du moins à rendre à ma langue cette force et cette énergie qu'inspire la noble liberté de penser: car les sentiments vigoureux de l'âme passent toujours dans le langage, et qui pense fortement parle de même. (79)

Bolingbroke's influence on Voltaire cannot be denied.

Something happened to cool the enthusiasm Bolingbroke had for Voltaire before Voltaire went to England. In December, 1725, Bolingbroke refused the dedication of the Henriade⁸⁰ and wrote to a mutual friend that he thought Voltaire tried to take him "pour dupe avec un peu de verbiage."⁸¹ What it was that put Bolingbroke off is unknown; the relevant correspondence has been lost. Voltaire, for his part, avoided excessive reliance on the Bolingbrokes after he arrived in England. "J have often seen mylord and mylady Bolinbroke. J have found their affection still the same, even increased in proportion to my unhappiness. They

(cont.) Racine or Pierre Corneille. Of course, Voltaire did not think Chaulieu was a greater writer than these two.

78. M. XIV, 562-563, from the chapter, "Des beaux-arts en Europe" which dated from 1756.

79. M. II, 311. 80. Best., 249.

81. Best., 250, commentary.

offered me all, their money, their house; but j refused all, because they are lords, and j have accepted all from mr Faulkneare, because he is a single gentleman."⁸² Perhaps Bolingbroke's greatest influence on Voltaire was in starting him on the study of English philosophy in 1724.

Ballantyne, on the other hand, discounted the misunderstanding of 1725: "Whatever this little misunderstanding may have been, it was a mere trifle, which in no way interfered with the friendship between the two."⁸³ And it must be admitted that Voltaire did see a lot of Bolingbroke for a while in England and that Bolingbroke introduced him into English society; however, after 1725, we do not find their early enthusiasm and warmth in their opinions of one another. In fact, long before Voltaire returned to France, all mention of him disappeared from Bolingbroke's correspondence; and when Bolingbroke was exiled into France for the second time, he did not see Voltaire.⁸⁴ But if Bolingbroke did no more than teach Voltaire to appreciate Locke, then his effect on Voltaire's thought was far from negligible.

82. Best. 294, 26 October 1726, to Thieriot. Note Voltaire's command of English.

83. Ballantyne, Visit, p. 28.

84. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 126-127.

85

La Fête de Bélébat (1725) was an offering of Voltaire's irreverent spirit. Voltaire and some of his friends in the nobility honoured the half-mad, half-drunk curé de Courdimanche with a mock-Christian, mock-Pagan ceremony. The curé, who fancied himself a poet and who was a Rabelasian drinker and wencher, "reçut tous ces éloges avec l'air d'un homme qui sait bien qu'il en mérite encore davantage."⁸⁶

First they praised his pastoral qualities:

Vous viviez en châtre; c'est un bonheur extrême:
Mais ce n'est pas assez, curé; Dieu veut qu'on
aime.

.
Combien de muids de vin vous vidiez dans un an;
Si Brunelle avec vous a dormi bien souvent. (87)

Then, after the curé extemporaneously confessed his sins--the text did not record them, but they must have been many and bizarre--he appointed his successor:

A Courdimanche avec honneur,
J'ai fait mon devoir de pasteur;
J'ai su boire, chanter, et plaire,
Toutes mes brebis contenter:
Mon successeur sera Voltaire,
Pour mieux me faire regretter. (88)

Voltaire, pasteur! Even in such a burlesque, the

85. M. II, 277-298. 86. M. II, 282.

87. M. II, 287. 88. M. II, 290.

idea feels strange, but Voltaire proved a hard-working pastor--in the tradition of Courdimanche. Two of his parishioners, young girls, sang his praise:

Que nos prairies
Seront fleuries!
Les jeux, l'amour,
Suivent Voltaire en ce jour;
Déjà nos mères
Sont moins sévères;
On dit qu'on peut faire
Un mari cocu.
Heureuse terre!
C'est à Voltaire
Que tout est dû. (89)

The farce ended with a hymn to fleshy delights after Voltaire had addressed a libertine homily to each of the important participants. Reading the sombre Locke patently had not dimmed Voltaire's wit nor had given him any respect for religious practices.

The "Avertissement des éditeurs de l'édition de Kehl" (1785-1789) said of La Fête de Bélébat, "Le ton qui règne dans cette fête, où se trouvaient un grand nombre de jeunes femmes, et dans la description adressée à une princesse jeune et qui n'était point mariée, est un reste de la liberté des mœurs de la Régence."⁹⁰ The judgement was

89. M. II, 292.

90. M. II, 279. Desnoiresterres (Voltaire, I, 341) commented about this "masquerade": "Ces plaisanteries-là . . . n'ont d'autre mérite que de donner une idée des mœurs du temps et la tournure d'esprit de la bonne société de la Régence dont on sortait à peine." Pomeau (Religion) did not mention La Fête de Bélébat at all. (cont.)

true enough, but today it is difficult to appreciate the shock that the editor felt because sexual allusions were made before young women, worse, young, unmarried women. What is still shocking today, it seems to me, is that France's leading poet led the public ridicule of a good-natured, alcoholic priest.⁹¹

Of course, a society that could applaud a poet when he humiliated a crazy curé could also applaud when the poet was beaten by the paid thugs of a nobleman, which was precisely Voltaire's lot early in 1726.⁹² The Chevalier Guy-Auguste de Rohan-Chabot offered Voltaire a crude insult at the opera; two days later Voltaire returned a brilliant one at the theatre. Some days thereafter Rohan had Voltaire beaten. Most of Voltaire's noble "friends" thought the incident funny and appropriate discipline for a commoner and refused to help in any way. Even the Sullys, from whose dinner table Voltaire had been summoned to be

(cont.) I feel it was the purest illustration of the negative component of Voltaire's attitude towards religion.

91. As Ascoli noted ("Voltaire", III, 129), this "morceau . . . témoigne que Voltaire ne pratique peut-être pas scrupuleusement lui-même la vertu qu'il vante."

92. Around 1 February 1726 (Best., 252). As the Rohan incident is well known and so well chronicled, I will only outline it. Foulet, *Correspondance*, Appendice I, is one of the best accounts. Best., 252-285 make up the relevant correspondence.

caned, dropped him completely. Nonetheless, Voltaire demanded justice--he may have tried to challenge Rohan to a duel. Since justice from a nobleman to a commoner was impossible, and since Voltaire refused to let the case die, the authorities sent him to the Bastille on 17 April 1726.

In prison or not, Voltaire was still adamant; he began a letter to the secrétaire d'état:

Je remontre très humblement que j'ai été assassiné, par le brave Chevalier de Rohan assisté de six coupe-jarets derrière les quels il étoit hardiment posté.

J'ai toujours cherché depuis ce temps là, à réparer non mon honneur, mais le sien, ce qui étoit trop difficile. (93)

The same letter contained his request that he be released in order to go to England, which request was implemented on the second or third day of May, 1726.⁹⁴ Although Voltaire's situation was desperate, his decision to go to England was not born of desperation. In October of the preceding year, when he still was society's pet, Voltaire had written King George I of England for royal patronage to publish the expanded version of the Ligue and had indicated his desire to go to London.⁹⁵ His imprisonment "merely" encouraged him to follow through on his earlier plans.

Exactly when Voltaire arrived in England we do not know. However, on the fifth of May, 1726, still fuming

93. Best., 263, c. 20 April 1726.

94. Best., 279 f. 95. Best., 242, 6 October 1725.

from the injustice done him, he wrote from Calais to René Hérault, the lieutenant of the French police. "J'ai la permission et non pas l'ordre, d'en sortir, et j'ose vous dire qu'il ne seroit point de l'équité du roy de bannir un homme de sa patrie, pour avoir été assassiné."⁹⁶ So he left France, on his own request, furious with the authorities over his maltreatment, furious with French society over his humiliation.⁹⁷

E. Summary: The year of the Rohan incident, 1726,⁹⁸ marked a turning point in Voltaire's thought and spirit. Not that, as we have seen, this event and his subsequent experience of England created Voltaire, the philosophe, ex nihilo; rather, as Lanson said, "L'Angleterre a mûri, armé, excité Voltaire: elle ne l'a pas fait."⁹⁹ Yet, up to this point, Voltaire's work only reflected the almost commonplace ideas of his educated French libertine contemporaries;¹⁰⁰ and its tone was--with the important exceptions

96. Best., 283. He must have left for England within a week of the writing of this letter. See Best., 282, commentary. See also Foulet, Correspondance, p. 28.

97. Foulet (Correspondance, pp. 212-219) documented the magnificent thoroughness of Voltaire's humiliation. Not only did high society prick at his pride with barbed epigrams, but the middle-class journals also publicized his disgrace; worst of all, Voltaire became the butt of several street songs and soldiers' ballads. See also, Lantoiné, Lettres philosophiques, chapter 1.

98. Lanson, Voltaire, p. 24, for example, (cont.)

of the Ligue, OEdipe, and perhaps l'Epître à Uranie--libertine and light. The fierce seriousness of his letters to the police was unprecedented and unexpected.¹⁰¹ Who would have guessed the author of La Fête de Bélébat was a man of tenacious integrity?

It should be noted that Voltaire was not a philosophical radical of the "far left". He rejected out of hand those little circles of atheists who centered on some Parisian cafés.¹⁰² Nonetheless, in the eyes of some dévots, Voltaire was a dangerous beast, a blasphemer. One of them, wrote, anonymously, to Hérault a few days after Voltaire's imprisonment; he made the ridiculous charge that Voltaire secretly preached deism to schoolboys some fifteen years earlier. Voltaire would have been only fourteen then. But the anonymous Christian did have the charity to add:

(cont.) said, "Cette date de 1726 est décisive dans la vie de Voltaire."

99. Ibid., p. 36. Ascoli ("Voltaire", III, 144) similarly said that Voltaire would leave England, "mûri et vieilli" but retaining "ses convictions de jeunesse".

100. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 112-113.

101. The letters quoted above, Best., 263, 283. Besterman, in the introduction to the second volume of the correspondence, noted that: "Voltaire's reaction was dignified, even stern, and from this moment a new note of seriousness enters his letters, never to leave them, and often to be accompanied by a philosophic melancholy." (Best., II, xix.)

102. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 113-114. Wade, (cont.)

je voudrais être homme d'autorité pour un jour seulement . . . afin d'enferme ce poète entre quatre murailles pour toute sa vie; il ne m'a pourtant jamais fait ni bien ni mal, n'en ayant jamais été connu; mais tout homme qui se déclare ennemi de Jésus Christ, notre divin maître et bon sauveur, est un impie que nous devons poursuivre à cor et à cris. (103)

As to Socinians, we can say with some assurance that Voltaire had met none when he left for England. From the "lettre hollandaise", we know he knew something about Socinianism, but how much and from where has not been determined. One likely source of information would have been Bayle's Dictionnaire. Finally, his spirit of bawdy irreverence, so marked in La Fête de Bélébat, and his constant denigration of scripture indicated an enormous gulf between Socinian thought and his, even though some of his theological opinions were similar to Socinian doctrines.

(cont.) Clandestine, pp. 5-7, documents the activities of these atheists.

VI

VOLTAIRE IN ENGLAND

A. The Visit: Voltaire, in his letter of 26 October 1726 to Thieriot,¹ sketched his activities of the first months of his stay in England. We need only comment upon it: "let me acquaint you with an account of my for ever cursed fortune. J came again into England in the latter end of July very much dissatisfied with my secret voiage into France both unsucessfull and expensive." The "secret voiage" was in part an attempt to seek out Rohan-Chabot; luckily for Voltaire's future, he failed to avenge himself.²

Voltaire, of course, lost his royal pension when he left France, and he intended to rely on his own moderate savings for which he had a letter of credit. However, as he continued to Thieriot: "At my coming to London i found my damned Jew was broken. J was without a penny, sick to death of a violent agüe, a stranger, alone, helpless. . . .

1. Best., 294. See also Best., 293, of the same date, to Mlle. Bessieres, which is similar in tone and content to the letter to Thieriot. Foulet's commentary on these letters is enlightening (Correspondance, letters 28 and 29).

2. Best., 291 (Foulet 26) also mentions this trip into France.

J had never undergone such distress; but j am born to run through all the misfortunes of life." Voltaire's major objective in making this voyage may have been to try to put his financial house in order.³ Not only did he fail to raise any money, but he also discovered that in the few months he had been gone nearly all his powerful patrons had lost favour.⁴

Certainly, these blows were easily enough to justify his distress and depression, but in this same period he also learned of the death of his sister, Mme. Marie-Marguerite Mignot, the only member of his immediate family he ever loved. "J have wept for her death, and j would be with her. Life is but a dream full of starts of folly, and of fancied, and true miseries. Death awakes us from this painful dream, and gives us, either a better existence or no existence at all."

How did Voltaire cope with all these misfortunes?

On 12 August 1726, he wrote Thieriot that:

Je n'ay plus que deux choses à faire dans ma vie, l'une de la hasarder avec honneur dès que je le pourai, et l'autre de la finir dans l'obscurité d'une retraite qui convient à ma façon de penser, à mes malheurs, et à la connoissance que j'ai des hommes. (2)

During this healing, "plus profonde retraite",² which was

3. Foulet, *Correspondance*, pp. 47, n. 1 and 55, n. 1.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 47, n. 1.

marked by a silence in his correspondence from 12 August to the letters of 26 October 1726,¹ Voltaire made enormous steps towards mastering the English language. The excellent English of the letter to Thieriot, marking the end of the retreat, displayed Voltaire's remarkable linguistic gift. Further, this letter showed that he was drawing out of his depression. He mentioned the possibility of having "Poor Henry", that is, the Henriade, printed by subscription, and he wrote of his intention to establish himself in London. A day later, he repeated his resolve to repair to London "chez mylord Bolingbrooke" in a letter to the marquise de Bernières; his tone was still most melancholy, but at least he wrote as though he expected to survive.⁵

By 2 February 1727, that date of Voltaire's next extant message to a friend,⁶ he was in much better spirit. Swift's Gulliver's Travels and new verses for the Henriade dominated the letter, though he also asked Thieriot to try to help him out of his financial plight. Clearly Voltaire's passion for belles lettres was taking over his life again. Indeed, the remainder of his English visit was filled with conferences with leading literary and philosophical Englishmen, and, of course, with his own prodigious

5. Best., 295. 6. Best., 300, to Thieriot.

labours.⁷ When Voltaire returned to France, he left behind three published works, the Henriade (1728), and two works in English, published together: An Essay upon the Civil Wars of France. Extracted from Curious Manuscripts. And also upon the Epick Poetry of the European Nations from Homer down to Milton. The latter two first appeared late in 1727, another witness to Voltaire's rapid progress in English, and were reprinted twice in 1728.⁸ In addition, he brought home some notebooks⁹ full of English extracts and anecdotes, many of which later appeared in print, the manuscript of his Histoire de Charles XII (published in 1731),¹⁰ a draft for his tragedy Brutus, and at least the idea for the Lettres philosophiques.

Just as it was impossible to determine exactly when Voltaire entered England and to trace his activities there with any certainty or completeness, his departure to France was also mysterious. From November, 1728, to February, 1729, Voltaire disappeared; in the letter that marked his reappearance in France,¹¹ there was a despairing passage

7. Foulet, Correspondance, Appendice IX; and Balandynte, Visit, Chapter 5.

8. Henriade, O.R. Taylor, pp. 659-660.

9. In Besterman's edition of the Notebooks, the "Small Leningrad Notebook" (pp. 29-48) and the "Cambridge Notebook" (pp. 49-88). The former dates from 1726 (ibid., p. 1), thus represents the work of the first retreat; the latter from 1727, or perhaps 1726, and several years following (ibid., p. 3).

reminiscent of those in Best., 291, 293, and 294. Pomeau suggested that this letter and the antecedent silence indicated another depression and retreat like that of Voltaire's first summer and fall in England;¹² and it is true that Voltaire suffered periodic depressive episodes throughout his life.¹³ On the other hand, Foulet offered a detailed argument to show that Voltaire secretly re-entered France in September or October, 1728, to try to arrange the publication of some of his work, which explained his silence.¹⁴ Besterman,¹⁵ Conlon,¹⁶ and F.A. Taylor¹⁷ all agreed basically with Foulet's explanation, as do I, so that Pomeau's hypothetical second retreat of Voltaire probably did not occur.

B. Contacts with Socinians and Socinianism: Of those English Socinians that Voltaire so identified--Newton,

10. Ibid., p. 82, "Cambridge Notebook".

11. Best., 335, c. February, 1729, to Thieriot.

12. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 121-122.

13. Another fact which cries out for a psychoanalytic interpretation; see above, p. 113, n. 12.

14. Foulet, Correspondance, Appendice VII.

15. Best., 335, commentary.

16. Conlon, Literary Career, pp. 255-256.

17. Lettres philosophiques, F.A. Taylor, pp. xxiv-

18

Clarke, and Locke--he met only with Clarke. Locke had died in 1704, but Newton, who died 20 March 1727, was alive during part of Voltaire's time in England. Nonetheless, Voltaire and Newton never met although Voltaire attended Newton's funeral, where he was most favourably impressed by the honours paid to the great physicist.¹⁹ Later in the year, in the "Advertisement to the Reader" of his Essay upon Epick Poetry, he announced his intention to write an account of English life--not to be the ordinary traveller's book where the country's monuments were described: "I consider England in another View; it strikes my Eyes as it is the Land which hath produced a Newton, a Locke, a Tillotson, a Milton, a Boyle."²⁰ He then asked his readers to share with him any anecdotes they had about these men to enrich what was to be the Lettres philosophiques. No doubt he was trying to make up for his failure to see Newton alive.

There were no contemporary accounts of Voltaire's meetings with Samuel Clarke, which proves the old saw that Voltaire was far more influenced by England than England

18. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 79-80.

19. Ibid., II, 158-159 (twenty-third Lettre, "Sur la consideration qu'on doit aux gens de lettres") and ibid. II, 2 (fourteenth Lettre, "Sur Descartes et Newton").

20. Essay, in O.R. Taylor's edition of the Henriade, p. 663.

by Voltaire. Further, Voltaire did not mention seeing Clarke in his correspondence of the English period, in the Lettres philosophiques, or in the Notebooks. However, in the Eléments de la philosophie de Newton (1738), he told how Clarke's air of respect when pronouncing the name of God was so striking and reported that Clarke said he learned²¹ that from Newton. The other record of their conversations was recorded in Voltaire's Courte réponse aux longs discours d'un docteur allemand (1744). The anecdote was long but deserves to be presented in full:

Lorsque j'étais en Angleterre, je ne pus avoir la consolation de voir le grand Newton, qui touchait à sa fin. Le fameux curé de Saint-James, Samuel Clarke, l'ami, le disciple et le commentateur de Newton, daigna me donner quelques instructions sur cette partie de la philosophie qui veut s'élever au-dessus du calcul et des sens. Je ne trouvais pas, à la vérité, cette anatomie circonspecte de l'entendement humain, ce bâton d'aveugle avec lequel marchait le modeste Locke, cherchant son chemin et le trouvant; enfin cette timidité savante qui arrêtait Locke sur le bord des abîmes. Clarke sautait dans l'abîme, et j'osai l'y suivre. Un jour, plein de ces grandes recherches qui charment l'esprit par leur immensité, je dis à un membre très-éclairé de la société: "M. Clarke est un bien plus grand métaphysicien que M. Newton. -- Cela peut être, me répondit-il froidement; c'est comme si vous disiez que l'un joue mieux au ballon que l'autre." Cette réponse me fit rentrer en moi-même. J'ai depuis osé percer quelques-uns de ces ballons de la métaphysique, et j'ai vu qu'il n'en est sorti que du vent. (22)

Ballantyne placed these interviews in 1726 but did

21. M. XXII, 403. 22. M. XXIII, 194.

not say why.²³ Since Voltaire said in the passage above that he saw Clarke only after Newton's death, since he stated late in 1727 that he could hardly understand English in conversation and could not pronounce it at all,²⁴ and since 1726 was spent mainly in his secret mission in France and subsequent retreat, I doubt very much that Voltaire's lessons in metaphysics from Clarke were in 1726. But when--more precisely than after March, 1727 (Newton's death) and before Voltaire left England in the autumn of 1728--they were can not be said.

Most of Voltaire's references to Clarke after 1750 took the form of regrets that he had followed him into the murky abyss of metaphysics. In the 1730's and 1740's, Clarke's influence on Voltaire's thinking was pronounced in the latter's metaphysical works and was obvious in the frequent references to Clarke in the correspondence. The last sentence from the extract of the Courte Réponse quoted above, where Voltaire confessed that metaphysics was proving to be nothing but so much wind, marked his growing disenchantment with Clarke's thought.

23. Ballantyne, Visit, p. 109.

24. From the "Advertisement to the Reader" of his Essay on Epic Poetry, in O.R. Taylor's edition of the Henriade, p. 662. No doubt there was some false modesty here, but in 1726, his command of the spoken language was probably insufficient to carry on a metaphysical conversation with Clarke.

Another passage from the Courte Réponse made the same anti-speculative point: "Plus je vais en avant, et plus je suis confirmé dans l'idée que les systèmes de métaphysique sont pour les philosophes ce que les romans sont pour les femmes. Ils ont tous la vogue les uns après les autres, et finissent tous par être oubliés."²⁵ Even though Voltaire came to scorn Clarke's thought, he always retained his respect for the character and person of the "curé de Saint-James." Much later, in attributing his youthful affirmation of Clarke's ideas to soft-headedness, he wrote, "j'aimais sa personne, quoiqu'il fût un arien déterminé ainsi que Newton, et j'aime encore sa mémoire parce qu'il était bon homme."²⁶

The Notebooks show that Voltaire wanted to understand Newton and Locke while in England but do not prove that he read Clarke then. Locke's On the Reasonableness of Christianity rated one rather cryptic sentence in the "Small Leningrad Notebook": "Mr. Lock's reasonableness of christian religion is really a new religion."²⁷ Annotated by later reflections, such as: Christianisme raisonnable "est un

25. M. XXIII, 194.

26. M. XIX, 36. From Questions sur l'Encyclopédie, fifth part (1771), article "Eternité".

27. Notebooks, p. 45.

mauvais livre: il voulait laver la tête d'un âne",²⁸ and
 "quand le célèbre Locke, voulant ménager à la fois les im-
 postures de cette religion [le christianisme] et les droits
 de l'humanité, a écrit son livre du Christianisme raison-
nable, il n'a pas eu quatre disciples: preuve assez forte que
 le christianisme et la raison ne peuvent subsister ensem-
 ble",²⁹ it becomes clear that the "Notebook" meant no com-
 pliment to the Reasonableness of Christianity.³⁰

Why was this most Socinian of Locke's works so
 offensive to Voltaire? Here Locke showed, empirically,
 of course, that the essence of the New Testament's message
 was very simple, suitable for ignorant fishermen and pea-
 sants. To be a justified Christian, all one had to do was
 to believe Jesus was the messiah, was resurrected, was the
 Lord and Judge of all men, and was to become their King
 and Ruler.³¹ Locke also argued strongly for individual
 freedom of belief, attacked the priests, and denounced all
 those who declared their creeds to be normative for "true"
 Christianity. Voltaire, too, wanted to purify religion as

28. M. XXXII, 462. A private manuscript, no date.

29. M. XXVI, 550-551. Le Dîner du compte de Bou-
lainvilliers (1767); see also M. XX, 230.

30. However in 1767, in Lettres à S.A. Mgr. Le
Prince de ---, Voltaire mentioned this work with no rancor
 at all. M. XXVI, 483-484.

31. Locke, Reasonableness, paragraphs, 1, 247, 252,
 and passim. See above, pp. 94-97.

he showed in this entry in the "Cambridge Notebook":

Personne ne dispute sur l'essentiel, de la religion, qui est de faire du bien; on dispute sur des dogmes inintelligibles. Si la religion se contentoit de dire soyez juste, il n'y auroit pas un incrédule sur la terre. Mais les prêtres disent croiez etc. et on ne croit point. (32)

Where Voltaire differed from Locke was that the Frenchman would remove all Christian content from true religion; "le christianisme et la raison ne peuvent subsister ensemble."²⁹ Bayle, earlier also argued that the Christian faith and reason were antithetical and insisted that the Christian must abandon philosophy. But Voltaire applied the argument in precisely the opposite way; recall that as early as 1716 François-Marie Arouet rejected the Christian scriptures as "la chimérique histoire, / Et les songes sacrés de ces mystiques fous."³³ No doubt Locke's careful examination of the New Testament seemed like a fool's task to Voltaire.

To extend the metaphor of the Courte Réponse, Locke stopped at the edge of the abyss only to try to bridge it with rotten lumber from an ancient trash heap--that is, so-called revelation. And On the Reasonableness of Christianity insisted that God's special revelation was necessary

32. Notebooks, p. 52. It is interesting that Voltaire misspelled "religion" in both English and French.

33. M. X, 231 f. See above, p. 116.

for man's salvation, that the light of natural reason could not be sufficient to establish a pure natural religion.³⁴ Locke made the same point in other works, notably the Essay Concerning Human Understanding, which Voltaire admired highly. No doubt, the good philosophy in those books outweighed the bad theology in Voltaire's judgement while On the Reasonableness of Christianity was all bad theology.

Voltaire firmly believed, on the contrary, that what the priests called revelation kept man from knowing God. In the Epître à Uranie (1722), he promised:

Devant toi, d'une main hardie,
Aux superstitions j'arrache le bandeau;
Que j'expose à tes yeux le dangereux tableau
Des mensonges sacrés dont la terre est remplie.
.....

Then:

Songe que du Très-Haut la sagesse éternelle
A gravé de sa main dans le fond de ton cœur
La religion naturelle. (35)

No wonder this Voltaire, who had declared himself no Christian so he could better love God, did not find Locke's Christian apologetics to his taste.

His libertine's distaste for the Bible and for popular devotion found ample expression in the English

34. Locke, Reasonableness, paragraphs, 1, 241, and 243.

35. M. IX, 358-359 and 361. See above, pp. 127-129.

notebooks. He copied--and recopied in later notebooks--a
 pornographic English verse about David and Bathseba,³⁶ a
 rather off-colour funny story about a weeping statue of
 the Blessed Virgin Mary,³⁷ and a joke about a communion
 wafer that served to ridicule priests and the doctrines of
 transubstantiation and the trinity.³⁸ This last little
 tale also served as a shaft in Hume's deist quiver. Hume's
 version was in his The Natural History of Religion (1757):

One day, a priest, it is said, gave inadvertently, instead of the sacrament, a counter, which had by accident fallen among the holy wafers. The communicant waited patiently for some time, expecting it would dissolve on his tongue: But finding that it still remained entire, he took it off. I wish, cried he to the priest, you have not committed some mistake: I wish you have not given me given me God the Father: He is so hard and tough there is no swallowing him. (39)

Voltaire's version, which was very much longer, began:

"There was a parson in France, who for to saunter away the time, was playing one day in the morning, at piquet, with his own whore." Again, Voltaire had shown how far removed from Socinian, or any Christian, thought he was.

36. Notebooks, pp. 55-56, "Cambridge Notebook".

37. Ibid., p. 53, "Cambridge Notebook".

38. Ibid., p. 36, "Small Leningrad Notebook".

39. Hume, Religion, p. 73.

C. Other Contacts with English Religion: A

rough calculation shows that of the first seven Lettres philosophiques, those which dealt specifically with religion, Voltaire only devoted twenty-two per cent to the established churches of England and Scotland. The lion's share of his attention, four letters, went to the Quakers with the few pages remaining to the Socinians. Ulterior-motives aside for the moment--and with one major exception--this distribution probably accurately reflected Voltaire's personal experience with English religion.

The exception was that there was no letter devoted to the English deists; he only mentioned two of them, Col-lins and Toland, in passing: "Ce n'est ni Montagne, ni Locke, ni Bayle, ni Spinoza, ni Hobbes, ni Milord Shaftesbury, ni Mr. Collins, ni Mr. Toland, etc. qui ont porté le flambeau de la discorde dans leur Patrie; ce sont pour la plupart des Théologiens."⁴⁰

Judging from the lack of notebook entries concerning the deists and from their negligible treatment in the Lettres philosophiques, Pomeau and Torrey may well have been right in saying that Voltaire had little interest in the serious deists' books and squabbles while he

⁴⁰. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 175-176 (thirteenth Lettre, "Sur Mr. Locke"). Lanson printed the 1734 Jore edition; latter editions had different men in the list of harmless philosophes.

⁴¹ was in England. On the other hand, in moving as much as he did in Bolingbroke's circle, he must have met many anti-clerical freethinkers, the "membre ²² /s/ très-éclairé /s/ de la société" of the Courte réponse, who laughed at all metaphysics and doctrine.

This omission was noted as soon as Thieriot published the first edition of the Lettres philosophiques in England. "Quant aux Déistes, qui font tant de bruit en Angleterre, l'Auteur n'en dit ni bien ni mal: il n'en dit rien."⁴² Prudence, more than ignorance, was the obvious reason for Voltaire's silence.⁴³ After all, he wanted to be able to publish the book in France too.

When Voltaire retired to the countryside to recuperate after his disastrous sortie into France in 1726, and again in the spring of 1727, he stayed in Wandsworth, a village not far from London. Wandsworth had an active Friends' Meeting, and there, primarily during his second visit,⁴⁴ Voltaire learned the Quakers' customs and doctrines

⁴¹. Pomeau, Religion, p. 185; Torrey, Deists, pp. 2-3.

⁴². "Lettres Anglaises", BB, tome second, première partie (Oct.-Dec., 1733), 34.

⁴³. Lanson commented: "Voltaire n'a pas parlé des déistes anglais. C'était probablement trop dangereux." (Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 81.)

⁴⁴. Best., 307, commentary.

first hand. Edward Higginson, who was the apprentice schoolmaster at the Wandsworth Friends' school, wrote an apparently reliable account of several meetings with Voltaire.⁴⁵

Their first encounter came when Higginson was called in to arbitrate an argument about baptism--an argument which began as an English lesson--between Voltaire and the schoolmaster. After Voltaire repeated the gist of the discussion, Higginson brought up I Corinthians 1:17, where Paul said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel",⁴⁶ one of the texts which led the Quakers to reject baptism. This passage struck Voltaire "so strange, that in a violent passion he said, I lied--which I put up patiently, till he, becoming cooler, desired to know why I would impose upon a stranger." Higginson was unable to convince Voltaire he told the truth until Voltaire read the passage for himself in a Greek Testament.

Voltaire reset this anecdote in the first of the Lettres philosophiques. In his version, immediately after citing I Corinthians 1:17, the Quaker added:

aussi ce même Paul ne baptisa jamais avec de l'eau que deux personnes, encore fut-ce malgré lui; il circoncit son Disciple Thimotée, les autres Apôtres

45. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 19-22, reprints the entire article from an old (1832) Quaker journal.

46. Ibid., I, 20.

circoncisoient aussi tous ceux qui vouloient.
Es-tu circoncis, ajouta-t-il? --Je lui répondis
que je n'avois pas cet honneur. --Eh bien, dit-
il, l'Ami, tu es Chrétien sans être circoncis,
et moi sans être baptisé. (47)

The four letters on the Quakers were the only ones that
went into any theological detail and, unlike the letters on
the Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Socinians, were filled
with lively, personally observed details. It would seem
that Voltaire knew Quakers best of all English

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faiths.

Higginson also preserved a very important Voltar-
ian "confession of faith". In the course of trying to con-
vince Higginson to become his paid companion, Voltaire
spoke very freely about his religious beliefs:

telling me then plainly, he was a Deist; adding,
so were most of the noblemen in France and in Eng-
land; deriding the account given by the four Evan-
gelists concerning the birch /sic/ of Christ, and
his miracles, etc., so far, that I desired him to
desist; for I could not bear to hear my Saviour so
reviled and spoken against. (49)

47. Ibid., I, 4. That Voltaire and Higginson re-
produced recognizably the same story speaks well for the
substantial truth of the anecdote. Voltaire related the
story as an after-dinner conversation with an old Quaker
gentleman, Andrew Pitt of Wandsworth, who was another major
source of information to Voltaire about the Friends. (Ib-
id., I, p. 12, n. 7.)

48. They were the only Protestants mentioned in
the English notebooks, Notebooks, p. 32; Pomeau, Religion,
p. 131. Further we know from Higginson that Voltaire read
Robert Barclay, the Quaker apologist, in England (Lettres
philosophiques, Lanson, I, 21).

49. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 21-22.

This was one of the rare times that what the young Voltaire said about his beliefs, when he had nothing to fear from the authorities, was recorded. The Epître à Uranie, another uninhibited statement of belief, agreed essentially with Higginson's report. Shocked by Voltaire's opinions about Jesus, Higginson refused to serve him. "Whereupon he [Voltaire] seemed under a desappointement [sic], and left me with some reluctance."⁵⁰

Samuel Clarke, Bolingbroke and his circle, Quaker schoolmasters: these were the primary sources of Voltaire's knowledge of the English religious scene. No wonder the Lettres philosophiques presented such a peculiar, skewed picture of English Christianity. As Ballantyne pointed out, Voltaire did not have the opportunity to find out what the ordinary, serious-minded Englishman believed.⁵¹ But as Abbey and Overton eloquently proved, ordinary, serious-minded Englishmen were perhaps rare at this time. Personal and public morality and piety were at their ebb.⁵²

D. The Henriade: Horace Walpole, the English ambassador to France, solicited Bubb Doddington, a wealthy

50. Ibid., I, 22.

51. Ballantyne, Visit, p. 329; see also Bellesort, Essai, p. 67.

52. Abbey and Overton, Church, chapters 1 and 8, pp. 302-304, for a summary.

patron of the arts, only a few days after Voltaire left for England: "Mr Voltaire, a French poet, who has wrote several pieces with great success here, being gone for England in order to print by subscription an excellent poem, called Henry IV, which, on account of some bold strokes in it against persecution and the priests, cannot be printed here."⁵³

This statement was true on both counts. One of Voltaire's motives in going to England was to publish the Henriade, and it was the clergy that lay behind his failure to get the censors' permission to print the poem in France.⁵⁴

Perhaps to ease the court's conscience over the Rohan affair, the comte de Morville, the secretary of State in France, had written letters of recommendation for Voltaire to the French ambassador to England, the comte de Broglie, at the time of Voltaire's departure.⁵⁵ However, when Voltaire approached the comte de Broglie to gain his support for the Henriade, de Broglie turned him down unequivocally. The reasons he gave to de Morville for this refusal were typical of the kind of official thinking

53. Best., 287, 29 May 1726.

54. See above, p. 139, for Voltaire's early plans to visit England. See Foulet, Correspondance, p. 38, n. 3, for the clerical obstruction.

55. Best., 289.

Voltaire always had to contend with:

comme je n'ay point veu cet ouvrage et que je ne
sais point si les additions et soustractions qu'il
dit avoir fait à celui qu'il a déjà donné au Pub-
lic à Paris, ni si les planches gravées qu'il en
a fait venir pour l'enrichir seront approuvées de-
la Cour, je luy ay dit que je ne pouvois m'en mes-
ler qu'autant que vous l'auriés pour agréable;
Je crains toujours que des auteurs françois ne
veuillent faire un mauvais usage de la liberté qu'
ils ont dans un pays comme celuy d'Ecrire tout
ce qui leur vient dans l'imagination sur la Reli-
gion, le Pape, le Gouvernement, ou les personnes
qui le composent. (56)

In Voltaire's case, the fears were well justified,
for the Henriade which appeared in March, 1728, was much
more outspoken than the Ligue--especially in matters of re-
ligion.⁵⁷ For example, he added some lines, very chari-
table towards non-Christian faiths, emphasizing his belief
in the beneficent God:

Un Juge incorruptible y rassemble à ses pieds
Ces immortels esprits que son souffle a créés.
C'est cet Etre infini qu'on sert et qu'on ignore:
Sous des noms différens le monde entier l'adore.
(58)

Here was the deist doctrine that essentially all religions
were dedicated to the same supreme being even though

56. Best., 301, 3 March 1727.

57. Henriade, O.R. Taylor, pp. 68-70. On p. 70,
Taylor cites several passages that were strengthened. Inci-
dentally, the proceeds from this edition eliminated Vol-
taire's financial worries.

58. Ibid., VII, 71-74; the whole section, VII, 71-
137, was much more heterodox in 1728 than the 1723 passage
it replaced.

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 priestly fraud had obscured the simple truth. This doctrine carried along as its corollary the doctrine of universal salvation, which Voltaire was not afraid to make explicit.

Ce Dieu les punit-il d'avoir fermé leurs yeux.
 Aux clartés que lui-même il plaça si loin d'eux?
 Pourrait-il les juger tel qu'un injuste Maître,
 Sur la Loi des Chrétiens qu'ils n'avaient pû connaître?
 Non, Dieu nous a créés, Dieu nous veut sauver tous.
 Partout il nous instruit, partout il parle à nous.
 (60)

A couplet, also introduced in 1728, drove the point home:

Non, s'il est infini, c'est dans ses récompenses;
 Prodigue de ses dons, il borne ses vengences. (61)

Voltaire was still at war with the "Dieu vengeur".

Need we add that orthodox Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, were quick to attack the theology of the Henriade?⁶² In fact, for half a century, this epic poem which was the cornerstone of Voltaire's reputation withstood dogmatic criticism. One such critique is noteworthy as it came from a man who, as Foulet said, had rather good

59. Henriade, C.R. Taylor, IV, 187-226, 263-290, and *passim*.

60. Ibid., VII, 103-108.

61. Ibid., VII, 221-222.

62. Ibid., pp. 85, 189-201. See, for example, Best., 397, a long theological critique of the Henriade taken from a letter to the editor of the Jesuit Journal de Trévoux of June, 1731.

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sense and was not a dévot and as it was one of the earliest examples of French reaction to the Henriade. Mathieu Marais wrote in his diary on 16 November 1728 that he had finally seen a copy of the poem and commented: "Il [Voltaire] a mis au 7^e chant une théologie affreuse et brûlable. Il amène aux pieds de Dieu toutes les nations pour être jugées."⁶⁴ Then Marais copied out twelve lines, which included VII, 103-108, reproduced above, and three others on the theme of universal salvation. He continued, "Vous verrez que ce fou-là dira que ce chant est un songe et qu'en songe on peut être athée, spinoziste, naturaliste et tout ce qu'il vous plaira, sans aucune consequence. Nous n'envierons pas à l'Angleterre ce déserteur de notre patrie."⁶⁴ "Brûlable, athée, déserteur": ominous words, these, and from a reasonable man at that.

When Voltaire, who had asked Thieriot to let him know what the French public thought of the Henriade,⁶⁵ learned of their theological objections, he defended his concept of God without compromise:

63. Foulet, Correspondance, p. 175, n. 2.

64. Ibid., p. 175, n. 2. See also, Best., 327, commentary. Marais used a pirated Dutch Henriade, and his quotations differ somewhat from the established text (O.R. Taylor's).

65. Best., 327, 14 June 1728.

Vous me mandez que des dévots gens de mauvaise foy ou de très peu de sens ont trouvé à redire que j'aye osé dans un poème que n'est point un colifichet de roman, peindre dieu comme un être plein de bonté et indulgent aux sottises de l'espèce humaine. Ces faquins là feront tant qu'il leur plaira de dieu un tiran, je ne le regarderay pas moins comme un être aussi bon et sage que ces messieurs sont sots et méchants. (66)

As one would have expected, that other major theme of Voltaire's religious thought was also strengthened in the Henriade: that is, his hatred for civil disorder inspired by the clergy. In the fifth chant, where he developed this theme, there was a sequence of textual changes that traced Voltaire's growing knowledge of Socinianism. Lines 79-80, which remained constant from the 1723 publication of the Ligue throughout the history of the poem, introduced the topic:

La Discorde attentive en tranversant les airs,
Entend ces cris affreux, et les porte aux Enfers.

Ten rather weak lines that condemned "la Discorde religieuse" in colourless generalities followed this couplet in the Ligue.

Voltaire discarded these spineless lines in 1728 and replaced them with three times their number. First he showed that la Discorde led to something worse:

Elle amène à l'instant de ces Royaumes sombres,
Le plus cruel Tyran de l'Empire des ombres.

66. Best., 332, 4 August 1728, Voltaire to Thieriot.

Il vient, le Fanatisme est son horrible nom;
 Enfant dénaturé de la Religion,
 Armé pour la défendre, il cherche à la détruire,
 Et reçu dans son sein, l'embrasse et le déchire.
 (67)

"Le Fanatisme", the worst tyrant of Hell, posed as religion's protector but was really its worst enemy. He illustrated Fanatisme's excesses at first with safe examples drawn from outside Christianity but eventually sketched its beginnings in the Roman Church:

Du haut du Capitole il criait aux Payens,
 Frappez, exterminiez, déchirez les Chrétiens.
 Mais lorsqu'au fils de Dieu Rome enfin fut soumise,
 Du Capitole en cendre il passa dans l'Eglise;
 Et dans les coeurs Chrétiens inspirant ses fureurs,
 De Martyrs qu'ils étaient, les fit persécuteurs.
 (68)

Then in the 1728 London editions, he jumped immediately from the general description of Christian fanaticism to specific English cases with this couplet:

Dans Londres il inspira ces peuples de Sectaires,
 Trembleurs, Indépendants, Puritains, Unitaires.
 (69)

This was the first time, that I have discovered, Voltaire

67. Henriade, O.R. Taylor, V, 81-86.

68. Ibid., V, 99-104. Voltaire was right; after the Nicene Council, Constantine ordered death for those who refused to surrender Arius's books. Castellio, Heretics, p. 16 (Bainton's introduction); see ibid., pp. 12-18.

69. Henriade, O.R. Taylor, V, 105-106, 1728 variant.

used "Unitaire" (or a related term) in a text he intended to be published. What makes this passage valuable for this study, even more than its primacy, is its short life. In the next edition of the Henriade (1730) that Voltaire supervised, these two lines disappeared to be replaced with:

Dans Londres il a formé la secte turbulente,
Qui sur un Roi trop faible a mis sa main sanglante.
(70)

We have already seen how highly Voltaire regarded the English Unitarians; he nearly idolized Locke and Newton. And the history of the Unitarians and the Quakers (Trembleurs)⁷¹ was one of conscientious non-violence.

Why then did Voltaire at first list the Quakers and Unitarians as persecutors and fanatics? I think it was a blunder born of ignorance. Voltaire had finished the Henriade in July, 1725,⁷² long before he came to England, and he may have used "Trembleur" and "Unitaire" like he used "socinien" a few years earlier in the "lettre hollandaise." He did, however, change some verses, dealing with England, after he was in the country. For example, in a letter of 13 February 1727 to Thieriot, he enclosed six

70. Ibid., V, 105-106. After 1730 the authorities allowed the Henriade to be printed in France, without official approbation; thus they could have confiscated it whenever they pleased. Ibid., p. 85; Conlon, Literary Career, p. 34.

71. Voltaire noted the Quakers' pacificism favourably in the Lettres philosophiques (Lanson, I, 6-7, 48).

72. Best., 232, 234, and 235.

new lines and mentioned others.⁷³ Now, on 3 March 1727,⁷⁴ he had begun to solicit subscriptions for the deluxe edition of the Henriade and had, therefore, probably stabilized the text. Thus the mistake was likely made long before he had learned about the Quakers from the Wandsworth school teachers⁷⁵ and about the English Unitarians from Clarke.⁷⁶ The mistake appeared in print because Voltaire had revised the manuscript before he knew how harmless the Quakers and Unitarians were.

A less complicated explanation of all this could be that Voltaire simply overlooked the error in this couplet when preparing the finished product. However, the simple explanation does not correlate well with Voltaire's usually careful preparation of his texts.

Whatever the case, by 1730, the Lettres philosophiques were under way and Voltaire was very well acquainted with the nature of the Society of Friends and with the Unitarians, so the misleading lines were replaced. The new English example of Fanatisme, "la secte turbulente", obviously referred to the Independents who had executed King Charles I in 1649. However, the critic whose letter was

73. Best., 300. 74. Best., 301.

75. See pp. 157-160 above.

76. See pp. 147-151 above. O.R. Taylor (Henriade, p. 598) gives no literary sources for the lines in question.

printed in the June, 1731, issue of the Journal de Trévoux, explained "la secte turbulent" as "les Quakers d'Angleterre" and chastised Voltaire for placing them in "l'Eglise".⁷⁷ Not abashed at such a display of misinformation, this critic went on to prove himself beyond any doubt "un dévot de mauvaise foi et de très peu de sens"⁷⁸ by trying to justify the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions with which Voltaire had closed his passage on religious discord.⁷⁹

E. Summary: In England, then, Voltaire made his first verified contact with "Socinians"--in the person of Dr. Samuel Clarke--and with "Socinian" writings, those of Locke, Newton, and perhaps Clarke. Successive editions of the Henriade showed his improving understanding of Socinianism, but not until the publication of the Lettres philosophiques did he give the Socinians a significant place in his works. Voltaire left France in 1726 as a non-Christian deist, who probably knew very little about the Socinians. He returned from England in 1728 as a non-Christian deist, who knew something more of the Socinians, but who--as his comments on Locke's Reasonableness of Christianity showed--

77. Best., 397; see above, p. 123.

78. Voltaire's phrase, Best., 332; see above, p. 165.

79. Henriade, O.R. Taylor, V, 107-110.

rejected their thought in so far as it was Christian and scriptural.

VII

SOCINIANS IN THE LETTRES PHILOSOPHIQUES

A. Introduction:

1. The Writing of the Lettres Philosophiques:

"Les Lettres philosophiques sont la première bombe lancée contre l'ancien régime."¹ Lanson picked an ideal metaphor for this most complex and destructive book. On the surface all was bright and harmless, but every detail was chosen for its lethal impact. Everything reminded the French reader that in France things were different from England and, almost invariably, worse. "Tout était fait pour blesser dans ce livre."²

In the Lettres on the Quakers, he ridiculed the Jansenist convulsionaries by analogy; in showing how the English rationally adopted inoculation against smallpox, he put the French academics and clerics, who opposed this proven life-saving technique, in a bad light. He argued that the Académie Française wasted its time when compared to the Royal Society of England and that England treated her men

1. Lanson, Voltaire, p. 52.

2. Desnoiresterres, Voltaire, II, 40.

of intelligence and wit with the proper respect and honour while France ignored, or persecuted, hers. On all fronts Voltaire attacked those powers in France that stood in the way of social and intellectual progress. But his programme was far from being all destructive as he offered the English way of freedom and tolerance as a most desirable alternative.

How Voltaire ever hoped to get official approval is beyond me, but he tried. Late in 1732, he attempted to win over the Cardinal de Fleury, the head of the ministry in charge of the printing trade. "J'ai lu au cardinal de Fleury deux lettres sur les quakers desquelles j'avais pris grand soin de retrancher tout ce que pouvait effaroucher sa dévote et sage éminence. Il a trouvé ce qui en restait encore assez plaisant, mais le pauvre homme ne sait pas ce qu'il a perdu."³ No doubt Voltaire wanted the Cardinal to approve the whole book because of the Lettres on the Quakers' implied affront to the Jansenists; Fleury was, however, not fooled and did not grant permission to publish the Lettres.⁴ At the same time, Fleury did not say

3. Best., 524, ? 6 December 1732, to Jean Baptiste Formont. Formont was Voltaire's philosophical confidant in this period. Voltaire may have returned from England with some of the Lettres philosophiques in draft. Whatever the case, on 21 November 1731 (Best., 425), he wrote Formont that he was ready to finish them up.

4. Conlon, Literary Career, p. 29.

that such permission was impossible.

Voltaire, still hoping that he could get the censor's approval, began in December, 1732, to think of Jore,⁵ his printer in Rouen. Meanwhile, Thieriot was in England, commissioned to prepare an English translation of the Lettres philosophiques. Voltaire had sent "une copie manuscrite de toutes mes lettres à Thieriot sur la religion, le gouvernement, la philosophie et la poésie des anglais",⁶ around the middle of December, 1732. Two months later, Voltaire was led to believe that all the Lettres, save that on Locke, would get official approbation and concluded to Thieriot: "c'est qu'il faut que vous imprimiez les lettres incessamment : puisqu'elles peuvent vous être de quelque utilité et qu'elles ne sont d'aucun danger pour moy."⁷

Of course, he was wrong; the Lettres philosophiques never got permission, and they were perhaps the most dangerous book, in terms of possible repercussions to himself,

5. Best., 530, ? 19 December 1732, to Cideville. Jore had done work earlier for Voltaire: both legal and illegal.

6. Best., 527, to Formont.

7. Best., 550, 24 February 1733; see also Best., 540, to Cideville, 4 January 1733, where he said that the censor appointed for the Lettres philosophiques: "Mr l'abbé de Rotelin m'a flatté qu'en adoucissant certains traits je pourrais obtenir une permission tacite, et je ne sçai si je prendray le party de gêner mon ouvrage pour avoir un approbation."

that Voltaire ever wrote. When it became clear that the authorities were in no mood to be lenient,⁸ Voltaire took nearly fanatical pains to insure that Jore's edition would remain secret.

Voltaire had seemed to go out of his way to defy official opinion since his return to France.⁹ In 1731 he published an "underground" Histoire de Charles XII, after one edition had been confiscated; his poems, Mort de mlle Lecouvreur and the Epître à Uranie, circulated in manuscript and came to the attention of the literary inquisitors in 1731 and 1732, respectively. Finally, in January, 1733, the police seized his Epître dédicatoire to Zaïre; and in March of the same year, the Temple du goût, where Voltaire had considered the literary merits of French men of letters, was taken as slander and near treason by the public and the censors. He was really quite justified in worrying about the Lettres philosophiques.

Meanwhile, Thieriot had been working with unusual

8. Best., 617, 27 July 1733, to Thieriot. "The lord keeper of the sceals is incensed against me. He believes j have despisd his authority and declind the tribunal of the litterary inquisition newly establish'd. He threatens me very seriously. He sais he will undo me if the letters come into the world. And between us, j d'ont believe j could stand against a first minister." Voltaire wrote then and the next day (Best., 619) to ask Thieriot to suppress the French edition which Thieriot was to print in Holland.

9. Conlon, Literary Career, pp. 27-29, 31-32, and 34-41.

diligence, and his English translation appeared in August, 1733. Voltaire had encouraged him to press ahead with the English edition so that he could gauge public opinion from it and to stop the French-language edition as his situation in France was very dangerous.¹⁰ As it turned out, they were generally well received in England, but as Voltaire pointed out, that really told one nothing about how the French would take them. "Les lettres philosophiques, politiques, critiques, poétiques, hérétiques et diaboliques, se vendent en Anglais à Londres avec un grand succès. Mais les anglais sont des papefigues maudits de dieu, qui sont tous faits pour approuver l'ouvrage du démon."¹¹ Although Voltaire's tone was light here, he was becoming very apprehensive.¹² The police in Paris had questioned Jore and had sent an inspector to Rouen to look for the Lettres philosophiques.¹³ He found nothing as Voltaire had made sure they were well hidden.

In spite of Voltaire's redoubled efforts to conceal the offending work, in April, 1734, an unauthorized version

10. Best., 614, 24 July 1733. Thieriot's French edition was not published. See note 8, above.

11. Best., 625, c. 15 August 1733, to Formont. See also Best., 628, and 632.

12. Best., 625.

13. Best., 634, 15 September 1733, to Cideville. The edition was complete in July (Best., 606, 3 July 1733, to Cideville).

went on sale in Paris. This disaster was due to a rather foolish mistake by Voltaire. In March he sent two sample copies of Jore's edition to be bound by Josse, a Parisian printer; Josse recognized a best-seller and quickly counterfeited and issued the book.

When Voltaire, who was in Monjeu, Burgundy, at the time, found out that the Lettres philosophiques had exploded in Paris, he immediately wrote to the ministers Fleury and Maurepas and to some influential friends, denying all knowledge of the recent edition.¹⁴ He was innocent of any responsibility for this particular volume, but it was too late for a simple denial. Maurepas wrote the order for arrest on 3 May 1734: "Le roi a jugé à propos de faire arrêter, et conduire au château d'Auxonne, Arouet de Voltaire."¹⁵

When his friends warned him of this order, Voltaire--remembering his months in the Bastille: "J'ai de plus une aversion mortelle pour la prison; je suis malade; un air enfermé m'auront tué"¹⁶ --fled to Lorraine.

2. Pascal and Persecution: "La COUR a arrêté et ordonné que ledit Livre /Lettres philosophiques par M.

14. Best., 701, 702, 703, 704--all 24 April--705 and 706, 25 April.

15. Best., 710.

16. Best., 717, c. 8 May 1734, to d'Argental.

de . . . 7 sera laceré et brûlé dans la Cour du Palais, au pied du grand Escalier d'icelui par l'Exécuteur de la haute Justice, comme scandeleux, contraire à la Religion, aux bonnes moeurs et au respect du aux Puissances¹⁷

So ordered the Parlement of Paris, a body dominated by Jansenists, on 10 June 1734; the order was carried out the same day. Or more accurately, it seemed to be carried out as the executioner tore and burned a copy of the "Révolutions d'Espagne . . . à la place de l'Exemplaire des Lettres philosophiques . . ."¹⁸, the latter which he apparently retained for his private library. That the public executioner collected condemned books somehow seems appropriate for the ancien régime.

Much more serious than the Parlement's symbolic destruction of the Lettres philosophiques was their intention to conduct an investigation into the circumstances of their authorship and publication.¹⁹ While the ministry was willing to let the case die as it faded from the public's attention,²⁰ Parlement would not consider giving up its right

17. Best., III, 268.

18. Lantoine, Lettres philosophiques, p. 120. The quoted passage was from a marginal note found in the Parlement's records on the order to burn the book.

19. Best., III, 268.

20. Best., 767, 7 October 1734, Chauvelin to Joly de Fleury.

to conduct a literary inquest.²¹ Ten months after the order for his arrest was issued, it was cancelled. Voltaire could return to Paris, but the police warned him to stay out of the kind of business that had got him into trouble in the first place: "Plus vous avez de talent, Monsieur, plus vous devez sentir que vous avez des ennemis et de jaloux. Fermez leur donc la bouche pour jamais par une conduite digne d'un homme sage et d'un homme qui a déjà acquis un certain âge."²²

However, for eight more years, Parliament retained the power to look into the Lettres-philosophiques affair which could have had catastrophic effects on Voltaire.²³ This was one good reason that he spent so little time in Paris in the following years.

When Voltaire heard of Parliament's order, he sat down with the Lettres philosophiques to determine what had likely been the barbs that had struck home. "On a cru qu'un français qui plaisantoit les quakers, qui prenoit le parti de Loke et que trouvoit de mauvais raisonnements dans

21. Best., 768, 8 October 1734, Joly de Fleury to Chauvelin.

22. Best., 823, 2 March 1735, Hérault to Voltaire.

23. Conlon, Literary Career, p. 44. For a thorough exposition of the composition of the Lettres philosophiques and of the official reaction to them; see ibid., pp. 29, 41-44, 264-266. For a good account of the bitter dispute that Voltaire later had with his printer, Jore, about this book, see Conlon, ibid., pp. 60-65.

Pascal étoit un athée."²⁴ In ridiculing the Quakers, he
 ridiculed the Jansenists,²⁵ and in challenging Pascal's
 apologetics, he took on the Jansenists' great saint and
 defender. As to Locke, the scandal was over Voltaire's
 discussion on the nature of the soul, where he maintained
 that it transcended the power of the unaided human reason
 to determine whether or not the soul were mortal or immor-
 tal,²⁶ material or immaterial.

Adding the twenty-fifth Lettre philosophique, "Sur
 les Pensées de M. Pascal", was an afterthought. Voltaire
 first mentioned this project a year and a half after he de-
 cided to finish the Lettres,²⁷ and it did rather have the
 appearance of an afterthought. On the surface, remarks on
 Pascal's Pensées had no relation to a discussion of English
 thought and customs: Ascoli described them as "si bizzarre-
 ment"²⁸ added to the whole. But viewed functionally, as
 part of the "bombe", the twenty-fifth Lettre fit very well

24. Best., 737, 22 June 1734, to La Condamine. This letter was quite cautious. Did Voltaire want La Condamine to intervene on his behalf?

25. See above, pp. 171-172.

26. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 170-175 (thirteenth Lettre).

27. Best., 596, c. 1 June 1733, to Formont.

28. Ascoli, "Voltaire", IV, 285.

into the mechanism; it added more than a few pounds of powder to the explosive charge aimed at orthodoxy.²⁹

Bombs, especially of the sort thrown at the ancien régime, could easily blow up in the face of the revolutionary. Voltaire knew this too well and from the very beginning was apprehensive about the extra charge, the anti-Pascal bonus: "Au reste, je m'y prendrai avec précaution, et je ne critiquerai que les endroits qui ne seront point tellement liés avec notre sainte religion qu'on ne puisse déchirer la peau de Pascal sans faire saigner le christianisme."³⁰

It was imprudent for Voltaire to challenge Pascal, for not only was he the Jansenist champion, Pascal was, as Lanson said, "le seul apologiste de la religion révélée qui comptât dans la littérature française et pour le grand public."³¹ But this made the target too appealing, and Voltaire could not resist: "Il y a déjà longtemps que j'ai envie de combattre ce géant."³² Further, he was convinced that he would win:

29. Barling ("Art", pp. 50, 68-69) discussed the unity of the Lettres philosophiques and the "Remarques". He saw them as a coordinated campaign against the traditional French-Christian view of life and society.

30. Best., 596, see note 27 above.

31. Lanson, Voltaire, p. 49.

32. Best., 596.

Je ne crois pas que le petit nombre de vrais philosophes qui, après tout, font seuls à la longue la réputation des ouvrages, me reprochent beaucoup d'avoir contredit Pascal. Ils verront au contraire combien je l'ai ménagé; et les gens circonspects me sauront bon gré d'avoir passé sous silence le chapitre des miracles et celui des prophéties, deux chapitres qui démontrent bien à quel point de faiblesse les plus grands génies peuvent arriver quand la superstition a corrompu leur jugement. Quelle belle lumière que Pascal, éclipsée par l'obscurité des choses qu'il avait embrassées! (33)

After the Lettres philosophiques slipped out, Voltaire sought to turn his rough treatment of Pascal and of the Quaker convulsionaries to his advantage with the anti-Jansenist authorities. He wrote Chauvelin the twenty-fourth of April, 1734: "Je compte beaucoup sur ce que les jansenistes sont assez mal traités dans ses lettres."³⁴ Later when he learned that a letter of cachet for his arrest had been issued, he protested to the lieutenant of police, "Devez vous écouter les pieuses et sottes clameurs des superstitieux imbéciles que le poison du jansénisme infecte, et qui prétendent qu'on attaque dieu et l'état quand on se moque des convulsions des quakers?"³⁵ Perhaps he

33. Best., 616, 26 July 1733, to Formont. See also Best., 605, 1 July 1733, to Cideville, where Voltaire wrote, "Le projet est hardie, mais ce misanthrope chrétien, tout sublime qu'il est, n'est pour moi qu'un homme comme un autre quand il a tort et je croi qu'il a tort très souvent." Best., 606, 609, and 708 have the same spirit.

34. Best., 703.

35. Best., 712, 6 May 1734, to Hérault. See also, pp. 171-172 and 178-179, above.

planned this tactic in advance; but against the pro-Jansenist Parlement of Paris it was worse than useless. Voltaire had no direct way to deal with Parlement and could only hope that they would not pursue their investigations. Nonetheless, the anti-Jansenist ploy may have helped restrain the police and secure his permission to return to Paris.

Voltaire made his intentions very clear in his introduction to the twenty-fifth Lettre: "J'ose prendre le parti de l'humanité contre ce misanthrope sublime . . . je suis de plus très-persuadé que s'il avoit suivi dans le livre qu'il méditoit, le dessein qui paroît dans ses pensées, il auroit fait un livre plein de paralogismes éloquens, et de faussetés admirablement déduites."³⁶ In short, not only did Pascal hate mankind, he could not even think straight! Again one wonders at Voltaire's temerity. Then Voltaire went on to consider fifty-seven of the Pensées, all of which he found indefensible.

There was an apparent inconsistency in Voltaire's method of attack in his remarks on Pascal. On the one hand, he used Bayle's method of declaring an absolute break between the realms of theology and philosophy and, of course, affirming the precedence of the received

36. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, II, 185.

theological doctrine. For example, "Les Philosophes n'ont point enseigné de religion";³⁷ or, "Pourquoi vouloir aller plus loin que l'Ecriture? n'y a-t-il pas de la témérité à croire qu'elle a besoin d'apui, et que ces idées philosophiques peuvent lui en donner?"³⁸

On the other hand, there was the rationalist-deist tendency to reduce true religion to a minimum of easily comprehensible moral commandments--which tendency resembled Socinian thought. "Le christianisme n'enseigne que la simplicité, l'humanité, la charité: vouloir le réduire à la métaphysique, c'est vouloir en faire une source d'erreurs."³⁹

Where these conflicting points of view converged was in their common rejection of philosophical justification for the Christian faith. By playing both sides at once, Voltaire wanted to be able to dismiss effectively all received doctrine and to be able to hide behind the fideist shield of orthodoxy. Take, for example, his discussion of the doctrine of the trinity in his treatment of

37. *Ibid.*, II, 186, Remark II; the corollary, that revelation had nothing to say in "philosophie" (in this case, physics), was made clearly in the Remark XXXI (*ibid.*, II, 211-212).

38. *Ibid.*, II, 187, Remark III.

39. *Ibid.*, II, 186, Remark I.

Pascal's metaphorical description of human existence, where man was a castaway on a terrible desert island with no idea of where he was or why he was there: "Quel est l'homme sage qui sera prêt à se pendre, parce qu'il ne sçait pas comme on voit Dieu face à face, et que sa raison ne peut débrouiller le mystère de la Trinité? il faudroit autant se désespérer de n'avoir pas quatre pieds et deux ailes."⁴⁰

Bayle, after such a renunciation of the possibility that reason could understand Christian mysteries, would then reaffirm the necessity of belief in the dogma. Voltaire merely dismissed, whimsically, the comprehensibility of the doctrine and let the reader remember his first remark, where Christianity was nothing but "la simplicité, l'humanité, la charité."³⁹ Yet Voltaire could defend himself by the letter of what he wrote against Pascal: "Qu'ai je donc fait autre chose que de mettre la ste écriture au dessus de la raison?"⁴¹ This was perfectly true, nominally; but we already know that Voltaire really thought of "ste écriture" as a collage of "mensonges sacrés". The apparent methodological inconsistency in his approach to Pascal was actually a device which was meant to allow him to

⁴⁰. Ibid., II, 193, Remark VI. In the first draft of the Lettre on Locke (see note⁸³ below), he wrote about this doctrine: "Le mystère de la Trinité et celui de l'Eucharistie ont beau être contraires aux démonstrations connues . . . les objets de la raison et de la foi sont de différente nature." Ibid., I, 201; see also pp. 201-202 below.

assault revealed religion and to protect himself at the same time. Obviously, the device failed.

B. The Socinians:

1. The Rehabilitation of Heresy: Sometime during his English stay, Voltaire wrote in his notebook this little paragraph:

Nature, purity, perspicuity, simplicity never walk in the clouds. They are obvious to all capacities and where they are not evident, they don't exist. Ignorant divines supported by more ignorant men are the founders of all religions, men of wit, founders of heresies, men of understanding laugh at both. (42)

These thoughts were fully developed in the Lettres philosophiques. In the four Lettres on the Quakers, he gave the historical account of the founding of a religion--by a very ignorant divine--but also spoke of Quaker simplicity and purity with genuine admiration. However, it was the Socinians, the most notorious heretics of all, who furnished Voltaire the best examples to set up against orthodoxy. If it were too dangerous to speak of the deists directly, he could insinuate something of the spirit of their rational theology into his book by discussing England's unitarians.

Furthermore, there was a direct link between

41. Best., 737; see note 24 above.

42. Notebooks, p. 40, "Small Leningrad Notebook".

Socinian thought and deism. Locke's general principles that received doctrines and the claims of scripture to be divine revelation must pass the test of reason⁴³ were also Socinian. While the Socinians and Locke judged that many of the traditional beliefs failed the test, they did not challenge the authenticity of the Bible as God's revelation. Nonetheless, if the Nicene trinity and the usual theories of atonement could be rejected because they were incomprehensible, then why not the incarnation, and the miracles as well? In fact, was the idea that the creator of the universe revealed his will only to an insignificant, rather barbarous nation in the ancient Near East reasonable? That is to say, rational exegesis, if carried to its logical end, could destroy all Christian mystery and the idea of revelation itself.

Toland, in his Christianity not Mysterious (1696), drew the logical conclusions of Locke's method. Toland's work, the first blow in the deist controversy, appeared only a year after Locke's The Reasonableness of Christianity, and Toland claimed to be Locke's disciple. Locke repudiated Toland and his deism which were so dangerous to Locke's claim to a reverent biblicism; but Toland had, in fact, been a faithful disciple of the Locke's critical-

43. See above, pp. 94-97.

philosophical thought.⁴⁴ Voltaire later took on the same robes of discipleship and no doubt would have been even less welcome to Locke than Toland. Thus Stephen's formulation. "Locke, the Unitarians, Toland form a genuine series, in which Christianity is being gradually transmuted by larger infusions of rationalism",⁴⁵ could be extended to Voltaire and the other philosophes, who eliminated all Christianity from their rational religion.⁴⁶ No wonder, then, that Voltaire used the Socinians to speak for him in the Lettres philosophiques.⁴⁷

At the beginning of the twelfth Lettre, "Sur le chancelier Bacon", he answered the question, "quel étoit le plus grand homme"? with "c'étoit sans contredit Isaac Newton".⁴⁸ Developing the same thought, he continued, "Puis donc que vous exigez que je vous parle des hommes célèbres qu'a porté l'Angleterre, je commencerai par les Bacons, les

⁴⁴. Abbey and Overton, Church, pp. 104-105; Stephen, History, pp. 78-100.

⁴⁵. Stephen, History, p. 94.

⁴⁶. However, the possibility that Locke was far less Christian than the surface of his writings suggests should be kept in mind.

⁴⁷. The French philosophes, of course, made ample use of Toland and the other English deists. (Torrey, Deists, passim.) See also, Gay, Enlightenment, chapter 6.1.

⁴⁸. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 152. Here I am using "Socinian" to refer to those persons so named by Voltaire in the seventh Lettre: that is, Locke, (cont.)

Lockes, les Newtons, etc."⁴⁹ This was high praise, indeed, for two Socinians, and Lettre on Locke (the thirteenth) and those on Newton (fourteen through seventeen) were also quite flattering. Newton and Locke again, with Clarke and Le Clerc added, appeared in the Lettre on the Socinians as "les plus grands Philosophes et les meilleures plumes de leur tems."⁵⁰

Beside bestowing highest honours to the individual Socinians, Voltaire's tone was subdued and respectful throughout the Lettre on the Socinians, in striking contrast to his mocking the conventional English churches. And, of course, the praise he gave to Quaker virtue was offset by his ridiculing their bizarre practices so that the Socinians were the only group he praised without reservation.

Voltaire's contemporaries--for example, the reviewer of the Lettres philosophiques for the Journal littéraire--noted his generous attitude towards heretics:

Dire de ces lettres qu'elles abondent en pensées hardies, exprimées vivement et heureusement On juge d'abord qu'entretenant son Ami des Quakers et des Ariens, il n'aura pas manqué de les traiter favorablement. Qu'Anglicans et Presbytériens n'auront pas aussi aisément trouvé grace devant ses yeux.

(cont.) Newton, Clarke, and Le Clerc.

49. Ibid., I, 152-153. 50. Ibid., I, 80.

Que Locke et Clarke doivent lui avoir fait abandonner la Philosophie et la Théologie des Anciens.
(51)

This article went on to point out how Voltaire "n'aura pas laissé échapper aucune occasion de s'égarer par des traits ingénieux et malins contre les usages, ou les abus qui l'auront choqué en France, soit dans la Religion, ou dans le Gouvernement, ou dans la manière de penser."⁵²

While the Journal littéraire was content to mention Voltaire's iconoclasm, the Present State of the Republick of Letters, in reviewing Thieriot's edition, became incensed. In discussing the close of the Lettre on Locke where Voltaire affirmed that theologians rather than philosophers were the source of civil disorder,⁵³ the English reviewer wrote:

Is this one of those Solid Reflections promised by the Editor in his Preface? Or has it not a manifest tendency to destroy all Right in the Church to judge Matters of Faith? By this admirable way of reasoning, not Arius, but the whole Church assembled in a general Council, were responsible for all the Confusion and Violence which ensued; and the orthodox Bishops, who oppose pernicious Novelties, have no other View but that of appearing at the Head of a Party. (54)

51. "Lettres Anglois", JL, tome 22, seconde partie (1735), p. 348.

52. Ibid., p. 348.

53. See p. 156, above.

54. "English Letters", PSRL, XII (October, 1733), 276.

He was not bad at all at reading between the lines. Earlier he had written of Voltaire's handling of the Socinians, "Their Crime does not here seem represented so great, as their Antagonists affirm it to be."⁵⁵

Similarly, modern commentators have noted this tendency in the Lettres philosophiques. Barling concluded, "Any tenderness, any respect for religious sentiments, are, it should be noted, reserved for the Quakers and the Socinians";⁵⁶ and Pomeau emphasized the same point.⁵⁷ However, neither the eighteenth-century nor the twentieth-century scholars have shown just what a radical break with earlier French thought and literature Voltaire's pro-Socinian stance entailed.

Recall that "socinien" had come to be synonymous with heretic,⁵⁸ and we know how the French dealt with heretics. Other than Le Clerc, who always defended Socinians against threats of persecution and who sometimes offered embarrassed, tortuous defences of selected aspects of their thought, Voltaire was the first writer in French (that I know about) who presented the Socinians in a good light, even as "les plus grands Philosophes et les meilleurs plumes

55. Ibid., p. 271. 56. Barling, "Art", p. 50.

57. Pomeau, Religion, pp. 131-138.

58. See chapter IV, section B, above.

de leur tems."⁵⁰

Hume, much later, in The Natural History of Religions (1757), took up the same theme of the rehabilitation of heresy:

Though the reproach of heresy may, for some time, be bandied about among the disputants, it always rests at last on the side of reason. Any one, it is pretended, that has but learning enough of this kind to know the definition of ARIAN, PELAGIAN, E-RASTIAN, SOCINIAN, SABELLIAN, EUTYCHIAN, NESTORIAN, MONOTHELITE, etc. not to mention PROTESTANT, whose fate is yet uncertain, will be convinced of the truth of this observation. (59)

Although Hume followed this statement with, "It is thus a system becomes more absurd in the end, merely from its be-
ing reasonable and philosophical in the beginning",⁶⁰ the irony of this orthodox disclaimer proved his agreement with Voltaire's notebook entry on heresy.⁴²

Of course, there could have been no direct influence from Voltaire's notebook to Hume, so that Hume's equation of heresy with rational religion and his use of "Arian" and "Socinian" to illustrate the point was most interesting. Praising heretics, showing thier philosophical soundness was one of the tactics that philosophes chose to harass the Christian establishment, and the Socinians offered themselves as an ideal example.⁶¹ One of the reasons,

59. Hume, On Religion, p. 71. 60. Ibid., p. 71.

61. The Quakers too had tendencies towards rational theology; see above pp. 89-91 and Pomeau, Religion, pp. 135-136.

then, that Voltaire lauded the Socinians was as a ploy in his battle against orthodoxy.

The other reason was, simply, that he was genuinely attracted to the person of Clarke and to Socinian thought. We have already shown how the Lettres philosophiques demonstrated this high regard, and the correspondence of the 1730's was full of compliments for Newton,⁶² Locke, and Clarke. Another solid proof of the sincerity of his esteem was Voltaire's heavy reliance on these Socinian thinkers in his own metaphysical writings of the two decades following his English visit.⁶³

Voltaire's letter of this period to Jacob Vernet, the Genevese Calvinist, following their initial meeting in Paris, offered a view from another angle of Voltaire's thought about the heretics:

Mais en fait de religion, nous avons, je crois, vous et moi, de la tolérance, parce qu'on ne ramène jamais les hommes sur ce point: je passe tout aux hommes, porvu qu'ils ne soient pas persécuteurs; j'aimerais Calvin, s'il n'avait pas fait brûler Servet; je serais serviteur du concile de Constance, sans les fagots de Jan Huss. (64)

62. Here is one example from the scores possible: "J'ai relu le raisonneur Clarke, Mallebranche et Locke. Plus je les relis, plus je me confirme dans l'opinion où j'étais que Clarke est le meilleur sophiste que ait jamais été, Mallebranche le romancier le plus subtil, et Locke l'homme plus sage." Best., 625, c. 15 August 1733, to Formont.

63. Pomeau, Religion, Part II, Chapter 4.

64. Best., 632, 14 September 1733.

Here was Voltaire's first reference to the antitrinitarian martyr, Servetus, and another variation on the major Voltairian theme of tolerance in religion. The sentiment expressed here was no doubt authentic; Voltaire's hatred of the crimes committed in Christ's name was a major reason behind his refusal of the Christian label. Christendom, as such diverse persons as Voltaire and Kirkegaard saw, offered from its own history the best arguments against one's considering himself a Christian.

2. Locke and Newton: Both Locke and Newton were eager to avoid theological controversy so were most circumspect in what they published on religion.⁶⁵ Neither made any public confession of Socinianism or Unitarianism; yet Voltaire unequivocally identified them as antitrinitarians in the seventh Lettre philosophique.⁶⁶ The Bibliothèque Britannique wondered about this: "On est au reste un peu surpris que Newton and Locke, qui n'ont rien publié en faveur du nouvel Arianisme, se trouvent ici aux côtés du Docteur Clark, comme des Chefs de secte."⁶⁷ Perhaps Voltaire judged Locke a Socinian from Locke's general

65. See above, pp. 72-75 and 88-97.

66. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 79-80.

67. "Lettres Anglois", BB, tome second, première partie (October-December, 1733), 34.

rational approach to religion or from The Reasonableness of Christianity. Or, perhaps, he reported some theological gossip he heard in England or repeated Bayle's judgement. ⁶⁸

Newton wrote an enormous mass of theology, probably more than 1,300,000 words. After his death, his literary executor suppressed Newton's religious writings, declaring them "not fit to be printed."⁶⁹ They remained an embarrassment to his family and to English churchmen so were not permitted to be published until 1950.⁷⁰ In fact, his theological position was most unconventional; he accepted the Bible literally as divinely inspired, and in the Socinian fashion allowed reason as the only authority in its interpretation. A near-fanatical hatred for Athanasius, the doctrine of the trinity, and the Roman Church underlay much of his writing, and he denied divinity to Jesus. Voltaire's first words on Newton as a Unitarian were, in a way, true. "Le grand Monsieur Newton faisoit à cette opinion l'honneur de la favoriser, ce Philosophe pensoit que les Unitaires raisonnoient plus géométriquement que nous."⁷¹

68. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 87, n. 17.

69. McLachlan, Manuscripts, p. 2. This discussion of Newton's theology was drawn from McLachlan's introduction (ibid., pp. 1-26) and from the manuscripts themselves.

70. In McLachlan's edition where he printed only a small fragment of the total; 1934 saw their first accurate description (ibid., p. 7).

71. Lanson, Lettres philosophiques, I, 79.

Given the Bible, then Newton proceeded "geometrically" to deduce an antitrinitarian system.

When Voltaire was preparing the Lettres philosophiques, only two Newtonian religious works had been published, both posthumously, Chronology of Ancient Kindoms (1727) and Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John (1733).⁷² Neither manifested Newton's unitarian christology, although both were examples of Socinian exegesis. Voltaire, then, probably got his surprisingly accurate information about Newton's beliefs from his talks with Dr. Clarke.

Voltaire ignored Observations upon the Prophecies in the Lettres philosophiques although he blasted it thirty years later: "Comment Newton, le plus grand des hommes, a-t-il pu commenter l'Apocalypse. . . . Je crois voir des aigles qui, s'étant élancés dans la nue, vont se reposer sur un fumier."⁷³ He did, however, devote half of Lettre seventeen to Newton's work on chronology, where he used Newton's general method rather than explicated Newton's actual application of it.⁷⁴ Since Newton tried to fit all human history

72. McLachlan, Manuscripts, p. 3.

73. M. XX, 230, from Nouveaux Mélanges (1765). But note that Newton was still the "plus grand des hommes".

74. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, II, 55-61, and 63, n. 43 ("sur l'infini et sur la cronologie").

into what was then considered the scriptural framework with the creation in 4004 b.c., Voltaire had an invitation to amuse himself and his readers with his consummate satire. However, he chose instead to present a view of reason picking away at the edges of the commonplace system of revelation, which moderate tactic allowed him, prudently and effectively, to show Socinian style religious thought in practice.

Lanson's "bombe" was here, too. Under the smooth surface of the subject of chronology, lay a deadly threat to the orthodox religio-political structure. For example, many clandestine philosophes, as inverted fundamentalists, thought that if the Bible could be shown false in only one historical detail, then the whole Christian structure would tremble.⁷⁵ The more subtle heterodox thinkers saw Biblical chronology as one place where the wall could be breached;⁷⁶ Voltaire recruited Newton's considerable force⁷⁷ to help open the breach.

75. Wade, Clandestine, pp. 244-253 and 271-272.

76. Hazard, European Mind, pp. 40-51.

77. Barling missed the point: "One might well wonder what interest this largely forgotten aspect of his work [Newton's chronology] could have held for Voltaire, but it must be remembered that the latter appears to have been fascinated by all the intellectual activities of the Englishman." (Barling, "Art", p. 31.) Barling's guess was an insult to Voltaire's fine critical sense and was also strangely unaware of the concerns of the era.

Incidentally, once again in The Natural History of Religion, Hume paralleled Voltaire in his treatment of Socinianism. The same great men appeared as the patron saints of heresy: "I maintain, that NEWTON, LOCKE, CLARK, etc. being Arians or Socinians, were very sincere in the creed they professed."⁷⁸ Was this embellishment on the heresy theme, I wonder, repeated by other philosophes?

In Locke's case, Voltaire chose to expand an incidental comment in De l'étendue de la connaissance humaine: "Nous ne serons jamais peut-être capables de connoître si un être purement matériel penser ou non",⁷⁹ to illustrate the empiricist's method in philosophy. This particular point had long interested Voltaire. He wrote in his English notebooks:

We do not know what a soul is, we have no idea of the thing, therefore we ought not to admitt it.
We are not of another gender than the beasts but of another species. (80)

This idea was more fully developed a few pages further on:

Je ne scaurois comprendre ce que c'est que la matière, encore moins ce que c'est qu'esprit.

78. Hume, On Religion, p. 84, n. 21.

79. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 170, Voltaire's italics; Locke's Essay, book IV, chapter III, paragraph 22.

80. Notebooks, p. 67, "Cambridge Notebook". This comment may have been inspired by Voltaire's reading Locke. His interest in the subject of the materiality or immateriality of the soul very likely came from French (cont.)

.....

Je ne saurois comprendre
comment je pense,
comment je retiens mes pensees [27
comment je remue.

Les premier principes aux quels mon existence
est attachée sont tous impénétrables. (81)

He concluded that a man would be better off to spend his days usefully in rendering "une terre fertile", rather than to lose himself in speculation about things which went beyond man's competence to know.

As first stated in the Notebooks, Voltaire's thoughts about the soul were much too explicitly radical to consider, even for a moment, publishing. He also had doubts about the acceptability of his first draft of the Lettre on Locke:

[J]e suis aussi obligé de changer tout ce que j'avais écrit à l'occasion de m. Locke, parce qu'après tout je veux vivre en France, et qu'il ne m'est pas permis d'être aussi philosophe qu'un anglais. Il me faut déguiser à Paris ce que je ne pourrai dire trop fortement à Londres. . . . Je compte vous envoyer mon manuscrit dès que j'aurai tâché d'expliquer Newton et d'obscurcir Locke.
(82)

-83

The first (or early) draft, reprinted by Lanson, was indeed dangerously close to the ideas in the notebooks.

(cont.) underground manuscripts (Wade, Clandestine, pp. 69-70, 210-211, 222-228, 272, and 275).

81. Notebooks, p. 74. In this jotting he also reflected that it was impossible to prove the existence or non-existence of deity. See also, ibid., p. 67: "God cannot be proved, nor denied, by the mere force of our reason."

82. Best., 524, ? 6 December 1732, to Formont.

First he denied that anyone really knew what he meant when he spoke of the soul: "Le mot d'âme est un de ces mots que chacun prononce sans l'entendre; nous n'entendons que les choses dont nous avons une idée; nous n'avons point d'idée d'âme."⁸⁴ Then followed an account of a hypothetical experiment where a child, a dog, a cat, and a canary--all born the same day--were observed maturing; an unbiased observer, basing his conclusions only on what he saw, would say: "Je soupçonnerai, mais avec bien de l'apparence, qu'Archimède et une Taupe sont de la même espèce, quoique d'un genre différent."⁸⁵ Much too clear and sharp for safety.

When he sent the first installment of the manuscript for the Lettres philosophiques to Formont, he wrote again of the letter on Locke:

La seule matière philosophique que j'y traite est la petite bagatelle de l'immatérialité de l'âme, mais la chose est trop de conséquence pour la traiter sérieusement. Il a fallu l'égarer pour ne pas heurter de front nos seigneurs les théologiens, gens qui voient si clairement la spiritualité de l'âme qu'ils feraient brûler, s'ils pouvaient, les corps de ceux que en doutent. (86)

83. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 190-203. This essay was first published in 1738 and saw many editions in Voltaire's lifetime.

84. Ibid., I, 192-193. 85. Ibid., I, 197.

86. Best., 527, c. 15 December 1732.

In the final version, Voltaire took on an air of great philosophical humility and wrote in a tentative, non-combative mood. He limited himself to two primary propositions. First, "Je suis corps, et je pense; je n'en sçai pas davantage."⁸⁷ Second, "En effet quel est l'homme qui osera assurer sans une impiété absurde, qu'il est impossible au Créateur de donner à la matiere la pensée et le sentiment!"⁸⁸

Voltaire was, it seemed, on solid theological ground here. How could anyone, even those superstitious men who would cry, "qu'il faut bruler pour le bien de leurs ames, ceux qui soupçonnent qu'on peut penser avec la seule aide du corps",⁸⁹ disagree with an affirmation of philosophical ignorance and a strong defense of God's omnipotence? Moreover, Voltaire had not failed to remind his readers that many of the Church Fathers taught that the soul was corporeal.⁹⁰

Of course, Voltaire's fears were not fantasies and all his precautions proved ineffectual. Only one contemporary commentator, that I have found, followed Voltaire's

87. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 172.

88. Ibid., I, 173. 89. Ibid., I, 173.

90. Ibid., I, 167. Here was have another example where Voltaire's thought was coincidentally parallel with that of some aspect of the Radical Reformation. Recall that Servetus believed that Scripture taught the corporeality of the soul; see above, pp. 16-17.

argument without gross misrepresentation. "Qu'il est même plus aisé d'attribuer la pensée à la matière, que est une substance toute connu, et à laquelle on ne sauroit nier que Dieu n'ait pu donner la faculté de penser."⁹¹ It must have seemed to Voltaire that every "cagot"⁹² in France took offense at his thoughts on the nature of the soul, but he consistently defended himself with the same basic argument: "Ma lettre sur Locke se réduit uniquement à ceci la raison humaine ne sauroit démontrer qu'il soit impossible à dieu d'ajouter la pensée à la matière."⁹³

One Socinian principle, that human speculation must not be mixed in with divine revelation, was made most explicit in both drafts of the letter of Locke.⁹⁴ While the Socinians truly believed that God's word must be kept pure, Voltaire used this doctrine as theological protection. Nowhere did Voltaire's true feelings about theological

91. "Lettres Anglois", EB, tome second, premiere partie (October-December, 1733), 113-114. He did though add a long, nasty footnote (*ibid.*, pp. 114-116), and his saying that Voltaire taught that the nature of matter was known was false.

92. "Je ne crois pas que nos lettres anglaises effrayent sitôt les cagots. . . . Qui osera dire qu'il est impossible que la matière puisse penser?" Best., 616, see note 33 above.

93. Best., 737, see note 24 above.

94. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 192 and 201 (first draft); 170-171 (published version). See also note 40 above.

controversies surrounding the Lettres philosophiques get expressed more forcefully that in two letters written to two of his women friends in the nobility. They were very similar in content and in tone; one said:

On dit qu'il faut je me rétracte. Très volontiers. Je déclareray que Pascal a toujours raison; que fatal laurier, bel astre sont de la belle poésie; que si st Luc et st Marc se contredisent, c'est une preuve de la vérité de la religion à ceux que savent bien prendre les choses; qu'une des belles preuves encor de la religion c'est qu'elle est inintelligible. J'avoueray que tous les prêtres sont désintéressés, que les moines ne sont ny orgueilleux, ny intrigants, ny puants.

(95)

At the same time, Voltaire was writing to officials to deny all responsibility for the appearance of the Lettres philosophiques and to justify himself with avowals of contrite orthodoxy.⁹⁶

C. The Seventh Lettre philosophique, "Sur les Sociniens, ou Ariens, ou Anti-Trinitaires":

1. History of Socinianism: Voltaire hardly treated Socinian doctrine at all in this letter. He mentioned that the English "Socinians" rejected the Athanasian

95. Best., 725, c. 23 May 1734, to Anne Charlotte de Crussol-Florensac, duchesse d'Aiguillon. Best., 724, 23 May 1734, to Marie Vichy de Chamrond, marquise Du Deffand, was the other letter.

96. See above, note 14 and 35. See also Best., 728, May, 1734, to Maurepas.

formula of the trinity and presented an anecdote to illustrate their belief that "le Pere est plus grand que le Fils."⁹⁷ There were, however, a few historical remarks about the antecedents of the English anti-Nicene Christians. First was, "Quoiqu'il en soit, le parti d'Arius commence à revivre en Angleterre aussi bien qu'en Holland et en Pologne."⁹⁸ Unfortunately, Voltaire made two errors in this brief statement; the Polish Socinians had been perfectly exterminated in 1660,⁹⁹ and by 1733 there were no Socinians in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁰ Lanson's note merely canonized Voltaire's mistakes: "Voltaire confond le mouvement antitrinitaire avec le socinianisme que depuis longtemps s'était répandu en Pologne et en Hollande: c'est pourquoi il associe ces deux pays à l'Angleterre."¹⁰¹

The second historical note began, "Vous voyez quelles révolutions arrivent dans les opinions comme dans les Empires. Le parti d'Arius, après trois cens ans de

97. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 78.

98. Ibid., I, 79. He nowhere mentioned the Transylvanian Unitarians.

99. See above, pp. 49-54.

100. See above, pp. 124-127 and 54.

101. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 82, n. 5. Nave's edition is mute on this topic. F.A. Taylor's has a page-and-a-half note on antitrinitarian history (pp. 151-152), but does not mention that Socinianism was dead in Poland and the Netherlands long before Voltaire wrote the Lettres philosophiques.

triomphe et douze siècles d'oubli, renaît enfin de sa cendre."¹⁰² Voltaire's intention here, as in the earlier historical comment, was transparent enough; he wished to lend some weight of tradition to the antitrinitarian cause as part of his programme to legitimize heresy. In this case, his facts were basically correct even though "triomphe" was too optimistic a term.

Voltaire did not let his basic sympathy with the English "Socinians" interfere with his historical sense, as the continuation of the second observation showed:

mais il prend très-mal son tems de reparoitre dans un âge où le monde est rassasié de disputes et des Sectes; celle-ci est encore trop petite pour obtenir la liberté des Assemblées publiques, elle l'obtiendra sans doute, si elle devient plus nombreuse; mais on est si tiède à present sur toute cela, qu'il n'y a plus guère de fortune à faire pour une Religion nouvelle ou renouvelée. (103)

Since a major part of the strategy employed in the Lettres philosophiques involved setting English toleration as a model for France, Voltaire's glossing over of the British laws which specifically exempted antitrinitarians from toleration was understandable.¹⁰⁴

102. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 80. See Lanson's note 13 (ibid., I, 86).

103. Ibid., I, 80. 104. See above, p. 70.

It was true that in the time Voltaire visited England religious feelings were generally at a low level; this was especially true in the class that Voltaire frequented. Abbey and Overton agreed with Voltaire's reasons for the failure of the antitrinitarians to flourish: "it was quite as much owing to the spiritual torpor which overtook the Church and nation . . . as to the strength of conviction, that the Trinitarian question was not further agitated."¹⁰⁵

Moreover, Voltaire's pessimism about the prospects of a unitarian church--"Messieurs Newton, Clarck, Locke, le Clerc, etc., les plus grands Philosophes et les meilleurs plumes de leur tems, aient pû à peine venir à bout d'établir un petit troupeau qui même diminue tous les jours"--¹⁰⁶ fit in well with his theory that religious movements began with fanaticism and fed on ignorance. Cool-headed philosophes like Locke and Newton were not the sort of men who founded sects. The letter on Locke emphasized this point: "jamais les Philosophes ne feront une Secte de Religion. Pourquoi? C'est qu'ils n'écrivent point pour le peuple, et qu'ils sont sans entousiasme."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵. Abbey and Overton, Church, p. 216; see also above, p. 160.

¹⁰⁶. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 80.

¹⁰⁷. Ibid., I, 175.

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Voltaire's concluding thought on the Quakers, a remarkable attempt to link religious growth with socio-economic facts which preshadowed modern sociology of religion, would also apply to the Socinians. Here he argued that the prosperity of the older Quakers led to a decline in the religious fervour of the younger generation; that is, wealth engendered worldliness. So English prosperity, born of tolerance, would not present a fertile ground for new sectarianism.

What could have been Voltaire's sources for Socinian history in this seventh Lettre philosophique? Lanson shows some general similarities between Voltaire's dismissal of the possibility for popular success for Socinianism to Bayle's Dictionnaire article, "Socin".¹⁰⁹ They both thought that Socinianism was too intellectual for the common man. Further, Lanson notes that Voltaire's information that Arianism flourished in the first three hundred years of Christian history could have come from Bayle's article, "Arius",¹¹⁰ but there were many other possible sources for this.

Mason, in his book, Pierre Bayle and Voltaire,

108. Ibid., I, 50-51 (fourth Lettre). See above, p. 47.

109. Ibid., I, 86, n. 14; see above, p. 104.

110. Ibid., I, 86, n. 13.

argues that Voltaire most likely borrowed heavily from the "Socin" article for several topics in the Dictionnaire philosophique (1760's and 1770's) and demonstrates with parallel passages that Voltaire's remarks appended to the Lettres philosophiques on Pascal's "pari" were taken from Bayle.¹¹¹ However, all of the above does not constitute a proof that Voltaire used Bayle for the "Lettre sur les Socinians".

I suspect that if Bayle were a source at all for this Lettre, it was only in the most general, diffused way. Perhaps, Voltaire had read the "Socin" article some time before he wrote the Lettres philosophiques and remembered the gist of Bayle's denigration of the popular fear of a Socinian renaissance. Certainly, had Voltaire followed Bayle closely, he would not have made the historical blunders he did. For example, Bayle was quite clear on the eradication of the Polish Socinians and offered the Transylvanians as the example of an extant antitrinitarian church. Naves, it seems to me has come close to the truth: "Quant aux Sociniens, il semble bien que Voltaire les ait décrits beaucoup moins par observation directe que par imagination zélée."¹¹² And imagination supplanted documentary sources

111. Mason, Bayle and Voltaire, pp. 34 and 42, and 61-62, respectively.

112. Lettres philosophiques, Naves, pp. vi-vii.

too. Usually Voltaire was very careful about the details in his work, and his defense of the Socinians was not helped by his uncharacteristic carelessness.

2. Terminology: "Sur les Sociniens, ou Ariens, ou Anti-Trinitaires" was the title Voltaire gave the seventh Lettre philosophique, and in the body of the Lettre he used these three terms interchangeably and added "Unitaire" as a fourth synonym. Pomeau, Lanson, and F.A. Taylor scored Voltaire for confusing these historically separate and doctrinally distinct sects. ¹¹³ Naves commented that:

En confondant Ariens . . . , Sociniens . . . , et Anti-Trinitaires ou Unitaires anglais, Voltaire simplifie, et il ne retient que leur refus commun du dogme de la Trinité. Son intention est évidente: il veut montrer l'ancienneté de cette école rationaliste et son importance par la diversité de ses adhérents. (114)

While I agree with Naves's assessment of Voltaire's motives for writing the seventh Lettre, I would argue with him and with Pomeau, Lanson, and F.A. Taylor about Voltaire's "confusion" in terminology.

Rather than being confused, Voltaire was simply following accepted ordinary usage--in both French and

113. Pomeau, Religion, p. 137: "il confond les uns et les autres"; Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 81, n. 2; Lettres philosophiques, F.A. Taylor, p. 152, n. 1.

114. Lettres philosophiques, Naves, p. 196, n. 49.

English--which did not retain the subtle and sometimes nearly incomprehensible shades of difference among the four terms.¹¹⁵ Since Voltaire was writing in a light mode for the general public, his choice to stick to the simplest use of technical terms was undoubtedly the wisest he could have made. Even so, in the first sentence of the essay, he did offer his readers a hint of suppressed complexities: "Il y a ici une petite secte composée d'Eclésiastiques et de quelques Séculiers très-sçavans qui ne prennent ni le nom d'Ariens ni de Sociniens."¹¹⁶ Further, there were definite historical connections between continental Socinians and English antitrinitarians, and the English looked back to the Arian dispute in the ancient Church for support.

Yet there was a peculiar use of words in the "Letter on the Socinians". The first sentence began, "Il y a ici une petite secte,"^{116, 117} thus, clearly he gave the English unitarians the status of a sect. Later in his commentary on the lack of zeal he found in England for religious innovation, Voltaire called, "Le Parti d'Arius . . .

115. See above, Chapter IV.

116. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 78. One wonders how aware of these complexities was Voltaire himself in light of the historical errors in his discussion of the Socinians.

117. My italics.

un petit troupeau"¹¹⁸ which was unable to establish itself at that time as "il prend très-mal son tems de reparoître dans un âge où le monde est rassasié de disputes et de Sectes."^{103, 117} Thus, Voltaire, in this case, implied that the unitarians were not a sect. And he regretted that while in an earlier age literary barbarians "aient fondé des Sectes qui partagent l'Europe",^{119, 117} in the eighteenth century, the greatest philosophers and best writers could only gather "un petit troupeau".¹⁰⁶ There was, obviously, an inconsistency in Voltaire's use of the word "secte"--in the sense of Littré's first meaning, "Ensemble des personnes que font profession d'une même doctrine".¹²⁰ He vacillated between calling the English unitarians a "secte" and declaring that they were unable to organize such a "secte".

Thieriot, in carrying out his duties as editor of the English edition of the Lettres philosophiques, noted Voltaire's strange use of "secte". Unfortunately, Thieriot's letter was lost, but we can infer his objections from Voltaire's reply: "Vous me dites que le docteur Clarke n'a pas été soupçonné de vouloir faire une nouvelle secte. Il

118. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 80.

119. Ibid., I, 80.

120. Littré, Dictionnaire, IV, 1874.

en a été convaincu, et la secte subsiste, quoique le troupeau soit petit. Le docteur Clarke ne chantait jamais le Credo d'Athanase.¹²¹ Voltaire was wrong; Clarke was never convicted of anything at all,¹²² and there never was an ensemble of believers or a common doctrine to confess.¹²³ In fact, Clarke was not even charged with trying to establish a new sect; he was extremely reluctant to disrupt Church unity. Rather they accused him of the heresy of Arianism,¹²⁴ which accusation he honestly refuted.

Neither did Voltaire's calling the English anti-trinitarians a "secte" correspond with the second meaning as given by Littré: "Particulièrement. Ensemble de ceux qui suivent une opinion accusé d'hérésie ou d'erreur."¹²⁵

121. Best., 576, ? April 1733, to Thieriot.

122. See above, pp. 74-75. But Besterman's commentary to letter 576 takes up Voltaire's part against Thieriot. "Voltaire was quite right, since Samuel Clarke was condemned by Convocation and had trouble in clearing himself; by 'la secte subsiste' Voltaire meant that there remained a few right-thinking people."

123. See above, Chapter III, Section B; see also, Stephen, History, I, 109 and Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 87, n. 19.

124. Abbey and Overton, Church, pp. 213-214; Colligan, Arian Movement, pp. 34-39; Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 239-242. That is not to say that Clarke was orthodox in his views on the trinity, but his position was substantially different from Arius's.

125. Littré, Dictionnaire, IV, 1874.

There was neither an ensemble nor one opinion. Littré, indeed, quoted the passage where Voltaire complained that Newton, Locke, Clarke, and Le Clerc were able only to draw a few followers unlike earlier fanatics who had easily founded sects as the primary historical illustration for the second meaning of "secte".^{106, 119}

Therefore, when, at the beginning of the seventh Lettre, Voltaire called the few English anti-Nicene thinkers a "secte", his terminology was at variance with ordinary usage. Besterman's suggestion that Voltaire only meant "that there remained a few right-thinking people"¹²² by "la secte subsist", if correct, would show that Voltaire was in error, for a "few right-thinking people" do not constitute a sect. At any rate, the terminology at the beginning of the seventh Lettre contradicted that at the end. For once, Thieriot was right.

Voltaire, in the other Lettres philosophiques, furnished more evidence against himself. For example, there was the statement from the Lettre on Locke quoted earlier: "jamais les Philosophes ne feront une Secte de Religion."¹⁰⁷ In the first six letters on the Quakers (four), Anglicans, and Presbyterians, he used "Secte"¹²⁶ fourteen times and "Séctaire"¹²⁷ once, in all cases referring to an established

126. Lettres philosophiques, Lanson, I, 5, 32, 34 (three times), 45, 49 (twice), 50, 61 (twice), 62, 72, 74.

religious organization with well-defined beliefs or to a member of such an organization. One example was "la Secte Episcopale et la Presbiterienne."¹²⁸ All these cases were in conflict with the use of "Secte" in the first sentence of the seventh Lettre to describe the English "Socinians". Finally, remember that in the 1730 edition of the Henriade, Voltaire suppressed his earlier characterization of the "Unitaires" as "Sectaires".¹²⁹

The tension between Voltaire's terminology at the beginning of this letter and that in its body is like the conflict shown in his treatment of Socinian history. He was uncomfortably poised between his desire to present the unitarian heretics as a respectable group and the reality that they were scattered, disorganized, and outside the law. Voltaire's resolution of the problem, in both cases was not very successful.

While Voltaire was definitely in error when he wrote Thieriot that Clarke had been convicted of sectarianism and that a Socinian sect still existed in England, he might well have found out from his personal contacts that Clarke wanted to see a non-Athanasian, or anti-trinitarian,

127. Ibid., I, 49.

128. Ibid., I, 74 ("Sur les Presbiteriens"). This Lettre had its own peculiar use of words: "Prêtre" for Calvinist minister.

129. See above, pp. 165-168.

reform within the church. Clarke prepared a version of the Book of Common Prayer which deleted all references to the orthodox doctrine of the trinity among other changes. In Clarke's lifetime, it was never used (in a church, at least), but it is highly unlikely that anyone would have developed a liturgy merely as a theological exercise or for personal use--a liturgy for one man would be senseless.

Much later, on 17 April 1774, when Theophilus Lindsey conducted the first Unitarian service in England, he used Dr. Clarke's Prayer Book, modified again--but slightly.¹³⁰

From there it passed to James Freeman, who on 19 June 1785, convinced the proprietors of King's Chapel, Boston,¹³¹ to adopt a minor revision of Lindsey's revision of

Clarke's revision of the Book of Common Prayer, thus establishing the first Unitarian church in America.¹³² Should

one want to experience first hand, today, the force of mind of Clarke, whom Voltaire so highly admired, services at King's Chapel are at 11:00 on Sunday mornings. The point is that Voltaire could have misinterpreted Clarke's interest

130. Wilbur, Unitarianism, II, 284-285.

131. Boston, as all cultured men know, is the Hub of the Universe. Now, King's chapel is at the corner of Beacon and Tremont streets: that is, at the precise center of the Hub of the Universe. The religious significance of this is overwhelming.

132. Wright, Beginnings, pp. 210-212.

in reforming the Anglican confession as a desire to establish a new sect.

Locke, though he never left the Anglican confession, at one time (1688) considered in his secret notebooks, which he wrote in code, establishing a new sect, the "Society of Pacific Christians". In practice and doctrine it was to have been Quaker simple and Socinian rationalist. However, nothing ever came of this idea. Voltaire could not have known of it as Locke's notebooks remained locked away in writing desk until recently in this century.¹³³ Clarke's friend Whiston¹³⁴ may have had some intention of founding a new communion.¹³⁵ Might Voltaire have heard some hint of these feeble attempts and inferred a sectarian conspiracy?

D. 1734: Voltaire a Socinian?: Pomeau, in discussing the Lettre philosophique on the Socinians, made a startling statement: "Pour sa part, Voltaire est certainement un 'unitaire'."¹³⁶ He supported this claim with the confession of faith Voltaire made to the Quaker

133. Cranston, Locke, p. 297.

134. See pp. 73-74, above.

135. Abbey and Overton, Church, pp. 202-205.

136. Pomeau, Religion, p. 137.

Higginson,¹³⁷ the story about the communion wafer,¹³⁸ and the following argument:

Les graves partisans du nouvel arianisme obéissent aux exigences de leur raison, quand ils préfèrent le Dieu des philosophes, logiquement un, à la Trinité chrétienne. C'est cet acheminement des théologiens anglais les plus éclairés vers le déisme que Voltaire indique dans sa dernière Lettre sur la religion en Angleterre. (139)

To review, Voltaire's confession to Higginson was that he was a deist, and there was considerable difference between a libertine French deist and a unitarian of the time; the wafer anecdote showed an irreverence completely foreign to men like Clarke and Newton.

Pomeau's major argument has two major flaws. First, the "neo-Arians" did not follow their reason alone; they followed the Bible, interpreted by reason alone, to their rejection of the Nicene doctrine of the trinity. Second, the God of the antitrinitarians, of Locke, Newton, Clarke, and Le Clerc, was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob--Who acted in history, Who sent Jesus as the Messiah to redeem mankind--not le dieu fainéant of Voltaire and deism. Recall that Voltaire cried to God in the Epître à Uranie, with something like devotion, "Je ne suis pas chrétien;

137. See above, pp. 159-160.

138. See above, p. 155.

139. Pomeau, Religion, p. 138. Pomeau also mentioned a 1739 variant of the the seventh Lettre which said that Clarke's contemporaries did not consider his Christian.

mais c'est pour t'aimer mieux."¹⁴⁰ All the Socinians, Unitarians, neo-Arians, and antitrinitarians mentioned in this study, on the contrary, always argued with apparent sincerity that they were truly Christian.

If Voltaire could be called a "unitaire", then it could only be in the most abstract sense of the word with no reference to the history of the antitrinitarian movement. Then any monotheist who denied divinity to Jesus--Moslem, Jew, or whatever--would qualify, and "unitaire" would lose all its distinctive meaning. Voltaire was not a unitarian or Socinian in 1734, nor had he been one at any earlier point in his religious life. What should be stressed is Pomeau's final thought quoted above: that Voltaire wanted to present his readers a view of rationalism in religion with affinities to deism when he wrote of Socinians in the Lettres philosophiques.

While Voltaire could not accept the specific doctrines of the Socinians and was even repelled by their Biblicalism, he was attracted, on the other hand, to their general principles and to their persons. "Freedom, tolerance, and reason in religion", the Unitarian trinity, was also¹⁴¹ Voltaire's.

140. M. IX, 361; see also, pp. 127-129, above.

141. Gay (Politics, pp. 31-32) gave me the idea of speaking of a Voltairian trinity.

VIII

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man. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd for the Univers-
ity Court of St Andrews, 1967.
- BB Bibliothèque Britannique, ou histoire des ouvrages
des savans de la Grande-Bretagne.
- FS French Studies.
- JL Journal Littéraire.
- M. Voltaire. OEuvres Complètes. Edited by Louis Mo-
land. 52 vols. Paris: Garnier, 1877-1885.
- PMIA Publications of the Modern Language Association of
America.
- PSRL The Present State of the Republick of Letters.
- RCC Revue des cours et conférences.
- RH Revue de Hollande.
- RHLF Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France.
- RLC Revue de Littérature Comparée.
- RP Revue de Paris.
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A. Selected Works Consulted but not Cited in This Study:

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B. Three Articles Examined Too Late to Consider in the Text of this Study:

- Barber, W.H. "Voltaire and Quakerism: Enlightenment and the inner light", SV, XXIV (1963), 81-109.

Here W. H. Barber traces Voltaire's writings on the Quakers and shows that he used them both as an historical weapon to attack orthodoxy and because he genuinely admired them. That is, Barber's conclusions about the Quakers and Voltaire parallel mine about the Socinians and Voltaire. What I have had to say about the Quakers in this study is not in conflict with Barber's article.

- Brown, Harcourt. "The composition of the Letters concerning the English Nation", AE (1967), 15-34.

Professor Brown has argued, on stylistic grounds, that Voltaire himself wrote a number of the Letters in the English version of the Lettres philosophiques, including the Letter on the Socinians. (See especially pages 23-24 and 33.) This is

obviously very important to Voltarian studies. However, in the present work, since terminological practices in regards to Socinianism were very similar in French and English, no significant changes are indicated.

Fletcher, Dennis J. "The Fortunes of Bolingbroke in France in the eighteenth Century", SV, XLVII (1966), 207-232.

This excellent article confirms (thank God) my interpretation of the relationship between Voltaire and Bolingbroke. (See especially pages 208-215.)