

Introduction

It is said that, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the west witnessed the emergence of a newly self-conscious and autonomous human being, inquisitive about the universe, self-assured in his own judgments, skeptical of dogmas, insurgent against authority, responsible of his own beliefs, full of love of the classical past but even more devoted to a greater future, gratified of his humanity, conscious of his differentiation from nature, mindful of his artistic capacities as single creator, assured of his intellectual power to understand and command nature, and altogether less dependent on an omnipotent god. But what were currently the more significant moments of the age of reason? Who are the most influencing thinkers of this epoch? What are the main characters of it? What is actually the relation between reason and religion?

Enlightenment meanings

The English term, Enlightenment, in fact does not make its appearance until the nineteenth century, when it vies with the expression the Age of Reason. During the eighteenth century the philosopher Berkeley, for instance, speaks of that 'ocean of light, which has broke in made his way, in spite of slavery and superstition' while another Englishman remarks that the century 'is enlightened beyond the hopes and imaginations of former times'. The poet Alexander Pope, pointing proudly to the grand philosophical and scientific syntheses of the age. Declares:

Nature and Nature's laws lay hide in night.

God said, let Newton be! And all Is light

Les seules lumières de la raison naturelle sont capables de conduire.

Les hommes à la perfection de la science et de la sagesse humaine.

Only the light of natural reason is able to lead man to the perfection of knowledge and human wisdom.

The same message may be found in poetic form:

Et ce qu'avait produit l'ignorance grossière

Disparaît aux grands jour d'un siècle de lumière.

And may those things gross ignorance has born.

Be banished in the light of our new age's dawn.

We find the idea of light in a number of parallel combinations: Aufklärung und licht, Freiheit and Licht-Enlightenment and Light, Liberty and Light'. 'Enlightenment means removing those veils and secrets that obstruct our sight, making way for light to enter our hearts and minds to illuminate the former and warm the latter and hence make its way into those realms of truth and order where man's destiny and happiness hold sway.'. Wieland speaks of freedom of thought, and freedom of press, which are to the

mind what light is to the eyes'. the young Herder seeks to characterize the age in which he lived, he calls it our enlightened age, the brightest of centuries.

It was not merely the intellectual concepts of the century that were to be illuminated by this new light; it was to penetrate every sphere of human activity. We have already quoted the Italian opinion that legislation, trade and public safety depended on the light of the nation. In the same vein Wieland extols every contribution that casts some light' on political economy, politics, the civil and military constitution, religion, morals, public education, the sciences, arts, and crafts and husbandry in any part of our common fatherland'. In this way Wieland reviews all the fields in which light might be shed to advantage.[\[i\]](#)

Enlightenment first footsteps

Throughout the later middle ages and the early modern epoch downwards to around 1650, European civilization was based on a largely shared nucleus of faith, tradition, and authority. On the contrary after 1650, everything, no matter how essential or intensely rooted, was questioned in the light of reason and frequently challenged or replaced by startlingly different concepts generated by the New philosophy and what may still usefully be termed the Scientific revolution .

Admittedly the Reformation had earlier caused a deep break in western Christendom. Mid-seventeenth century Europe was still, not just predominantly but overwhelmingly, a culture in which all debates about man, God, ethics, liberty, and the world which penetrated into the public sphere revolved around 'confessional'- that is Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed(Calvinist), or Anglican issues, and scholars fought above all to establish which confessional bloc possessed a monopoly of truth and a God-given title to authority. It was a civilization in which almost no one challenged the essentials of Christianity or the basic premises of what was taken to be a divinely ordained system of aristocracy, monarchy, land-ownership, and ecclesiastical authority.

On the contrary, after 1650, a radical process of rationalization and secularization set in which rapidly overthrew theology's age-old hegemony in the world of study, slowly but surely eradicated magic and belief in the supernatural from Europe's intellectual culture, and led a few openly to challenge everything inherited from the past-not just commonly received assumptions about mankind, society, politics, and the cosmos but also the veracity of the Bible and the Christian faith or indeed any faith. Of course, most people at all levels of were profoundly disquieted by such sweeping intellectual and cultural change and frightened by the upsurge of radical thinking. Before 1650 everyone had the ability to discuss, dispute, and write about revelation, confessional differences between religions, sects, and so on. Revealed religion such as Christianity[\[ii\]](#) .

After the great renewal came the enlightenment ;after the age of science came the age of reason ;in an era from the 1620s to 1815 according to some historians or from 1688(The glorious Revolution)to 1789(the French Revolution),some other periods were suggested to limit the enlightenment, reason becomes the unifying and central point of this epoch, expressing all that in longs and strives for achieves, but we must be aware of the concept 'reason 'and what it means ;it does not mean the abstract one but the practical reason

[iii]. For that the attempt to solve the central problem of philosophic method involves rescue to Newton's « rules of philosophy » rather than to Descartes' « Discourse of method » [iv], with the result philosophy takes an entirely new direction, it takes the direction of induction rather than of deduction, and that was the main result of Bacon's method. Bacon's most important book; the advancement of learning is in many ways remarkably modern. Bacon is commonly regarded as the originator of the saying 'knowledge is power', the whole basis of his philosophy is practical; to give mankind mastery over the forces of nature by means of scientific discoveries and inventions. Bacon is the first who have emphasized the importance of induction as opposed to deduction [v].

Knowledge from virtue to power

The principle of the Enlightenment was intellectualistic. Knowledge passed for the greatest of the powers of the mind. Knowledge, it was thought, would not only unlock the secrets of nature, but it would insure virtue and teach the correct rules for creating poetry and art.

Secondly, the spirit of the Enlightenment was practical and utilitarian. It sought to promote the happiness of the people by remodeling institutions. It justified poetry and religion by finding profit in them. In fact, by this method it missed the highest values of emotion which are self-confidence; sentiment was groomed into sentimentality.

Thirdly, the Enlightenment was optimistic, fully convinced of the intrinsic goodness of mankind, and of man's ability to win happiness. This optimism was due to partly to the exaltation following on discovery of a new principle; pregnant with an exit of mankind from the tutelage of a minor exactly expressed the self confidence of the new spirit.

As this spirit arose in the field of natural science, it was in that field that it first attained maturity. Far from watching science with suspicion, hostility, and dread, the men of that time came mostly to welcome its discoveries with enthusiasm. A reckless search for truth was demanded; the methods of experiment and mathematical analysis were justified by their success. No longer could scholastic tradition, the authority of the state, or even the sanctity of revelation be successfully pleaded as a bar to the acceptance of scientifically established truths

From this field the method was transferred to that of the social sciences. Perhaps the most characteristic achievement of the thinkers of the eighteenth century was the establishment of the natural system of the moral and social disciplines. These men were convinced that prejudices, religion, and morality were no less subject to fixed formula than were astronomy and physics. The idea of a natural law, a natural ethics, and a natural religion, found in germ much earlier, now become dominant. Convinced as they were of the unchangeableness of human nature, the historians of this period failed to allow sufficiently for the peculiarities of former ages. In other fields, while their fundamental axiom was correct, the thinkers of that age sometimes erred through too hastily generalization. But on the whole they did a work wonderful both in newness and incite permanent value [vi].

Bacon's most important book, the advancement of learning, is in many ways remarkably modern. He is commonly regarded as the originator of the saying 'knowledge is power'. While Socrates had equated knowledge with virtue, Bacon equated knowledge with power; its practical usefulness was the very measure of its validity. With Bacon, science took on a new role –utilitarian, utopian, the material and human counterpart to god's plan of spiritual salvation .Man was created by God to interpret and hold dominion over nature. The pursuit of natural science was therefore his religious obligation. Man's primal fall required that such a pursuit be painstaking and fallible, but if he would discipline his mind and purify his vision of nature from age-old prejudices, man would achieve his divine right. Through science, the man of the modern era could assert his true superiority over the ancients. History was not cyclical, as was supposed by the ancients, but progressive, for man now stood at the dawn of a new, scientific civilization.[vii]

With Newton's synthesis, the Enlightenment began with an unprecedented confidence in human reason, and the new science's success in explicating the natural world affected the efforts of philosophy in two ways: first, by locating the basis of human knowledge in the human mind and its encounter with the physical world, and second, by directing philosophy's attention to an analysis of the mind that was capable of such cognitive success.

The Triumph of Newton and Locke

Not less striking that the growth of English empire and liberty was the prestige of English thought. As Italy had led Europe in the Renaissance, as Germany had guided the reformation, as France had dominated the age of the Great Renewal, so England kindled the enlightenment.

One of the best known and most striking features of the Early Enlightenment is a cultural and intellectual movement which swept the continent from France to Russia, and Scandinavia to Sicily, in the 1730s and 1740s. This was the so-called anglomania of the eighteenth century, a near universal English ideas, influences ,and styles. Suddenly, virtually everything English was in demand in Europe .For the first time, English poetry and plays were widely studied. English grammars and dictionaries, rare in the past, became commonplace, British constitutional monarchy began to be widely admired .Above all; Newton and Locke were almost everywhere eulogized and lionized.

The phenomenon is well known and of crucial importance for the general evolution of western civilization[viii]. Yet the particular play of cultural and intellectual forces generating the anglomania of the 1730s and 1740s has not been much considered, or studied. It is certain, in any case, that there are at least two strikingly diverse ways explaining the phenomenon and relating it to its historical context. Some scholars have been inclined to locate the origins of the Enlightenment itself in precisely those intellectual streams, Newtonians and Locke's empiricism, which spearheaded, so to speak, Britain's cultural conquest of the west. The notion that the French and other continental Philosophers 'looked to England as the mother of the Enlightenment[ix]and that the 'fashion for deism 'in France was a daughter of anglomania 'gains plausibility from the incontestable fact that many books proclaiming the mainstream high Enlightenment, published on the continent from the 1730s onwards, clearly professed

to be inspired by English ideas. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Voltaire's intellectual, as distinct from rhetorical and literary, contribution to the Enlightenment, consists of little more than introducing Newton and Locke to the continent or, as Paolo Mattia Doria called his 'lettres philosophiques' (1734), mere 'propaganda' for English philosophy[x].

Certainly, Voltaire's *Eléments de la philosophie de Newton* (1739) exerted a formidable influence in the expansion of mainstream moderate Enlightenment thought while, intellectually, Voltaire is here nothing more than a forceful and witty mouthpiece for Newtonians.

Yet there is also another, and arguably a better explanation. Incontrovertibly, from the 1730s there was an international 'cult' of Newton and Locke. The view that while the 'propagandists of the Enlightenment were French...its patro saints and pioneers were British :Bacon, Newton and Locke had such splendid reputations on the continent that they quite overshadowed the revolutionary ideas of a Descartes or a Fontenelle at first glance seems fully supported by d'Alembert eulogy of these British thinkers in his discours préliminaire to the encyclopédie. If Spinoza dismisses Bacon as a philosopher who simply makes assertions while proving hardly anything'6Spinoza letters 59 62.D'Alembert eulogized Bacon as so great that 'on serait tenté de le regarder comme le plus grand ,le plus universel, et le plus éloquents des philospphes[xi].

Empiricism, Skepticism, Relativism: Hallmarks of the Enlightenment

The term 'empiricist' is used broadly of anyone who thinks that all knowledge of the world is based upon experience-or, slightly more narrowly, of anyone who thinks that all substantive knowledge is based upon experience. Those who are empiricists in the broad sense might allow that there is substantive knowledge not based upon experience if, for instance, they believed (as Locke did) that the existence of God or the truths of ethics could be demonstrated. They might none the less believe the truths about the natural world could only be established by observation and experiment. One important contribution Locke made to developing empiricism as a philosophical doctrine was in relation to the theory of ideas. Whereas Descartes and others had held that certain ideas were 'innate', Locke held that all our ideas are ultimately derived from experience, either from the senses or from our mind turning 'its view inward upon itself' [xii]. Against Descartes and others who held the concept of God to be innate. Locke insists that we arrive at a concept of God through reflection. The concept of an 'eternal most powerful, and most knowing being' is a complex one. Locke agreed with Descartes that the existence of such being could be demonstrated a priori. His empiricism is not, therefore, straightforwardly to be contrasted with Descartes 'rationalism. None the less, his rejection of innate ideas was taken up by many philosophers in the eighteenth century and became one of the hallmarks of the Enlightenment.

Hume, in saying that 'men...will hearken to no arguments [in natural philosophy] but those which are derived from 'experience' might be understood as claiming that, by the middle of the eighteenth century, empiricism had established itself as the methodology for the natural sciences. He also thought, that people ought to go further, and be empiricists in moral philosophy as well as natural. And indeed he defended empiricism in a narrower, more rigorous sense, rejecting all rationalist metaphysics as well as ethics. For Hume, as for any strict empiricist, no substantive question could be settled except

by reference to experience. Thus in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, he is brief and dismissive about the traditional a priori arguments for the existence of God. The argument discussed sympathetically and at length in the dialogues is an argument from experience.

Hume was more thorough-going in his empiricism than Locke, in whom; it is possible to detect rationalist elements. But this is not to say that Locke was inconsistent in as much that such elements are compatible with a broad empiricism. Insofar as empiricism was widespread in the eighteenth century, it was of the broader sort. This is the empiricism or 'experimental philosophy' defended by members of the royal Society. Though it is natural to extend the demand that arguments are only drawn from experience into ethics and natural theology, there is no necessity to do so.

The birth of new psychology

Condillac's attempt to show that all psychological reality is a transformation, a metamorphosis, or simple sense perception is continued by Helvetius in his book (*On the Mind*)(*De l'esprit*). The influence which this weak and unoriginal work exerted on the philosophical literature of the eighteenth century is explicable in that the epoch found here a basic element of its thought expressed with pregnant clarity, and indeed with an exaggeration which parodies this thought. In Helvetius's exaggeration, the methodological limitation and danger of this mode of thinking is clearly presented. The limitation consists in a leveling process which threatens to deny the living wealth of human consciousness and to look upon it. According to Helvetius there are neither fundamental graduations in the scale of ethical values nor radical graduations of theoretical form. On the contrary, all such distinctions boil down to the same undifferentiated mass of sensation. The so-called faculties of judgments and cognition, imagination and memory, and understanding and reason, are by no means specific original powers of the soul. Here again we have been subject to the same delusion. We think we have transcended the sphere of sense perception when we have only slightly modified its appearance. The criticism which explains away this modification also applies to theoretical distinctions. All operations of the mind can be reduced to judgment, and judgment consists only in grasping similarities and differences between individual ideas. But the recognition of similarity and difference presupposes an original act of awareness which is analogous to, or indeed identical with, the perception of a sense quality. « I judge or I perceive that of two objects the one I call 'fathom' makes a different impression on me from the one I call 'foot', and the color I call 'yellow', hence I conclude that in such a case to judge is simply to perceive. » Here, as one sees, both of the edifice of ethical values and the logically graded structure of knowledge are demolished. Both structures are, as it were, razed to the ground because it is thought that the only unshakable foundation of knowledge lies in sensation. [\[xiii\]](#)

It would be erroneous to consider the fundamental viewpoint represented by Helvetius as typical of the content of the philosophy of Enlightenment, as has often been done, and it is equally erroneous to regard it as typical of thought of the French Encyclopaedists. For the sharpest criticism of Helvetius's work was exercised by precisely this school of thought; and this criticism originated among the best minds in French philosophical literature, as, for instance, Turgot and Diderot but one thing is undeniable, namely, that in Helvetius as well as in Condillac a certain methodology appears, a methodology characteristic of an decisive for the entire eighteenth century

.Here was a form of thinking whose positive achievement and immanent limitations, whose triumphs and defeats, were so to speak predetermined.[\[xiv\]](#)

Religion as the main target of critics

If we were to look for a general characterization of the age of the Enlightenment, the traditional answer would be that its fundamental feature is obviously a critical and skeptical attitude towards religion. If we attempt to test this traditional view by concrete historical facts, we soon come to entertain the gravest doubts and reservations so far a German and English thought of the Enlightenment is concerned. Yet French philosophy of the eighteenth century seems to confirm the traditional view all the more stubbornly. In this judgment opponents and enemies, admirers and devoted followers have all agreed. Voltaire in his writings and letters never tires of repeating his old battle cry: E'crâsez l'infâme. And if cautiously adds that his struggle is not with faith but with superstition, not with the religion but with church, yet the next generations, which saw in Voltaire its spiritual leader, did not uphold this distinction. French Encyclopedias' declare war openly on religion, on its claims to validity and truth. It accuses religion, of having been incapable of having been an eternal hindrance to intellectual progress and a just social and political order. Holbach in his Natural politics recurs untiringly to this point. His indictment of religion is climaxed in the charge that while religion educated men to fear invisible tyrants, it also made men slavish and cowardly toward earthy despots, stifling all initiative to the independent guidance of their own destiny. Deism too is now denounced as an amorphous hybrid and a weak compromise. Diderot states that deism had cut off a dozen heads from the Hydra of religion, but that from the one head it had spared, all the others would grow again[\[xv\]](#).

This complete rejection of religious faith in general, in whatever historical event may appear and no matter what arguments may support it, seems henceforth to be the only means to free man from slavery and prejudice and to open up the way to his real happiness. Diderot has Nature say to man: « In vain, Slave of superstition, do you seek your happiness beyond the limits of the world in which I have paced you. Have the courage to free yourself from the yoke of religion, my haughty rival, which does not recognize my prerogatives. Cast out the gods who have usurped my power, and turn to my laws. A Return to nature from which you fled; she will console you and dispel all those fears which now oppress you. Submit to nature, to humanity, and to yourself again; and you will find flowers strewn all along the pathway of your life. « Examine the history of all nations and all centuries and you will always find men subject to three codes: the code of nature, the code of society, and the code of religion; and constrained to infringe upon all three codes in succession, for these codes never was in harmony, The result of this has been that there never was in any country ... a real man, a real citizen, or a real believer»[\[xvi\]](#) Whoever has understood this fact, can never return to the previous state of things. There can be no compromise and no reconciliation; one must choose between freedom and slavery, between clear consciousness and vague emotion, between knowledge and belief. And for modern man, for the man of the Enlightenment, there can be no hesitation about this choice. He must and should renounce all help from above; he must blaze his own way to a truth which we will possess only in so far as he can win and establish it by his own efforts.

Deism substituted revealed religion

An unorthodox religious attitude that found expression especially among a group of writers beginning with Edward Herbert in the first half of the 17th century and ending with Henry St. John 1st viscount Bolingbroke ,in the middle of the 18th century .In general it refers to what can be called natural religion ,the acceptance of a certain body of religious knowledge that is inborn in every person or that can be acquired by the use of reason ,as opposed to knowledge acquired through either revelation or the teaching of any church.

The proponents of natural religion were strongly influenced by three intellectual concerns: a growing faith in human reason, a distrust of religious claims of revelation leading to dogmatism and intolerance, and, finally, an image of god as rational architect of an ordered world.

Renaissance Humanism had rejected the orthodox Christian emphasis upon the corruption of reason through sin and had affirmed a general faith that human reason could discern universal religious and moral truths apart from any supernatural revelation or specific church teachings. Similarly, deists argued behind the vast differences in modes of worship, piety, and doctrine of the world religions and the Christian churches lay a common rational core of universally accepted religious and moral principles .The early deists asserted that superficial differences of ritual and dogma were insignificant and should accordingly be tolerated.

By the turn of the 17th century ,however, a number of deists ,notably John Tolland, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Mathew Tindal, Thomas Woolston, and Anthony Collins, turned more militant ,beginning to apply the scalped of reason to much of the piety and practice of self. They rejected the elaborate liturgical practices and complex institutional trappings of Catholicism as analogous to ancient pagan superstition .In place of the noxious « enthusiasm »and strict individual piety of the protestant sects; they sought to promote the sober moral striving and tolerance of the religion of reason.

The chief debate between the militant deists and the orthodox Christian thinkers concerned the proper role of appeals to divine revelation as a disclosure of ultimate religious truths, supernatural revelation was necessary as a supplement to teach these same truths more clearly and effectively .Indeed, the catholic tradition since Thomas Aquinas esteemed right reason as always in harmony with revealed truth and capable of disclosing god's natural moral laws. Deists countered that natural religion alone was certain and free of corruption, and they launched a vigorous attack upon all of the Christian additions to the simple moral truths affirmed by reason.

In place of the orthodox Judeo-Christian conception of god as involved actively in shaping and sustaining human history, the deists argued that after god's initial work of creation, He withdrew into detached transcendence, leaving the world to operate according to rational natural rules. Borrowing upon the general prestige of Newton's vision of the universe as a mechanism obeying stable rational laws, they propounded variations on the classic argument from design wherein the existence of a rational creator is inferred from the evidence of the rational ordering of the world.

In England and later in Germany the deists 'attack upon Christian distortions remained moderate, but in France, where the political influence of corrupt catholic prelates had spawned a strong anticlerical reaction, the attack became exceedingly impassioned and

bitter .in the view of Voltaire, every man of sense, every good man, ought to hold the Christian sect in horror »For many other French Philosophers, deism was simply a station upon the road to complete atheism.

By the end of the 18th century, in addition to becoming a dominant religious attitude among English, French and German intellectuals, deism had crossed the Atlantic to shape the religious views of super-class Americans. The first three presidents of the United States of America all subscribed to deist beliefs[xvii].

Deism is derived from the Latin word « Deus »which means « god »,the deism is a theological/philosophical position that combines the rejection of revelation and authority as a source of religious knowledge with the conclusion that reason and observation of natural world are sufficient to determine the existence of a single creator of the universe.

- The main features of deism are:
- The rejection of religions that are based on books that claims to contain the revealed word of god.
- The skepticism of reports of miracles, prophecies and religious « mysteries ».
- The radical rejection of dogma and demagogy.
- The belief that god gave humans the ability to reason.
- God considered as the Supreme Being, the divine watchmaker, grand architect of the universe, nature's god (used in the declaration of independence), and father of lights. Benjamin Franklin used this terminology when proposing that meetings of the constitutional convention begin with prayers.

Kant, the dialogue between reason and religion

The intellectual challenge that faced Immanuel Kant in the second half of the eighteenth century was a seemingly impossible one: on the one hand, to reconcile the claims of science to certain and genuine knowledge of the world with the claim of philosophy that experience could never give rise to such knowledge; on the other hand, to reconcile the claim of religion that man was morally free with the claim of science that nature was entirely determined by necessary laws. With these several claims in such intricate and pointed conflict, an intellectual crisis of profound complexity had emerged .Kant's proposed resolution of that crisis was equally complex, brilliant, and weighty in its consequences.

Kant was too intimate with Newtonian science and its triumphs to doubt that man had access to certain knowledge. Yet he felt as well the force of Hume's relentless analysis of the human mind. He too had come to distrust the absolute pronouncements on the nature of the world for which a purely rational speculative metaphysics had been pretending competence, and concerning which it had fallen into endless and seemingly irresolvable conflict. According to Kant, the reading of Hume's work had awakened him from his « dogmatic slumber », the residue of his long training in the dominant

German rationalist school of Wolff, Leibniz's academic systematize. He now recognized that man could know only the phenomenal, and that any metaphysical conclusions concerning the nature of the universe that went beyond his experience were unfounded. Such propositions of the pure reason, Kant demonstrated, could as readily be opposed as supported by logical arguments. Whenever the mind attempted to ascertain the existence of things beyond sensory experience such as god, the immortality of the soul, or the infinity of the universe _it inevitably found itself entangled in contradiction or illusion. The history of metaphysics was thus a record of contention and confusion, entirely devoid of cumulative progress. The mind required empirical evidence before it could be capable of knowledge, but god, immortality, and other such metaphysical matters could never become phenomena; they were not empirical. Metaphysics, therefore, was beyond the powers of human reason.

But Hume's dissolution of causality also appeared to undercut the claims of natural science to necessary general truths about the world, since Newtonian science was based on the assumed reality of the now uncertified causal principle. If all human knowledge necessarily came from observation of particular instances, these could never be legitimately generalized into certain laws, since only discrete events were perceived, never their causal connection. Nevertheless, Kant was convinced beyond doubt that Newton, with the aid of experiments, had gotten hold of real knowledge of absolute certainty and generality. Who was correct, Hume or Newton? If Newton had attained certain knowledge, and yet had demonstrated the impossibility of such knowledge, how could Newton have succeeded? How certain knowledge was possible in a phenomenal universe? This was the burden of Kant's critique of pure reason, and his solution was to satisfy the claims of both Hume and Newton, of skepticism and science _and in so doing to resolve modern epistemology's fundamental dichotomy between empiricism and rationalism[xviii].

The dialogue between philosophy and theology, ringing like a refrain through the whole history of western culture, finds perfect illustration in the influence of Kant, the famous German philosopher whose works were to become the standard textbooks of generations of thinkers in many fields, lived out a peculiarly uneventful existence. In his significant published work, *Religion within the limits of Reason Alone* (1793), Kant was drawn into the philosophy of religion dialogue once more. This little book was enormously influential in shaping the direction which nineteenth-century theology was to follow. Here both the rational and the ethical concerns of Kant merge in an interpretation of religion, and of Christianity in particular, which was as ingenious as it was controversial.

Religion for Kant, as has been suggested, was « his ethic writ large ». Though man is created with a « radical evil » which tends to wrap his progress toward the good life, there is also in human nature a good disposition of divine inclination which constantly battles with the radical evil, eventually overcoming it and setting man's course in the right direction. The supreme historical illustration of this divine-human struggle in man is Jesus Christ. He is the personification of the victory of the good principle over the radical evil, and he is therefore man's model and archetype of ideal humanity. We shall say...of the character (good or evil) distinguishing man from other possible rational beings, that it is innate in him. Yet in doing so we shall ever take the position

that nature is not to bear the blame (if it is evil) or take the credit (if it is good), but that man himself is its author[xix].

Man himself must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is or is to become. Either condition must be an effect of his free choice; for otherwise he could not be held responsible for it and could therefore be morally neither good nor evil. When it is said, man is created good, this can mean nothing more than: he is created for good and the original predisposition in man is good; not that, thereby, he is already actually good, but rather that he brings it about that he becomes good or evil, according to whether he adopts or does not adopt into his maxim the incentives which this predisposition carries with it (an act which must be left wholly to his own free choice). Granted that some super-natural cooperation may be necessary to his becoming good, or to his becoming better, yet, whether this cooperation consists merely in the abatement of hindrances or indeed in positive assistance, man must first make himself worthy to receive it, and must lay hold of this aid (which is no small matter) — that is, he must adopt this positive increase of power into his maxim, for only thus can good be imputed to him and to be known as a good man.

To become morally good it is not enough merely to allow the seed of goodness implanted in our species to develop without hindrance; there is also present in us an active and opposing cause of evil to be combated. Among the ancient moralists it was preeminently the stoics who called attention to this fact by their watchword « virtue », which (in Greek as well as in Latin) signifies courage and valor and thus presupposes the presence of an enemy.

If a moral religion (which must consist not in dogmas and rites but in the heart's disposition to fulfill all human duties as divine commands) is to be established, all miracles which history connects with its inauguration must themselves in the end render superfluous the belief in miracles in general; for it bespeaks a culpable degree of moral unbelief not to acknowledge as completely authoritative the commands of duty — commands primordially engraved upon the heart of man through reason — unless they are in addition accredited through miracles: « except we see signs and wonders, we will not believe » yet, when a religion of mere rites and observances has run its course, and one based on the spirit and the truth (on the moral disposition) is to be established in its stead, it is wholly conformable to man's ordinary ways of thought, though not strictly necessary, for the historical introduction of the latter to be accompanied and, as it were, adorned by miracles, in order to announce the termination of the earlier religion, which without miracles would never have had any authority. Indeed, in order to win over the adherents of the older religion to the new, the new order is interpreted as the fulfillment, at last, of what was only prefigured in the older religion and has long been the design of providence. If this be sought, it is quite useless to debate those narratives or interpretations; the true religion, which in its time needed to be introduced through such expedients, is now here, and from now on is able to maintain itself on rational grounds. Otherwise one would have to assume that mere, and repetition of, things incomprehensible (which any one can do without thereby being or ever becoming a better man) is a way, and indeed the only way, of pleasing God — an assertion to be combated with might and main. The person of the teacher of the one and only religion, valid for all worlds, may indeed be a mystery; his appearance on earth, his translation thence, and his eventful life and his suffering may all be nothing but miracles; nay, the historical record, which is to authenticate the account of all these miracles, may itself

be a miracle(a supersensible revelation).We need not calling question any of these miracles and indeed may honor the trappings which have served to bring into public currency a doctrine whose authenticity rests upon a record indelibly registered in every soul and which stands in need of no miracle. But it is essential that, in the use of this historical accounts, we do not make it a tenet of religion that the knowing, believing, and professing of them are themselves means whereby we can render ourselves well-planning to god.

If such an empirical faith ,which chance ,it would seem, has tossed into our hands ,is to be united with the basis of a moral faith (be the first an end or merely a means),an exposition of the revelation which has become into our possession is required, that is, a thorough going interpretation of it in a sense agreeing with the universal practical rules of a religion of pure reason .For the theoretical part of ecclesiastical faith cannot interest us morally if it does not conduce to the performance of all human duties as divine commands (that which constitutes the essence of all religion)[xx].

Conclusion

The chiefly influence of the deism on the intellectuals of the eighteenth century(The age of reason), was undoubtedly the metamorphosis of the notion of God, that, If the God of the Middle Ages and of the reformation had been not only a tyrant but a magician, exhibiting his power chiefly by suspending and violating the usual order of nature. The deism metamorphosed God to an architect, a mathematician or a mechanic, revealing his perfection by the reformulation and application of inviolable laws. Miracles, special providences, supernatural revelations, were discarded by the deists not only as incredible in the light of science, but as unworthy of the creator of the universe and the source of all truths.

[i]- Ulrich Im hof,1993, *The Enlightenment*, Blackwell, Oxford U.K ,Cambridge U.S.A.,pp,4.5

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