

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

LECTURE 27 – INTRODUCTION TO (WHAT HISTORIANS CALL) THE ‘MODERN PERIOD’; and one aspect of it, a movement known as DEISM.

We’ll start with a prayer from the years we’re going to study:

O Lord, let me not henceforth desire health or life, except to spend them for you, with you, and in you. You alone know what is good for me; do, therefore, what seems best to you. Give to me, or take from me; conform my will to yours. And grant that, with humble and perfect submission, and in holy confidence, I may receive the orders of your eternal providence; and may equally adore all that comes to me from you: through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Blaise Pascal (1623-62), a layman, a French mathematician, who invented the first digital calculator, who paved the way for the invention of the barometer and who created the first wrist-watch.

The rest of this page is an outline of this lecture.

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The Peace-Treaty of Westphalia (1648)
- 3 ‘Modernity’
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- 6 Economic changes
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TOPIC – QUAKERS (SOCIETY OF FRIENDS)

- 9 ‘Enlightenment’ or ‘Age of Reason’ (1650-1789)
- 10 Reasonableness of Christianity
- 11 Reason alone
- 12 Deism
 - 12.1 Definition of Deism
 - 12.2 Influential Deists
 - 12.3 An answer to Deism

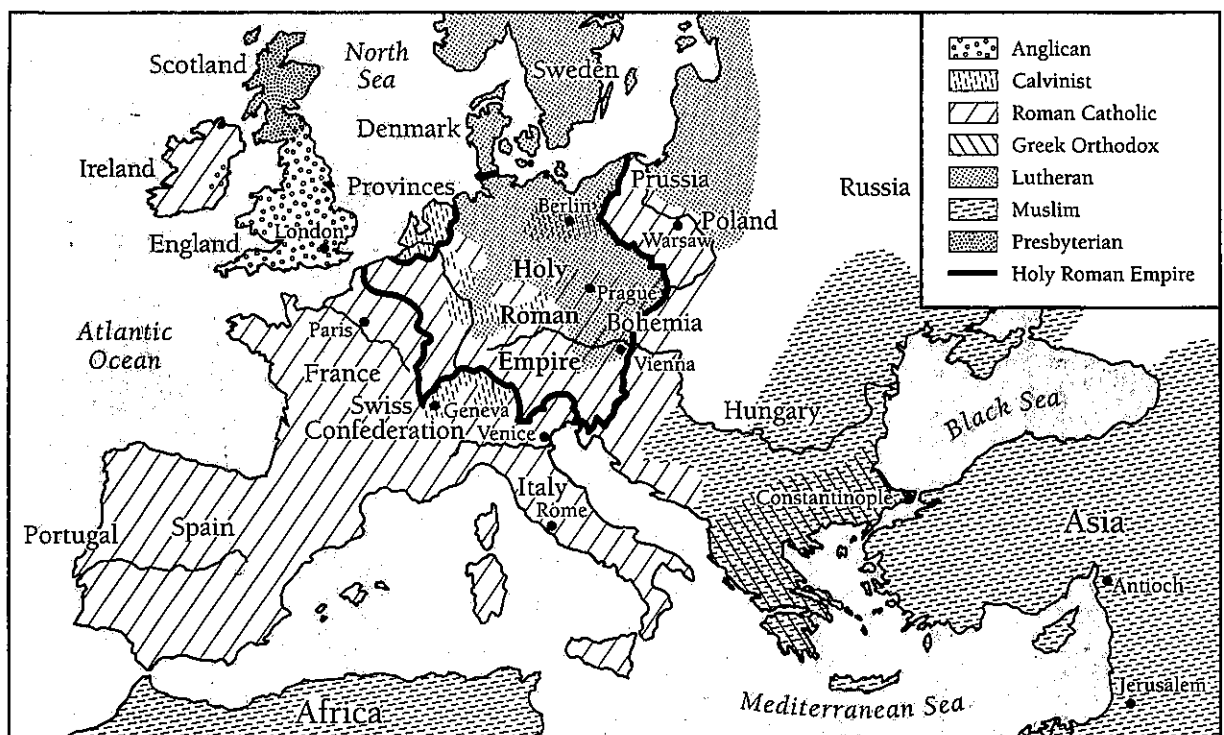
In preparation, read Cairns, 346-353 (Thirty Years War and Peace Treaty of Westphalia), 375-80 (Deism); Lion, 485-93; Vos, 114-5 (Rationalism and Deism); Olson, 540-2 (Modernity / Enlightenment), 518-32 (skim-read for Deism); Lane, 177-8 for Pascal (in the picture above).

1. INTRODUCTION

The year 1650 may not seem to merit the description ‘modern’,¹ but it was the start of two huge changes of attitude, which developed over the next centuries and which still affect us today, (a) the State’s relationship with the Church (section 2, below), and (b) people’s personal view of Christianity (sections 3 to 12, below) - it was the start of what we now call ‘secularism’. (Some historians date ‘secularism’ from the 1650’s, some date it from the Industrial Revolution in the C18, some date it from Darwin in the C19 and some date it from the First World War in the C20.)

We’re looking in this Lecture only at ‘Europe’; there were no corresponding movements in the Orthodox Churches east of the Balkans.

We’ve seen how the Lutheran Church came to dominate much of Northern Europe, while the Reformed (Calvinist) Church took root in Switzerland and Holland and other places, including Scotland; the map below distinguishes ‘Presbyterian’ Scotland from other Calvinist areas. We saw also how the Roman Catholic Church counter-attacked, to recover areas that had become Protestant, all as set out in this map.



CHRISTIANITY AT THE TREATY OF WESTPHALIA, 1648

The ‘Holy Roman Empire’ wasn’t one country - it was a patchwork of hundreds of small, independent, city-states. In the C17, there were over 300 German states, all with their own secular ruler; some had declared themselves Lutheran, some Calvinist, some Catholic.

There was a lot of politics mixed in with religion as until 1658 most of these small states tried to impose their particular brand of Christianity on their neighbours - by force. In the last Lecture we saw how an incident in Prague in 1618, when some exasperated

¹ A monograph which has not yet been mentioned in these Lectures, but which is well worth reading for the years covered by Lectures 27 to 36, is Tim Grass, *Modern Church History*, 2008, London, SCM. He opens it by explaining why a study starting in 1650 may properly be described as ‘Modern Church History’.

Protestant rulers threw two Catholics out of a third-floor window, escalated into the 'Thirty Years War', (1618-48). France joined in to help the Catholics, Scandinavian soldiers sailed across the Baltic to help the Protestants, and the rival armies fought backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, over the Holy Roman Empire - it was just awful, and by 1648 they were exhausted. The Holy Roman Empire lost a third of its population through battle, disease and starvation. It was well described as follows:

As long as Christians had access to power, they used it to compel conformity to the truth: Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed. So men died for their faith, tens of thousands of them. Until something general but very deep in man awoke to revolt.'²

2. THE PEACE-TREATY OF WESTPHALIA (1648)

The Thirty Years War was ended by a Peace-Treaty signed in Munster, in what is now north-west Germany. It not only ended hostilities but - here's the fundamental change - it said that secular rulers had the right to enforce religion only within their own boundaries - doctrinal disputes were to be settled within states, internally, not between states - no more interfering with your neighbour's religion. European Christians accepted, reluctantly but realistically, that Western Christendom was now permanently divided and although Rome still claimed to be the only true Church, everyone else recognized that a denominational concept of the Church was the only way forward.

Since 1648, European nations have fought each other from time to time, but never again over religion. There was still persecution within nations, for example the Huguenots (French Calvinists) in France (Lecture 26), but that was domestic, not between states.

So the religious map of Europe on the previous page is basically the religious map of Europe today. You've probably spotted one error in that map - Northern Ireland should be shaded Presbyterian, not Roman Catholic, because by this time Scottish and English Presbyterians had been settled in the northern provinces.

So one reason for calling 1650 'the start of the modern period' is the acceptance of a fundamentally different relationship between Church and State - that every ruler could decide the religion for the area he ruled.

The concept wasn't completely new, because something like it had been agreed nearly a hundred years earlier, in 1555, at the Peace-treaty of Augsburg. However, Augsburg was different from Westphalia in three ways. First, it applied only to German-speaking states; it didn't prevent German-speaking states from imposing their religion by force on non-German states, like France, whereas the Treaty of Westphalia said that none of the signatories were to impose their version of Christianity on anyone else. Secondly, Augsburg said that the rulers of German-speaking states could choose only between Lutheranism or Catholicism; Calvinism and Anabaptism weren't options and their followers were punishable by death. Westphalia laid down that every signatory state could choose whatever brand of Christianity it wanted for its own people, and that no state could interfere with its neighbour's choice.

Thirdly, there was freedom for individual belief within states - a real novelty; if you dissented from the religion chosen by the ruler of your state, you could practice your own faith in private, so long as you obeyed the laws of the state. This remarkable toleration was not an outworking of any religious convictions, it was simply because everyone was exhausted after thirty years of gruelling warfare.

² Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, Nashville, Nelson, 2nd ed, 1995, p.311.

3. 'MODERNITY'

I said at the beginning that there were two reasons for calling 1650 the beginning of the modern period. We've just noted one, the new Church/State relationship, and this was recognized at the time; the second one was happening imperceptibly and the description of it as 'modernity' is a C20 'buzzword' - C20 and C21 people reading their ideas back into the C17 and dividing history into three eras:

c374 – c1650	'Pre-modern' era -	Christian teaching accepted
c1650 – c1950	'Modern era' -	challenges to traditional beliefs
c1950 – now	'Post-modern' era -	no certainties, infinite answers

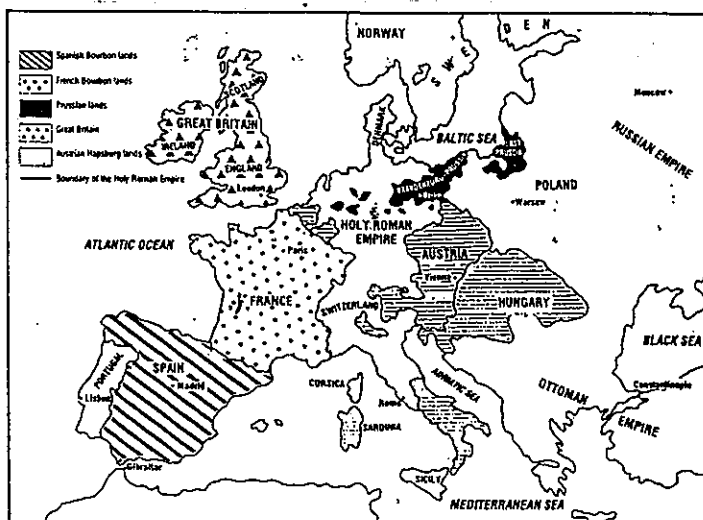
You may have heard the word 'post-modernity' bandied about - this is where it comes from. In the early 1970s, academics began to speak about pre-modern, modern and post-modern eras. Their idea was that when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, toward the end of the C4, Christian teaching about God and Christian morality was generally accepted as coming from Revelation, from the Bible. Not everyone believed it, but there was no other worldview on offer. So these late C20 academics began to call it the 'Pre-modern' era, c374 to c1650.

Then, they said, people's attitudes began to change c1650, for the reasons we're going to examine for the rest of this lecture, leading to three hundred years of challenges to Christian belief, from c1650 to c1950; they called these three hundred years the 'Modern era' - 'modernity'. Then c1950, attitudes changed again (they said), so we are now in the 'Post-modern' era: there are now no certainties, no authorities, no absolute truths about the world; every question has an infinite number of answers, all being equally as valid as the other. 'If you claim that the Bible is true', they say, 'well, that's how you see it, and that's your choice, but I see it differently - I see it like this ...'. Post-modern culture is suspicious of any claim to absolute truth. Relativism reigns. 'It's true for me only if it feels right to me - there are no objectively 'right answers', only personal answers.

So that is the second of the two reasons for saying that 1650 is the beginning of Modern Times. What were its ingredients? We'll look at nine for the remainder of this Lecture.

4. ABSOLUTIST STATES and their relationship with the Church

(for the background to Absolutist States, see Cairns 259-62 and 267-8; Vos 83-84.)



Germany was, as mentioned, a patchwork of independent states, but in France, Spain, England and other European countries, powerful kings began to claim absolute authority in their areas, as on this map. The Peace Treaty of Westphalia said that secular rulers were in charge of everything, including religion, in their own areas, so they began to say to the Churches: 'look, we're in charge now - so you keep quiet'. The Pope, Innocent X, protested at the way this marginalized the Catholic Church in these nations, but the Pope's influence had dwindled to the point where these countries paid no attention to him.

One illustration - *The Four Articles of 1682*. King Louis XIV of France needed money to build the Palace of Versailles, so he kept the revenue due to the Pope when a bishopric

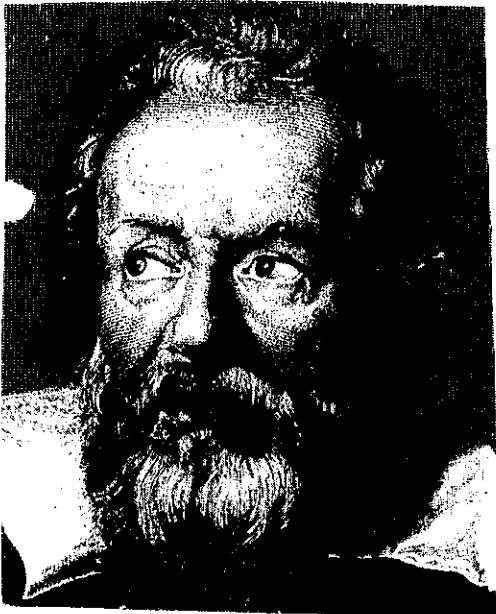
was vacant. When the Pope objected, Louis called a Church Assembly in 1682 and browbeat the French clergy into adopting '*Four Articles*':

- (1) the Pope has no power in temporal matters;
- (2) General Councils are superior to the Pope in spiritual matters;
- (3) the Papacy must conform to French laws;
- (4) the Pope's decisions are binding only when ratified by a General Council.

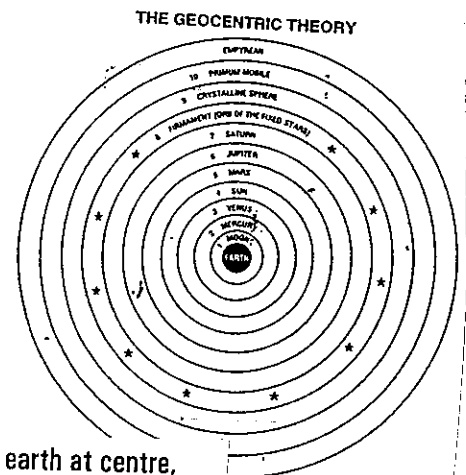
What a change from Church/State relations in the Middle Ages, when Popes dominated secular rulers. What else changed c1650?

5. SCIENCE CHANGED THE WAY THAT PEOPLE LOOKED AT THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH AND THE CHURCH

The Protestant Reformers were not the only ones to challenge the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. An astronomer, Copernicus (1473-1543), had claimed that the sun is the central body in the universe and that the earth moves around it. Until then, people believed what is known as the Geocentric Theory, as in the diagram. Copernicus was silenced, but in 1610 a young scientist at the University of Padua in Italy, Galileo Galilei (details beside his picture) discovered that Jupiter has moons; he became convinced that Copernicus had been correct in saying that the sun is the central body in the solar system and that the earth moves around it.



Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) the Italian astronomer and physicist. By observation and reasoning he argued that the planets revolve around the sun. This led him to support Copernicus' theory of the solar system. But Galileo came into conflict with the Inquisition for writing on Copernicus' theory, after which time he lived under house arrest until his death.

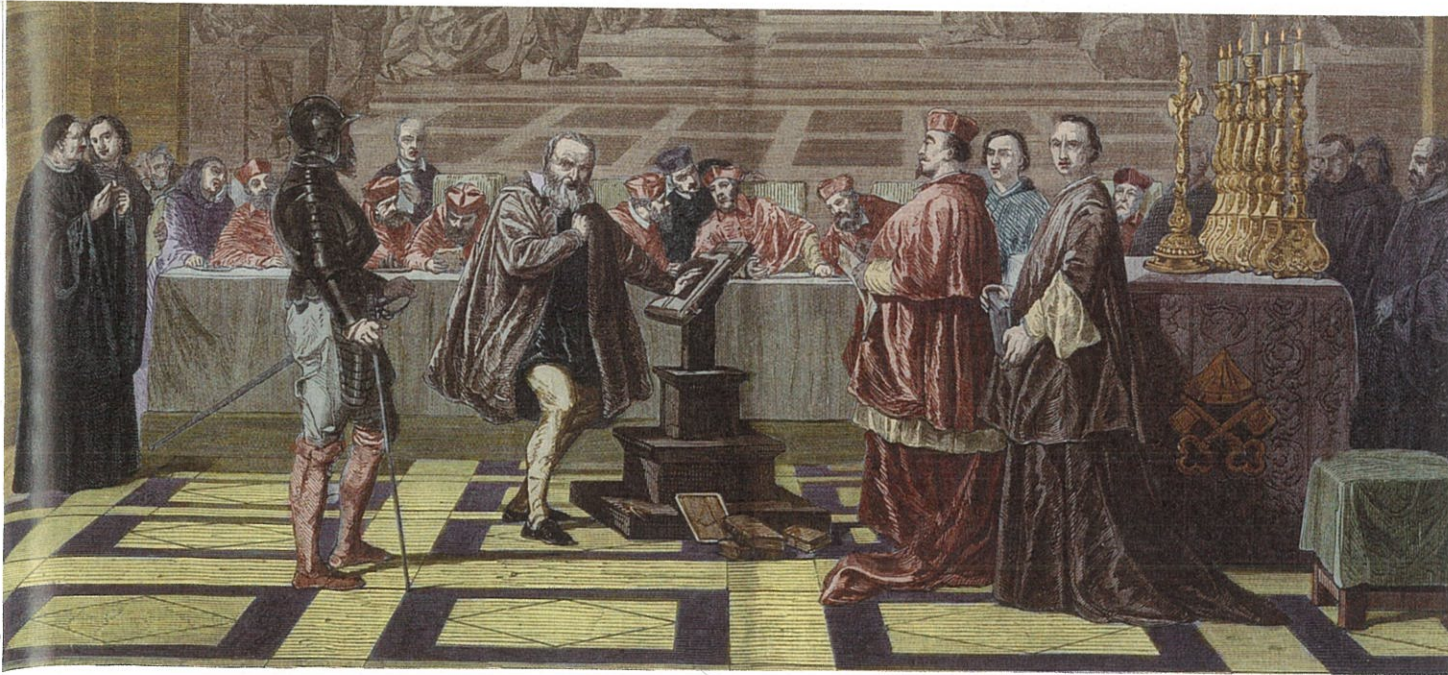


Geocentric theory had earth at centre, stationary, while moon, stars and sun moved around it on fixed tracks, beyond which was God and where all was at rest. Christians added 'hell' at centre. All religious people rejected Copernicus' theory – Luther ridiculed it.

When Galileo said this publicly, he was forced to retract his claim, and he spent the remaining years of his life under house arrest - more details about this on the next page.

However, gradually, more and more scientists began to say: 'Wait a minute; you, the Church, say that our earth is the centre of the universe, and that the sun moves around it; if what we see through our telescopes is denied by the Church, then the Church can keep its teaching and its miracles and all the other things it says are important - we're going to believe only what we can see for ourselves.'

Emerging science did not in itself challenge the truths of Christianity, but as scientific knowledge increased in the later C17, the 'scientific method' encouraged people to challenge and test everything - economics, religion - check it out, don't take it from anyone else. More of this below; the Notes continue on page 7.



Galileo's most important admirer and ally in the Church, in fact, was Cardinal Maffeo Barberini (1568–1644), who in 1623 became Pope Urban VIII – the very man who would ultimately command Galileo to recant.

Galileo, however, was a frequently unpleasant man, who often refused to give other scientists credit for their own discoveries, belittled those he saw as rivals (such as Johannes Kepler), and insisted on provoking disputes. His demands for unconditional acceptance of his theories led to an ecclesial consultation in 1616. When he failed to produce a single convincing proof for his position, the consultation admonished him against teaching Copernican theory as a fact. Even so, Urban himself encouraged Galileo to write the book that became the *Dialogue concerning the Two Chief World Systems, the Ptolemaic and Copernican* (1632), enjoining only that it include a statement to the effect that Copernican theory was only an unproven hypothesis. Galileo did include such a statement in his dialogue, but placed it on the lips of a clownishly obtuse character named Simplicio.

This seemed an unwarranted insult of a generous friend; Urban took offence and resolved upon a trial. Moreover, as it turned out, Urban was quite right about the unproven nature of the Copernican theory. For all his brilliance as a physicist, Galileo was an amateur astronomer at best, and seemed unaware how mathematically and empirically incoherent Copernicus' book was. The only evidence he provided for the Earth's movement was a theory about the tides that was completely irreconcilable with observable tidal sequences. He could have defended heliocentrism better if he had been willing to adopt Kepler's theory of elliptical planetary orbits – of which he was aware – but he was loath to do so.

Ultimate effect of Rome's authoritarian meddling was to make the Church appear ridiculous. The case was, though, an aberration, and not a true reflection of the relation between the Catholic Church and the sciences. In fact, Urban was a generous patron of the sciences, while the Jesuits fostered many original scientific minds of the age. But the embarrassment created by the Catholic Church by Urban's outraged pride has never entirely faded.

Galileo on trial in Rome. It is a myth that Galileo was tortured by the Roman Inquisition (though, in keeping with the unsavoury forensic procedures of the time, he was reminded that torture could be applied as a penalty for perjury). But he definitely was ordered to recant his Copernicanism, an instruction with which he complied.

6. ECONOMIC CHANGES

After the Peace Treaty of Westphalia, Europe enjoyed a long period of peace; some people became comfortable and prosperous and obsessed with making money, more than attending Church; others were exploited until they were too miserable to think about Church.

Secular leaders wanted the Church to maintain the existing structure of society, which was based on nobles (at the top) and merchants (in the middle) and peasants (at the foot); the nobles and merchants would have approved of the hymn that said: 'The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly, and ordered their estate.' They saw the function of the Church to provide (as it traditionally had) social welfare for the poor. But the Church throughout Europe was overwhelmed by welfare problems as capitalists restructured agricultural society, and dispossessed people drifted from the countryside to the towns. So prosperity for some and misery for others made people focus their attention on this world and not on the next - religious life was at a low ebb.

7. WORLD TRAVEL CHALLENGED TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

Travel and trade brought new experiences, which challenged old beliefs. How could Africans and Indians and Siamese and Chinese, most of whom had never heard about the Christian faith, have wisdom and virtue? Was there perhaps a basic natural religion, apart from the revelation of the Bible? People were asking questions to which the Church had no ready answer.

8. THE STATE OF THE CHURCHES GENERALLY IN 1650

(a) There was disenchantment with religion generally, brought about by the Thirty Years War, which, you remember, ended in 1648. People said, 'If that's what religion makes you do, then there's something wrong with religion', and

(b) There was also disenchantment at the increasingly dogmatic and inflexible position of Church leaders about their own views. Historians call this 'Confessionalization' - every community defining its own Doctrinal Basis, its own Confession of Faith, with ever-increasing precision, against all other communities. The Reformation, as a source of new and reforming ideas, was over - Lutherans and Calvinists and Arminians now spent their time and energy on fine-tuning their particular Statements of Faith, showing why they were right and everyone else was wrong.

People responded in various ways to the sad state of the Churches in 1650. A young Englishman, George Fox, was sent to prison more than once for his solution to the problem. His solution is our Topic, which we'll take now:

TOPIC - QUAKERS (THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS) - was taken at this point in the Lecture; here, it is printed at the end of the Notes for this Lecture.

We saw, just before our Topic, that by 1650 there was much disenchantment with religion, partly because of the brutality of the Thirty Years War, in the name of religion, and partly because of people's impatience with the increasingly dogmatic and inflexible position of Church leaders about their own views.

The Quakers were one reaction, but by far the most significant reaction to this sad state of affairs is now known as:

9. 'THE ENLIGHTENMENT' OR 'THE 'AGE OF REASON' (1650-1789)

These two phrases are interchangeable. The word 'Enlightenment' was coined by a German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), to describe a current of thought which had become widespread among thinkers and writers in England and France and Germany. Faced with the ongoing bitterness and persistence of doctrinal controversies during the mid-C17, all claiming that their particular set of doctrines was absolutely right, 'enlightened' thinkers believed that their mission was to lead people out of the darkness of superstition (their word for religion) into an Age of Reason, where people could understand the world in a new way, based not on 'revelation' but on 'reason'.

They believed that human reason, based on deductions from experience, (not revelation, not tradition), could build a better world. Their two principal targets were religion (the Church) and politics (the hereditary aristocracy). We're concerned in this Lecture with only the first of these, religion.

So the Enlightenment was a human reaction to the negative aspects of the Church in the mid sixteen-hundreds. Philosophers, starting with a Frenchman, a Roman Catholic, Rene Descartes (1596-1650), said, 'we're going to judge everything by human reason, not by 'revealed truth' in Scripture; everything must to be worked out by human beings from first principles, using the power of the mind.

As well as philosophers like Descartes taking this new line, scientists also were using their little grey cells to formulate ideas, independently of what the Bible taught. You've probably heard the story about Isaac Newton (1643-1727), who in 1666 was walking in an orchard of apple trees, when an apple fell to the ground near him. It probably didn't hit him on the head, as the popular version of the story goes, but the rest of the story is true. So he asked himself,

'why should apples always drop perpendicularly to the ground, why not go sideways, or upwards?'

He therefore worked out what we now call the law of gravity, and much else. Isaac Newton considered himself a Christian, a devout believer, and he taught that the laws of nature, which he had discovered, showed that the universe was the handiwork of God, that it demonstrated the power and wisdom of the creator; but his teaching was first of all based on his thinking, complemented by what the Bible said; this approach encouraged others to use their minds, independently of Scripture, to seek for truth.

The Enlightenment went through two stages. First:

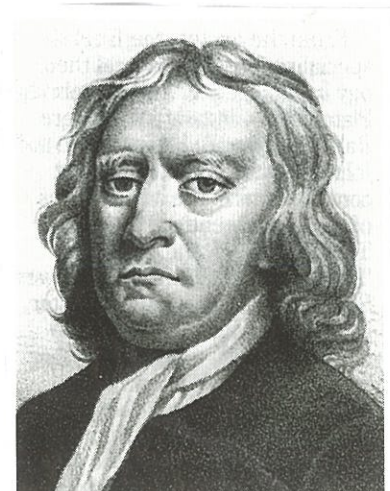
10. THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

In the early Enlightenment, Descartes, the philosopher, and Newton, the scientist, and many others, considered themselves to be Christians, although their faith was built first on what they had



Cairns page 378

René Descartes, a French philosopher and mathematician, a dualist who believed in the existence of mental and material worlds. He believed that by reason alone he could accept the existence of God and the soul.



Sir Isaac Newton, the great English scientist, is best remembered for his law of gravity and work on the physics of light

worked out for themselves, not what the Church or the Bible had taught them. Having arrived at their view of the world and of God by human reason, they went on to show that their beliefs were in harmony with revelation as found in the Bible. For example, Descartes concluded that God's existence was 'proved', by the fact that the idea of God existed everywhere, and therefore there must be a God.

Because they claimed to be Christians, the early Enlightenment thinkers were at pains to show that the Bible was in harmony with reason, that the Biblical books are rational, that they are reliable and honest. Others pointed, as Paul did in Acts 14:15-17 and 17:24-29 and in Romans 1:19-21, to the revelation of God in nature, to show that Christianity conforms to reason. For them, Christianity should be accepted, (first) because it is reasonable, and (secondly) because revelation confirms this - in other words, reason is the basis for belief, and revelation backs it up.

Before we condemn this approach of putting reason before revelation, look at it in light of what was happening at the time in the name of Christianity. (a) in England, Puritans rose up against the King in a vicious civil war that included publicly beheading both the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury; (b) Presbyterian Scots tried to force the Westminster Confession on everyone in England; (c) Puritans dominated the social scene in England until their leader, Cromwell, died and (d) when that happened, the restored monarch, Charles II, ruled that only members of the Church of England could go to university in England or hold public office - intolerance by 'winners' to everyone else went on and on.

So it's understandable why the Enlightenment leaders said, 'Look, cool it; if philosophers start with their minds, and if scientists start with their minds, and they can find common ground, why don't you theologians start with your minds and we can all agree what is 'reasonable'. An influential essay by John Locke (1632-1704), *The Reasonableness of Christianity* in 1695 shaped Christian thought for the next hundred years.. Locke was studying medicine at the University of Oxford in the heyday of the intolerant Puritans. Suddenly, with Oliver Cromwell's death, the Puritans went out of favour and the restored monarch persecuted everyone who wasn't Church of England.

Locke argued that there is nothing inherently incredible in Christianity, that it is a 'reasonable' religion but that 'revelation' added nothing of importance to what could be worked out, anyway, by human reason. The state therefore should not adjudicate between competing religious claims and any politically-imposed religious uniformity was worse for morality than allowing religious diversity. Free enquiry, without the restraints of orthodox opinion, was a virtue and the fundamental truths of Christianity would become intelligible to reasonable people. In consequence, the late C17 and the early C18 leaders had a confident belief in God, but a God who was known initially by reason, backed up by revelation.

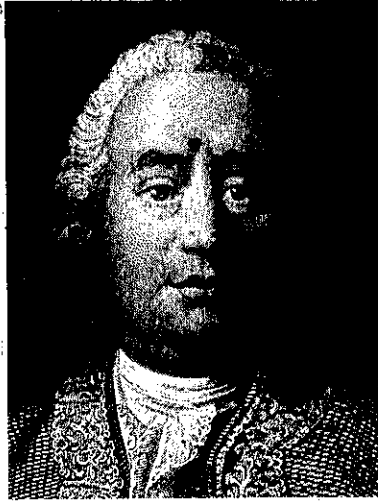
JOHN LOCKE	1632– 1704	The Reasonableness of Christianity Essay Concerning Hu- man Understanding	Revelation cannot contradict reason. Taught the idea of a tabula rasa. Knowledge comes by reflec- tion on sensations.
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It's a debate that has shifted backward and forward from 1700 to the present day. We'll have a look, in Lecture 33, near the end of our course, at a Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, who was influential throughout most of the C20; he insisted that revelation must be the starting point, while his near contemporary, the German Emil Brunner, whom we'll also look at in that Lecture, wanted to start with 'natural theology'; they had heated debates.

What, as C21 evangelicals, do we say about that? Well, natural theology may reveal God, or at least the idea of God, but natural theology cannot redeem fallen humankind - for that we need the revelation of Scripture. The main point, for this Lecture, is to be aware of the issue - where is our starting point, revelation or reason?

I said that the Enlightenment went through two stages. The first, which we've just looked at, included showing the rational basis for Christianity; the second, to which we now turn, dispensed with Christianity altogether, in favour of a life based on reason alone.

11. REASON ALONE



David Hume (1711-76).

As the C18 progressed, later Enlightenment thinkers rejected all religion in favour of human reasoning. One of the best known of these sceptical philosophers was Edinburgh's David Hume (1711-78) - commemorated today by the Hume Tower in the Edinburgh University and by a statue of him outside the High Court of Justiciary in the Royal Mile.

Enlightenment thought reached its climax in the teaching of Immanuel Kant (1724-1802). He rejected Biblical or any other non-rational account of human nature and the universe, and wrote a book, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. He was followed by G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831), who taught that human beings possess a reasoning faculty, capable of unravelling truth from tradition and reality from myth. He and others dismissed anything transcendent - miracles, revelation, etc - as non-rational.

In art galleries which are arranged chronologically, medieval art features mainly religious themes - especially paintings of the life of Jesus. After the Enlightenment, artists painted human subjects and objects in the natural world. By the C19 and the C20, religious subjects were a small part of most gallery's repertoire. The focus of human life had shifted from heaven to earth, from the supernatural to the natural.

On the other hand, a fine evangelical Christian, David Bebbington, at present Professor of History at the University of Stirling, has argued persuasively in books, articles and lectures that the traditional evangelical view of the Enlightenment as entirely anti-Christian needs to be modified. Apart from the fact that in most countries, it was rooted in the reforming strain of Christianity which sought a measure of accommodation with contemporary thought. Evangelical Christianity benefited (as well as suffered) from Enlightenment thinking. This is not the place to explore that, but I mention it to give a balanced, and not entirely negative, view on these events. I will be pleased to send a tape of one of David Bebbington's lectures on this subject to anyone who is interested.

We'll look, finally, at one other response to the disillusionment of the C17/C18 with traditional religion, and that is Deism.

12. DEISM

We need to spend some time on Deism, for four reasons: (1) it was enormously influential in shaping Christianity in both Britain and the emerging States of North America, (2) it led to the Liberal Theology that has blighted the Church since 1800, (3) our Course textbook, Olson, spends 14 pages explaining Deism and says, at pages 519-20, that Deism is widely misunderstood by evangelicals, and (4) we have many deists

among us today; although they don't now call themselves by that name, we need to recognize them and equip ourselves to answer them.

12.1 Definition of Deism

It's not a word we use today, although the ideas behind it are still prevalent. Deism, from *deus*, the Latin word for god, is the belief that a just and benevolent Creator made the universe, but after creating reasonable people to live in our world, he was no longer interested in it and left people to discover the laws of nature and to live by them. Humanity was capable of progress as it applied rational principles to the study of its environment - Enlightenment thinking again, 'work it out for yourselves by the power of the mind'. The deist God was an 'absentee God', not a person with whom a relationship is possible through Christ. Deists did not believe in the Trinity nor in Jesus as Redeemer.

12.2 Influential deists

There were relatively few deists, but they were hugely influential; many of them were the 'movers and shakers' in Britain, France and the United States, especially politicians. Thomas Jefferson, the co-author of the American Constitution and an early President, was not a Bible-believing Christian, but a deist, as was Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, the first President of the United States. The next page is devoted to pictures and comment on American Deism and Christianity.

Evangelical Christians condemned Deism as atheism, but most deists considered themselves to be Christians, although they who rejected the supernatural in Christianity. They were particularly sceptical about miracles, because miracles meant that God was still involved with the world. Many deists attended established Christian churches, although dissenting in private from much that was said; Deism was respectable and is still with us today - respectable because it does not call sin sin, and sees no need for salvation. So although the word 'Deism' is not generally used today, many believe in a similar 'absentee God'.

12.3 An answer to Deism; the metaphor of the watchmaker

William Paley was born in Peterborough, England, and trained for the Anglican ministry. He wrote several influential books in support of the orthodox Christian faith, the best-known of which, *Evidences of Christianity* (1794), argued that if you found a watch abandoned on a beach, you would conclude that there was, somewhere, a watchmaker:

As only an intelligent watchmaker can make a watch, only an intelligent Designer could have created the world, and, if God had taken such care in designing the world how much more must he care for humanity and sent Christ to redeem humanity.

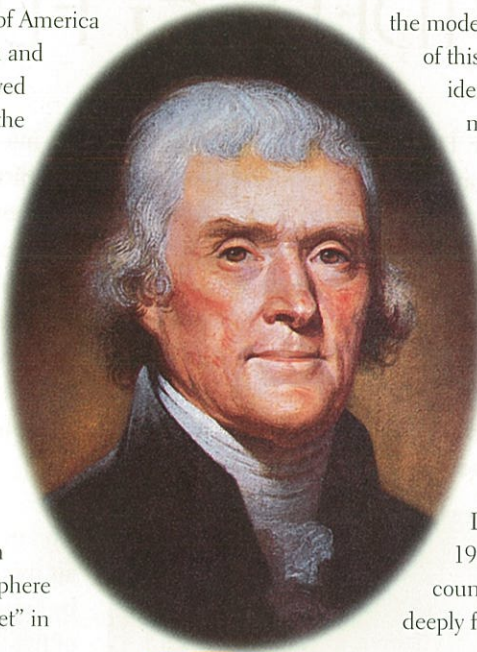
WILLIAM PALEY	1743– 1805	View of the Evidences of Christianity Natural Theology	Gave lucid expression to anti-Deist apologetic. Gave classical form of teleological argument for the existence of God.
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There was another, and very important, response to the rationalism of the 18th century, known as Pietism, and we'll start the next Lecture looking at it.

The framers of the American 'Declaration of Independence' and 'Constitution' were deists, so when they said 'In God we trust', and used that phrase on USA currency notes, they did not mean the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; this was crafty – see the comment under the picture at the bottom of this page about 'carefully chosen language'.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

THE new constitution of the United States of America recreated the relationship between Church and State. Previously, the two had always been viewed as a unity. Wherever Christianity had become the dominant religion, it had in some way or other been linked with rulers and nations by law, lending its authority to government and receiving government protection. Church and State were seen as totally intertwined, whether by popes who tried to direct rulers and states; or by eighteenth-century absolute monarchs who tried to make the Church a department of State. In the new United States the two were to be completely separated. (The constitution does not even mention God.) Churches were to be free of State control, and the State to be free of church interference. This established a culture in the sphere of religion that was analogous to the "free market" in the sphere of economics – all religions were allowed to thrive or die by their own efforts, without the support or enmity of the State. It was increasingly to become the model for



DEIST INSPIRATION

Deist influence on the American constitution came especially from Thomas Jefferson. Although he was out of the country while it was drafted, his ideas were a major influence.

the modern world. In the US and elsewhere, the result of this separation has been to make it harder to identify a country as "a Christian nation" – its laws must be grounded in something other than the Christian revelation, even where Christianity is the religion of the majority, as in the United States. The Churches are left in an ambiguous position vis-a-vis government, free but barred from influencing the conduct of the State. This has sometimes led to Christianity being marginalized, and to conflict between Church and State over education. In the United States Christianity has often been replaced in the public arena by "Civil Religion" – a less defined faith, mingling Deism and patriotism. To give one example, in 1954 President Eisenhower told Americans: "Our country makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious faith – and I don't care what that is." Such a nebulous faith, including belief in a "manifest destiny" guiding America to a glorious future, is often invoked to support government, rarely to challenge it.



ion of Independence was adopted by delegates representing each of the colonies on 4th July, 1776 (above). Although its author, Thomas Jefferson, was a Deist, he used language that embodied the revival spirit of the American Revolution. He carefully chose language and concepts that would appeal to both Christians and Deists, referring to the deity as "Nature's God", "the Supreme Judge of the World", and "Divine Providence".

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTUR

TOPIC FOR LECTURE 27 - QUAKERS (SOCIETY OF FRIENDS)

Please tell us about the origin of the Quakers (the 'Society of Friends', as many Quakers prefer to be known), including, if you wish, their distinctive beliefs, how they conduct their services, their organization and numbers (then and now), their attempts to influence secular society and anything else that you feel we should know about them.

See Cairns pages 381-2; Lion, 500-503 (a good introduction); Vos, 126-7 and 129; Hanks, Great Christians, 153-7.

Overleaf is an engraving of an early Quaker Synod.



The founder of the Quaker movement, George Fox.

This famous painting by Benjamin West shows a Quaker family waiting in silence before making a decision.





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