# THE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT
# of
# RICHARD PRICE, D. D.
# (1723-1791)

By

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TO SHIRLEY AND BILL

# P R E F A C E

It has not been within the compass of this thesis to attempt any analysis of Dr. Richard Price's valuable writings in the fields of philosophy, politics, and finance. Other writers have been concerned with these phases of his work. As the subject of the thesis indicates, my research has had to do only with the "religious thought" of the man. While Dr. Price has been remembered chiefly because of the success of his other writings, viz., his Review of the Principal Questions in Morals, his Two Tracts on Civil Liberty, and his Treatise on Reversionary Payments, his "life work" was that of a minister of the Gospel, and his religious publications, although perhaps less distinctive than his other works, are worthy of his great talents and mark him as one of the leaders of Christian thought of his day. It has been my purpose to present here, in a comprehensive and orderly manner, the main features of his ideas on religion, and to trace Dr. Price's application of these ideas to the problems of everyday life in home, community, church, and nation. My work in the preparation of this thesis has been most profitable and stimulating.

American spelling has been used throughout the writing except within quotations taken from British writers, where the original spelling has been retained.

Especially am I indebted to the Very Reverend Professor John Baillie and to Principal Hugh Watt, who have served as my supervisors. Both have been most generous with their time, and helpful in the giving of guidance and encouragement.

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C O N T E N T S

# CHAPTER I

# THE LIFE AND TIMES
# OF
# RICHARD PRICE

# THE SETTING

Richard Price was born in Wales, lived most of his life in London, and, while minister of small Dissenting congregations there, enjoyed a unique international reputation, touching two continents. However, except for occasional notice by the philosophers, his name has been forgotten by the modern world. This in spite of the fact that his friend and contemporary, Condorcet, referred to him as "one of the formative minds of the eighteenth century";[1] and only recently he has been characterized as "a veritable giant among giants."[2] Suffice it to say that many who were great in their own day have not loomed so large when brought into the historical focus of the centuries. Nevertheless, Richard Price made significant contributions not only in his chosen field of religion, but in philosophy, politics, mathematics, and business.

'The Age of Reason' has remained as the phrase most descriptive of eighteenth century thought. With the rise of empirical philosophy, logic had become the idol of the thought world of both Britain and the continent. It has been well said that Locke

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1. H. N. Brailsford, Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle, London: n.d., p. 11.

2. E. S. Price, "The Stature of Richard Price", Faith and Freedom, II, No. 6, (Summer 1949), p. 136.

and Newton ruled from their graves. Freedom of inquiry was a new and hard-won advantage, and by it many expected the early emancipation of all mankind. Richard Price took his place in this age of rationalizing, and shared in this hope.

This trend in philosophy gave to theology a new turn. It resulted "in 'religion' being displaced by a purely reasoned 'theology', based on what can best be described as the ideas of an absentee God, and a self-sufficient humanity."[1] There is also the fact that men everywhere were weary of the wars of religion of the previous centuries, and "a spiritual lethargy settled over Western Europe."[2] A new sterile form of Christianity arose, finding expression in the terminology of natural religion and deism, as it challenged the old orthodoxy without the fears of martyrdom known in former times. On the continent this deism, practically unopposed, rapidly reduced theology to skepticism, but in England it encountered formidable opponents; and Butler's Analogy signalled the end of English Deism. However, other types of heresy were allowed to remain, mainly Arianism and Socinianism; and the first of these was to play no small part in the religious thought of Richard Price.

The 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, which was of world-importance, had delivered the mortal blow to the ancient theory of the divine right of kings. Largely the political history of

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1. W. R. Robinson, What Churches of Christ Stand For, Birmingham: 1926, p. 12.

2. Hugh Watt, Representative Churchmen of Twenty Centuries, London: 1927, p. 228.

the eighteenth century "consists of the effort to make actual what that event had made possible."[1] John Locke, writing in the closing years of the seventeenth century, had justified the Revolution by vigorous and logical appeal to reason. This new trend in political thinking continued throughout the century, and it was to find one of its most zealous champions in Richard Price. It was in this field that he was to win international reputation.

While the broad outlines of the century must be held in mind in considering the religious thought of Richard Price, it is far beyond the limits of this thesis to attempt any detailed analysis of the eighteenth century backgrounds, a subject which, in itself, has called forth several interesting volumes by leading scholars. However, for our present purpose, it is worth recalling that, in general, except for the Dissenting Academies, the level of education in Britain was at a very low ebb. In discussing this area of the life of the century G. M. Trevelyan pays tribute to the Sunday Schools and the Charity Schools for rising to meet the deficits in the education of the young, and to the Dissenting Academies which "to some extent made good the deficiencies of Oxford and Cambridge."[2] And a further interesting observation is made by the same author: "Yet the Eighteenth Century, in spite of its educational defects, produced a larger proportion of remarkable and original English men from among those who passed through its schools than our highly educated and over-regulated

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1. Roland Thomas, Richard Price, Philosopher and Apostle of Liberty, London: 1924, p. 2.

2. G. M. Trevelyan, English Social History, London: 1944, p. 365.

age is able to do."[1] Though of Welsh extraction, Richard Price was to have his place among 'remarkable and original English men' in this century which, though drab and placid in its early decades, was to behold much of revolution in government, industry, and agriculture before its close. The Christian religion was ever the first love and central interest of this man, and he was prepared to spend and be spent in carrying the claims of that religion into the realms of philosophy, politics, and business, as well as in the church life. Like many other eminent Dissenting ministers of his day, he was anxious for the social applications of the Gospel. Of course, the breadth of his religious thought will become apparent as we study his life.

## THE EARLY YEARS

"Richard Price, the son by a second marriage of Rice Price, was born on the twenty-third of February 1723, at Tynton, in the parish of Langeinor, in the county of Glamorgan. His father for many years was the minister of a congregation of protestant Dissenters at Bridgend in the same county."[2] Thus begins the biography which was written by a nephew in 1815. This slender volume, a book[3] written by Roland Thomas in 1924, and a paper[4] by

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1. Ibid., p. 312.

2. William Morgan, Memoirs of the life of the Rev. Richard Price, D. D., F. R. S., London: 1815.

3. Thomas, op. cit.

4. Howell Prosser, Historical Sketches of Glamorgan, "A Glamorgan Worthy of the Eighteenth Century", II, (London: 1912).

Howell Prosser given in 1911, are the chief sources of knowledge concerning the life of Richard Price. Many other sources yield helpful bits of information.

Richard's parents were almost exact opposites in temperament and disposition, and the son seems to have inherited the strong qualities of both. His father is described as 'a bigoted Calvinist' who ruled the home with a heavy, though distinctly religious, hand. We are told that "the Prices of Tynton had a very high notion of parental authority, and scrupled not to enforce that authority by extreme penalties; natural affections seeming to be crushed out of them if but a whim were thwarted."[1] An incident, included by nearly all who have given any account of the life of Richard Price further illustrates the manner in which Rice Price 'ruled' his home. One day when he found the boy reading a volume of Dr. Samuel Clarke's sermons, he seized the book and flung it into the fire, "with the most bitter invectives against him for his want of faith and orthodoxy"[2] for Clarke was an acknowledged Arian. Most reviewers are agreed that the early influence of the harsh religion of his father was a major reason for the reaction of Richard toward more liberal views in religion, an analysis with considerable psychological weight. But it should be noted also that young Price was strongly drawn to his mother, who evidently was a delightful person with great warmth and gentleness of spirit. So while the father's was a rule of 'law', the mother's rule was

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1. Ibid., p. 68.
2. Morgan, op. cit., p. 6.

that of love, and Mr. Thomas is undoubtedly right when he says: "That love of all sentient beings, and particularly of all mankind, which played such a controlling part in her son's later life, must have received powerful stimulus from his mother."[1]

Whatever criticisms are levelled at Rice Price, it cannot be said that he neglected his son's education. It was his intention that Richard should enter the business world, a design which might have been accomplished had the father lived. In any event a thorough education was deemed essential. The first training was in the Price home, a Mr. Peters being engaged for special tutoring. Later Richard was placed in a small school in Bridgend; then he was sent on to Neath to spend two years under the Rev. Mr. Simmons, minister of a dissenting congregation. The next three years were spent at Pentwyn in the school of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Jones, a truly worthy teacher, and greatly admired by his young student for the candor and liberality of his religious principles. Mr. Jones had imbibed Arian opinions and young Price seems to have been impressed by them. In fact, "the three years which Richard spent at Pentwyn form a distinct and most influential factor in his mental and religious development."[2]

Rice Price was careful to keep his son under the influence of dissenting principles, and it was probably because Mr. Jones' sentiments were too liberal that Richard was sent, at the age of fifteen, to the Rev. Vavasor Griffith's academy at Talgarth in Breconshire. It was near the end of his first year of study with

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1. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 8, 9.

2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 11.

Mr. Griffith that news came of his father's sudden death in the late spring of 1739.

As the eldest son, Rice Price had inherited the small family estate. He was evidently a keen man of business, as well as a hard-working clergyman, and his material possessions had continued to increase. His fortune, which was very considerable for those days, was "increased by his first marriage with Miss Gibbon, who was said to have been not only rich, but saving to the verge of eccentricity."[1] However, at his death, the ambitious design revealed in the terms of Rice Price's will meant hardship for most of his family.

The children of the first marriage, two sons and two daughters, were grown and in homes of their own when he was left a widower. Miss Catherine Richards, of Bridgend, became the second Mrs. Price, and to this union three children were born, the eldest a son, Richard. Although it had been known all along that Mr. Price intended to leave a substantial part of the estate to the children of his first wife, it came as a terrible shock when the will revealed that he had singled out as his heir his favorite son, John, thus passing over his eldest son who was then 'practicing physick' at Newport, and who survived this disappointment but a short time. Not only did John Price have a shrewd eye for business, but he had married an heiress, Catherine Williams.[2] These considerations,

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1. Caroline E. Williams, A Welsh Family, London: 1867 (Printed for private circulation), p. 17.

2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 14.

in the mind of Rice Price, made him the logical choice to carry on as the builder of the Price estate, an ambition which John shared with his father, and a task he was only too glad to accept.

Richard was the only other heir named in the will, and receiving four hundred pounds he, characteristically, gave the entire amount to his widowed mother and his sisters, who had been left to shift for themselves. John Price seems to have had no concern for the widow and her children. Under the pressure of such reduced circumstances it was necessary for Mrs. Price to quit Tynton, and she took a small house in Bridgend, where she could be near her own people. Somehow Richard managed to return to the academy at Pentwyn, where he was being educated and boarded for the incredibly small sum of five pounds a year. But more sorrow was soon his portion for, in the spring, his mother was stricken with a nervous fever, and after several weeks of suffering she died on June 4, 1740, less than a year after the death of her husband, although she had been twenty years his junior. Richard and his two sisters were present when their mother died, an experience that moved the young man profoundly. The patience and sweetness with which she had borne the hardships of this whole last year of her life made a deep and lasting impression on her son. "His grief at her loss confirmed him in his serious turn of mind, and made him now decide, as he had been for some time strongly inclined, to enter the Dissenting Ministry."[1] The two sisters remained in Bridgend with relatives and, leaving with them what little money remained, Richard set his face in a new direction,

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1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 15.

having "resolved to go for advice and assistance to his uncle, Mr. Samuel Price, who was settled in London as co-pastor to the celebrated Dr. Watts."[1]

These events brought to a close what may be called the early years of Richard Price's life. These early influences had largely determined the course his life was to follow. Perhaps one other influence should be reported here. Howell Prosser points out[2] that it was on one of his long walks from Talgarth to Bridgend, coming to see his sick mother, that Richard Price first occupied his mind with a then recently published volume, Butler's Analogy. This was in his seventeenth year, but it was a book which Price admired and praised as long as he lived, a work which was one of the most decisive influences in his early life.

## ACADEMY YEARS IN LONDON

Empty handed, but with a Welsh heart full of the love of liberty, and a mind thirsting for knowledge, Richard Price set out from Bridgend for London in his eighteenth year. The journey was accomplished mostly on foot, although he was given a 'lift' now and then in carriages which chanced to be going his way. He was enjoying a new happiness for, though great sorrows had recently clouded his life, now his mind was settled; he would throw all his strength into his preparation for the Dissenting ministry. His brilliant young mind, already showing a pronounced anti-Calvin

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1. Williams, op. cit., p. 20.
2. Prosser, op. cit., p. 70.

tendency, and reflecting on what he felt to be the more logical and liberal views of Arian teachings, was bent on making the most of the opportunities that stretched out before him.

Even if his opportunity was great, the first year in London was not easy for Richard Price. The following account of those first days is worthy of notice. "Immediately on his arrival in London he was admitted into the academy of Mr. Coward, of which Mr. Eames was the principal tutor, and lodged by his uncle (at whose expense he was chiefly maintained) in the house of a barber, in Pudding-Lane. In this close and confining abode, which was rendered more noxious by the want of those ordinary conveniences which are necessary to health and cleanliness, he pursued his studies with the most unremitting zeal and delight."[1] The extreme exertions of that first winter caused a temporary breakdown in his health. However, after spending the summer months with his sisters and other relatives in Wales, he returned to London in excellent health, and resumed his studies. Better arrangements having now been made for his lodging, "he devoted his whole time with 'ardour and delight'----to the study of mathematics, philosophy, and theology."[2] The four years spent in Coward's Academy completed Richard Price's formal education. These years, in addition to the classical education he had received in Wales, saw him well equipped for his life's work, for the Dissenting Academies of those days were excellent training centers for the

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 9.
2. Ibid., p. 10.

ministry.[1]

Richard felt especially fortunate to be studying under the celebrated Mr. John Eames, F.R.S., one of the greatest mathematicians of the time. His training was to be reflected in the important calculations of his student, in the field of finance. Dr. Isaac Watts, who was one of the trustees of Coward Academy, once described Eames as "the most learned man I ever knew." Besides Richard Price other prominent men who studied under Eames include John Howard, the prison reformer, and Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury. In discussing the excellence of some of these Dissenting Academies, Abbey says: "Some of their ablest men devoted themselves especially to the work of tuition, and established seminaries of such high repute that Churchmen of position and influence were sometimes tempted to send their sons to be educated there. Some eminent men, the most well known of whom were Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Butler, author of the 'Analogy', owed their early training to these schools."[2] So we may be sure that the intellectual and educational atmosphere which surrounded Richard Price during these years was such as would sharpen his own keen mind.

Of his theological training at Coward Academy we are told little, but he evidently continued to arrive at views in religion that were hardly less objectionable to his uncle, Samuel Price, than they had been to his father. A single incident will illus-

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1. J. H. Overton, History of the English Church in the Eighteenth Century; London: 1878, II, p. 44.

2. Charles J. Abbey, The Church of England and its Bishops 1700-1800, London: 1887, II, p. 62.

trate: "In their conversation one day on controversial subjects, being asked whether he believed in the 'proper divinity' of Jesus Christ, he most ingenuously answered in the negative, if by 'proper divinity' was meant the equality of Jesus Christ with God. On which his uncle with some vehemence exclaimed 'that he had rather see him transformed into a pig, than that he should have been brought up to be a dissenting minister without believing in the Trinity'."[1] It seems that the leaven of Arianism had, for years, been working quietly, and especially within some of the faculties of the Dissenting Academies. The plan of advance had generally been veiled and reserved, the exact opposite of the 'enthusiasm' of the evangelicalism which was gaining the larger following. Within the Dissenting (or Presbyterian) seminaries the spirit of free inquiry, a laudable thing in itself, did much harm; expressing itself in an 'itch for novelty', it became religious liberty run wild. Gradually the academy converts to these heretical opinions filled the Dissenting pulpits, and, in most instances, spiritual decay within these churches was the result. The word 'candour' was used to great advantage by both the Arians and the Socinians; if the orthodox minister did not stand with completely open mind and outstretched arms, 'he lacked candour'.[2] Naturally this quest 'for a new and sounder basis' of truth appealed to many of the young men in the academies, and Richard Price's religious convictions took a further Arian turn during his years in the academy in

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 13.

2. David Bogue and James Bennett, The History of Dissenters, London: 1833, pp. 302-306.

London. As we shall have occasion to note later in detail, his Arianism was a rather strange combination of 'low-Arianism' mixed with a deep reverence for Scripture. Perhaps it was nothing more than the common attempt to harmonize science and the Christian religion. Nevertheless, in view of the wide spread acceptance of such 'Unitarian' views among the eighteenth century Dissenting ministers, Richard Price was looked upon as no great heretic for following in this path. His early home life, his formal training, and his own zeal for liberty, all seemed to lead him away from traditional orthodoxy.

## CHAPLAINCY

On finishing at the academy in 1744, he accepted the recommendation of his uncle, and went to Stoke Newington, an important residential district of London, where he resided with a Mr. Streatfield as family chaplain; a position in which he continued for the next twelve years. His duties as family chaplain permitted ample time for further study and development of his mental powers. He was eager, however, to try himself at preaching, and in the same year, as a part-time assignment, he became assistant to the learned and influential Dr. Samuel Chandler, minister at the Old Jewry Meetinghouse. This was a large and wealthy 'Presbyterian' congregation. In this "Nonconformist or Dissenting body, which had originated with the ejectment of 1662",[1] Price remained throughout his life. Of the two thousand clergy who left the

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1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 23.

establishment in 1662, about fifteen hundred allowed themselves to be designated as 'Presbyterian' ministers. Within a short time hundreds of meeting-houses were built for these ministers and their Dissenting congregations. Old Jewry was among the first to be built. Dr. Chandler, who ministered there from 1726 to 1766, was thoroughly committed to the cold, stiff pulpit behavior which at this time characterized the preaching in Dissenting churches. Having brought from Wales a great natural vigor, and still feeling the inspiration of the Rev. Howell Harris, whose torrential delivery had captivated him during his last days at Targarth, Richard Price began his preaching career with great energy. He was rapidly gaining popularity when Dr. Chandler rebuked him for showing too much animation in the delivery of his sermons, and advised "more diffidence and modesty."[1] This rebuke caused some tension between the two men, and resulted in Price lapsing into a cold and lifeless delivery that greatly injured his early ministry.

Since Price was just beginning his public ministry, he naturally wished to make a sound approach to his preaching, but one wonders at his willingness to subdue his natural bent in this matter. However, looking about he would find the preponderance of opinion, within the Dissenting churches, on the side of Dr. Chandler. The reading of sermons[2] had become the fashion among the English Presbyterians and Independents alike, especially in London. This was supposed to distinguish them from the dis-

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., pp. 263-264.

graceful 'enthusiasm' of the Methodists, and be a mark of carefully reasoned preaching, which, of course, it was. Much attention was given to purity and elegance of style,[1] with great emphasis being placed on the 'proofs' of Christianity.[2] The preaching of this period has been described as "scholarly and philosophical, very cultured, very tolerant; and from its very nature it thought less of the doctrines of the Christian faith than of virtue, self-mastery, benevolence, and other moral qualities which attest the reality of a Christian profession."[3] We find these very characteristics in many of the recorded sermons of Richard Price. It is sufficient to notice here that, as a young preacher, he adapted himself to the preaching fashion of his denomination, even though it left his few hearers sleepy and himself depressed.

He is said to have held no ill-will toward Dr. Chandler but, while we cannot be certain of the years, his connection with Old Jewry was not a long one. The remaining years of his chaplaincy saw him occupied as morning or afternoon preacher with various London congregations. During the last several years with Mr. Streatfield he took one service each Sunday at Edmonton. The security and study opportunities of the chaplaincy were welcomed by Price. Also there was evidently the closest friendship and harmony between him and his patron, for at his death in 1756

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1. Ibid., p. 255.

2. J. A. Steele and A. J. Campbell, The Story of the Church, London and Edinburgh: 1934, p. 195.

3. Ibid., p. 196.

Streatfield remembered Price generously in his will. Throughout this twelve year period the public ministry of Price was neither extensive nor impressive; nevertheless, he was conscientious in his stewardship of time and talent, and almost immediately following this period we find his first volume coming from the press.

## MARRIAGE

Price's general security was greatly increased in the year 1756. As just mentioned, he had received a handsome legacy at the death of his patron, Mr. Streatfield; and within the year another inheritance, London property of considerable value, was left him at the death of his uncle, Samuel Price. The bulk of the estate of this uncle, however, went to John Price, the half-brother of Richard, who had also inherited the estate at Tynton. It is a matter of speculation whether Richard Price's liberal views in religion cut short his inheritance in both family connections. It seems more probable that both Rice and Samuel Price were actuated by the common hope of there eventually being a Price estate worthy of a title.

Now that he was financially secure Richard Price felt free to marry. Within recent months he had met a Miss Sarah Blundell of Hackney, and at first sight had fallen in love with her. They were married on June 16, 1757, and for the first year they lived at her home in Hackney. "She was a member of the Anglican Church, and remained so to the end of her life. . . . . By education, association, and religious views she was very different from the

man she married,"[1] but it is abundantly clear, from all references to their family life, that they were well-suited to each other; and his affection for her only increased through the long years of her invalidism, a condition of health which began scarcely four years after their marriage, and continued until her death in 1786.

## THE PHILOSOPHER

The next years saw Price's reputation considerably extended as a result of the appearance of his first volume, a work in the field of moral philosophy, entitled A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals.[2] Prosser calls attention to the fact, that "in the domain of philosophy, Wales appears to have contributed very little," and as far as he was able to discover, "Dr. Price's work stands almost alone."[3] Be that as it may, it appears from Price's own statement[4] that the material had been several years in preparation. Also the fact that in 1787, when the third edition of the volume appeared, the author, after thirty years, had found few changes necessary in his system of thought, is indicative of the painstaking labors which had gone into this first publication. The third edition, however,

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1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 28.

2. Richard Price, A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals, London: 1758.

3. Prosser, op. cit., p. 76.

4. Price, op. cit., p. iii.

does contain some corrections of style, several additional appendices, remarks on Mr. Paley's Lectures on Moral Philosophy, and a dissertation by Price on The Being and Attributes of the Deity. In characteristic modesty the author often expressed his indebtedness, in the composition of the book, "to Hutcheson, Balguy, Clarke, Butler, and Hume; but particularly to the latter, whose doubts and objections led him to examine the ground on which he stood, before he ventured to raise his own structure upon it."[1]

The appearance of the Review brought Price's name to the attention of the leading writers of the day, and it marked the beginning of important friendships. "Mr. Hume should be particularly mentioned, who, admiring the liberal manner in which his doctrines had been controverted, conceived so favourable an opinion of the writer, that it gave rise to an acquaintance, which was continued on both sides with uninterrupted esteem and friendship. . . . . In a subsequent interview with Mr. Price, when Mr. Hume visited him at his house at Newington Green, he candidly acknowledged that on one point Mr. Price had succeeded in convincing him that his arguments were inconclusive; but it does not appear that Mr. Hume, in consequence of this conviction, made any alteration in the subsequent edition of his Essays."[2] While this incident is mentioned in various volumes touching on the life of Price, nowhere is any clue given as to which of his arguments Mr. Hume had in mind.

The Review did not enjoy a wide circulation, as is evident

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 19.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

from the fact that the first two editions lasted nearly thirty years. Of course it was not a book for general public reading, but among students of philosophy it has earned a place. It reflects certain trends of thought and controversy during the middle years of the eighteenth century, and is generally considered the ablest defense of the school of thought Price represented. The principal arguments of the Review must be considered later,[1] but we may note here that Professor Fowler, in his Principles of Morals, points out the remarkable fact that Price anticipated by several years many of the conclusions of Kant, the great German philosopher.[2] There is no record, however, that Kant ever knew of Price or his works, and Price makes no mention of Kant.

Other estimates of Price's philosophy vary. Stephen, taking a rather unfavorable view, says: "His philosophical speculations are curious, though they hardly possess high intrinsic merit. His book on morality is the fullest exposition on the theory which it advocates; but the theory was already antiquated; and Price, though he makes a great parade of logical systematization, is a very indistinct writer. It is often difficult to discover his precise drift, and the discovery does not always reward the labour it exacts."[3] Another has referred to the work as the best

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1. Price concludes the Review with a chapter on Natural Religion, which he bases on the general propositions set forth throughout the book.

2. Thomas Fowler and J. M. Wilson, The Principles of Morals, Oxford: 1894, p. 70.

3. Leslie Stephen, English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1876, II, p. 3.

book on morals until quite recent times,[1] and so, as in all such cases, much depends on the viewpoint of the critic.

Sections of the book are somewhat polemical, aimed especially at Hutcheson; however, the general plan of the book is constructive. In his "Introduction", Price explains that his "principal view has been to trace the obligations of virtue up to the truth and the nature of things, and these to the Deity."[2]

## FULL TIME MINISTRY

About the time of the publication of the Review Price became minister to the congregation of English Presbyterians worshipping at the meeting-house at Newington Green in Stoke Newington, London. At that time this community numbered only about one thousand, but many important families, noted for Dissent, lived in this neighborhood. He soon moved there from Hackney, in order to be near the people of his new parish. His new assignment called for him to preach both morning and afternoon, and, at thirty-five, this move marks his full time establishment in the public ministry. From this time forward, of all the important services he rendered, nothing was allowed to crowd him away from his pastoral work.

During the first years at Newington Green, Price concentrated on sermons and the building of friendships with the people of his congregation. He wrote in his 'memoirs', later edited and

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1. Hastings Rashdall, Theory of Good and Evil, Oxford: 1907, I, p. 80.

2. Price, op. cit., p. 5.

published by his nephew, that he regretted the time he had wasted on philosophy and mathematics, and was now convinced that the practical Gospel ministry was the only worthy course; the pursuit of all other subjects, not directly connected with it, he considered vain and trifling. This resolution he was to alter somewhat.

But with his fresh abandon to the ministry came new problems to try Price's soul. Mrs. Price became ill in 1762, and was left with a partial paralysis, from which she never fully recovered. His own health seems to have been uncertain as well, but he is said to have maintained his usual cheerfulness and affection toward his flock.

In December of 1762 he added the evening service at Poor Jewry Lane to his preaching responsibilities, an assignment which he continued for the next seven years. Audiences at both meeting-houses were so small in numbers, however, that Price became discouraged to the point of despondency. He was led to ask himself seriously if his talents were in the field of preaching. In one of his private notes he mentioned, that "having preached in the afternoon on the 'future judgment' with all the force and energy in his power, he had the mortification to find that neither his delivery nor the importance of the subject could keep a great part of his hearers from sleeping."[1] For a brief time he considered renouncing the ministry, but he held on, and "in spite of his discouragement he held fast to the belief that the saving of souls and the amelioration of men required all his talents. This faith not only kept him in the ministry but enabled him to take

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 22.

a wider view of the legitimate view of both his talents and his time."[1] Determined not be drawn away from his ministry, he rejected, in 1762, an appeal from the publishers to edit a set of the complete works of Sir Isaac Newton, a task that had great attractions for him. In the same year he also refused a call to become minister of Lewin's Mead Church of Bristol, "one of the most important Presbyterian congregations outside of London."[2] Besides these offers, he refused an invitation to teach in Coward's Academy. Providence seemed to honor these decisions for the rest of his ministry in London was to bear much fruit.

Even in these dark days Price's widening circle of friends was bringing him in contact with some of the best known men of the times. In 1757 he had met Benjamin Franklin, who had just arrived in London to represent the American Colonies on the uneasy question of taxation. Though twenty years his senior, Franklin was drawn to Price, and they remained close friends throughout their lives.[3] An enduring friendship with Joseph Priestley, discoverer of oxygen and champion of Socinianism, was also begun in these early years at Newington Green. It is probable that the encouragement radiating from such distinguished friendships helped Price to bridge these years of depression of his spirits.

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1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 41.
2. Ibid., p. 40.
3. Ibid., p. 39.

## BECOMES F. R. S.

Price could not ignore his great talent in mathematics. It was a favorite subject with him, and his mastery in it was well known. Eventually it was to be the means of his election to the Royal Society, and other similar honors from America. He insisted, however, on employing his scientific abilities for the good of his fellow-men, and not just for his own personal satisfaction.

On the death, in the spring of 1761, of the Rev. Thomas Bayes, F. R. S., minister of the Presbyterian church at Tunbridge Wells, Price was asked by the family to look through his papers. In doing so he discovered an unfinished problem on the Doctrine of Chances, and decided to attempt a solution. The problem was: "Given the number of times an unknown event has happened and failed, required the chance that the probability of its happening in a single trial lies somewhere between any two degrees of probability that may be named."[1] His interest in the problem was probably stimulated by his regard for Butler's arguments in his famous 'Analogy' which were based on 'probability'. Feeling that there would be many practical uses in a solution, Price set to work on the problem, proceeding slowly lest he neglect his pastoral responsibilities.

A solution to the problem was found in 1763, which he showed to his friend Mr. Canton, F. R. S., who in turn presented it to

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1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 42.

the Royal Society. This and an improved solution, presented in 1764, were both published in the "Philosophical Transactions", and earned for Price the coveted F. R. S., on December 5, 1765. The honor was deeply appreciated, especially because of the associations it would make possible with leading scientists, a fellowship in which he found great enjoyment.

His carefully improved scientific talents Price put to work in a most benevolent way, for the relief of the distresses of his fellow men. His reputation as a mathematician continued to grow, and people with all sorts of business and financial problems sought his assistance. This help he gave, without fee or favor, wherever he thought it would do good. Of his powers and their disposition, it is said, on good authority that, "for profound skill in mathematical calculations, he had perhaps not his equal in the kingdom; and this skill he generously employed in promoting the benefit, not only of individuals, but of the nation."[1]

In 1771 Price published his most important work in this field, a treatise entitled Observations on Reversionary Payments. This publication, which became the basis for many more writings, was prompted by the many appeals now coming to him for assistance in financial matters. The book created a sensation in the business world, for it exposed the miserable tactics of 'bubble' insurance societies then plaguing the land. "On the publication of it," we are told, "some of the 'societies' dissolved at once; some decided to reform their plans so as to make them sound; some hesitated, while some, having effected minor improvements, which

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1. Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., p. 603.

were totally inadequate, still went on, only to accumulate their distress."[1] The striking success of the Equitable Society, for which Price was chief advisor in these days of reorganization, caused that company to become the working-model in life insurance. He made almost daily visits to their office for a time. Eventually his nephew, and biographer, William Morgan, became associated with the firm, and he in turn became not only eminently successful as a business man, but an authority in the field of finance.[2] Price, refusing any fee for his services to the Equitable Society, was presented with some valuable scientific equipment by the company, to show their appreciation.

The extent of Price's contribution through this, and his similar writings, is acknowledged by many writers. The opinion is expressed that he raised the whole treatment of annuities to a new level, and gave to Life Insurance a scientific method. And the writer goes on to say: "His tables were, of course, not perfect. Constructed as they were without a census, they have now been superseded."[3] Suffice it to say that 'the Northampton Tables' remained for a century by far the most important tables on mortality, employed as a basis of calculation by leading companies in Great Britain, and adopted by the Courts as practically a part of the Common Law. Parliament, followed by some state legislatures, and many courts in America, even made it the authorized

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1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 56.

2. William Morgan, The Doctrine of Annuities and Assurances on Lives, and Survivorships Stated and Explained, London: 1779; also, A Comparative View of the Public Finances, London: 1792, etc.

3. Thomas, op. cit., p. 58.

standard for valuing annuity charges and reversionary interests.[1] To this extent Price became the founder of modern Life Insurance, a business which has blessed the poor and aided many. He also developed a plan for old age pensions, which was considered by Parliament. One other testimony on this point is of interest. "The widow's fund for the clergy of the Church of Scotland, which has proved a blessing to tens of thousands, was formed under his direction; and to him the nation is said to be indebted for the idea of the sinking fund."[2] While Price did not 'originate' the idea of a sinking fund, he did develop the plans which were adapted by Pitt the Younger, and finally adopted by Parliament in 1786.

## THE D. D. DEGREE

Up to this time Richard Price's popularity as a preacher had been little increased by his publications, and he still labored under a certain sense of failure. But with the publication, in 1767, of his volume Four Dissertations,[3] both the general public and religious leaders began to honor him. Writing in 1843, W. Turner says: "This volume was from the first, and continues to be, deservedly popular, and has been many times reprinted."[4]

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1. Encyclopedia Britannica, XIV, 11th ed., 1910-11, Article on Life Insurance by William Gow, pp. 565-566.

2. Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., pp. 603-604.

3. Richard Price, Four Dissertations, London: 1767.

4. William Turner, Lives of Eminent Unitarians, London: 1843, II, p. 393.

Included in the book are the following four dissertations: I. On Providence, II. On Prayer, III. On the Reasons for expecting that virtuous Men shall meet after Death in a state of Happiness, and IV. On the Importance of Christianity, the Nature of Historical Evidence, and Miracles. The fourth dissertation is, perhaps, the most important. Price wrote it in 1760 but had not published it. It is largely a refutation of the theories of David Hume concerning miracles, and Price makes use of his own Doctrine of Chances. The other dissertations, however, being of a more 'practical' nature, were more generally helpful.

The Four Dissertations brought Price the worthy distinction of the degree of Doctor of Divinity, "conferred upon him by the Marischal College, Aberdeen, on August 7, 1767."[1] This honor, one need hardly mention, came as a surprise to the modest and self-effacing Price; he never even knew just who put his name forward. Drysdale makes an interesting observation in discussing Price's D. D. degree. "It is astonishing," he says, "what large numbers of these prominent English Dissenters received Divinity diplomas from the Scottish Universities. Men not only like Calamy,

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1. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 43-44. On these pages Mr. Thomas also gives this additional information: "Extract minute and date kindly supplied by the Librarian, the University, Aberdeen. Morgan erroneously states in the 'Memoirs', p. 42, that the degree was obtained from Glasgow, and in 1769. A note kindly supplied by the Registrar, The University, Glasgow, makes it clear that Price's name does not appear in that university's records.

"Both J. M. Mitchell, in his article on Price in the Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., 1910-11, and Professor T. Fowler, President of Corpus Christi, Oxford, in his articles in the Encyclopedia Britannica, 9th and 10th eds., repeat the double error as regards both the University and the date. Fowler has the error also in his article in the Dictionary of National Biography, 1896." (The writer has letters from the above-mentioned Universities confirming Mr. Thomas's statements.)

Daniel Williams, or Joshua Oldfield, but like Priestley, Price, Taylor, Towers, Philip Furneaux, Earle, Amory, Abraham Rees, and many more besides Scottish divines themselves in England."[1] To the writer it seems only natural that the Scottish Universities, as centers of Presbyterianism, would honor their 'spiritual kinsmen' in England. Of course Drysdale's astonishment probably refers more to the "large number" of degrees granted, and to the lack of orthodoxy in many of the men receiving them.

The Dissertations gave rise to acquaintance with the Earl of Shelburne, later Marquis of Lansdowne. Shelburne had just lost his wife and, knowing of his spiritual depression, a Mrs. Montague had handed him a copy of Price's new book to read. Shelburne was so impressed with the dissertations on prayer and the future life that he asked to meet the author, and this same Mrs. Montague arranged for an interview. This meeting proved to be the beginning of another important association. The two men were of similar political views, a factor which added much fuel to the fires of friendship. Shelburne gave him encouragement in his subsequent political writing; but there was no taint of 'party politics' in the friendship "for Mr. Price had no favour to ask, either for himself or for others, from his distinguished friend, even when he occupied the most elevated place in the counsels of his sovereign; and in fact the period when Lord Shelburne was so much occupied with official duties unavoidably occasioned an interruption in their frequent intercourse, though none in their mutual confi-

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1. A. H. Drysdale, History of Presbyterians in England, London: 1889, p. 531.

dence and esteem."[1] Lord Lyttelton also sought out Price at this time. Lyttelton, being a deeply religious man, and having recently published an "Essay on the Conversion of St. Paul", wanted, as one has expressed it, to talk with one of the clearest thinkers of the age on the transcendent themes in which he felt so profound an interest."[2]

We are indebted to P. W. Clayden's The Early Life of Samuel Rogers, for many interesting bits of information concerning Price's private life, and his personality. The Thomas Rogers family who were members of his congregation, lived second door from Dr. Price at Newington Green. There was much visiting back and forth between the families, and Dr. Price was as great a favorite with the Rogers boys as with the parents. The Doctor was a great lover of children, though he had none of his own. Samuel Rogers, who became famous as a poet, "spoke of him in after-years with the most sincere affection." He tells how the pastor often came over just for an informal evening, and how the children never forgot the impression his conversation made upon them. "He would talk and read the Bible to us," said Rogers, "till he sent us to bed in a frame of mind as heavenly as his own."[3] A description of Price's personal appearance is also given, Rogers picturing him as "slim in person, and rather below the common size, but possessed of great muscular strength and remarkable activity.

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1. Turner, op. cit., p. 400.

2. P. W. Clayden, The Early Life of Samuel Rogers, London: 1887, p. 31.

3. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

With strong features, and a very intelligent eye, his countenance was the mirror of his mind; and when lighted up by conversation his features were peculiarly pleasing."[1] The mild manners and lovable nature of Dr. Price are emphasized in all accounts of his personal life.

## THE GRAVEL PIT MINISTRY

In 1770, after twelve years with the Newington Green congregation, Dr. Price accepted a call to become morning preacher at the Gravel Pit Meeting-house in Hackney, a ministry which he continued to the end of his life. In accepting this call he changed from morning to evening preacher at Newington Green, and resigned from the evening ministry at Poor Jewry Lane. The Prices continued to make their home at Stoke Newington. The change in his ministry was refreshing to Dr. Price for he faced much larger congregations at Gravel Pit. He was not, however, to preach to capacity audiences until his political writings brought him great popularity, some six years later.

Both Dr. and Mrs. Price were now enjoying a larger measure of health than they had known since the first years of their marriage. In every way his influence was widening, and he was beginning to feel a deeper sense of satisfaction, both in his Gospel ministry and in promoting other important interests of mankind. But the tranquility of his personal life was not matched by the nation, for these same days saw the political atmosphere

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1. Ibid., p. 10.

assuming a lowering aspect. Tensions were mounting between the government and the American colonies, and Dr. Price, with his deep-rooted convictions about liberty, could not be indifferent to the developing struggle. His friendship toward America was to bring him both friends and enemies.

## THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

For present purposes it will suffice to recall only a few of the political actions leading up to the American war. The despised Stamp Act of 1765 had aroused such a storm of protests on both sides of the Atlantic that it had to be repealed within a year. The repeal, however, was accompanied by an ominous resolution, which read "That the King and Parliament had, have, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force to bind the Colonies and people of America, subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, in all cases whatever."[1] Continuing pressures against such a policy resulted, in 1770, in the passing of another Act repealing all revenue raising laws, except a duty of a penny a pound on tea. Since America was importing a negligible amount of tea from Britain, this new action was welcomed by the Americans, trusting that it was a signal of better relations. But in 1774 a more subtle act, designed for raising revenue from the colonies, set America aflame. A law was passed allowing the export of tea to any country, free of duty. The East India Company had won its point with

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1. Public Acts, 6 George III, 1-54, London: 1765-66, p. 40.

Parliament, and soon seventeen million pounds of tea were being loaded for shipment to New England; the penny a pound tax would return considerable revenue to the government. Ship-loads of tea instead of a few pounds meant trouble, and the famous "Boston Tea Party"[1] resulted. This proved to be a call to battle stations.

In Parliament Edmund Burke stood almost alone as he "thundered against the Government, invoking the curses of the nation and the vengeance of the Deity on those responsible for the war."[2] Lecky quotes from Burke's Confidential Letters: "I never remember the opposition so totally abandoned as on that occasion."[3] And further, it is pointed out that the majority of literary opinion was anti-American, including Adam Smith, Dr. Johnson, and Gibbon. "Hume, however, though in most of his sympathies a decided Tory, was one of the very few men who as early as 1775 agreed cordially with Burke that the attempt to coerce America could lead to nothing but disaster and ruin."[4] Many there were totally indifferent to the gathering clouds of war, the 'rank and file' drifting along as government propaganda directed.

With the lamps of freedom flickering in the face of the storm, Richard Price could maintain his silence no longer. Earlier he

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1. Williams, op. cit., p. 54, and elsewhere. It is claimed in several places, though without documentary evidence, that it was Dr. Price's pen that advised the city of Boston to throw the taxed tea into the sea, rather than submit to taxation without representation.

2. Prosser, op. cit., p. 89.

3. W. E. H. Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1892, IV, p. 335.

4. Ibid., p. 335.

had written a small pamphlet, calling public attention to the serious condition of the nation's debts, but it had been only a general criticism. Now he was alarmed, not only at the prospect of the additional war debts, but he was incensed over the threats to the civil liberties of the Americans. Dr. Price was in possession of much reliable information from America through his good friend, Benjamin Franklin. One of Franklin's letters which influenced Price in his decision to take an active part in the conflict is worth quoting:

> I wish as ardently as you can do for peace, and should rejoice exceedingly in cooperating with you to that end. . . . But every ship from Britain brings some intelligence of new measures that tend more and more to exasperate, and it seems to me that, until you have found by dear experience the reducing us by force impracticable, you will think of nothing fair and reasonable. We have as yet only resolved on defensive measures. If you would recall your forces and stay at home, we should meditate nothing to injure you. A little time so given for cooling on both sides would have excellent effects. But you will goad and provoke us. . . . You despise us too much--and you are insensible of the Italian adage, that there is no <u>little enemy</u>. . . . I am persuaded that the body of the British people are our friends--but they are changeable, and by your lying gazettes may soon be made our enemies. Our respect for them will proportionably diminish, and I see clearly we are on the high road to mutual family hatred and detestation. . . . A separation of course will be inevitable. 'Tis a million of pities so fair a plan as we have hitherto been engaged in for increasing strength and empire with public felicity should be destroyed by the mangling hands of a few blundering ministers. . . . It will not be destroyed. . . . God will protect and prosper it. . . . You will only exclude yourselves from any share in it. We hear that more ships and troops are coming out. We know that you may do us a great deal of mischief, but we are determined to bear it

> patiently as long as we can. . . . But if you flatter yourselves with beating us into submission, you know neither the people nor the country. The Congress is still sitting, and will wait the result of their last petition.
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> Philadelphia, October 3, 1775.[1]

Brooding over such information as this, abhorring the trend of despotism he felt was developing in the home government, and living by a philosophy which insisted on the 'inalienable rights of man,' Dr. Price felt he must do what he could to arouse the conscience of the nation. A pamphlet seemed the best means of making his sentiments known. Although he was dubious about its reception, he published in February 1776 a tract on Civil Liberty[2] which was immediately popular, and Dr. Price was soon one of the best known men in England.[3] In the words of his friend Priestley, "Dr. Price was the first, the loudest, and the most incessant in his cries against that . . . . war with our brethren across the Atlantic . . . ."[4] This picture is presented in another place: "He wrote with the fire and energy of a Brutus. Looking around, he beheld despotism swaying an iron scepter, stained with blood, over almost the whole earth. He heard the groans of misery from the oppressed, he felt their woes, and with

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1. The Writings of Benjamin Franklin, ed. by A. H. Smith, New York: 1907, VI, pp. 430, 431. Also, Morgan, op. cit., pp. 55, 56.

2. Richard Price, Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America, London: 1776.

3. Thomas Fowler, Dictionary of National Biography, London: 1896, XLVI, p. 335, article on Richard Price.

4. Joseph Priestley, Priestley's Funeral Sermon on Dr. Price, London: 1791, p. 13.

the voice of thunder he claimed their release."[1] It cannot be said that Price's writings go beyond those of Locke; he only claimed to be reinterpreting those principles which had been the seeds of the Revolution of 1688. But he was writing at a crucial time, and his zeal for liberty kindled the flame in the hearts of his readers.

Price's Observations on Civil Liberty came off the press just after the news of the battle of Lexington had reached England, and not long before the American Declaration of Independence. It had been claimed that the tract, along with Thomas Paine's Common Sense, was influential in bringing the colonists to their decision on independence.[2] The pamphlet was much discussed by members of Parliament, and was often quoted in both Houses.[3] Lecky pays tribute to Price's work, and throws additional light on the English background of the American Revolution. "The great strength of the Opposition," he points out, "lay in the Nonconformist bodies. . . . The 'Essay on Liberty', by Dr. Price, . . . was a powerful defense of their cause, and it identified it very skilfully with the cause of constitutional liberty and of parliamentary reform at home. In two years it passed through eight editions, and in the judgment of Walpole it was 'the first publication on that side that made any impression'. But though the majority of old Dissenters were staunch supporters of the Americans, even in their ranks there was some langour and division, while a

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1. Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., p. 604.
2. Morgan, op. cit., p. 63.
3. Prosser, op. cit., p. 89.

large section of the Methodists, . . . . took the other side. The tract of John Wesley against the Americans had an enormous circulation."[1]

Dr. Price's many opponents on this issue included John Wesley and Dr. Markham, Archbishop of York. Even Edmund Burke, who had been so outspoken against the government's policy on the American question, joined in the opposition. In his famous Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol,[2] he took occasion to censure Price's principles of the origin of government. Dr. Price expressed sincere regret that Burke had to be an opponent. By those defending Dr. Price, it has been claimed that most of the criticisms of his tract came from pensioners of the government, or those who hoped soon to be such, and the Doctor held his silence, happy in the knowledge that his work was finding its mark in the consciences of many of his countrymen. In a subsequent edition he did reply briefly to the accusations of the Archbishop of York, for he felt many might be influenced to wrong opinions by the Archbishop.

## FREEDOM OF THE CITY

The company of critics rising up against Dr. Price was small compared with the host of friends waiting to congratulate him on his defense of civil liberty. One tribute alone which came to him will serve to illustrate his popularity. An honor, usually

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1. Lecky, op. cit., p. 334.

2. Edmund Burke, Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, London: 1776.

reserved for the most distinguished servants of the nation, was conferred upon him by the world's largest city. 'The Freedom of the City of London' was his, presented "in a gold box by the aldermen and common council, as a 'testimony of their approbation of his principles, and of the high sense which they entertained of the excellence of his observations on the justice and policy of the war with America'."[1] As one[2] has pointed out, this recognition is all the more remarkable when one remembers that Dr. Price was a Dissenting Minister. It is, indeed, no small testimony as to the character, disinterestedness, and patriotism of the man.

## ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

In the spring of 1777 Dr. Price published a second tract on Civil Liberty[3]--dedicated to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and the Common Council of the City of London. It was equally well written, and was largely an amplification of the views on liberty expressed in the former pamphlet, going a bit further into the essentials and excellence of 'Free Government'. This new work, while not as popular as the first treatise, which had sold 60,000 copies, was also widely read, and went through several editions. The two tracts were later incorporated into a single volume.

With Additional Observations on Civil Liberty Dr. Price

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 62.

2. Prosser, op. cit., p. 92.

3. Richard Price, Additional Observations on Civil Liberty, London: 1777.

announced that he was withdrawing from politics,[1] a resolution which he maintained to the end of the war. However, although his pulpit was free from 'political preaching', he did take advantage of 'fast days' proclaimed by the Government for preaching 'patriotic sermons'. Only two of these were printed.[2]

During the remainder of the war he remained an anxious spectator. As British hopes dwindled Dr. Price was subject to more and more abuse--cries of 'traitor', and threats of assassination. His correspondence with the American leaders had to stop. In one of his last letters, Franklin wrote: "Your great comfort and mine in this war is, that we honestly and faithfully did everything in our power to prevent it."[3] Surely it is fair to say that Dr. Price had made a noble effort to give practical expression to his religion in an historic hour of crisis. He was a firm believer in the 'social Gospel' as it might find expression in the nation's business. At no time was he even accused of 'party politics', and Britain has had few men more loyal to her and her Constitution.

## AMERICAN HONORS

Dr. Price's efforts in defense of the rights of the Americans did not go unrewarded across the Atlantic. Not only had his tracts

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1. Ibid., p. xvi--(Introduction).

2. Those preached in 1779 and 1781.

3. Franklin's Memoirs, III, p. 47, Letter to Dr. Price, written from Paris, February 6, 1780.

been eagerly read over there, but his zeal for liberty and the great knowledge of finance displayed in his writings induced the Congress of the United States to extend a special invitation to him to move to America, that his great abilities might be utilized in building the new nation. The following resolution was forwarded from the American Embassy in Paris to Dr. Price in the winter of 1778.

In Congress, 6th October, 1778

> Resolved,
> That the Honourable Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, Esqrs., or any one of them, be directed forthwith to apply to Dr. Price, and inform him, that it is the desire of Congress to consider him as a citizen of the United States, and to receive his assistance in regulating their finances. . . . That if he shall think it expedient to remove with his family to America and afford such assistance, a generous provision shall be made for requiting his services.
> Extract from the minutes,
> CHARLES THOMPSON, Secy.[1]

In replying to the invitation, on January 19, 1779, Dr. Price expressed his deep sense of gratitude for the honor thus bestowed upon him by Congress. He declined, however, pleading his unfitness for so great a task, and his family obligations in England. Reaffirming his appreciation to Congress he concludes the letter with the assurance "that he looks to the United States as now the hope, and likely soon to become the refuge, of mankind."[2] Later events in America certainly demonstrated their need for such talent as they would have had in the person of Dr. Price.

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 76.
2. Ibid., p. 80.

Other recognition came from America when, on September 7, 1781, Yale University (Yale College at that time) conferred upon Richard Price the honorary degree of LL. D. The honor was all the more conspicuous because it was conferred in the same service when General George Washington received the same degree. Dr. Price was deeply moved[1] by this expression of esteem from America.

On January 30, 1782, Dr. Price was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston, and a like honor came from the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia.

Failing to avail themselves of his presence, the American leaders asked Dr. Price, at the close of the war, to write for the new nation his best counsel. This request he was happy to grant. He wrote a booklet entitled Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution and the Means of Making it a Benefit to the World.[2] This publication was enthusiastically received in America, and was widely circulated in Britain and France as well. To quote Prosser once more: "The pamphlet was highly welcomed by the American leaders. Indeed, so highly was it thought of that the President, in his message to Congress in February, 1785, enclosed a copy of it, stating 'that the remarks contained in the pamphlet were the best legacy he could leave them, and he hoped the spirit of them might animate the manners and dispositions of legislators and people to the latest age."[3]

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1. Abiel Holmes, The Life of Ezra Stiles, Boston: 1798, pp. 287-288.

2. Richard Price, Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution And the Means of Making it a Benefit to the World, London: 1785 (85 pages).

3. Prosser, op. cit., p. 98.

Franklin and many others wrote Dr. Price their sincere appreciation.

## "A FREE DISCUSSION", ETC.

The popularity coming to him during the period of the American Revolution Dr. Price never allowed to turn him aside from the central business of the ministry. Comparatively the time given to political writing had been small, although the influence of his works had been international. His greatly increased reputation brought large crowds to hear him at Gravel Pit Meeting-house. Many who came out of curiosity were so impressed with the warmth and the spirit of his preaching that they continued as regular worshippers. Preaching which earlier had been indifferently received by the few was now enthusiastically praised by multitudes. His excellent sermons will demand our attention in later chapters.

We have mentioned the friendship between Dr. Price and Dr. Joseph Priestley. The two men were more closely allied in political views than in religion. Although both were in theological opinion what would now vaguely be called 'unitarians',[1] they differed sharply in matters of doctrine, Priestley being of strong Socinian convictions while Price held Arian views. The publication of Dr. Priestley's Disquisitions [2] raised no small storm of protest, and Dr. Price replied to his friend by private

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1. Dictionary of National Biography, Article by Dr. T. Fowler, XLVI, London: 1896, p. 335.

2. Joseph Priestley, Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit, London: 1777.

letter. Unlike Priestley, Price did not relish a controversy. Nevertheless, on the urging of his friend he entered into a correspondence debate, which they called 'a free discussion', on the subjects of Matter and Spirit. They followed a plan, suggested by Priestley, whereby they would write back and forth until each had done his utmost in expressing himself on a given point; then they would proceed to the next issue of the controversy. The correspondence was published[1] by Priestley, giving a new and interesting demonstration in the field of controversy. The two men felt they had shown that persons of opposite views, on matters most vital and sacred, could not only disagree without being disagreeable, but could retain the closest friendship throughout, with mankind benefitting by such discussion. Like most such 'discussions', however, it ended about where it began, Priestley still insisting on the soul as only a combination of matter while Price argued for the soul as a separate, indivisible substance. "Truth and not victory"[2] was the object of the two men, says Mr. Thomas, but one often has the feeling that the discussion is a 'demonstration' and not a real contest.

The year 1780 saw Dr. Price busy with two other publications of interest. At the instigation of Colonel Barré, he and Mr. Horne Tooke co-authored a pamphlet called Facts.[3] It was an

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1. Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, A Free Discussion on the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity, London: 1778.

2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 90.

3. Richard Price and Horne Tooke, Facts;--Addressed to the Subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, London: 1780.

exposure of government wastes in matters of money and war materials, with Dr. Price writing the section on finance. The pamphlet went through eight editions, but failed to move the administration to measures of economy. Dr. Price was more interested, however, in the publication of his Essay on the Population of England.[1] He was moved to prepare this essay by the conviction that there was an alarming decrease in the population of the nation; and his thesis was that this depopulation was a direct result of the wretched conditions of the poor, the excesses of the rich, and the want of religion throughout the land. Using the available figures on the number of houses reported in England in 1690 over against those reported in 1780, he estimated that there had been a twenty-five percent decline in population. His calculations in this instance proved to be the poorest of his career, based as they were on hopelessly inaccurate statistics. Later data has shown that, actually the population had increased by one-fourth in these years, and not decreased. Nevertheless, the Doctor's concern over the prevalence of poverty and sin is to be applauded.

## LATE MINISTRY

In the years following the American Revolution Dr. Price, while still actively interested in financial and political questions, was giving ever greater devotion to his sacred calling. It should be mentioned that, even at the height of his political activity, most of his afternoons were spent in visitation among

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1. Richard Price, Essay on the Population of England, London: 1780.

his flock. When Lord Shelburne became Prime Minister in 1782 he asked Dr. Price to become his private secretary, an office which he courteously refused, although he felt the invitation was sincere. Such work had no appeal for Dr. Price, and it had been long years since he had even thought of turning aside from his preaching. In any case Shelburne knew that his old friend would give his best for his nation. It is reported that one part of the King's speech at the opening of the 1782 Parliament was inserted in Price's very words,[1] a paragraph expressing a determination for economy and the reduction of the public debt. The brief Shelburne administration did not have time to translate the King's desire into action.

Sorrow and physical suffering now began to do their work in the Price home. Mrs. Price's paralytic disorder had grown steadily worse, and for the last five years of her life she was unable even to enjoy the company of friends. In all her years of suffering her husband's loving attentions never slackened or wavered. She died on September 20th, 1786, and we are told, "Her loss was as deeply felt and as sincerely lamented by him as if no malady had reconciled him to its approach."[2] Dr. Price's own health declined steadily from this time onward.

Knowing that his health would not likely improve, he felt he should not delay publishing some of his sermons, which would set forth clearly his theological position. His Sermons on the Christian Doctrine[3] came from the press in 1787. The volume was

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 98. 2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 106.

3. Richard Price, Sermons on the Christian Doctrine as Received by the Different Denominations, etc., London: 1787.

well received, the last five of the sermons being republished on several occasions. The work of editing a second volume was begun but not completed; however, a posthumous volume of sermons was printed in 1816.[1] These two volumes of sermons, together with the Dissertations and several sermons published singly, give a rather good cross-section of Dr. Price's preaching. It was his design that these sermons should reflect his religious views.

Dr. Price, in the midst of these busy years, found time to assist Mr. Pitt, at the Prime Minister's request, in working out a plan for a sinking fund, for the reduction of the national debt. Pitt knew Price's reputation as a financial advisor, and of his long-standing interest in the reduction of the public indebtedness. After some correspondence and several interviews Price prepared for Mr. Pitt's consideration three alternative plans for a sinking fund, recommending one of the plans as having far greater merit than the other two. But his plan called for eight hundred thousand pounds additional taxes, and Pitt shrank from the idea. Instead he adopted, after some changes of his own, the weakest plan Dr. Price had offered. Mr. Pitt presented his Sinking Fund plan to the Government, and it was adopted, in 1786, with very little opposition. Never at any time did the Prime Minister acknowledge the assistance he had received from Price. This gave the Doctor little concern for his only interest in the matter was the welfare of the nation. Nevertheless, it was well known that Dr. Price was the real author of the plan. During its

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1. Richard Price, Sermons on Various Subjects, (edited by William Morgan) London: 1816.

first years of operation the Sinking Fund gave real promise. But the coming of the French Revolution and the subsequent war between England and France again put the nation under terrific pressures; the operations of the Sinking Fund were altered, and finally it collapsed. Summaries and criticisms of the plan are to be found in many writings dealing with this critical period of history. Lecky appraises the plan as follows: "The essential characteristic. . . . was that it should be pursued without interruption, in times of war as well as in times of peace, in times of deficit as well as in times of surplus, and in that case, by the virtues of compound interest, it would produce effects which seemed absolutely magical."[1] And Lord Overstone (1857) has this to say: "It was a sort of hocus-pocus machinery; supposed to work 'without loss to anyone', and consequently purely delusive. There is no doubt, however, that Price rendered service by calling attention to the growth of the debt, no less than by attacking the practice, begun by North, of funding by increase of capital."[2] Further remarks on the history of the Sinking Fund are not to our purpose here. It must suffice to recall that Dr. Price's fundamental concern was in striking at the roots of the evils connected with the public debt.

In the political sphere, Dr. Price also gave active support to the cause of old age pensions. A bill, on which he had given advice, had, in 1773, passed the House of Commons, but failed in

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1. W. E. H. Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1892, V, p. 323.

2. DNB, article by T. Fowler. (Quoted from works privately printed by Lord Overstone, which I have been unable to see.)

the House of Lords. He assisted the Rev. John Acland with another bill in 1786, which followed the course of the former one. In 1789 "tables were computed by Dr. Price, at the request of a committee of the House of Commons, and were intended to form the foundation of a plan for enabling the labouring poor to provide support for themselves in sickness and old age, by small weekly savings from their own wages. A bill for establishing this plan, likewise, was formed and approved by the Commons. . . . , but it too was rejected by the Lords."[1] The practical and scientific help given by Dr. Price mark him as a pioneer in this field of social service which has, in our own day, come to be so important to mankind.

It should be mentioned here, though a detailed consideration is given in Chapter VI, that every effort to repeal the Corporation and Test Acts, made during Dr. Price's ministry, found him as zealous for religious as for civil liberty.

"New College," a new Dissenting Academy, was established at Hackney in 1887, and Dr. Price's was the best known name on the list of dissenting ministers forming the committee, which appealed to the dissenting churches for funds. The desire they expressed was for an academy which would safeguard 'liberal principles,' and where students would not of necessity be taught the orthodox view on the subject of the Trinity.[2] It was a Presbyterian college, being intended, as Dr. Price says, "for the purpose of providing that denomination of Protestant Dissenters to which we

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1. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 59-60.
2. Ibid., pp. 108-109.

belong, with a succession of able and useful ministers. . . . I here speak of the Presbyterian denomination of dissenters only."[1] For its first year Dr. Price donated his services to the academy, lecturing on mathematics, astronomy, morals, and natural philosophy; but his health would not permit his continuing. Although adequate finances had been secured in the beginning the college, through poor management, became bankrupt, and closed its doors ten years after they opened.

In the spring of 1787 Dr. Price resigned his pastorate at Newington Green and moved to Hackney, hoping that living in a busier community might cheer his spirits. His depression over the loss of his wife had been deepened by news of the passing of several of his close friends--Franklin, John Howard, and Dr. Adams of Oxford. Mrs. Morgan, his widowed sister, came from Wales to take charge of the new home in Hackney, and her presence was a real boon to his faltering spirits.

## THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

With the first explosion of the French Revolution, Dr. Price's hopes for the future improvement of mankind revived, and new life seemed to fill his tired and ailing body. He felt himself to be in possession of reliable information through his correspondence with Thomas Jefferson (then American ambassador to France), and Necker, the popular minister of Louis XVI; and he had received a

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1. Richard Price, The Evidence for a Future Period of Improvement in the State of Mankind, London: 1787, p. 39. (Sermon delivered at the opening of New College, Hackney, April 25, 1787.)

report on the people's side of the revolution from his nephew, George Morgan, who had been travelling in France at the time of the fall of the Bastille. During the summer and fall of 1789 Dr. Price was so intensely interested in the progress of the French Revolution that he could scarcely be persuaded to take his usual holiday on the seacoast of Glamorganshire.

There were many poets, philosophers, politicians, and preachers, who also held the highest hopes for France in the early days of the Revolution.[1] And Dr. Price was inspired to the most eloquent utterances of his life as the passion for liberty once more flamed within him. For many years he had been an active member of the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain, a group of interested citizens and politicians meeting annually in London to reassert the principles on which the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 had been founded. The meeting on November 4, 1789 was an historic one. His enthusiasm over the French Revolution had led Dr. Price, in spite of painfully poor health, to accept appointment as speaker for the annual meeting of the 'Society' to be held in the meeting-house at Old Jewry. His sermon that day on The Love of Our Country fired his hearers until they could scarcely restrain themselves from applause even in the sacred place of meeting.[2] But the effort was greater than his strength

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1. Clayden, op. cit., pp. 116-117. Here we find listed the names of Southey, Coleridge and Wordsworth, Price, Priestley and Mackintosh, Charles Fox, Grey, Whitebread, Francis, Erskine, Sheridan, Windham and Stanhope. All these, and others like them, who "had been labouring in the popular cause, felt upon their faces the light and warmth of a new morning for the world."

2. Morgan, op. cit., p. 155.

and he collapsed after returning to his home. Even so, by virtue of medical assistance and his own strong will, he was able to attend the evening dinner which the Society held in the London Tavern; and he moved the congratulatory address to the National Assembly of France.

This famous sermon (to be examined carefully in Chapter VI) was reprinted in France and America, and it proved to be the opening blast of a long and bitter contest of words. The view expressed by H. N. Brailsford is that, "The history of the French Revolution in England begins with a sermon and ends with a poem",[1] the sermon being Price's The Love of Our Country, and the poem, Hellas, by Shelley. The biographer of Thomas Paine calls the sermon "the red rag that drew Burke into the arena."[2] Indeed Edmund Burke made it the 'text' of the first half of his bitter denunciation of the French Revolution;[3] and then Thomas Paine replied to Burke with his Rights of Man,[4] and so the battle raged. Price did not live to witness the 'Reign of Terror', the disillusionment of which would probably have broken his heart. Nevertheless, this sermon, and his following expressions, so linked Dr. Price's name with the French Revolution in England that "when speaking of one it was impossible not to mention the other."[5]

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1. H. N. Brailsford, Shelley, Godwin and their Circle, London: n.d. (about 1900), p. 7.

2. M. D. Conway, The Life of Thomas Paine, London: 1909, p.132.

3. Edmund Burke, Reflections on the French Revolution, London: 1790.

4. Thomas Paine, Rights of Man, London: 1791.

5. Prosser, op. cit., p. 110. Quoted by Prosser as being a statement from an issue of the Monthly Review.

Though criticised, misquoted, and condemned by many in England, this sermon was loudly applauded in France. Dr. Price's writings on finance and civil liberty had long been familiar to such leading Frenchmen as Necker, Condorcet, and Turgot. The National Assembly, on receiving the congratulatory address, which Dr. Price had moved at the Society's dinner meeting, stood, as a mark of respect, for a second reading of it. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld wrote Price his personal appreciation, calling him "that great Apostle of Liberty."[1] Many patriotic societies and clubs sent glowing tributes, and the London 'Revolution Society'[2] was skyrocketed into a position of great importance.[3] But these days of apparent triumph were soon to be offset by the tragic aspects of the Revolution, which Dr. Price did not live to see. In the remaining months of his life, however, his optimistic view of the future was undisturbed by the fulminations of Burke or the pessimism of his American friend, John Adams.

## DR. PRICE'S LAST DAYS

Several references have already been made to Dr. Price's declining health. One ailment seemed to follow another until his activity was largely confined to his pulpit and his home. His body was now so racked with pain that his old habits of horseback

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1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 132.

2. The name often substituted for the full title, The Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain.

3. W. E. H. Lecky, The History of England in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1892, VI, p. 373.

riding, and walking, had to be abandoned. During the months of 1790 he attempted to set up a fourth edition of his Reversionary Payments, in two volumes. Only the first volume was completed, leaving the second for the attention of his nephew, William Morgan. Dr. Price also started work on some memoirs, intending to prefix them to a volume of sermons; but only the first rough sketch appeared, and the sermons remained untouched. Concentration for more than a few minutes at a time was impossible because of physical discomfort. He did manage a few additional notes for a last edition of The Love of Our Country, in answer to some of Burke's charges, but he refused a general contest with him. A 'Commemoration Dinner' on July 14, 1790 (anniversary of the fall of the Bastille) was Dr. Price's last public appearance on behalf of civil and religious liberty, but he was unable to take a leading part on this occasion.

During the fall and winter he continued, without interruption, his preaching appointments at the Gravel Pit Meeting-house. Early in February, after attending the funeral of a friend at Bunhill-fields Cemetery, Dr. Price remarked, that "this method of conducting funerals was the sure way of sending the living after the dead."[1] While the Doctor suffered no ill-effects following this experience, a month later he returned from another such funeral, was seized with chills and fever, and medical assistance had to be summoned. After about ten days he was again able to be up, and even to go for a ride in a carriage. This relief was brief, however, and he was soon in bed again, fighting a combination of the

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1. Morgan, op. cit., p. 174.

ailments which had plagued him for several years. An operation was necessary almost immediately, 'for constriction of the neck of the bladder'; but this only brought temporary relief, and the operation brought less relief each time it was repeated. After nearly a month of the most excruciating pain, he died on April 19, 1791. His nephew wrote of Dr. Price's last hours: "Distinguished from his earliest years for the meekness and equanimity of his temper, no injuries excited him to improper resentment--no affliction to impatience and discontent. Convinced of the great truths which he had so constantly taught, and so well exemplified in every period of his life, he calmly sunk under the last conflict of nature with a well founded hope of rising again to a more glorious existence in a better state."[1] In other words, Dr. Price died as he had lived, practicing his interpretation of Christianity with fullest confidence.

Besides the brief eulogy delivered at the grave in Bunhill-fields by Dr. Andrew Kippis, a funeral sermon was preached the following Sunday in the Gravel Pit Meeting-house by Dr. Joseph Priestley. Both these messages were printed, as were the memorial sermons delivered by Thomas Wright of Bristol and Thomas Cromwell of Newington Green.

News of Dr. Price's death, according to the biographer Roland Thomas, was received with profound sorrow in Britain, France, and America.[2] Prosser reports having read from an old unpublished manuscript in Hackney, "that three millions of French

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1. Ibid., pp. 177-178.

2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 141.

people went into mourning for him; and that the Patriotic Society of Nantes resolved to place a bust of Dr. Price in their Hall by the side of the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man', and further resolved to name one of the quarters of the town 'Le Quartier de Richard Price."[1]

Of the very numerous tributes to the life and character of Richard Price none is more eloquent than the Memorial Tablet which was placed in Newington Green Chapel by the congregation to whom he ministered for over a quarter of a century:

> To the Memory of Richard Price, D. D., F. R. S., Twenty-six years Minister of this Chapel, born at Tynton, Glamorganshire, February 23, 1723; died at Hackney, Middlesex, April 19, 1791. Theologian, Philosopher, Mathematician; friend to freedom as to virtue; brother of man; lover of truth as of God; his eminent talents were matched by his integrity, simplicity, and goodness of heart; his moral dignity by his profound humility. Few have been more useful in their generation, or more valued by the wise and good; none more pure and disinterested. Honoured be his name! Imitated his example.[2]

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1. Prosser, op. cit., p. 115.

2. Quoted by Raymond V. Holt, The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England, London: 1938, p. 77.

# CHAPTER II

# NATURAL RELIGION

# AND

# THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION

# THE CHALLENGE OF NATURAL RELIGION

The main streams of influence, affecting the development of the eighteenth century idea of Natural Religion, need to be taken into account as we come to consider Dr. Price's views on the subject. By the time he wrote in this field (1758) Natural Religion had passed its peak of popularity, but many, like himself, were busy trying to salvage some good from the battlegrounds of the controversies.

Surveying the backgrounds which shaped the century, Mr. Basil Willey singles out the important fact that, while 'Truth' seemed to be the key-word of the seventeenth century, in the eighteenth the word was 'Nature'.[1] The idea of 'Nature' found a new emphasis in religion, as well as in ethics, philosophy, politics, and poetry. 'The natures of things' being such a primary consideration on every hand resulted in a divinization of Nature peculiar to the century. It was not that the idea of Nature was new in Western thought, for it had long played a leading role, but, heretofore, Nature had been regarded more as a villain than as a hero, more as man's worst enemy than as his best friend. The multitude of meanings attached to the word in the past had also

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1. Basil Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, London: 1940, p. v.

rendered it suspect. But in the eighteenth century, comments Mr. Willey, "it was not the ambiguity of 'Nature' which people felt most strongly; it was rather the clarity, the authority, and the universal acceptability of Nature and Nature's laws. The laws of Nature are the laws of reason; they are always and everywhere the same, and like the axioms of mathematics they have only to be presented in order to be acknowledged as just and right by all men."[1] In this new mood the attempt was made to reduce religion to a natural science, the trend being to replace the authority of Scripture with the authority of Nature or Reason. It was inevitable that this prevailing contention, that "all religious truth was subject ultimately to the test of Reason," would affect "the basis of authority in religion and the method of theological thought."[2] The Deistic controversy which resulted from this emphasis marks the beginning of a new phase in modern theology.

This new development has been called the 'Golden Age' of Natural Religion. The shifting of the center of authority from Revelation to 'Nature' was even finding open doors among the houses of orthodoxy. Still retaining the supernatural basis of the Christian religion, many theologians began to insist that faith must first be "firmly grounded upon Nature before one had recourse to super-nature."[3] Such a position had resulted from a combination of the forces arising out of the scientific movement

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1. Ibid., p. 2.

2. J. M. Creed and Boys-Smith, Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1934, p. xvii.

3. Willey, op. cit., p. 3.

and the post-Reformation religious conflicts. Bacon and Newton may be taken as typical of the modern pioneers of science who felt they had rendered the highest services to religion as well as to science. In studying Nature, they were studying the works of God, almost as holy a calling as studying His word. Modern science had 'revealed' a world of design, order, and law, thus strengthening the inherited presuppositions of Christianity. "Francis Bacon could announce with conviction and authority that science was not the forbidden knowledge; that God had provided two channels of revelation, not one merely: the Scriptures, of course, but Nature also."[1] So the new science could hardly dispense with a divine hypothesis. Nature had been revealed as a Great Machine which presupposed a Divine Mechanic. And when Newton bound together in one dazzling synthesis the great and the little, the stars in their courses and the fall of an apple, a thankful generation, at once scientific and pious, could exclaim with its spokesman, Alexander Pope:

> Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night:
> God said, Let Newton be! and all was light![2]

But soon the divine uniformity of Nature was being weighed over against religious conflicts, disputes and wars. How can these things be? If the Revelation of Christianity is true, why all the confusion about what has been revealed? Have we not a right to expect that Scriptural Revelation should stand on the same basis of Common Reason as the revelation of Nature? The

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1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. A. Pope, The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, London: 1889 (Globe Ed.), p. 461.

philosophical struggle over such questions gave an atmosphere of cold intellectualism to the dawn of the eighteenth century. From several quarters came the exponents of the new Natural Religion known as Deism. At first they posed as apologists, intent on freeing Christianity from its ancient pollutions; but, before long, they were forced to abandon any pretense of a defence of Christianity, and turn rather to attack it. As the war of Deism began, the exponents of the new religion were encouraged by the successes in natural philosophy, which had created something of a predisposition of mind against the supernatural, and by the "downward tendency in Christian doctrine, both in the Church of England and among the Dissenters."[1] Perhaps this decay within the Christian religion itself was the primary cause for the rise of Deism.

On the other hand, while it was neither intended nor approved by him, it was the philosophy of mind introduced with so much distinction by Locke which provided the main strength for the cause. "This he did, above all, by his short but very significant work on the Reasonableness of Christianity (1695). In the pages of the writers who follow along the path where he led the way we shall find the same ostensible attempt to simplify the ancient faith, at first with an apologetic purpose, then with a gradually increasing and more overt hostility; the same principle of discrimination between the supposed valuable and worthless elements of the Creed; the same pre-eminence assigned to the ethical

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1. John Cairns, Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1881, p. 63.

teaching of Christianity; the same conception of religion as a moral philosophy and a code of precepts rather than a power enabling the enfeebled will; the same treatment of miracles and prophecy as external evidences of the truth of the claims of Christianity; the same anxiety to discover a reconciliation between belief in the absolute impartiality of the Divine goodness and the position of privilege assigned to revealed religion."[1] Toland, Blount, Collins, Clarke, Wollaston, Shaftesbury, Tindal, and many others, follow this pattern.

Of course, the recognized 'father of Deism' is Lord Herbert of Cherbury who, in the early years of the seventeenth century, had repeatedly inferred that revelation was unnecessary, though at times he treated revelation as of great importance.[2] His 'Five Undeniable Propositions' were often called the Deists' Bible in the first decades of the eighteenth century. These propositions are: "I. That there is one Supreme God. II. That he ought to be worshipped. III. That Virtue and Piety are the chief Parts of Divine Worship. IV. That we ought to be sorry for our Sins, and repent of them. V. That Divine Goodness doth dispense Rewards and Punishments both in this life, and after it."[3] Herbert's work asserts the competence of human reason to attain certainty with respect to the fundamental truths of religion, insisting on the unbreakable connection between religion and the practical

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1. ERE, ed. James Hastings, 1911, Vol. IV, p. 543. (article by G. C. Joyce--"Deism").

2. Cairns, op. cit., p. 43.

3. Edward (Lord) Herbert, The Ancient Religion of the Gentiles, etc., London: 1705 (a translation), pp. 3-4.

duties of life. "This is precisely the theme on which the Deistic writers enlarged. The pivot of the whole controversy is the disputed question of the sufficiency of natural reason to establish religion and enforce morality. . . . a sufficiency as vehemently asserted by the Deists as it was denied by their opponents."[1]

This all-sufficient Natural Religion of the Deists was a challenge to the Christian Faith which could not be ignored. It was now necessary to defend what had always been taken for granted. Of the ensuing struggle, it should be noticed that, "although the Christian apologists did not accept the Deistic conclusion, they were for the most part so far carried away by the spirit of the time that they, no less than the Deists, admitted and even courted the appeal to Reason. The old orthodoxy was not only attacked from without, it was profoundly modified from within."[2] As Leslie Stephen has put it, the question was, "how should morality survive theology?" And he goes on to say, "Various answers were given in England by various schools of thought . . . . by Clarke, Wollaston and Price, by Shaftesbury, Butler, and Hutcheson, by Hartley and Adam Smith, by Locke, Hume, Tucker, Paley and Bentham."[3] Price's answer to the challenge is our immediate concern.

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1. ERE, IV, op. cit., p. 533.

2. Creed, and Boys-Smith, op. cit., p. xvi.

3. Leslie Stephen, English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1876, p. 3.

## THE FOUNDATION
## ON WHICH PRICE BUILT

It has been pointed out that, with all their efforts at the divinization of Nature, the Deists did not produce one acknowledged masterpiece of literature; but, on the other hand, each of their leading works called forth "fifty or more replies"[1] from the Christian apologists. Chief among these was Bishop Butler's Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed (1736), which signalled the beginning of the end of the controversy. However, the idea remained active until 1760, and was not fully extinct until 1790.[2]

Dr. Price's Review of the Principal Questions in Morals (1758) was more in answer to the philosophy of Hume and Hutcheson (in so far as it was a polemic), than in reply to Deistic writings. But it was, in part, an effort to find that elusive but proper harmony between Natural Religion and the Christian Revelation, the 'holy alliance' between science and religion. His expressed purpose in the work "to trace the obligations of virtue up to the truth and nature of things, and these to the Deity",[3] is put simply, and in the spirit of the times; and the last chapter of the work is an application of his account of morality to the "Explication and Proof of some of the principal Doctrines and Facts of Natural Religion." In the third edition (1787) of the Review a "Dissertation

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1. Cairns, op. cit., p. 65.

2. ERE, IV, op. cit., p. 533.

3. Richard Price, A Review of the Principal Questions in Morals, London: 1787 (3rd. ed.), p. 5.

on the Being and Attributes of the Deity" is appended. Price explains in an advertisement that this dissertation had always been intended as a part of the treatise on morals.[1] Thus the ultimate purpose of the Review is emphasized. Remembering his vocation and the times, it is not strange to find such a theological intention behind his philosophy.

Dr. Samuel Clarke was the best known exponent of the school of English moralists known as the 'intellectual school', and Price is regarded as the last teacher of the school. Although he professes to have stated the view more distinctly, and a little differently, Price definitely built his superstructure on Clarke's foundations. Both men were moved by an ambition to prove that morality was no mere fashion, but that it was just as much a fundamental law in the natures of things as is the law of gravity. (Both men were ardent followers of Newton, Price having a particular affinity for him because of his own mathematical genius.) Clarke's position has been summarized thus:

> The mathematical universe in which he believed consisted of two elements; on the one side was matter with its primary qualities, . . . . and, on the other, the heirarchy of spirits from the divine to the human. All other qualities were merely modifications raised in the spirit in consequence of the mysterious action and reaction between itself and matter. The reason was the faculty by which the invariable relations between these ultimate facts were perceived; whilst the senses presented us with a shifting phantasmagoria of unrealities. To prove then that morality was not arbitrary and variable seemed to him to be the same thing as proving that it belonged to those eternal

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1. Ibid., p. iii.

> and immutable relations, and not to the sphere of observation, where the accidental and the essential are indistinguishably blended. The foundation of his argument for revealed religion was a proof that there was an unalterable natural law, to which revelation provided a necessary supplement.[1]

Price's Review, recognized as the ablest defense of the theory of the intellectual school, reflects the above views in its main propositions: I. That the power within us that perceives the distinctions of right and wrong is the understanding.[2] II. That the understanding consists of two acts, intuition and deduction.[3] III. That the understanding itself is a source of new ideas, simple ideas, that is, . . . . our ideas of right and wrong being of this sort.[4] Price carefully replaces Clarke's term 'reason' with the word 'understanding', for reason "supposes us already to have the ideas we want to trace; and therefore cannot give rise to new ideas."[5] Our abstract ideas, so essential to all its operations, are assigned to the understanding itself. "I cannot help wondering," he says, "that, in enquiring into the origin of our ideas, the understanding, which, though not first in time, is the most important source of our ideas, should have been overlooked. It has, indeed, been always considered as the source of knowledge: But it should have been more attended to, that as the source of knowledge, it is likewise the source of new ideas, and that it cannot be one of these without being the

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1. Stephen, op. cit., pp. 5, 6. (Vol. II).
2. Price's, Review, (3rd. ed.), p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. Ibid., pp. 16, 49.
5. Ibid., p. 57.

other. The various kinds of agreement and disagreement between our ideas, which Mr. Locke says, it is its office to discover and trace, are so many new simple ideas, obtained by its discernment. . . . . As bodily sight discovers to us visible objects; so does the understanding, (the eye of the mind, and infinitely more penetrating) discover to us intelligible objects; and thus, in a like sense with bodily vision, becomes the inlet of new ideas."[1] Such are our ideas of duration, space, difference, connection, and our moral ideas, argues Price. He challenges those who doubt this to attempt definitions of these ideas which will amount to more than synonymous expressions. There are some actions, he holds, that are ultimately approved, and for the justification of which no reason can be assigned. And the same is true of certain desired ends. "Were this not true," he asserts, "there would be an infinite progression of reasons and ends, and therefore nothing could be at all approved or desired."[2] This position is defended with great skill throughout the treatise. While the argumentation is often involved and difficult, it is ever the same theme, always the same a priori method of reasoning. This, of course, is a point of great advantage for Price as he comes to apply his theory to the doctrines of Natural Religion, as well as Revelation.

## THE PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES OF NATURAL RELIGION

The position, that actions are right or wrong in themselves; that moral distinctions are 'simple ideas', which are intuitively

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1. Ibid., pp. 49, 52.  2. Ibid., p. 58.

perceived by the understanding, is reviewed and further emphasized as Price makes ready to bring it to bear on the basic propositions of Natural Religion. He takes care to differentiate his position from that of the 'moral sense' theory, which is that right is only a species of sensation, by asserting that, "it may be said that it denotes a real character of actions, or something true of them; something necessary and immutable, and independent of our perceptions, like equality, difference, proportion, or connection; and, therefore, that no other account is to be given, why such and such actions are right, than why the natures of things are what they are."[1] So his argument runs that when we have traced a subject up to the nature of things, we ought, in all cases to be satisfied. Surely it is trifling and unreasonable, he contends, for a person to want further information on such self-evident truths as, that the whole is greater than a part, or that two plus two equals four. As for truth itself, Price maintains that it is asserting what cannot be understood to say that the will of God is the foundation of truth, for "this is sacrificing to the single attribute of will all the divine perfections." His conviction is, "that truth having a reference to mind; necessary truth, and the eternal natures of things, imply, a necessary, eternal mind; and force us upon the acknowledgement of the Divine, unoriginated, incomprehensible wisdom and intelligency."[2]

This is the foundation on which he builds his arguments concerning the Being and Attributes of the Deity: "It is happy for us," he says, "that our conviction of all that is most interesting

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1. Ibid., p. 402.

2. Ibid., p. 403.

to us is made to be the effect of immediate and irresistible perception, and not left to depend on abstruse reasonings and deductions. This is true particularly, of our conviction of the existence of a Maker of the World."[1] The above argument is the same as that in the main body of his treatise, in which Price has acknowledged the three grounds of belief or assent to be feeling, intuition, and argumentation or deduction, with the accent on the primary place of intuition. By intuition he means "the mind's survey of its own ideas, and the relations between them, and the notice it takes of what is or is not true or false, consistent and inconsistent, possible and impossible in the natures of things." He then goes on to say, that it is to this "we owe our belief of all self-evident truths; our ideas of the general, abstract affections and relations of things; our moral ideas, and whatsoever else we discover, without making use of any process of reasoning. It is on this power of intuition, essential, in some degree or other, to all rational minds, that the whole possibility of all reasoning is founded. To it the last appeal is ever made. Some truths there must be, which can appear only by their own light, and which are incapable of proof; otherwise nothing could be proved, or known; in the same manner as, if there were no letters, there could be no words, or if there were no simple and undefinable ideas, there could be no complex ideas."[2] Thus our intuitions, or our a priori ideas, enter into every process of

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1. Richard Price, A Dissertation on the Being and Attributes of the Deity, (appended to the 3rd. ed. of Price's Review) London: 1787, p. 489.

2. Price's Review, 3rd. ed. pp. 158, 159.

reasoning, and particularly in those reasonings that lead us to a belief in the Deity, and our understanding of his nature. The truths we perceive by intuition really belong to an infinity of truth which, in reality is God. This leads to the assertion that "there is nothing so intimate with us, and one with our natures as God. He is included, as appears, in all our conceptions, and necessary to all the operations of our minds: nor could he be necessarily existent, were this not true of him. For it is implied in the idea of necessary existence, that it is fundamental to all other existence, and pre-supposed in every notion we can frame of every thing. In short, it seems very plain, that truth having always a reference to MIND; infinite, eternal truth implies an infinite eternal MIND: and that, not being itself a substance, nor yet nothing, it must be a mode of substance; or of the essential wisdom and intelligence of the one necessary Being."[1] Price considers this reasoning to have fully established the fact of the existence of an eternal, infinitely wise God. However, he maintains that the general arguments from cause and effect are also of considerable weight, especially the argument from design. He holds it to be self-evident that the visible world, of which we are a part, is an exhibition of the power and wisdom of a powerful and wise cause. The degree of power and wisdom exhibited being beyond our powers of conception, he feels we are obliged to conclude, that the same wisdom exists where we cannot see it as where we can. Thus we can "reckon with confidence that all appearances of irregularity are appearances only, rendered unavoidable by our

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1. Ibid., pp. 141, 142.

ignorance and partial view; and which, were not this true, would imply a difficulty greater than any that now puzzles us, and not possible to be accounted for without supposing, that the world was formed by a wisdom and foresight not superior to our own."[1] He also accepts the argument from the order displayed by nature as indicating the unity of the first cause.

Although he considers these arguments sufficient for all practical purposes, Price, in order to clarify his theory of the necessary existence of the first cause, makes use of another kind of reasoning. He thinks probably it is the 'better method of reasoning about the Deity', which Sir Isaac Newton hinted at but never explained. He first summarizes the reasonings of cause and effect:

> The existence of all beings is either contingent or necessary.
>
> All beings exist contingently whose non-existence is possible; and the non-existence of all beings is possible, whose non-existence implies no contradiction.
>
> Our own existence and the existence of the whole visible world is contingent.
>
> All that exists contingently; and which, therefore, might or might not have existed, requires a reason or cause for its existence.
>
> There must, therefore, be a cause of our own existence and of the existence of the world.
>
> The cause of all that exists contingently must exist necessarily.
>
> Thus far all the writers on the being and attributes of the Deity have agreed; but they have not, in my opinion, properly explained that necessity of existence which belongs to the first cause. It is the attribute which forms the grand and fundamental distinction between him and all other beings; and which, when rightly under-

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1. Price's Dissertation on the Deity, pp. 490, 491.

> stood, will be seen to imply all his other attributes."[1]

Price endeavors to clarify his position with the following observations: (1) "The necessity of God's existence is not an impossibility grounded upon or deduced from any facts or arguments, but an impossibility appearing immediately, and carrying its own evidence with it; an impossibility in the nature of the thing itself." From this it follows (2) "That the necessity of God's existence implies that his non-existence cannot be conceived without a contradiction." (3) "The necessity of God's existence implies that it is necessary, not merely as an efficient cause of other existence, but to the very conception of all other existence."[2] Here the necessity of the Deity is the same as the necessity of time and space, which are indispensable to the conception of all other existence. These, he argues, cannot in thought be destroyed. Neither can truth be destroyed in thought; this would be the same as making truth to be falsehood, and, therefore, a contradiction in terms.

It is further asserted that such a necessity of being allows for no limitation or imperfection; and that such a necessary being cannot possess perfection in the manner of inferior beings. This would be to possess it as participating in it as something distinct from itself and independent of it. He illustrates in the following manner:

> A being existing necessarily cannot be omnipresent by existing in space as all contingent

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1. Price's Review, pp. 493, 494.
2. Ibid., pp. 494, 495, 496.

> beings do; because, on this supposition, we might conceive of immensity without him, and there would be the same reason for requiring a cause for his existing in all rather than in any part of, that there would be, were he limited in this respect, to require a cause of that limitation. . . . . A being whose existence does not constitute infinite space can no more exist every where without a cause, than he can any where. And the like is true of his eternity, and of every attribute and perfection that we can apply to him. A being, who is intelligent by the perception of truth as somewhat independent of him, can no more be perfectly intelligent without a cause, than he can be so imperfectly. It must be just as proper to ask a reason or cause of his knowing all truth rather than a part of truth, as of his knowing any one part of truth rather than another. The like is true of power; and the result is, that the being who exists necessarily must possess these attributes in a manner peculiar to himself. He is intelligent, not by the apprehension of truth, but by being truth; and wise, not by knowing all that is knowable, but by being that intellectual light which enlightens all other beings, and which makes them wise and knowing. He is, therefore, WISDOM, rather than wise; and REASON, rather than reasonable. In like manner; he is ETERNITY, rather than eternal; IMMENSITY, rather than immense, and POWER, rather than powerful. In a word; he is not benevolent only, but benevolence; not absolutely perfect only, but absolute perfection itself; the root, the original (or to speak after Dr. Clarke, and perhaps still less improperly) the substratum of all that is great and wise and good and excellent.[1]

Price frequently complains of the limitations of words and expressions in dealing with this abstruse subject matter. However, this outline of his reasoning with respect to God shows clearly how he moves from the intuitive perceptions of what he considers eternal truths in the natures of things to the Being who, in a

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1. Ibid., pp. 499, 500. (Dr. Clarke applied such language only to the eternity and immensity of the Deity.)

manner peculiar to himself, is the necessary cause of all truth and being. He feels such reasoning lends the stongest possible force to the principal truths of Natural Religion. The term 'necessary' here is evidently used in the sense of being 'logically necessary' to the closing of an infinite regress. With respect to God, he makes the term stand for absolute independence, rather than absolute dependence, as in the ordinary usage of the term.

It is this same process of reasoning which leads to the idea of the moral attributes of the Deity in Price's writings on Natural Religion. The natures and reasons of things, he holds, distinctly imply that God prefers happiness, goodness, truth, and justice, rather than their contraries. If his preference is not grounded on such intrinsic worth as we see in the natures of things, then God must be essentially indifferent, and may be malevolent as easily as benevolent, and therefore without any determinate character. Moreover, he contends that all the effects we can observe in the world not only demonstrate wise design on the part of the first cause, but goodness; and that happiness is the true end of the creation. "It may be justly said," he argues, "that we are to judge of what we do not see by what we do see, and not the contrary; and that consequently, as long as the appearance on the whole of what lies before us of God's works, though comparatively little, is clearly as if happiness was their end, the fair conclusion is, that this is indeed the truth."[1] He emphasizes that the natural state of a being is always the sound, good and happy

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1. Price's Review, p. 415.

state of that being; that the preponderance of evidence on every hand indicates that there is something intrinsically better in goodness, truth, and justice, than in their opposites; that intelligence implies the approbation of beneficence; that the understanding is the power which judges of moral differences; that there is a necessity in the natures of things which requires that "goodness rather than malice must constitute the disposition and end of every mind in proportion to the degree of its knowledge and perfection."[1] Upon these principles, it is asserted, nothing can be more easily ascertained than the moral perfections of the Deity. For, as Price has stated earlier, it appears from our intuitive understanding and from the reasonings of cause and effect that, "rectitude, or virtue is a LAW. And it is the first and supreme law, to which all other laws owe their force, on which they depend, and in virtue of which alone they oblige."[2] And, granting that there is such a law, "it follows demonstrably, that the first intelligence, that is, the Deity, must be under the direction of it more than any other nature; as much more, as his understanding is higher, and his knowledge more perfect. He is in fact the living independent spring of it. He cannot contradict it, without contradicting himself. 'Tis a part of the idea of reason, and therefore, in the self-existent reason, must be of absolute and sovereign influence."[3] Infinite power, infinite knowledge, and absolute rectitude are represented as qualities implying one another, and yet essentially one, which complete the

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1. Ibid., p. 418.
2. Ibid., p. 178.
3. Ibid., p. 419.

idea of Deity. With God thus acting by the law of rectitude, it is held that, of all possible schemes of creation, all things being equally easy for him, he would certainly be guided by that which was best, and create the best possible world. His absolute independence and self-sufficiency raise God above all possibility of temptation to do wrong, interfering qualities being a contradiction to his very nature. In fact, his very nature precludes anything arbitrary, instinctive, or independent of reason. It is contradictory, he holds, to think of the same necessity and reasons of things as the ground for the approbation and love of rectitude on the one hand, and biases against rectitude on the other.

But Price does not think that benevolence constitutes the whole of the character of the Deity. "Absolute and eternal rectitude, (or a regard to what is in all cases most fit and righteous) is properly the ultimate principle of the divine conduct, and the sole guide of his power. In this GOODNESS is first and principally included. But GOODNESS and RECTITUDE, how far soever they may coincide, are far from being identical. The former results from the latter, and is but a part of it."[1] Supposing an interference possible, goodness would certainly yield to rectitude. Nevertheless, he readily admits, the character of God is much more nearly reducible to goodness, than is that of inferior beings.

It is asserted that, since God is absolutely supreme and independent, he must be perfectly happy in himself, and therefore his views would not terminate in himself; but, "to him others must be all; and the care of their interests, the due adjustments

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1. Ibid., p. 428.

of their states among themselves, and the right administration of their affairs must comprehend the principles and views of all his actions."[1] It is Price's claim that happiness is the one and only end, conceivable by us, of God's providence and government. However, He pursues this end in subordination to rectitude, which is the supreme law by which He acts. "Justice and veracity," Price points out, "are right as well as goodness, and must also be ascribed to the Deity. Divine benevolence is a disposition, not to make all indiscriminately happy in any possible way, but to make the faithful, the pious, and the upright happy." In other words, God's goodness is directed by justice,[2] which is a distinct attribute. The same argument is used to indicate "Veracity as another principle of rectitude, not reducible to goodness, which directs the actions of the Deity, and by which all the exertions of his goodness are conducted and regulated."[3] Since justice and truth suppose reasonable, moral beings actually existing, it is evident that these attributes of the Deity could never engage him to create; only goodness could move him to this. Price feels it is more correct to say that truth and justice direct, than that they limit God's goodness. For, he insists, they are certainly not inconsistent with the unlimited communication of happiness, or the Deity's exercise of everlasting and infinite goodness.

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1. Ibid., p. 430.

2. Price emphasizes that he means here, distributive justice, and not absolute justice.

3. Ibid., pp. 430, 432, 434.

Price stoutly affirms that it is perfectly consistent to hold that the moral attributes of God are not resolvable into benevolence, while affirming at the same time that happiness is the end for which he created and governs the world; for it is happiness subordinate to rectitude; happiness obtained consistently with justice and veracity. However, he says, "We may admit that goodness comprehends the whole divine moral character, provided we understand by it a reasonable, sincere, holy, and just goodness." And he closes this part of the discussion by recalling, "that though it be proper, and often unavoidable, to speak of goodness, justice, and veracity, as different attributes of the Deity; yet they are different only as they are different view, effects, or manifestations of one supreme principle, which includes the whole of moral perfection; namely, everlasting rectitude, or reason."[1] So it appears that Price has succeeded mainly in reducing all the attributes of the Deity to the principle of rectitude or reason, rather than to benevolence. Of course, having invested his 'categorical imperative', the LAW of rectitude, with such absolute sovereignty, he could reach no other conclusion. Nevertheless, in a sermon on "The Goodness of God", writing from different motives, Price says, "Benevolence is the crown of all the attributes of the Deity."[2] But even here he goes on to press the point that God's goodness is a reasonable goodness; founded in, derived from, and under the direction of reason in all cases;[3] reason standing

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1. Ibid., p. 436.

2. Richard Price, Sermons on Christian Doctrine, London; 1786, p. 262.

3. Ibid., pp. 268-9.

for rectitude in this instance, for he often uses the terms interchangeably.

As for the moral government of the Deity, Price affirms that it must follow, that God would require his reasonable creatures to be governed by the same rules by which he governs his own actions. The universal, eternal, immutable law of rectitude must operate wherever truth and reason exist. "The law of truth must be the law of the God of truth." And he sums up the claim: "If there is an intelligent being at the head of all, who made things what they are; if moral good and evil are real and immutable differences, and not just mere names and fancies; if there is a law of righteousness which the Deity regards, and according to which he always acts; if virtue deserves well, and is essentially worthy of encouragement, and vice deserves ill, and is a proper object of punishment; then, it may be depended on that the lots of the virtuous and the vicious will be different; that God is for the one, and against the other; or, that the administration of the world is strictly moral and righteous."[1] This point is considered so obvious as to need little elaboration. He only mentions further that, virtue, by its very nature, always promotes order and happiness, while the contrary must be said of vice. Therefore, Goodness and Justice are represented as joining in the requirement that virtue should be universally and forever encouraged under the divine government, and vice discouraged and punished.

But the problem of evil must be faced. What about the presence of injustice and unhappiness in the world? Price's answer is

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1. Ibid., p. 439, 440.

simply, "that if it should appear, that, in the present world, virtue and vice are not distinguished in the manner which these observations require; the unavoidable consequence must be, that there is a future state."[1] Since the natural tendencies of virtue and vice are so self-evident, it is considered not unreasonable to presume that ultimately these will issue in their genuine effects. Surely they declare the purpose of God, and it is unreasonable to think that this purpose will ultimately be defeated.

Insisting that our only recourse is to deduce the unknown from what is known, Price argues that while we are confronted with injustice and vice in the world, we know that virtue is intrinsically better than vice, and all reason leads us to expect that it will be rewarded and vice punished. Noting that often, in this world, the most virtuous are the greatest sufferers while the vicious prosper and are happy, he observes; "This world appears fitted more to be a school for the education of virtue, than a station of honour to it; and the course of human affairs is favourable to it more by exercising it, than by rewarding it."[2] The true measure of virtue is not its immediate utility but its intrinsic worth, which remains even after the world has done its worst. Surely it is reasonable to presume, for instance, that where life is sacrificed for conscience sake, virtue will eventually receive a just reward under the divine government. Elsewhere he puts it thus: "The Deity cannot be an indifferent spectator of the series of events in the world to which he has given being. His goodness will as certainly engage him to direct them agreeably

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1. Ibid., p. 441.

2. Ibid., p. 444.

to the ends of goodness, as his wisdom and power enable him to do it in the most effectual manner."[1] He declares that, a God without a particular Providence is a contradiction; and, that no affliction or grievance would be allowed for one moment if it were improper. But who are we to pronounce judgment on God's total plan, which includes many things beyond our understanding? In the eternal plan, it must be proper that rewards and punishments should often wait until a future period.

Again, it often happens that the best men are uneasy about even minor infirmities that plague them, while the most wicked are scarcely troubled by the checks of conscience. But are we to conclude that God is indifferent, and that eternal justice will never be brought to bear? Shall we retreat to Atheism, he asks, rather than accept the conclusion that this life must be connected with another? Or, must we say, granting that there is a God, that it does not follow from his being himself righteous that he approves, supports, requires, and rewards righteousness? Here, in the instance of virtue, where we should expect the greatest order, shall we find the least? "But, acknowledge the reference of this scene to a future more important scene, and all is clear; every difficulty is removed, and every irregularity vanishes."[2] For him, nothing is plainer, or more obvious, than that a perfectly reasonable Deity will take such care of his universe as perfect reason requires.[3]

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1. Richard Price, Four Dissertations, London: 1766, p. 5.
2. Price's Review, p. 450.
3. Price's Dissertations, p. 6.

In support of his 'school for virtue' argument, Price says further:

> Were every single action, as soon as performed, to be followed with its proper reward or punishment; were wickedness, in every instance of it, struck with immediate vengeance, and were goodness always at ease and prosperous; the characters of men could not be formed; virtue would be rendered interested and mercenary; some of the most important branches of it could not be practiced; adversity, frequently its best friend, could never find access to it; and all those trials would be removed which are requisite to train it up to maturity and perfection. Thus, would the regular process of a moral government be disturbed, and its purposes defeated; and therefore, the very facts which are made objections to it, appear, as mankind are now constituted, to be required by it."[1]

While this argument leaves God responsible for allowing the present inequalities in our world, Price argues that these are overbalanced by innumerable appearances of His infinite power and perfection, and that we are better off to receive the plain, easy, and natural supposition about a future life. Why should we hesitate to accept the obvious and natural explanation in such a case as this, any more than we would hesitate to accept the plain and obvious sense of a strange passage in a book, which the turn of the passage itself pointed to us, and which rendered it of a piece with the wisdom apparent in other parts of the book, and agreeable to what previously we had the best reason to believe concerning the character and abilities of the author?"[2]

Forced to rely on the arguments of cause and effect, in the

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1. Price's Review, pp. 451, 452.

2. Ibid., p. 454.

effort to prove a future state, Price makes the most he can out of it, insisting that we can collect the unknown from the known in this case as reasonably as we can in the realm of sensible impressions. The a priori truths from the understanding are brought to the aid and support of all reasonings a posterori, and not only a future state, but the other principal doctrines of Natural Religion are proved, in Price's opinion.

## REVELATION

Having reasoned his way to the necessity of a future state, Price frankly admits that 'reason' leaves us much in the dark on the subject. For, except for the fulfillment of retribution, we can know little about such a future life. Thus, it might be for a very short period indeed, and our expectations still left very low. The work of repentance in breaking the connection between sin and punishment is not explained, and the peculiar treatment in the cases of penitents, as distinguished from innocents, is left a blank. Lord Herbert's fourth proposition, "that men ought to be sorry for their sins and repent of them," Price gives no place in his defense of Natural Religion. He is happy to turn to the Scriptures:

> Here, I think, the information given us by the CHRISTIAN REVELATION comes in for our relief most seasonably and happily. . . . To this Messiah the scriptures tell us the present state has, from the first, stood in a particular relation, and had it not been for this relation our state might perhaps have been so ordered, that adequate retribution should have taken place even here, and all mankind sink in death, without the hope or

> possibility of a resurrection. That we are to be delivered at all from death to a new life of any kind may, therefore, be owing to JESUS CHRIST, consistently with the argument for a future state on which I have insisted. But that we are to be delivered from death to a new life that shall never end of complete happiness, this is unspeakably more than any arguments from distributive justice can teach us to expect; and we may well acquiesce in the scripture doctrine concerning it, and consider our whole future existence as derived under God's goodness, from the benevolent agency of that SAVIOUR, who came into the world that all the truly virtuous might not only have life, but have it more abundantly.[1]

He is confident that the Christian Revelation not only confirms what we gather from reason in the field of Natural Religion, but that it goes infinitely beyond all this in promises to the virtuous of eternal, happy immortality. By the reasonings of his Review, Price has endeavored to arrest the attention of the sceptic, lead him to the necessity of a belief in God, convince him of the obligations of virtue, and move him to a consideration of the 'reasonableness' of Christianity. "Whoever," he persists, "will fairly examine the evidences of religion, must see that they deserve great regard."[2] For the sacred writings most strikingly assert, defend, and illustrate the claims of virtue which we find present in the understanding. Further, the reasonableness of infinite goodness communicating infinite happiness to his creatures--of the operation of laws favorable to the virtuous--of the spotless holiness of the Deity as represented in the Scriptures, must surely lead a thoughtful person to consider that it may all be true. This very possibility should lead us to secure ourselves

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1. Ibid., pp. 455, 456. 2. Ibid., p. 470.

by all possible means. Price holds that sincere and impartial inquirers must concede "that all the arguments taken together, which have been used to prove natural and revealed religion, produce some degree of real evidence."[1] Here, Price follows Butler, who says of the skeptical that: "It ought to be forced upon the reflection of these persons, that our nature and condition necessarily require us, in the daily course of life, to act upon evidence much lower than what is commonly called probable; . . . . For numberless instances might be mentioned respecting the common pursuits of life, where a man would be thought, in a literal sense, distracted, who would not act, and with great application too, not only upon an even chance, but upon much less, and where the probability or chance was greatly against his succeeding."[2] Therefore, since we are, in many cases, under the necessity of acting on evidence which amounts to much less than certainty, why should we demand certainty with regard to the ultimate issues of life? In other words, is it not just as reasonable to run some risks in pursuit of eternal blessings of inestimable worth, as it is to run risks in pursuit of money, power, fame, etc.? But, continues Price, there is not only a possibility, "not only an equal chance, but a great probability for the truth of religion."[3] How shocking it is, then, for any one to choose vice, or neglect the Christian religion!

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1. Ibid., p. 472.

2. The Works of Joseph Butler, (edited by J. H. Bernard) London: 1900, Vol. II, pp. 220, 3.

3. Price's Review, p. 474.

In his dissertation on The Importance of Christianity,[1] Price makes free use of Butler's doctrine of probability, and supplements it with a lengthy explanation of his own doctrine of chances,[2] for, along with others, he attempted to meet Hume's arguments against miracles. The Age of Reason had made it necessary for theology to defend prophecy and miracle under cross-examination, with the result that theological thought of the eighteenth century was more concerned with evidences for, than with the content of Revelation.[3] While Locke had innocently allowed the case for Revelation, those who followed him turned his philosophy into an attack on the credentials of Revelation. The Deists' attack was overshadowed and superceded by that of Hume. For clarity and consistency his reasonings were unequalled, and his challenge to the traditional foundations of the Christian religion provoked many replies from the defenders of the faith. It was Hume, who was to become a personal friend, who drew Price into the arena.

The eighteenth century has been described as an age of reason based upon faith--"the faith in question being a confidence in the stability and regularity of the universal frame of nature." And the point is well made that; "Nothing can better illustrate Hume's adherence to this faith, and its separation in his mind from his philosophical scepticism, than his celebrated essay on

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1. Richard Price, "The Importance of Christianity", Four Dissertations, London: 1767.

2. It was his paper on this doctrine of chances which won Price the F. R. S. in 1763.

3. Creed and Boys-Smith, op. cit., p. xx.

Miracles. The very man who proved that, for all we can tell, anything may be the 'cause' of anything, was also the man who disproved the possibility of miracles because they violated the invariable laws of Nature."[1] This unusual lack of consistency is the very point at which Price attacks, and, although he otherwise depends on the usual arguments for testimony as adequate evidence, he does show that Hume, by his own formula, could not have accepted the miracles of Jesus had he been present and seen them with his own eyes.[2]

His reverence for the Scriptures appears immediately in Price's dissertation on The Importance of Christianity. At the outset, he affirms the importance of the great Bible truths over all modern material discoveries; especially the coming of the great Messiah to abolish death, judge mankind, execute justice, and establish an everlasting kingdom where the virtuous shall be completely and unchangeably happy.

But many have begun to doubt these Bible truths, and to demand proofs. The new age of criticism is welcomed, and the hope expressed that it will continue with the best minds applied to it. For it is his conviction that such inquiry has always been to the advantage of the Christian religion. Especially, does Price deplore the use of civil power for silencing heretics and infidels, since the civil magistrate has never been a competent judge of truth. "Let rather unbelievers be encouraged to produce their strongest objections. If Christianity is of God, we may be sure

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1. Willey, op. cit., pp. 126, 127.

2. Price's Dissertations, p. 454.

it will bear any trial, and in the end prevail.[1] And, he reminds, Christians themselves will do well, instead of quickly assigning infidelity to the worst motives, to "take care that their own faith is the result of honest inquiry."[2]

Owning that there are objections that contain a measure of real difficulty, Price avows: "The proof of Christianity does not consist of a clear sum of arguments, without anything opposed to them. But it is the overbalance of evidence that remains after every reasonable deduction is made on account of the difficulties."[3] This is the same as Butler's argument (borrowed from Origen) that, "he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it, as are found in the constitution of nature."[4] The fact, that we cannot explain either nature or super-nature fully, does not leave us without an overbalance of evidence which is sufficient for proof. Price briefly reviews the leading, current arguments against Revelation, all of which he considers to have been fully met, except one, the objection to the validity of the testimony of the New Testament witness. His clearly stated position deserves to be quoted:

> The gospel is not a speculative science, or an abstruse and complicated theory. Whatever jargon may have been fathered upon it in systems and creeds, it is in itself plain and simple. It is a set of facts exhibiting and demonstrating this one truth; Eternal Life, the gift of God, through Jesus Christ

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1. Ibid., p. 366.
2. Ibid., p. 463.
3. Ibid., p. 367.
4. Butler's Works, op. cit., p. 4.

> our Lord. The New Testament contains a narrative of these facts. The business of the apostles was to attest and publish them to the world; and no enquiries, relating to their qualifications and authority, are of great importance in any other view, than as witnesses of these facts. I think, indeed, that they have an authority as teachers, as well as witness: But what they insist themselves most upon, is their office as witnesses, and the regard they claim is founded principally on their having heard, and seen, and handled the word of life. (I John 1:1-2) The only question, certainly that affects the truth of Christianity is, whether they were honest men, who did not mean to deceive, and who were competently informed with respect to the facts they attest. If this appears, (as, I think it does abundantly) Christianity is proved; nor need any person be anxious about more in it than necessarily follows from hence.[1]

This, of course, brings Price to the main point at issue, namely, Mr. Hume's objections to the miracles recorded in the New Testament. He refers to Hume's assertion that, "in general,--all relations of facts which contradict experience, or imply a deviation from the usual course of nature, are their own confutation, and should be at once rejected as incapable of proof, and impossible to be true. One cannot be better employed," he says, "than in inquiring how far such sentiments are right, and what regard is really due to testimony, when it's reports do not agree with experience." And he proposes "to state this matter as accurately as possible, by entering into a critical examination of the grounds of belief in this case, and of the nature and force of historical evidence."[2] Just in passing, and before turning to

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1. Richard Price, Four Dissertations, London: 1767, pp. 377-379.

2. Ibid., pp. 379, 380.

his main arguments, Price charges the patrons of infidelity with the responsibility of showing that there are no instances of the fulfillment of prophecy which deserve regard. For if there are such instances, he holds, one must be impressed by them as demonstrating the credibility of miracles, and, in some degree, an actual exhibition of them. But Hume includes prophecies along with other miracles, and dismisses them with a reference to the same argument he has used against miracles,[1] which we quote:

> It is a maxim worthy of our attention, that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish. And even in that case, there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force, which remains after deducting the inferior. When any one tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable that the person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact he relates should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other, and according to the superiority which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous than the event which he relates, then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief or opinion. . . . I desire any one to lay his hand on his heart, and after serious consideration declare, whether he thinks that the falsehood of such a book, (the Pentateuch) supported by such testimony, would be more extraordinary and miraculous than all the miracles it relates; which is however necessary, to make it be received, according to the measure of probability above established. . . . So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the Christian Religion not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable

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1. David Hume, Essays, London: 1760 edition, III, p. 201.

> person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity. And whoever is moved by faith to assent to it is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience.[1]

In answer to Mr. Hume's assertion, that the credit we give to testimony is derived solely from experience,[2] Price maintains that the inherent improbability of the fact attested has nothing to do with the grounds of our reliance on testimony. In fact, it is common, he holds, for the testimony of a single witness to overcome infinite improbability; as, for instance, the previous improbability of any ordinary narrative, antecedent to the testimony affirming it, is overcome. This is simply saying, that there is no absolute proof against possibility, to be drawn from improbability. It is true that by experience we trust the future to resemble the past, but it must also be remembered, "that the greatest uniformity and frequency of experience will not afford any proper proof, that an event will happen in a future trial, or even render it so much as probable, that it will always happen in all future trials."[3] In other words, uniform experience gives no reason for concluding that the course of nature will never be interrupted.[4] From the past uniformity of events, we are sure properly only of the past fact. "Nor, I think, is there, in general, antecedently to their happening, any comparison between the

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1. Ibid., pp. 177, 201, 202. 2. Ibid., p. 171.
3. Price's Dissertations, p. 392, 393.
4. Ibid., p. 392, 393.

assurance we have that they will happen, and that which we have of many facts the knowledge of which we derive from testimony."[1] For example, we cannot be as sure that the tides will continue to ebb and flow, and that the sun will rise, as we can be that there was a Roman Empire, or a Caesar.

Further, Price argues that, if testimony is to be grounded on experience only, we could only believe a man in proportion to our experience with him; but, it often happens that we are led to believe a man in our first conversation with him, without having any previous knowledge of him. By his manner, by the corroboration of other testimony, and by various particulars in the nature and circumstances of his story, we may be satisfied that it must be true. "We feel in ourselves that a regard to truth is one principle in every reasonable being, and that there is a necessary repugnancy between the perceptions of moral distinctions and deliberate falsehood. To this, chiefly, is owing the credit we give to human testimony."[2] So Price stands by his convictions, and credits testimony on the grounds of intuitive moral perception of the understanding.

From these observations, the conclusion is drawn that there is no absurdity in using testimony to prove miracles. It is not using a feebler experience to overthrow a stronger experience of the same kind, "but using an argument to establish an event, which yields a direct and positive proof and is capable of providing the strongest conviction to overthrow another founded on different principles, and which, at best, can prove no more than that,

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1. Ibid., p. 400.

2. Ibid., p. 399.

previously to the event, there would have appeared to us a presumption against its happening."[1] In other words, all the evidence of experience is considered negative evidence, and it is overbalanced by one bit of positive evidence of another kind.

Price understands Hume's central argument to be, "that if it is more improbable that any fact should have really happened, than that men should either deceive or be deceived, it should be rejected by us."[2] Against this position, Price brings the following illustration:

> The end of a newspaper confines it, in a great measure, to the relation of such facts as are uncommon. Suppose that it reports truth only twice in three times, and that there are nine such uncommon facts reported by it as, that a certain person is alive in his one hundredth year, that another was struck dead by lightning, or that a woman has been delivered of three children at a birth; Would it be right to reject all these facts, because more extraordinary than the report of falsehood by the newspaper? To say this would be to say, that what, by supposition, reports truth six times in nine, does not report truth once in nine times.[3]

This is simply saying, that even though a high degree of improbability has attended most common facts, testimony has generally been reliable, when applied to such facts. Therefore, it is reasonable to credit such testimony, though it is less likely to be true than that the facts should not happen. "And saying this, is only saying, that an evidence generally right ought to be received as being so, notwithstanding improbabilities by which we have found it to be affected; I will add, and by which too we know that

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1. Ibid., p. 400.
2. Ibid., p. 405.
3. Ibid., p. 409.

it is its nature not to be affected."[1] At great length, Price continues his insistence that the capacity of testimony to report truth is not lessened by improbabilities as such. It is held that falsehood in testimony can only come from the intention to deceive, or the danger of being deceived, and not from any degree of improbability existing before the event attested. Actually, Price claims, testimony is no more than sense at second-hand, so the evidence of testimony is no less reliable than that of sense, or experience.

However, improbabilities do give rise to caution in our acceptance of both experience and testimony. Nevertheless, we are often convinced through the repetition of an experience, and by the corroboration of testimony. The danger is, that this caution with respect to improbability is apt to cause us to confuse the improbable and the impossible, and so deceive ourselves; but between the two there is an infinite difference. Surely the miracles of the New Testament, Price contends, cannot be designated impossible: Incredible, yes, but not impossible. Having now ruled that the testimony of witnesses is to be relied on, as well as the evidences of sense, he feels that the only question of consequence is, did the witnesses of the miracles reported in the New Testament intend to deceive? The following statement carries his major conclusion:

> All that has been here asserted may be justly applied to the case of miracles reported by testimony. Uncommon facts, as such, are not less subject to the cognizance of sense than the most ordinary. It is as

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1. Ibid., p.413.

> competent a judge, for instance, of a man eight feet high, as of a man five or six feet high, and the restoration of a withered limb, or the instantaneous cure of a disease, by speaking a word, as the amputation of a limb, or the gradual cure of a disease by the use of medicines: And were a set of such facts to be related to us by eye and ear-witnesses, who appeared no more to mean deceit than persons in general do when they relate any thing of a common nature, we should be under the necessity of believing them. In particular; were there no more reason to question the sincerity of the Apostles when they tell us, that they saw Jesus perform his wonderful works, that they conversed with him familiarly for many days after the resurrection, that he ascended to heaven before their eyes, and that afterwards, in consequence of being endued with power from on high agreeably to his promise, they went about through all the world preaching the doctrine of eternal life through him, and converting men from idolatry and vice, God himself bearing witness with them by divers miracles and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost: were there, I say, no more reason to question the honesty of the Apostles when they deliver this part of their history, than when they give an account of the affairs of the Jews and Romans, of the ignominious sufferings and crucifixion of Christ under Pilate, of Peter's denial, Judas's treachery, and other events of a similar nature, we should be obliged alike to receive both. This, indeed, seems to me to be nearly the truth. The extraordinary facts they relate are so blended with the common, and told with so much of the appearance of a like artless simplicity in both cases, as has, I think, a strong tendency to impress an attentive and impartial mind.[1]

After further illustrations on his position, Price exhorts the patrons of infidelity to reflect more deeply upon the complicated and extensive frame of nature, upon the limitations of their

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1. Ibid., pp. 424-427. This conclusion is almost identical with Bishop Butler's statement on the same matter in Part II, chapter 7 of the Analogy. In acknowledging the similarity Price states that, had he remembered Butler's writing, he probably wouldn't have written on the subject.

own ignorance, and to guard against the "vanity" of skepticism. In addition, he reflects that surely all must allow, that the creation of the world was a time of miracles, and we have no ground for the inference that, after this, God completely withdrew from his creation. Should not the Deity intervene in his world, even for the most worthy purposes? Refusing to allow the common definition, "that a miracle implies a violation or suspension of the laws of nature," Price argues, "a sensible and extraordinary effect produced by superior power, no more implies that a law of nature is violated, than any common effect produced by human power."[1] For instance, an adequate superior power could easily control the laws of gravitation,[2] just as a man can keep a heavy body from falling.

In closing, Price urges that just such a revelation as we have in the New Testament might reasonably have been hoped for. Certainly, in the light of the great need for it, it is far from implying an absurdity. And without it how explain the establishment of such a religion as the Christian faith among mankind? the transforming power it has exerted over millions, turning them from vicious to pious lives?[3] In one of his most eloquent sermons,[4] Price dwells on the wisdom of Christ in choosing the Apostles as he did, in order that the power of God might be manifest in them in such a way as to make it absurd for any man to take credit for the revelation. In his view, those who oppose

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1. Ibid., p. 437.
2. Ibid., p. 81.
3. Ibid., p. 439.
4. Richard Price, Sermons on Various Subjects, London: 1816 (published posthumously). Sermon I.

Christianity should make it their business to invalidate the direct evidence for it; let them show that Christ and the Apostles were imposters and enthusiasts. Let the "joint force of all evidence internal, external and presumptive"[1] be taken together. He feels that if this is honestly done, the worst the infidel can do is to remain in a state of doubt; for surely all this information taken together, constitutes some measure of evidence and proof.

It is to be regretted that Price went no further than he did in pressing the claims of the inherent worth of the Christian religion. He stops just short of emphasizing that there was new moral and spiritual light and truth embodied in the very person and work of Jesus Christ, which is a separate evidence[2] overshadowing all other. Of course, it must be remembered, that at the time of his writing men everywhere were attempting to make the Christian religion stand trial in the courts of reason and, like others, he was preoccupied with proving the validity of revelation, rather than demonstrating the power of the gospel itself.[3] This latter method was left to the evangelical leaders, who believed that Christianity is its own best witness. Price, even though strong 'feeling' is often evident in his sermons, is primarily concerned to make the facts of Christianity appear in a 'reasonable' light, and in our decisions he allows the emotions little voice. He felt that our religion could and should be defended by man's highest faculty, reason.

In establishing the point that it is just as reasonable to

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1. Price's Dissertations, p. 459.
2. Cairns, op. cit., p. 87.
3. Supra., p. 85.

believe in the evidence of testimony as that of sense,[1] Price is perhaps not as convincing as he might have been had he carried further his challenge of the accepted definition of miracle. This he passes over in a few words. His position that a miracle is not a violation or suspension of the laws of nature, but that a 'superior power' is involved, is saying, in fact, "that the root of the difficulty lies in the idea of a uniformity of nature without a God behind it; for if God be once believed in, a miracle becomes credible, either as a matter of sense or of testimony."[2] However, in the dissertation, Price has elected to meet his opponent on his own terms, by proving the probability of miracles on the grounds of the validity of testimony.

As H. R. Mackintosh expressed it, the eighteenth century Rationalists, in their attempt to prove everything by reason, hardly bothered to raise the question as to what reason is. It was assumed that everybody knew. "Yet this was the one question worth asking. The assumption that man's higher consciousness is

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1. Price's full statement is as follows: "It has appeared in this Dissertation, that the objection, which is the main subject of it, is applicable to facts for which we have the evidence of sense, as well as those which depend on the evidence of testimony. Were we to be eyewitnesses to any thing quite new to us, and out of the usual course of nature, it might be said, that what we perceive being contradictory to uniform experience, but deceptions of our senses common; therefore, it must be wrong to believe the reality of it; because this would be trusting a feebler experience in opposition to a stronger, or, receiving a fact upon an evidence, the falsehood of which would be less uncommon than the fact itself. He, therefore, that will guide himself by the principles which are the foundation of this objection, and balance opposite experiences in the manner it requires, must have been an unbeliever, though he had seen the miracles related in the New Testament." Price's Dissertations, p. 454.

2. Cairns, op. cit., p. 108.

a constant quantity, the same in all, is gratuitously false . . . If there is anything on which virtually all schools of thought now agree, it is that this so called reason--this constant, unvarying, and universally distributed stock of moral and spiritual convictions--is devoid of real existence. There is in fact no such thing; otherwise why should we be so much concerned with education and nurture?"[1] That Price represented a viewpoint similar to the above-mentioned rationalism is evident from his summary of the supremacy of the claims of reason over us:

> Its rightful place in the mind is that of superiority . . ., and of absolute dominion. In the nature of it is implied that it belongs to it, in all cases, to examine, judge, decide, command, and forbid; that it should yield to nothing whatsoever; that it ought to model and superintend our whole lives; and that every notion and thought, every affection and desire, should be subject constantly and wholly to its inspection and influence. So intimate to men is reason, that a deliberate resolution not to be governed by it is scarcely possible; . . .. How plainly may we hence learn how great the force of reason is; how sovereign and unsurmountable it is in its nature; . . .
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> The essential pre-eminence now observed to belong to the reasonable faculty, is what ought chiefly to be considered in settling the true idea of human nature.[2]

However, Price's sincerity is not to be questioned, and in his efforts to make the Christian Revelation fit into the accepted mold of reason he stands as a defender of the faith. As was true of many of his time, his practical faith was larger and richer

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1. H. R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology, London: 1937, p. 17.

2. Price's Review, pp. 366, 367.

by far than his explicit principles would indicate. His moral philosophy appears to be a type of rationalism dedicated to the proposition that the supremacy of the human reason still leaves man much in need of the Christian Revelation, which it is deemed perfectly reasonable to allow. His love of truth is matched by his devotion to the Scriptures. Nevertheless, reason breaks down when he comes to consider the unspeakable gift of everlasting happiness which we have in Christ, which is "more than any arguments . . . . can teach us to expect."[1]

The obscurity often complained of in Price's writings[2] is apparent mostly in his long and involved mathematical proofs of religion; and, as one working for a reconciliation between the appeal to reason and the claims of faith, he often found it difficult to state his case distinctly. The fact that his Dissertations caused Mr. Hume to desire his acquaintance must be taken as an indication of their excellence; and that the same volume was the basis for his receiving the Doctor of Divinity degree from Aberdeen University is evidence that he was widely accepted as a champion of the true faith.

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1. Price's Review, p. 456.
2. L. Stephen, op. cit., p. 3.

# CHAPTER III

# PRICE'S ARIAN THEOLOGY

## PRICE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ARIANISM

Although he is remembered chiefly for his writings in philosophy, mathematics, and politics, Richard Price also wrote in the field of dogmatic theology. His one and only contribution[1] in this field appeared near the close of his life and it contains a comprehensive statement of his basic theological opinions. The volume includes ten sermons, five of which are of a practical and devotional type, in subject matter more or less characteristic of the times. However, in all of Price's sermons and dissertations there is a warmth and animation which was unusual for his day.[2] While his philosophy was a cold rationalism, that could almost completely dispense with the emotions,[3] he found his heart stirred deeply by the Christian religion. As has been previously noted, his conviction that the New Testament is a Divine Revelation moved him to publish his able dissertation in defense of miracles. But with his singular devotional fervor Price combined a strong tendency toward unorthodox views in theology.

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1. Richard Price, Sermons on the Christian Doctrine, London: 1786.

2. Leslie Stephen, English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1876, II, p. 428.

3. Price's Review, p. 121 ff.

Even in childhood Richard Price developed an aversion to Calvinism,[1] at least the extreme form of it displayed by his father, and he gave up the orthodox view on the Trinity at quite an early age. Through the influence of the sermons of Dr. Samuel Clarke and the years at Coward's Academy in London, he began his first ministry, as assistant to Dr. Samuel Chandler, as "an acknowledged Arian."[2] Like the Arianism of Dr. Clarke, which has been described as "semi-Arianism--of a mild type,"[3] Price, even though his volume of sermons was a defense of this view, was looked upon as a "conservative Arian";[4] and he shrank from the idea of controversy in the matter. By advertisement in the first edition of his Sermons, he gave notice that he intended to make no reply to those who might write against him.[5]

It is hardly necessary to recall that during the eighteenth century there were very few orthodox Presbyterian congregations (the denomination to which Price belonged) in England, except for those composed of Scottish residents.[6] The reaction against strict Calvinism, which had begun with the rise of Arminianism on the continent, had spread to England, where Arianism and Socinianism

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1. Supra., p. 6,7.

2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 26.

3. Duncan Coomer, English Dissent Under the Early Hanoverians, London: 1946, p. 68.

4. J. Hay Colligan, The Arian Movement in England, Manchester: 1913, p. 123.

5. Price's, Sermons on the Christian Doctrine, Advertisement. However, in the 2nd. ed., 1787, he made brief reply to his friend, Priestley.

6. Henry W. Clark, History of English Nonconformity, London: 1913, p. 196.

followed in turn. The Presbyterian churches proved to be particularly vulnerable to the two latter heresies. In eighteenth century England, "Presbyterian ministers were a law unto themselves, uncontrolled alike in the doctrines they preached and in the form of divine service they adopted."[1] This condition, which was due to legal exclusion of Presbyterian organization as such, (no Presbyteries or Synods being permitted), resulted in evangelical orthodoxy being replaced by Arianism, Socinianism, and finally Unitarianism. Gradually the orthodox ministers were replaced by the young men, who had imbibed the heresies at the academies in the spirit of 'free enquiry.' Many of the Arians concealed their sentiments under ambiguous expressions, while others were more honest, and boldly preached their Arian doctrines to their congregations.[2] Price was of this latter class, having preached his Sermons on the Christian Doctrine to his congregation at Hackney.

Many ministers, Dissenters and Churchmen alike, gravitated all the way down the 'Arian slope' to Socinianism and skepticism, but Price held fast in his Arian opinions to the end of his life. The publication of his Sermons was one of the last efforts made in defense of Arianism in England. The heresy had never been "more than a passing phase of English Theological thought,"[3] and many had made the transition from Arianism to Socinianism by 1770. It was in the latter days of Dr. Joseph Priestley, however, that

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1. J. N. Ogilvie, The Presbyterian Churches of Christendom, London: 1925, p. 162.

2. Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., p. 301.

3. Thomas, op. cit., p. 118.

Socinianism came into vogue as a "militant, fighting creed." Arianism had been "quietly and sleepily holding the field"[1] for half a century when, in 1782, Priestley published his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, and in 1786 his History of Opinions Concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. These works mark the beginning of a new epoch in 'Unitarianism' in England. In them Priestley contended that the earliest belief about Christ was purely Unitarian, "and that the doctrines which arose later came of the corrupting influence of pagan philosophy on Christian thought. He insisted that the orthodox worship of Christ was sheer idolatry, and that Arianism was little better."[2] Although they were very close friends, Price refused to follow Priestley's theological lead. Price was also a friend of Theophilus Lindsey, and interested in the Unitarian Society of London, but, it is a matter of conjecture whether he would ever have become a member of the "Unitarian Church,"[3] as it became predominantly Socinian under Priestley's leadership.

Not only is the period of transition from Arianism to Socinianism and Unitarianism hard to define, but the very terms themselves were used with a wide range of meanings. Price called Priestley's view, "the genuine Socinian position," but Priestley rather preferred the term "Unitarian". However much the theological contents of "Arian" and "Socinian" have varied, the meanings,

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1. Drysdale, op. cit., p. 534.

2. Earl Morse Wilbur, Our Unitarian Heritage, Boston: 1925, p. 362.

3. Infra., p. 249.

in general, approximated the historical views. Colligan has summed up the main points of difference as follows: "The Socinian view was distinctly separated from the Arian one by its rejection of the pre-existence of Christ, and its acceptance of the impersonality of the Holy Spirit. On the question of divine honor to Jesus, the Arian and the Socinian agreed. It was the Socinian theology on a fundamental subject, like that of the atonement, which created the widest divergence between Arian and Socinian."[1] These were still the main points at issue when Price published his defense of the Arian position in 1786.

Concerning the Arian movement of the eighteenth century, Professor Gwatkin has written: "Arianism is one of the most modern of the old heresies strangely English in its impatient commonsense."[2] In this same connection, it has been pointed out that it was "an endeavour to find out how far a rational interpretation of the Scripture could be allowed; and to what degree the Protestant principle of private judgment could be safely developed."[3] For the most part it was a movement among intellectual men, having no great influence among the common people. Generally speaking, from Clarke to Price, Arianism was "an attempt to reconcile Christian dogma to the a priori mode of reasoning; for it was manifestly impossible to demonstrate the Supreme Three in One by

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1. Colligan, op. cit., p. 3.

2. H. M. Gwatkin, The Knowledge of God, London: 1907, II, p. 106.

3. Colligan, op. cit., p. 146.

pure reasoning."[1] Just as Arius himself had been more of a rationalist than a mystic, with an intellectual rather than a religious interest,[2] so the Arians of eighteenth century England were men committed to the supremacy of reason. This led naturally to conflict over the doctrine of the Trinity, and Richard Price held firmly to the Arian view on the Person of our Lord, that he was pre-existent to the creation of the world and was the divine agent in the creation and atonement, but was subordinate to the Father and did not partake of his essential Godhead. These points stand out clearly in reviewing Price's position.

## PRICE'S COMPARISON OF OTHER THEOLOGIES WITH THE ARIAN VIEW

Before presenting his view of the Arian scheme, Price used the plan of putting forth a résumé of the claims of Calvinism and Socinianism, as representing the two extreme views in theology. However, in the very first sermon in his series he calls attention to the folly of theological bickering, since all Christians, of whatever schools of thought, are really in agreement on all the essentials of Christian faith; and he takes account of the many embarrassments to the Christian religion caused by the differences among the various groups of theologians. Many, he feels, have gone too far in connecting 'salvation' with "their accounts of

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1. Leslie Stephen, English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1876, I, p. 420.

2. Arthur C. McGiffert, A History of Christian Thought, London: 1932, I, p. 247.

the Gospel," consigning to hell all who disagree with them. These stumbling blocks, Price wishes to help remove "by shewing that Christians of all parties, however they may censure one another, and whatever opposition there may seem to be in their sentiments, are agreed in all that is essential to Christianity, and with respect to all the information which it is its principal design to communicate."[1] Denouncing the current "rage for proselytism as one of the curses of the world," Price expressly declares that he wishes to "make no proselytes except to candour, and charity, and honest enquiry."[2] In these pages, he approaches the slogan used by a nineteenth century reformer who pleaded: "In essentials unity; in opinions liberty; in all things charity."[3] Price's words, while less concrete, express a similar spirit. Having asserted that there is agreement in all essentials, he urges: "Let us then love one another, and embrace with affection our fellow-christians of all persuasions, making allowances for their mistakes and prejudices."[4]

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1. Price's Sermons, p. 6. Throughout the remainder of this writing, the designation, Price's Sermons, is used for his Sermons on the Christian Doctrine.

2. Ibid., p. 158.

3. Thomas Campbell, The Declaration and Address, Washington, Pa.: 1809. Campbell's slogan appears to be an adaptation of the following: "In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity. (In necessariis, unitas; in dubias, libertas; in omnibus, caritas.) Attributed to Melanchthon by W. L. Bowles, who had it inscribed over the door of his house in Salisbury Close; also to Rupertus Meldenius by Canon Farrar, Croyden Church Conference, 1877." Stevenson's Book of Quotations Classical and Modern, arr. by Burton Stevenson, London: 1938, 3rd. ed., p. 242: 14.

4. Price's Sermons, p. 26.

Price's idea was that the core of the Gospel is found in the words, "Eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour";[1] and with this he remained "perfectly easy" with respect to all the contrary opinions about "the dignity of Christ; about his nature, person, and offices; and the manner in which he saves us."[2] Regardless of the different ways of explaining them, Price felt that all who take the New Testament as a rule and guide of faith are agreed in the "grand facts of Christianity"; that there is one living and true God; that God is of infinite perfection, wisdom, righteousness and benevolence; that He exercises a providence over us to the numbering of our hairs; that we are to imitate and worship Him, and to love our neighbors as ourselves; that repentance and a holy life are necessary; that we will receive rewards and punishments according to our works. And with respect to Jesus Christ and his mediation, all sects believe that He was sent of God, that he is the true Messiah; that he worked miracles, suffered, died and rose again from the dead as related in the four Gospels; "that after his resurrection he ascended to heaven and became possessed of universal dominion, being made head over all things in this world; and that he will hereafter make a second appearance on this earth, and come from heaven to raise all mankind from death, to judge the world in righteousness, to bestow eternal life on the truly virtuous, and to punish the workers of iniquity."[3] Thus he holds, that as the New Testament describes the Gospel as "glad tidings of great joy

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1. Ibid., p. 12. (from Romans 6:23) 2. Ibid., p. 13.
3. Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

to all people,"[1] there is every reason to be completely joyful in our religion; and that the information described above "includes all that we have any reason to be anxious about, and we should regard with indifference all disputes that leave us in possession of it."[2] Here Price's position is that all the various theories of theology fall into the realm of opinion, and are of such subordinate importance, that whichever might be adopted, it need not imperil the simple faith, that "Christ did rise from the dead, and will raise us from the dead; and that all righteous penitents will, through God's grace in Him, be accepted and made happy forever."[3] This stand, together with a refusal to give assent to a creed, and an insistence on the right to state one's belief in the precise words of the Bible, reflects, of course, the position taken up by the original Arians in the fourth century.[4] Religious liberty within the fellowship of the church is mainly what Price would contend for, as over against 'conformity,' whether by civil laws or ecclesiastical pressure.

In considering further the disputes with respect to the person and offices of Christ, the FALL, the justification, the resurrection of mankind, and the intermediate state, Price maintains, that it is "obvious with respect to these differences, that they affect not the doctrine itself of our salvation in Christ; and that however they are determined, the foundation of our hopes remains the same."[5] "He that runs may read these doctrines in the

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1. Luke 2: 10.
2. Price's Sermons, p. 11.
3. Ibid., p. 14.
4. Coomer, op. cit., p. 67.
5. Price's Sermons, pp. 14, 15.

New Testament; and it is not possible to mistake them. Extremes the most distant, . . . agree in them, and leave us everything that is essential to our support and comfort in passing through this world. Pardon to sinful men, . . . according to all opinions, are assured us by the gospel,"[1] making it, indeed, a "glorious Gospel."[2]

## CALVINISM REVIEWED

As he comes to present the claims of Calvinism, Price continues his pleading, that impatience and resentment be put aside by Christians, "when we hear some saying that Christ was a 'mere man,' others that he was a super-angelic 'being,' and others that he was God himself in union with a man."[3] All this does not mean that he holds theological disputes to be of 'no' consequence. To be well informed about the controversies, he holds, and to be more correct in our judgments, is to be more respectable, more useful and valuable members of the Christian Church; "provided we take care to add to our knowledge brotherly kindness, and suppress in ourselves every tendency to intolerance and uncharitableness."[4] While the "staid, easy-going, and not highly honourable tactics of the Arian ministers"[5] have often been severely criticized, it is difficult to find fault with the spirit in which Price gives his account of the opposing theologies.

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1. Ibid., pp. 25, 26.
2. I Timothy 1: 2.
3. Price's Sermons, p. 31.
4. Ibid., p. 32.
5. Drysdale, op. cit., p. 535.

The differences between the several schemes of Christianity are outlined under four heads:

> First. The nature of the Deity.
> Secondly. The nature and consequences of that fall of man which brought us into our present state.
> Thirdly. The nature and dignity of Christ.
> And Fourthly. The nature of that interposition of Christ by which he is the Saviour of the world.[1]

In a recital of the Trinitarian position under the above headings, Price uses extensive quotations from the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England and from the Litany, from the Shorter Catechism and the Church Catechism, the Scotch Confession of Faith, the Assembly's Catechism, and the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds. Of the Trinitarian view of the Deity, he remarks in passing: "Divines have laboured to shew, that believing in these three Gods is consistent with believing in but 'one' God. But what a riddle must this appear to a child."[2] In his summary of Calvinism, Price observes that it includes (besides the doctrines of the three co-ordinate persons in the God-head forming 'one' nature, and the 'two natures' in Jesus Christ forming one person) the following doctrines, known generally as the FIVE POINTS:

> First. The doctrine of absolute predestination and election.
> Secondly. The doctrine of original sin.
> Thirdly. The doctrine of the total impotence of man, and irresistible grace, in opposition to free-will.
> Fourthly. The doctrine of <u>particular</u> in <u>opposition</u> to universal redemption.

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1. Price's <u>Sermons</u>, p. 34.

2. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 36. This appears in a footnote, and was evidently not a part of the sermon as it was preached to his congregation.

> And Fifthly. The doctrine of perseverance of saints after being once called and converted.[1]

Calvinism, having become thus fixed, "and crystallized at the Synod of Dort,"[2] is deplored by Price as causing the loss of "an infinity of what is most important in religion," that is, "charity and good temper."[3]

Having presented his brief recital of the main points of Calvinism, Price raises a series of questions about the system,--questions which he presumes are in the minds of his hearers and readers:

> I fancy that by some parts of it (Calvinism) your good sense as well as your feelings of benevolence must be shocked. Many enquiries concerning it will, upon the least reflection, offer themselves to you which cannot be easily answered. You may ask how we can be justified freely by the grace of God if a full equivalent has been paid for our redemption? How it is possible that God should make satisfaction to himself for the sins of the world? And how, if three persons acting different parts and sustaining different characters are each of them equally God, there can be but one God? Or, if this is possible, and three persons make but one nature, how it can be possible that two natures should make but one person in Jesus Christ? You might further ask, how a sin committed at the creation can be imputed to those who did not commit it, so as to subject them to wrath and punishment? How, in particular, this can be true of innocent babes of whom Christ says, that of such is the kingdom of heaven? How, if by denying to the greatest part of mankind the means of salvation, he has devoted them to eternal

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1. Ibid., p. 44. Also outlined by F. J. Hall, Theological Outlines, ed. by F. H. Hallock, London: 1934, p. 244; G. P. Fisher, History of Christian Doctrine, Edinburgh: 1896, pp. 298-309.

2. Hall, op. cit., p. 244.

3. Price's Sermons, p. 45.

> misery, he can be a just and benevolent being? And why if we have not free-will and can do nothing, it does not follow that we have NOTHING TO DO?[1]

In the light of these and other questions, Price considers it evident that Calvinism, in most parts of it, is "a system inconsistent with reason, injurious to the character of the ever-blessed Deity, and in the highest degree comfortless and discouraging."[2] And in his opinion it is no less contrary to Scripture than to reason, and texts are quoted to show that Christ died for all, and that there is but one God.[3]

The discussion of Calvinism affords Price an opportunity to discourse at some length on the evils of the civil establishment of religion. He observes that Calvinism "is upheld by all the church establishments in Christendom, . . . and the reception of it enforced by pains and penalties."[4] The most lamentable thing about the system, as Price sees it, is its tendency to lead those who embrace it to lay such undue stress upon it, that they think all who reject it are denying Christ, and are the enemies of God. And this conviction, he contends, has led, in times past, to the offering of many lives at the shrine of religious bigotry; but he is thankful for the approach of better days," when the Gospel shall be better understood, jargon give way to reason, and peace and tolerance prevail universally."[5] The narrowness and intolerance of those who effected the civil establishment of religion in England (and its counterpart in the Assembly's Confession), Price

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1. Price's Sermons, pp. 48, 49.
2. Ibid., p. 50.
3. John 17:3; I Cor. 8:5-6.
4. Price's Sermons, p. 55.

is willing to charge off as "faults of the age in which they lived."[1] "These venerable reformers, in particular, to whom we owe our present Church Service and the 39 Articles, were excellent men; and though, from a regard to what they thought to be sacred truth, they would burn <u>others</u>, they proved that, from the same principle, they would also burn <u>themselves</u>."[2] Arguing that "the dark age is gone," and that the errors and cruelties of the past should not continue as burdens on the consciences of good men, and pleading that all parties learn respect for one another in their differences, Price concludes the sermon. Even in his low regard for Calvinism as a system, and in his criticism of the civil establishment of the Christian religion, Price would be quick to agree, that "the practice was better than the theory, and the normal Calvinist was a man of strong moral fibre dominated by the idea of the sovereignty of God."[3] But Price would say there are certainly Arians and Unitarians of equal worth, and some from all parties will meet in heaven, for no one sect has all the truth, virtue and good sense.

## SOCINIANISM PRESENTED

The Socinian system is stated simply and briefly, Price finding himself in sympathy with it on two main points. And again it is asserted that, although he thinks the Socinians wrong on two leading points, they too, like the Calvinists, "maintain all that

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1. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 66.
2. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 66.
3. Coomer, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 64.

we need be anxious about in Christianity";[1] that is, they accept the 'grand facts' of the religion set forth in the New Testament.[2]

Using the same outline by which he had considered Calvinism, Price describes the Socinian system under the following heads: 1. The nature of the Deity. 2. The fall of man and its consequences. 3. The nature and dignity of Christ. 4. The nature and effect of Christ's interposition. On the first two doctrines, he goes along with the Socinians, departing from them with regard to the latter two. The Socinian view of the Deity is, according to Price, "that the essence of the Deity is simple and undivided; that God the Father only (and not the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) is the true and living God, and the fountain of all power and perfection in the universe; and that to elevate any other beings to an equality with him is idolatry and impiety." And with respect to the Fall, "Socinians allow that there has been such an event, and that by it mankind have been brought lower in the scale of beings, and subjected to the imperfections of the present state and particularly to the evil of death. But they reject the doctrine of the "imputation of Adam's transgression to his posterity, and such a total corruption of our natures by original sin as deprives us of free-will, and subjects us before we have committed actual sin (and, therefore, even infants)

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1. ERE, Vol. I, p. 776. In his article on "Arianism," Mr. F. J. Foakes-Jackson points out that this emphasis on 'facts' has characterized the Arian position from the beginning: "None of the facts of the Gospel story were disputed; Christian philosophy identified Jesus Christ with the Divine Logos; faith acknowledged His pre-existence, His miracles, His resurrection and His ascension as unquestionable facts."

to the displeasure of God and future punishment."[1]

Those opinions which most properly form the Socinian system of Christianity are represented, by Price, as being found in their views on Christ and his mission. Christ is held to be a mere man, having had no other existence previous to his birth. However, at the same time, the Socinians maintain, "that by the extraordinary powers with which he was endowed, and a communication of the Spirit of God to him without measure, he was raised far above common men, and distinguished so much from them as to be infallible and impeccable, and capable of becoming, immediately after his resurrection, the Sovereign of angels and the Judge of mankind."[2] This account evidently refers to the original position of Socinus himself,[3] for Bogue and Bennett have written of the Socinianism of Price's day, that it was "the open degradation of Christ to the rank of a mere man, the denial of his miraculous conception, atonement, and even infallibility and impeccability."[4] They held that Christ is our Saviour by his example, by his teachings, and by the power which has been given him to govern the Christian Church, raise mankind from death, and bestow future rewards and punishments.[5] While Price holds the Socinian view of Christ as Saviour is "very low," he feels no great aversion to the scheme since it admits "all the facts . . . relating to the

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1. Price's Sermons, pp. 73, 74. 2. Ibid., p. 75.

3. Joshua Toulmin, Memoirs of the Life of Faustus Socinus, London: 1777, p. 82. Socinus held Christ should be the object of worship.

4. Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., p. 577.

5. Price's Sermons, p. 77.

doctrine of our salvation by Christ," and, therefore, is only a rejection of "the common modes of interpreting this doctrine."[1] On the whole, feeling that it is more in keeping with reason, Price leans toward Socinianism in preference to Calvinism, thus marking himself as a "low Arian." But, he insists, he believes Christ to be a Saviour in a much higher sense than the Socinians allow, and views His character in a much higher light.

## THE MIDDLE SCHEME

The "whole truth," he feels, is more nearly set forth in a modified view, which he cautiously labels the "middle scheme."

Price summarizes his own position in the following paragraph:

> It makes Christ more than a human being; his character more than that of a reformer; and our salvation by him more than a mere conveyance of benefits. It teaches that Christ descended to this earth from a pre-existent dignity; that he was in the beginning with God, and that by him God made this world; and that by a humiliation of himself which has no parallel, and by which he has exhibited an example of benevolence that passes knowledge, he took on him flesh and blood and passed through human life, enduring all its sorrows in order to save and bless a sinful race. By delivering himself up to death he acquired the power of delivering us from death. By offering himself a sacrifice on the cross he vindicated the honor of those laws which sinners had broken, and rendered the exercise of favour to them consistent with the holiness and wisdom of God's government; and by his resurrection from the dead he proved the efficacy and acceptableness of his sacrifice. In a word; according to this scheme, Christ not only declared but obtained the availableness of

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1. Ibid., p. 79.

> repentance to pardon; and became, by his interposition, not only the conveyor but the Author and the means of our future immortality. This was a service so great that no meaner agent could be equal to it; and, in consequence of it, offers of full favour are made to all; no human being will be excluded from salvation except through his own fault; and every truly virtuous man from the beginning to the end of time (be his country or his religion what it will) is made sure of being raised from death and made happy forever. It is necessary to add, that in all this the Supreme Deity, according to the same principles, is to be considered as the first cause, and Christ as his GIFT to fallen man; and as acting under that eternal and self-existent Being compared with whom no other being is either great or good, and of whom and through whom and to whom are all things.[1]

After this statement of his faith, Price gives his attention to explaining and defending it, particularly with regard to the accounts given of the doctrine of the person of Christ and the doctrine of salvation. While Price never openly embraces the historic view of Arius, he gives his assent to most of its basic propositions.[2]

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1. Ibid., pp. 85, 86.

2. A. Harnack, History of Dogma, London: 1898, IV, pp. 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19. (Translation from 3rd. ed. by E. B. Speirs and James Millar). From fourth century sources, such as the fragment of the Thalia and the two letters of Arius which have been preserved, the confession of faith of Arius, statements of his earliest opponents, letters of Alexander and Athanasius, and the propositions of the earliest Arians, Harnack has summarized the main points of ancient Arianism as follows:
(a) God, the Only One, besides whom there is no other , is alone unbegotten, without beginning and eternal; He is inexpressible, incomprehensible, and has absolutely no equal. . . .
(b) Wisdom and Logos dwell within this God as the powers (not persons) which are coincident with His substance, and are by their very nature inseparable from it; there are besides many created powers.
(c) Before the world existed, God of His free will created

Of Dr. Samuel Clarke's fifty-five propositions, put forth in his Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity (1712), it has been said, that there was only one to which an ancient Arian would not subscribe.[1] And in advancing his 'middle scheme' (1786), Price seems to be nearly as close to the historic position. With reference to the doctrines of God and the pre-existence of Christ,

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an independent substance or hypostasis (οὐσία, ὑπόστασις) as the instrument by means of which all other creatures were to be created, since without it the creatures would not have been able to endure the contact of the Godhead. This Being is termed in Scripture Wisdom, also Son, Image, Word; . . .

(d) As regards his Substance, the 'Son' is consequently an unrelated and independent being totally separated from, and different from, the substance or nature of the Father. . . .

(e) Since the Son is, as regards his substance, unrelated to the Godhead, he is not truly God, and accordingly has not by nature the divine attributes; he is only the so-called Logos and Wisdom. . . .

(f) Still the Son is not a creature and a product like other creatures; he is the perfect creature, κτίσμα τέλειον ; by him everything has been created; he stands in a special relation to God, but this is solely conditioned by grace and adoption; the bestowal of grace on the other hand, is based on the steadfast inclination of this free being to the good which was forseen by God. Through God's bestowal of grace and by his own steady progress he has become God, so that we may now call him 'only-begotten God','strong God', and so on.

(g) All that Scripture and tradition assert in reference to the incarnation and the humanity of this being holds good; he truly took a human body (σῶμα ἄψυχον); the feelings shewn by the historical Christ teach us that the Logos to whom they attach--for Christ had not a human soul--is a being capable of suffering, not an absolutely perfect being, but one who attains by effort absolute perfection.

(h) Amongst the number of created powers (δυνάμεις) the Holy Ghost is to be placed beside the Son as a second, independent Substance or Hypostasis, (οὐσία, ὑπόστασις); for the Christian believes in three separate and different substances or persons, (οὐσίαι, ὑποστάσεις); Father, Son, and Spirit. Arius apparently, like his followers, considered the Spirit as a being created by the Son and subordinate to him.

1. C. J. Abbey and J. H. Overton, The English Church in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1878, I, p. 495.

he follows the ancient system closely; his views are perhaps less typical on Christ as Saviour, and he hardly ventures an opinion on the subject of the Holy Spirit. (See Appendix A). His emphasis is rather on Scriptural than speculative arguments, as he presents his reasons for preferring this scheme of theology.

Price asserts that the war between the Socinians and the Trinitarians has been entirely a war of words,[1] for the former hold that "God dwelt in Jesus and acted and spoke by him," while the latter maintain, what they surely cannot believe, that there was such a union between Jesus and the Supreme Deity "as to make it strictly true, that when Jesus was born, God was born; or that when Jesus was crucified, God was crucified."[2] His own position is, that God alone is unbegotten, eternal, incomprehensible,[3] and worthy of our worship. Noting that "formerly" Socinians concurred with Trinitarians in worshipping a deified man, Price states plainly, "It is an essential point of religion with me to worship God only."[4] "We should honour Christ ardently as our Lord and Saviour, but we should honour him as having the same God and Father with ourselves, and never think of anything so absurd and shocking as elevating him who was sent to an equality with the self-existent Being who sent him."[5] Elsewhere Price declares, that at best, our ideas of God must be very erroneous, for "his nature is absolutely unfathomable to us, and in contem-

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1. Price's Sermons, p. 91.
2. Ibid., pp. 90, 91.
3. Supra., p. 118.
4. Price's Sermons, p. 143.
5. Ibid., pp. 197, 198. Price's text for these sermons on his Arian views is, I John 4:14. "For we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

plation of it we see ourselves lost."[1] But, he asks, why should we wonder at this when we cannot comprehend the essence of the lowest inanimate object?[2]

As he proceeds to establish the case for the pre-existence of Christ, Price uses the argument, that there is every reason to believe that "man . . . is only one link in the chain" of beings rising "from the oyster to the One Supreme," and, it is considered the greatest of folly to imagine that man stands alone, having no connections with superior orders of creatures. That man's present state is derived from these connections; and, that the administration of the Divine government over man has a reference to them, he feels is a fair assumption. Indeed, the Scriptures teach us plainly that this is the case, "by the account they give us of the fall, of angels good and bad, and of the Messiah. Nor can any doctrine appear more credible to a person who attends properly to the order and laws of the creation."[3] Thus man is linked with the many classes of beings above him elsewhere in God's universe.

Turning to the New Testament, Price argues that the history of our Saviour found there, and the events of his life and ministry, "answer best to the opinion of the superiority of his nature."[4] The miraculous conception, God's proclamations at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, the perfect innocence and sinless example of the Saviour, his command over nature, the signs accom-

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1. Richard Price, Sermons on Various Subjects, London: 1816, pp. 169, 170. (Published posthumously).

2. Supra., pp. 67-78. For general discussion of Price's idea of God.

3. Price's Sermons, pp. 121, 122. 4. Ibid., p. 124.

panying his suffering and death, and his resurrection from the dead and triumphant ascension to heaven are cited to show that Christ's character was above that of this world. How could the immaculateness of character, which the Scriptures ascribe to Christ, belong to a mere man?--is a question Price raises with the Socinians.

As express, direct declarations of the pre-existent dignity of Christ, quotations are made from John 1:1; 1:14; 3:13; 4:62; 8:58; and 17:5. After bringing these and many other passages to bear against the Socinian view, Price gives it as his opinion that the most decisive text of all is Paul's word: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ; who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation."[1] But Price asserts, that it is generally agreed among the best commentators, that the true rendering of the passage is as follows: "--who being in the form of God did not covet to be honoured as God, but divested himself, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross."[2] The turn and structure of the passage is such that he finds it impossible not to believe, "that the humiliation of Christ which St. Paul had in view was (not his exchanging one condition on earth for another) but his exchanging the glory he had with God before the world was for the condition of a man, and leaving that glory to encounter the difficulties

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1. Philippians 2:5-6. (AV)
2. Price's Sermons, pp. 137, 138.

of human life, and to suffer and die on the cross."[1] In this connection, Price readily admits that the manner of Jesus' manhood is entirely incomprehensible to us. But those who believe nothing, the manner and causes of which they cannot comprehend, he holds, are well on the way to believing nothing at all. It is in a similar attitude of faith that Price accepts the pre-existence of Christ, for he says: "I look upon Christ as more than any human being," but "I do not presume to be able to determine the degree of his superiority, or to know anything of the particular rank which he held in God's universe before his descent from heaven. This is a point which we have neither means for discovering, nor facilities for understanding."[2] Finding the Scriptures mainly silent on the matter, he feels that faith should rest on the facts we do have, and not on speculations.

That the world was created by Christ as God's agent, Price finds well attested by the Scriptures,[3] and this is "a fact that raises our ideas of the pre-existent dignity of Christ higher than anything else that is said of him in the New Testament."[4] By way of explanation, he points out, however, that by the term world the Scriptures mean only this world and its dependencies, for they lacked the advantages of modern astronomy. Also, he maintains, that Christ is represented, not as the original creator, but as God's minister or agent in creation (Christ's own words being, "I can of mine own self do nothing. The Father who

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1. Ibid., p. 139.
2. Ibid., pp. 94, 95.
3. Quotations are given from Heb. 1:2; John 1:3, 10; Col. 1:16.
4. Price's Sermons, p. 142.

dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 5:19; John 14:10). And further, it is observed that the power, which the Scriptures teach us that Christ possesses in raising to life all who have died and all who will die, is surely equal to the power of creating a world. "How inconsistent is it to allow him one of these powers, and at the same time to question whether he could have possessed the other?--to allow that he is to restore and new-create this world; and yet deny that he might have been God's agent in originally forming it?"[1] Having thus carefully balanced his arguments against both the Trinitarian and Socinian positions, while insisting on the Scriptural correctness of his 'middle scheme,' Price closes his argument on the pre-existent dignity of Christ with an urgent appeal for Christians to think carefully on their redemption:

> If Christ was indeed possest of that superiority of nature which I have been asserting, how important must the service be which he came to perform. Would one so high have stooped so low to do only what a meaner agent might have done? . . . The dignity of the service, and the dignity of the agent, imply and prove one another. Think, Christians, how dreadful the danger must be which Christ left heaven to save you from; and neglect not so great a salvation. Remember that, at an expense greater than can be described, you have been raised to the hope of a resurrection from death to an endless life of ever-increasing happiness. Take care that you do not lose a benefit so transcendent, and sink at last into a death from which there will be no redemption. This cannot happen except through your own fault. But should it happen, Christ will not lose the fruits of his labour; for though you should have no share in them others will, and myriads delivered by him

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1. Ibid., p. 148.

> from sin and death will hereafter unite in raising songs of praise and triumph, and ascribing blessing, and glory, and power to the Lamb that was slain, and who hath redeemed us to God by his blood.[1]

Such is the "ardent gratitude" which we owe to Christ; but the gratitude we owe to Him is nothing compared with that which we owe to God who gave Him, "And whom alone we know to be ever near us to hear and notice our prayers and praises."[2] Throughout the discourse, Price has emphasized the importance of worshipping the Supreme Deity only, insisting that the Scripture rule of worship is to be found in Jesus' own words, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," and, "You shall ask me nothing.--Whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you."[3] That is, as his disciples, we are to pray to God in the name of Christ, and with a regard to Him as the Mediator between God and man; but, under no circumstances, are we to pray to Christ,[4] even though he is held to be absolutely immaculate and impeccable, the creator of this world (as God's agent), and the Mediator between God and man. This would be idolatry, approaching the practice of the Papists who worship the Virgin Mary, and Saints.

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1. Ibid., pp. 155, 156.
Vide., infra, pp.144-5 for Price's view on free will, which is suggested in this passage.

2. Ibid., p. 102. Price gives no hint of his views on the continuing presence of Christ in the world, or on the subject of the person and office of the Holy Spirit.

3. Matthew 4:10; John 16:23.

4. Price's Sermons, p. 98.

## CHRIST AS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

In expressing his views on Christ as the Saviour of the world, Price frankly acknowledges that, as in most cases, he can more confidently say what is not, than what is the truth.[1] His repudiation of both Calvinism and Socinianism is decisive, especially as regards the theories of 'Substitution,' or 'Satisfaction.' "Some of these explanations," Price says, "are in the highest degree absurd, and I receive none of them, thinking that the Scriptures have only revealed to us the fact that God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world."[2] If some of his ideas on the subject should be wrong, he feels no apprehension about ill consequences; for it is his conviction that he will be held responsible, not for the justness of his conceptions, or the rectitude of his opinions concerning it, but for the sincerity of his heart. It is a fundamental belief with him, that error, when involuntary, is innocent, and that all that is required of a man, as a condition of acceptance by Christ, "is faithfully endeavouring to find out and to practice truth and right."[3] Elsewhere Price has written:

> Much has been said and written about fundamentals, and great pains have been taken to settle the nature and number of them. For my own part, I am unwilling to apply the term fundamental to any controverted doctrine or any speculative opinions. There is properly nothing fundamental except an upright heart. It is not speculation

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1. Ibid., p. 158. 2. Ibid., p. 191.

3. Ibid., p. 93. This conviction is based on his interpretation of Jesus' statement, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the knigdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 7:21.

> but practice--not knowing, but doing, that is most necessary to our acceptance. I do, however, acknowledge that there are fundamental doctrines, but none of the doctrines controverted among sincere inquirers, or of the peculiarities of different sects, can be of this number. Whatever is fundamental is so evident, that it must be universally received.[1]

That Christ was sent of God to be the Saviour of the world, he considers to be one of those fundamental doctrines, which is abundantly evident. Theories about the exact manner in which He saves us must take their place as opinions, not as fundamentals.

While it is largely beyond our powers of comprehension, Price holds that Christ "was sent of God to be the Saviour of the world in a manner that makes him (his benevolence) the cause of our salvation, as well as that original benevolence of the Deity from which all other benevolence is derived. He was the conveyor of pardon and immortality to us, in such a sense that we owe them to him, as well as primarily to God."[2] Christ is held to be the author of our salvation; for by his "voluntary interposition from obedience to God and benevolence to man," by which he has delivered us from calamities under which we might have perished, and by his condescending to be born, suffer and die, he not only conveyed salvation to us, but likewise obtained it for us. "Supposing this to be the truth,--no objection to it can be drawn from the necessity of acknowledging the goodness of God in all our benefits, and ascribing to him the glory of them."[3]

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1. Price, Sermons on Various Subjects, p. 84. Also, vide., supra., pp. 108-109.

2. Price's Sermons, pp. 165, 166. 3. Ibid., p. 168.

Price's explanation of the FALL, that makes a Saviour necessary, is that "the true and full account of this event is probably impossible for us to discover, or even to understand it were it communicated to us."[1] He thinks that the veiled and obscure language of Genesis 3 assures us of the fall, but little more particular knowledge is to be had from it. Certainly, he argues, the credibility and reasonableness of such an event, is apparent when we consider the facts of fallen persons, families and nations. Why should the fall of a whole species be thought impossible? And, again, it is suggested that, undoubtedly, man is connected with higher orders of beings and is "only one link in a chain" of beings, reaching at last to the Deity. What revolutions particular circumstances may produce among particular beings in the connections, we have no way of knowing.

After citing Butler's argument, that the manifold miseries and extreme wickedness in the world leave little reason to object to the Scripture account of the state of mankind's degradation,[2] Price refers to the "intrinsic demerit of vice, which, independently of consequences, makes punishment proper.[3] "Our cases," he says, "as sinful and mortal creatures required more than instruction. Instruction could only bring us to repentance. It could not make repentance the means of remission; or an exemption from the effects of guilt. It could not create a fitness that

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1. Ibid., p. 170. 2. Butler, op. cit., pp. 192, 193.

3. Price's Sermons, pp. 175, 176. Price sees punishment as proper for the vindication of the honor of God's broken laws, and as a deterrent to those who have not yet offended, as well as for the reformation of character.

offenders should be favoured as if they had never offended. It could not raise from death, or restore to a new life."[1] He finds the New Testament full of statements which establish the fact that Christ is more than a prophet or a reformer. There he finds Christ styled "the propitiation for our sins."[2] Also, that, "In him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. He made his life an offering for iniquity, shed his blood for the remission of sins, and appeared once in the end of the world forever to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."[3] And he continues:

> I cannot think that such expressions signify only, that he died to seal the covenant of grace, and to assure us of pardon. Their obvious meaning seems to be, that, as the sacrifices under the law of Moses expiated guilt and procured remission, so Christ's shedding his blood and offering of his life was the means of remission and favour to penitent sinners. But the declarations of most consequence, are those which acquaint us that Christ came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. . . That he laid down his life for the life of the world. . . That he is that eternal life which was with the Father. . .That by death he destroyed death; and that as by Adam came sin and death, so by Christ shall come the resurrection of the dead, and grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.[4]

Thus he sees Christ as the Author of life, the Deliverer from the grave, the Restorer of a distressed world. These and many other New Testament passages, he holds, imply "that our resurrection from death to an endless life depended on his interposition; and that by uniting himself to our nature, passing through human life,

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1. Ibid., p. 180.
2. I John 2:2.
3. Eph. 1:7, Heb. 9:26.
4. Price's Sermons, p. 182.

and suffering and dying as he did, he acquired the power of making us happy forever,"[1] thus performing a service greater than any mere man could perform, and consisting of a far greater benefit than just enlightening and reforming the world. Only through such a superior nature as Christ possessed could we have known of that "love which passes knowledge,"[2] and that scheme of redemption into which St. Paul represents angels stooping to look. Only such a transcendent service would be "adequate to that humiliation and interposition of that Messiah who was in the beginning with God."[3]

Price, as a point of special emphasis, calls attention to the fact that Christ is referred to in the Scriptures as "the Saviour of the world," and as having "tasted death for every man." That is, He is the Saviour of ALL MANKIND, the benefits He has obtained extending as far as the effects of Adam's fall. Because he cannot find it taught in the Scriptures,[4] Price does not believe in 'universal salvation,' but he does contend that all the virtuous will at last be saved, whether Calvinists, Arminians, Unitarians, Socinians, pagans, Jews or Mohammedans:

> I think we should extend our Catholicism so far as to believe that no more is required of them than to act up to the light they enjoy, and that as far as they do this, and are equally virtuous with ourselves, they shall at last be made partakers of equal happiness, through that great Messiah who tasted death for every man.[5]

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1. Ibid., p. 183.
2. Colossians 2:9,10.
3. Price' Sermons, p. 186.
4. Ibid., p. 195.
5. Richard Price, Sermons on Various Subjects, London: 1816, pp. 85, 86.

Throughout his writings, Price often recalls "the unsearchableness of God's ways, "which, he insists, can only be an unsearchableness of rectitude and love. As noted above,[1] he is quite content to acknowledge that there is much about the manner in which Christ saves us which cannot be easily explained to the satisfaction of all, but, he feels, "all the light is granted us that is necessary to enable us to answer the ends of our beings, and more we cannot claim without tacitly asserting that we have a right to be omniscient."[2] Surely it is abundantly evident that Christ is "that word of God and great Messiah, who was made flesh and dwelt among us to bless us with light, instruction, pardon, and immortality"; and we are inexcusable if we fail "to carry about with us a deep sense of our obligations to him, and to honour and love him."[3] But, on the other hand, we are likewise inexcusable if we worship Him, instead of the God who sent Him, thus worshipping the creature rather than the Creator.

In his refusal to worship Christ, Price is perhaps more consistent than the ancient Arians[4] (and most eighteenth century Arians), who also held Him to be a subordinate, created being. However, while Price often speaks of Christ taking on flesh and blood and passing through human life,[5] and enduring all its sor-

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1. Supra., p. 127.

2. Richard Price, Sermons on Various Subjects, London: 1816, p. 181.

3. Price's Sermons, p. 196.

4. H. M. Gwatkin, Studies in Arianism, London: 1900, p. 3.

5. Supra., p. 117-118.

rows, he nowhere attempts to explain the real humanity of Jesus, or to answer the question, "Did Jesus have a human soul?" Thus, as were the ancient Arians, Price appears to be content with a Christ who is "neither truly God nor truly man."[1] This, of course, raises many questions with regard to Price's whole interpretation of the mission of Christ; but his answer to all such questions is, that we cannot understand the exact manner in which Christ saves us, only the fact that He does save us by his interposition. In a way his position seems to agree with that of the earliest Christian writers who, according to Gwatkin, held that "their task was rather to repeat the apostolic testimony than to discuss it, to urge historic facts rather than to deduce their dogmatic consequences."[2] But such a stand left too much unsaid to make much impression on the religious thought of Price's day. One of Price's closest friends, Joseph Priestley, was impatient with him for his hesitancy about making a clear-cut avowal of his Arian position,[3] and one wishes that he might have been as confident in his theology as he was in his role as 'the Apostle of Liberty.'[4]

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1. Gwatkin, Studies in Arianism, p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 6.

3. Joseph Priestley, Letters to the Rev. Dr. Price, London: n.d., p.91.

4. Supra., p. 52.

# CHAPTER IV

# VIEWS CONCERNING CERTAIN

# PARTICULAR THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINES

## THREE PARTICULAR THEOLOGICAL DOCTRINES

Receiving special emphasis within the writings of Dr. Price are three theological doctrines: Providence, the Human Soul, and the Future Life. An examination of his views on these doctrines, indicates that his Arianism did not keep him from entertaining quite orthodox opinions on these important subjects. As mentioned above,[1] it was in recognition of his volume of Dissertations[2] that he received the D. D. degree from the University of Aberdeen. Having adopted the mood of his day, Price labored conscientiously to give a reason for the hope that was in him; and his effort was ever to prove that the Christian faith is consistent with reason, man's highest and noblest faculty.

### PROVIDENCE

Price's volume of Dissertations opens with his treatment of the doctrine of Providence. His arguments have been described

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1. Supra., p. 28.

2. This volume, published in 1767, contains dissertations on (1) Providence, (2) Prayer, (3) The Reasons for expecting that virtuous Men shall meet after Death in a State of Happiness, and (4) The Importance of Christianity, the Nature of Historical Evidence, and Miracles.

as "chiefly a reproduction of the old optimistic Deism of Clarke and Wollaston."[1] While he acknowledges his dependence on these writers, Price carefully develops his own line of reasoning. He argues for a particular providence within a general plan, which yet leaves room for the liberty of the individual. In phrases typical of his day, the proposition is stated: "If it can be proved that the Deity administers all the affairs of the world, and extends his care to every created being in such a manner that nothing hard or oppressive, nothing inconsistent with rectitude and wisdom in the government of events ever comes to pass; or, in other words, if it can be proved 'that all the occurrences in nature are under perfectly wise and good direction'; then the doctrine of Providence, in the highest and strictest sense of it, will be established."[2]

Reasoning first of all from the perfections of the Deity,

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1. Leslie Stephen, English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1876, I, p. 429.

2. Price's Dissertations, pp. 4, 5. This rationalistic definition of Providence is similar to the "informal definition" of A. B. Bruce (coming more than a century later), though it lacks the warmth of Bruce's "benignant Father,--overcoming evil with good." Bruce's definition runs thus: "That God cares for man individually and collectively; that His nature is such, and that he sustains such a relation to man, as makes that care natural and credible; that his care covers all human interests, but especially the higher, ethical interests--righteousness, goodness--in the individual and in society; that he is a moral Governor, and a benignant Father, a Power making for righteousness, and a Power overcoming evil with good; that He ruleth over all things with a view to a kingdom of the good." A. B. Bruce, The Providential Order of the World, London: 1897, pp. 6, 7.
In our own time, H. H. Farmer has written: "Faith in providence is, . . . . another aspect of that awareness of God as personal which . . . . lies somewhere at the root of all man's religious history." H. H. Farmer, The World and God, London: 1935, p. 92. This 'awareness of God as personal' appears only vaguely in Price's discussion of the doctrine.

Price argues that the idea of absolute perfection implies infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, and in these, such a providence as he has mentioned. It is held to be impossible that the Deity could be an indifferent spectator of things that go on in the world he has given being, for "his goodness will as certainly engage him to direct them agreeably to the ends of goodness, as his wisdom and power enable him to do it in the most effectual manner. . . . God is present everywhere. He sees all that happens; and it is in his power, with perfect ease, to order all for the best. Can he then possess goodness, and at the same time not do this? I am, suppose, in affliction. The author of my existence, who is almighty and righteous, knows my conditions and sees what I feel. Would he, if he saw that my affliction is improper, or that I labour under any real grievance, suffer it for one moment? 'Tis utterly impossible. A God without a Providence is undoubtedly a contradiction. Nothing is plainer than that a Being of perfect reason will, in every instance, take such care of the universe as perfect reason requires. That supreme intelligence and love which are present to all things, and from whence all things sprung, must govern all occurrences, and exclude from the constitution of nature all real ill and disorder."[1] These considerations are deemed adequate to prove a particular, and not just a general, Providence; for a general Providence, Price believes, is unsuitable to the idea of a perfect Being.

Several of the prevalent objections to the idea of a particular Providence are considered. These objections, originating

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1. Price's Dissertations, pp. 5, 6.

mainly with the thoroughgoing Deists, Price describes as "foolish ridicule," proving no more than the ignorance of those who make them. Nevertheless, he does deal with a few of them, beginning by taking notice of the objection, made by Lord Bolingbroke[1] and others, that it is beneath the dignity of the Deity to watch over the minutest affairs of the meanest beings, as required by the doctrine of a particular Providence. The answer is given, that matters of great consequence are only from many minute affairs, each of some consequence, being added together. That some matters are wholly frivolous and, therefore, want, and are capable of, no direction is acknowledged. While the term 'wholly frivolous' is not carefully explained, Price goes on to say that, "Nothing is absolutely trifling wherein the happiness of any individual, even the most insignificant, is at all concerned: nor is it beneath a wise and good Being to interpose in any thing of this kind."[2] He reasons that, not in watching over men but in neglecting them would the universal parent be degraded, and the objection, under the appearance of honoring God, really dishonors him. Furthermore, he makes the assertion, that whatever it was not too great a condescension for God to create, "it cannot be too great a condescension in him to take care of,"[3] for the more perfect an artist is, the greater care he takes in small as well as in large matters. Surely we are not to conceive of God as less concerned

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1. John Leland, A View of the Principal Deistical Writers, with an Introduction by Cyrus R. Edmonds, London: 1837, pp. 430-3.

2. Price's Dissertations, p. 8.

3. Ibid., p. 9.

than a mortal artist.

The objection of most consequence, Price considers, "is that taken from the supposed inconsistency of a particular providence with the liberty of reasonable agents, and the general laws of the world."[1] His response to this objection is that the regulation of events by the Deity can insure what is right without interfering with natural laws or free will, and he puts his argument, which he borrows from Wollaston,[2] into the form of an illustration:

> It would, indeed, be impossible, if a man, for example, happens to be under a wall when it is falling, to prevent his being killed, without suspending the law of gravitation: But how easy would it have been, had his death at this particular time, and in this particular manner, been an event proper to be excluded, or which was not consistent with exact order and righteousness in the regulation of events; . . . how easy it would have been to hinder him from coming too near the dangerous place, or to occasion his coming sooner or later, by insensibly influencing the train of ideas in his mind, and in numberless other methods, which affect not his liberty.[3]

If, therefore, this thing was easy to be done, but was not done, Price contends we can assuredly conclude that it was not right to be done, and that it was not without the counsel and approbation of Providence. Much stress is here placed on the secret influences that operate on our minds, guiding them to particular decisions, without the least violation of free will. Attention is called to our ignorance of the manner in which ideas arise

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1. Ibid., p. 11.

2. William Wollaston, The Religion of Nature Delineated, Glasgow: 1746, Sec. V., pp. 185-207 passim.

3. Price's Dissertations, p. 13.

within us. Who can say that we are not often "influenced by the suggestions of invisible beings, and particularly by the secret agency of the supreme Spirit."[1] Surely God, who sees all and knows all, and to whom all the powers of nature are subject, would not find it difficult to influence man and turn him in whatever way he pleases.

With respect to the inconveniencies which seem to arise from the general laws of nature, Price maintains, we may be sure that no law would at first be established which would provide any inconvenience not right, all things considered. Then too, secondary laws often come to our assistance, as, for example, at night, we are able to make up for the inconvenience of the absence of the light of the sun by providing lights of our own. Nevertheless, if it should be true, "that some evils are impossible to be separated by any methods from the uniform operation of any law of nature necessary to the general good, such evils only render this law so much less good, while yet it may be the best possible, and the impossibility of preventing them without greater harm, becomes itself a sufficient vindication of Providence in permitting them, and renders them entirely consistent with, nay instances of, a perfect order in the oeconomy of the universe."[2]

In summing up his proofs of a particular providence from the perfections of the Deity, Price asserts that if, in a single event, all the care is not taken that is right to be taken, the administration of the world is so far defective, and the character of God imperfect. "It follows, therefore, that no one who be-

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1. Ibid., p. 15.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

lieves in a perfect Deity can deny a Providence, or doubt whether it is particular."[1] The very notion that anything in the universe is as it should not be appears to him to be "self-evidently incredible," implying a contradiction, like the destruction of space or duration. Further, he adds that God's failure to prevent any event from happening must be his consent that it should happen; and that this consent must be founded on good reasons, just as he had good reasons for creating the universe in the first place. Much we cannot understand, for we would have to possess not much less than God's omniscience in order to comprehend all the reasons which have guided him in all instances. "It should be enough to us to know that, whatever these reasons are, they must be worthy of infinite intelligence, or at least, of a piece with that perfection of wisdom and art which we see in the whole of the inanimate creation."[2]

The general laws and constitution of the world yield further proofs for Price in his arguments for a particular Providence. He will not allow, as stated in his Review,[3] that our whole evidence for the Divine perfections is to be taken from what we observe of the frame of nature. But, supposing that our whole knowledge of the Deity must be derived from what we see of his works, he holds that men still must reason by inference, lest there be an end to all reasoning; and, referring to God as the author of the universe, he feels it a valid conclusion, that "the

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1. Ibid., p. 18.
2. Ibid., p. 21.
3. Price's Review, chaps. I and X; supra., chap. II, p. 68, and pp. 70-77.

cause must always have in himself, in a greater degree, those perfections which he communicates."[1] Therefore, since we actually see, in countless instances, that nature is the effect of a wisdom which surpasses our highest conceptions, we are unavoidably led to infer that the same wisdom takes place in other instances where it is not seen, and in the whole administration of events.

A more specific argument is founded upon the proposition "that the Deity is always present and always active in all places; and that his energy is the first mover in every motion, and the true source of all the powers and laws which take place in the material world."[2] To establish this position, Price argues from Newton's three laws of motion; laws based on the idea of the inactivity of matter. Surely nothing, he contends, can be more repugnant to our ideas of matter than self-motion, "nor is there any conclusion which there is much more reason to rely upon than that it is not a subject capable of any spontaneous powers, and therefore must owe every change that can happen in it to some foreign influence."[3] This 'foreign' influence is, of course, held to be the ever-present Deity. In his sermon on "The Omnipresence of God," this same line of reasoning appears, Price arguing that the law of gravity is as surely the energy of God, as are the movements of all parts of a watch from one spring." And again, "Those laws, by which nature is conducted and maintained, are only his power acting every where according to es-

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1. Price's Dissertations, p. 25.
2. Ibid., p. 28.
3. Ibid., p. 39.

tablished rules."[1] Not only us God ever present with us; he is, likewise, always working within us and without us. He is the ever-present first mover, required by the "machine of the universe";[2] He is the life of creation, "the infinite Spirit by which it is informed and sustained; . . . all material causes are no more than instruments in his hands, and from him their efficacy is derived. So far is he from being an idle spectator of what happens, that were he, for one instant, to suspend his agency, universal confusion would take place, and all nature fall to pieces."[3] From these observations on matter, and God's agency in it, Price finds it reasonable to infer that, all the more, are we to find his agency in the more important spiritual world. Surely order is not less likely in the spiritual sphere, which is the more important part of creation. "If God so clothe the grass of the field, . . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"[4] Do not Christ's own words follow this line of reasoning?

What of the manner in which Providence is administered? This, as will be apparent from the above account, Price considers to be by way of the constant influences of the Deity. Noting that God is not obliged to act after the manner of men, and reminding that there is nothing difficult to him,[5] our author points out

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1. Richard Price, Sermons on Various Subjects, (published posthumously), London: 1816, p. 114. Hereafter in this writing this volume will be referred to as Price's Posthumous Sermons.

2. Price's Dissertations, p. 50.

3. Ibid., pp. 52, 53.

4. Matthew 6:30.

5. Price's Dissertations, p. 65. Also, O. D. Watkins, The Divine Providence, London: 1904, pp. 5-7. "If the Infinite God see fit to exercise a particular providence in the smallest

that a constant exertion of care is altogether becoming of the Deity, and we should be no more prejudiced against the idea of the influence of the Deity than against the fact of the influence of people. "There is no person who does not influence in various ways what passes within the circle of his friends and acquaintance, and it has never yet been thought that the liberty of mankind, or their scope for action, is affected by it."[1] Surely it is unreasonable to acknowledge the influence of every other being and deny that of the Supreme Being. However, Price cautions that to press the analogy might be to begin judging what the Deity should do by what men ought to do.

Those who acknowledge Christianity, proved by miracles, Price argues, have conceded his point. "For let it be allowed that the Deity has ever once interposed since the original establishment of things, and there will remain no tolerable reason for imagining, that he does not interpose continually, as far as there is any occasion."[2] But does this make Providence a continued series of miracles? Only if all exertions of Divine power are considered miraculous. And, he suggests, it may be that a miracle is only distinguished from common events by the fact that the influence of superior power is rendered obvious and sensible through extraordinary circumstances attending the particular fact.

Price considers every new vegetable and animal as a new product of Divine power, an immediate exertion of continual creation.

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matters, it is obvious that the exercise of such a particular providence is altogether easy to Him." p. 7.

1. Price's Dissertations, pp. 66, 67. 2. Ibid., p. 71.

Therefore, if God is continually exerting himself in creation, there can be little reason for denying his continual exertion in the administration of Providence. Surely it is not to be supposed that God is busy with the material world and yet has nothing to do with the affairs of moral agents.

In concluding his observation on the manner in which Providence is administered, Price expresses his belief, that there is an instrumentality of subordinate agents, acting always under the superintendency of the Deity, in carrying out the designs of Providence. But this superintendency of the Deity, he holds, reduces the instrumentality of such agents "into a perfect coincidence with that mode of administering Providence,"[1] for which he has been pleading.

Price stresses the point, however, that in explaining the doctrine of Providence, the liberty of man must not be destroyed.[2] In order to have any such thing as a moral government in nature, created beings must be allowed scope for action, and events, in some measure, must be left to be determined by their choice. At the same time, this cannot be made to mean that the Deity exercises no Providence over the affairs of rational beings.

> The power which they have over events,
> with all its restrictions, was given by him;

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1. Ibid., p. 85.

2. Price's position on the liberty of man is defended at considerable length in his controversial correspondence with Joseph Priestley over the doctrine of philosophical necessity. In answering Priestley's charge, that the doctrine of free will is an argument for an effect without a cause, he queries: "Does it follow that because I am myself the cause, there is no cause?" Price and Priestley, A Free Discussion on Materialism and Philosophical Necessity, London: 1778, p. 136.

> and all the particular exertions of it are under his direction. If any of them become depraved, and bring calamities upon themselves or others, we must say, that so the Deity suffers things to happen. Those circumstances in the plan of nature and states of Beings which gave occasion to, or admitted of, such evils, we must ascribe to his will; and all that happens in consequence of them we ought to consider as superintended by him in the best manner. Nothing would be more unreasonable than to imagine, that there is any inconsistency between a limited and derived dependence of events on created agents, and a supreme dependence of all events on the first cause, of whom, and through whom, are all things.[1]

Thus, while the Deity disapproves of all abuse of liberty and reason, it can enter no further than he sees fit to suffer it. He must have had the best of reasons for establishing at the first those states and connections from which he knew abuse would spring, and he can restrain and direct events as he pleases, even to the turning of evil into an occasion of good. It is Price's conviction that, "Every determination of every Being which would produce any degree of wrong suffering, or any event not consistent with a perfect order of administration, he [the Deity] will undoubtedly either prevent, or over-rule in its consequences."[2] Here, as always, Price is sure of one thing; that the Deity will always act according to the eternal, immutable law of rectitude.

Objections against Providence, which Price considers worthy of special notice, are those "taken from the irregularities and evils natural and moral, which we see in the world."[3] In general, he accepts the common answer, which he considers solid and important; that such irregularities and disorders are largely to be

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1. Ibid., pp. 94, 95. 2. Ibid., p. 97. 3. Ibid., p.99.

explained by "our ignorance and narrow views, compared with the extent and scheme of Providence."[1] We must acknowledge that the seeming irregularities in nature are either real, or due to limitations of our own perception and understanding, and it is more reasonable to suspect our own powers, which we know are often faulty, than to question God's Providence. It is incredible that we, being ourselves parts of nature, should be able to correct nature, or conceive an order greater and better than that which is found in it. And, since the irregularities in the moral sphere are even more difficult, because more complicated and abstruse than those found in the material world, we cannot hope to explain them fully. Since there is evident in God's works a depth of wisdom and contrivance which we cannot trace, we should be led from hence to a hearty acquiescence, believing where we do not see, and adoring where we find ourselves incapable of comprehending.

Price considers that the above objections against Providence "are founded too much on the unreasonable and absurd expectation 'that the Deity should act, in every single instance, to the utmost extent of his powers, and communicate the greatest possible happiness'."[2] But, since happiness is prevalent, this is only a complaint that there should be more happiness,--and there is no end to such an argument. In any case, however, the justice of God is held to be vindicated by supposing a future state. Also, it must be admitted that man's existence is surely better than no

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1. Ibid., p. 100.

2. Ibid., p. 110. Vide., Price's Posthumous Sermons, pp. 297-299,--sermon on "The Goodness of God."

existence, so it is better to praise and adore than to complain.

The principal difficulty, Price recognizes as arising, "not from the natural evils and imperfections of man, but from what religion teaches us concerning his circumstances as a moral agent, placed in a state where he is strongly tempted to wickedness, and where it must have been expected that a general corruption would prevail, all forfeit innocence, and great numbers fall into the future punishment of sin, and be lost for ever."[1]

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1. Ibid., p. 116. In a sermon on "The Evil of Sin," Price gives a general statement of his view on the doctrine of sin. All that puzzles him, about the wisdom and goodness of God, as well as about the doctrine of sin, he ascribes without hesitation to his imperfect knowledge, partial views, and disadvantageous situation. "With respect therefore in particular to the introduction of evil into the world, we may know (whether able to account for it or not) that it must be right. But we need not rest the solution of this difficulty entirely on our ignorance. We are not in this instance quite in the dark, nor is it necessary that we should content ourselves with a confidence entirely implicit. There are several considerations, which may help us in some measure to account for the admission of evil, and which have a tendency to shew that it is consistent with infinite wisdom and goodness. . . . It should be considered that the creation of free agents, that is, of beings endued with active and self-directing powers, is absolutely necessary to the production of the greatest happiness; such powers being the foundation of all virtue and merit, and consequently of all rational and moral happiness. Infinite goodness therefore required the communication of such powers, and by requiring these it required also that scope should be given for exerting them. . . . It should never be forgotten, that moral agency implies, in the very notion of it, the capacity of acting wrong as well as right, and that there cannot be true virtue without the power of being vicious, or good desert without the power of ill-desert. The possibility therefore of the introduction of moral evil is the necessary consequence of granting moral powers; nor could it have been excluded in any other way than either by not granting such powers, or by restraining the exercise of them. In this way indeed evil might have been excluded; but in this way would have been excluded also all that is most worthy and honourable in creation, and therefore it is a way of preventing one evil by producing an infinitely greater." He illustrates, that, so might civil government prevent crimes by locking every one up, but this would destroy all good as well.

"We see evil in the world, and we have every reason to believe that the permission of it is the result of the wisest

Admitting that he has no complete answer to this serious difficulty, he falls back on the argument that existence with any degree of happiness is surely better than non-existence, so the goodness of God cannot be questioned. Liberty, moral beings must have, and, since God might not have given existence at all, he may surely give it on any terms consistent with his goodness. As for happiness, Price argues that all have some chance for it, when they might have had none; that it is always a free gift from God, and any capacity or possibility for it is valuable, and ought to be received with gratitude. But God has not left the matter here; he has placed before us the prospect of a blessed immortality, which we can only lose through our own fault. Through Christ, every person has the power to secure infinite happiness. Rather than lament our condition and accuse our Maker, let us work out our own salvation. We do have many remedies for evil; we can rise above many of the everyday hazards and evils of life; and, we can be sure that ultimately an adequate retribution will take place.

With reference to retribution, Price holds, that it will consist of the annihilation of the wicked, on the one hand, and of eternal life for the righteous, on the other.[1] Nevertheless, he suggests, the final proportionate number of the redeemed may

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councils. Amidst the difficulties that occur to us in contemplating it, let us remember that it is permitted only for a time. A period is coming when all the powers of wickedness shall be broken, and the devil and all his works be destroyed." pp. 281-289, passim.

1. Ibid., p. 134.

be very great.[1] Before the end of time, a general reformation among men is considered likely, for, like many others, he is committed to the idea of progress. Since the world has been rapidly getting better in recent centuries, he sees the time approaching when "knowledge, peace, and virtue" may prevail.[2] He imagines a world government which will annihilate property, "reducing mankind to their natural equality, removing most of the causes of contention and wickedness."[3]

In concluding his reasoning on the problem of evil as it affects Providence, Price declares his faith in the Christian Revelation as having taught us expressly and clearly on the whole matter. He sees the Scripture teaching as reasonable and consistent:

> The blessings which the Christian scheme supposes mankind had lost, they never had any right to. The Divine perfections certainly do not require, that such virtue as ours should be rewarded with the Christian Salvation. Had our Maker intended us only for a temporary existence we should have had no reason for any other sentiments than grateful ones, provided we enjoyed any degree of happiness, and received universally an adequate retribution. But he has been infinitely more kind to us. That very constitution of his government which made us liable to be brought into that calamitous state which Christianity supposes, made provision also for the

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1. Revelation 7:9.

2. Price's Dissertations, pp. 136-138. This confidence in the philosophy of progress, Price also expresses in a sermon preached at the opening of a new academy in Hackney (1787) on the subject, "The Evidence for a Future Period of Improvement in the State of Mankind, etc."

3. Price's Dissertations, p. 138.

> possibility of our deliverance and restoration to the views of a happy eternity; and thus displays the highest wisdom and goodness we can imagine.[1]

Amidst all our darkness, we do see enough to assure us that God is perfectly righteous in all his ways. Our first business is to keep clear of "the corruption that is in the world through lust,"[2] striving to save our own souls, and doing what we can to save some others with ourselves.

The final section of Price's "Dissertation on Providence" is given over to a consideration of the usefulness of the doctrine. His view on the subject, he asserts, furnishes us with a strong reason for contentment; teaches us the reasonableness of prayer;[3] provides us with "the proper object of absolute confidence; gives us a source of the highest joy; and, "as the doctrine of Providence, supposed previously established, furnishes us with an argument for the scriptures, so these in their turn furnish us with an argument for Providence." The fulfillment of prophecies "proves that the predicted events were indeed subject to the superintendency of Providence, and obliges us to conclude the same of all events."[4] And finally, the doctrine of Providence should ever be kept in mind, in order that we may cultivate that temper which it requires, and "enjoy that peace of God which passeth all understanding, and attain to the highest dignity and bliss of which human Beings are capable. Oh! Joyful reflection!

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1. Ibid., p. 157.
2. II Peter 1:4.
3. Infra., pp. 183-189.
4. Price's Dissertations, pp. 164-190.

God reigns and all is well."[1]

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL

> But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.[2]

Price's proposition, based on the above text, is that "there is in man, something that is distinct from his body, or that there is in man a spirit or soul."[3] While he suggests that many statements from the Scriptures[4] contain this same idea, he also feels that the point "is capable of being established by many arguments from reason."[5] In the treatment of the subject that follows, Price, as a disciple of Clarke, is largely restating the position of the latter on the immateriality of the soul. Later, Price's position on the subject led him to engage in a controversy with his friend Priestley, who had become a convinced materialist. Price's arguments from reason for the separate existence of the soul, however, must first occupy our attention.

True to his general pattern of reasoning, Price begins by asserting that, "it is self-evident, that the powers of thought and reflexion, are not the same with any of the modifications of matter." Do what you will with matter, he contends, "You will

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1. Ibid., p. 193.

2. Job 32:8.

3. Richard Price, a sermon on "The Nature and Dignity of the Human Soul," preached at St. Thomas's Church, London (1766); London: 1766, p. 1. In the following pages this sermon is referred to as Price's "Sermon on the Soul."

4. e.g. Ecclesiasties 12:7, and Matthew 10:28.

5. Price's "Sermon on the Soul," p. 2.

never be able to work it into thought, and memory, and reason," any more than sounds can be made into a ball or a square into a circle. "We have ideas of matter, and we have ideas of spirit. Matter is something that is solid, and extended, and figured, and moveable. Spirit is something that thinks, and wills, and judges. There is not the least affinity between these ideas, and they are equally clear and consistent. They represent properties of different substances."[1] To oppose such basic, self-evident truths, is to deal in senseless jargon, and to overturn the foundations of knowledge. A further argument is taken from the infinite divisibility of matter as contrasted to the principle that consciousness within man is indivisible. "No one can conceive of the division of what he calls himself, for the result of such a division, would be two selfs; that is, himself and another, which is absurd."[2]

Again following the reasoning of Clarke,[3] Price continues his argument from the proposition of the inactivity of matter. An essential quality of matter is that it cannot change its own state or begin motion in itself. This is assumed to be the foundation of all philosophy, and of all the knowledge we have of nature. "But everyone knows, that the contrary is true of his soul. It follows, therefore, that our souls must be something distinct from matter."[4] How shall a clod of earth have the

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1. Ibid., pp. 2, 3.
2. Ibid., p. 3. See also Butler's Analogy, op. cit., p. 1[illegible].
3. The Works of Samuel Clarke, London: 1738, III, pp. 795-99.
4. Price's "Sermon on the Soul," p. 4.

qualities of reason, will, imagination, action, etc.?

But, not only is the principle of thought and reason in man distinct from his body, it is independent of it. Price feels it must ensue, that if the body and soul are distinct substances, "they must likewise be independent of one another, and the destruction of the one, can never of itself have any tendency, to infer the destruction of the other."[1] Hence the immateriality and immortality of the soul are linked together. Of course, Price is not declaring the independence of the soul with respect to operations, because he acknowledges, for example, the power of a sick body to impair the operation of the soul. But it does not follow that the powers of the soul themselves are dependent on the body. He sees the body as "nothing but a machine, fitted for the convenience of the soul." The soul, however, "must perceive things as they are represented by the senses,"[2] and the senses sometimes deceive us.

From the above arguments, Price concludes that the soul is naturally immortal. He sums up his claims thus:

> What we should always expect is, that a being will go on to exist, 'till it meets with some cause capable of destroying it. But it has been proved, that the dissolution of the body is no sufficient cause of the destruction of the soul, because it is distinct from it and independent of it. What therefore reason leads us to expect, is, that the soul will survive the body. The worst that can happen to the soul, in consequence of the loss of the body and its organs, is, that it will become insensible with respect to the external world, not that it will be annihilated.[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 5. 2. Ibid., p. 7. 3. Ibid., p. 8.

Making use of a common illustration, Price likens the experience of death to that of sleep. Just as a man's senses are locked up and his faculties taken from him in sleep, and yet not destroyed, so we may infer, that though his sleep should be for a thousand years and more, in what we call death, "he would join the moment of his waking to that of his falling asleep, and have a perfect recollection of all that passed, previously to his sleep. We have no sufficient reason for believing, that the effect of death will go much beyond what is similar to this. Perhaps it may not go so far. Or if it should, a time of revivi-scence will come, when we shall awake to a happy immortality, through the power of our great deliverer and Saviour."[1] But only after the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul has been established, Price asserts, can any regard be given to the Scripture-doctrine of the resurrection. For, if the soul be not capable of surviving the body, the resurrection will have to be a "resurrection of what was not in being"; or, a resurrection of nothing.[2]

Price insists that it must be concluded, from his account, that our souls are the higher part of our nature, and that they are properly ourselves; and our bodies are only appendages. The same difference, with respect to dignity, exists between body and soul as exists between houses made of wood and stone and the people who inhabit them. Then, returning to his text, Price makes one further assertion:

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1. Ibid., p. 9.
2. Infra., p. 159.

> The soul is not only our higher, but our Divine part. The body is of the earth; but the soul is from heaven, and it is the inspiration of the Almighty that has given it understanding. It is an emanation from the supreme intelligence. It has the image of the Deity stamped upon it. It partakes of his perfections, and is capable of knowing and serving him, of acting by the same rule with him, and of being happy in him forever.[1]

The remainder of the sermon deals with the obligations which are ours to care for our souls. "The proper culture of the soul consists of furnishing it with knowledge and with virtue," with virtue receiving the larger emphasis. Neglect of the soul is described as unjust, cruel, dishonorable, and the betrayal of self. Price feels that neglect is impossible if a man will only reflect on how precious his soul is. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[2]

In the controversy with Priestley, on Materialism, Price presents some additional arguments, but primarily he is busy defending the position taken in the sermon we have been considering. Both Price and Priestley have been praised for the temper with which their controversy was conducted, for they remained the best of friends throughout, and for years afterward. There is much to be said, however, for the following estimate of the "free discussion": "They certainly appear more like men fencing with foils, for a shew of skill, than fighting with swords, for their life."[3] That both men viewed the controversy as being of second-

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1. Price's "Sermon on the Soul," pp. 10, 11.
2. Matthew 16:26.
3. Bogue and Bennett, op. cit., p. 605.

ary importance, is evident from Priestley's statement:

> . . . the difference between us being chiefly this. He supposes that the powers of perception and thought reside in an immaterial substance, but that the exercise of these powers is made to depend on the organization of the body; whereas I suppose these powers to reside in the organized body itself, and therefore must be suspended till the time when the organization shall be restored. This I think can never be conceived to be a difference of much importance, all the consequences being the very same.[1]

Price writes of Priestley as "one of the best men in the world," with whom he ardently hopes to be reunited in the resurrection. And, he adds, "Our agreement in expecting this awful period makes it of little consequence in what we differ."[2] Since both men were agreed on the fact of the resurrection, neither of them could see the necessity of making the controversy a life and death struggle.

As indicated earlier in this writing,[3] Priestley had become a Socinian, and several of his best known writings were designed to expose the corruptions of Christianity, and to show that the Apostolic view of the religion was the same as the Socinian. His volume, Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit (1777), which gave rise to the controversy with Price, was designed to prove that Materialism, and not the doctrine of a separate soul, is taught in the New Testament. "It is evident," he claims, "that a

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1. Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, A Free Discussion on the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity, London: 1778, p. xvi. Hereafter, in this writing, this volume will be referred to as A Free Discussion.

2. Ibid., p. xxxix

3. Supra., chap. III, p. 103-4.

Christian has, at least, no reason to be biased in favour of the doctrine of a soul, and may, without concern, leave it to philosophical discussion."[1]

Much of the contest is over the term "matter." Near the very end of the controversy, Price expresses the wish that he might convince his opponent, that he should not "lay so much stress on the doctrine of materialism, till he is better able to inform us what matter is."[2] Early in the discussion, Price attacks Priestley's position, "that it is demonstrable that matter is infinitely divisible,"[3] by asserting that Priestley has thereby invalidated his whole case. "Can he say," Price asks, "that the being he calls <u>himself</u> is likewise infinitely divisible? What would be the result of such a di-vision? . . . Can the thing I call <u>myself</u> be split into two <u>others</u>?"[4] Standing by his conviction of the unity and indivisibility of the soul, Price considers such reasoning "impossible." However, Priestley is unimpressed, for he sees no difficulty in the fact that half a brain may be incapable of thinking. "The matter of which I consist may be divisible, though the <u>actual</u> division of it might so disarrange the parts of it, that the property of thinking (which is the result of a particular modification of them) would be destroyed. A whole brain may think, but half a brain may be incapable of

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1. Price and Priestley, <u>A Free Discussion</u>, p. xix, also p. 97.

2. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 339.

3. Joseph Priestley, <u>Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit</u>, London: 1778 ed., p. 72.

4. Price and Priestley, <u>A Free Discussion</u>, p. 62, see <u>supra</u>., p. 151-152.

it."[1] Priestley sees no connection in Price's assertion, that if the brain is the self, half a brain would be half a self. But Price counters with another suggestion. "When the eye is destroyed we cannot see. So likewise when the brain is destroyed we cannot reason. If from hence it follows that it is the brain that reasons, why should it not also follow that it is the eye that sees?"[2] Experience teaches us, not that the brain _is_ the mind, but that "the _exercise_ of our mental powers _depends_ on the brain and nerves."

Of more consequence is Price's suggestion, that if the brain is the mind, then "the mass of corporeal substances which we call the _world_, may be God; and it must be un-philosophical to search farther than _itself_ for its cause."[3] So Priestley's system proves too much, for it tends to prove that the Deity, as well as all other inferior beings, is material. The answer from Priestley is, that such an inference is unsound, because it is evident that the Deity has "_quite different properties_" from the _known properties_ of man. To this position, which acknowledges the immateriality of the Deity, Price is quick to reply that, if the Deity is an immaterial being, it must follow that immaterial beings are possible. "In like manner, the Deity is an intelligent being; therefore intelligent beings are possible. He possesses the powers of self-determination; therefore such powers are possible. He is an agent; therefore there may be other agents. All these conclusions appear to me to be just."[4] On this point, Price

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1. _Ibid._, p. 63.
2. _Ibid._, p. 89.
3. _Ibid._, pp. 66, 91.
4. _Ibid._, pp. 102, 103.

thinks Priestley is obviously inconsistent, and he fears that his opponent, though trying to serve the best of all causes, has run upon bad ground.

"The most advanced Materialist denies the teaching of Annihilation; he denies the Immortality of the soul, but he asserts the immortality of matter, no single atom of which can ever cease to be."[1] In this connection, Priestley does not conceive death to be the extinction or annihilation of being. The rearrangement, after death, of the parts of matter which have formed the man, he considers as "a proper resurrection." "It is as much so, as that of a seed sown in the ground, the germ of which does not perish, but rises again in the form of a new plant, though the greatest part of the bulk of the seed (being merely nutritious and extraneous matter) does not properly rise again."[2] Price considers this as amounting to the loss of personal identity, and equivalent to a new creation, and not a resurrection in the proper sense. He reminds Priestley, that "it is essential to his scheme to maintain the resurrection of the same body, or that the very matter that composes man at death, will be collected at the resurrection, and compose him again in another world, and for ever."[3] From the above statement, however, it is apparent that Priestley does not agree that it is essential for the body of the resurrection to be exactly the same body.

A full analysis of the controversy lies outside the scope of

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1. E. E. Holmes, Immortality, London: 1908, pp. 44, 45.
2. Price and Priestley, A Free Discussion, p. 72.
3. Ibid., p. 74.

the present writing, but the notice that has been taken of the discussion clearly indicates Price as a rational exponent of the doctrine of an immaterial soul separate from the body. On the doctrine of the soul, he sees the traditional view of the church to be consistent, both with reason and the Scriptures.

## THE FUTURE LIFE

As explained in Chapter II,[1] Price holds the fact of a future life to be discoverable by the processes of reason. The perfections of the Deity obviously require a future state of rewards and punishments when men shall receive justice according to their works. Furthermore, we know from reason, that nothing is so much a unity (and therefore incorruptible by natural causes) as the human soul, and that it exists independently of the body until the creative power that brought it into being puts it out of being.[2] But, according to Price, the eye of unaided reason leaves us much in the dark on the subject. Although we may, in general, know that the soul is capable of perpetual existence, and that all men shall receive an adequate retribution in a future state, we can know little of the nature of the future life without the assistance of the Christian revelation. For instance, reason cannot tell us

> how far repentance might avail to break the connection established by the divine laws

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1. Supra., chap. II, pp. 78-82.

2. Infra., p. 164. Vide. also Price's Posthumous Sermons, sermon on "The Eternal Happiness of the Righteous in a Future State," pp. 305, 306.

> between sin and misery. . . . Here then the aid of the Christian revelation comes in most favourably, and gives us the most agreeable information. It furnishes us with a certain proof from fact of a future state, and shews to our senses the path of life in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. It assures us, that repentance will be available to our complete salvation, and that all virtuous men shall be rewarded with a blessed and glorious IMMORTALITY. At the same time it teaches us to consider this as the effect, not of the ordinary laws of divine government, but of a particular interposition in our favour, and a love to man in Jesus Christ which passes knowledge.[1]

With regard, then, to the future life, Price is content to lean heavily upon arguments from Scripture, accepting them as "proof from fact." The resurrections performed by Jesus, together with his own resurrection, are facts which "exhibit him to our senses as indeed the Resurrection and the Life. No doubt can remain on a doctrine thus proved."[2] The resurrection of Lazarus was a "specimen" of that power by which Christ is to effect the universal resurrection. All theological disputes about the manner of the resurrection of mankind, Price discounts as of little consequence. While he emphasizes Paul's claim "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,"[3] he feels that the only thing of vital importance, is to "know that we are to be raised up from death." "There is no more reason for disturbing ourselves about

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1. Price's Dissertations, dissertation on "The Reasons for expecting the virtuous Men shall meet after Death in a State of Happiness," pp. 323, 324.

2. Price's Sermons on Doctrine, sermon on "The Resurrection of Lazarus," p. 338.

3. I Corinthians 15:50.

this, than there would be (were we going to take possession of an inheritance) to disturb ourselves about the materials of the dress in which we shall enter upon it."[1]

Price considers the intermediate state as another phase of the subject which allows for a wide difference of opinion without affecting the doctrine itself. He seems drawn to the idea of the sleep of the soul,[2] but cannot fully accept it since there are texts of Scripture which he cannot easily reconcile to it. "God only knows what the truth is in this instance."[3] Whether the intermediate state is a time of rewards and punishments, or whether it is the cessation of all powers until the time of the resurrection and judgment, Price sees as amounting to the same thing; for, since sleep blots out the consciousness of time, death, in either case, will "be the same with an 'immediate' entrance on another world."[4] The importance of the final judgment is the same, whether it be at the moment of death or at the time of the resurrection.

In indicating it as his conviction, that all virtuous men shall be raised up unto eternal life, while the wicked shall be raised up only to be annihilated, Price voices a latitudinarian view of conditional immortality. His expressed belief is, not that "only those who have been initiated into the divine fellow-

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1. Price's Sermons, p. 21.

2. Price's Dissertations, p. 349. Here Price suggests that, to virtuous men, the grave "is no more than a bed of rest till the morning of a joyful resurrection."

3. Price's Sermons, p. 24.

4. Ibid., p. 22.

ship will survive,"[1] but, that "no human being will be excluded from salvation except through his own fault; and every truly virtuous man from the beginning to the end of time (be his country or his religion what it will) is made sure of being raised from death and made happy for ever."[2] The 'truly virtuous man' is elsewhere described as one who is chiefly influenced by "the love of truth and righteousness, the desire of maintaining the order of his mind, a sense of duty to the governor of the world, a regard to his own happiness, and the hope of heavenly assistance."[3] Those who live by such principles will receive the blessings of eternal life, regardless of nation, creed, or religion. From pagans, and all who have never heard of Christ, and all who through unavoidable mistake have rejected his mission, no more is required than to live up to the light they enjoy; and, "as far as they do this, and are equally virtuous with ourselves, they shall at last be made partakers of equal happiness, through that great Messiah who tasted death for every man."[4] Voluntary ignorance, however, is a crime certain to be adequately punished, for every man's obligations do extend as far as he knows.[5]

"The loss or destruction of the Being" is considered the main circumstance of the future punishment. "The difficulties to

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1. John Baillie, The Life Everlasting, London: 1934, p. 238.

2. Price's Sermons, p. 86.

3. Price's Posthumous Sermons, sermon on "The Future Inheritance of the Righteous," p. 386.

4. Ibid., p. 86.; supra., p. 130.

5. Richard Price, a sermon, "The Vanity, Misery, and Infamy of Knowledge without suitable Practice," London: 1770, pp. 9, 10.

be removed are evidently much less on the supposition of the ultimate restoration of all mankind; but this opinion is by no means reconcilable to the language of scripture; and there is reason to believe, that the consequences of vice will be found far more terrible."[1] Price thinks it reasonable, that "as God's power is continually exerted according to stated laws in bringing new beings into existence, so there may be laws according to which it is exercised in destroying beings."[2] This power of destruction is reserved, of course, for the ultimate punishment of the wicked. The Scripture language used to describe the 'second death' is considered highly figurative, and as having the primary meaning of annihilation. So, as Price understands the Scriptures, they inform us that the resurrection of the wicked shall be only for judgment, justice, and destruction, and the resurrection of the righteous shall be to receive the gift of eternal life.[3] Of the duration of the punishment of the wicked before annihilation we can only guess; but we can know that it will be adequate retribution. Eternal life, on the other hand, is a reward not even the righteous have any right to expect,[4] but it is God's GIFT to them through Jesus Christ.

Price's dissertation on "The Reasons for expecting that Virtuous Men shall meet after Death in a State of Happiness" "is concerned only with the important question, 'How far we have reason to expect, that we shall hereafter be restored to an ac-

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1. Price's Dissertations, p. 134.
2. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 310.
3. Ibid., p. 317.
4. Ibid., p. 312.

quaintance with one another, or again see and know one another'."[1] The longing for such a reunion of loved ones and friends is considered a rational hope. Price acknowledges that the instinctive determinations which respect only the exegencies of this present life, will cease with it; but it does not follow, he asserts, "that we are likely hereafter to be left as indifferent to those who are now our relations and friends, as if we had never known them."[2] Surely the present is more apt to be by way of foundation for what is to be eternal. And, does not the language of the Scriptures teach expressly, "that mankind will be raised from the dead <u>together</u>, and be judged together; and that the righteous, after the general resurrection and judgment, are due to be taken together to the same heavenly state, there to live and reign with Christ, and to share his dignity and happiness?"[3] Passages of Scripture, such as the following, are deemed adequate to establish the fact of our future recognition of each other in a heavenly state: Hebrews 12:22-24; John 14:1-6; I Thessalonians 2:19, 4:13, 14 ff.; and II Corinthians 1:14 and 4:14. I Thessalonians 2:19 is especially stressed: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" "'Tis most plainly implied in these words that the apostle expected to see and know again his Thessalonian converts at Christ's second coming."[4] The remainder of the dissertation is an eloquent and interesting description of the delight and advantage which will accompany this renewal of inter-

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1. Price's <u>Dissertations</u>, p. 324.
2. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 326, 327.
3. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 329.
4. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 333.

course with each other. The powerful motives to a life of holiness, which such a prospect suggests, are also stressed.

The expectation which virtuous friends have of being completely happy together hereafter is urged as an important motive for regulating our earthly behaviour. Making friends for eternity should be our ideal, thus sparing ourselves the pain (in this life) of separation from those who lack virtue, since we know it will be the last we will ever see of them. "Let us resolve to cultivate friendship only with those whom we may hope to be happy with for ever."[1] Let us be friendly toward all men; but let us cultivate those friendships which may be eternal.

But, if we recognize our virtuous friends hereafter, what about our missing of others we also loved who shall be absent? Price is willing to leave this problem to the wisdom of God. It is enough to know, that there will be no more pain or tears.[2]

Far from looking on the future life of the righteous as an experience of rest and passivity, Price is sure that, "There is in the works and perfections of God and in infinite truth, an inexhaustible fund of employment for our faculties,"[3] and we shall go on working and improving forever. The idea of the philosophy of progress is carried over into his concept of the heavenly state; many dormant powers will come to light to be developed; and the adventure of exploring universe after universe may be before us. Price approximates the idea that, "Instead of develop-

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1. Ibid., p. 348.
2. Revelation 21:3, 4.
3. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 318.

ment towards fruition there will be development in fruition."[1] He would agree with A. E. Taylor that "the blessed would always have new discoveries awaiting them, more to learn than they had already found out of the unspeakable riches of the wisdom of God," and that heaven "must be a land of delightful surprises, not a country of Lotus-eaters where it is always afternoon."[2]

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1. Baillie, op. cit., p. 234.

2. A. E. Taylor, The Faith of a Moralist, London: 1930, p. 421.

# CHAPTER V

# CONCERNING MATTERS

# OF

# PERSONAL RELIGION

## MORAL AND PRACTICAL PREACHING

Words of praise for the preaching of eighteenth century England are difficult to find. A barren orthodoxy among Churchmen seems to have been matched by a cold morality among Dissenters. "Sermons everywhere were little better than miserable moral essays, utterly devoid of anything likely to awaken, convert or save souls."[1] It is true that, except for Wesley, Whitefield, and their associates, who put new heart and soul into preaching by "proclaiming faith with faith, and the story of life with life,"[2] the British preachers of the day gave a relatively large and prominent place to morals.[3] Pertinent to the present study is the following report from Bishop J. C. Ryle: "The celebrated lawyer, Blackstone, had the curiosity, early in the reign of George III, to go from church to church and hear every clergyman of note in London. He says that he did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero, and that it would have been impossible for

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1. J. C. Ryle, The Christian Leaders of the Last Century, London: 1869, p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 25.

3. E. C. Dargan, A History of Preaching, New York: 1912, II, p. 292.

him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mohamet, or of Christ."[1] Such a grievous charge, however, can hardly be supported, for there were those, both among the churchly orthodox and the Dissenters, who preached Christian morals, distinctly derived from the Bible as the authoritative word of God.[2]

Certainly Dr. Price, who was one of the leading preachers in London at the time of Blackstone's reported sampling of the religion of the city, was one who stressed the authority of the Scriptures. His sermons, while often engaged in "proofs" from reason and common sense, seldom failed to emphasize the superiority of the Christian revelation over reason, and the necessity of accepting the New Testament as a rule and guide to faith. Largely topical, these sermons usually followed the line of argument that a text is right, that it is reasonable, and that it is God's revealed word; therefore, its message should be taken seriously. Occasionally he approached the evangelical note, but for the most part his discourses were on subjects related to the day by day business of personal religious living. According to his associates, Price was diligent and careful in his sermon preparation, and delivered his messages with warmth and feeling,[3]

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 15.

2. Dargan, op. cit., pp. 292, 293.

3. Dr. Andrew Kippis, in his sermon at Price's funeral said: "His devotions were accompanied with an humility and fervor that powerfully engaged every well disposed heart; and his sermons were peculiarly instructive, improving, and interesting. Indeed, as a moral and practical preacher, he was almost without example." Andrew Kippis, "Funeral Sermon for Dr. Price," London: 1791, p. 19.

though without the aid of a strong voice or the 'arts of oratory'.[1] Simplicity and humility are said to have characterized him in the pulpit, as well as in private life.

Only two volumes of Price's sermons were printed. His Sermons on the Christian Doctrines (1787), as noted in Chapter III, was principally a defense of his Arian theology, although the last five of the sermons are on devotional themes. A posthumous volume, Sermons on Various Subjects, edited by his nephew, Mr. William Morgan, appeared in 1816. The twenty sermons of this latter volume were carefully selected from among many manuscripts, as being "a fair specimen of Dr. Price's pulpit compositions."[2] The volume received only limited notice, probably because it appeared so long after the author's death; and, by that time, the whole religious mood had been changed by the evangelical movement. Nevertheless, these sermons, along with various other sermons printed singly, give a fairly accurate picture of Price as a preacher; a preacher of great intellectual powers who emphasized the responsibilities of personal religion in the Christian life. In his view, Christianity consists of an honest heart dedicated to the doing of God's will, duties faithfully performed, and right attitudes carefully cultivated.

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1. Thomas Wright, "The Death of a Great Man Improved," a sermon, London: 1792, p. 23.

2. W. Turner, Lives of Eminent Unitarians, London: 1843, II, p. 436.

## AN HONEST HEART

As noted in Chapter III, Price considers the core of the gospel to be contained in the words: "Eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour."[1] As to man's responsibility in accepting this gift of salvation, Price holds that nothing is fundamental or essential except an honest heart in which there is the desire to know, and to do God's will. Two sermons designed to establish this proposition are based on a text taken from Jesus' own words: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."[2] This text, supported by many other citations,[3] is used to show that the Scriptures uniformly and constantly assert, "that doing the will of God, and avoiding iniquity, is the end, the sum and substance of true religion; and all that we can profess, or know, or believe, is vain and worthless, when considered as of itself, in any degree a foundation of God's favour, and of future happiness."[4]

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1. Supra., chap. III, p.108--(from Romans 6:23).

2. Matthew 7:21-23.

3. e.g. Matthew 13:41; Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 11:27-28; Romans 14:17; I Corinthians 13:1-13; Micah 6:8.

4. Price's Posthumous Sermons, pp. 55, 56.

Stress on creeds, confessions of faith, rites and ceremonies, is considered a pernicious error. By insisting on 'right forms of faith' rather than on "right practice," those zealous for orthodoxy have torn the church asunder. The secret of a saving faith, in the light of his text, Price believes, is found not in what we say, but in honestly trying to learn and to do God's will. Recurring throughout his sermons and dissertations, is this insistence, that the only valid test of faith or fellowship is a sincere declaration of the desire to know God's will through Christ attended by faithful efforts to discover it. He says:

> A sincere disposition to receive whatever information God is pleased to give us, may be considered as equivalent in all cases to a right belief. It is an assent already prepared to whatever doctrines God has revealed, and contains all the merit that there can be in the actual reception of them. A person, for instance, who takes the New Testament for the rule of his faith, and studies to form his opinions by it, may be said to believe whatever is revealed, though it should happen that there are particular doctrines there taught to which (through unavoidable mistake) he does not explicitly assent. By receiving the book that contains such doctrines he gives a virtual assent to them; and by meaning and endeavouring to extend his faith as far as God requires, or reason and evidence will warrant, he possesses all that is necessary or valuable in faith.[1]

Just as it is the will to righteousness that wholly constitutes virtue in every action, so it is the determination to know the truth that gives faith its worth and meaning at every point. And it follows, Price emphasizes, that just as, in order to have a virtuous character, <u>every thing</u> virtuous is not necessary in

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1. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 59, 60.

our conduct, so in our faith neither is it necessary for us to give actual assent to every thing that is true. The faith of some will be more just than others, or it will include more articles; but as long as all have nothing but truth ultimately in view, and are pursuing the same end, and have zeal and attachment for the same object, what difference does it make? If the bent of the heart is right, "wrong opinions" will be accepted as if they were right; if the turn of the heart is wrong, or a criminal negligence takes place, "right opinions" will be condemned as if they were false. "In this, as in all other instances, the will is accepted for the deed."[1] This whole argument, of course, is levelled against "the establishment." Price is simply pleading that the most rigid orthodoxy is vain, and the most extensive articles of faith are only a system of "notions floating in the head," unless humility, sincerity, piety, and right practice prevail. Furthermore, these virtues are to be found in some men of all sects; therefore, let us love one another and make allowances for differing opinions, as long as there is zeal for right practice.[2]

All this does not mean that Price asserts that there are no essential doctrines, or that it is a matter of indifference what opinions are held. It is our duty to discern which doctrines have a tendency to promote true goodness, and to defend these at

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1. Ibid., p. 62.

2. Ibid., p. 84. As mentioned before, supra.,p.126, Price's view is, that "whatever is fundamental is so evident, that it must be universally received." e.g. Such doctrines as, that Christ was sent of God to be the Saviour of the world, that he worked miracles, that he rose from the dead, etc.

all costs. The main thing is this: "He that does not follow what appears to him to be truth and reason, contradicts his conscience, and hazards his own salvation."[1] In other words, men should follow their convictions in the gospel, without malevolence or rancor toward those who differ with them. Let zeal always be tempered with candor, love, and good will toward all men. Charity and unrestrained liberty of conscience are considered more important than any modes of faith or worship.

Price feels that if only this doctrine of tolerance and good will were accepted, and backed up by the civil magistrates in guaranteeing religious liberty to all alike, good men of all sects would become better acquainted with one another, most differences would disappear, intolerance and persecution would be at an end, and love would prevail throughout the church. "Remember," he says, "that the religious principles most likely to be true, are those which have the best effects on the temper, and which render you most humble, catholic, and candid. Judge always by this test of your religion, and learn to reject every sentiment that makes you love mankind less, and leads you to think hardly of your Christian brethren, or that inclines you to any degree of intolerance or uncharitableness."[2]

However, it is with particular concern that Price looks upon those who hold only counterfeits of charity and moderation. He sees many acting as if there is no choice between giving up all religion, and being frantic in religion. Irreligion is just as unreasonable as superstition, and even more inexcusable. The

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1. Ibid., pp. 67, 68.

2. Ibid., pp. 79, 80.

zealous bigot may only be mistaken in his opinions, but the skeptic (if he believes there is a God to whom homage is due) stands self-condemned. Exhorting men to be liberal, and at the same time ardent in their religion, Price goes on to plead:

> Instead of being offended with those who belong to a different religious persuasion from our own, let us esteem them as brethren, let us take them into our hearts, and encourage them to follow their own convictions, withdrawing our zeal from rites, and forms, and doctrines, and detesting the hypocricy of those men who can be more easily reconciled to immorality than heresy, and more shocked at <u>believing</u> wrong than <u>doing</u> wrong.[1]

The conviction that all things essential to Christian belief are acknowledged by all sects,[2] coupled with the fact that religious bigotry and prejudice have been waning since the days of the Reformation, leads Price to hope for the early fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; . . . and a little child shall lead them."[3] The words of the Lord's Prayer which run, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,"[4] Price also finds supporting this hope. Surely this petition, which primarily refers to the introduction of the Christian religion among mankind, means that it is to be established as a kingdom of light, peace, and virtue.[5]

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1. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 83.

2. Price's <u>Sermons on Doctrine</u>, sermon I; <u>supra</u>., pp. 106-110.

3. Isaiah 11:5-6.

4. Matthew 6:10.

5. Richard Price, a sermon on "The Evidence for a Future Period of Improvement in the State of Mankind with the means and Duty of Promoting it." London: 1787, p. 3.

He feels that the Providence of God is guiding events, and speeding them, toward the day when the light, peace, and virtue of the kingdom of God shall prevail.

As disciples of Christ, we are urged, not only to pray for the speedy advent of God's kingdom, but to spare no effort on our own part in serving as God's agents for the establishment of virtue, in which alone there is peace and light. There is an urgency running through Price's sermons, not "to be converted and accept Christ as Saviour," but to make sure of salvation by the cultivation of righteousness and virtue. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness . . . . ,"[1] is the predominate appeal. The criticism that eighteenth century preaching was largely "a sincere wish to stock the ordinary mind with a due provision of common-sense maxims, which may serve to keep the proprietor out of mischief, and make him a respectable member of society,"[2] cannot easily be directed against Price. Virtue, yes, for rectitude is the one eternal, immutable law of the universe,[3] the law by which God invariably acts, and by which he expects man to live; but the eternal law of rectitude is made explicit and unmistakable in the commands and admonitions of the Scriptures. "The proper motives of virtue are the love of truth and right, and a regard to God's will and authority; and it is only as far

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1. Matthew 6:33.

2. Leslie Stephen, English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, London: 1876, II, p. 338.

3. Supra., chap. II, p. 74.

as we are influenced by these motives that we are virtuous."[1] Not only must these principles be present in our lives, but they must be predominate, for it is the ruling passion that denotes the character. "The ruling love of righteousness denominates a righteous man."[2] And, of course, this love of righteousness within is only real when it finds expression in our conduct. "The duties we are to discharge, and the sins we are to avoid, are divided into those respecting God and ourselves. A virtuous man makes conscience of discharging equally all those duties, and of avoiding all those sins."[3]

In taking account of the prevalent custom of making good moral conduct a religion--(without God), Price warns, that there can be no <u>true</u> virtue without the addition of religion to morality. Our chief duties to God are: love of him, resignation to his will, trust in his goodness, imitation of his perfections, prayer to him in private, in public, and in the family. "That morality is miserably deficient which is not accompanied with the discharge of these duties."[4] As Christians, however, we must go even further, "by directing our views to Christ, as being that to us which the gospel reveals him to be,--by knowing and loving him as our Lord and Saviour, by keeping his sayings, and complying with his instructions."[5] The most pernicious error of all is

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1. Price's <u>Posthumous Sermons</u>, p. 250.

2. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 253. 3. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 254.

4. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 256. The very idea of separating religion and morality from one another, Price considers as "monstrous." p. 259.

5. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 257. In this same connection: "Christianity to those (who know it)who do not practice it must be a curse, and

made by those who profess the religion of Christ while ignoring his teachings on moral conduct. Woe, unto the Pharisees and hypocrites!

After pointing out that it is an entire character that is necessary, not a perfect character, Price sums up the requirements for true righteousness thus: "What constitutes true goodness is the supremacy of good principles, manifested by a prevailing and universal obedience, and a freedom from all indulged and habitual sin. Wherever this supremacy exists, there exists a virtuous character, though it be attended with many weaknesses and infirmities."[1] Although we cannot attain perfection in this life, perfection must be our constant aim, for he who thinks he is good enough, is most probably not good at all.

Various other emphases on the life of virtue find expression in Price's sermons. Such subjects as "The Security of a Virtuous Course," "The Happiness of a Virtuous Course," and "On the Future Inheritance of the Righteous," all aim at the one goal; that of persuading men that only in true righteousness is there joy in this life or hope for the life to come.

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not a blessing. . . . Learn then to obey the laws, and to imbibe the spirit of your holy religion. You profess zeal for Christ; but this is a mockery of him and an insult upon him, if you don't do what he commands you. It is not so much faith, but your works that he regards. Right practice is what is of most value in his estimation; and without this all the noise you can make about doctrines is odious in his sight." Price's sermon on "The Vanity, Misery, and Infamy of Knowledge without suitable practice," London: 1770, pp. 28, 29. All of his argument about the secondary roll of faith in the Christian life is really only by way of saying that, "faith without works is dead." Neither faith nor knowledge is of real value until coupled with righteous actions.

1. Ibid., p. 261, 262.

In arguing for "The Security of a Virtuous Course," Price leans fundamentally on "proofs" from reason. His text is from Proverbs: "He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely."[1] Principally, this is seen to be equivalent to the maxim, "There is safety in the practice of virtue"; and the burden of the sermon is, that even if the greatest claims of Christianity are not true, "still there will remain sufficient evidence to prove, that in all events it [virtue] must be the 'safest,' and therefore the 'wisest' course."[2] Such preaching was obviously aimed at persuading the skeptical, rather than stirring the emotions or lifting the hopes of the masses. The recurring suggestion, that "even if the gospel is not true, virtue is the way of wisdom," was surely not likely to persuade men that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."[3] However, the sermon, insisting that "honesty is the best policy" in all the relations of life, and that in the course of virtue there is nothing to lose and everything to gain, comes at last to add, that even the most "superficial" minds must acknowledge there is sufficient evidence for Christianity to make one <u>apprehensive</u> about the possibility "that the gospel has given right information; and, the slightest GLIMPSE of that ETERNAL LIFE which the New Testament promises, is enough to elevate above this world. The bare <u>possibility</u> of losing it, by sinful practices, is enough to annihilate all temptation."[4] Thus it was hoped that virtue,

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1. Proverbs 10:9.
2. Price's <u>Sermons on Doctrine</u>, p. 204.
3. Romans 1:16.
4. Price's <u>Sermons on Doctrine</u>, p. 227.

with so many obvious recommendations, assisted ever so slightly by the gospel, would claim its converts.

Furthermore, not only does the course of virtue make life secure, but it is the one means of obtaining true happiness, both here and hereafter. By practicing virtue we gratify our highest powers; we gain health and order of mind; we find "the greatest total happiness"; all innocent and natural pleasures are improved and refined; many peculiar joys which nothing else can give are ours; and, the happiness of the virtuous course takes on the peculiar qualities of permanence, independence, purity, and persistence even in affliction.[1] Far from being the enemy of pleasure, as many religious people suppose, virtue is, without doubt, the best friend of true pleasure. Therefore, if we have virtue, "we can want nothing that is desirable."[2]

An honest heart, then, which is dedicated to the virtuous course, is, for Price, the foundation upon which the Christian life must be built. The Bible unites with reason in making this plain. Virtue for virtue's sake is reasonable enough in itself, but the Christian revelation, in setting before us "the ravishing hope" of eternal life, makes it incredible that any man should choose the ways of vice and sin. Since there can be no true virtue without religion, morality must ever be anchored in the Christian faith. The exact manner in which Christ's interposition saves us, we cannot fully comprehend,[3] but how can we fail

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1. Ibid., pp. 229-259, sermon on "The Happiness of a Virtuous Course," passim.

2. Ibid., p. 258.

3. Supra., chap. III, p. 127.

to understand that right actions on our part, far more than a "correct statement of faith," are absolutely essential to salvation? Nevertheless, while the sincerity and purity of Price's motives cannot be questioned, the ever-present emphasis on right actions, rather than on faith in and surrender to Christ, tends to center the mind on self, instead of the Saviour. This was surely one of the weaknesses in this type of rationalized Christianity.

However, Price's emphasis on right actions is made explicit by sermons in which he insists on the performance of the duties of the Christian life. These sermons, dealing with basic issues of religious living, are far more than a mere demonstration of logic, or a mixture of maxims and good advice.

## CHRISTIAN DUTIES TO BE PERFORMED

No systematic treatment of the Christian duties is attempted in Price's writings. The large place which he gave to such subjects, however, requires that special attention be given to them here. Duties to God, as well as duties to ourselves, are given frequent emphasis, both in his sermons and in his dissertations. Our Christian duties to "others," except for his crusading for freedom of conscience and religious liberty,[1] receive only incidental consideration. Of first importance are our obligations to God, and receiving great emphasis is the matter of prayer.

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1. Infra., chap. VI, passim.

PRAYER: Price's dissertation on Prayer clearly reflects the deep devotional quality of his own life.[1] The fact that the dissertation was originally in the form of sermons,[2] together with the practical cast of it, indicates that he earnestly sought to develop the devotional life of his parishioners.

By Prayer, Price means "a serious and solemn address of our minds to the Deity, as the fountain of Being and happiness, and the parent and governor of the world." The chief parts of prayer are: "Acknowledgment of our dependence, and of the Divine perfections and sovereignty; thankfulness for mercies we have received; a penitential confession of what we have done amiss; and offering up our desires of favour and happiness for ourselves and others."[3] That the Supreme Being should receive the homage of all is taken to be self-evident, just as there is no clearer principle of reason than that thankfulness is due for benefits received. The propriety of penitence is also obvious. Only the last part of prayer mentioned, that of "offering up our desires of favour and happiness for ourselves and others," in his judgment, has been seriously questioned. Price feels that few objections would

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1. Joseph Priestley, in his funeral sermon for Dr. Price, gives the following testimony: "The peculiar fervor of his devotion, ever expressed in the most natural and unaffected manner, you must have constantly observed in the pulpit, and in all his public services of which prayer made a part, and the deep sense that he had of the constant presence and Providence of God was always apparent in his conversation on religious subjects. . . . No person well acquainted with Dr. Price could say, that rational sentiments of Christianity are unfriendly to devotion." --London: 1791, pp. 18-20.

2. Turner, op. cit., p. 393.

3. Price's Dissertations, p. 198.

be made to prayer if only more attention were given to the dictates of the human mind on the subject.

> The art of addressing our desires to God for benefits which are necessary to our happiness, implies in it that sense of our dependence upon him, and that acknowledgment of his dominion which render it self-evidently proper. The fitness of it is immediately perceived by the lowest as well as the highest understanding; and the force of nature and reason will extort it from every mind that possesses a just sense of piety.[1]

Prayer is perfectly reasonable, Price argues, if only we remember that God deals with us according to our conduct, not according to our importunity; according to reason, but reason coupled with just conditions. God is <u>always</u> ready to do us good <u>if</u> we meet certain conditions. Of course God is unchangeable, but his unchangeableness consists in always doing what is right --his conduct varying with the actions, characters, and dispositions of Beings. "If then prayer makes an alteration in the case of the supplicant, as being the discharge of an indispensable duty; what would, in truth, infer changeableness in him, would be, not his regarding and answering it, but his <u>not</u> doing this. . . . We have a part to act, and duties to discharge, which, if neglected, cannot but deprive us of his protection and leave us destitute and unhappy."[2] Thus prayer is established as an "indispensable duty," because it is simply doing what is right to be done; "and what, therefore, God cannot but expect and require us to do as a <u>condition</u>"[3] of our having blessings necessary to our happiness.

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1. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 202, 203.
2. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 208, 209.
3. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 205.

"This, indeed, is itself the principal law and the immutable order of the Divine administration, that all Beings shall, on the whole, receive according to their works."[1] Prayer, then, is the very "work" that makes us worthy; like veracity or gratitude, it is a duty in itself.

It is considered obvious that, since God is pleased with our helping one another in other ways, he will surely favor our prayers for others. Supplication for others is just as natural, and as reasonable, as for ourselves. However, since we cannot determine the exact extent of the efficacy of prayer, "care should be taken that neither our prayers for ourselves or others be too particular, and that we indulge no other expectation in consequence of them than that, if the fruits of genuine benevolence and piety, they shall be accepted and heard as far as is consistent with the order of the world and the purposes of infinite wisdom."[2] In other words, the mood of Gethsemane, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done,"[3] must temper all our prayers.

In emphasizing the importance of performing the duty of prayer, Price writes: "Nothing, certainly, can tend more to promote a right conduct and temper and to establish within us all good dispositions, than this duty properly discharged."[4] In prayer, we become aware of God's presence, and our dependence on Him; we face the great truths of life, and consider our own need of repentance; confession of sins leads to a resolve to forsake

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1. Ibid., p. 220.
2. Ibid., p. 228.
3. Luke 22:42.
4. Price's Dissertations, p.230.

them; and, as we persevere, we become like God. Not only is prayer the best friend of every virtue, and a chief source of divine strength, but it brings that peace which the world cannot give. Prayer is not only right, and therefore a virtue; it is the best means of virtue. It is not only a duty, but of the greatest use in keeping all duties, for without it we become less mindful of the Deity, and careless. As we engage in true prayer, our minds are filled with thoughts of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Prayer is considered our main duty of religious virtue. It is necessary because: " (1) It is right . . . ; (2) to promote a good temper in us, and train us up in righteousness . . . ; (3) 'Tis incumbent upon us to pray as we hope for the favour of God. This is one qualification for his favour . . . ; (4) The Christian revelation enjoins it. This . . . must have great weight with every attentive Christian . . . ; (5) The greatest ecstasy possible to the soul is to feel one's self in the presence of God . . . ; (6) Devotion . . . constitutes a general temper conducive in the highest degree to happiness. The spirit of Prayer is the spirit of hope, humility, gratitude, and resignation . . . ; (7) 'Tis devotion that consecrates knowledge and renders it subservient to its proper end; that gives unbounded scope to our most raised affections, and employs our faculties on an object every way adequate to them."[1] All these reasons, which make private prayer necessary, are equally binding for the practice of family devotions, and public worship. Surely it is

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1. Ibid., pp. 240-257, passim.

reasonable that, as parents care for the bodies of their children, they should also care for their souls.

> If the chief interests of a family are to be consulted, or the first of all the relations in which we stand to be regarded, family prayer is reasonable and proper; nor can any person deny this with any colour of reason, who acknowledges the obligation to pray at all. If then it is reasonable and proper, how can the stated omission of it be reconciled to a character of sound virtue?[1]

The practice of public prayer, Price suggests, increases our personal strength as we are warmed by the presence of one another, and "insensibly" catch one another's feelings. Besides this, the public and stated forms of religion go far in maintaining order and morality in a general way. The power of example has a telling effect on society. Those "good moral men," who pride themselves on their goodness while neglecting public worship, are ignoring the real roots of all true goodness. It is a palpable contradiction, that there can be a good man without religion, a truly benevolent man without gratitude to God, or a righteous life without prayer.[2] Repeatedly, Price strikes at the common erroneous idea, that if a man practices some virtues he is good. Too many people entertain the false hope that several virtues will offset one or two favorite vices. Does not the New Testament teach plainly that repentance has reference to all our sins? even those we love most? The dictates of both reason and Scripture indicate, beyond any doubt, "that no kind of partial goodness can be true goodness, and that he only is virtuous who endeavours to do his

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1. Ibid., pp. 259, 260.

2. Ibid., p. 269.

whole duty."[1] Bemoaning the almost desperate lack of true piety and devotion,[2] Price exhorts men to diligence and solicitude in acquiring true worth and piety.

The dissertation closes with the following emphases on the manner of performing prayer: (1) Let prayer be performed "with a mind prepared for it, and with fixed and composed thoughts . . (2) We ought to pray with fervency of affection and desire." To the extent these affections are wanting, devotion loses its own soul, and drops to a worthless formality. Our affections should be intense and at their best when we approach God in prayer. However, "Reason ought always to be the governing faculty, and the affections must not lead but follow." (3) "We ought to be constant in prayer--lest we forget; some portion of time every day, and especially in hours of temptation or decision. (4) It is absolutely necessary that our prayers be accompanied with a holy life. (5) We ought to pray and give thanks in the name of Christ, as directed in the Scriptures: e.g. John 16:23; Ephesians 5:20; and Colossians 3:17." Not only is it reasonable to pray in Christ's name, but it is utterly inexcusable "to neglect that name to which we owe our prospect of a blessed immortality, that name at which every knee shall bow, . . . and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11)."[3] Pointing to the

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1. Ibid., p. 272. vide., Price's Review, chap. IX. Also Matthew 5:17-20; Ephesians 5:13-18; Romans 10:3, 4.

2. Supra., pp. 169, 170.

3. Price's Dissertations, pp. 276-299, passim.

twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, Price follows these practical suggestions with the reminder, that we shall be held responsible, not only for crimes committed, but, more especially, for duties neglected. It is his conviction that whole-hearted religion, appearing as the joyful and divine thing it really is, would soon result, not only in every objection to it being removed, but in universal reverence and admiration for it. True prayer is not only a duty to God, but the way to wisdom,[1] and one of the best means of winning men to Christ.

GLORIFYING GOD: Closely related to the duty of prayer, is that of glorifying God. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."[2] After discounting Calvinism for teaching that glorifying God requires the burning of heretics, and the consigning to damnation of all those who do not receive its code of faith, Price, in a sermon on the above text, discusses what he considers to be the true glory of God, "and the proper means by which it is to be promoted."[3] Notice is taken of the glory which God has in himself, and by which he is in himself necessarily and eternally all that is great, wise, and good: His glory in this sense, of course, cannot possibly be increased or diminished. For man to think of making the slightest alteration in this innate glory of God, would be the wildest sort of blasphemy and absurdity. However, this cannot be said of his glory when it is considered from another point of view.

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1. James 1:5
2. I Corinthians 10:31.
3. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 344.

There is a sense in which the glory of God is like the glory of a king.

> The glory of a king, considered not in himself, but in his relation to his subjects, consists in the order and happiness which prevail among them,--in their respect for his character, their attachment to his authority, and obedience to the laws by which he governs them. "In like manner," it is then we give to God the glory due to him, when our souls are possessed with the deepest reverence for him, when we love him above all things, and submit cheerfully to his authority,--when we do his will, and answer the purpose for which he has created us,--when we are his pious, grateful, and lowly subjects, and do all we can to enlighten and reform mankind, and to promote the order, and harmony, and felicity of the world.[1]

This means, in particular, that to glorify God, worthy and honorable apprehensions of him must be entertained; and these sentiments must find suitable expression, especially in worship. Neglect of worship is a practical denial of God's existence. Furthermore, we glorify God in paying a just regard to all his institutions: the Lord's Day, the Church, the Lord's Supper. Also, in endeavoring to lead others to glorify God, we bring him glory. And, again, the exercise of gratitude to him, glorifies God. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifies me." (Psalm 50:23)[2] Finally, "confidence in the Deity, and a reliance on his promises, and faithfulness, are mentioned in the Scriptures as instances

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1. Ibid., pp. 344-346.

2. Also Luke 17:18--Jesus says of the one cleansed leper who returned to give thanks: "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger."

of glorifying God."[1] It is easy and natural to employ ourselves with these deeds which bring glory to God when we remember that we have the promise of life eternal set before us; and when we consider what obligations we are under to the Deity, and that he has a right to our best services. Even as Jesus glorified the Father[2] through the work which he did on earth, so may we glorify God, however little by comparison, by serving Him in "the cause of liberty and justice--the cause of peace and virtue."[3] We can be sure that all who thus glorify God, and so fulfill their duty, He will glorify; therefore, ". . . do all to the glory of God."

IMITATING GOD: The Christian character can only be made complete as we strive to imitate God himself. From Jesus' own words, Price urges the discharge of this duty: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."[4] Jesus' exhortation, which ends with this text, is to an imitation of God. Price gives his own translation: "Pray for all men. Do good to all men. Love all men; for there is nothing meritorious in loving those who love you, or in embracing persons of the same sect, or religion, or nation with yourselves. This even the worst of men do. But do you aim at higher goodness, and strive to imitate the Deity, and to be in this instance, as far as you can, perfect as he is perfect."[5] Certainly, few men would fail to agree with

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1. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 352. (e.g. Romans 4:20; Philippians 1:20).

2. John 17:4. 3. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 356.

4. Matthew 5:48.

5. Price's Posthumous Sermons, pp. 364, 365. (Matt. 5:44-48).

Price in his interpretation of this text.

The sum of Price's explanation is, that since men can only imitate God's moral attributes, "we imitate the Deity when, like his, our wills are directed by truth and righteousness."[1] God is the eternal law of truth and right, and we can only imitate, but the guiding principles are the same. Our purpose, like God's, must be to do good. This we can do by protecting merit, relieving misery, spreading peace, candor, knowledge, and liberty. Another attribute of God to be imitated is his placability: "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."[2] Throughout the New Testament we are taught that forgiving one another is one of our first duties.

As children of God, we are bound to direct our attention to Him, our heavenly Father. It is our duty to imitate Him in our conduct, "and to assimilate ourselves to Him as far as possible. . . . It must be His will that His children should manifest their affection and veneration by making His character the model of their own. It is thus only they can shew themselves his dutiful children, and give the glory due to his name."[3] In this imitation we attain our true dignity, and find our true happiness. We achieve the practice of true religion, religion that "consists in mercy more than sacrifice,--in doing more than believing,--in fidelity and justice more than any ritual services."[4] Such is the Christian religion that Price considers its lofty description of God as one of its strongest recommendations; for our ideas of

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1. Ibid., p. 367.
2. Ephesians 4:32.
3. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 374.
4. Ibid., p. 379.

God will determine our conduct. To strive to imitate God as He is revealed in Christ, is among the first of all our duties. And God himself will assist us in the doing of it.

SELF-EXAMINATION: The Christian has certain duties to himself, as well as to God. Price's sermons show a strong emphasis on the duties of Self-examination, Heavenly-mindedness, and Contentment.

Self-examination is considered as "the first necessary step to saving goodness."[1] How else shall we know our virtues? How else shall we discover and amend our faults? Without frequent and impartial self-searching, how shall we be sure of the motives that actuate us? Only by self-examination can we be certain that we really seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness. How shall men become conscious of sin, and repent of it, if they have never been under any convictions of it? We are too apt to think ourselves good because we have some good in us, and possess some good qualities. But does goodness prevail within us? How pure are our motives? How universal is our obedience? Price uses many such questions to stir the conscience concerning the need for self-examination.

"The purity of our motives should be particularly inquired into."[2] Constant care must be exercised, for there are endless ways of deceiving ourselves. It is well to remember that charity may be nothing more than ostentation, and the vigorous display of the preacher may be only a display of talents. Nearly every virtue has its counterfeit. Therefore, we must search diligently

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1. Ibid., p. 132.

2. Ibid., p. 135.

for our springs of action, and labor to purify them. The universality of our obedience to God's laws and commands is also a necessary test of our motives. Are we satisfied with a partial discharge of our duties? Have we "any bosom vice that we practice; any criminal passion that we indulge; any important duty that we neglect?"[1] We must honestly let such questions search our souls in the business of self-examination.

It is a contemptible practice to study everything but ourselves, says Price. Since the capacity of reflecting on ourselves, and looking forward to eternity, is one of the distinguishing privileges of our natures, it is shameful not to use it. Without self-knowledge, we cannot know whether God is pleased or displeased with us; whether we are saved or lost. Price illustrates:

> In our spiritual concerns, we often resemble decaying tradesmen, who fearing a disagreeable discovery, and chusing to be deceived, will not examine their accounts. The consequence of which always is, that bad grows worse, till at last ruin becomes unavoidable.[2]

The exhortation is given, that regardless of what others may do or think, let all Christians examine themselves frequently, impartially, and devoutly, as in the very presence of God.

HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS: On Heavenly-mindedness, Price's principal argument is, that as Christ's disciples, we are called into a path of life leading out of this world, and the heavenly issue of our religion places us under obligation to cultivate this frame of mind. Far from making virtue mercenary and selfish, "a prudent

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1. Ibid., p. 139.

2. Ibid., p. 142.

regard to our own interest is a duty; and a regard in our actions to our final interest is one of the most important duties; and the more our actions are governed by it, the more worthy we shall be."[1] Moreover, the New Testament is punctuated with exhortations to heavenly-mindedness: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . ." "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." "Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth,"[2] etc. Christians should always remember, that it is the relation of this life to another which renders it most valuable, and that all things must ultimately be judged with a regard to their influence on the life beyond. Believing we are immortal, let us give our attention to things eternal, improving our characters, so that when asked, "What are you living for?" we may be able to answer that "we are living for eternity."[3] In the words of the text, let it be said of Christians that, "now they desire a better, that is an heavenly country."[4]

CONTENTMENT: Reasoning from Paul's statement to the Philippians, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,"[5] Price stresses the duty of contentment. It is required by our duty to God, for he has fixed our situation, and assigned our lot. Hence, discontent is disobedience to him.

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1. Ibid., p. 200.
2. I John 2:15; Matthew 6:20, 21; Colossians 3:2.
3. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 203.
4. Hebrews 11:16.
5. Philippians 4:11.

"Has not he who created the world, a right to govern it?"[1] Whatever comes, we know that all the determinations of God's providence are according to the eternal principles of rectitude, and ultimately, nothing that is rightfully ours can be denied us. Thus it is Price's considered opinion, that if Christians really believe the hairs of their heads are numbered, if they have any regard to their duty to God, any faith in his providence and authority, they "will be satisfied with their lot, and practice contentment."[2] When we realize that we might, without injustice, have had nothing; when we remember that it is a general rule that we receive more good than evil in life; and, when we face up to our own unworthiness and guilt of sin, we have little reason for complaint. Also, when we are inclined to find fault, we should remember the example of Christ himself. "The discontented man forgets what he is, and where he is. He forgets this life to be a state of trial and discipline. He forgets that he is travelling to a country beyond the grave; and that in his journey he must expect, sometimes, to meet with bad roads and inclement weather."[3] Let us face the fact that sorrow and heartache, for instance, over the death of loved ones calls for our resignation to the authority that appoints these incidents. We might as well sorrow over the law of gravity. But, even though all friends must part, we have the blessed hope through Christ of meeting again in a better state.

It should ever be held in mind, that, at best, earthly life

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1. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 90.

2. Ibid., p. 92.

3. Ibid., p. 101.

is short; and, furthermore, "Life," in its true sense, "consisteth not in the abundance of things a man possesses."[1] If Christians love life itself, and God who gave it, they will practice contentment, remembering that "this important virtue will sweeten every blessing, throw new charms on the face of nature, heighten the relish of prosperity, lighten the strokes of adversity, soften grief, and give us the full share of bliss intended for us here below."[2] On the other hand, they will remember that discontent spoils and shrivels life, and turns plenty into poverty.

These several duties of the Christian, to himself and to God, Price holds to be "self-evident" to the person who approaches the Scriptures with an honest heart. In emphasizing such practical matters of personal religion, he felt himself to be dealing with far more vital issues than controversial theological doctrines. Above all things, he wanted to present Christianity, not only as "the way of life," but as reasonable and practical both for time and eternity.

Linked with the discharge of Christian duty, is the cultivation of proper attitudes toward the problems of life. As the man of God he was, Price saw the Christian religion as touching life at every point, and it appears that he preached often on themes calculated to develop a wholesome outlook toward all of life.

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1. Luke 12:15.
2. Price's Posthumous Sermons, pp. 105, 106.

## CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES

HUMILITY: Throughout Price's writings there is a recurring emphasis on the need for the cultivation of this great virtue. Humility would save governments from ruin, restore the unity of the church, and flood the lives of Christians with joy and peace. Amidst all the perplexities of life, Job's word should be kept in mind: "For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing."[1] With all his learning, man's ignorance far outweighs his knowledge. So much about man himself is utterly incomprehensible to us; "and one of the greatest mysteries to man is man." We know little more about the world around us, for "there is not a particle of dust which has not enough in it to puzzle and confound the highest human understanding"; to say nothing of the solar system of the universe. Of the administration of Providence we see and understand but little. "The origin of evil, for instance, is a point which in all ages has perplexed human reason." Furthermore, the nature of God "is absolutely unfathomable to us, and in the contemplations of it we see ourselves lost."[2] Much of our ignorance can be easily explained by the narrowness of our faculties, the lateness of our existence (we are but of yesterday), and the disadvantages of our earth-bound situation. However, the great point is, that contemplation of the vastness of our "ignorance" ought to teach us the profoundest humility. "There is not a more ridiculous object in nature than a proud man, or a poor blind

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1. Job 8:9.

2. Price's Posthumous Sermons, pp. 165-170, passim.

creature who is but of yesterday vain of his understanding, swelled with a conceit of his superior wisdom, and fancying himself capable of judging of the works and ways of the Deity."[1] As a child accepts the rule of parents, so should we accept the government of the all-wise Parent and Ruler of the world. Of course, we should constantly strive to improve our ignorance, but always in humility, modesty, diffidence, and submission to Providence. Remembering that "false wisdom" fills the mind with conceit, and arrogance, and prejudice,[2] let every Christian make humility and teachableness a primary concern in daily living. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."[3] Although true science should be looked upon as a noble and divine thing, it should never be forgotten that true humility is infinitely more noble.

SUFFERING: What should be the Christian's attitude toward suffering? In a sermon which deals with this question, Price turns to Isaiah for his text. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."[4] In the spirit of the text, we are urged, in the face of all suffering and affliction, to think on God: He is present; He is concerned, and caring for us as a Father; He is almighty, benevolent, and all-wise. These thoughts help to sustain us, especially when we remember that the afflictions of this

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1. Ibid., pp. 175, 176.
2. Ibid., p. 24.
3. Luke 14:11.
4. Isaiah 50:10.

life, at their worst, are, as St. Paul quotes, "but for a moment,"[1] when measured against eternal life. And, as we think on God, let this be remembered: "There is not a single instance to be found in which the Author of nature appears to have intended pain for its own sake. The common and ordinary state of every living creature is a state of health, and of some kind of enjoyment."[2] This leads to the reflection that all pain has its purpose: remedial, preservative, or stimulative. Many pains engage us to take care of ourselves: hunger, thirst, fear, shame, etc. "The pain we receive from the misconduct of relatives, the troubles of friends, or the calamities of our country, are the necessary effects of those public affections and kind instincts which link us to one another, and without which we should lose all the joys of society."[3] We can be sure, as we reflect on the goodness of God and the purposes of pain, that every calamity will be driven out of nature as soon as it becomes needless and improper.

True, there are many cases that baffle us completely, and we are tempted to cry out that "such suffering can not be consistent with the infinite goodness of God." But can it be possible that we are more compassionate than God who gave us our compassion, and every other blessing besides? Isaiah's words, of course, as Price emphasizes, are directed only to the pious and the obedient. It is the Christian's attitude to suffering, therefore, that concerns us, and, of all people, we must be ready to acknowledge,

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1. II Corinthians 4:17.
2. Price's Posthumous Sermons, pp. 234, 235.
3. Ibid., p. 235.

that "God's government proceeds by judgments as well as by blessings, by punishments as well as by rewards; and this is absolutely necessary to the greatest good."[1] God must be kept in mind; eternity must be kept in view. Let us not suffer as those who have no hope.

From the above examination of Dr. Price's sermons,[2] it is apparent that he succeeded personally in combining a strong faith in the Scriptures as the revealed word of God with decidedly rationalistic sentiments. He saw reason and revelation as the natural allies of religious faith; and, to him, that faith which lacked either of these elements was in danger. As a preacher, Price was sincere and devoted to the Gospel as he understood it; and it is surely above question that he made a deeply spiritual effort to lead people to a practical personal faith in Christ. True, his carefully reasoned messages lacked the evangelical note, but he was constantly striving to direct men to that wholesome middle ground between skepticism on the one hand, and 'fanatical enthusiasm' on the other.

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1. Ibid., p. 243.

2. As was pointed out [supra., p.183], the "Dissertation on Prayer," reviewed in this chapter, was originally in the form of sermons.

# CHAPTER VI

## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM

## ON LIBERTY IN GENERAL

In order to understand properly Price's thought on religious freedom, it is necessary to take into account his views on the general subject of liberty. His ideas were clearly and ably stated in his Two Tracts on Civil Liberty,[1] published during the early years of the American Revolution. These writings exerted a wide influence, both in Britain and America, and on the continent of Europe.[2] The impact of Price's tracts on Liberty was greatest in America, where their influence was no small factor in the Colonists' decision to declare their independence.[3]

While, in general, Price's idea of government is the "contract theory" found in the writings of Locke,[4] his political

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1. Price's Observations on Civil Liberty was first published in February 1776, and his Additional Observations on Civil Liberty appeared the following year. Together with a "General Introduction," the two tracts were published as one volume in 1778, entitled Two Tracts on Civil Liberty.

2. Supra., pp. 35-39. As recently as 1938, Mr. Anthony Lincoln referred to Richard Price and Joseph Priestley as "the two leading dissenting thinkers" of this period. Anthony Lincoln, Some Political and Social Ideas of English Dissent 1763-1800, Cambridge: 1938, p. 2.

3. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 77, 78. The Preamble of the American Declaration of Independence is an almost exact restatement of principles boldly set out in Price's Civil Liberty. In this Preamble "we have clearly stated the a priori doctrines of equality, Natural Rights, and the sovereignty of the people." According to Thomas, Price's tract was second only to Paine's Common Sense in popularity in America in 1776.

4. Ibid., p. 78.

thought has quite different philosophic roots; his a priori position being definitely opposed to Locke's empiricism. However, as pointed out by Anthony Lincoln, Price's "political system developed in harmonious logic from his moral system, in which, indeed, it was itself implicit."[1] In pleading for the Rights of Man, Price was always insisting on the Rights of Man as a moral agent, capable of infinite moral improvement.[2] "Morality," Price asserts, "is a branch of necessary truth and has the same foundation with it."[3] Thus, not only must truth and morality stand or fall together, but all obligations to morality spring from the one great Law of Rectitude. "And it is the first and supreme law, to which all other laws owe their force, on which they depend, and in virtue of which alone they oblige. It is an universal LAW. The whole creation is ruled by it: under it men and all rational beings subsist. It is the source and guide of all the actions of the Deity himself, and on it his throne and government are founded. It is an unalterable and indispensable LAW."[4] Now in man's response to this eternal, immutable law consists his virtue or righteousness. Thus, "practical virtue supposes LIBERTY." And, Price continues, "The liberty I here mean is the same with the power of acting and determining: And it is self-evident, that where such a power is wanting, there can be no moral capacities. . . . Virtue supposes determination, and determination supposes a determiner; and a determiner that determines not himself, is a palpable contra-

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1. Lincoln, op. cit., p. 101.
2. Ibid., p. 103.
3. Price's Review, p. 137.
4. Ibid., p. 178.

diction."[1] To be virtuous, then, a person must be free to respond to the eternal Law of Rectitude; thus, morality postulates liberty. The political implications of this position are fairly obvious, and Price's whole conception of politics was simply an elaboration of his primary dogma of philosophical liberty.[2] Things are right or wrong in themselves, not for utilitarian reasons and not because a king or a parliament wills them; only when obligation is in harmony with rectitude does it become binding. As Lincoln explains Price's view, "Once a conjunction is effected between will and rectitude, the element of will is transmuted, and from the fusion of these emerges something which is a reflection of the eternal law of goodness."[3] Such a philosophy naturally provides a foundation for the doctrine of the "inalienable rights of man."

Price's moral philosophy led him to a profound conviction about the inseparable connection between religion and liberty. Only through virtue can men be free, and religion is the principal source of virtue:

> He that forgets God and his government, presence, and laws, wants the main support and the living root of genuine virtue, as well as the most fruitful source of tranquility and joy: Nor can he with due exactness, care, and faithfulness, be supposed capable of performing his duties to himself and others. He that is without the proper affections to the Author of his being, or who does not study to cultivate them by those acts and exercises, which are the usual expressions of them, should

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1. Ibid., pp. 305, 306.

2. Lincoln, op. cit., p. 115.

3. Ibid., p. 113.

> indeed be ashamed to make any pretensions to integrity and goodness of character.[1]

For Price, then, not only are virtue and freedom bound together in the very nature of things, but religion is the indispensable taproot of virtue, and he alone can possess a just and consistent zeal for liberty who cultivates virtue by way of religion.[2] The lofty moral demands of such a political theory rendered it utterly remote from the political conditions of the day, for, to quote Lincoln again, Price "was confronted with the hopeless task of incorporating Fox, Wilkes, and Sheridan into the universal Law of Rectitude."[3] In his famous sermon on "The Love of Our Country," Price cries out, "Oh! that I could see in men who oppose tyranny in the state, a disdain of the tyranny of low passions in themselves; . . . I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of an immoral patriot, or to that separation of private from public virtue, which some think to be possible."[4]

It is sufficient, for the purpose of the present writing, to take account of Price's basic propositions concerning the nature of liberty. In the following lines one can see the translation of his moral philosophy into political theory. In writing of the

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1. Price's Review, p. 241.

2. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 207. vide., Sermon on "Spiritual or Inward Liberty," on the text, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." II Peter 2:19.

3. Lincoln, op. cit., p. 146.

4. Richard Price, "The Love of Our Country," a sermon, London: 1789, pp. 42, 43.

four general divisions of liberty, he says:

> By PHYSICAL LIBERTY I mean that principle of Spontaneity, or Self-determination, which constitutes us Agents; or which gives us a command over our actions, rendering them properly ours, and not effects of the operation of any foreign cause. MORAL LIBERTY is the power of following, in all circumstances, our sense of right and wrong; or of acting in conformity to our reflecting and moral principles, without being controuled by any contrary principles. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY signifies the power of exercising, without molestation, that mode of religion which we think best; or of making the decisions of our own consciences respecting religious truth, the rule of our conduct, and not any of those decisions of our fellow-men. In like manner; CIVIL LIBERTY is the power of a Civil Society or State to govern itself by its own discretion, or by laws of its own making, without being subject to the impositions of any power, in appointing and directing which the collective body of the people have no concern, and over which they have no controul.
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> It should be observed, that, according to these definitions of the different kinds of liberty, there is one general idea, that runs through them all; I mean, the idea of Self-direction, of Self-government. Did our volitions originate not with ourselves, but with some cause over which we have no power; or were we under a necessity of always following some will different from our own, we should want PHYSICAL LIBERTY.
>
> In like manner; he whose perceptions of moral obligation are controuled by his passions has lost his Moral Liberty; and the most common language applied to him is, that he wants Self-government.
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> He likewise who, in religion, cannot govern himself by his convictions of religious duty, but is obliged to receive formularies of faith, and to practice modes of worship imposed upon him by others, wants Religious Liberty. And the Community also that is governed, not by itself, but by some will independent of it, wants Civil Liberty.[1]

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1. Richard Price, Civil Liberty, pp. 3-4.

In other words, servitude results insofar as that force which is opposed to the agent's own will is allowed to operate. "As far as, in any instance, the operation of any cause comes in to restrain the power of Self-government, so far Slavery is introduced."[1] In view of these primary considerations, Price believes that no other word in the whole compass of language expresses so much of what is important and excellent, as does the word liberty. From every point of view, it is a truly sacred and invaluable blessing. "It is the foundation of all honour, and the chief privilege and glory of our natures."[2] Without Civil and Religious Liberty man becomes an abject animal, without rights or property, and without a conscience, a slave to the wills of others.

## LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE AND THE CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION

Although Price left no major publication on the subject of religious liberty, his views found clear and forceful expression in his various writings, and particularly in the volume, Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution, And the Means of Making it A Benefit to the World (1785). Having declined the invitation of Congress to come to America to help with the regulation of the finances of the new nation, Price, toward the close of the war, was requested by some of the American leaders to

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1. Ibid., p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 6.

publish a booklet containing his advice to the United States.[1] The above mentioned volume, published at his own expense, was Price's response to this request. Among the thirteen subjects discussed in this book is to be found his most comprehensive statement on religious liberty. However, this phase of the great subject of Liberty, ever dear to his heart, received frequent emphasis in nearly all of Price's writings, both religious and political.

In stressing the importance of liberty to the American people, and to all men, Price says: "The liberty I mean includes in it liberty of conduct in all civil matters--liberty of discussion in all speculative matters--and liberty of conscience in all religious matters. And it is then perfect, when under no restraint except when used to injure any one in his person, property or good name; that is, except when used to destroy itself."[2] In reality, Price holds, civil power has nothing to do with any such speculative doctrines as the worship of the Virgin Mary, the Trinity, satisfaction, etc.; "and civil governors go miserably out of their proper province, whenever they take upon them the care of truth, or the support of any doctrinal points."[3] In attempting to govern in this realm of speculative doctrines, civil power, under the idea of supporting sacred truth and op-

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1. Supra., p. 41. The dedication of the volume reads: "To the Free and United States of America, the following observations are humbly offered, as a Last Testimony of Good Will of the author."

2. Richard Price, Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution, etc., London: 1785, p. 21.

3. Ibid., p. 23.

posing dangerous error, has only succeeded in upholding superstition, idolatry, and nonsense. Hence, the complete separation of Church and State is Price's recommendation. "Would not, therefore, its perfect neutrality be the greatest blessing? Would not the interest of truth gain unspeakably, were all the rulers of States to aim at nothing but keeping the peace; or did they consider themselves as bound to take care, not of the future, but of the present interest of men; not of their souls and their faith, but of their persons and property; not of any ecclesiastical, but secular matters only."[1] Rather than supporting particular formularies of faith and speculative opinions, the business of civil government is to encourage all persons in the search for truth wherever they can find it. If contending sects attempt to injure one another, let the civil magistrate step in and crush the attempt, and maintain equal liberty for all sects, by punishing every encroachment on it. Noting the tragic disturbances of society caused by dissent from established opinions and doctrines of religion, Price pleads with America to remember that it has been the very idea of establishment which is at fault. "Had civil government done its duty, left all free, and employed itself in procuring instead of restraining fair discussion,"[2] all trouble

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1. Ibid., p. 24. This same argument appears in Price's sermon on "The Improvement of Mankind," p. 23.

2. Ibid., p. 27. See also Sermons on Christian Doctrine, in which Price makes the following declaration: "What is most lamentable in the system (of "established religion") is its tendency to lead those who embrace it to lay undue stress upon it, and to think that all who reject it deny the Lord that bought them, and are enemies to God and Christ. This contracts their benevolence, and disposes them to view with disgust a considerable part of their Christian brethren, it being scarcely possible

would have been avoided, and mankind would have been improved and blessed. Let it always be kept in mind, that "charity and unrestrained liberty of conscience"[1] are the first objects of all just zeal, on the part of civil government as well as among individuals.

Price is deeply grieved by those who would call on the aid of civil power to defend the Christian religion. If it needs such assistance, how can it be of God? The corruption and debasement of Christianity date from the very time when civil power took it under its patronage. "The religion of Christ disclaims all connexion with the civil establishments of the world. It has suffered infinitely by their friendship."[2] Instead of silencing the opponents of Christianity, let them be encouraged to produce their strongest arguments against it. Such free discussion can only cause it to be better understood, and truth will prevail; for nothing reasonable can suffer by discussion, and "all doctrines really sacred must be clear and incapable of being opposed with success."[3] Wherever civil authority interposes, it tends to support some misconception or abuse of such doctrines. It is Price's conviction that the "supposed immoral tendencies" of speculative doctrines will come to nought when public discussion of them is allowed. "Only overt acts of injustice, violence

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they should love those whom they think God hates. Such uncharitableness is miserable and frightful." p. 63.

1. Price's Posthumous Sermons, pp. 69, 70.

2. Price's Importance of the American Revolution, p. 29.

3. Ibid., p. 30.

or defamation, come properly under the cognizance of civil power."[1]

Furthermore, since the religion of Christ claims no connection with the civil governments of this world, it can only be fit to become the universal religion as it casts off the corruptions of civil government. "It must lose that connection with civil power which has debased it, and which in almost every Christian country turns it into a scheme of worldly emolument and policy, and supports error and superstition under the name of it."[2] Christianity must be displayed to the world in its native and original excellence, for only then will it be fit to triumph as a religion, and to reform and bless mankind.

By liberty of conscience, Price means much more than Toleration. He feels that Jesus Christ made it unmistakably clear that there is to be a perfect equality among his followers. "His command is, that they shall assume no jurisdiction over one another, and acknowledge no master besides himself. It is, therefore, presumption in any of them to claim a right to any superiority or pre-eminence over their brethren. Such a claim is

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1. Ibid., p. 32.

2. Price's sermon on "The Improvement of Mankind," pp. 19, 20. In a footnote at the close of this sermon, Price refers, more or less approvingly, to the type of religious establishment found at that time in New England, where a contribution for the support of religion is required, "payable by every citizen, but with liberty to apply it to the support of that worship he likes best. . . . I must add, however," Price continues, "that, in my opinion, this is the farthest a legislature ought to go in its interference with religion. . . . If civil governors go farther, universal experience proves that, not being judges of religious truth, they will support falsehood, obstruct the improvement of the world, and hurt the best interests of society."

implied, whenever any of them pretend to tolerate the rest."[1] The obvious fact is stressed, that toleration can only exist where one predominant religious sect enjoys exclusive advantages, through civil establishment, while, at the same time, it agrees to allow the exercise of other modes of faith and worship. But it is beyond the province of civil government to grant such privileges of exclusion to any one sect. The office of the civil magistrate is to secure the liberties and properties of all who are under his jurisdiction. All good subjects have a right to his protection, and it is his duty to preserve the peace among contending sects, preventing them from encroaching on one another. It is impossible, Price reasons, for God to grant to any particular men or set of men, "a power to direct the faith and practices of others in religious matters, without making them, at the same time, infallible and impeccable.--Otherwise,--What would it be, but a grant of power to mislead and deceive?"[2] Shall civil authority presume to declare that one religious sect has such power and infallibility? Rather a State should consider, not only all Christians, but all men of all religions, as equally entitled to its protection as far as they show themselves to be honest and peacable.

Not only are the rights of private judgment[3] violated by

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1. Price's Importance of the American Revolution, p. 34.

2. Price's Review, p. 304n.

3. In Price's Review, p. 303, he says: "It is truly and absolutely right, that a being should do what the reason of his mind, though perhaps unhappily misinformed, requires of him; or what, according to his best judgment, he is persuaded to be the will of God. If he neglects this, he becomes necessarily and

civil establishments of religion and their formularies of faith and worship, but--

> They ingender strife--They turn religion into a trade--They show up error--They produce hypocrisy and prevarication--They lay an undue byass on the human mind in its enquiries, and obstruct the progress of truth. Genuine religion is a concern that lies entirely between God and our own souls. It is incapable of receiving any aid from human laws. It is contaminated as soon as worldly motives and sanctions mix their influence with it. Statesmen should countenance it only by exhibiting in their own example a conscientious regard to it in those forms which are most agreeable to their own judgments, and by encouraging their fellow-citizens in doing the same.[1] s/

Even though the Church Establishment in England is admitted to be of the mildest and best sort, Price finds it illustrating the above charges. Many ministers find themselves forced to choose between prevarication and starvation, as they face the necessity of giving their unfeigned assent to all and every thing contained in the thirty-nine Articles and the Book of Common-Prayer. The way religious establishments hinder the progress and improvement of the world is easily seen, Price suggests, if one will only imagine what effects similar establishments would have in Philosophy,[2] Medicine, or Mathematics. If one must choose

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justly the object of his own dislike, and forfeits all pretensions to integrity."

1. Price's Importance of the American Revolution, p. 35.

2. "Something like this took place in Logick and Philosophy; while the IPSE DIXIT of Aristotle and the nonsense of the schools maintained as authority like that of the creeds of churchmen: And the effect was a longer continuance of the world in the ignorance and barbarity of the dark ages." Importance of the American Revolution, p. 37.

between atheism and the superstition which is fostered by the establishment of religion, Price says, for his own part, he "could almost give the preference" to the former. While, for instance, it is true that atheism destroys the sacredness and obligation of an oath, it is likewise true that a certain establishment of religion has done this, "by leading its professors to a persuasion that there exists a power on earth which can dispense with the obligation of oaths, that pious frauds are right, and that faith is not to be kept with heretics."[1] But the true religion of Jesus Christ, which is best promoted by the State by being left free and open, is fitted to bless the world, and be a real advantage to society.

True Christianity, as Price views it, is a rational and liberal religion, "founded on just notions of the Deity as a being who regards equally every sincere worshipper, and by whom all are alike favoured as far as they act up to the light they enjoy; a religion which consists of the imitation of the moral perfections of an almighty but benevolent governor of nature, who directs for the best all events, in confidence in the care of his providence, in resignation to his will, and in the faithful discharge of every duty of piety and morality from a regard to his authority and the apprehension of a future righteous retribution."[2] This religion teaches that loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves, is our whole duty; and that men of all nations who fear God and work righteousness are

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1. Ibid., p. 39.
2. Ibid., pp. 39, 40.

acceptable unto Him.

> It rests its authority on the power of God, not of man; refers itself entirely to the understandings of men; makes us the subjects of a kingdom that is not of this world; and requires us to elevate our minds above temporal emoluments, and to look forwards to a state beyond the grave, where a government of perfect virtue will be erected under that Messiah who has tasted death for every man. What have the powers of the world to do with such a religion? It disclaims all connexion with them; it made its way at first in opposition to them; and, as far as it is now upheld by them, it is dishonoured and vilified.[1]

The injury done to Christianity by civil establishments has resulted from: (a) The substitution of the spirit of pride and tyranny for the Christian spirit of lowliness, humility, and benevolence; (b) The overthrow of Christ's authority; (c) The difficulty of introducing alterations into church establishments once they have been formed--regardless of the changes in public manners and opinions; (d) Christianity itself being disgraced because "all religion comes to be considered a state trick, and a barbarous mummery." In order to overcome these evil effects, "the monster of HUMAN AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION" must be put down forever, and place must be given to "the genuine Gospel of peace lifting above the world, warming the heart with the love of God and his creatures, and sustaining the heart of good men by the assured hope of a future deliverance from death, and an infinite reward in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour."[2] Let the New Testament itself, and not formularies and creeds of

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1. Ibid., p. 41.

2. Ibid., pp. 41-47, passim.

human invention, be accepted by Christians as a sufficient standard of Christian Divinity,[1] for the religion of Christ is founded on the power of God, not the power of the state. Let civil authority guarantee liberty of conscience, the indefeasible right of all persons, and Christianity will not only stand on its own foundations, but bless every society where it exists.

A firm believer in the "philosophy of progress," Price was optimistic about the future. He thanks God that the day for burning heretics is past; that a new spirit of liberality is prevailing in religion; and, that ideas of greater justice are catching on in civil government. He feels that the demonstration of the total separation of religion from civil policy going on in America will be of infinite service. However, he is much concerned that the new liberality in religion is having the effect on many of indifference to all religion, "and a disposition to scepticism." This reaction, he feels, is only temporary, being caused by people "mistaking for Christianity that which is held out as such in civil establishments of it," and it will disappear when the cause is removed. But even this opposition of infidelity will serve Christianity by "producing a stricter enquiry into its nature and evidence." Price welcomes the enquiry, because he believes Christianity is of God and well able to bear it. Rejoicing over the immediate prospects before Christianity, he writes (1787): "O happy time! when bigotry shall no more persecute the sincere enquirer, and every one shall tolerate as he would wish to be himself tolerated--when mankind shall love one

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1. Ibid., p. 59.

another as brethren amidst their religious differences, and human authority in religion be exploded." He sees superstition giving way, the anti-Christ falling, and the millennium hastening.[1] Coming reform will not be without opposition, Price warns, for "there is a jealousy natural to church establishments. . . which may produce alarm."[2] Nevertheless, though enemies of reformation, ignorance, and intolerance may make objection, the liberal temper of the times is expected to overpower them all.

## APPEALS FOR REMOVAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS 1787-1790

His strong convictions on the subject naturally led Price to take an active part in all efforts made on behalf of religious liberty during his lifetime. After many years of virtual silence on the issue, several appeals for greater religious freedom were brought before Parliament between the years 1770 and 1790. These attempts all received the enthusiastic and influential support of Price.[3] In 1770 he was one of the committee of Dissenting

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1. Price's sermon on "The Improvement of Mankind," pp. 21-25. Also, Sermons on Doctrine, p. 59.

2. Ibid., p. 52. "A tide has set in. A favourable gale has sprung up. Let us seize the auspicious moment, obey the call of Providence, and join our helping hands to those of the friends of science and virtue." p. 52.

3. Price was a crusader for Parliamentary reform as well. Adequate representation, both as to extent and duration, was his constant plea. Actively associated with all attempts at reform made during his lifeti e, he was a powerful supporter of those made by Wilkes in 1776, by the Duke of Richmond in 1780, and by Pitt in 1782, 1783, and 1785. Thomas, op. cit., p. 102.

ministers chosen to conduct an application to Parliament, for relief from subscription to the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, as required by the act of toleration.[1] He rejoiced that the petition proved successful to the extent of gaining "the benefit of toleration to all Protestant preachers of all denominations, reprobating all penal laws in religion, disdaining to ask a liberty for themselves which would not be equally enjoyed by Unitarians and Socinians."[2] However, Price continued to protest on the grounds that civil magistrates had no right whatsoever to interfere in matters of conscience.

Although, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, subscription had been little more than a form,[3] Noncomformity continued to be on the defensive, and the cries for religious liberty grew louder as the century drew to a close. Even among the clergy and laity of the Established church there was strong sentiment in favor of relief from the Thirty-Nine Articles. After an unsuccessful appeal to Parliament by some of these Churchmen, a meeting of the Dissenting Deputies[4] was held, and Price was placed on the committee entrusted with preparing and presenting a

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1. Turner, op. cit., p. 408.

2. Price's Sermons on Doctrine, p. 61. Instead of a subscription to the doctrinal Articles, a general form of declaration was substituted in 1770, "Whereby Dissenting ministers were allowed to attest their adhesion to the Scriptures as the Word of God, and as received by Protestant and reformed churches at large." Drysdale, op. cit., pp. 429, 430.

3. J. H. Colligan, Eighteenth Century Noncomformity, London: 1915, p. 117.

4. A body which had been formed in 1732 to prosecute the agitation for religious freedom.

petition for relief from subscription. "The application to Parliament was made in 1772. The Bill for relief passed the Commons twice--in an amended form in 1773[1]--but was twice rejected by the Lords."[2] The attempts made during these years were an appeal to "candour," and a plea for cooperation.[3] The efforts made in the years 1787, 1789, and 1790 were expressed in more resolute terms. This later movement, of course, was for the removal of the Test and Corporation acts; the most objectionable of all the laws limiting religious freedom. By 1790 the cry was, "Give us back our rights which have been usurped." It has been well expressed: "The Dissenters had hardened their hearts against a State that had rejected them. . . . Their political philosophy demanded secularization and extension. They desired that the state should speak one language and one only: pure political language, without so much as an intonation of religion or romanticism."[4] Although their philosophy failed in its immediate objectives, it served as a preparation for a new age.

Partly because of the spirit of the times, and partly because of the support the Dissenters had given young Pitt on his

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1. On June 16, 1773, Pitt, who was very friendly with Price, in a letter to him, said: "In writing to you it is impossible the mind should not go of itself to that most interesting of all objects to fallible man--Toleration." And he assures Price that, "On this sacred and inalienable right of nature, and bulwark of truth," his "warm wishes will always keep pace," with his. "Happy," he adds, "if the times had allowed us to add hopes to our wishes." Price's "Love of Our Country," p. 38.

2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 64. Also see Benjamin Brook, History of Religious Liberty, London: n.d., II, pp. 364-370.

3. Lincoln, op. cit., p. 211.

4. Ibid., pp. 271, 272.

appeal to the country after accepting the Premiership, the Dissenter's hopes were running high in 1787. Their expectations were further heightened by Mr. Beaufoy, a member of the Established church and a sturdy supporter of the ministry, who agreed to champion their cause before Parliament. Mr. Beaufoy presented the appeal again in 1789, and it was sponsored a third time, by Mr. Charles James Fox in 1790, but the measure was voted down on each occasion. By 1790 opinion had turned strongly against the Dissenters because of their favorable disposition toward the early developments in the French Revolution. The third defeat of the bill was so decisive that "no attempt at repeal was made again for nearly forty years, when Lord John Russell secured repeal in 1828."[1]

Through his political exertions, and his writings, Price's views on the Test laws were well known. Like many others, he considered these laws as both a profanation of a sacred ordinance and an "encroachment on his civil liberty, and consequently a grievance which ought never to be borne without exerting every peacable effort"[2] to repeal them. He left little doubt about his position when he urged, in 1787 in a much publicised sermon, the necessity for "gaining an open field for discussion, by excluding

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1. Thomas, op. cit., p. 119. vide., Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. XXI, 1949 ed. Chicago: p. 977. "After a considerable number of amendments and partial repeals of these acts, and of acts of indemnity to protect persons from penalties incurred under the Test Act, the necessity of receiving the sacrament as a qualification for office was abolished by 9 Geo. IV. C. 17, and all acts requiring the taking of oaths and declarations against transubstantiation, etc., were repealed by the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 (10 Geo. IV. C. 7.)."

2. Morgan, op. cit., p. 35.

from it the interposition of civil power, except to keep the peace; by separating religion from civil policy; and emancipating the human mind from the chains of church authority, and church-establishment. Till this can be effected," he charged, "the worst impediments to improvement (in the conditions of mankind) will remain."[1] However, Price's sharpest words of denunciation for the Test laws came in 1789, after the first two unsuccessful attempts at repeal, in his famous sermon on "The Love of Our Country."

In this sermon,[2] the Dissenters are reminded that they have great reason to rejoice in "the liberty of worshipping God in the manner they think most acceptable to him," which was gained by the Glorious Revolution of 1688. But, even though they have abundant reason to thank God for such freedom of worship, for the opening of their meeting houses, and for their worship being taken under the protection of the law, Price feels the Dissenters can best show their gratitude by improving these blessings and maintaining the principles of the revolution. One of these principles is "The right to liberty of conscience in religious matters." He urges his hearers to detest "the odious doctrines of passive obedience, non-resistance, and the divine right of kings--doctrines which, had they been acted upon in this country, would have left us at this time wretched slaves--doctrines which imply, that God made mankind to be oppressed and plundered; and

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1. Price's sermon on "The Improvement of Mankind," p. 32.

2. Preached at the Old Jewry Meeting House on November 4, 1789, to the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain.

which are no less a blasphemy against him, than an insult on common sense." Continuing, he recalls that the toleration gained in 1688-89 was imperfect, and, though some relief has been gained, subscription to the doctrinal articles of faith is still required, and the Test laws are still in force--barring from public office, civil and military, all who will not conform to the established worship of the Church of England. Expressing his hope that the Protestant Dissenters will be successful in the forthcoming attempt at the removal of proscription (the 1790 attempt), he adds, "They will have the satisfaction, not only of removing from themselves a proscription they do not deserve, but of contributing to lessen the number of our public iniquities. For I cannot call by a gentler name, laws which convert an ordinance appointed by our Saviour to commemorate his death, into an instrument of oppressive policy, and a qualification of rakes and atheists for civil posts." After recalling that no such test is required in Scotland, that it has been abolished in Ireland, that America has declared it the indefeasible right of all citizens to be equally eligible for public office, that in the Emperor's dominions even Jews have been lately admitted to equal privileges with other citizens, and that, in England, a Dissenter can help make the laws though he is excluded from the power of executing them, Price declares: "When . . . I consider such facts as these, I am disposed to think it impossible that the enemies of the repeal of the Test Laws should not soon become ashamed, and give up their opposition."[1] These sentiments are coupled with like ambitions

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1. Price's sermon on "Love of Our Country," pp. 30-32, passim.

for Parliamentary reforms concerning "fair and equal representation, properly chosen"; and he brings the address to an eloquent and dramatic conclusion:

> Be encouraged, all ye friends of freedom, and writers in its defence! The times are auspicious. Your labours have not been in vain. Behold kingdoms, admonished by you, starting from sleep, breaking their fetters, and claiming justice from their oppressors! Behold, the light you have struck out, after setting AMERICA free, reflected to FRANCE, and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates EUROPE!.
>
> Tremble all ye oppressors of the world! Take warning all ye supporters of slavish governments, and slavish hierarchies! Call no more (absurdly and wickedly) REFORMATION, innovation. You cannot hold the world in darkness. Struggle no longer against increasing light and liberty. Restore to mankind their rights; and consent to the correction of abuses, before they and you are destroyed together.[1]

Such opinions gained Dr. Price the gratitude of the National Assembly of France,[2] but, in England, they "created feelings of exasperation and anger in Court, Tory, and High Church circles."[3] Burke replied to the political implications of the sermon with his Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790), and a war of words ensued, which lasted for years.[4] Instead of improving the chances for the success of the forthcoming petition to Parliament for repeal of the Test Laws, the message had the opposite effect,

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1. Ibid., pp. 50, 51.

2. See Appendix B.

3. Herbert S. Skeats and Charles S. Miall, History of the Free Churches of England 1688-1891, London: 1891, p. 400.

4. Supra., chap. I, p. 51.

and, as has been mentioned, the bill was soundly defeated.[1] Burke denounced the discourse as the declamation of "a man connected with literary caballers, intriguing philosophers, and political theologians";[2] and, in the Parliamentary debate on the repeal of the Test Laws, he pointed to the writings of both Price and Priestley[3] as among the chief reasons for maintaining those laws.[4] Writing of the matter nearly a century later, J. Stoughton has well said:

> Though Price's sermon contains a great deal to which all liberal politicians in the present day would subscribe, there are passages in it[5] which crossed the prejudices and aroused the fears of the Tory citizens of that season of excitement; but, on the other hand, Burke attributed to Price designs for which no warrant is given in the discourse; and said a great deal which it would be difficult to reconcile with the principles of the Revolution of 1688. Dr. Price, of course opposed

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1. Beaufoy was defeated in 1787 by 178 to 100, and in 1789 by 122 to 102, but Fox, in 1790, was defeated by 294 to 105. Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century, VI, pp. 7, 9.

2. Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, London: 1790, p. 13.

3. Especially Priestley's "Letters" addressed to Edward Burn, extracts of which were furnished to all members of the House of Commons. These extracts, containing Priestley's reference to his own theological efforts as 'grains'of gunpowder' for which his opponents were 'providing the match,' were largely the cause of the defeat of Fox's motion for repeal on March 2, 1790. Joseph Priestley, Familiar Letters Addressed to the Inhabitants of Birmingham, Birmingham: 1790, pp. 207, 208.

4. Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century, VI, p. 8. Referring to Burke's stand, Lecky says: "Ten years ago he would have readily voted for its repeal. In 1787 and 1789 he had left the House when the question was agitated, being unable to take any settled decision; now he was reluctantly convinced that the circumstances were such that a test must be maintained."

5. e.g. the closing words, "Restore to mankind their rights;

> the Test and Corporation Acts, and, in common with many of his Dissenting friends, zealously sought their repeal. Burke, looking at the question through the medium of the French Revolution, fancied he saw in their repeal the destruction of a breakwater against mischievous changes in Church and State. Nothing can be more futile than his reasoning, regarded in the light of subsequent history: The Test and Corporation Acts are gone, and are now confessed by all parties to have been sources of weakness, not props of strength, to the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the country.[1]

As Fox claimed in the debate of 1790, the situation in France had not prompted this latest appeal; it was implicitly the same plea that had been made in 1787 and 1789. However, as Anthony Lincoln has observed, by 1790 the very name 'toleration' had been rejected by the Dissenters, "as too narrow and cringing a description."[2] This new emphasis on liberty, not as a state-created privilege, but as a right to be demanded, the establishment regarded as a menacing innovation which must be suppressed.

Price's sermon provoked many replies from the clergy of the Established Church, but he took little notice of these writings. Feeling that he had expressed himself clearly and fairly in his

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and consent to the correction of abuses, before they and you are destroyed together." supra., p. 224.

1. J. Stoughton, Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges, London: 1878, II, pp. 45-46. Also cf. H. O. Wakeman, An Introduction to the History of the Church of England, London: 1898. "For Churchmen to degrade the holiest rite of their religion by making it the stepping-stone to office and emolument was startling indeed. . . . The history of the Sacramental Test in England is one of the saddest chapters in the whole of Church history. It kept out only the honest and high-minded. It dulled the religious instinct, and lowered irretrievably for generations the whole conception of the Sacraments." p. 393.

2. Lincoln, op. cit., p. 254.

publications on the subject of Liberty, he was content to let the public judge of his principles and integrity. By this time, Price's health was failing rapidly and, having an aversion to controversy and the mere repetition of phrases, he held his peace, counting on future events to vindicate his position. His death in April 1791 spared him from witnessing the reign of terror which took place in France, and perhaps saved him from the indignities of the violence that occurred later in England.[1]

## PATRIOTISM A CHRISTIAN DUTY

Just as Price considered the idea of an immoral patriot absurd, so he also held it to be obvious that a Christian must be the best patriot. For, like liberty, patriotism must find its strength in virtue, and the chief source of virtue is religion. "Christians," in fact, "must be patriots,"[2] and must do their utmost to prevent the decay and downfall of the society in which they live. If their patriotism goes unrewarded in this life, still Christians cannot lose, for they gain an inner satisfaction greater than anything this world can give; and they "shall enjoy the transporting hope of soon becoming members of a perfect community in the heavens, . . . the everlasting kingdom of our Lord

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1. In 1791, Price's close friend, Dr. Joseph Priestley, because of his outspoken approval of the French Revolution, was a victim of the mob in Birmingham, his home (including all his valuable scientific equipment) being burned to the ground.

2. Price's sermon on "The Love of Our Country," p. 40. Also his Fast Day sermon of February 10, 1779, in which he affirms: "In short, a virtuous man must be a firm and determined patriot." p. 21.

and Saviour Jesus Christ."[1] Noting that Jesus never once mentions loving our country as a duty,[2] Price points to the superiority of Christ's emphasis on UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE, as "an unspeakably nobler principle" than partial affections. Hence, also, the Christian's concern for general justice and good will must embrace all the world. We must begin with those interests and connections nearest at hand, but, "in pursuing particularly the interest of our own country, we ought to carry our views beyond it. We should love it ardently but not exclusively. We . . . . ought to consider ourselves citizens of the world, and take care to maintain a just regard to the rights of other countries."[3] Indeed, the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"[4] has given Christianity the distinction of being the Religion of Benevolence; and nothing can be more friendly than this to the general rights of mankind. If properly heeded this principle would cause animosity and contention to give way to peace.

Such a view of Christian patriotism would have caused Price to question the assertion, that "true patriotism will make an Englishman care for everything that concerns England."[5] He would qualify such a claim by the reminder that, "everything related to us we are disposed to overvalue," and a wise man will guard against this delusion. He will try to see things as they are, taking care not to be guided by partial affections or

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1. Price's sermon on "The Love of Our Country," p. 40.
2. Ibid., pp. 9, 10.
3. Ibid., p. 9.
4. Matthew 22:39 and Mark 12:31.
5. Ryle, op. cit., p. 11.

reasoning, and remembering that others may have as much and as valuable wisdom as his own. "But notwithstanding this, our obligations to love our own families, friends, and country, and to seek, in the first place, their good, will remain the same."[1] Further, patriotism must make careful distinction between love of country and the common spirit of rivalship. Too often patriotism has degenerated into a mere partiality to one's own nation and a contempt for others. Therefore, let the passions of patriotism be purified by the discipline of sober reflection, making it "a just and rational principle for action."[2]

The objective of true patriotism is to foster the three chief, and inseparable, blessings of human nature: TRUTH--VIRTUE --and LIBERTY. These, Price reasons, are the blessings, "in the possession of which the interest of our country lies, and to the attainment of which our love of it ought to direct our endeavours. By the diffusion of knowledge, it must be distinguished from a country of Barbarians: By the practice of religious virtue, it must be distinguished from a country of gamblers, atheists, and libertines: And by the possession of liberty, it must be distinguished from a country of slaves."[3] Bigotry, intolerance, persecution, and slavery are the offspring of ignorance. Popes and tyrants have schemed to keep the people in darkness; therefore, true patriots must spare no effort to let the people know the truth. And virtue must follow knowledge, for "Virtue without knowledge makes enthusiasts; and knowledge without virtue makes

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1. Price's sermon "Love of Our Country," p. 4.
2. Ibid., p. 6.
3. Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

devils; but both united elevates to the top of human dignity and perfection."[1] Furthermore, the enlightened and virtuous nation must be free. The condition of mankind rises and falls with this blessing, in every nation and in every age. Greece, for example, having lost liberty has returned to darkness, poverty and barbarity. Proper attention, therefore, to these three matters--TRUTH, VIRTUE, and LIBERTY--constitutes true patriotism, real love of one's country, and only by such love can any nation be made great and happy.

The love of country requires obedience to its laws, and respect for its magistrates. Price argues carefully that it is not the business of truth and virtue to despise governments, and to speak wantonly of their rulers.[2] Rather, it is for Christian patriots to strengthen them, and remember the admonitions of St. Peter and St. Paul.[3] It must be remembered, that civil laws are regulations, agreed upon by the community, and that civil magistrates are officers appointed by the community for executing these laws. "Without this obedience, the ends of government cannot be obtained, or a community avoid falling into a state of anarchy that will destroy those rights, and subvert that liberty which the government is instituted to protect."[4] On the other hand, one extreme is as much to be lamented as the other. Servility and adulation are just as dangerous as pride and licentious contempt. The warning is given, that the rulers of this world

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1. Ibid., p. 13.
2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. e.g. Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17.
4. Price's sermon "The Love of Our Country," p. 18.

seem to have a natural tendency to begin thinking of themselves as having "an inherent superiority, which gives them a right to govern, and make mankind their own; and this infatuation is almost every where fostered in them, by the creeping sycophants about them, and the language of flattery which they are continually hearing."[1] Honor the king, therefore, but let it be remembered that he is only "the first servant of the people" and responsible to them. All homage is only on account of his relation to the people. "His sacredness is the sacredness of the community. His authority is the authority of the community; and the term majesty, which it is usual to apply to him, is by no means his own majesty, but the majesty of the people."[2] In this sense, and for this reason, the term is due the king, and it would be criminal to withhold such respect from him. It is the craving for power of those in office, that tends to make them look upon their power as a right instead of a trust. Hence, the inclination of governments to despotism. "And in this the best constituted governments must end, if the people are not vigilant, ready to take alarms, and determined to resist abuses as soon as they begin."[3] Such vigilance, therefore, is the continuing responsibility of every true patriot.

In the conclusion of his sermon on "The Love of Our Country," Price urges his hearers to remember that there is great reason to love their country, that God has repeatedly blessed it and often delivered it, and, therefore, all should study to show themselves worthy of such favor from the Almighty. "Practise personal virtue

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1. Ibid., p. 19. 2. Ibid., p. 20. 3. Ibid., p. 24.

as well as public," he continues; "Obey our laws and help perpetuate our privileges; give your vote for public liberty, and be ready to shed your blood in its defence; look to God for continuance of his favour, and pray for the prosperity of our country," holding all the while a strict regard for the rights of other countries, "considering yourselves more as citizens of the world than as members of any particular community."[1] Christians should ever be mindful, that although Christ gave no express command on the love of country, He did love His country,[2] despite the fact that it was a wicked one. By His example, therefore, Jesus strongly recommends such a love, but it must move on the higher level of the brotherhood of man.

Apprehensive about the scarcity of true patriotism in Britain, still Price brings this famous sermon to its climax with the following optimistic exultation:

> What an eventful period this is! I am thankful that I have lived to see it; and I could almost say, 'Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever; and nations panting for liberty, which seemed to have lost the idea of it. I have lived to see thirty millions of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty, with an irresistible voice; their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. . . . After sharing in the benefits of one

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1. Ibid., p. 37.

2. e.g. Luke 19:41; and the Master's lament over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, . . ." Luke 13:34.

as well as public," he continues; "Obey our laws and help perpetuate our privileges; give your vote for public liberty, and be ready to shed your blood in its defence; look to God for continuance of his favour, and pray for the prosperity of our country," holding all the while a strict regard for the rights of other countries, "considering yourselves more as citizens of the world than as members of any particular community."[1] Christians should ever be mindful, that although Christ gave no express command on the love of country, He did love His country,[2] despite the fact that it was a wicked one. By His example, therefore, Jesus strongly recommends such a love, but it must move on the higher level of the brotherhood of man.

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1. Ibid., p. 37.

2. e.g. Luke 19:41; and the Master's lament over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, . . ." Luke 13:34.

> Revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two other Revolutions, both glorious. And now, methinks, I see the ardor for liberty catching and spreading; a general amendment beginning in human affairs; the dominion of laws, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience.[1]

The passion for liberty, truth and virtue, evident in the above lines, may be taken as typical of that zeal for these fundamental blessings, which burned constantly and consistently in the great heart of Dr. Price. That his emphasis on the importance of Christian patriotism was no mere "popular phase" of his ministry will be increasingly apparent from a consideration of his "Fast Day Sermons."

## PRICE'S FAST DAY SERMONS

Several times during the years of the American Revolution the British government proclaimed a Fast Day, in an effort to enlist divine favor in the prosecution of the war. Notwithstanding the fact that he never referred to political topics from the pulpit on the regular days of religious worship, Price "always seized the opportunity offered by these Fast days to deliver his opinions on the war."[2] The sermons delivered in 1779 and 1781 were published, and, while reflecting Price's anxiety about the justice

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1. Price's sermon "The Love of Our Country," pp. 40, 41. It was this burst of eloquence, with its obvious favorable references to the French Revolution, which particularly infuriated Burke, and moved him to write his Reflections on the Revolution in France.

2. Thomas, op. cit., p. 91.

and prosecution of the war, they demonstrate his lofty ideal of putting Christianity into patriotism.[1] It was his deep conviction that there are no mysteries in either civil government or religion, into which private citizens are incompetent to enquire, and on which they are incapable of judging. And further, Price held that it was not only the right but the patriotic duty of private citizens to express themselves on public affairs. Happy that he has done his own best[2] in this regard, he urges every Christian to do what he can: "If we see our country threatened with calamity, let us warn it. If we see our countrymen proud and insensible to the rights of mankind, let us admonish them."[3] What little the private citizen can do may mean everything.

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1. A sermon of Price's on "Britain's Happiness, and its full Possession of Civil and Religious Liberty," which had been preached on November 29, 1759, was published in 1791, after Price's death, by "A British Manufacturer." Whether or not the "manufacturer" was a friend of Price's, it is impossible to determine. In any case, the sermon, which exhibits a characteristic mid-century complacency about the state of Britain, is far from representing Price's views at the time of his death. It is certain that Price would never have consented to its publication in 1791, for the last sixteen years of his life saw him completely routed from his earlier complacency about Britain as the citadel of liberty and good government. In 1759 Price had written: "In this island peace and liberty have fixed their abode, and from hence superstition, persecution, and slavery are fled, while in other nations they still remain to confound and terrify men's souls. . . . Our lot has been cast in a land . . . where peace, plenty, knowledge and liberty abound and flourish. A land which has the best constitution and government, the best laws, the best king, and the best religion in the world." "Britain's Happiness, etc.," p. 18. A very different spirit is obvious in the later sermons under consideration in the present chapter. The "manufacturer" who published Price's sermon on "Britain's Happiness" was evidently trying (after Price's death) to use Price's earlier words to offset the influence of his famous sermon on "The Love of Our Country" (1787).

2. Especially his "Two Tracts on Civil Liberty."

3. Price's "Fast Day Sermon 1781," p. 26.

On February 10, 1779, Price preached from the following text: "And he said, O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake."[1] In the familiar story of Abraham bargaining with God for the salvation of Sodom, Price sees a parallel with his own day. The principal idea of the text is taken to be that, in his Providence, God watches over nations, and that the number of righteous within the nation determine its right to survival. It is God's love of righteousness and aversion to wickedness (God's use of the universal Law of Rectitude) which determines the fate of kingdoms. "He regards communities with particular favour, on account of the number of virtuous persons in them; and he gives them up to calamity, only when this number is so inconsiderable as not to afford a sufficient reason for saving them. In such circumstances, or when virtuous men are very scarce among a people, they become, as this history teaches us, a 'devoted' people, and they fall a prey to dreadful calamities and judgments."[2] Nevertheless, as in the case of Lot, even when such calamities and judgments come, the righteous will be favored. But in the common course of events, "the righteous often suffer with the wicked, and indiscriminate distress is permitted."[3] In this case, however, God will still take the part of the virtuous, granting them eternal blessings

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1. Genesis 18:32.

2. Richard Price, "Fast Day Sermon, 1779," London: 1779, pp. 9-10.

3. Ibid., p. 12.

instead of temporal. The worst calamity of this world cannot wrest from the righteous man the things he really values, for he knows that the future life of rewards and punishments will bring justice to all.

Avowedly, Price's aim in the sermon is to give an idea "of the importance of righteous men in a kingdom, and of the favor that will be shewn them." And, he asserts: "It is to them that states owe their preservation. It is on them that the very being of a society depends."[1] In other words, since righteousness is the only hope of the nation, those persons who really love their country, and who would be true patriots, can do nothing more practical than promoting virtue, both in themselves and in others.[2]

The righteous citizen demonstrates his loyalty by giving to God the things that are God's, while at the same time giving to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. "The righteous citizen," however, "at the same time that he is loyal, can have no notion of passive obedience and non-resistance. His duty obliges him to enquire into his rights, and to be jealous for them; to attend to the manner in which the trust of government is discharged; and

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1. Ibid., p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 16. Also see "The Love of Our Country," in which Price argues that, if there is a God to be worshipped, there can be no valid excuse for neglecting public worship. If men dislike the established worship and can find no other church they approve, they "ought to set up a separate worship for themselves." Thus will they testify against error and superstition, "and at the same time recommend religion, by making it appear to be (what it certainly is when rightly understood) the strongest incentive to all that is generous and worthy, and consequently the best friend to public order and happiness." pp. 15, 16.

to do his part towards keeping the springs of legislation pure, and checking the progress of oppression. Thus only can he prove himself a worthy and useful citizen."[1] Those who have insisted that resistance can be justified only in cases of extreme oppression are the ones who have lost the world its liberty. To avoid resistance while oppression is growing is to invite disaster. Therefore, let the righteous speak up at the first signs of corruption:

> Let us remember that we are men and not cattle; that the sovereignty in every country belongs to the people; and that a righteous man is the best member of every community, and the best friend of his species, by being the most irreconcileable to slavery, the most sensible to every encroachment on the rights of mankind, the most zealous for equal and universal liberty, and the most active in endeavouring to propagate just sentiments of religion and government.[2]

Thus the righteous, who are the strength and security of a nation, carry also the responsibility of putting virtue into the political life of the nation. The Christian who conscientiously promotes virtue in every phase of life is the best possible patriot. "Public virtue cannot subsist without private; nor can public and private virtue subsist without religion. As a truly virtuous and religious man must be a patriot, so a true patriot must be a virtuous and religious man."[3] Let all patriots remember that true goodness is uniform and consistent, and beware of elevating to the trust of public office men who boast of their patriotism

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1. Price's "Fast Day Sermon, 1779," p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 21.
3. Ibid., pp. 23, 24.

while lacking the living root of preserving virtue.

The sermon, after various applications of the above principles to the political issues of the day, closes with a lament over the prevalence of hypocrisy--even among those in high places, and the dangerous decline in the ranks of the righteous. Religion in Britain is considered to be at its lowest ebb in history. However, Price sees the hand of Providence working in the American Revolution, both in the cleansing and chastening of Britain, and in the establishment of liberty and righteousness in the new nation across the Atlantic.[1] One thing remains sure, God will honor and reward the righteous, and by them He will save the nation if it is worthy of existence.

In his Fast Day sermon two years later (1781), Price, in the face of the increasing calamities of the war, aims at the bringing of patience and fortitude to his followers. The emphasis is on the future life as he discourses on the following texts: "For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."[2] Faith in the perfect government of the Deity and "the prospect of a future better state" are recommended as "the grand springs of consolation amidst the evils of life; and wretched is the person who, either from scepticism, or inattention, or viciousness of charac-

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1. Ibid., pp. 24-35, passim.

2. II Peter 1:2; 3:13.

ter, loses the hope and satisfaction which they are fitted to afford."[1]

The prevalence of despotism is viewed with horror, and Price finds himself almost ashamed that he is a man when he contemplates such governments. He cannot think on the mischief they occasion without the most painful emotions.[2] Over against the present dismal picture, the Christian must keep in mind the prospect of the future everlasting kingdom of Christ, the new heaven and the new earth where there will be perfect government, and complete happiness for all. Many Scripture references are cited to establish the fact and the nature of this perfect kingdom which is to come, and men are urged to withdraw their minds "from temporal objects, and amidst the devastations, the slaughters and cruelty . . . to look forwards to a better state."[3] The earth-bound atheist is to be pitied, for he has no such source of comfort.

All civil governments, even those which may be called "free governments," are pictured as terribly imperfect, and subject to strife and ferment. Therefore, while Christians must do their utmost to promote righteousness in this world, they are encouraged to keep ever in view "the tranquility and order of Christ's everlasting kingdom."[4] After pleading for a whole-hearted resolution to the ways of righteousness, in order to make heaven sure,

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1. Richard Price, "Fast Day Sermon, 1781," London: 1781, p. 2.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

3. Ibid., p. 18.

4. Ibid., p. 21.

Price returns to his familiar emphasis:

> Particularly consider that in the practice of righteousness is included the faithful discharge of all our duties as members of civil society. He that expects to be a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem ought to be the best citizen of this world. He will be the warmest friend of liberty, and the most ready to spend his substance, or to pour out his blood, in defence of the rights of his country. Act, fellow-Christians, under the influence of these sentiments; and while others think of nothing but making their way <u>in</u> the world, do you strive to make your way <u>through</u> the world.[1]

From every point of view then, true patriotism and Christianity are inextricably linked together. The fate of the nation is in the hands of the righteous, and the righteous cannot honorably ignore their responsibilities to the state. The Law of Rectitude cannot be ignored indefinitely, either by nations or individuals, for, in the final analysis, God is the perfect governor.

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1. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 24.

# CHAPTER VII

# A GENERAL ESTIMATE

# of

# PRICE'S CONTRIBUTION

In coming, finally, to give a general estimate of Dr. Price's contribution to religious thought, our attention is naturally drawn, first of all, to the man himself. Was he as good as his word? In answer to this question we may point to the several eulogies on Price's life, which all stress the purity and nobility of his character. He seems to have succeeded well in giving place in his life to that "Law of Rectitude," which for him was the key to the problems of the moral realm. Many men took exception to the religious and political opinions of Richard Price, but his integrity of character commanded the respect of those who differed with him. His wide circle of friends, which included some of the most eminent personalities of the times, found men of all schools of theology and of all political parties within its compass. Many writers have referred to him as "the great and good Dr. Price,"[1] and, on careful examination of his life and writings, it is easy to give consent to this appraisal. Whether or not he was great we, perhaps, need not argue here, but his goodness we must acknowledge, for it was the common denominator of all his work and thought.

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1. William Belsham, Essays, Vol. I, London: 1799, p. 478. "Europe," says Belsham, "may be traversed in vain in search of an abler head or a better heart."

All who knew him were apparently captivated by Price's warm and affectionate spirit. If the emotions found only a minor role in his philosophical writings,[1] still love was the keynote of his daily living. "It is a sad and gloomy prospect," wrote his nephew, William Morgan, "to leave my heavenly-minded friends at Newington Green, among whom such unbounded love reigns. The thought of separating from Dr. Price damps every pleasure and checks the joy I should otherwise feel in returning home."[2] Dr. Price loved his own; he loved his country; he loved all mankind, and he loved God with an honest and upright heart. And his love bore fruit, for, as Thomas Rogers relates, "All admired and loved him, for the sweetness of his disposition and for the unaffected sincerity of his manners."[3]

In private conversation as well as in the discharge of the duties of his sacred office, humility and simplicity were so characteristic that men of all ranks were charmed by his presence. This unaffected piety remained the same in Dr. Price throughout his life, even though, in his later years, he enjoyed a "blaze of popular fame,"[4] was celebrated by the learned, and honored by some of the world's great leaders. "Humility," said Priestley, "is a virtue nearly allied with candour and benevolence, and I never knew a person less sensible of his own excellencies, or so little elated by the great celebrity to which he attained, (and this was greater than any dissenting minister ever attained before

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1. Supra., p. 101.
2. Williams, op. cit., p. 35.
3. Clayden, op. cit., p.
4. Wright, op. cit., p. 22.

him) as Dr. Price was."[1] In the light of such testimony--of which there is sufficient to fill a volume--and remembering the stress our Lord placed on humility as one of the primary marks of true greatness,[2] we must add that, in the light of the Gospel, Richard Price attained to the greatness that really matters. He appears to have been unfailingly aware that all talents are from God and are to be used to glorify Him, and he acquitted himself as a faithful steward of many talents.

With Price's strongly defended rationalistic sentiments he managed to combine habits of devotion that were both intense and constant. One who often attended Price's church has written, "Never shall I forget his thrilling tones of devout feeling, the humility and fervor of his prayers, the pathos of his discourses."[3] Much has been written about the "false candour" of the eighteenth century, but there would be few to question Priestley's judgment that, "In real candour, I question whether Dr. Price ever had a superior." His outspoken zeal for truth and righteousness, so evident in all his writings, never lessened Price's sympathy and respect for those who flouted the Christian religion, or held different opinions from his own. And, while never in possession of any great material wealth, his liberality to charity was well known. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that here was a man wholly committed to the ideal of modelling his entire life after

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1. Priestley's funeral sermon for Dr. Price, p. 24.

2. e.g. Matthew 23:11-12.

3. Memorable Unitarians, London: 1906, p. 114. vide., also "An Address Delivered at the Interment of the late Rev. Dr. Richard Price," by Andrew Kippis, London: 1791, p. 21.

that of our Saviour. His inner life and his outer expressions of life can best be described by the one word--Christ-like. Having made the most of every opportunity to improve his talents, he gladly and unselfishly poured out his life in service to his fellow-men, and to the glory of God.

Although his reputation as a religious leader does not emphasize his pastoral ministry, Dr. Price, we are assured, was responsive to the needs and problems of the people of his parish. Even during the busiest years he was faithful in pastoral visitation, spending a large part of most afternoons in this work.[1] As suggested several times in the present writing, he never lost "the common touch." The naturalness and simplicity of his life made it easy for people to approach him, and he found time for all who sought him out for advice and help.

Price's "counselling ministry" should not be forgotten, for by it his influence for good was spread far and wide. He befriended many who were working for the relief of misery and for the betterment of society. The Charity School Movement, the fight against the slave trade, the struggle for women's rights begun by Mary Wollstonecraft, and John Howard's crusade for prison reform, all received assistance from Dr. Price. The following acknowledgment from Howard is illustrative: "I am ashamed," he says, "how much I have accumulated your labours; yet I glory in that assistance, to which I owe so much credit in the world, and, under Providence, success in my endeavours. It is from your kind aid and assistance, my dear friend, that I derive so much

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1. Supra., pp. 44, 45.

of my character and influence."[1]

His own efforts at social reform are noteworthy. Price considered his work on behalf of life insurance and old age pensions as part of his spiritual ministry; a claim which one is inclined to respect. Surely, by giving to life insurance a sound actuarial basis he not only exposed a great public evil,[2] but raised the hopes of the common man; and his pioneer work in the field of old age pensions was of great service to those who, after him, carried forward this battle for social security. It can truly be said that Dr. Price turned his peculiar gifts in mathematics to the benefit of the poor.[3] As Dr. Andrew Kippis expressed it, by becoming "eyes to those who were blind in understanding, he dispelled the delusion [concerning ill-founded life insurance], and was thus of unspeakable benefit to thousands of families. In this respect he delivered the poor that would have cried, and the fatherless, whom there would have been none to help."[4] True to his benevolent nature, in all of his counselling to leaders of business and government, Dr. Price served without fee or material reward of any kind. His sole aim was to do good.

Not much need be added here, to that which has been stated in Chapter V, concerning Dr. Price's ministry of preaching. The

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1. J. Stoughton, Howard the Philanthropist, London: 1884, p. 273.

2. Supra., pp. 25, 26.

3. His Observations on Reversionary Payments (1769) caused an "immense sensation," and led to a sound reorganization of the whole life insurance business, freeing it from much dishonesty and corruption.

4. Kippis, op. cit., p. 10.

Law of Rectitude, central in his philosophical writings, found a primary place in his sermons, where it became God's law of righteousness. Skeptical that the enthusiasm of some Protestant sects would become as disastrous as the superstitions of Popery, he wished to stress the New Testament axiom, "Faith without works is dead."[1] The one thing fundamental is doing the will of God as we honestly believe it to be revealed in the Gospel. Here, in Price's view, is the only valid "test" of salvation. His sermons, while often possessed of real warmth, and always revealing great sincerity and forceful reasoning, fail to sound the clear trumpet tones of evangelism. This, no doubt, was partly due to his resolution against every appearance of proselyting, and partly because of his hesitance in asking others to accept his own religious views. One cannot help wishing that evangelism had received more particular attention in his ministry. However, Price's sermons are laudable, not only for their simplicity of style and practical application, but especially for the genuine catholic spirit which is always present; a spirit which would be at home in the more ecumenically-minded religious world of today. Typical of his pleading for liberality in Christian fellowship, is the following expression. Speaking of the tragic division and strife existing among the people of the various denominations, he says:

> I . . . wish they were better acquainted with one another. The best remedy for narrowness (next to a correct judgment and a candid heart) is a free and open

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1. James 2:20. (James 2:14-26, passim).

> intercourse with persons of different sentiments. We are like children wearing different garbs in the middle of a mist. We keep at a distance from one another, and therefore appear to one another like monsters. Did we come nearer to one another, and associate more, our silly prejudices would abate, and we should love one another better.[1]

At the same time that separation of Church and State was a cause dear to his heart, Price repeatedly lifted his voice to plead for the unity of God's people. Why could not freedom of conscience operate within the life of the church, as well as throughout the life of a nation? Price felt that it could, and would, if given opportunity; and his belief, that all doctrines essential to the Christian faith are so obvious as to be above controversy,[2] sustained him in this conviction. If Price's strong emphasis on "no salvation apart from good works" left some hoping for salvation by a few good works, there must have been many others who were led to accept a wholesome catholic view of the Christian religion in the place of old prejudices and sectarian narrowness.

It must be admitted that, in theology, the clear presentation of his Arian views, given by Price in his volume Sermons on the Christian Doctrine (1786), succeeded in starting no new trend. The presentation satisfied neither the Trinitarians nor the Socinians, and succeeded in winning few followers for the scheme of theology it set forth. However, Price was more concerned with

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1. Price's Posthumous Sermons, p. 76.

2. Supra., pp. 106-109. e.g. Such doctrines as: there is one living and true God; we are to imitate and worship him; Christ was sent of God; he worked miracles, suffered and rose from the dead, etc.

defending the right to accept the theology of the New Testament as he understood it than with winning converts to his opinions. As an Arian he was, of course, in one sense of the term, a 'Unitarian.' Nevertheless, even though many Unitarian volumes list him among the 'worthies' of that denomination, Price died as he had lived, a member of the Presbyterian Church. It is well known that a majority of the ministers of the Presbyterian Church in England, at the close of the eighteenth century, were Arians, and often called Unitarians. Many of these ministers, as Drysdale expresses it, "were driven," during the closing decade of the century, by the militant Socinianism of Priestley, into the Unitarian denomination. Would Price have gone with the others? Speculation on this point is perhaps of doubtful value, but we can be reasonably sure that he would have refused to subscribe or assent to the early Unitarian creed (1794) which declares

> That there is but one God the Creator and Governor of the Universe, without any equal or vice-regent, the only object of religious worship; and that Jesus Christ was the most eminent of those messengers which He has employed to reveal His will to mankind, possessing extraordinary powers, similar to those received by other prophets, but in a much higher degree.[1]

Intellectually, Price found the Socinian effort to reduce Christ to the level of a 'mere man' just as absurd as the Trinitarian view of Christ as co-equal with God. While he gladly acknowledged the right of all to philosophical speculation about the nature of the Godhead, his abiding conviction was, that there is abundant evidence that God sent Jesus Christ to be the Saviour

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1. Drysdale, op. cit., p. 538. (As quoted by this author).

of mankind, the exact manner in which He saves us being a mystery beyond our powers of understanding. For Price, the facts of the Gospel were sufficient as a basis for faith, and, as he saw it, both Calvinism and Socinianism were at fault in attempting to establish speculative opinions as articles of "the faith." If agreement of Christians on such difficult points were essential to salvation, Christ would have made them so clear as to obviate controversy. Surely it must be admitted that Price's "liberal" view in theology has much to commend it. One has the feeling that, whatever denomination he might accept if he were alive today, he would be at home in the ecumenical councils of our time, and men would draw strength from his spirit and wisdom.

While possibly deserving a larger place than is accorded him in the history of religious thought, it must be remembered that his burst of enthusiasm over the early events of the French Revolution so associated Price's name with that struggle that his memory could not escape the shadow soon cast by the Reign of Terror. His generation was gone before subsequent events justified the principles (though not the carnage) of the French Revolution, and the new generation was more absorbed with the unlimited possibilities of the future than with forgotten men of the past. The Evangelical Movement at home, and the missionary expansion abroad, had taken the spotlight in the religious interests of the people.

Nevertheless, most of the causes to which Dr. Price gave his best energies were ultimately successful in the subsequent history of Britain and America: the civil liberty established in

the United States of America has endured, and Parliamentary reform such as Price envisioned was accomplished in Britain; with the repeal of the Test Laws, the religious liberty of Britons became what he had advocated; his dream of pensions for the poor and the aged has taken its place among the basic realities of British life; and, the spirit of love and good will, which now marks the religious life of the Western world, has been growing for generations, and owes a debt to such catholic-hearted men as Dr. Price. His contribution to the religious world, while lacking what has been called orthodoxy, was always true to one standard; the best he had to give. His powerful intellectual energies wrought their work through an honest mind and a pure heart. If he was weak in evangelizing individuals, he was strong in evangelizing society, and laying the claims of the "social Gospel" on the conscience of the nation as he pleaded for the God-given rights of man. Others may have been more sensitive to the power of the Gospel to save individuals, but few have understood it better as "the salt of the earth" by which the whole of society is to be purified and saved.

Although his reputation and influence have rested more on his political and philosophical writings than on his religious publications, it can be said that, for him, the Christian religion was a holy, living thing, supplying the heart and purpose for all that he wrote and did. Like many other noble personalities, his greatness is not defined by new spiritual paths cut through the fields of religious thought, but it is the greatness of a man of many talents unconditionally surrendered to a holy

ideal; the imitation of Christ in spirit and in deed. Reflection on the total ministry of Richard Price leaves the cry of the ancient prophet ringing clearly in our ears: "But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."[1]

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1. Amos 5:24. (American Standard Version).

# APPENDIX A.

The second edition of Price's Sermons on The Christian Doctrine, which appeared in 1787, includes an Appendix in which he takes notice of some of the arguments advanced against his "Middle Scheme" of theology by his friend, Dr. Joseph Priestley. In expressing his gratitude to Priestley for the civility and candor of his objections, which had been made in published letters, he says:

"I feel most sensibly the affection with which you have offered them; and I think myself particularly obliged to you for allowing me to keep the resolution I have formed not to engage in a controversy. My intention, therefore, in the following notes is, not to answer your arguments, but chiefly to state some of the most important of them, that our readers may be better able to form their judgments on the points about which we differ." p. 371.

Of some interest in the present thesis is a brief statement by Dr. Price concerning his view on the subject of the Holy Spirit. In Note D. of the Appendix, he makes the following reply to the criticism of omitting a treatment of this doctrine in the first edition of his volume of sermons: "It may be sufficient to observe that it was by no means a part of my plan to enter into an examination of all the points litigated among Christians. I will, however, take this occasion to say, that, on the subject of the Holy Spirit, I incline most to the opinion of Dr. Watts and other writers who have maintained that by the Holy Spirit, in the Old and New Testament, is meant not a distinct agent, but chiefly the power of the Deity, or that heavenly influence on human mind which produced the inspiration of the apostles and prophets, and the miraculous gifts of the primitive church, and which probably in all ages is communicated to men, in different degrees, and according to their different circumstances and deserts, to support them under trials, and to assist, enlighten, and animate them in a virtuous course." pp. 381, 382.

APPENDIX B.

The following selections, taken from An Abstract of the History and Proceedings of the Revolution Society in London (Printed by order of the Committee, London: 1789), indicate something of the esteem in which Dr. Price was held by the National Assembly of France, following his sermon on "The Love of Our Country" and his "Congratulatory Address."

"Dr. Price then moved, and it was unanimously Resolved, that the following Congratulatory Address to the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF FRANCE, be transmitted to them, signed by the Chairman:

'The Society for commemorating the REVOLUTION IN GREAT BRITAIN, disdaining national partialities, and rejoicing in every triumph of Liberty and Justice over Arbitrary Power, offer to the National Assembly of France their Congratulations on the Revolution in that Country, and on the prospect it gives to the two first Kingdoms in the World, of a common participation in the blessings of Civil and Religious Liberty.

They cannot help adding their ardent wishes of an happy settlement of so important a Revolution, and at the same time expressing the particular satisfaction with which they reflect on the tendency of the glorious example given in France to encourage other Nations to assert the unalienable rights of Mankind, and thereby to introduce a general reformation in the governments of Europe, and to make the World free and happy.

STANHOPE.' "--pp. 50-1.

"In pursuance of the Resolution of the Society, Nov. 4, 1789, the Congratulatory Address was conveyed to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld at PARIS, with a Letter requesting him to present it to the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, and at the same time intimating, that the Society considered the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY as acting for the world as well as for the great kingdom it represented, and therefore hoped that their Address was not an improper intrusion; or, if it was, that it would be excused as an effusion of zeal in the cause of general liberty and human happiness which no considerations of impropriety had been able to suppress." p. 57.

"Extract from a Letter of the DUKE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD to DR. PRICE.--Dated Paris, December 2d, 1789.

'It belonged to--Dr. Price to propose a motion tending to pay to Liberty the fairest homage, that of National prejudices.--The Address of Congratulation which Earl Stanhope has done the DUKE de la ROCHEFOUCAULD the honour to transmit to him, has been received by the National Assembly with lively applause. They have seen in that address the dawn of a glorious day, in which

two Nations who have always esteemed one another notwithstanding their political divisions and the diversity of their governments, shall contract an intimate union, founded on the similarity of their opinions and their common enthusiasm for Liberty.--They have directed their President to write to Earl STANHOPE; but the multiplicity of the business of the Presidency not having yet permitted the expediting of that letter, the Duke de la ROCHEFOUCAULD has not delayed to do himself the honour of writing to Dr. Price. Happy in having been chosen for such an honourable commission, he has rendered an account of it to the National Assembly; and, in presenting to them the address of a Society whose object is so noble and patriotic, he has acquainted them with the claim which it has to their esteem, and to the esteem of the whole French nation, etc.----" pp. 57, 58-59.

"Extract from the Votes of the National Assembly of Wednesday the 25th Nov. 1789.

'A Member having read a Congratulatory Address of the English Society called the Revolution Society; the Assembly, deeply affected with this extraordinary proof of esteem, expressed its satisfaction by loud applause, and resolved that the President be directed to write a Letter to Lord Stanhope, Chairman of the Society, expressing the lively and deep sensibility with which the National Assembly of France received the Address of the Revolution Society in England, which breathes those sentiments of humanity and universal benevolence, that ought to unite together, in all Countries of the World, the true friends of Liberty and the happiness of Mankind.

(Signed) THE ARCHBISHOP OF AIX,
President of the National Assembly.

Sealed with the Arms
of the National Assembly of France.

(Counter-Signed) The Visc. de Miraebeau,
Secretary,

Salomon de la Saugerie,
Secretary.'" p. 60.

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Mr. Roland Thomas gives this further testimony:

"The profound impression it made may be summed up in a sentence in the words of the Patriotic Society of L'Orient which speaks of 'Dr. Price's Discourse' as being 'one of the things that should determine people to decide to lose life rather than cease to be free.'" Thomas, op. cit., p. 129.

Among the many excellent eulogies, many of them quoted by Thomas, the following from France is typical:

"Hardly had our tribunes left off singing the funeral praises of the immortal Mirabeau, says the Society of Aix, when 'a fresh cry of pain makes itself heard! Death has just struck also the fiery Orator, who, in the midst of a free People, pleaded like him the cause of the People oppressed by Tyranny! Dr. Price is no more! This Apostle of Liberty--was the friend of Mankind--. He dared to show that proud titles, based on the accident of birth, and proud wealth, should not give to a small number of men in each nation the exclusive right of ruling at their will. He proved that it is to virtue and merit recognized by all and chosen by the greatest number, and to them alone, belongs the right to govern and administer the People according to Laws which they themselves have imposed.' The Society also decided to 'wear mourning for Dr. Price,' and to 'have recorded in its Registers the testimony of the pain it felt on learning of the death of this eloquent and zealous defender of oppressed Peoples.'" Thomas, op. cit., pp. 145-6.

# B I B L I O G R A P H Y

(The following bibliography, comprising the books consulted in the preparation of this thesis, is arranged in two sections; the works of Dr. Price are listed chronologically while the general sources are in alphabetical order. In both sections of the bibliography the edition listed is the one used in the preparation of the thesis.)

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## Abbreviations Used

DNB--Dictionary of National Biography.
ERE--Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.