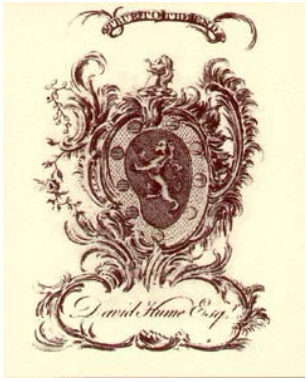

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Hume and the Religious Significance of Moral Rationalism

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Hume notoriously criticized religion and its defenses, and in particular Christianity. The *Dialogues*, the *Natural History*, the chapters on miracles and on providence in the first *Enquiry*, some of the essays, and many passages in the *History* are usually taken to be the main presentations of his objections. As Edward Craig points out, it adds up to a great deal—to more than Hume wrote on any other single philosophical subject.[1] There are in addition several obvious attacks on religious beliefs in the *Treatise*. But it is not noticed in the literature that a number of Hume's arguments in the *Treatise* tell against propositions that are important for religion even when they are not labelled as being so. I give only one example. In the course of arguing that causes must precede their effects, Hume remarks that everyone accepts the principle "that an object, which exists for any time in its full perfection without producing another, is not its sole cause." The point reappears later as one of the rules for judging cause and effect.[2] At neither place does Hume make explicit one of the implications: that either God is not the sole cause of his creation, or else the creation is co-eternal with God. Both of these alternatives would of course be unacceptable to Christians.

In this paper I argue that Hume's critique of moral rationalism is yet another unlabelled attack on religion. I do not propose to add to the literature assessing the arguments against rationalism. I raise instead a question about their point in Hume's campaign against religion. John Balguy voiced a commonplace eighteenth-century view of the relations between religion and

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morality when he remarked that "whatever promotes the cause of revealed religion befriends morality, and whatever strengthens morality adds force to religion."[3] Hume, everyone agrees, was trying strenuously to separate the two; and he knew he was bound to be understood as threatening both in so doing. A look at the religious signficance of rationalist moral thought should bring out some of the philosophically pertinent motivations he had for attempting to destroy this view of morality.

It may also add some clarity to the vexed issue of what Hume himself "really" thought about God. On this matter, as we all know, the variety of opinion is considerable. Was he, as his early critics charged, an atheist? Was he a concealed believer—a theist perhaps? Did he hold some version of deism? For present purposes the question of the relation between Hume and deism is central. It is not unusual to identify Hume as an adherent of this movement. Thus Gawlick cites an extensive German literature from the eighteenth century onward which treats Hume, more or less hesitantly, as a deist. Gawlick himself thinks the matter is debatable. What chiefly separated Hume from deism, Gawlick thinks, "was not his rejection of rationalism" but his own "final despair" about attaining the defining goal of the deists, which he takes to have been ridding the world of superstition, intolerance, and clerical authority.[4] Agreeing about Hume's pessimism on the practical matter, Gaskin argues nonetheless that Hume is an "attenuated deist," and that what separates him from the deists is his "attack on two arguments: that from design and that from first cause."[5] Foster agrees with Gaskin.[6]

I think that both of these views about Hume's relation to deism are mistaken. Of course no one thinks it matters much exactly what label we attach to Hume's religious position. He is not apt to fit into a pre-existing category so in any case we will have to explain what our label means. But in order to understand Hume's standpoint we must be able, like the sympathetic moral spectator, to put ourselves imaginatively into the position of those most affected by the debates that he was entering. We need to understand the map of religious options on which Hume's readers would have located him. Whether he accepted the common options or not, he would have known them and taken them into account in his presentation of his views—and in his understanding of what their shock value would be. I think that previous discussions of his ethics have not given enough weight in this connection to the religious signficance of moral rationalism.

Commentators from Sir Leslie Stephen on have located many of the points that need to be considered here. But there is one element of Hume's thought whose significance for his contemporaries has, to the best of my scanty knowledge, been universally neglected, although the feature of Hume's thought that makes it pertinent has been widely noticed. It is frequently noted in commentary on Hume's views of God that while Hume seems grudgingly to allow some causal power to whatever deity reason leads us to accept, he uniformly

denies any moral attributes to that deity. I shall suggest that when we put this Humean negation in the context of the alternative views of religion available at the time, we will have a better understanding of Hume's rejection of Balguy's commonplace claim about the inseparability of morality and religion. We will also see why moral rationalism was so important to its religious adherents.

The religious view that I think the commentators have neglected is sometimes called "voluntarism" and more frequently "divine command ethics". In *The Invention of Autonomy* I argue that this position was centrally important in the development of modern moral philosophy.[7] In what follows I try to supplement the argument in the book by showing that fear of voluntarism kept the problem it posed a live issue in Britain as late as the 1730s, when Hume was working on the *Treatise*. We will not find the fears and worries about voluntarism stated with great precision, nor do later articulations of them seem to differ much from earlier ones. Like the dread of "communism" in the United States during the 1950s, the early eighteenth-century rejection of the voluntarist position needed less to know its enemy in detail than to display its own propriety by the firmness with which that enemy was cast out.

The labels I have given to the position that caused the concern are not nearly as old as the doctrine itself, which originates in the work of Scotus and Occam and was revitalized by Luther and Calvin. Both of the great "reformers" hold that God's untrammeled will is the source of the principles of morals. I give one illustrative passage from Calvin. God's ways, he holds, are far beyond human understanding. That it was predestined from eternity that Adam would sin, that in his sin all mankind would be ruined, that out of the mass of totally undeserving beings some would mercifully be chosen for salvation, that those not chosen would be left to suffer the anguish of permanent separation from God—all this is God's justice and is incomprehensible to us. How, then, can we be sure that it is just?

> God's will is so much the highest rule of righteousness that whatever he wills, by the very fact that he wills it, must be considered righteous. When, therefore, one asks why God has so done, we must reply: because he has willed it. But if you proceed further to ask why he has so willed, you are seeking something greater and higher than God's will, which cannot be found.[8]

In the seventeenth century the most widely influential philosophical exposition of moral voluntarism was Pufendorf's.[9] He holds that God imposed "moral entities" after creating the natural world and that his purpose in imposing them was to give human beings guidance about how we are to live. He explicitly rejects Cartesian rationalism and allies himself with empiricism. Empirical evidence allows us to infer that God exists and gives us commands.

God could have made an entirely different kind of world and imposed different moral directives upon those who lived in it. Empirical evidence allows us to infer what he actually commands in this world, and therefore how we ought to live. But since moral entities were imposed for the sole purpose of guiding human action, they do not allow us to infer anything about God's moral attributes.

Theories of this kind seemed to many Christians to have two major defects. First, they turned God into a tyrant and a despot, and thus made him a dangerous political model for earthly sovereigns, who are all too likely to want to satisfy Hobbes's description of the ruler as a mortal deity. Second, by making God tyrannical they made him unloveable. But since Christ commands us to love God above all else, a theory making such love impossible must be mistaken. To show that it is mistaken, the rationalists tried, in various ways, to explain the principles of morality as not only truths that reason could discover—Pufendorf agreed with that claim—but as *a priori* necessary truths, truths that would have to be recognized by any rational agent, no matter how situated, and so by God as well. Leibniz, for example, in both his *Theodicy*, which Hume plainly knew, and his attack on Pufendorf, tries to confute voluntarist views; and Malebranche, whose work was important in Hume's development, was also opposed to such theories.

Theological as well as philosophical use of voluntarism became rare by the end of the seventeenth century, but the feeling of the threat did not go away. We can see its persistence by noting the efforts to show that God's will is not arbitrary or tyrannical but is governed by eternal measures of justice and goodness.

Philosophers were not the only ones with this concern. Here, for instance, is William Sherlock, Dean of St. Paul's, a prolific seventeenth-century controversialist, considering God's power in his *Discourse concerning the Divine Providence* of 1694. He characterizes it as "absolute power," the technical phrase used by voluntarist thinkers to refer to the total absence of limits on what God might originally ordain. Sherlock then notes the fears that go with the claim that God's power has no bounds: "mankind . . . judge of God's absolute power by the arbitrary and tyrannical government of some absolute monarch. But," he hastens to add, "true absolute power can do no wrong."[10] The unity of God, he says, shows that his goodness and his will are the same thing; but it makes things clearer for us to reject the thought that God's will makes things just and good and to "make good and evil antecedent to the will of God and the rule of his will and choice." Otherwise we imply that "justice and goodness has no stable nature of its own."[11]

The Cambridge philosopher Cudworth was one of the major seventeenth-century opponents of voluntarism. His *Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* is devoted wholly to attacking it.[12] The fact that it was first published in 1731, over four decades after his death, suggests that voluntarism

was still a live issue. Clarke's sermons attacking Calvinist predestinarianism make his anti-voluntarism plain, as do his frequently reprinted 1705 Boyle Lectures demonstrating what their title calls "the unchangeable obligations of natural religion."[13] And Clarke's follower and defender John Balguy makes his opposition to voluntarism equally plain in a series of tracts gathered into a single volume in 1734. He challenges one central voluntarist claim, that because God can have no superior no law can bind him, in terms reminiscent of both Cumberland and Clarke: "God has no superior to prescribe laws to him, and yet is eternally bound by the rectitude of his own nature; that is, the rules of right reason. These are so many laws to him . . . they strictly and formally oblige him" (Balguy 5). And he attacks Locke by name for holding views that would make God "arbitrary in all his procedings" (Balguy 145).

Clarke and Balguy were serious Christians, not simply deists. Many deists shared their moral rationalism. But some eighteenth century British deists were empiricists. Toland and Collins proclaim themselves Lockeans. Was Hume perhaps within their camp? Bolingbroke, attacked at length for his deism in Leland's *View of the Principal Deistical Writers*, sounds as if he holds a Lockean view. Leland reports that he describes as absurd enthusiasts those who hold that there is "a moral sense or instinct by which men distinguish what is morally good from what is morally evil . . . . This may be acquired in some sort by long habit . . . but it is whimsical to assume it to be natural."[14] Bolingbroke is thus plainly separating himself from Hume. It seems evident that Hume's readers could not easily have taken him to be a deist of the empiricist sort.

There are, however, enough important deists who do hold to a full-blown moral rationalism to allow us to treat such adherence as a major deistic strategy. They owned it, after all, by inheritance. Hume claimed, in an often-cited footnote, that Malebranche was the originator of the "abstract" or rationalist theory of morals afterwards followed by Cudworth and Clarke.[15] But that honor should in fact go to Lord Herbert of Cherbury. And Leland takes him to be, if not the originator of deism, "the most eminent of the deistical writers, and in several respects superior to those that succeed him" (Leland 1: 3).

Herbert holds that we are all equally equipped with a basic, unique moral concept, and that we can all equally know intuitively what the fundamental principles of morality are.[16] We can moreover use this knowledge to test any alleged revelation. God cannot have a morality other than ours, he thinks, and so any putative divine directive that contravenes our moral insights must be spurious. Herbert is aware of the implications of his view for the authority of the clergy, which he aims to subvert. He thus has the reformist political concerns that Gawlick places at the center of deism; and his view of the need for a moral test of revelation is one that later deists made central. He also shows himself deeply opposed to voluntarist predestinarian doctrines. Herbert's arguments can work only if justice is the same in God and in humans; and a rationalism that places *a priori* necessary truths at the foundation of morality, as

Herbert did, supports that claim. After Pufendorf and Locke it became clear to opponents of Calvinism that empiricism was, to put it mildly, not a reliable ally.

The deists were as troubled by enthusiasm, or Protestant sectarianism, as Locke was, and as opposed to superstition, their term for Roman Catholic belief; and they found Herbert's views useful for fighting both these opponents. They acknowledged the existence of God and agreed that he ought to be worshipped, but they held, as one of them put it in *The Oracles of Reason* (1693), "that our obedience consists in the rules of right reason, the practice whereof is moral virtue."[17] Right reason shows all humans the same thing, the writer continues. Our eternal happiness depends on our living as it requires, and on nothing further. Since no revelation less universal than that of reason can be admitted, the Bible can have no special standing; nor can the special claims of any confession.

Matthew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730) is probably the major exposition of eighteenth-century British deism. His opposition to voluntarism is plain. It disrupts the moral relation between God and us. "[I]f the relations between Things, and the Fitnesses resulting from thence, be not the sole Rule of God's actions, must not God be an arbitrary being? and then what a miserable condition will Mankind be in! . . . tis not in our Power, tho' ever so often commanded, to love the Deity, while we conceive him an arbitrary being acting out of humor and caprice."[18] His commitment to a rationalist account of morality is equally plain. We discover God's will, he says, by discovering the "law of nature or reason" which is "perfect, eternal, and unchangeable." And his final chapter is a lengthy discussion of Clarke, whose moral philosophy he finds acceptable although he does not want to draw from it some of the conclusions Clarke draws, and to which I shall return.

Less sophisticated than Tindal, Thomas Chubb, writing in 1730, is no less Clarkean in his deistic defense of the precedence of the moral obligations of religion over its positive obligations concerning the proprieties of worship. He expressly appeals to Samuel Clarke on his opening page, and argues that even the positive obligations stemming from "the will and pleasure of God" must be founded on reasons, or else they would be "tyrannical impositions, unworthy of God."[19] John Clarke of Hull holds that God's will is the sole source of the *obligation* of the moral law, though he allows that its *content* is not due purely to will. Chubb will have none of this, insisting, with Samuel Clarke, that "the obligation of the moral law does not arise from the positive will of God, but from the reasons and fitnesses of things."[20] Like Tindal and Chubb, the deist Thomas Morgan appeals again and again in *The Moral Philosopher* (1737) to "the moral, eternal reason and fitness of the things themselves" as central to arguments in support of religion.[21]

Moral rationalism is thus central to the thought of some of the major representatives of deism. It is so precisely because it provides grounds for reject-

ing the voluntarist view of God. This rejection was recognized as one of their central aims by no less a figure than William Law, who in 1731 published a long pamphlet attacking Tindal.[22] In it he goes beyond criticism to provide a positive sketch of voluntarism as providing the key to the proper understanding of morality. His critical point can be put briefly. Suppose, as Tindal and Clarke do, "that there is a fitness and unfitness of actions founded in the nature of things and resulting from the relations that persons and things bear to one another" and also, as Tindal says, that these fitnesses are "the sole rule of God's action." It still does not follow that the relevant fitnesses will be comprehensible to us, because one of the terms of the fitness relation must be God's nature, which is infinite and incomprehensible. So some acts could be fitting for such a being without our being able to have a rational grasp of their fitness. In fact, Law says, if God is to act on what is fit for a being with his "divinely perfect and incomprehensible nature" then he must necessarily act by a rule above all human comprehension. He must do so precisely because he is not arbitrary but acts according to what fits the particular case of his own actions. "We have from this argument," Law concludes, "the utmost certainty that the rule or reasons of God's actions must in many cases be entirely inconceivable by us, and in no cases perfectly and fully apprehended."[23]

Law has so far drawn a voluntarist conclusion from the fitness theory itself on the assumption that its proponents think that God's own nature must be the rule of his action. But, he goes on, these theorists in fact appeal instead to "I know not what eternal, immutable reasons and relations of things . . . which are a common rule and law of God and man." In opposition to them he argues that the nature and the relations of things are created by God, so that his willing cannot be based on them (Law 82–3). God's omnipotent action certainly suits the causes and effects he has created, but it cannot be "founded upon" their nature "because neither causes nor effects have any nature but what they owe to omnipotence." And the same is true of moral relations between rational beings (Law 84).

To Tindal's assertion that we could not love God were we to think him an arbitrary being acting out of caprice, Law replies: God's will is as opposed to caprice as his omnipotence is to weakness. It is the highest perfection, and therefore "we have the highest reason to love and adore God, because he is arbitrary, and acts according to his own all-perfect will." Because his will is as all-perfect as God himself is, it needs nothing outside itself for guidance, and particularly nothing moral. Law emphatically declares that "Nothing has a sufficient moral reason or fitness to be done, but because it is the will of God that it should be done." Even when God wills that certain acts are fit to be done, this does not make them fit in themselves: their continuing fitness depends as thoroughly on God's continual willing of it as the existence of things depends on God's sustaining them (Law 86–7; cf. 68).

Law suggests that reliance on our own reason rather than on God for our guidance is the worst sort of pride (Law 59). The deists, he points out, claim that our own reason shows each of us all we need to know about how to live and what salvation requires. But this is as absurd as if we claimed that our own reason teaches us our language. We learn to speak from others, acquiring in the process whatever knowledge or insight past experience has given our culture. The same is true of morality. The powers of reason in people generally can be learned only by experience, and that shows them to be generally weak. There is no evidence of an inner light that guides us all, as the deists claim. And if we need the help of other humans in order to know anything at all, why might we not need the help of God if we are to know the most important things of all (Law 115–21)?

Here Law comes to the central point of his polemic against Tindal. It was a point that united all Christian opponents of deism: the need for revelation. Tindal is very clear that reason shows us morality and that morality suffices for salvation. Deists from Lord Herbert on argued that to think otherwise is to think God could be unjust, since revelation has not been given equally to all people. It was, however, generally agreed that the Christian doctrines of the fall and inherited sin, the incarnation, and salvation through Christ, were available to us only through revelation, not through natural religion. It is no surprise, therefore, that the devout Leland says that Herbert's central failing is to make no room for revelation (Leland 1: 6ff). But the need for revelation to support the special teachings of Christianity gives rise to a problem.

Moral rationalism seems to rule out revelation. But if morality is not centered on *a priori* necessary truths, or if performance of positive duties beyond those of morality is required for salvation, the door is open to the voluntarist version of Christianity and to the fear that God is after all only an arbitrary tyrant. The problem for Christian apologists was how to use moral rationalism to ward off voluntarism without falling into the deism that threatens Christian revelation—and with it Christian institutions and ministers.

The difficulty confronted Catholics as well as Protestants, and the first effort I know of to get around it comes from Malebranche. I shall not discuss here his effort to defend the need for divine revelation and for a unique church to bring that revelation to all mankind. I turn instead to Samuel Clarke, who hardly wished to defend the Roman church but who shows in clear form the source of the general line of thought that the moral rationalists used to defend revelation—and some priesthood or other.

The reasonableness of Christianity concerns Clarke at least as much as it did Locke. "Christianity," he says, "presupposes the truth of natural religion,"[24] and he holds that even the efficacy of divine grace is to be understood as the gift of the ability to understand the arguments that should move one to belief.[25] With a rational morality at the core of religion, what room is left for anything more than the deists would have admitted? Clarke devotes far more

of his second set of Boyle lectures to arguing for the truth and necessity of the Christian revelation than he gives to demonstrating the existence of unchangeable moral obligations.[26] Having proved to his own satisfaction that the morality of Christianity is embodied in eternal moral truths, he then goes on to argue that most people cannot understand and appreciate these gifts of reason. The widespread weakness of reason, a sure sign of human corruption, is clear evidence that there was need for a revelation;[27] the Christian revelation best fills that need; and if this does not convince the reader of the truth and certainty of its message, nothing will.

Clarke offers arguments to support the belief that there must be a future life in which the virtuous will be rewarded and sinners punished.[28] Without that hope virtue could not be widely practiced. Yet most people are so enslaved by lusts and desires, so swayed by prejudice, so governed by superstition, that they cannot follow arguments like these. So although "the great obligations and the principal motives of morality are indeed certainly discoverable and demonstrable by right reason," most people must be instructed about them and about the future rewards and punishments they lead us to expect.[29] Moreover, such instruction must come from someone who can speak with *authority*. Reason alone and the philosophers have never been able to do so.[30]

Neither the knowledge of the morality of natural reason nor its motivating power, then, can reach the world it should govern, and "[f]or these reasons there was plainly wanting a divine revelation."[31] It is often thought that miracles must provide the main support for claims that the religion to whose revelation they attest is to be accepted.[32] What Clarke gives instead is an argument in support of revelation from the moral need for one. Moreover, he goes to great lengths to demonstrate that the Christian revelation supplies, more perfectly than any other, exactly what is needed. Not the least of the reasons for accepting it is that it centers on an authoritative teacher on whose word even the simplest will accept the truths that enable them to act morally. Happily that authority has been passed on to others, who have carried it down the ages. So long as reason remains weak in the many, the clergy will be there to see to it that virtue has its champions.[33]

Thomas Morgan tells us that the religion of nature consists only of "the eternal, immutable Rules and principles of moral Truth, Righteousness, and Reason." He rejects the other kind of religion, the revealed kind (Morgan 94). John Balguy thinks the deists wrong on exactly this point. He supports his opposition to voluntarism in part by showing some of its unpalatable implications. The voluntarist must think that we could learn about morality only through revelation. This would subvert natural religion as well as morality; and since it opens the possibility that God's will changes, it would require a new revelation every instant. We could not predict future duty from present (Balguy 365-6). But since morality does not depend on God's will, we can see that "the obligations of religion depend, and are entirely founded on the obli-

gations of reason." Religion is simply obedience to God's commands; and obedience is owed, out of gratitude, only to justified commands (Balguy 383–4). But though eternal moral truth grounds revealed religion as well as natural, there are two problems about the purely natural kind. First, "the fierceness and headiness of mankind will not ordinarily be restrained by the mild laws and pure dictates of reason" (Balguy 393). Revealed religion teaches us means of bringing "distempered minds" to act not only for reward but from an internal concern for rightness and truth. Reason could not have discovered these means; revelation is needed to show us how to perfect ourselves in complying with the rational dictates of natural religion (Balguy 403–4). Second, revelation is needed because most people are unable to see for themselves the rational truths at the core of both morality and natural religion. If moral obligation is a kind of force, "it is not, like corporeal attraction, effected at a distance." Moral reasons cannot operate where they are not known; revelation brings them to everyone, as reason cannot.

Moral rationalism extends moral community to God, and voluntarism confines it to humans. The Christian moral rationalists get God in but are forced to restrict the number of people who are equal members of the moral community. Sin or stupidity forces most people to take their morality at second hand, even though it is in principle available to reason. If reason were less feeble in the masses, the special gifts of Christianity would seem unnecessary.

I need not spend much time in pointing out the implication that religious readers would have drawn from Hume's sentimentalist view of morality. Hume goes out of his way to show that he leaves them with only a voluntarist understanding of God. The very way in which he poses the issue between sentimentalism and rationalism in the third paragraph of the second *Enquiry* suggests this. The question, he says, is whether "morals" have foundations that "should be the same to every rational intelligent being; or whether . . . they be founded entirely on the particular fabric . . . of the human species." The pertinent other rational intelligent being is of course God. To hold that morality rests on "eternal fitnesses" is to imply, as Hume points out, that immutable moral standards "impose an obligation . . . on the Deity himself," but of course he rejects such theories (T 456). God, moreover, is not our equal and does not share with us in the circumstances of justice. In relation to him we are like those rational but feeble creatures whom Hume imagines, who are too weak to make resentment of us effective. We might be gentle to such beings, but we could not enter into relations of justice with them (EPM 190). Pufendorf had made exactly this point. "A right," he says, "which is to have power among persons equal in nature" cannot be patterned after the relations between persons as drastically unequal as humans and God. In a footnote to one of his additions to the *Treatise* Hume says the kind of thing that infuriated religious readers of Locke: "The order of the universe," he there says, "proves an omnipotent mind; that is, a mind whose will is constantly attend-

ed with the obedience of every creature . . . . Nothing more is requisite to give a foundation to all the articles of religion"—so that, notably, moral attributes are not requisite (T 633n).

Hume's treatment of the problem of evil, in the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, also belongs in the voluntarist camp.[35] Leibniz and Malebranche try to show that evil poses no moral difficulties for God's character. The voluntarists have no need to try. They simply do not think that God has to be morally intelligible. Hume's speakers argue that we cannot admit that evil exists and also have any justifiable views about God's moral attributes. Rather than proposing a solution to this problem Hume's discussion exacerbates it. If in the end he allows us any rationally grounded religious belief, it is belief in a deity so attenuated and so incomprehensible as to have no resemblance to the God of either Leibniz or Clarke.[36] We can hardly speak about Hume's deity in literally meaningful terms, and we certainly cannot be assured that we live in a moral community with him. And to make matters still worse, Hume's sentimentalism undercuts the intellectualist defense of revelation that the Christian moral rationalists invoke.

Hume is plainly aware of the voluntarist implications his view would have for believers. He is in effect telling his readers that, if there is to be any religion, it must be of a kind most of them would reject. His anti-religious aims were not hard to see. I have argued that he could not have been mistaken for a empiricist deist, and I hope it is now evident that he was not a rationalist deist either. He did not need to be taken for an atheist to be read as posing a devastating problem for Christian believers. In the eighteenth century it would suffice for him to be a voluntarist. I do not know whether or not he was one, since I do not know how seriously to take his various assertions about belief in the existence of God. But if he meant to be taken as a believer, it is clear how his readers would understand the God he accepted. And I am confident that his devastating attack on moral rationalism was intended as a major part of his campaign to destroy all the foundations of religion, revealed as well as natural.

NOTES

The first draft of this paper was written for the 24th Hume Conference, July 29-August 2, 1997. I am grateful to the audience who responded to the paper and to others who have heard it since for questions and comments that have, I hope, led to some improvements.

1 Edward Craig, *Hume on Religion* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1997), 9.

2 *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed., revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 76, 174. References hereafter in the text, indicated as "T".

3 John Balguy, *A Collection of Tracts* (London, 1734), 371. This is from *The Law of Truth*. Cited in the text hereafter as Balguy.

4 Guenter Gawlick, "Hume and the Deists: a Reconsideration," in G. P. Morice, ed., *David Hume* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 128–38. See note 10 and p. 133.

5 J. C. A. Gaskin, *Hume's Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Atlantic Highlands N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1988), 223.

6 Stephen Paul Foster, *Melancholy Duty* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), 23–4.

7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

8 I cite from John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1961); see II v 12, III xi 7, III xxiii 2.

9 For the discussion that follows, see *The Invention of Autonomy*, chapter 7 i, 7 vi, on Pufendorf, and chapter 12, iv–v for objections to his views.

10 William Sherlock, *A Discourse concerning the Divine Providence*, 5th ed. (London, 1715), 86-7. Cited hereafter as Sherlock.

11 Sherlock 95–6.

12 (London, 1731).

13 See n. 26 for citations.

14 John Leland, *A View of the Principal Deistical Writers*, 5th ed., 2 vols. (London, 1766), 2: 29. Hereafter cited as Leland. The first edition was published in 1754.

15 David Hume, *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 3rd ed., revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 197n. Hereafter cited as EPM.

16 For what I say about Herbert I draw on *The Invention of Autonomy*, chapter 9 ii–iii, where I give references for my account of his views.

17 [Charles Blount and others], *The Oracles of Reason* (London, 1695), 195; this piece is not by Blount.

18 Matthew Tindal, *Christianty as Old as the Creation* (London, 1731; reprinted New York: Garland, 1978), 30-1.

19 Thomas Chubb, *The Comparative Excellence and Obligation of Moral and Positive Duties* (London, 1730), 1, 24.

20 John Clarke, *The Foundation of Morality in Theory and Practice Considered* (York, 1726), 10, 20; Chubb, 17–18.

21 Thomas Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher* (London, 1737), 86.

22 William Law (1686–1761) is best known as the author of *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (London, 1729), a classic of English devotional literature. A

mystic and later a follower of Jacob Boehme, he wrote numerous polemical as well as religious works and had a wide readership. See E. Gordon Rupp, *Religion in England 1688–1791* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), chapter 15, which however does not discuss Law's philosophical views. In "William Law and the Christian Economy of Salvation," *English Historical Review* 111 (1994): 308–22, B. W. Young touches on Law's attack on Mandeville's ethics but does not discuss his voluntarism.

23 William Law, *The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion* (London, 1731), as it appears in *The Works of the Reverend William Law*, 9 vols. (Brockenhurst, Hampshire: G. Moreton, 1892), 2: 63–3. Cited in the text hereafter as Law.

24 *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*, ed. H. G. Alexander (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), 6.

25 Sermon XXX, in Samuel Clarke, *The Works of Samuel Clarke, D.D.*, 4 vols. (London, 1738; reprinted New York: Garland, 1978), 1: 187.

26 See the summary of the argument in *A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion* (cited hereafter as *Obligations*), in *Works* 2: 596–600. In these lectures issues of moral philosophy as such are discussed only under the first proposition; under the remaining fourteen Clarke argues for the truth of specifically Christian doctrines and the need for a revelation.

27 *Obligations*, lecture 15, *Works* 2: 730–1.

28 *Obligations*, lectures 3–5, *Works* 2: 642–52.

29 *Obligations*, lecture 5, *Works* 2: 652–6.

30 *Obligations*, lecture 6, *Works* 2: 656–7.

31 *Obligations*, lecture 7, *Works* 2: 666ff.

32 See e.g. Gaskin's Introduction to his edition of Hume's *Dialogues* in David Hume, *Principal Writings on Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), xii.

33 *Obligations*, lecture 5, *Works* 2: 655–6.

34 Samuel Pufendorf, *On the Law of Nature and of Nations*, trans. C. H. Oldfather and W. A. Oldfather (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), II iii 5, p. 186.

35 See M. A. Stewart, "An Early Fragment on Evil," in M. A. Stewart and John P. Wright, eds., *Hume and Hume's Connexions* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 160–70, for evidence that Hume was concerned with the problem of evil from the early stages of his philosophical work, not only after the *Treatise*.

36 *Dialogues* 10 and 11 contain the discussion of the problem of evil; in 12 Hume suggests that the cause or causes of the world probably have some remote analogy to human intelligence. Whichever speaker represents Hume's own position, if any one of them does, the voluntarist religious implications of empiricism are made plain. See also EPM 294, where Hume says that the standard of rational truth is unalterable "even by the will of the Supreme Being," while the moral standard, arising from an animal constitution, "is ultimately derived from that Supreme Will," which made each kind of being have the nature it has.