

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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## Fifty Years of Infidelity

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After the turmoil of the Reformation – military, theological, political, all encompassing – there came a period of relative calm, *exhaustion* might be a better term, in the seventeenth century. Instead of fleeing Romish persecution, the Protestants could pay more attention to perfecting their creeds. There had indeed been earlier creeds, and the present-day *Thirty-nine Articles* was completed in 1563 and 1571. The *Irish Articles* dated from 1615; the Synod of Dort completed its work in 1619; and the *Westminster Confession* was written between 1645-1647.

Then came a let-down. Imperceptible at first, developing slowly through exhaustion, the final consequence was a movement called rationalism, the hey-day of which may be conveniently dated as 1750-1800. This anti-Christian revolt occurred in slightly different forms in France, England, and Prussia (there was no "Germany" until 1870). Here not much will be said of English rationalism, a bit more about the French form, but the German movement is by far the most important.

Any account of rationalism ought to provide some detailed information about its chief exponents. This will be done. But before choosing the exponents, one must have some idea of what rationalism is. How else can one identify its adherents? Two main usages are common. The first is philosophical. Descartes, Spinoza especially, and Leibniz were rationalists in the sense that all knowledge is to be had through reason or logic alone. In its pure form

no empirical, sensory, experimental processes are permissible. In contrast, theological rationalism was thoroughly empirical, trusting the senses, and even more hunches and emotions.

Even so, the term *rationalism* can be used in a more restricted sense. How one defines it depends on his choice of subject matter. Good literary usage is not confined to any one narrow definition. Yet on the other hand, no authority can require an author to use this rather than that definition. Here the definition, that is, the subject matter chosen for discussion, is very narrow. As already indicated it is confined, fairly well, to the period of 1750 to 1800. But the dates do not describe it. Hence the greater part of this essay will consist of a description of particular men and particular views characteristic of that half century. After the description not much refutation in favor of orthodoxy will be needed. The reason becomes more and more obvious as we proceed.

One further introductory note is needed. Contemporary rush and bustle, an ambition to be up-to-date, and a little further into tomorrow, sees no point in wasting time on previous centuries. What could be more dull and useless than a German form of religion more than two hundred years ago? Caesar's assassination is enough for antiquity, a bit of the Reformation will do for Protestants, and "star wars" in the next century are sufficient for the educated man of today. Why study Greek when so many good mistranslations of the New Testament are available? And any way, Johnny can't read.

Now, the rationalism of eighteenth century Germany is not the most important subject in the world, even for theologians. But as we shall see, it is worth two or three evenings of reading.

### *English Rationalism*

This study restricts itself severely because otherwise it is difficult to make a true general statement. Even within the limits of these fifty years, there are variations of form and content. They will not be totally ignored; indeed some short descriptions of them throw into more definite relief this which is the most consistent and scholarly form. For this reason it is helpful, if a little strange, to begin with a lesser representative, namely, English rationalism. Its leader was Lord Bolingbroke, assisted by William Tindal and Thomas Morgan. Very much interested in politics, he was attainted of some crime and was banished to France. There he met a younger man by the name of Voltaire. When he was finally permitted to live permanently in England, Voltaire visited him, and to a degree, through Voltaire his influence was felt in Germany. Perhaps Bolingbroke's method was a bit too witty and frivolous, but there was enough serious argument to attract public attention.

Since through Voltaire he influenced Germany, and since he was a figure in the development of rationalism, some of his views merit attention. One subject which he discussed at length in several publications was the doctrine of Providence. His views, like those of others, including some orthodox theologians, were confused because of a commonly alleged distinction between general providence and particular providence. There is an inherent flaw in supposing that God directs things in general without having any effect on things in particular. If Bolingbroke was confused, so were the orthodox. Furthermore, as an early rationalist, his attack on Christianity was neither so severe nor so consistent as the later attacks were. Bolingbroke lived a long, not always commendable life, and died at the age of eighty in 1751.

### *French Rationalism*

Little need be said about rationalism in France, for it was more political than theological. They were preparing for a revolution against Catholicism and absolute monarchy. The debate was settled by the guillotine.

If one refer to the wider scope of Voltaire's activities, we grant that he was a very witty author, though not so witty, let alone scholarly, as many people think. His *Candide* is actually crude. In one place Voltaire ridiculed the assertion in the first chapter of Genesis that there was light before the sun came into existence. Well, the Bible knew more than Voltaire did. At any rate Voltaire's contribution to rationalism was as much made at the German court as in Paris and in that connection we can best consider him.

Those secularists, of whatever nationality, English and even American, who a century or more later, defended and praised German rationalism, argue that Protestantism had become hard and frigid, that the Lutherans and Calvinists had fought bigoted battles full of rancor and ill-will – obviously the exaggerations of the enemies of Christ – and therefore that true religion should be re-established by those who are genteel and urbane.

### *German Rationalism*

One example of this urbanity occurred when Dr. Tholuck was appointed to Halle. He found only one student there who read the Bible for devotional purposes. When the other students discovered that Dr. Tholuck believed the Bible, they attacked his house, broke his windows, and he himself was rudely treated – because he believed that the Bible was the Word of God. Yet the picture delineated in the liberal publications is that of cantankerous Christians irritating liberals who are always sweetly serene. Well, the rise of German religious rationalism naturally provoked a definite reaction among the Christians. Both Lutherans and Calvinists quickly recognized that this new movement was first of all an incipient attack on Christianity; and in the second place they lived to see their fears realized in a complete denial of the Biblical doctrines.

Since German rationalism strictly defined, scarcely survived the eighteenth century, from which fact advocates of contemporaneity conclude it is not worth mentioning, this introduction is justified in repeating the principle that history is worth studying. In high school we had a course in English history, the only useless part of which was the memorization of the dates of the kings from 1066 onward. Greek and Roman history are instructive. Contemporary history is less useful because most of it is kept secret. Admittedly the history of German rationalism is not so important as that of the Reformation, but it has its just though small place in the history of Christianity.

The main motive, or at least the common justification for rationalism, was the allegation that orthodoxy, whether Lutheran or Calvinistic, was cold and dead. What was needed was more emphasis on morality, a religion of the heart rather than of the head. When Luther asserted the right to private judgment it was private judgment of what the Bible taught. Now the Bible was lost sight of and the right of private judgment was absolute.

It is with this temperament, in less violent physical form, that we are to deal. Nevertheless, to understand the entire situation, another contemporary development must receive some attention. It is the rejection of Protestantism by Pietism. These people were usually gentle, very devout, inoffensive, and they were convinced that they were true Christians. But one thing: They rejected the Scripture and replaced the Bible with individual experience. Similarly in England there were the Quakers. But these people do not fit into the present study because they had no logical foundation. They developed customs, but no Confession of Faith.

The Pietists, however, pretty much agreed with original rationalism in its condemnation of Protestantism as stiff, hard, literal orthodoxy, with its bitter intolerance; and while their language was more gentle, they were, in this judgment, one with the rationalists. But in some cases even their language was not so gentle. Their disciplinary procedures were sometimes extreme. Semler reports that their methods were tyrannical. They made

weekly registers of the frame of mind their parishioners should have. Each member was supposed to have the same sequence of emotions. Doctrine was minimized.

The so-called secular philosophers, such as Leibniz and Wolff, were not anti-Christian. Leibniz was a fairly good Lutheran, and Wolff only a bit less so. The people here to be discussed were theologians, not philosophers. We may look askance at Leibniz's attempt to demonstrate the doctrine of the Trinity without appeal to Scripture – the very devout Anselm had claimed to succeed with the doctrine of the Atonement – but in any case Leibniz did not deny these doctrines. The rationalists to a great degree confined their preaching to polite morality, with only a slight tinge of the existence of some sort of god.

Because of their poorer non-existent philosophical foundation, one author or another in introducing his lengthy analytical defense against rationalism characterized it as skepticism. It certainly was not skepticism, nor does it need a lengthy analytical refutation. In most contests between two opposing philosophies or theologies, the process of refutation begins with a fairly short summary of the view to be refuted, and then a lengthy refutation follows. In the present case, however, the reverse procedure is sufficient. The account or description of rationalism will be lengthy and the refutation will be almost unnecessary. That is to say, the main problem is to describe what precisely rationalism was.

### *What Was Theological Rationalism?*

If one wishes to make a general statement, such as usually have an exception or two, it would be better to label it dogmatism. Their scholars were certainly dogmatically negative with reference to orthodox Lutheranism and Calvinism. It may irritate and lessen the interest of some readers, but the present writer will try to be accurate in detail, perhaps to some tedious detail, rather than indulge in such misleading generalities. Although he will insert illustrative material, even from the twentieth century, the main interest centers in eighteenth

century Germany, for it is the source of similarities in later times and in other nations.

This is not to claim that other authors should be debarred from using the term rationalism in other senses. Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz were rationalists; in fact the name etymologically belongs to them rather than to those whom we are about to discuss. But words are ambiguous, and an author is duty-bound to explain the sense in which he will use the word.

In discussing rationalism in general, and though detailed honesty is the ideal, it is not absolutely necessary to investigate at length any one particular doctrine, such as the Trinity or the federal headship of Adam. Let us keep in mind that Christianity is as logically seamless as Christ's robe, and when we cast our dice we get either all or none.

Since most of those so unfortunate as to read this essay are not professional philosophers, it becomes necessary to repeat, once or twice, the warning that the theological rationalists were not philosophical rationalists. They were confused empiricists. Spinoza, for example, produced a system like geometry – in fact the full title of his great work is *Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata*. As in geometry there is no appeal to experience, so for Spinoza there is no appeal to experience in any subject. But the theological rationalists have no other basis. The philosophic objections to empiricism, to Hume for instance, are quite sufficient to destroy the foundations of theological rationalism. In fact, the empiricism of these theologians is much more vulnerable than that of Hume's. Not realizing all the distortions of vision, the diseases of the eye, color-blindness, deficient or non-existent imagery, most people think that the sense of sight is trustworthy, and forgetting that some animals have keener eyesight than man – the eagle, for instance – and some have less – the dog, for instance – they attribute to knowledge based on sensation an objectivity it does not have. How many people realize that trees and flowers have no color at all? They reflect certain wave-lengths of energy from the sun, which, hitting our retinas, produce the sensation. Coupled with mirages, distortions, diseases – for not everyone has 20-20 vision –

sensory perception is far from trustworthy. But the empiricism of the theological rationalists was even worse. Instead of basing their theories on eyesight, their foundation was their subjective preferences for certain types of social behavior, the customs of polite society in eighteenth-century Germany, as opposed to Spartan thievery, African cannibalism, and Islamic polygamy. Their only argument – though it is not an argument at all – had to be, "That is the way we rationalists in Germany prefer it." They could not appeal even to German customs as a whole, for the true Christians there did not so prefer it. For all their conceited superiority, they were intellectually inferior to the orthodox.

### *W. E. H. Lecky*

Naturally their own writers tried to camouflage these deficiencies. Although W.E.H. Lecky is a late author (1863), the original rationalists of the eighteenth-century never said it any better.

Human reason, he begins, is the only factor in history. If there is a Holy Spirit, he has nothing to do with mankind. Creeds and liturgies shackle the intellect. To quote, rationalism's "central conception is the elevation of conscience into a position of supreme authority.... Rationalism is a system which unites in one sublime synthesis *all* the past forms of human belief, which accepts with triumphant alacrity each new development of science [including the theory of phlogiston]... and which represents the human mind as pursuing ... a path of continual progress toward the fullest and most transcendent knowledge of Deity."

In the previous paragraphs this treatise has given, I am bold to say, a fairly accurate, though inadequate, description of the contents of rationalism. The material can be called Theological. To alleviate the inadequacy, further information can best be brought in by means of an historical account. So then to Potsdam let us go. We shall be concerned particularly with two Kings. Frederick William (1688-1740) ruled from 1713-1740; and Frederick the Great, his son, (1712-1786), King from 1740-1786.

### *The Fredericks*

As a King, but chiefly as a father, Frederick William was intolerably and inexcusably strict, a tyrant and martinet, if ever there was one, a devout Christian trying to impose his exact form of religious conduct on everyone, especially on his son.

I am inclined to suppose that the rationalists in their accusations of rigidity, hardness of heart, deadness of spirit against the orthodox, transferred to the ministers and people the repulsive austerity of the King. A page or two further on the description of the work of A. H. Francke, after his conversion, will undermine the rationalists' too easy generalization.

Admittedly there is nothing much good that can be said about the King. The young prince and his friend, Lieutenant von Katte, planned secretly to visit England for a time of relief. The plan was discovered and the King first tried to stab his own son with a dagger. An officer interposed his own body and saved the prince. The son and his friend von Katte were court-martialed. The prince was released but von Katte drew life imprisonment. The King was unsatisfied. He beheaded von Katte, forcing the prince to witness the event. Then the King imprisoned his son in solitary confinement. In view of conduct like this, our wonder at the decline of orthodox Lutheranism diminishes. Of course a popular rejection of religion on the basis of one man's, even a King's, very excessive intolerance, is a logical fallacy; but it seems psychologically inevitable. Eventually, however, the King died and the son, who was to become known as Frederick the Great, inherited the throne.

As Christians we deplore Frederick the Great's later support of Voltaire, but it is understandable. And Voltaire took advantage of his opportunities in serious and less serious ways. One evening, as often, the King invited Voltaire to dinner. Voltaire, perhaps unintentionally, breached etiquette by arriving late. He took his seat as quickly and as unostentatiously as possible, and found a sheet of notepaper, *ein Zettel*, on his plate. He read it and put it in his pocket. A bit later during the meal Frederick the Great asked him, did you find a note on your plate when you came in? Yes, he found it. Well, then, said the King, read it to us. Voltaire read

it, "Voltaire ist *ein Esel*, Friedrich der Zweite." Eventually Friedrich got tired of Voltaire's superficiality and suggested that he return to France.

Friedrich der Zweite relaxed the restrictions his father had imposed on the Lutheran liturgy. He increased, or one might say, he initiated tolerance for the Romanists; in fact he built them a church building in Berlin. However, he insisted that the Catholics be as tolerant of the Protestants as the latter now were of the Catholics. Neither Church was to allow intolerant sermons. Similar liberties (and restrictions) were granted the Greek Catholics who had settled in Breslau, and the Unitarians in Lithuania. The Moravians too were granted freedom for so long as they did not proselytize. At the same time he eliminated from government positions all "parsons;" he incessantly ridiculed the Pietists; and referred to Professor Franke of Halle as a "wretched psalm-singer." He required Professor Francke, who considered theatrical performances to be deleterious to Christian purity and morals, to go to the theatre and make a public retraction. The King made it known that he did not want any "evangelical Jesuit" meddling in his plans. This is known as toleration.

While there were still orthodox Lutherans and Calvinists in Germany, the times had changed, even to the introduction of a new vocabulary. A century before, men spoke of faith, justification, grace, sin, salvation, and the Kingdom of God. Now larger and larger sections of the populace spoke of virtue, honor, freedom, manhood, reason, and tolerance. One of the minor poets, Gleim, praised Bacchus in contrast

to the useless Moses and David.

Many people, when they read history, see it as a two dimensional movie screen. The images move, but there is a touch of unreality. This justifies the infusion of some detailed information about the now forgotten Augustus Herman Francke (1663-1727).

### *Augustus Herman Francke*

Although he died before the epoch on which we are centering our attention, he provides a pertinent background. With him the University of Halle lived

up to its original purpose of theological training and active preaching of the Gospel. He had been a pastor, apparently before he was converted to Christianity. In a way he converted himself by choosing as his text for one Sunday morning the verse, "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." Preparing his sermon he came to realize that he was a sinner and not a Christian. That week he came to know the grace of God in Christ. University professor as he was, he was also a pastor and preached regularly.

In addition he founded a needed orphan home. What had been sporadic gifts to the poor became a well ordered program of relief. But the poor had children whom they could not educate. The school for children which he founded grew enormously; indeed, one can say it became a mammoth institution.

Then too, of course, there was his work as a professor in a university. The statistics, which are reasonably accurate, indicated that more than six thousand students were trained for the ministry. These founded missions to the Jews, and to a group of Moslems who had come to Germany. Francke's influence, as anyone can guess from this information, spread everywhere in Northern Europe, and south to Switzerland at least. Even England was somewhat influenced. Of course, in such an extensive movement there were weak spots, and some of his followers were rather anti-theological. But what large movement can possibly be without flaws? After his death the University and his widespread influence became more emotional and less theological. Mysticism, Pietism, and superstition contaminated the movement. During the reign of Frederick the Great, the University of Halle became less Christian and more rationalistic. Pietism therefore actually encouraged a non-biblical religion.

A fairly large number of pietists emigrated to America. The Hutterites, possibly the last to come, settled in the Dakotas. Mennonites and Amish produced a dense population in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and adjoining counties. They still

speak the German dialect of the eighteenth century, or did so until recently. They are hard workers, absolutely honest, and deplorably stupid, or in more polite language, blindly attached to their religious principles. I used the work *stupid* because of their attachment to non-resistance to evil, even more than their military pacifism. My younger daughter had a very friendly conversation with a young wife of her own age. The Amish girl tried to explain the principles of non-resistance, and perhaps vaguely hoped to convert my daughter. She listened, not merely patiently, but willingly, for it was not an entirely new experience for her, yet a somewhat new experience. Then she softly dropped a bomb. Suppose, she said, a thug attacked you and tried to rape you; your husband, a hefty farmer, was standing only fifteen feet away; would you want your husband to stand still and watch you being raped, or would you want him to *resist* and use *force* to rescue you? The Amish girl, one hundred percent truthful, was taken aback, and almost stuttering replied, "I never thought of that." There is the key to the situation: Pietists do not think.

*James* 4:7 says, "Resist the devil." And the rapist is inspired by the devil. But then there is *Matthew* 5:39, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil." Does this mean that Christ forbids a husband to defend his wife? For that matter, Christ's statement, so-interpreted, would prevent a city from having a police force.

### *More Theological Rationalists*

Now to return to Germany and to the rationalists, instead of the pietists, we shall listen to their own historian.

Wegscheider (1771-1849), who, as the rationalists' chief historian, had to live at the end of their movement, gives a description of them that far exceeds the length of a definition. In his *Institutiones Dogmaticae* we read,

"Since [supernaturalism] is encumbered with various difficulties, every day made more manifest by advances of learning, especially historical, physical, and philosophical [rather comprehensive, is it

not?)]... not a few... departing from it [i.e. supernaturalism] thought it right to admit, even in the investigation of divine things, not only the formal use of human reason, ... but also the material use, by which...the particular doctrines are submitted to inquiry. Thus arose that of which the generic name is Rationalism....

"Theological Rationalism lays it down as an axiom that religion is revealed to men in no other manner than that which is agreeable both to the nature of things and to reason, as the witness and interpreter of divine providence; [N.B.: this excludes every historical proposition such as David's Kingship and Christ's crucifixion] teaches that a subject matter of every supposed supernatural revelation is to be examined and *judged* according to the ideas...which we have formed in the mind by the help of reason. [And note well:] Whosoever, therefore, despising that supremacy of human reason, maintains that the authority of a revelation, said to have been communicated to certain men in a supernatural manner, is such that it must be obeyed by all means, without any doubt, – this man takes away and overturns from the foundation the true nature and dignity of man, and at the same time cherishes the most pernicious laziness and sloth, or stirs up the depraved errors of fanaticism."

It is hard and perhaps impossible to find a more thorough and scathing attack on Christianity. It is also hard to find a more accurate description of the rationalism of 1750 and thereabouts. Bretschneider (1832), no champion of rationalism, lists particular doctrines attacked: "I mean especially the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, the Mediation, the Intercession of our Lord, Original Sin, and Justification by Faith."

From our twentieth century position of forgetfulness we should not conclude that the orthodox were blameless. But the blame, like ours, was partially involuntary. Even though Luther, two hundred years

earlier, seems to have realized that the Hebrew points and accents were medieval additions to the Old Testament text, the orthodox of the eighteenth century defended them as original. Nor do they seem to have realized that there were errors of transcription. Some of the ministers apparently gave credence to fabulous accounts of early martyrs. This blindness, however, was matched by the excesses of the critics. Ernesti, an excellent classical scholar, contended that the term *logos* meant *reason* or *wisdom* (right), and therefore could not be applied to Christ (wrong). A comparison is instructive. In second century Gnosticism the eon lowest in the scale of emanations was Sophia, a female who introduced sin into God's mind. The supreme god, *Sige*, therefore cast her out to descend and create the world. Does this prevent Paul from asserting in *I Corinthians* 1:24 that Christ was the wisdom of God? Another similar point is the rationalist contention that *regeneration* means merely that one is received into church membership.

Semler (1725-1791), whose dates place him squarely within the main time limits of this study, was raised in a pietist home; but his intellectual ability and love of scholarship withdrew him from those circles. He considered the Bible, or parts of it, to be inspiring, and he took it as normal that each one should value whatever passages helped him. There is no objective interpretation that applies to all people alike. Thus Semler's view can properly be called subjectivism. Yet because the church is a useful institution, one must worship with its members, even use their language to a degree, without accepting the traditional meaning of the words. Just how this avoids hypocrisy and deceit is hard to explain. But such are the vagaries of psychology that we may credit him with a purity of life and domestic tranquility that Voltaire, for example, could never imagine.

In his opposition to orthodoxy Semler made effective use of the differences among the various religious groups. The Jews of Palestine told him there were twenty-four sacred books. The Alexandrian Jews said there were more. The Samaritans said only five. Semler then decided that he could himself determine their number by his own method: *viz.*, whether or not a book inspired him.

The result was that Chronicles, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and the Song of Solomon, are spurious and should be rejected. Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Daniel are doubtful. The Pentateuch is entirely legendary. In the New Testament the Apocalypse is the work of a fanatic. The Gospels are doubtful, though John is acceptable. But even in the acceptable books the authors used language to accommodate the common prejudices of their time. Thus, even in the more genuine sections, most is local and ephemeral, and only a little has permanent value. As for the Church fathers, such as Tertullian and Augustine, they were fanciful, captious, fanatic visionaries.

Yet, for all his influence and fame, Semler was neither a competent scholar nor a careful writer. He was attracted to single defects and then magnified them. Nevertheless, he had a wide following among students and other university professors. These men were usually, almost always, more vicious than he.

One reason for confining the term *rationalism* to the second half of the eighteenth century, when there is still plenty of liberal opposition to the Bible today, is that the dating and authenticity of its books have definitely favored the orthodox position. No longer are Paul's writings limited to four epistles. Perhaps some still doubt the authorship of *2 Peter*, but this is only the dying gasp of a defeated opposition.

### *K. F. Bahrdt*

The last enemy of Christ in the eighteenth century, at least the last we need to mention, was K. F. Bahrdt (1741-1792). His life just about spans the half-century selected as the most characteristic for rationalism. While others did not carry their principles very far into their conduct, Bahrdt spent his evenings in gambling, drunkenness, and prostitution. Why not? If the Ten Commandments were not a revelation from God, and if conduct depends solely on one's preferences, each person may do as he likes. There is no objective criterion. The other rationalists, who had not carried their subjective individualism that far, opposed him; and to such an extent that Bahrdt thought it wise to visit England. But when he returned, he found that his fellow rationalists had not forgotten him. Semler

became almost orthodox in his condemnations. His poor wife suffered from neglect, and he died of syphilis. In spite of this the students, the rising generation, adopted his infidelity, probably in both senses of the word.

### *Conclusion*

This is the end of the historical survey, for the anti-Christian movement of the nineteenth century was of a different sort. We may ignore Feuerbach and Marx, for they were political revolutionaries. Schleiermacher tried to deduce his religious principles from a subjective feeling of awe and dependence. Kierkegaard was an irrationalist. The more deliberately anti-Christian strategy took the form of Higher Criticism. The Hittites never existed; the Old Testament is a fourth or fifth century patchwork of four earlier documents; the New Testament is not much better. Then the Hittite library and fifteen hundred years of history were discovered. But the liberals in these last years still teach the JEDP theory, for they have little else to hold on to. One item: The book of Exodus contains a mention of seven-stemmed lamps; seven-stemmed lamps were not invented before the later years of Babylonian domination; therefore Exodus must have been written only four or five hundred years before Christ. Then, in 1962, a seven-stemmed lamp was dug up, which, by pottery dating, had been modeled about 2500 B.C. *0 tempora, 0 mori*. I mean *mori*, not *mores*.

It is not really necessary to write a refutation of eighteenth century rationalism. It refutes itself. It has no philosophic basis and rests on nothing but erratic individual preferences. Discarding rationalism and its twentieth century progeny, Christianity must have a philosophy that can meet all the errors of the ages. This is not the place to expound and defend such a system in all its detail. But a concluding paragraph can briefly mention a few of its basic principles.

First, one must wipe the slate clean of all empiricism. Whether it be the moral preferences of the pietists, or the immoral preferences of Bolingbroke and Voltaire, or the more philosophical sensory theories of Locke and Hume, all must be



discarded, both because of their philosophical inadequacy, but also because Scriptures say that man is the image of God, and God is not a blank mind.

Second, Christians must acknowledge the impossibility of demonstrating the inerrancy of Scripture. If any devout Christian thinks he can, let him try to prove that the list of names in Genesis 36 is without error.

Third, one must come to realize that a system of truth must begin somewhere. For that matter, a system of error must also begin somewhere. If it did not begin, it could not continue. This is to say that every system of philosophy must have a first indemonstrable axiom. Empiricists can only assume, they can never demonstrate from some more remote proposition, that sensation is trustworthy. Nothing can precede the starting point.

Now, fourth, the Christian should, though many do not, choose as his axioms the propositions of Scripture, and from these axioms he may develop an orderly system.

Upon hearing this, many friends and enemies alike will object that this begs the question. It does not. The question is, Where shall we start? Some say sensation; I say revelation. One does not beg the question by answering the very first question.

Of course, it is permissible for the opposition to argue that his opponent's axioms result in self-contradiction. And of course that is precisely what the seventeenth century rationalists, the nineteenth century higher critics, and the twentieth century existentialists have done. But the Hittites destroyed the higher critics, and the law of contradiction destroys the existentialists. If anyone wish to pursue this in detail, there are various volumes within easy access.