THE REACTION OF JONATHAN SWIFT TO VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE'S ETHICAL VIEWS

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The problem investigated in this paper is the unlikely friendship of Swift and Bolingbroke. The purpose is to assess the reaction of Swift to the ethics of Bolingbroke. Under examination are the conflicting opinions of these men in regard to morals, money, and ethics. Chapter I contains immoral actions of Bolingbroke. Chapter II shows Swift's manner of life and his reaction to Bolingbroke's immorality. Chapter III gives Swift's attitude to money, Bolingbroke's attitude, and Swift's reaction to Bolingbroke's opinion. Chapter IV contains Bolingbroke's ethical philosophy. And Chapter V reveals Swift's religious views and his reaction to Bolingbroke's ethics. The conclusion is that Swift disapproved of Bolingbroke's ethics, but did not break with him on account of them.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE MORALS OF HENRY ST. JOHN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. SWIFT'S REACTION TO BOLINGBROKE'S IMMORAL BEHAVIOR</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. SWIFT'S REACTION TO BOLINGBROKE'S STOICISM, AND ESPECIALLY TO HIS INDIFFERENCE TO MONEY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. BOLINGBROKE'S RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY: SOME ASPECTS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT, METHOD, AND CONTENT</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE RELIGION OF JONATHAN SWIFT AND HIS REACTION TO THE ETHICS OF VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

Jonathan Swift and Henry St. John, later Viscount Bolingbroke, met in the fall of 1710. During the next four years Swift worked for the Tory ministry in which St. John was a Secretary of State, and the two men became intimate friends. At the end of this period, in 1714, Swift returned to Ireland, after which he saw Bolingbroke only twice more, in 1726 and 1727, when Swift made his two last visits to England. Except for those two brief visits, the friendship of the two men was maintained through their correspondence, which ended in the late 1730's.

The friendship of Swift and Bolingbroke may now seem somewhat improbable, for, as the following pages will show, Swift was a Christian moralist, Bolingbroke, a deist who, at least when Swift first knew him, was profligate. This paper purports to show the reaction of Swift to Bolingbroke's ideas and actions in the areas of morals, money, and ethics. Each of these areas is examined in the following manner: the behavior or opinions of Swift and Bolingbroke are given, then the extent of Swift's knowledge of Bolingbroke's behavior and opinions, and finally Swift's reaction.
Perhaps in view of his early training it is not surprising that Henry St. John did not become a conventional member of the established Church of England. As a boy he was subject to religious instruction from dissenters. His grandmother, the Lady Joanna, was known as a patroness of dissenting preachers and theologians;\(^1\) and his teachers were among those who received her protection.\(^2\) But one may wonder why St. John grew into a man who frequently disregarded moral precepts accepted by Christians both within and outside of the Church of England.

Perhaps the exacting thoroughness of his early religious instruction exasperated him. Later in life he relished mentioning that he had been required to read the hundred and nineteen sermons which one Dr. Manton, "a Puritanical parson," had composed on the one hundred


\(^{2}\)Ibid., pp. 6-7.
and nineteenth Psalm. St. John once mentioned to Swift that it had been Dr. Manton "who taught my youth to yawn, and prepared me to be a High-Churchman, that I might never hear him read, nor read him more."  

Or perhaps St. John's religious training was not as thorough as he liked to believe. The only evidence St. John's biographers have that his training was rigorous is the word of St. John himself, and the assumption that the Lady Joanna must have provided the boy a stern example. However, her good example may have been countered by that of St. John's father, who was himself no stern-faced saint. On the contrary, he was a bon vivant, a man who in youth brawled and killed a man and in old age was characterized by Swift as "a man of pleasure, that walks the Mall, and frequents St. James's Coffee-house, and the chocolate houses." But if his father gave him a bad example, St. John's stepmother may have provided a counter to that immoral influence. Angelica Magdalena Wharton St. John was of a French-Swiss Huguenot family, and at her urging the young St. John, after a brief stay at Eton, may

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5Petrie, pp. 16-17.

6Quoted in Petrie, p. 17.
have been sent to a dissenting academy, perhaps to Sheriff-hales. If so, St. John's residence at Eton must have been much briefer than has been assumed.  

At what age or for what reasons St. John abandoned any Christian principles he may have been taught is not apparent. What is known is that from the time any detailed information about his thought and action is available, namely from 1698, when he began his tour of Europe, he apparently was not guided by Christian principles. In a letter of 8 November 1699, Sir William Trumbull slyly fears that the "pretty charmers" of France will detain St. John as long as those of Milan did. And on his return to England, St. John continued his unethical behavior. Indeed, far from attempting to emulate the life of Christ, St. John on his first entry into the polite world of London chose to imitate the life of his cousin John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester—a man who had been notorious for his debaucheries. To this period belongs a tale Oliver Goldsmith included in his life of St. John, according to which a group of naked, drunk young men, led

7Dickinson, p. 3.  8Ibid., p. 4.


10Hassall, p. 9.
by a naked, drunk St. John, ran through St. James's Park, while a thousand people looked on. This episode, true or not, accurately illustrates the nature of St. John's pleasures during a great part of his life. The example would be even more apt if the object of the young men's race could be shown to have been a naked young woman, for if there were anything St. John loved as much as a bottle, it was a compliant woman. His propensities were described by an opponent in 1708, on the occasion of one of St. John's numerous retirements from politics: "From business and the noisy world retir'd, / Nor vex'd by love, nor by ambition fir'd; / Gently I wait the call of Charon's boat, / Still drinking like a fish, and ________ like a stoat."12

The charges of drunkenness and lechery were levelled against St. John time after time by his contemporaries, and the charges were true. St. John's love of the bottle was well known. He was particularly fond of champagne and burgundy, and he was not averse to sitting up all night to indulge in them.13


13Ibid., pp. 230, 237.
Since everyone knew of St. John's devotion to sexual indulgence, he was quite open about his carnal affairs. On one occasion he wrote to an acquaintance, "As to whores, dear friend, I am very unable to help thee. I have heard of a certain housemaid that is very handsome: if she can be got ready against your arrival, she shall serve for your first meal."14 And to the same friend, Thomas Coke, St. John admitted, "Really, Tom, you are missed: whoring flags without you."15 His candor was not reserved to his friends: he paraded his fashionable mistress in public.16 Everyone knew of his amusements, including his first wife—although she did not herself often share them. His enemies fulminated against his excesses: "He is given to the bottle and debauchery to the point of almost making a virtue out of his open affectation that public affairs are a bagatelle to him, and that his own capacity is on so high a level that he has no need to give up his pleasures in the slightest degree for any cause."17 Even as an old man he displayed a lively interest in sexual matters, and the old romancer could not forbear giving advice to his young friends. To

14Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts Preserved at Melbourne Hall (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889), III, 49.

15Ibid., p. 61. 16Petrie, p. 32.

17Quoted in Dickinson, p. 6.
the son of Sir William Wyndham he wrote, desiring to know how the young man fared in love, "I want to know whether you are happy, and by what medium, whether by money, or stark love and kindness. With all ladies . . . good engineers proceed by assaults, not saps. . . . Whilst I loved much, I never loved long, but was inconstant to them all, for the sake of all." 18

St. John was beyond doubt immoderate in his use of wine and women. But the disciple of the Earl of Rochester should not be condemned without reference to the morals of his contemporaries. Their behavior must mitigate, if not excuse, his own. For although St. John drank immoderately, so did many another man of that day. This was the age when a gentleman might drink four bottles of port at a sitting. 19 And although St. John frequently had to his bed a woman who was not his wife, yet many another man in that amorous and lecherous age did the same. Someone of that period once remarked that of eleven prime ministers he had known, seven of them had been adulterers. 20 One of St. John's biographers has suggested that St. John's notoriety as a lecher derives not so much from his indiscretions, as from his complete failure to hide them. His

18 Quoted in Petrie, p. 321.
20 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
amours may not have been extraordinary in that age. His frankness regarding them was.\footnote{Petrie, p. 31.}

Another factor has contributed to St. John's notoriety: namely, the fact that he was one of the leaders of a party which lost a great political struggle. If his side had won, perhaps later generations would not have heard as many tales as they have about his private and public immorality—especially since many of his vices were no different from the failings of some of his celebrated contemporaries, like the Duke of Marlborough.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 30, 32.}

But no fairness could have been expected from the Whigs, to whom St. John was a dark devil. Their writers were hard pressed to discover metaphors and similes hideous enough to convey the enormities of his character. A writer for the Daily Courant made this attempt in 1732: "Thus so much of this most detestable traytor and ingrate since Judas, who has not yet swung on the gallows—which that he may soon do, God, of his infinite mercy to these kingdoms, grant."\footnote{Quoted in Isaac Kramnick, Bolingbroke and His Circle (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 261.} From opponents of that virulence St. John could expect no mercy, and he received none. Every flaw in his character was published, and his every mistake was
publicized and vehemently condemned.24 Yet, since it must be said that many of the faults for which he was attacked were not unique in the eighteenth century, some palliation of his private immorality is possible. Likewise, some excuse can be found for his public misdeeds, and particularly for his peculation and his treasonable acts.

St. John's attempts to improve his finances by dipping into public money began when he was Secretary at War. Apparently St. John and one of his disreputable friends, James Brydges, Paymaster-General of the Forces Abroad, contrived to profit from military contracts.25 During the same period the Earl of Godolphin, apparently at the request of Marlborough, did "unreasonable things, in point of money, for Mr St John."26 When he was Secretary of State, St. John asked Robert Harley to advance him half a year's secret service money—a request which Harley denied.27 St. John was even accused of supporting the Quebec expedition for the purpose of making money from army contracts. And he, James Brydges, and another shady character, Arthur Moore, are thought to have made profits by supplying inferior equipment to the English forces in Spain.28

24Dickinson, pp. 218, 245.  25Ibid., p. 46.  
26Ibid.  27Ibid., p. 13  28Ibid.
In 1714, during a parliamentary investigation of a commercial treaty with Spain, Bolingbroke was implicated in a conspiracy to reap undue profits from the Spanish trade. In what must have seemed to Bolingbroke a nightmarish progression, investigators moved step by step toward his covert role as chief beneficiary of the trading agreement. The assignment of an unusually large share of the profits—twenty-two and a half per cent—to the Queen had aroused the suspicions of critics of the treaty. Then Bolingbroke's old acquaintance Arthur Moore was found guilty of breach of trust by the South Sea Company because he had tried to put extra cargo aboard the first licensed ship bound for the West Indies. In an effort to stop the investigation, Bolingbroke announced that the Queen was willing to surrender her share of the profits. But the investigation continued. Lord Oxford volunteered that he had had nothing to do with drawing up the treaty; and one of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations testified that the Commission had had nothing to do with it either. That information made Bolingbroke's position look suspicious, and his difficulties were increased when the Secretary to the Treasury, William Lowndes, explained that he was only the nominal receiver of the Queen's twenty-two and a half per cent. The investigators were on the edge of the discovery that the actual receivers
of the Queen's share were Bolingbroke, Lady Masham, and Arthur Moore when the session was prorogued.29

These examples show that Bolingbroke on several occasions used his public office in an illicit manner to secure private gains for himself and his friends. But just as the age provides some excuse for Bolingbroke's private vices, so it provides some mitigation of his tendency to enrich himself with public money. He was by no means the only offender on that score. In fact, misuse of public money, or the unlawful acceptance of money by public officials, was more the rule than the exception. Huge bribes were given by the Whigs to men who could control parliamentary elections. In 1727 the price of a seat was 1,500 pounds, and the price went up as the century advanced.30 Dipping into the secret service fund—as St. John tried to get Harley to do—was common practice. Between 1754 and 1762 the Duke of Newcastle withdrew 291,000 pounds from the fund and spent it on elections, bribes, and pensions for Members of Parliament and aristocrats.31 In 1725 Lord Chancellor Macclesfield was impeached for selling offices and taking bribes.32 And


31Ibid., pp. 57-58.

in 1711 Walpole was found guilty of corruption and was sent to the Tower because he had allowed a relative to make 1,000 pounds from a forage contract, although, as Charles Petrie notes, "Judged by the standard of the day there was nothing particularly scandalous in this."\textsuperscript{33} Bolingbroke's financial legerdemain was unsavory, but it was not uncommon.

Another unsavory aspect of Bolingbroke's character was an ability to shift easily from one loyalty to another. Perhaps it was to this trait that Walpole was referring when he characterized Bolingbroke as a man "void of all faith and honour, and betraying every master he has ever served."\textsuperscript{34} And, indeed, in some sense Bolingbroke did betray every monarch he served. During the reign of Queen Anne, he communicated frequently with the Pretender.\textsuperscript{35} On the accession of George I, Bolingbroke fled to France and shortly entered the service of James III, who received him gladly, made him an Earl and Secretary of State, and put him in charge of Jacobite plotting.\textsuperscript{36} But when the Fifteen failed and James abruptly dismissed his Secretary of State, Bolingbroke abandoned the Jacobite cause with unseemly alacrity and hastily announced to

\textsuperscript{33}Petrie, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{34}Sir Robert Walpole, quoted in Kramnick, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{35}Dickinson, pp. 17-18.  \textsuperscript{36}Petrie, p. 265.
George I and his ministers that he would willingly betray the secrets of his recent master. Lord Stair reported to Marlborough that Bolingbroke "orders me to tell you, that he will have no reserves of any kind with you, that he will tell you all he knows. . . . He will likewise freely tell the King everything he knows. . . ."\textsuperscript{37} His loyalty to the House of Hanover did not last. By 1740 he was again dabbling with Jacobitism, in a halfhearted way. Apparently his interest in it declined rapidly.\textsuperscript{38}

By these accounts Bolingbroke was in some sense disloyal to Queen Anne, George I, James III, and George II. The disloyalty consisted of his communicating with the Pretender, his treasonable serving of the Pretender, and--from the Jacobite point of view--his betraying of James III. For this last offense, no excuse seems possible, except political expediency.\textsuperscript{39} But for the other two examples of Bolingbroke's faithlessness, some defence is possible. As long as the succession to the English throne was not certainly established, men hedged their bets by staying on good terms with both the actual and the potential ruler. Bolingbroke was not the only public figure who had a foot in either camp. Godolphin, Marlborough, and Oxford--to name only three--also wrote to

\textsuperscript{37}Dickinson, pp. 142-143.  \textsuperscript{38}Petrie, pp. 324-326.  
\textsuperscript{39}Dickinson, p. 142.
the Pretender. And Bolingbroke's defection to the Pretender was not considered as heinous an action by his contemporaries as it may seem now. J. H. Plumb has noted that in the early eighteenth century, loyalty to a nation was not strongly felt. One of the reasons for this lack of national loyalty may have been the nature of the aristocratic societies which ruled the nations of Europe. These aristocrats "met not only on terms of equality but tastes, manners, interests and language were largely the same. It was fatally easy for coteries to form which seemed to have more in common than the state to which they belonged." In this closed, international society, personal ambitions often conflicted with national interest, and treachery—or treason—was so common that it was hardly viewed even with distaste, and was easily forgiven. It was because of this attitude that Bolingbroke, who in another age might have died for his treason, suffered only exclusion from the House of Lords. Of course, the Whigs were not willing to forget Bolingbroke's lapse into Jacobitism, and they were not willing to let anyone else forget it, either. Late in 1734, when Walpole

40 Hassall, p. 82.  
41 Plumb, II, 16.  
42 Ibid.  
43 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
launched a fierce attack against Bolingbroke, the Jacobitism of the latter was a major target in pamphlets like *The Grand Accuser*—*The Greatest of All Criminals*.44

It is apparent that much of Bolingbroke's notoriety was due to Whiggish publicizing of faults which were hardly unique in Hanoverian England, namely, drunkenness, lechery, peculation, and treason. And other of his failings have been overstated. For example, his supposed disloyalty to Marlborough and Oxford, and his attack on the memory of Pope, have been exaggerated: with Marlborough he remained on fairly good terms, and it can be said that Harley and Pope betrayed him before he attacked them.45 However, Bolingbroke did know how to cherish a grudge: he never forgave Oxford for not exercising or relinquishing his office, and he never ceased to blame Oxford for the failures of Queen Anne's last Tory ministry.46

None of these arguments and mitigations excuses St. John's more nefarious actions, but they do show that in many respects he was not atypical of his time. He was not an isolated example of evil incarnate, as many Whigs and Whig sympathizers have averred. But, even admitting that some have erred in painting St. John an unvarying black, it must be said that certain aspects of

46Ibid., pp. 100, 130-131.
his character were very dark and even sinister, and do not admit the palliation of different times or customs. For example, his treatment of his first wife was most inhumane.

The "wonderful handsome" Frances Winchcombe was the daughter of Sir Henry Winchcombe, a wealthy Berkshire gentleman. Late in 1700, Henry St. John married her. The match must have been arranged by the parents of the couple; otherwise it is hard to understand why a man who had married of his own volition would describe his nuptials to a friend in the following terms: "That I was married last Thursday is a trifling piece of news, and yet it is the only thing I know of that has happened since you left London." He regrets to his friend, Sir William Trumbull, that he cannot report the transactions of the House of Commons, his wedding having required his presence elsewhere, but he adds that "to-morrow is the last day I sacrifice to form."

And he did sacrifice little to form, for the rest of Frances St. John's life. Indeed he did on one occasion become suddenly loving and domestic, but that was when he had learned that Queen Anne was appalled by his treatment of his wife.

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47 Petrie, p. 36. 48 Downshire MSS., I, ii, 802. 49 Ibid., p. 803.
of his wife. The rest of the time he made no attempt to hide his contempt for her, or to disguise the fact that the thing that he found most appealing about her was her father's money. In 1701, when he expected the death of his father-in-law, St. John feared to leave the country because his absence, in the event of Sir Henry's demise, would give "incredible advantage" to family members whose ends were prejudicial to his own. About his father-in-law's life he showed little concern; about his father-in-law's land and money he showed great feeling.

And how did the handsome and hot-tempered Lady St. John react to her husband's coldness and egocentricity? Apparently she reacted with love. That is not necessarily to say that she always deferred to him, or that she sat quietly in a corner while St. John walked the promenade with his mistress. Perhaps she protested occasionally with her reputedly violent temper. But until the end of her life she retained her affection for St. John and her loyalty to him. That she had no place in his affection, she knew, for she spoke of herself as "a poor, discarded mistress." Even so, after St. John fled to France,


51 Downshire MSS, I, ii, 805.

52 Quoted in Petrie, p. 234.
Lady Bolingbroke wrote to Swift, "I am a little fury, especially if they dare mention my dear lord without respect." 53

However, her love for him must have diminished when she learned that her lord had, while in France, become the favorite of the Marquise de Villette and that lady's acknowledged lover. 54 When she received that information, apparently the rage of the "fury" turned from the husband's tormentors to the husband himself. She took what revenge she could. She died in 1718, and when her will was read, the name of her husband was not pronounced a single time. The estate of Bucklebury she left to the heirs of her younger sister. 55 Frances Bolingbroke had shown how she felt, finally, about her husband.

St. John's reaction to this will was, surely, one of the most curious and most malicious of his life: "a very dishonourable action," William Stratford called it. 56 He struggled for years to retain the estate by means of the law, and lost his case. 57 Before the proper owners could take possession, he returned to Bucklebury and proceeded to devastate it. He ordered that all of

55Ibid., p. 284. 56Portland MSS, VII, 409.
57Dickinson, pp. 179-180.
the trees in the grove around the house be cut down, as well as all of the hedges around the estate; and as a scandalized William Stratford reported to the second Earl of Oxford, "He has marked 1,100 trees to be cut that are so small as not to be valued at half a crown a-piece." 58 After having reaped a small profit and a mean revenge, he yielded the estate, though not his claim to it. 59

Here is illustrated the dark side of the man, the aspect of his personality which his friends did not see, or refused to see, but which was apparent to those who did not love him. There is a curious conflict of opinion between those who saw Bolingbroke as a man possessed of the "wisdom of Socrates, the dignity and ease of Pliny, and the wit of Horace," 60 and those who said of him that "neither his rank, his credit, capacity, or steadiness make one believe him." 61 Apparently those who loved him were far outnumbered by those who did not like him at all. When Bolingbroke returned to England in 1725, few even of the Tories were glad to see him. 62 William Stratford,

58 Portland MSS, VII, 409.
60 Lord Orrery, quoted in Dickinson, p. 212.
62 Dickinson, p. 179.
writing in 1727, maintained that Bolingbroke was then "the most friendless man" in England.\textsuperscript{63} And when the second Lady Bolingbroke was rumored dead, Stratford reported that Bolingbroke's sorrow on that occasion was due not so much to the lord's regard for his wife, as to his belief that she had left her considerable fortune, not to him, but to the hospital at Greenwich.\textsuperscript{64} Probably Stratford, and others of his opinion, wronged Bolingbroke in this instance, for his affection toward his second wife seems to have been constant. But the crediting of this bit of malicious gossip may indicate that many people--even Tories--were ready to believe the worst of Bolingbroke.

And perhaps they were correct in holding that opinion of Bolingbroke. Undoubtedly much of the malice directed against him was inspired or augmented by faction; but to some extent his detractors were right in thinking that his character was defective, that there was in his nature, as J. H. Plumb has said, "a twist, a bias . . . that drew him irresistibly to duplicity."\textsuperscript{65}

However, it would not be completely fair to Bolingbroke to imply that his character was the sum of his faults. His failings were very many, and they were

\textsuperscript{63}Portland MSS, VII, 450. \textsuperscript{64}Ibid., 446.
\textsuperscript{65}Quoted in Kramnick, p. 2.
readily apparent to his triumphant enemies, who did not hesitate to emphasize and enlarge them. H. T. Dickinson has asserted that for every fault, Bolingbroke had a neutralizing virtue. Thus if Bolingbroke was indiscreet, he was also candid in admitting his mistakes. If he was guilty of occasional peculation, he never stole enough to get rich. If he was a physical coward, he was courageous in battling year after year for a lost cause. He was fond of posing as philosopher, scholar, and man of letters; but he also encouraged and defended writers more talented than himself. He abandoned many friends, but to a few he was loyal and loving. He scorned his first wife, but was devoted to his second. And if he sometimes donned and discarded loyalties as readily as he did suits of clothes, yet to some ideals and to some beliefs he remained faithful for much of his life.

66Dickinson, pp. 311-312.
CHAPTER II

SWIFT'S REACTION TO BOLINGBROKE'S IMMORAL BEHAVIOR

In this chapter Swift's reactions to the private and public misdeeds of Viscount Bolingbroke are examined. The private misdeeds include Bolingbroke's intemperance, especially his drinking and his keeping of late hours, and his philandering and unfaithfulness to his first wife. The public faults include his peculation, his correspondence with the Pretender, and his service to the Pretender. To understand Swift's reaction to Bolingbroke's immorality, one must first know something about Swift's own morality and manner of living.

Swift strove throughout his life to preserve his health by eating and drinking moderately, by keeping reasonable hours, and by exercising strenuously. His care about what he ate arose in part from his belief that his dreaded giddiness had its beginning when he ate "a hundred golden pippins at a time, at Richmond."¹ In fact, according to the most recent surmises of doctors, Swift suffered

from labyrinthine vertigo, or Menière's disease, a disorder of the inner ear. But Swift, succumbing to the post hoc fallacy, believed for the rest of his life that eating fruit meant endangering his health. Therefore, although he loved fruit dearly—as must be obvious from the episode of the hundred apples—he permitted himself but little fruit, and he ate his small allowance fearfully. In July, 1711, he wrote Esther Johnson, "Yes, my head has been pretty well, but threatening within these two or three days, which I impute to some fruit I ate; but I will eat no more: not a bit of any sort." And in September, 1712, he complained that he had been plagued by giddiness and remarked, "I have eat mighty little Fruit, yet I impute my disorder to that little, and shall henceforth wholly forbear it." 

Swift avoided fruit out of fear; he disdained rich food partly for the same reason, partly because he did not like it. Once he confessed to Esther, "I have a sad vulgar appetite." Often he ate of only one dish, and

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2 Ibid., V, 226.
3 *Journal to Stella*, I, 314-315. Hereafter *Journal*.
4 *Journal*, II, 556.
5 Ibid., I, 248. *Correspondence*, IV, 135.
6 *Journal*, II, 637.
that "the plainest ordinary meat at table." If nothing was plain enough to suit him, he frequently would not eat at all. Once his host produced wine from the Queen's table "and such very fine victuals," Swift complained, "that I could not eat it [the dinner]."

In the last instance he probably did partake of some of the wine, for he always liked good wine. To be sure, he professed to like ale better, but said he was afraid to drink it. In any case, whatever he was drinking, he preferred to drink moderately. "I drink little, miss my glass often, put water in my wine, and go away before the rest, which I take to be a good receipt for sobriety," he wrote. At least in later life, Swift was regular in his drinking habits, sometimes taking a pint and a half a day, sometimes a bottle of French wine in two sittings, noon and evening. It should be noted that Swift favored moderation, not abstinence. To Gay he once jokingly observed, "If you drink less than I, you drink too little."

7 Ibid., II, 387, 637. 8 Ibid., I, 202.
9 Correspondence, IV, 135. 10 Journal, I, 248.
11 Correspondence, IV, 154.
12 Ibid., pp. 212, 268, 301, 381. 13 Ibid., p. 40.
Swift's rule "to go away before the rest" was based only in part on his dislike of staying in drinking company too long to stay sober. He also disliked keeping late hours. Once after sitting up late with Harley, Swift complained, "It breaks all my measures, and hurts my health. . . ." Harley's "cursed hours" continually annoyed Swift and other of Harley's associates. At last Swift rebelled, saying, "... late sitting up does not agree with me; ... and I won't do it. . . ." Later he somewhat relaxed his practice of retreating early. As an old man, alone in his rooms in the deanery, deaf, unable to read, and frequently dizzy, he sat nightly until eleven, writing to kill the hours.

However, even when he was old, Swift persevered in one of his habits, that of exercising daily. He was an advocate of strenuous exercise, which he usually got by walking or riding. The Journal to Stella is filled with his accounts of walking and with his exhortations to the ladies in Ireland to walk for their health, as he did. Thus on November 10, 1711, Swift observed, "I had good walking to-day in the city, and take all opportunities of it on purpose for my health; . . . I wish MD walked half

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14 Journal, I, 181. 15 Ibid., II, 373.
16 Ibid., p. 457. 17 Correspondence, III, 375, 434.
as much as Presto. If I was with you, I'd make you walk. . . ."\textsuperscript{18} While in England, Swift also rode, but apparently not as much as he was accustomed to do in Ireland.\textsuperscript{19} He continued both exercises up to the time he became incapable of governing himself. He used to comment that on fair days he rode as far as twelve miles.\textsuperscript{20} And when he became Dean, and even when he was old, he continued his practice of vehement walking—for he was no ambler; he paced along "like lightning," and few people could keep up with him for any length of time. When Mrs. Pilkington knew him, his furious exercise and sparse diet had made him very lean.\textsuperscript{21} More than once she observed the fierce energy which had burned away the plumpness of Swift's middle age. One day when rain prevented a walk outdoors, Mrs. Pilkington watched as the Dean ran furiously up and down flights of stairs in the deanery.\textsuperscript{22} His energy did not leave him until his reason had been impaired by age and illness. Only then did he grow docile, and fat.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Journal}, II, 409. \textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}, I, 255-56.

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Correspondence}, IV, 268, 301, 381.


\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 465. \textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 484.
Swift's rule of life may be summed up by a sentence he wrote to Bolingbroke in April, 1729: "I dine alone upon half a dish of meat, mix water with my wine, walk ten miles a day, and read Baronius." Having found a regimen which he thought preserved his health, Swift, as is not uncommon, tried to get his friends to try the same method; and he was not backward in scolding them when they adopted a course of life which he considered injurious to them. Thus in 1736 Swift became very angry when he learned that Lord Orrery had danced himself into a sickbed. After rating Orrery soundly for dancing "till your body was all in a sweat" and then staying up until five in the morning, Swift added, "Regularity of Life is what you were destined for by God and Nature, in spite," he added sarcastically, "of your being a Lord. . . ."25 He chided even Pope by saying, "You are the most temperate man God-ward, and the most intemperate your self-ward, of most I have known."26 When Lord Berkeley went abroad in 1735, Swift inquired, "Is Lord Berkeley's voyage . . . owing alone to his ill habit of Body, (which I foretold him in his youth, & reminded him the last time I saw him). . . ."27 In December, 1736, William Pulteney revealed that he, too, had been a

24Correspondence, III, 330. 25Ibid., IV, 467.
26Ibid., III, 294. 27Ibid., IV, 335.
recipient of Swift's salutary advice by writing, "... I will preserve my self by your advice, and follow your Rules of rising early, eating little, drinking less, and riding daily." It is no wonder, in light of these examples, that Bolingbroke did not escape a lecture or two on the virtues of moderation.

The Journal to Stella is filled with examples of Swift's resentments and reproaches of Bolingbroke's overindulgence. When his friendship with Bolingbroke was still young, Swift had occasion to complain to Esther Johnson of the Secretary's rudeness. He and Swift were in company, the hour was late, and St. John would not come away, and he would not stop drinking, either, much to Swift's annoyance. Swift snarled, "I wonder at the civility of these people; when he saw I would drink no more, he would always pass the bottle by me, and yet I could not keep the toad from drinking himself, nor he would not let me go neither..." One time St. John's drinking and keeping of late hours came near to wrecking his incipient friendship with Swift. The Secretary, who later admitted that he had been "sitting up whole nights at business, and one night at drinking," frightened Swift

by appearing cold and withdrawn. Two days later Swift returned to the Secretary in a rage, berated him, and informed him plainly that his behavior had been unacceptable and that Swift would not tolerate such treatment from him. St. John took the lecture amiably, explained the reason for his coldness, and tried to make amends; but Swift was too angry at the moment to accept immediate reconciliation.31

Within a week, Swift noticed during a visit that St. John was drinking only tea, while his guests were having champagne, and confessed to Esther that, because he had been aware that excessive drinking of burgundy and champagne, together with keeping of late hours, had made St. John ill, he had scolded the Secretary "so severely that I hardly knew whether he would take it well."32 Apparently St. John did take it well, because Swift continued his harangues. Two days later (9 April 1711) Swift was again with St. John, and again Swift held him to the line. "I would not let him drink one drop of Champagne or Burgundy without water," he exulted, "and in compliment I did so myself."33 However, St. John's reformation must have been short-lived, for on April 12

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31 Ibid., pp. 229-30. 32 Ibid., p. 237.
33 Ibid., p. 238.
Swift recorded an apparent relapse. On that day Swift went to the Secretary, who was, said Swift, "very ill with a cold, and sometimes of the gravel, with his Champagne, &c. I scolded him like a dog, and he promises faithfully more care for the future." Afterwards they drank, but "soberly." Swift's attempt to amend St. John's ways permanently was in vain. On January 30, 1712, Swift recorded, "I was this morning with the secretary, who was sick and out of humour; he would needs drink Champagne some days ago, on purpose to spite me, because I advised him against it, and"--churchman and moralist coming to the fore--"now he pays for it... ."35

Swift never doubted that Bolingbroke paid with ill health in later life for the intemperances of his youth and middle age. To Pope, in 1728, Swift regretted that Bolingbroke's ill health had forced him to the Bath for a cure. "Tell me," Swift inquired rhetorically, "is not Temperance a neccessary virtue for great men... ?"36 In 1736 Swift asked Pope to reassure him about the state of Bolingbroke's fortune and health--"for he hath been... a Squanderer of both."37 And upon hearing that Lord Bolingbroke had escaped without injury from a hunting

34Ibid., p. 240.  35Ibid., II, 475.  
36Correspondence, III, 290.  37Ibid., IV, 546.
accident, Swift remarked, "I am glad he has so much youth
and Viger left of which he hath not been thrifty. . . ." 38
These and like incidental comments plainly show what Swift
thought were the causes of any ill health Bolingbroke
suffered.

Among these causes Swift must have numbered Boling-
broke's philandering; and yet Swift's response to this
fault was curiously different from his reaction to the
Secretary's drinking.

Lady Bolingbroke, who probably was the chief victim
of her husband's promiscuity, was held in high regard by
Swift. On April 7, 1711, Swift commented that he had
visited with Mrs. St. John, who, he said, "is growing a
great favourite of mine." 39 And when he visited Buckle-
berry he repeated his praises for her, ending with the
same words: "She is a great favourite of mine." 40 But
Swift, despite his liking for her, never protested Boling-
broke's treatment of his wife, or felt free—as he did in
regard to some other of St. John's faults—to lecture the
Viscount on his shortcomings in regard to his wife. It
is hard to say how Swift viewed Bolingbroke's amatory
indiscretions. His commentary on them seems accompanied,

40Ibid., p. 326.
not by outrage, but by a shrug. For example, Swift enjoyed the poem about St. John which concluded, "Still drinking like a fish, and _______ like a stoat," and he observed, without any apparent dismay, "I believe the thing was true; for he had been a thorough rake." 41 And Swift's comment on the following episode hardly reveals a shocked moralist: "Lord Radnor and I were walking the Mall this evening; and Mr. secretary met us and took a turn or two, and then stole away, and we both believed it was to pick up some wench; and tomorrow he will be at the cabinet with the queen: so goes the world." 42

Such a worldly attitude may be common enough; but in view of A Project for the Advancement of Religion and the Reformation of Manners, there is something odd about Swift's complacency in the face of St. John's overt philanderings. As Irvin Ehrenpreis has noted, Swift would not have excused everybody with a Cosi fan tutte. 43 In any case, Swift never expressed shock, or even surprise, at Bolingbroke's treatment of his first wife, although Swift's liking for her and his admiration of her continuing devotion to her wandering husband might have inclined him to do so. His extant comments on Bolingbroke's dalliance with the Marquise de Villette are calm enough. "I

41 Ibid., p. 164.  42 Ibid., p. 339.
43 Ehrenpreis, II, 457.
am heartily concerned for Lady Boling---," he writes, "but we have a story, that some Proceeding in my Lord had provoked her." The "Proceeding" was, of course, the affair with the lady who was to be the second Viscountess Bolingbroke.

Swift's acceptance of what one of his biographers has called Bolingbroke's warts, that is, his moral deficiencies, has puzzled many scholars. Many theories have been advanced to account for Swift's passivity in the face of some of Bolingbroke's more obvious failings. One of the more recent theories supposes some connection in Swift's mind between Sir William Temple and Lord Bolingbroke. Indeed, Ehrenpreis seems to suggest that to Swift, Bolingbroke represented Temple, come again into the life of a now mature Swift, who could, the second time around, make the accomplished, cold benefactor accept him on his own terms.

Other theories, perhaps more concerned with Swift's attitude to powerful men and to power than with Bolingbroke in particular, have turned on Swift's supposed hypocrisy, naivete, pride, ambition, and egoism. Especially relevant may be the idea that Swift was dazzled by Lord Bolingbroke.

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44 Correspondence, II, 308. 45 Ibid., n. 6.
Surely no one can doubt that Lord Bolingbroke possessed that evasive quality now called charisma. The Bolingbroke who rises from the papers which now house his personality is a man whose impressive talents are balanced or overbalanced by his apparent failings and weaknesses. And yet contemporaries of his, men supposedly of the utmost insight and discrimination, proclaimed him the greatest man of his age. Since Bolingbroke obviously was not the greatest man of his time, two explanations for this opinion can be offered: first, that those who passed judgment upon him were ignorant of certain aspects of his intelligence and character; and second, that his contemporaries could not see through the dazzle of his exterior grace and personal attractiveness.

Obviously Swift was ignorant of some of Bolingbroke's beliefs and practices. He did not know that Bolingbroke had corresponded with the Pretender or that Bolingbroke had stolen from the public. Perhaps he did not know the full details of Bolingbroke's philosophical opinions. But if Swift were ignorant of certain unpleasant actions and attitudes of his friend, he was also apparently willing to remain in ignorance about some of them. In denying that St. John had plotted with the Pretender, Swift once
averred to Archbishop King, "I could not believe him if he should have sworn it. . . ." 48

And despite the distaste with which Swift viewed some of Bolingbroke's actions and opinions, he never ceased to regard Bolingbroke as a great man, worthy of his admiration and friendship. Swift listed Bolingbroke among ministers of genius who had been unfortunate because of their personal greatness, instancing "Lord Bacon, Williams, Strafford, Laud, Clarendon, Shaftesbury, the last Duke of Buckingham; and of my own acquaintance, the Earl of Oxford and yourself." 49 And once when Bolingbroke had written that the Earl of Oxford had been Swift's favorite, Swift replied, "It is you were my Hero, but the other ne'er was. . . ." 50 The hero shines plainly in this early description of St. John, although Swift's quick eyes have already found some spots in the rising sun: "I think Mr. St. John the greatest young man I ever knew; wit, capacity, beauty, quickness of apprehension, good learning, and an excellent taste; the best orator in the house of commons, admirable conversation, good nature, and good manners; generous, and a despiser of money. His only fault is talking to his friends in way of complaint of too

48 Correspondence, II, 238. 49 Ibid., pp. 332-333. 50 Ibid., III, 353.
great a load of business, which looks a little like affection: and he endeavours too much to mix the fine gentleman and man of pleasure, with the man of business."

And though time took the glitter off their relationship to a certain degree, some dazzle remained to the end. It is interesting that the favorable portrait which Swift drew in the *Journal to Stella* is allowed to stand in *An Enquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's Last Ministry*, a work that Swift had by him all his life, a work which he could have altered at any time. Apparently Swift did become more aware of Bolingbroke's faults, for the main difference between the two descriptions is that the listing of Bolingbroke's failings is lengthier in the later one. But even the condemnation closes on a soft note. The mixing of business and pleasure is mentioned, as is Bolingbroke's affectation, and to these faults Swift adds animadversions on Bolingbroke's pleasures. Of these, Swift writes: "Bolingbroke "had indeed been too great and Criminal a Pursuer; For although he were persuaded to leave off Intemperance in Wine, which he did for some Time to a Degree that he seemed rather abstemious; yet he was said to allow himself other Liberties, which can

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51*Journal*, II, 401.
by no Means be reconciled to Religion or Moralls, whereof I have Reason to believe he began to be sensible."52

Plainly, Bolingbroke's person, politeness, learning, wit, and whatever aura he may have possessed, covered a multitude of his sins in Swift's eyes. But Swift was always aware of the flaws in his friend and never became as infatuated with him as Pope, who seemed to think that Bolingbroke was exalted above the social rules which encompassed lesser men about. Thus in 1736 Pope became distressed when he discovered that Swift, in a letter to an unnamed correspondent, had related some unsavory gossip about Lord Bolingbroke. "Was this for the prophane?" he indignantly inquired; "the thing, if true, shou'd be conceal'd. . . ."53 To this pitch of idolatry Swift never attained. But even he, with his eyes open to many of Bolingbroke's faults, failed to discern some others, or did not admit to finding them. One of these was Bolingbroke's grasping after public funds.

In A Project for the Advancement of Religion, Swift lamented that of six million pounds raised every year for public use, one third was stolen by "artful Men in Office."54 For those ministers of state who did not help


53Correspondence, IV, 526. 
54Prose Works, II, 58.
themselves to public money, Swift had the greatest respect. On this account Swift honored the Earl of Oxford, whose "Liberality and Contempt of Money were such, that he almost ruined his Estate while he was in Employment." 55 And in contrasting Oxford and Walpole, Swift once observed to the former, "You never enriched yourself and family at the expense of the publick." 56 Indeed, part of Swift's detestation of Walpole was founded in his dislike of the corruption which characterized that person's government. Under the guise of a description of a corrupt Japanese minister, Swift wrote that Walpole "seemed to fail, in point of policy, by not concealing his gettings, never scrupling openly to lay out vast sums of money in paintings, buildings, and purchasing estates; when it was known, that, upon his first coming into business . . . his fortune was but inconsiderable." 57

Clearly, Swift considered peculation dishonorable—no matter that it was common in his time. How, then, did he react to Bolingbroke's efforts to enrich himself by illicit means while holding public office? Apparently he did not react in any way, because he did not know of Bolingbroke's mining in the treasury. Swift seems to have believed that the Tory ministry was as honest as

55Ibid., VIII, 136.  56Ibid., V, 113.
57Ibid., V, 101-102.
Oxford, who was, of course, honest indeed. At the beginning of his relationship with Bolingbroke, Swift characterized him as a man "generous, and a despiser of money"—much the same words he later used in reference to Oxford—"Liberality and Contempt of Money." Oxford knew of Bolingbroke's efforts to get money, because some applications were directed to himself, and he might have told Swift; but that is unlikely, because Oxford was never a communicative man, even with as close a friend as Swift; indeed, Swift once wrote that all the secrets that passed between him and the Lord Treasurer could be cried aloud at Charing Cross. And although hints came his way, Swift did not pursue them. For example, he was surprised in April, 1711, when, during a parliamentary inquiry into the fate of thirty-five million pounds missing during the previous administration, St. John came to the rescue of the suspected James Brydges, paymaster-general of the forces abroad. Swift was confused by St. John's action, "for"—said he—"the chief quarrel against the late ministry was the ill management of the treasure." And he jokingly suggested that if the late ministry were not to

blame, the Queen should cut off Harley's head for suggesting that she change it; whereupon everyone laughed; but Swift understood that Harley and his supporters "take things ill of Mr. St. John." Of course, St. John, having been the recipient of some of the missing money, had been eager to clear his accomplice, Brydges.

Another dangerous moment for Bolingbroke occurred during the parliamentary investigation into the provisions of the Spanish Treaty, from which he and his friends had planned to profit in an illicit manner. But of this crisis, too, Swift was apparently ignorant. He made no comment on it, although he did have details of the proceedings from Charles Ford. One passage from the correspondence could be interpreted as Swift's admitting some doubt about Bolingbroke's financial honesty, and that is Swift's observation that "Poverty dares not look a great Minister in the face, under his lowest declension. . . . such mortals have resources that others are not able to comprehend." Perhaps Swift did suspect Bolingbroke of financial dishonesty. It would have been odd if the idea had not at least passed through his mind. But even if he had known, his repudiation of Bolingbroke

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63 Correspondence, II, 51, 58-59.
64 Ibid., III, 294.
would not necessarily have followed. He once blinked at Bolingbroke's betrayal of something much more important than public trust, and that was the Revolution Principle and the Protestant Succession.

Swift was constant in his admiration for William III and his support for the Revolution settlement of 1689. In "Arguments Against enlarging the Power of Bishops" he referred to "the glorious Memory of the late king WILLIAM, who preserved these Kingdoms from POPERY and SLAVERY." This laudatory language recalls an early poem, "Ode to the King," which also celebrates the virtues of King William in extravagant terms. Likewise he supported the political settlement of 1689. In a letter to Pope, written in January, 1721, Swift commented, "As to what is called a Revolution-principle, my opinion was this; That whenever those evils which usually attend and follow a violent change of government, were not in probability so pernicious as the grievances we suffer under a present power, then the publick good will justify such a Revolution; and this I took to have been the Case in the Prince of Orange's expedition. . . ." And in "A Sermon upon the Martyrdom . . . ."

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66 Prose Works, IX, 56. 67 Correspondence, II, 372.
of King Charles I" Swift reiterated this position when he noted that "the late Revolution under the Prince of Orange was occasioned by ... oppression and injustice ... beginning from the throne. For that unhappy Prince, King James II. did not only invade our laws and liberties, but would have forced a false religion upon his subjects, for which he was deservedly rejected. ..."68

A major effect of the Revolution of 1688-89 was the establishing of the English crown exclusively upon Protestants. Thereafter, no Roman Catholic was to be monarch of England. To this arrangement Swift was unswervingly dedicated, partly because in his youth he had observed the effects of Roman Catholic rule in Ireland.69 To Pope he avowed, "I always declared my self against a Popish Successor to the Crown, whatever Title he might have by proximity of blood."70

In view of these strongly held opinions, one must wonder how Swift reacted when he learned that his intimate friend Lord Bolingbroke had fled the country upon the accession of the protestant King George and had shortly

68Prose Works, IX, 229-230.
70Correspondence, II, 372.
entered the service of the Roman Catholic Pretender, James Stuart.

Let it be noted that Swift never knew of Bolingbroke's communications with the Pretender during the four last years of Queen Anne and that he steadfastly refused to believe all reports that Bolingbroke, as Secretary of State, had been in touch with the Queen's half brother. The Examiner is full of denials that either of the chief ministers had any correspondence with the Pretender. And in An Enquiry into the Behavior of the Queen's Last Ministry Swift devotes an entire section to disproving the Whigs' contention that the Tories had intended to call James Stuart to the throne. In that work he notes ironically what was near the truth: "As my own Heart was free from all treasonable Thoughts, so I did little Imagine my self to be perpetually in the Company of Traytors." And to Archbishop King Swift once averred that Oxford and Bolingbroke were as innocent in regard to the Pretender as those who were then (1716) in charge of the government.

Therefore, Swift did not equate Bolingbroke's flight to France with his subsequent Jacobite activities. The immediate cause of Bolingbroke's flight was his imminent

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72 Ibid., p. 134.  
73 *Correspondence*, II, 238.
impeachment, which was due, not to any alleged dealings with the Pretender, but to the part he had played in making the Peace of Utrecht. Moreover, the Tories apparently felt that Bolingbroke was a principal target of Whig vengefulness. Probably the first reports Swift received stressed the clear danger the former secretary would have been in had he stayed in England. As John Barber confessed, "It [Bolingbroke's flight] was a great surprize at first, but everybody is now convinced he would have been sacrificed had he staid." Shortly Swift was echoing these opinions, as in a letter to Pope written in June, 1714, in which he said of Bolingbroke and Ormonde, "Do you imagine I can be easy while their enemies are endeavoring to take off their heads?" From this opinion, that Bolingbroke had been forced by the rancor of his enemies to flee for his life, Swift did not afterwards budge.

Nor did he ever indicate precisely what he felt or thought when he learned that one of his closest friends, after repeated denials of Jacobitism, suddenly had thrown himself into the service of the Pretender, had accepted


75Correspondence, II, 168. 76Ibid., p. 176.
honors and position from him, and had begun to work
diligently to replace a protestant king with a Roman
Catholic one, thus enlisting himself in a cause which
was anathema to Swift. How did the friendship of Swift
and Bolingbroke survive such a shock?

No exact answer can be given to this question. Af-

	

erwards, Swift seldom wrote about Bolingbroke's flight,
or about his months with the Pretender. He did write
about the plight of the Duke of Ormonde, whose circum-
stances were the same as Bolingbroke's; and although he
knew as he wrote that Ormonde was in the camp of the
Pretender, Swift did not mention that fact, but filled
his space with assertions that Ormonde was an honorable
man who had, "by the direct and repeated Commands of the
Queen his Mistress . . . committed those Facts, for which
he hath now forfeited his Country, his Titles and his
Fortune." In short, Swift indicated that Ormonde was
a victim of factional strife who had been driven by his
enemies to be a traitor. And because Bolingbroke was
with Ormonde, perhaps Swift reasoned about him in the
same way. The only other references Swift made to Boling-
broke's flight or treason appeared in Gulliver's Travels
and in An Account of the Court and Empire of Japan. When
writing figuratively in Gulliver's Travels, Swift again

77Prose Works, VIII, 133.
depicts Bolingbroke, in the form of Gulliver, as one forced by the unprovoked fury of his enemies to seek safety in a neighboring kingdom. But Swift does not comment on Bolingbroke's treasonable service to the Pretender, for he breaks the allegory just as the narrative reaches the point at which Gulliver, to be true to his model, would have to enter the service of the Emperor of Blefuscu. Only in *An Account of the Court and Empire of Japan* does Swift write--though again under a guise--of Bolingbroke's treason.

However Swift may have come to view Bolingbroke's apostasy, at the time of its occurrence he must have been surprised, and perhaps violently surprised. Some hint of his reaction to the news may be found in his correspondence. Possibly Swift did not even know of Bolingbroke's service to the Pretender until it was over. He was in contact with people in England--the Duchess of Ormonde, Bishop Atterbury, Barber, Arbuthnot, Pope, and others--but he and they were being very careful about what they wrote. Swift was correct in thinking that his mail was being intercepted and examined, although he may not have guessed that his censors were no less persons

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79 See below, p. 48.
than Archbishop King and the Earl of Kildare.\textsuperscript{80} In any case, in his correspondence Swift gave no indication that he was aware of Bolingbroke's change of heart until April 18, 1716—a month after Bolingbroke was dismissed by the Pretender.\textsuperscript{81} In a letter to Bishop Atterbury Swift suddenly asked, "Does your Lordship know that, as much as I have been used to lies in England, I am under a thousand uneasinesses about some reports relating to a person that you and I love very well? I have writ to a lady upon that subject, and am impatient for an answer."\textsuperscript{82} The lady was Lady Bolingbroke, and though Swift's letter to her is lost, her answer has survived. Whatever Swift had asked, and presumably his question was about Bolingbroke's service to the Pretender, Lady Bolingbroke's reply was this: "Do not forsake an old friend, nor believe reports that are scandalous and false."\textsuperscript{83}

Then a letter came to Swift from the Duchess of Ormonde, who implied that Bolingbroke had betrayed the Pretender to gain favorable treatment from George I for Lady Bolingbroke, who was trying to preserve her estates, which were necessarily affected by her husband's attainder.\textsuperscript{84} The Duchess commented that Lady Bolingbroke's

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{80}Correspondence, V, 230-233.  \textsuperscript{81}Ibid., II, 199.  \\textsuperscript{82}Ibid., pp. 198-199.  \textsuperscript{83}Ibid., p. 200.  \\textsuperscript{84}Ibid., p. 216, n. 4.
husband "has bin a better courtier than either she or any of her sex cou'd be, because men have it in their power to serve, & I believe hers, has effectually don what lay in him." 85

Shortly after, Bolingbroke replied to a letter, now lost, in which Swift apparently had asked for some account of Bolingbroke's action. In a deliberately vague style, Bolingbroke says that his friends--presumable the Tories--"are got into a dark hole," out of which they cannot find their way. He has learned "that there is no returning to light, no going out but by going back. my stile is mystick, but it is yr trade to deal in mysteries, & therefore I had neither comment nor excuse. you will understand me, & I conjure you to be persuaded, that if I could have half an hours conversation with you ... you would stare, haul yr wigg, & bite paper more than ever you did in yr life." 86 And there their correspondence ended for more than two years. 87

Why Swift was not estranged from Bolingbroke forever by the latter's unfaithfulness to one of the Dean's most cherished beliefs is difficult to understand; but obviously their friendship survived. Perhaps, as Nigel Dennis maintains, Swift was more enraged by the ingratitude of

85Ibid., p. 216. 86Ibid., p. 219. 87Ibid., p. 314, n. 1.
a King and party which impeached and exiled the men who had stopped a twenty-year-old war and smoothed the way of a protestant to the throne than he was by the treasonable actions of his friends. And perhaps Swift finally did have that half hour's conversation, during which Bolingbroke—who could, by a friend's admission "make the worse appear the better cause"—showed all the secret reasons he had had for joining the Pretender. Apparently Swift made up his mind in Bolingbroke's favor. For in the Account of Japan, Swift shows the Tory ministers as men driven into rebellion: "But he [the new emperor], on the contrary, began his reign by openly disgracing the principal and most popular Yortes [that is, Tories], some of which had been chiefly instrumental in raising him to the throne. By this mistaken step he occasioned a rebellion. . . ."

For whatever reason, Swift had recovered from his initial shock at learning that Bolingbroke was in the camp of the Pretender and had decided to believe that, given the animosity of the Whigs and the disfavour of the new King, Bolingbroke had had no choice but to rebel. Perhaps Swift adopted this opinion with some misgivings: he seldom wrote of Bolingbroke's defection; and certainly it is hard

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89Prose Works, V, 99-100.
to glorify someone who sneaks away from a confrontation. Oxford stayed to face the Whigs, and gained Swift's applause; Bolingbroke fled, and gained Swift's silence. But within a few years, as soon as Bolingbroke's efforts to gain a pardon from the King had begun to have some effect, and it was safe for Swift to write to the exile, a rather steady correspondence began to pass between the two men. In the letters they wrote to each other for the next several years they said to each other at a distance those kinds of things which they might once have spoken face to face. They commenced—or recommenced—arguing banteringly about various questions, some of them of a philosophical nature. One of their disputes of long standing was about stoicism, and particularly about a proper contemptuous attitude toward money.

\[90\textit{Correspondence, II, 182, for example.}\]
CHAPTER III

SWIFT'S REACTION TO BOLINGBROKE'S STOICISM, AND ESPECIALLY TO HIS INDIFFERENCE TO MONEY

The intemperance of Lord Bolingbroke was not confined to overindulging in drink or to chasing women. It manifested itself also as certain stoical concepts—such as indifference to fame and fortune—which Bolingbroke purported to embrace. To this intemperance of mind Swift was as opposed as to intemperance of body. He had no patience with anybody who pretended to be indifferent to the world and who affected to be content with the barest necessities—especially if that person were the immoderate Viscount Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke might write Reflections upon Exile in the manner of Seneca, he might disdain fame and ambition, and he might say that money was not important. Pope could be impressed (or pretend to be impressed) by the reconstructed Bolingbroke: "Lord B. is the most Improv'd Mind since you saw him, that ever was without shifting into a new body or being Paullo minus ab angelis."\(^1\) Swift was unmoved.

\(^1\)Correspondence, III, 107.
He greeted Bolingbroke's (and Pope's) claims of worldly indifference with a steady flow of humour and sarcasm. Once he instructed Pope, "Pray tell my Lord Bolingbroke that I wish he were banished again, for then I should hear from him, when he was full of Philosophy, and Talked de contemptu mundi." To William Pulteney, Swift observed, "but as for our friends at Twickenham and Dawley, I have told them plainly that they are both too speculative and temperate for me to accept their invitation, and infinitely too philosophical." And to John Arbuthnot Swift wrote, "I could not live with my Ld Bo---- or Mr Pope; they are both too temperate and too wise for me, and too profound, and too poor."

These quotations are typical of the verbal fusillades which Bolingbroke and Swift exchanged on the subject of temperance, economy, and money. Each of the men had a separate and quite different idea about a proper attitude toward money, and each of them was sure that his view was correct. No doubt their ideas about money were due in part to their experiences with it. Bolingbroke had always had enough of it. Swift had had always to make what he had be enough. Consequently, he had become a true master of economy.

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2Ibid., p. 117. 3Ibid., IV, 304. 4Ibid., p. 268.
One of the aids to economy which Swift began early and practiced for most of his life was the keeping of account books, into which he made precise and detailed entries showing what money he had received and from whom, and how much he had spent and for what. He entered everything. For example, in 1703 part of his outlay was for the following: "For work done in the Garden below to Mar. 14, 1702/3, making Trenches and walks, and planting Sallyes"; "Two dinners at Visitations"; "For Hay money pd may 28"; "To Mr. Smith for 2 sermons." He even noted, in great detail, how much he won and lost at cards. He entered the date, the type of game (usually picquet or ombre), the person with whom he was playing, and the amount of money that changed hands. At the end of the year he summed up winnings and losings. Usually he won more than he lost.

His account books prove that Swift liked to keep a tight grip on his finances. He liked to know at all times where his money was and what it was doing there. Part of his care with money was a result of his thrifty nature. But Swift's need for thrift was increased by his many charities, which cut into the money he had available.


6Ibid., pp. 269-270.
for ordinary expenses. Before looking at examples of Swift's thriftiness, and at his financial responsibilities, one should consider the sources and amounts of Swift's income.

As a young man Swift had no independent income, but relied on the kindness of his relatives. This uneasy situation was altered when he entered the service of Sir William Temple. As resident secretary to Temple, he probably received twenty pounds a year. In 1695 he entered the church, and was appointed to the prebend of Kilroot, which was valued at between 100 and 150 pounds a year. Swift returned to Moor Park in 1696 at Temple's invitation and resigned Kilroot in 1698. After Temple's death, Swift went to Ireland as chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley. In 1700, after much vexation and many squashed hopes, he was granted the livings of Laracor, Agher, and Rathbeggan, and the prebend of Dunlavin. The combined worth of these livings was probably something less than 300 pounds a year, and they provided the bulk of Swift's income.

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7Murry, p. 20. 8Ibid., p. 55.
income until he became Dean of St. Patrick's.\textsuperscript{11} The deanery brought him about 700 pounds a year, in addition to what he received from Laracor, for when he became Dean he retained his former livings. In 1742 his estate was assessed at 800 pounds a year, although 900 might have been a more accurate estimate.\textsuperscript{12}

Although his livings provided the larger part of his income, Swift did have other sources of revenue. He speculated in bank stock, as he mentions in the \textit{Journal to Stella},\textsuperscript{13} and he invested in the South Sea Company: "Stratford had near four hundred pounds of mine, to buy me five hundred pounds in the South-Sea company."\textsuperscript{14} Interestingly, Swift never made any money from his writings, except in the case of \textit{Gulliver's Travels}. For that work he received two hundred pounds, and he got that only through the efforts of Pope.\textsuperscript{15}

For the age, Swift's income as vicar of Laracor and later as Dean of St. Patrick's was satisfactory, and even substantial. But he never could abandon his habits of thrift, and he never could stop worrying about expenses. Whenever he could, he economized.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Murry, p. 171. \item Ibid., p. 475. \item Journal, I, 74. \item Ibid., II, 463. \item Cornelis Van Doorn, \textit{An Investigation into the Character of Jonathan Swift} (New York: Haskel1 House, 1966), pp. 65-66.
\end{enumerate}
His Journal to Stella provides many examples of his frugality. While in London from 1710 to 1714, he rejoiced to accept invitations to dine out, or to dine with friends. He exults, "It has cost me but three shillings in meat and drink since I came here." But he was always angry at himself when he allowed himself to be talked into going to a tavern, or to any other place where he had to pay a share of the bill: "Lord Halifax is always teasing me to go down to his country house, which will cost me a guinea to his servants, and twelve shillings coach hire; and he shall be hanged first." In town Swift walked as much as possible to avoid paying coach fare, and he was always irritated when stormy weather forced him to ride. "Twelvepenny weather" was his term for it. One night he came home late and found that his servant, "that extravagant whelp Patrick," had kindled a fire for him; but he did manage to salvage some of the fuel, for he says, "I picked off the coals before I went to bed." Frequently he did not have a fire at all. Often he wrote in bed with the curtains drawn around him against the cold. Van Doorn notes with

16 Quoted in Murry, p. 172. 17 Ibid. 18 Ibid. 19 Journal, I, 204. 20 Quoted in Van Doorn, p. 67.
amusement that when Swift heard that Lord Oxford's porter was expected to die, his first thought was of all the tips he had given the man: "I wish I had all my half-crowns again."21

The examples of Swift's pronounced thriftiness do not end with the period of the Journal. Predictably, the habit of parsimony did not become less pronounced as Swift grew older; rather, with every year it became more deeply engrained in his character. On one occasion, when he had entertained sixteen guests, he was quite pleased when the expense proved to be less than he had anticipated: "I came off rarely for about thirty shillings. They were all very modest and obliging."22

Aside from a natural bent toward frugality, Swift had good reasons for conserving his income. Much of his money was pledged in advance to various purposes or projects. His many trips to England were expensive. He had to keep up his dignity and preserve the state of his various positions. His curate at Laracor had to be paid.23 He had to keep himself in excellent wine. But a great part of his money went for benevolent or charitable purposes.

21Ibid.  22Quoted in Van Doorn, p. 69.
23Murry, p. 172.
One of Swift's biographers, Collins, maintains that as a young and struggling priest, Swift spent a tenth of his income on the poor.\textsuperscript{24} He became the benefactor of many friends and relatives. Among those who received financial aid from him at one time or another were Mrs. Johnson, Rebecca Dingley, and his sister, Mrs. Fenton.\textsuperscript{25} He also helped Mrs. Ridgway, who was the daughter of his former housekeeper.\textsuperscript{26} Many of the recipients of his generosity never knew that he was assisting them with his own money. For example, he led Mrs. Dingley to suppose that her annuity, which in fact came from his own purse, was from a fund for which he was merely trustee.\textsuperscript{27} Deane Swift reports that Swift "formed a fund for granting loans to industrious tradesmen and citizens, to be repaid by weekly installments";\textsuperscript{28} by this means he is said to have benefited over two hundred families in Dublin.\textsuperscript{29} According to Deane Swift, the Dean of St. Patrick's in his later years threw "upon the waters above a third part of his income."\textsuperscript{30} Perhaps even Deane Swift did not know

\textsuperscript{24}Cited in Van Doorn, p. 69. \textsuperscript{25}Van Doorn, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid. \textsuperscript{28}Ibid. \textsuperscript{29}Ibid.

how much bread was cast upon the waters: Murry says that from 1725 to 1736 Swift saved 600 pounds a year out of an income of 900.\textsuperscript{31} This accumulation was the money which Swift intended to be spent in the founding of his hospital. The obverse of his parsimony showed the true design: generosity.

Here was a hard-headed realist who once wrote to Pope that "Wealth is liberty"\textsuperscript{32} and who made a note every time he opened his purse. To such a person as this, no wise man would write letters expressing fanciful notions about money, or doubts about money's usefulness. But Lord Bolingbroke over a period of years did write such letters to Swift; and Swift's responses were predictable.

In the years after 1714 Bolingbroke seemed to be saying three things about money, none of which Swift really believed. First, Bolingbroke said that his fortune was depleted and implied that he was near the end of his resources. Second, he said that he was economizing, or that he was moderating his desires to match what was left of his fortune. Last—and this idea was calculated to enliven Swift—he said that he despised money on philosophical grounds.

Perhaps in their disagreement about the importance of money Swift felt for Bolingbroke some of the amusement

\textsuperscript{31}Murry, p. 475. \textsuperscript{32}Correspondence, II, 294.
which a man who has clawed his way from nothing to a sort
of affluence reserves for a soft-handed boy who has been
able to afford idealism. Bolingbroke was born to money,
and he was the level grace and good fortune sought.
Except for some deficiency of character, he would have
ridden the world. At first he was handed everything. He
was given an excellent education. As a young man he was
allowed to go to London to play the rake, to dazzle
ladies, and to write complimentary verses to Dryden. He
toured Europe, where he continued what was to be his life-
long policy of educating himself by day and edifying him-
self by night. He returned home to accept a seat in
Parliament and a fortune: his first wife, Frances Winch-
comb, was worth 40,000 pounds.33 Without strain he rose
to a position of power in the government. During the
years when he shared in the direction of the state, he
was certainly in a position to make money. Then as now,
most men left public office richer than when they entered
it. The Earl of Oxford maintained that Bolingbroke used
the Quebec expedition to mulct the public of some 20,000
pounds.34 And it is certain that in a letter of
January 6, 1714, Bolingbroke asked Oxford to give him

33Sydney W. Jackman, Man of Mercury (London: Pall

34George Wingrove Cooke, Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke,
2nd ed. (London: R. Bentley, 1836), I, 269.
3,500 pounds from the public funds to pay off a mortgage: "I have thought the mortgagee used me impertinently."\textsuperscript{35}

After the death of Queen Anne, Bolingbroke fled to France and entered the service of the Pretender.\textsuperscript{36} As a result of this action, an act of attainder was passed against him\textsuperscript{37} which stripped him of his title, his political rights, his personal property, and his right to own or inherit property.\textsuperscript{38} But even in this extremity he was not without funds, his needs being supplied by his family, who were not made to suffer on account of his disgrace.\textsuperscript{39}

In addition to support from home, he was buoyed by his personal success in France. He invested early in Law's Mississippi scheme, and sold at a profit before that shaky enterprise fell to pieces. With his profits he bought La Source, an estate so called because on its grounds the river Loire arose.\textsuperscript{40}

After the death of his first wife, he married his mistress, the Marquise de Villette, who, besides being learned, witty, and beautiful, possessed the delightful

\textsuperscript{35}Petrie, p. 238.  \textsuperscript{36}Dickinson, pp. 135, 138.

\textsuperscript{37}Churchill, p. 910.  \textsuperscript{38}Dickinson, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{39}Jackman, p. 39.  \textsuperscript{40}Petrie, p. 286.
virtue of riches. In 1723 he was pardoned by George I; and in 1725 that monarch, who had been influenced in his decision by his mistress, the Duchess of Kendall—who had no doubt been influenced in her turn by the 11,000 pounds which Lady Bolingbroke had insinuated into her hands—conveyed to Walpole that Bolingbroke's attainder was to be reversed. It was done, and Bolingbroke was once more capable of enjoying his estates and of inheriting his father's properties. At this juncture, in 1725, he returned to England to live and bought the estate of Dawley, for which he paid a total of 23,000 pounds.

In view of the foregoing account, Bolingbroke's talk of approaching ruin is hard to understand. To be sure, his fortune did fluctuate. He was a spendthrift all his life, and he never learned to spend less than he had. Consequently, he tended to dissipate a fortune; but as soon as he had spent it, he got another. Again and again he found himself in a trough: but time and again he was lifted to the crest of a fortune. He married Frances Winchcomb and used her fortune. To be sure, just before he fled to France he returned her estate to her to insure that it would not be confiscated by the state in the

43 Petrie, p. 301.
event of his attainder;\textsuperscript{44} but by that time it was not worth much.\textsuperscript{45} The Marquise de Villette brought him relief for a time. When her help became scant, he first borrowed, then sold Dawley for relief. From that transaction he gained 26,000 pounds,\textsuperscript{46} and on that sum he lived comfortably until his father had the grace to die, in 1742. Thereupon he inherited the family estates, including the manor of Battersea.\textsuperscript{47} On this inheritance he lived until his death.

It is apparent that, although his fortune fluctuated, Bolingbroke always had access to funds. Of course, he did not have before him the scenario of his life. Perhaps he really thought that he was going to be reduced to poverty. More likely, he used his financial reverses as an excuse to indulge his affectation of despising money.

Thus on an occasion when he was quite removed from being poor, having recently married the Marquise, he lamented to Swift that he was attempting "to save four fifths of 400 M:livres," and added, "... tho' I cannot hope to deserve yr esteem by growing rich, I have endeavour'd to avoid yr contempt by growing poor."\textsuperscript{48} Preciously he added

\textsuperscript{44}Dickinson, p. 135.  \textsuperscript{45}Petrie, p. 384
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. 320.  \textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p. 326.
\textsuperscript{48}Correspondence, II, 413.
that "to despise riches with Seneca's purse, is to have at once all the advantages of fortune & philosophy."\(^4\) Perhaps Bolingbroke did despise riches in his heart; but his manner of living made wealth a necessity to him, and Swift knew it well. In 1729 he informed Swift that "all mankind knows that I have been cruelly plundered, and yet I feel in my mind the power of descending without anxiety two or three Stages more."\(^5\) But Swift would accept neither of Bolingbroke's implications: he did not believe that one was "poor" when he had lost a small part of a large fortune; and he did not believe that a man who had stood as high in the world as Bolingbroke had done could be reduced to real poverty. "I must observe, that my Lord Bolingbroke . . . argues most sophistically: The fall from a million to an hundred-thousand pounds is not so great, as from eight hundred pounds a year to one: Besides, he is a controller of Fortune, and Poverty dares not look a great Minister in the face, under his lowest declension."\(^6\)

Swift did alter his opinion somewhat during the period when Bolingbroke was forced to borrow money several times, that is, in the years before he sold Dawley.\(^7\) The death of Bolingbroke's father, "Old Frumps," would have made the

\(^4\)Ibid.  \(^5\)Ibid., III, 348.  \(^6\)Ibid., p. 294.  
\(^7\)Petrie, p. 320.
son secure. But the old man refused to die. In 1735, Swift asked Pope, "Will his [Bolingbroke's] Estate hold out as long as his life? & is his worthless Father immortal?" 53 And at the end of 1736 he asked John Barber, "Is our friend Bolingbroke well? ... I am chiefly concerned about his fortune. ..." 54 This concern ended in 1738, when Bolingbroke sold Dawley.

Swift usually did not believe Bolingbroke's tales of imminent financial ruin; he certainly did not accept the Viscount's protestations of "oeconomy."

Lord Bolingbroke probably did not believe that he was going to lose all his money; but he liked to think that he could, in the event of financial disaster, draw around himself the quiet comfort of philosophy and be content with the little that he had. He was fond of pretending that his political reverses had forced him to adopt a system of economy; and he loved to write to his friends accounts of his stoicism in the face of moderation. Thus in 1719 he wrote Swift, "... my fortune is extremly reduced, but my desires are still more so. nothing is more certain than this truth, that all our wants beyond those which a very moderate income will supply, are purely imaginary. ..." 55 When Swift congratulated him on his success

53Correspondence, IV, 384. 54Ibid., p. 551.
55Ibid., II, 315.
with the Mississippi scheme, Bolingbroke demurely replied that "if I have secur'd enough to content me it is because I was soon contented." 56 "You shall find that I can live frugally without growling att the world . . . . " 57 Even Pope, with tongue in cheek, praises Bolingbroke's "oeconomy." He says that Bolingbroke's savings are so considerable that with them Swift could buy an English bishopric. He cites the day's menu as a proof of Bolingbroke's temperance (a cousin to economy): " . . . I can answer that (for one whole day) we have had nothing for dinner but Mutton-broth, beans and bacon, and Barn-door fowl." 58 And then Pope confesses that Bolingbroke is paying a painter 200 pounds to decorate the hall with pictures of farm implements: 59 surely a most uneconomical expense!

The truth was that Bolingbroke was never economical, and Swift knew it: "I never knew him live so great and expensively as he hath done since his return from Exile; such mortals have resources that others are not able to comprehend." 60 To all of Bolingbroke's talk of cutting expenses Swift replied, "Retrenchments are not your Talent. . . . " 61 But Swift's plentiful advice was wasted. Everyone recognized its rightness: in 1735, when Swift asked if Bolingbroke would be returning soon from France

56 Ibid., p. 395.  57 Ibid., III, 348.  58 Ibid., p. 290
59 Ibid.  60 Ibid., p. 294.  61 Ibid., p. 354.
(where in that year Bolingbroke had retreated, partly because of his reduced finances, partly because of political pressure), William Pulteney replied, "If he had listened to your admonitions and chidings about economy, he need never have gone there . . . ." Everyone recognized the rightness of the advice except the person for whom it was intended. Perhaps Bolingbroke recognized it, too. But he would not leave off his extravagance. And, to Swift's dismay, he insisted that one should have no regard for the riches that made extravagance possible.

Bolingbroke wrote to Swift, "let us not refuse riches, when they offer themselves; but let us give them no room in our heads or our hearts. let us enjoy wealth, without suffering it to become necessary to us, and . . . let us place it so, that Fortune may take it without tearing it from us." To this notion that one should have no special regard for money, but should take it or let it go without concern, Swift made two objections.

First, he said that Bolingbroke was wrong about money, although he admitted, "I pretend to value money as little as you . . . ." In words reminiscent of Bolingbroke's own, he said, " . . . my Lord, I have made a maxim, that should be writ in letters of diamonds, That a wise man

62Dickinson, pp. 245-246. 63Correspondence, IV, 437. 64Ibid., II, 396. 65Ibid., III, 354.
ought to have Money in his head, but not in his heart." 66
His second objection was that poverty would not be suitable to Bolingbroke's station: "God forbid, that ever such a Scoundrel as want should date [dare?] to approach you." 67

Their dialogue concerning money went on for years. They were both commendably consistent, so much so that a quotation lifted from a letter written in one decade finds a ready answer in a letter written ten years before or ten years after. Bolingbroke is always saying that money should not matter to a man, and Swift is always replying, wittily but firmly, in different words but with the same intent, that a wise man--a wise man--had better have money in his head, no matter what delusions he cherishes in his heart.

66Ibid., p. 328.   67Ibid., p. 354.
CHAPTER IV

BOLINGBROKE'S RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY:
SOME ASPECTS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT,
METHOD, AND CONTENT

We can probably never know with certainty how Henry St. John, who surely began his life as a student of Christianity, came to abandon those principles which were, according to him, drummed into him as a youth. Virtually nothing is known of the first twenty years of his life.¹ From the year of his birth, 1678, until 1698, his history is based on tradition—frequently false²—on supposition, on terse information in contemporary records, and on his own statements made in later life. An example of this last is his well-known comment about the sermons of Dr. Manton, the Puritan divine.³ He emerges clearly for the first time in the letters which he wrote to Sir William Trumbull from Europe in 1698.⁴ Out he leaps, completely formed, with all of the perfections and imperfections which were in his future life to gain him the admiration and distrust of many discriminating men.⁵ Already he plays the

¹Dickinson, p. 4. ²Ibid., p. 3. ³Ibid., p. 2.
⁴Ibid., p. 4. ⁵Ibid., pp. 4-5.

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rake, yet takes time to study the politics of the countries he visits and to give detailed accounts of the state of learning in them. His attitude to organized religion is cool, for he declares that "the servants of Heaven are the worst of masters." Of course, his subject is the Roman Catholic hierarchy in France, but the quoted clause is absolute. Without qualification, "the servants of Heaven are the worst of masters." Why had he turned against organized Christianity? H. T. Dickinson has suggested that St. John's unusual background and his unusual education had combined to destroy his allegiance to any traditional principles, including Christian ones.

Henry St. John was born into a contradictory environment. His family was divided politically, religiously, and morally. The political and religious divisions reached back to the English Civil War. During that conflict one branch of the St. John family had ridden with King Charles, but the other had stood with Parliament. Probably much bitterness remained when the fighting ended, for both sides lost men in battle. Perhaps when he was a young boy living with his paternal grandparents at Battersea, St. John heard

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6Ibid., p. 4.  7Downshire MSS., I, 783-784.
8Ibid., pp. 790-793.  9Ibid., p. 777.
justifications of both sides; for those two grandparents represented both sides of the St. John family and both sides which fought in the English Civil War. Sir Walter St. John was an heir of the cavalier division of the family, and the Lady Joanna was the daughter of Cromwell's Chief Justice of Common Pleas.\textsuperscript{11}

The religious division in St. John's environment also originated with his paternal grandparents. The Lady Joanna was a dissenter and a patroness of nonconforming preachers and theologians.\textsuperscript{12} Sir Walter, on the other hand, was a conforming member of the Church of England all of his life, and endowed a charity school at Battersea.\textsuperscript{13} And St. John's stepmother, Angelica Magdalena, was an occasionally conforming member of the Church of England who was also a Huguenot.\textsuperscript{14}

To the political and religious confusion which faced the young St. John must be added the moral division he must have seen between his upright, respectable grandparents and his father, who was a notorious rake. These differences may have been emphasized to St. John as he was transferred from one sphere of influence to another,

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Hassall}, pp. 4-5. \textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 5-6. \\
\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Dickinson, "Henry St. John,"} p. 34. \\
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Dickinson, Bolingbroke}, p. 3 and p. 316, n. 12.
from his grandparents' estate at Battersea\textsuperscript{15} to his father's house in the west end of London,\textsuperscript{16} from High Church Eton to a dissenting academy.\textsuperscript{17} Maybe the "Man of Mercury" early became unsteady.

And if Henry St. John did receive a substantial part of his education at a dissenting academy, he may have learned there to question any principles he had been taught. The course of study at an academy, unlike the curriculum at one of the traditional English schools, emphasized contemporary learning and interests, like modern languages, English literature, history, political theory, inductive logic, and science. And in addition, and perhaps most importantly as far as St. John's principles were concerned, students at the academies were encouraged to discuss freely the most important topics of the day, including religion.\textsuperscript{18} Perhaps at Sheriffhales, St. John learned to relish the skeptical air of his age.

In any case, when St. John had grown into manhood, he apparently lacked principles, and for some years he did not try to acquire any. He hardly had time to consider religious or ethical problems. Politics absorbed much of

\textsuperscript{15}Hassall, p. 6.  \textsuperscript{16}Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.  
his time, and roistering the rest of it. He entered Parliament in 1701 and became Secretary at War early in 1704—a position he held until February of 1708. During this period he admitted to Sir William Trumbull that he had no philosophy to help himself over the rough places of life. Particularly he admitted that he was no stoic—in his words, "Pain to me is pain, and pleasure pleasure." Characteristically, he immediately contradicted himself by insisting that one should not complain of "natural evils" or "accidents of life."

From 1708 to 1710 St. John was not in Parliament. In later life, during the intervals of his political activities, he usually applied himself assiduously to his studies in history or philosophy. Therefore, to find him devoting himself to his books during his absence from Parliament would not be surprising. And indeed, at the time he declared to an acquaintance that, were he debarred from political life forever, the pleasures of the field and of his study could content him for the rest of his life. He did have other interests to pursue. For one thing, he was still interested in politics: he labored to reorganize

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19Petrie, p. 46. 20Hassall, pp. 21-22.
21Ibid., p. 32. 22Downshire MSS., I, 810.
23Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 8. 24Ibid.
the Tories, and he spent a considerable amount of time in 1708 trying to arrange for a belated entrance into Parliament through a by-election. For another, he was, for once in his life, being domestic. Nevertheless, at this time he apparently began seriously to think about principles for his life and to study philosophy, for in 1731, in a letter to Swift, he wrote, "As far as I am able to recollect, my way of thinking has been uniform enough for more than twenty years." The period "more than twenty years" before was, presumably, the political retirement of 1708 to 1710.

Although he did make a start in philosophy, St. John soon reentered politics. The interval of 1708-1710 was followed by the tumultuous four last years of Queen Anne. And that busy time was displaced by his period of flight and by his time of service to the Pretender. Thereafter, he tried for several months to obtain from King George a quick reversal of his attainder. Only when his early efforts failed did he turn, as was his custom, to the solace of his books, and resume his philosophical studies.

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27Ibid., p. 109. 28Correspondence, III, 488.


30Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 156.
Toward the end of 1716, Bolingbroke became involved in the intellectual life of Paris and became acquainted with two men who were to influence and direct his early studies in history and philosophy. They were Pierre Joseph Alary and Levesque de Pouilly. From 1717 until about 1720 Bolingbroke concentrated on the study of ancient history, relying on Alary for instruction and guidance. However, after much intensive research Bolingbroke became convinced that, due to insufficient data and unreliable documentation, no adequate history of ancient times could be written. Perhaps his findings helped him to his belief that the entire Old Testament was historically false, being comprised as it was of the books of a "superstitious people, among whom the art of pious lying prevailed remarkably." In any case, Bolingbroke's opinion that large parts of the Bible were not historically accurate, and therefore not morally binding, was to influence his philosophy greatly.

From about 1720, philosophy, and particularly religious and moral philosophy, occupied Bolingbroke's attention. His primary guide in his philosophical studies

31Ibid.  32Ibid., p. 157.  33Ibid., p. 156.


35Dickinson, Bolingbroke, pp. 158-159.
was Levesque de Pouilly, although he also consulted Alary. He must have proved an apt pupil, for he was soon writing. In 1720 he wrote The Substance of Some Letters to M. de Pouilly, a treatise in which he proves to his own satisfaction that the world owes its existence and survival to a Creator. During this same period—that is, after his attainder and before his pardon—Bolingbroke wrote Reflections upon Exile, Reflections Concerning Innate Moral Principles, and A Letter Occasioned by One of Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons. The first of these, an imitation of Seneca's De Consolatio ad Helviam, shows Bolingbroke in his stoical mood. In the second, he tries to find a respectable substitute for the Bible as a basis of morality. And in the third, he attempts to show that the writings of Moses cannot be deemed historical and that the Old Testament cannot have been written under divine influence.

In 1725 Bolingbroke's partial restoration passed through Parliament and received the King's approval; within

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36Ibid., p. 158. 37Jackman, p. 72.
38Walter McIntosh Merrill, From Statesman to Philosopher (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), pp. 15-16.
39Dickinson, Bolingbroke, pp. 154-155.
40Ibid., p. 160. 41Works, III, 39.
42Ibid., p. 32.
three weeks Bolingbroke was back in England. He settled at the manor house of Dawley and soon became politically active. But even though he had resumed his old political interest, he did not again abandon his philosophical studies. During the years at Dawley he wrote Letters or Essays Addressed to Alexander Pope, Esq., and Fragments or Minutes of Essays. The former work consists of four essays: I, "Concerning the Nature, Extent, and Reality of Human Knowledge"; II, "Containing some Reflections on the Folly and Presumption of Philosophers. . . ."; III, "Containing some farther Reflections on the Rise and Progress of Monotheism. . . ."; IV, "Concerning Authority in Matters of Religion." The latter is, in Bolingbroke's words, "nothing more than repetitions of conversations often interrupted, often renewed, and often carried on a little confusedly," which "were thrown upon paper in Mr. Pope's lifetime, and at his desire." The subjects of these fragments are various and include discussions of historical, religious, civil, and philosophical questions.

Lord Bolingbroke did not publish his philosophical writings in English (although he did apparently publish some of those which he originally wrote in French, like

45 Ibid., p. 162. 46 Merrill, p. 16.
47 Works, IV, 111. 48 Works, IV, passim.
Reflections upon Innate Moral Principles). Instead, in his will he left to David Mallet the right to reprint or to publish any of his works. Thereby, he invoked the well-known judgment of Dr. Johnson: "Sir, he was a scoundrel, and a coward: a scoundrel for charging a blunderbuss against religion and morality; a coward, because he had not resolution to fire it off himself, but left half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman, to draw the trigger after his death!" The vehemence of this statement indicates how virulent an opposition Bolingbroke's philosophical writings aroused in England. And that opposition, although somewhat subsided, has continued from that day to this.

Bolingbroke's philosophical work has been evaluated and found wanting. He was a second-rate philosopher. His method of presenting his theories is confused, contradictory, and unsystematic. And his thinking is not original, although he thought that it was. He lifted ideas from a bewildering number of sources, among them Pufendorf, Spinoza, Bayle, Malebranche, Bacon, Locke,

49Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 298. 50Ibid., p. 295.
51Quoted in Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 298.
52Ibid., pp. 297-99. 53Ibid., p. 300.
54Ibid., p. 303. 55Ibid., p. 309.
56Merrill, p. 16. 57Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 162.
Shaftesbury, Archbishop William King, Sir William Temple, Charles Leslie, Toland, Collins, and Lord Herbert of Cherbury. When Bolingbroke's works were published, the judicious recognized in his philosophical writings the fingerprints of other men. William Pitt remarked of the Essay on Human Knowledge (that is, the Letters... Addressed to Alexander Pope, Esq.), "I cannot think it the greatest performance that ever was... Old matter new dressed and often tawdry enough..." And Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote her husband, "I am of your opinion that he has never looked into half the authors he quotes, am much mistaken if he is not obliged to Mr. Bayle for the generality of his criticism, for which reason he affects to despise him, that he may steal from him with less suspicion." And by the way, this accusation by Lady Mary is at least partly correct. Many of the authors he quotes, he had not read.

One of Bolingbroke's methods was to borrow from greater thinkers than himself such of their ideas as he needed to support his own preconceptions, and then,

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58 Ibid. 59 Quoted in Jackman, p. 51.
60 Quoted in Dickinson, Bolingbroke, pp. 298-299.
having taken what he needed, to reject as much of the rest of their philosophy as did not suit his purposes. For example, Bolingbroke accepted Hobbes's idea that will is the source of moral law, but rejected that philosopher's contention that the possessor of that will is the civil authority. Bolingbroke advocated the idea of the Great Chain of Being, one of the central concepts of the Platonists, and yet he rejected vehemently most of the teachings of Plato and of the disciples of Plato.

Another of his methods was to pretend allegiance to a system and then change it or distort it to suit his needs. Thus in the Essays on Human Knowledge he professes to be a follower of Locke, and even calls Locke "my master, for such I am proud to own him." He then proceeds to expound a system quite unlike Locke's in many regards, without bothering to announce or examine the changes he is making. D. G. James seems to consider that since Bolingbroke is deliberately misrepresenting Locke's philosophy, he is being guilty of intellectual dishonesty.

Sometimes Bolingbroke would reject a method and then use it anyway. For example, he professed to abhor the

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64 Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 163. 65 James, p. 241.
a priori reasoning of Descartes and to approve the a posteriori method. He insisted, "When we reason . . . from the phenomena we have a sure criterion to guide our judgments. . . . When we reason otherwise, not from the phenomena but to them, we have no such criterion to guide . . . our judgments." He then continues this passage with an attack on the notable philosophers who used the a priori method: "If they [the followers of Descartes, Spinoza, and Hobbes] conclude absurdly it is because they pursue an absurd method. . . ."68 And yet, despite his emphatic rejection of the a priori method, Bolingbroke frequently used it. Thus Bolingbroke subscribed to the "best of all possible worlds" concept, and his reasoning to that conclusion is roughly as follows: he argues from the complexity and interdependence of nature, to the perfect wisdom of God, and thence to the perfection of nature, and of the world. In other words, he argues a posteriori from nature to God and His attributes and then argues a priori from the attributes of God to the perfection of the world.69 Similarly, he reasons a posteriori to the existence of God and thence a priori to a theory of Providence.70 And, for a final example, he arrives at his ethical rules by arguing a priori.71

68Works, IV, 415-416. 69Merrill, pp. 86-87. 70Ibid., p. 143. 71Ibid., p. 183.
With the publication of his works, Bolingbroke's reputation declined, with both orthodox and deistic writers. The orthodox objected most vehemently to Bolingbroke's attacks on religion: Dr. Johnson's comment illustrates their feelings. The unorthodox may have objected to Bolingbroke's diffusion, self-contradiction, and lack of method—on record is Voltaire's sneer that Bolingbroke was like a tree which produced leaves copiously, but very little fruit. In view of the furor occasioned by his works, Bolingbroke's decision to delay their publication until after his death is understandable. The following pages glance at those religious and philosophical opinions of Bolingbroke which aroused the ire of his orthodox contemporaries.

Bolingbroke was a deist. Certainly he believed a God, for in A Letter on One of Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons he wrote, "There is a God, a first intelligent Cause of all things, whose infinite wisdom and power appear in all his works." Bolingbroke concluded that God had two natural attributes, namely, the two cited in the previous

72Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 299.
73Ibid.  74Ibid., p. 300.
75Quoted in Jackman, p. 72.
quotation: infinite wisdom and infinite power. Bolingbroke was reluctant to speculate about God's moral attributes, since he felt that God was so remote and different from mankind that men could never really understand His nature. However, he felt safe in saying that God was just and good, because God, being infinitely wise, would always do that "which is fittest to be done. That, which is fittest to be done, is always just and good."  

A God possessed of perfect power and wisdom would, of necessity, create a perfect world. Therefore, Bolingbroke believed that God had framed His creation by such excellent natural laws that it did not require His personal attention or supervision. God, said Bolingbroke, creates the world, and then "he wills it to continue, and it continues distinct from the workman, like any human work, and infinitely better fitted by the contrivance and disposition of it to answer all the purposes of the divine architect, without his immediate and continual interposition." In other words, the world is a self-contained, self-governing, independent unit. Since it is perfect, being the creation of a perfect God, it no longer needs its maker.

76Merrill, p. 29.  
77Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 159.  
78Quoted in Merrill, p. 40.  
79Quoted in Merrill, p. 45.
after its creation. This idea that the world is the best of all possible worlds is the foundation of several of Bolingbroke's religious opinions.80

For example, this view supports his contention that the world, and men, are ruled by a general rather than a particular providence.81 Bolingbroke had no God personally directing his life or whispering him instructions. And of course, it makes providential acts and, by implication, miracles, highly suspect; for both are the result of divine intervention in the normal workings of the world.82 And, of course, such intervention would not be necessary in any case in a perfectly constituted world. This opinion also helped him kick revelation out of doors; for how can there be any need of revelation, when the perfection of nature requires no elaboration?83

Bolingbroke's belief in the perfection and self-sufficiency of nature also led him to conclude that any apparent defects in creation must be due more to man's faulty perceptions than to any actual flaw in the workmanship of the universe, for, as he said, "Since infinite wisdom not only established the end but directed the means, the system of the universe must be necessarily the best of

80Merrill, p. 137.  
81Ibid., p. 44.  
82Ibid., pp. 46, 143.  
83Jackman, p. 73.
all possible systems. . . ."84 According to Bolingbroke, men's perceptions are faulty because men think they are viewing the world from a position which in fact they do not occupy. They think that they are the center of creation, whereas, in fact, they constitute only one link in a vast chain of being, wherein each part is as important as every other.85 Man's perceptions must necessarily be confused when the world his vanity makes him master of treats him as it treats every other being in creation. According to Bolingbroke, the idea of evil arises from man's anthropocentric point of view: evil is not real, but apparent. As Bolingbroke said, "The seeming imperfection of the parts is necessary for the real perfection of the whole."86

In a sense, Bolingbroke's concept of religion also depended on his belief that God's perfection insured the perfection and self-sufficiency of nature. He thought that nature, being perfect, contained in itself the seeds of a "natural religion," which he defined as "that original revelation which God has made of himself, and of his will to all mankind, in the constitution of things, and in the order of his providence."87 Bolingbroke thought that this

84Quoted in Merrill, p. 87.  85Merrill, pp. 88-89.  
86Ibid., p. 95.  87 Ibid., p. 146.
natural religion was readily apparent to any rational man— at least, he thought that the general outlines of it were apparent. The precepts of Bolingbroke's religion were four: that God exists; that God is to be worshipped; that morality is the chief end of religious practice; and that sins must be expiated. However, of these rules, Bolingbroke stresses only the first and third.

According to Bolingbroke, the most important of the laws of nature is a moral law. Man discovers this moral law in the following manner. He is born with only one principle, self-love. This self-love, ideally, leads him to sociability, because self-love seeks to please itself, and sociability is pleasant. Thereupon, reason gives man a sense of happiness and makes him understand that if he is to continue to enjoy this happiness, he must live, not selfishly, but according to the law of nature, of which the chief principle is benevolence. However, if a man's reason is imperfect, he will necessarily be immoral. Bolingbroke also maintained an opinion contrary to the one just given. According to this second view, man is

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88Ibid. 89Ibid., p. 142. 90Ibid., pp. 147-148.
91Ibid., p. 148. 92Ibid., p. 167.
93Merrill, p. 178. 94Ibid., p. 185.
95Ibid., pp. 184-185.
naturally benevolent and does not have to learn to be so by going through the process outlined above. With this second view in mind, Bolingbroke wrote, "Sociability is the great instinct, and benevolence the great law of human nature. . . ." 96

In any case, Bolingbroke thought that morality, and particularly public morality and the more important aspects of private morality, was the chief end of natural religion. 97 Among obvious sins for man to avoid, Bolingbroke listed blasphemy, idolatry, sodomy, theft, murder, and bestiality. He thought, however, that nature understood man's passionate inclinations. 98

Bolingbroke considered himself a Christian, insofar as the religion of Christ was a natural religion. He observed that the "system of religion, which Christ published, and his evangelists recorded, is a complete system to all the purposes of true religion, natural and revealed." 99 Elsewhere he said, "Christianity, genuine Christianity, is contained in the gospels, it is the word of God, it requires, therefore, our veneration, and a strict conformity to it." 100 However, in genuine Christianity Bolingbroke apparently included only the moral teachings of Jesus. 101

96Quoted in Merrill, p. 178. 97Ibid., pp. 147-148. 98Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 169. 99Merrill, p. 150. 100Quoted in Jackman, p. 77. 101Merrill, p. 150.
To Bolingbroke, Christianity was satisfactory only insofar as it was a natural religion and was not more satisfactory than any other natural religion. Bolingbroke professed to find other acceptable natural religions in ancient China and in ancient Egypt. That Bolingbroke valued Christianity only for its system of ethics is further shown by his rejection of certain ideas central to orthodox Christianity, namely, the validity of revelation and the immortality of the human soul.

Bolingbroke thought that the early Church Fathers and later theologians who "perplexed and corrupted it by rites, ceremonies, and needless doctrines" were responsible for the destruction of pure, simple Christianity. Bolingbroke believed that the leaders of the primitive Church, and particularly the apostle Paul, had obfuscated the simple teachings of Jesus because their training in Greek metaphysics disposed them to do so.

Augmenting the teachings of Jesus was the first offense of the early Fathers. The second was their tacit understanding with the civil authorities, whereby the churchmen undertook to use their influence to cause their followers to support the "divine" rights of the government, in return for the government's recognition of the divine

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102 Ibid., p. 151.
103 Ibid., pp. 134, 240.
104 Ibid., p. 150.
105 Ibid., pp. 150, 202.
rights and privileges of the Church. These two errors were the sources of many corruptions of Christ's simple and natural religion. Bolingbroke thought that the alliance of church and state [in the time of the Roman Empire and subsequently] allowed the development of an "ecclesiastical empire under the autocratic spiritual rule of the pope and his clergy." These spiritual rulers added to the morality of Jesus two new duties: observance of the ceremonies of the Church and belief in, or public acceptance of, the doctrines of the Church.

And, according to Bolingbroke, the Christian was soon busy believing a host of new doctrines, for the Church Fathers' insistence on a metaphysical interpretation of Christ's teachings led to a burgeoning of pernicious theology. An orthodox Christian might be startled to learn that among these pernicious doctrines Bolingbroke included "the trinity, the coeternity, the coequality, in a word the sameness of the son with the father, the procession of the holy ghost from the father and the son, the fires of purgatory, and the real corporeal presence of Christ in the eucharist." However, despite Bolingbroke's misgivings about the validity of orthodox Christianity, one of his strongest

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106Ibid., p. 203. 107Ibid., p. 208. 108Ibid. 109Quoted in Merrill, p. 207.
and most persistent loyalties was to the Church of England. The oddity is not so great as it may at first appear. Certainly Bolingbroke's devotion to the English Church was not founded on reverence for its doctrines and ritual. Rather, he supported the Church because most of his countrymen did—that is, he supported it for political reasons. Also, he always recognized that the Church, corrupt as it might be, served a useful political function by encouraging public and private morality, and by inclining people to obey the law. He said, "To make government effectual to all the good purposes of it, there must be a religion; this religion must be national and this national religion must be maintained in reputation and reverence." Moreover, he said that something as politically important as religion could not be left to the clergy, but must be controlled by the state.

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110 Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 164.
111 Quoted in Dickinson, Bolingbroke, p. 164.
112 Ibid., p. 165.
CHAPTER V

THE RELIGION OF JONATHAN SWIFT AND HIS REACTION TO THE ETHICS OF VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE

If Swift was qualified to be a clergyman, much less a leader in the Church, that fact was not immediately apparent to many of his contemporaries, and to some of them it never became apparent.

Archbishop Sharp of York is supposed to have opposed the granting of an English deanery to Swift, citing the "scandal it would be, both to church and state, to bestow such a distinguish'd preferment upon a clergy-man, who was hardly suspected of being a Christian."¹ Legend has it that on the day of Swift's installation as dean, the following verses were tacked to the door of St. Patrick's:

"Look down, St. Patrick, look we pray, / On thine own Church and Steeple; / Convert thy Dean, on this Great Day; / Or else God help the People!"² One may well inquire the bases of this antagonism to Swift.

A Tale of a Tub was the cornerstone of Swift's fame and the basis of his notoriety. When the Tale appeared,

¹Quoted in Ehrenpreis, II, 633.
it sold well; but apparently much of its success was due more to the author's supposed blasphemies than to his skill as a writer, or to his wit and inventiveness. Bishop Atterbury said that the book was valuable for its "wit, humour, good sense, and learning"; but he regretted the "prophane strokes in that piece," and correctly predicted that they "would do his [the author's] reputation and interest in the world more harm than the wit can do him good." Those who were offended by the book were violent in their condemnation of it. One of them, Dr. William King of Christ Church, picturesquely charged that the writer "takes the air upon dung-hills." Many pious and influential people were shocked by the work, including some who were vital to Swift's hopes for preferment in the Church. In "The Author upon Himself" the Dean named three of these people: "York is from Lambeth sent, to shew the Queen / A dang'rous Treatise writ against the Spleen." Swift was well aware of the danger to his career of this book and was careful never to acknowledge the Tale, or to provide any overt evidence that he had written it. To Esther

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3Ehrenpreis, II, 326.  4Ibid., 327.


Johnson he once referred to it as the "you know what." But within a year of publication Swift's authorship was common knowledge.

The misunderstanding and misinterpretation of A Tale of a Tub which caused Archbishop Sharp to recoil in horror from the idea of giving its author any substantial preferment in the English Church has persisted from the time of its publication to the present century. Many critics have chosen to regard the Tale as an autobiographical instead of an ironical work and have attributed to Swift those religious opinions and follies which were the objects of his satire.

Adverse comments on the Tale were commonplace in the eighteenth century. In 1716 Sir Richard Blackmore characterized Swift as an "impious Buffoon," who was the most audacious of those who treated "Vertue and Sobriety of Manners with Raillery and Ridicule." William Warburton had no doubt that Swift intended to heap contempt on Christianity, and indeed on all religion: "The religious author of A Tale of a Tub will tell you, Religion is but a Reservoir of Fools and Madmen." In 1726 an anonymous writer

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8Journal, I, 47.
9Murry, Jonathan Swift, p. 121.
10Critical Heritage, p. 52.
11Ibid., p. 71
charged that in the Tale Swift "levelled his Jests at Almighty God: banter'd and ridiculed Religion and all that's good and adorable above."¹² To John Dennis, Swift was "a scandalous Priest, hateful to God and detestable to Men, and agreeable to none but Devils."¹³

Thus the adverse effect of the Tale on Swift's reputation as a Christian is readily apparent. In his life and after his death this work caused many readers to believe that Swift was a Christian in name only. But aside from his writings, Swift's peculiarities of character must have caused many of his contemporaries to think that he was not decent enough, or subdued enough, or proper enough to be a parson, much less a dean.

As someone aptly said, Swift was a hypocrite in reverse.¹⁴ If he did an act of kindness, he pretended that his motive for doing it was the furthest thing from good will or humanity; either he had some practical explanation for a good deed or he undercut his magnanimity with carping and complaints. He would search out a man from Leicester, his mother's native place, to have a wig made; but then he would confess, "I thought it would be cheap."¹⁵ Mrs.

¹²Ibid., p. 70. ¹³Ibid., p. 48.
¹⁴As in Ehrenpreis, II, 550-551.
¹⁵Forster, p. 53, note.
Garrett Wesley, one of his Laracor parishioners, was consulting a doctor in London because of a grave illness. Swift assisted her, visited her, and prayed with her; but in reporting his kindness to Mrs. Johnson, he emphasized that the smell of Mrs. Wesley's medicine was quite abominable.16

Swift extended this "hypocrisy" into his social life also. He was pleased to be treated as an equal by the most powerful men in the kingdom. To be "Admitted private, when Superiors wait"17 must have given him great satisfaction. Likewise the treatment he received at court must have pleased him: "At Windsor S---- no sooner can appear, / But, St. John comes and whispers in his Ear; / The Waiters stand in Ranks; the Yeoman cry, / Make Room; as if a Duke were passing by."18 And all ladies, and particularly "toasts" who desired the acquaintance of Dr. Swift were expected to make suitable advances to him, instead of vice versa.19 But if Swift was noted for his affected brusqueness with lords, he was also known for his interest in, and kindnesses towards, people of the lower classes. Lord Orrery reported that when Swift was journeying "from Holyhead to Leicester, London, or any other part... He generally chose to dine with waggoners, hostlers, and persons of

that rank; and he used to lie at night in houses where he found written over the door Lodgings for a Penny."\textsuperscript{20}

Worse yet, Swift "delighted in scenes of low life. . . . The vulgar dialect was not only a fund of humour for him, but I verily believe was acceptable to his nature."\textsuperscript{21}

Apparently Orrery's surmise was correct, for Swift did seem to enjoy talking to the common people of Ireland.\textsuperscript{22}

In verses written at Quilca in 1725 Sheridan records his surprise—a surprise which may have been shared by many of Swift's contemporaries—that Swift would enjoy associating with the Irish natives: "So far forgetting his old station / He seems to like their conversation. / Conforming to the tatter'd rabble, / He learns their Irish tongue to gabble. / And what our anger more provokes, / He's pleased with their insipid jokes."\textsuperscript{23}

Swift's manner of speech and deportment were most unclergymanly. In his own phrase, he was not "the gravest of divines."\textsuperscript{24} He was an inveterate punster.\textsuperscript{25} And he loved hoaxes and practical jokes. The Partridge affair is an example. But this merry, trenchant clergyman did not

\textsuperscript{20}Quoted in Nigel Dennis, p. 43. \textsuperscript{21}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{22}Murry, p. 474. \textsuperscript{23}Quoted in Murry, p. 474.

\textsuperscript{24}Quoted in Landa, Swift and the Church of Ireland, p. xiii.

\textsuperscript{25}See, for example, the Journal, I, 139-140, 153, 249-250.
confine his drolleries to words alone: sometimes his deeds must have seemed frivolous to the sober. Lord Orrery was apparently one of the sober, for he reports with some dismay that Swift once raced a fellow clergyman to church, in Nigel Dennis's words, "winning by an aisle's length and horrifying the congregation."\(^{26}\)

These eccentricities of speech and action did not diminish with age. An investigation of any description of the Dean in his old age--that of Letitia Pilkington, for example--will show that as Swift grew older, his perverse or unusual characteristics grew stronger. In addition, his gloom became more pronounced, and his merriment diminished. And therein lies another reason for the frequent questioning of Swift's religious sincerity. All of Swift's early biographers knew him first or best in his old age. Letitia Pilkington, Lord Orrery, Deane Swift, Patrick Delaney, and Thomas Sheridan the elder (who was surely the source of his son's information about Swift) all knew more about the later, gloomier Swift than about the wit whose friends considered him one of the choicest of companions. It was the old, discouraged Swift who said, after a lifetime of trying in vain to shore up the decaying Irish

\(^{26}\)Dennis, p. 42.
Church, "I have long given up all hopes of Church or Christianity." 27

Swift spent much of his life vigorously defending the established Church against the attacks of its enemies and the encroachments of its supposed friends. In his ecclesiastical writings his main targets were the Dissenters and the deists, although he devoted some of his ire to other victims, such as Roman Catholics. In A Tale of a Tub, for example, the Roman Catholics, under the guise of Peter, receive a drubbing along with the Dissenters. But apparently Swift considered the Dissenters and the deists the two great threats to the established Church.

Some of Swift's campaigns against the Dissenters were occasioned by attempts to repeal the Test Act, or to circumvent its provisions. In 1708, when a move was afoot to repeal the test in Ireland, Swift published A Letter concerning the Sacramental Test, 28 which was followed in 1709 by A Letter to a Member of Parliament, in Ireland, upon the choosing a New Speaker there. 29 Over twenty years

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29 Ibid., p. 126.
later Swift was again in the field, firing squibs against those who favored repealing the Sacramental Test in Ireland. In February, 1732, when the question of the Test was again moot in Dublin, Swift published *The advantages propos'd by Repealing the Sacramental Test impartially considered.*

This work he followed with a tract entitled *Queries Wrote by Dr. J. Swift, in the Year 1732.*

In 1733 he continued his attack with numerous pamphlets, many of which are no longer identifiable; but among them were *The Presbyterian Plea of Merit examined, Some few Thoughts concerning the Repeal of the Test, and Reasons for repealing the Sacramental Test &c. in favour of the Catholics.*

Swift's reasons for excluding the Dissenters from civil positions may be found temperately stated in his *Sentiments of a Church of England Man.*

The *Sentiments* also provides a stepping stone to an attack on a group of men whom Swift found as threatening to the Church as the Dissenters, namely the deists; for in his *Remarks upon 'The Rights of the Christian Church' (unpublished),* Swift extends the arguments of the *Sentiments* into an attack on the work of the deist Tindal.

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30 Davis in *Prose Works*, XII, xl-xlxi.  
31 Ibid., p. xli.  
32 Quintana, p. 349.  
33 Davis in *Prose Works*, XII, xlii.  
34 Quintana, p. 138.  
35 Ibid., p. 141.
other works in which Swift attacked the deists are the satirical *An Argument against Abolishing Christianity* and *Mr. Collins's Discourse of Freethinking*.36

These tracts are the remains of Swift as defender of the established Church. When judging the sincerity of Swift as a clergyman, it is well to remember that he often harmed his chances for preferment by writing these pamphlets. For example, in 1708, when Lord Godolphin indicated to Swift that the first-fruits could certainly be remitted in Ireland if the Irish Church would only consent to removal of the Test Act, it was not incumbent on Swift, a supposed Whig and a man who had hoped for advancement from the Whigs, to write two pamphlets against repealing the Test. This action shows him as a man who would never "go against what becometh a man of conscience and truth, and an entire friend to the Established Church."37

But Swift the clergyman has been overshadowed by Swift the controversialist. Swift was occupied for more than forty years, not as a rule with writing pamphlets, but with discharging his duties as a priest. And at a time when many churchmen were careless about their responsibilities, Swift was reasonably conscientious. For example, Swift's first assignment was to Kilroot, a prebend in

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36Ibid., p. 147. 37Quoted in Quintana, p. 122.
Northern Ireland consisting of three ruined parishes, two of which had no church at all, the third with a church without a roof. These three parishes had very few parishioners. Some parishes in Northern Ireland had no more than six. But Swift wrote and preached sermons to his half a handful of auditors, and when he returned to England in 1696, he was conscientious enough to leave a curate. At Laracor, Swift's next parish, matters were better than at Kilroot. Swift found a church in good repair and no fewer than fifteen parishioners to fill it on Sundays. As befitted a good churchman of the eighteenth century, Swift tried to improve his temporalities. At Laracor he repaired the residence and the grounds; he was particularly proud of his canal, willows, and cherry trees. He preached occasionally, and carefully chose the curates to whom he gave over the care of his parishes during his frequent absences. It should be stressed that this behavior toward his priestly responsibilities was unusually conscientious, for the time. Not infrequently the holder of pluralities made no provision at

38Landa, "'Not the Gravest of Divines,'" p. 43.
39Ibid. 40Ibid. 41Ibid. 42Forster, p. 80.
43Landa, "'Not the Gravest of Divines,'" p. 47.
44Ibid., p. 46  45Ibid.
all for curates to discharge religious duties in his parishes.46

As Dean of St. Patrick's, Swift discharged his duties in an exemplary manner. At his accession, he instituted a weekly Eucharist,47 and this at a time when so frequent an observance was rather unusual. In 1741 Bishop Secker urged the clergy of the diocese of Oxford to increase their number of administrations from three to four a year; and if possible to one administration a month.48 Of course, the weekly Eucharist was more common in the larger cities; but even in them, a monthly or fortnightly communion was much more common than a weekly one. For example, Dr. Wickham Legg reports that in London, in 1728, only eleven churches offered a weekly Eucharist.49

Apparently Swift preached "in his turn," that is, every fifth Sunday.50 And when he was not preaching he attended to whoever was, took notes on the sermon, and afterwards presented his criticisms of it to the preacher.51


48Abbey and Overton, p. 454.


50Landa in Prose Works, IX, 99.

51Landa, Swift and the Church of Ireland, p. 193.
In addition to fulfilling these obvious responsibilities Swift devoted much time to the minutiae of administering and maintaining a cathedral church. He presided over the cathedral chapter, saw that the buildings of the cathedral were kept in good repair, concerned himself with his leases, and generally involved himself in administrative matters.52

He had in his first years as Dean to fend off the attempts of Archbishop King and his adherents in the chapter to undermine his power and prerogatives.53 He battled to maintain the privileges of his decanal office, appealing for precedents to Bishop Atterbury and Dr. Younger, Dean of Salisbury.54 In addition, out of consideration for those who might hold that parish after him, he maintained and improved his living of Laracor. Thus in 1716 he arranged to add twenty acres to the Laracor glebe,55 which he intended to procure and improve at his own expense.56 His intent throughout seems to have been a vigorous discharge of his duties and a stout defense of his decanal dignities and prerogatives, which he was determined to pass unimpaired to his successor. In one of the last letters he

52Landa, "'Not the Gravest of Divines,'" pp. 51-52.
53Ibid., pp. 54-55.
54Correspondence, II, 194 and n. 2.
55Ibid., p. 218, n. 2. 56Ibid., p. 236.
drafted Swift appealed to the Chapter of St. Patrick's to aid him in his resolution "to preserve the Dignity of my Station, and the Honour of my Chapter."\(^{57}\)

All of these public acts and writings unfortunately reveal very little about Swift's private religious views and beliefs. However, two sources provide some information on these subjects. One is his sermons and his rather scanty writings on religion. The other consists of little noted or private acts or customs denoting piety unexpected in one so often considered a Christian in name only.

An example is provided by Letitia Pilkington, who professed herself "charmed" by the reverence Swift displayed while celebrating the Eucharist. She noted that he had committed the liturgy to memory and she observed that some of the congregation censured him for an act "favouring of Popery; which was that he bowed to the Holy Table."\(^{58}\) Thomas Sheridan spent weeks in the deanery before discovering by accident that Swift read prayers to the household every evening.\(^{59}\) It seems characteristic that Swift did not tell Sheridan about this reading of common prayer. According to Dr. Lyon, another habitual practice of the Dean's was daily meditation, in which he spent some time

\(^{57}\text{Ibid., V, 268.}\)  \(^{58}\text{Pilkington, p. 50.}\)

each night, taking some part of the liturgy as a starting point.\textsuperscript{60}

These isolated instances do not prove much about Swift's religious beliefs; but they do reveal a pattern in his life which seems to indicate some efforts at piety and some genuine attempts to practice what he was supposed to believe. It is tempting, but probably unwise, to emphasize one of this Thoughts on Religion: "I am not answerable to God for the doubts that arise in my own breast, since they are the consequence of that reason which he hath planted in me. . . ."\textsuperscript{61} Whether he was speaking in this passage of himself in particular or of men in general is not now determinable. But certainly Swift was vexed, as were many men of his time, by the seemingly contradictory claims made upon his belief by faith and reason.

The deists maintained that faith was "explicit," that is, that it "involved assent only when reason clearly perceived the nature of the doctrine or mystery" under examination.\textsuperscript{62} Many Orthodox churchmen preferred to believe that faith was "implicit"—that is, that it required "assent to a doctrine on authority, even though the doctrine

\textsuperscript{60}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 211-212.  \textsuperscript{61}\textit{Prose Works}, IX, 262.

is not fully comprehended" by the mind.\textsuperscript{63} On this question Swift's anti-rationalism\textsuperscript{64} came into play. Certainly one should not trust to reason alone, wrote Swift, for "the reason of every particular man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed and turned by his interests, his passions, and his vices."\textsuperscript{65} Moreover, Swift said that reason is at best a tool with limited capabilities.\textsuperscript{66} But Swift was not willing to dispense altogether with reason. He therefore adopted Locke's position: that it is incumbent on one to accept a revelation from God, "but whether it be a divine revelation or no, reason must judge."\textsuperscript{67} By this process implicit faith "resolves at last into a Ground highly Rational. . . . For certainly nothing can be more Reasonable than to believe whatever God (who is infallible) reveals."\textsuperscript{68}

Swift gave two aids in determining whether or not a mystery can be approved by man's reason. He said that a supposed mystery should come under suspicion if it is not taught or commanded in the Scriptures, or if it "turns to

\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., p. 252. \textsuperscript{64}See Quintana, pp. 55-56.
\textsuperscript{65}Quoted in Landa, "Swift, the Mysteries, and Deism," p. 248.
\textsuperscript{66}Ibid., p. 249.
\textsuperscript{67}Ibid., quotation from Locke, p. 251.
\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., quotation from John Norris, p. 255.
the Advantage of those who preach it to others."

Apparently Swift considered the dogmas of transubstantiation, predestination, and inspiration to be suspicious beliefs. As examples of valid mysteries Swift gives "The Resurrection and Change of our Bodies . . . ; our Saviour's Incarnation . . . : The Kingdom of God . . . ; . . . Faith, and the Word of God . . . :" and of course, the Trinity.

In accepting these and other mysteries of the Christian religion, Swift again displays his anti-rationalism. He professed to accept these dogmas without trying to understand them intellectually, and he fervently wished that everyone else would do the same. He thought that many of the schisms and controversies of the Church could have been avoided if clergymen had been willing to forego attempting to explain what could not be explained in any case. In A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately enter'd into Holy Orders, Swift observes, "I do not find that you are anywhere directed in the Canons, or Articles, to attempt explaining the Mysteries of the Christian Religion. And, indeed, since Providence intended there should be Mysteries; I do not see how it can be agreeable to Piety, Orthodoxy, or

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69Prose Works, IX, 162.
70F. M. Darnall, "Swift's Religion," JEPG, 30 (1931), 381.
71Prose Works, IX, 162.
good Sense, to go about such a Work." In one of the
Thoughts on Religion Swift explains the danger of attempting to expound the mysteries: "I believe that thousands of men would be orthodox enough in certain points, if divines had not been too curious, or too narrow, in reducing orthodoxy within the compass of subtleties, niceties, and distinctions..." Apparently Swift followed his own advice "upon solemn Days to deliver the Doctrine as the Church holds it, and confirm it by Scripture." And to Delany he once commented that "the Grand points of Christianity ought to be taken as infallible Revelations." One other point can be made about Swift's personal religious beliefs: he had an acute sense of the insignificance of man in relation to God. He once translated an epigram which sneered at the idea that a man's failure to fast might anger God. And in another place he exclaims, "Miserable mortals! can we contribute to the honour and Glory of God? I could wish that expression were struck out of our Prayer-books." The anti-intellectualism apparent in Swift's view of the Christian mysteries reveals itself also in his

72 Ibid., p. 77. 73 Ibid., p. 262.
74 Ibid., p. 77. 75 Correspondence, IV, 7.
76 Poems, III, 949. 77 Prose Works, IX, 263.
approach to philosophy. He once told Deane Swift that he had never understood "logic, physics, metaphysics, natural philosophy, mathematics, 'or anything of that sort.'"\textsuperscript{78} Perhaps as a result of this inability to understand abstractions, Swift disliked abstruse, metaphysical works. For example, he owned several of Berkeley's works, among them \textit{Alciphron or the Minute Philosopher}\.\textsuperscript{79} Swift knew Berkeley personally and tried to help him and further his projects. To that end Swift wrote in 1724 to Lord Carteret, giving an account of Berkeley and urging Carteret's support of him.\textsuperscript{80} But apparently Swift himself took little delight in Berkeley's books, for he admitted to Gay that he found the bishop's works "too speculative."\textsuperscript{81}

Walter J. Ong observes that what Swift was interested in was the "philosophico-physical speculation" of his time.\textsuperscript{82} For example, Swift abhorred the metaphysical parts of Descartes's work but was quite interested in the philosopher's "quasi-mechanistic conceptions."\textsuperscript{83} These, along with discussions of the work of Galileo and Copernicus,

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid., p. 213. \textsuperscript{80}Correspondence, III, 31-32.
\textsuperscript{81}Quoted in Ong, p. 213. \textsuperscript{82}Ibid., p. 211.
\textsuperscript{83}Ibid., p. 213.
Swift may have read in a popularization by Bernard de Fontenelle, *Entretiens sur la plurlaite des Mondes.*\(^8^4\) In addition to this book Swift owned the *Opera Omnia* of Francis Bacon, which he annotated and apparently drew on for examples for some of his own writings.\(^8^5\) Swift also owned a two volume set of Hobbes's philosophical works, a copy of *Elementa de Cive*, and two copies of *Leviathan.*\(^8^6\) Hobbes's philosophy—with which of course Swift did not agree—interested him and provided him with some examples in his writings.\(^8^7\) Finally, Swift was much influenced by the ideas of Locke, although Swift was displeased with Locke's contention that there are no innate ideas.\(^8^8\)

In attempting to assess the reaction of Swift to the philosophical thought of Lord Bolingbroke, one must first determine how much Swift knew of what Bolingbroke was attempting. Of course, Swift could not have known much about Bolingbroke's formal works, for they were published after both men were dead. But certainly in the course of their long acquaintance and the longer period of their correspondence, Swift must have found out many of Bolingbroke's opinions. Interestingly, indications are that

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\(^{8^4}\)Ibid.  \(^{8^5}\)Ibid., p. 211.  \(^{8^6}\)Ibid.  
\(^{8^7}\)Ibid., p. 212.  \(^{8^8}\)Ibid.
Swift was less disturbed by the deistical opinions of individual men than by their publishing of those opinions.

Liberty of conscience, that is, "the liberty of possessing our own thoughts and opinions," Swift allowed to all men, of a necessity; for, said he, "To say a man is bound to believe, is neither truth nor sense." What he did not allow was liberty of action, or dissemination. Liberty of conscience, when interpreted to mean liberty to "form conventicles . . . and print books" results in "revolutions, or at least convulsions and disturbances in a state," he declared. Bolingbroke in one place seems to share this view with Swift. In his declamation against freethinkers, Bolingbroke declares, "The persons I am describing think for themselves, and to themselves should they unhappily not be convinc'd by yr arguments, yet they will certainly think it their duty not to disturb the peace of the world by opposing you." With this idea Swift certainly would have agreed. One can only speculate what Swift's reaction would have been had he lived to see Mallet dropping Bolingbroke's deistical bombshells.

The correspondence indicates that Swift knew that Bolingbroke was at work on philosophical subjects. Both

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89 Prose Works, IX, 263. 90 Ibid., p. 261.
91 Ibid., p. 263. 92 Correspondence, III, 28.
Bolingbroke and Pope mention the Viscount's labors. Bolingbroke wrote, "... you will be surprized to find that I have been partly drawn by him [Pope] and partly by myself, to write a pretty large volume upon a very grave and very important subject. ..."93 Pope on one occasion mentioned that "My Neighbour's [Bolingbroke's] writings have been metaphysical,"94 and on another he hopes that Swift "will live to see and stare at the learned figure he [Bolingbroke] will make, on the same shelf with Locke and Malbranche."95

But Bolingbroke never gave Swift any clear idea of the exact content of his writings. In fact, Bolingbroke seems to have tried to play on Swift's known distaste for metaphysics and to make him think that his own metaphysical writings were designed to destroy metaphysics! Bolingbroke wrote, "... I have ventured to pay no regard whatever to any authority except sacred authority, and ... I have ventured to start a thought, which must ... render all your Metaphysical Theology both ridiculous and abominable."96 Later he wrote, "I propose, however, to reconcile you to Metaphysicks by shewing you how they may be employed against Metaphysicians, and that whenever you

93Ibid., IV, 6. 94Ibid., p. 158.
95Ibid., p. 254. 96Ibid., p. 6.
do not understand them nobody else does, no not those who
write them."\textsuperscript{97}

Whether Lord Bolingbroke tried deliberately to divert
Swift's attention to an attack upon metaphysics is not now
determinable. But Swift did accept Bolingbroke's emphasis,
as he showed when he wrote to Pope, "My Lord B's attempt
of reducing Metaphysicks to intelligible sence & usefull-
ness will be a glorious undertaking, & as I never knew him
fayl in any thing he attempted, if he had the sole manage-
ment, So I am confident he will succeed in this. . . ."\textsuperscript{98}

Swift did know some of Bolingbroke's philosophical
opinions, and the two men sometimes debated various points
through the mails. In a letter written in June, 1724, (now
lost) Swift apparently accused Bolingbroke of being a
freethinker. On September 12, 1724, Bolingbroke wrote a
long reply to this charge, relying heavily on semantic
subtleties to clear himself. A freethinker, says Boling-
broke, is a pest to society, because he attempts "to losen
the bands of it."\textsuperscript{99} Moreover (says Bolingbroke), a free-
thinker is so determined to tear down the edifice of the
established religion that in his zeal he ruins the house
of natural religion, too.\textsuperscript{100} And, says Bolingbroke, "I

\textsuperscript{97}Ibid., p. 45. \textsuperscript{98}Ibid., pp. 263-264.

\textsuperscript{99}Ibid., III, 27. \textsuperscript{100}Ibid., pp. 27-28.
therefore not only disown, but detest this character."

He then presents his own highly laudatory definition of a freethinker: "If indeed by Esprit fort, or freethinker, you only mean a Man who makes a free use of his Reason, who searches after truth with out passion, or prejudice, & adheres inviolably to it, you mean a wise & honest Man, and such an one as I labour to be." He then defends and commends a full use of the faculty of "Reason or common Sence," deplores the deterioration of original Christianity, and concludes, "I make no doubt but you are by this time abundantly convinc'd of my orthodoxy. . . ."

Unhappily Swift's reply to this letter has not been preserved. But this letter of Bolingbroke's contains hints of his beliefs. For example, in this letter are references to his views on natural religion and some indications of his ideas about the nature of "real" Christianity. Plainly, he thinks that established Christianity has little in common with the religion of Jesus. And he even insinuates that Christianity is completely reasonable--thus putting himself in the camp of the deists. In a letter of August 8, 1731, he hints that he does not believe in evil

101Ibid., p. 28. 102Ibid. 103Ibid.
104Ibid., pp. 38-29. 105Ibid., p. 29.
106Ibid., pp. 28-29. 107Ibid., p. 28.
when he observes that in the Essay on Man Pope is answering the charge concerning "the supposed unequal Dispensations of Providence";\(^{108}\) and that belief in the ultimate fairness of Providence hints at another opinion, which is that there is no heaven or hell.\(^{109}\) In another place he notes that moral maxims, because formulated according to the behavior of a limited number of men, may be fallible.\(^{110}\)

Possibly Swift did not approve of these beliefs, but probably he was not startled by them. After all, he had known for years that Bolingbroke was only a nominal Christian, and apparently the knowledge caused him no great concern. In the Journal to Stella Swift recorded, "I was early with the secretary to-day, but he was gone to his devotions, and to receive the sacrament; several rakes did the same; it was not for piety, but employments; according to act of parliament."\(^{111}\) Apparently Swift was not shocked in the least by St. John's hypocrisy. And Swift certainly received obvious signals regarding Bolingbroke's view of Christianity, as for example, his casual comment that Mystery led millions by the nose.\(^{112}\) But apparently Swift was willing to allow Bolingbroke the liberty of conscience which he thought the right of every man. Perhaps he would

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\(^{108}\)Ibid., III, 489.  \(^{109}\)Ibid., p. 489.  
\(^{110}\)Ibid., IV, 240.  \(^{111}\)Journal, II, 420-421.  
\(^{112}\)Correspondence, II, 395.
have balked had Bolingbroke proposed publishing some of his unorthodox beliefs.
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Books


**Articles**


