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Thomas Morgan (1671/2-1743): from presbyterian preacher to Christian deist : A contribution to the study of English deism

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Citation

Berg, J. van den. (2018, November 8). *Thomas Morgan (1671/2-1743): from presbyterian preacher to Christian deist : A contribution to the study of English deism*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/66795>

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Issue Date: 2018-11-08

Chapter Two: Morgan's writings before the publication of *The moral philosopher*

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§1: Introduction

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This chapter will discuss Morgan's writings before the publication of his major work, *The moral philosopher* of 1737. In more or less chronological order these writings revolve around Morgan's contribution to the pamphlet war related to the Salters' Hall Conference (1719), the debate with Thomas Chubb, and his medical works. It is important to realize that a development takes place in Morgan's thinking and publishing throughout those years. His literary output focuses on a variety of topics. The catalogue of his published works and pamphlets has in general some twenty-five numbers.¹ In some cases there is doubt about their authorship. Most works from the Salters' Hall period are written as reaction to texts by other people, and deal with Arianism and Enthusiasm. Morgan defends the Arian position and accuses most of his antagonists of Enthusiasm. At first, he defends an orthodox vision on Scripture, which over time gives way to the primacy of reason. After his dismissal from Marlborough, he enters into debate with the deist Thomas Chubb. In the meantime, he publishes his first medical work. It is amazing to see his growing production in various fields in a relatively short period of time.

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§2: The pamphlet war around the Salters' Hall Conference during the years 1719-1724

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The first group of pamphlets by Morgan all deal with the Salters' Hall Conference in February 1719. This was a (non-)subscription controversy among the dissenters, about adherence to the Trinity dogma.

The General Body of London Dissenting Ministers, composed of Presbyterian, Independents and Baptists, was convened in Salters' Hall in London by the Committee of Three Denominations to discuss the question: Must ministers subscribe to the confession, or is the Bible sufficient? Salters' Hall appeared to be a watershed between liberal and creed-bounded dissent. A split between the two occurred at Salters' Hall.² Arian influences had been discerned before among the dissenters. But with the appearance in 1712 of *The Scripture doctrine of the Trinity* by the Rector of St. James's, Piccadilly, Samuel Clarke, things moved in a rapid maelstrom. Clarke collected 1251 texts of the New Testament relating to the Trinity. He outlined fifty-five propositions about the Trinity. According to Thomas Pfizenmaier, he was not a heretic, although he was commonly acknowledged as such.³ The dissenters read the book eagerly.⁴ In the Exeter dissenting academy, Clarke's book was openly discussed by the students. In 1718, discussion started among the members of Exeter assembly about the eternity of the Son of God. The Exeter body sought advice from the four lecturers at Salters' Hall and from other ministers in London. But they sent a message to put the question before some ministers from the West of England. These seven ministers stated

¹ N.N., *British Museum*, 375-78.

² A. Gordon, *Addresses biographical and historical*, London, 1922, 123-156: 'The story of Salters' Hall', 124; Colligan, *The Arian movement*, 1913; Wiles, *An archetypal heresy*, 62-164: 'The rise and fall of British Arianism', especially 134-56.

³ Th.C. Pfizenmaier, *The Trinitarian doctrine of dr. Samuel Clarke (1675-1729): context, sources, and controversy*, (Studies in the History of Christian Thought 75), Leiden, 1997, 4-9, 220.

⁴ Thomas, 'Presbyterians in transition', in: Bolam and others, *The English Presbyterians*, 149-50.

that denial of the true and proper divinity of Christ was to be regarded as a disqualifying error. As a result, in March 1719, two Exeter Presbyterian ministers, James Peirce and Joseph Hallett, were dismissed, because they did not want to subscribe.⁵

In the meantime, in London, the threefold body of Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists came together to discuss the matter at the end of February 1719 and later on in March. A manifest entitled *Advices for peace*, written by the politician and apologist John Shute Barrington, was discussed. In this document, Barrington asked to secure accusations of heresy not based on gossip, and to secure adherence to the Scriptures as an attestation of orthodoxy.⁶ Thomas Bradbury, the famous Independent minister of New Street, Fetter Lane, wrote a strong Trinitarian preamble to the *Advices*. But the majority of those present in Salters' Hall voted against it. With 57 votes to 53, the principle of Scripture sufficiency gained the day. Afterwards, the meetings split in disorder, the most rigorous participants following Bradbury. But the division was not along denominational lines. Salters' Hall was not a split between Independents and Presbyterians. It is described as the most critical event, which has ever occurred in the history of Non-conformity, in the sense that it revealed the thoroughly Protestant attitude of the non-subscribers.⁷ In the end, it turned out to be about the liberties of English dissent.⁸ Afterwards, many pamphlets appeared about the discussions at Salters' Hall and their consequences.

Thomas Morgan was not present at Salters' Hall, as one author seems to suggest, but he participated in the pamphlet war arising from it.⁹ He refers to the Salters' Hall debate various times in his publications and he shows himself much interested in the case.¹⁰ A number of his opponents were subscribers. Morgan clearly took the side of the Non-subscribers and the Arian side, as we shall see below.

⁵ A. Brockett, *Nonconformity in Exeter 1650-1875*, Manchester, 1962, 74-95: 'Disruption, 1716-20', 82; Gordon, *Addresses*, 134; see for the details D.L. Wykes, sub voce, 'Peirce, James', in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, volume 43, London, 2004, 449-52.

⁶ Thomas, 'Presbyterians in transition', 159.

⁷ Gordon, *Addresses*, 143, 147; Thomas, 'Presbyterians in transition', 163-4; Colligan, *Eighteenth century nonconformity*, 23-33: 'The Salters' Hall controversy', 23, 33.

⁸ Gordon, *Addresses*, 153: 'The rift at Salters' Hall will be for ever memorable; for then and there the future of the liberties of English Dissent was at high cost secured'; see further for the Salters' Hall conference F.J. Powicke, 'The Salters' Hall controversy', *Congregational Historical Society Transactions*, 7 (1916) 110-124; R. Thomas, 'The non-subscription controversy amongst dissenters in 1719: the Salters' Hall debate', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 4 (1953) 162-86; Ch.S. Sealy, *Church authority and non-subscription controversies in early eighteenth century Presbyterianism*, Ph.D. thesis Glasgow, 2010, 18-65: 'English controversies: Exeter and Salters' Hall'.

⁹ Wigelsworth, 'The disputed root', 32: 'His (i.e. Morgan's) participation in the 1719 dissenting debates at Salters' Hall'; also J.R. Wigelsworth, *Deism in Enlightenment England: theology, politics, and Newtonian public science*, Manchester, 2009, 133; Hudson, *Enlightenment*, 75, curiously places the Salters' Hall controversy in 1717.

¹⁰ (Th. Morgan), *The nature and consequences of enthusiasm consider'd, in some short remarks on the doctrine of the blessed trinity stated and defended. In a letter to Mr. Tong, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Smith and Mr. Reynolds*, London, 1719, 26; Th. Morgan, *The grounds and principles of Christian communion consider'd*, London, s.a., 4, 37.

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§3: The four London Presbyterian subscribing ministers

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Morgan's first pamphlet was entitled: *The nature and consequences of enthusiasm consider'd, in some short remarks on the doctrine of the blessed Trinity stated and defended. In a letter to Mr. Tong, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Smith and Mr. Reynolds*, and was published in 1719 by 'a Protestant dissenter'. It was a reaction to a publication in the same year by these four named London Presbyterian ministers: *The doctrine of the blessed Trinity stated and defended*. William Tong was an influential Presbyterian minister at Salters' Hall Court in Cannon Street, and manager of the Presbyterian Fund in London. This was the wealthiest congregation among the London dissenters. Tong maintained the orthodox view on the Trinity, being one of the leaders of the subscribing party at Salters' Hall. Benjamin Robinson was a Presbyterian minister at Little St. Helen's, Bishopsgate Street, and a prominent advocate of subscription. Jeremiah Smith was a minister at Silver Street Presbyterian Chapel, London. Thomas Reynolds was a Presbyterian minister at Little Eastcheap, London, and also a subscriber.¹¹ Morgan shows himself to be somewhat disappointed by their book, criticizing the authors as follows: 'I think it will be the more necessary here to distinguish between your opinion, or sense of Scripture, and Scripture itself'. In this pamphlet he expresses his orthodox view about Scripture: 'Scripture it self is supposed to be the infallible Word of God, which cannot possibly be false'. The judgment of fallible men was something other, however. Things above reason must be brought down to our understandings and capacities.¹² Clearly, Morgan was no ardent defender of the Trinity. He attacks the four leading members of the subscribing party, accusing them, among other things, of Enthusiasm and Tritheism. Enthusiasm was a favourite label at the time to hurl at one's opponents. Morgan likes to imply ridicule, accusing them of Tritheism: 'For who would not be orthodox at so cheap a rate, as making the words three and one seems to chime so as to belong in some sense or other to the same thing?'.¹³ None of these four divines reacted in public to Morgan's pamphlet. But another subscriber did.

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§4: The Independent minister of New Street, Fetter Lane, Thomas Bradbury

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Thomas Bradbury was an embittered subscribing partisan. The journalist Daniel Defoe described him nicely as a dealer in many words. Bradbury gained fame as a highly political preacher, who had many hearers. He played an important role in the discussions at Salters' Hall. In 1720, he published *The necessity of contending for revealed religion*, in which he twice referred negatively to Morgan's pamphlet.¹⁴

¹¹ A. Gordon, sub voce 'Tong, William', in: *Dictionary of National Biography*, Volume 57, London, 1899, 30; A. Gordon, sub voce 'Robinson, Benjamin', in: *Dictionary of National Biography*, Volume 49, London, 1897, 4; Thomas, 'Presbyterians in transition', 164.

¹² (Morgan), *The nature and consequences*, 4-5, 39, 19.

¹³ (Morgan), *The nature and consequences*, 26.

¹⁴ Thomas, 'Presbyterians in transition', 167 note 2; (D. Defoe), *A friendly epistle by way of reproof from one of the people called Quakers, to Thomas Bradbury, a dealer in many words*, London, 1715; this very popular pamphlet reached six imprints in 1715; Th. Bradbury, *The necessity of contending for revealed religion*, London, 1720, xii, 13.

When a second edition of Morgan's pamphlet appeared in that same year, 1720, it had an addition entitled *A postscript occasion'd by Mr. Bradbury's discourse, intitl'd, The necessity of contending for reveal'd religion*. Morgan did not like Bradbury's style: 'I have never seen more conceit and vanity, uncharitableness and ill-nature, put together'... 'He sets out upon the strength of his own infallibility'. On page after page Morgan heaps ridicule upon his opponent.

Morgan accepts the idea of revelation. 'Revelation is the light that renders things visible'. He declares: 'That the Christian doctrines are in themselves, and laying outside the testimony of Scripture, irrational, absurd, and ridiculous, is the only speculative principle of deism and infidelity'.¹⁵ That is the first time he refers to Deism. Deism and infidelity are part of the negative and critical view of Morgan on Deism in those years. Later on, his views will change completely.

Morgan attacked Bradbury again in *The absurdity of opposing faith to reason: or, a defence of Christianity against the power of enthusiasm. In answer to Mr. Bradbury's sermon on the fifth of November, intitl'd, the nature of faith. Adress'd to the five ministers concern'd with him in carrying on the lecture at Pinner's-Hall*, published in 1722. He ridicules Bradbury for 'having thought fit in his Christian wisdom, openly, and in the face of the world, to renounce all pretensions to reason'.¹⁶ Reason is part and parcel of the conduct of Biblical figures such as Noah and Abraham. Noah acted upon this eternal and unchangeable principle of reason, 'that God cannot lye', and so he built an ark upon 'the principle of self-preservation, which I hope is a principle of reason'.¹⁷

So did Abraham in his obedience in the offering of his son. He knew that what God had promised he was also able to perform: 'He knew that God could have rais'd up his son'. Morgan concludes: 'the religion of these patriarchs ... was ever a rational religion'.¹⁸ We see here a clear development in Morgan's thinking from Scriptural orthodoxy to the primacy of reason.

Understandably, Bradbury did not like Morgan at all. In 1723 he wrote about Morgan: 'This man I have no design of taking any notice of'. He described this last pamphlet of Morgan's some years later, in 1726, with the following words: 'Such a rant of profaneness, ill manners, and impudence runs thro' a pamphlet called a Defence of Christianity against the power of enthusiasm, by Mr. Thomas Morgan of Marlborough', calling Morgan afterwards an 'ignorant writer'. Even in 1743 after Morgan's death, he remembered Morgan as a lampoonist.¹⁹ We do not know whether these two vehement characters ever met.

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§5: The Presbyterian minister of Wilton, Samuel Fancourt

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In the meantime, the Presbyterian minister of Wilton (three miles west of Salisbury), Samuel Fancourt, wrote against Morgan's first pamphlet *An essay concerning certainty and infallibility, or, certain reflections upon a pamphlet, stiled, The nature and consequences of*

¹⁵ (Morgan), *The nature and consequences*, 2nd edition, London, 1720, 38, 51.

¹⁶ Th. Morgan, *The absurdity of opposing faith to reason*, London, 1722, 1.

¹⁷ Morgan, *The absurdity*, 20.

¹⁸ Morgan, *The absurdity*, 23-24.

¹⁹ Th. Bradbury, *Twenty-eight sermons ... preach'd at Pinner's-Hall*, London, 1723, xiii; Th. Bradbury, *The charge of God to Gideon. In three sermons*, London, 1727, Preface, and 74; Th. Bradbury, *Six sermons on Hebr. vi 12*, London, 1743, iv.

enthusiasm considered, dated December 17th 1719. Fancourt was a pupil of three of the four London ministers and defended them against the far-fetched objections and bitterness of Morgan.²⁰ Later on, Fancourt acquired fame as the initiator of a circulating library in Salisbury.²¹ He probably knew the author of *The nature and consequences of enthusiasm considered*. He reproaches the author: ‘The very title of your book is wrote with a pen dipt in poison’. Morgan’s comparison of the four London ministers with a sect of enthusiasts he thinks to be a nasty affront. Fancourt quotes many phrases from *The nature and consequences of enthusiasm considered*, to reprimand them afterwards. In this he is a staunch defender of the four London ministers. They look for certainty, yes, but they cannot be accused of being infallible. Fancourt observes that this is a black indictment.²²

Morgan answered anonymously with *The nature and consequences of enthusiasm, defended; against the reflections of the reverend Mr. Samuel Fancourt ... In a second letter to Mr. Tong, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Smith and Mr. Reynolds* (1720). It is in fact not a second letter, but a lengthy reaction to Fancourt’s pamphlet, in which he ridicules the relationship of Fancourt with the London ministers. In it he defends the freedom to defend himself against men who ‘make new fundamental articles of faith, and declare any thing as necessary to salvation and church communion, that Christ has not made so’.²³ But Fancourt did not give up. He responded with *Enthusiasm retorted, or: remarks on Mr. Morgan’s second letter to the four London ministers*, dated April 4th 1722. Obviously, Fancourt did know publicly who the author of the letters was. On page after page he discusses Morgan’s second letter in a long-winded manner. In this pamphlet, he discusses circumstantially the doctrine of the Trinity, quoting the works of Clarke and Waterland. He was disappointed by Morgan: ‘I cannot but grief to see the pen of a minister thus prostituted to scandal and calumny’. He did not like Morgan either:

Mr. Morgan’s conduct in this affair appears to me such a palpable contradiction to his pompous profession about the sincerity of his enquiries, and his infinite value for truth, that I find it difficult, without commencing an enthusiast, to believe the truth and sincerity of his profession.²⁴

Morgan had the last word in 1723 with *A defence of the two letters ..., against Mr. Fancourt’s Enthusiasm retorted*. A remarkable example of Morgan’s mocking style is the first phrase of this pamphlet: ‘The reverend mr. Samuel Fancourt, after three years silence in the controversy betwixt him and me relating to the four London ministers, has now at length, I suppose,

²⁰ S. Fancourt, *An essay concerning certainty and infallibility, or, certain reflections upon a pamphlet, stiled, The nature and consequences of enthusiasm considered*, London, 1720, iii.

²¹ See on Fancourt K.A. Manley, ‘The road to Camelot: lotteries, the circle of learning, and the “circular library” of Samuel Fancourt’, *The Library*, 8 (2008) 398-422; M. Little, *Samuel Fancourt 1687-1768, pioneer librarian*, Trowbridge, 1984.

²² Fancourt, *An essay*, iv, 4, 15.

²³ (Th. Morgan), *The nature and consequences of enthusiasm defended; against the reflections of the reverend mr. Samuel Fancourt*, London, 1720, 33.

²⁴ S. Fancourt, *Enthusiasm retorted, or: remarks on Mr. Morgan’s second letter to the four London ministers*, London, 1722, 29, 39.

convinced the world, that while he said nothing, he did not spare for thinking'.²⁵ A nice example of the way in which Morgan showed his cynicism. He reproaches Fancourt for defending his brethren without arguments. All these four pamphlets excel in aridity and diffuseness and prolixity.

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§6: The minister of the Scottish church, John Cumming

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Morgan also took up his pen to write against John Cumming, who in the final stage of his life was a minister of the Scottish church in London.²⁶ This text was entitled *The grounds and principles of Christian communion consider'd. In a letter to the Reverend Mr. John Cumming M.A., occasion'd by his dissertation concerning the authority of Scripture-consequences*.²⁷ Cumming belonged to the subscribing party and in 1724 preached the funeral service for Benjamin Robinson, one of the four above-mentioned London ministers. Cumming had written about the differences of the London ministers around the Salters' Hall Conference. In this pamphlet, Morgan exhibits some characteristic views about his changing position concerning Scripture. Scripture is in many cases subject to different interpretations and therefore we depend on our own understanding and judgment. That is exactly what the more conservative dissenters wanted to avoid by imposing a subscription on the confession. Moreover, Morgan appears to move gradually away from orthodox views by asserting that 'The Scripture is a complete system of natural as well as reveal'd religion'. There are two different classes or kinds of truth contained in Scripture. 'I must here distinguish betwixt principles of reason and principles of revelation'. The first principle of natural religion is that man is an intelligent agent under the moral government of God, as the supreme independent first cause of all things.²⁸ Here Morgan clearly accepts the difference between revelation and natural religion, accepting reason as the decisive preference. Later on, he will continue along those lines, diminishing the value of divine revelation.

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§7: The Independent minister of Warminster, Joseph Pyke

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After a relative silence during the year 1721, Morgan again became very active as a pamphleteer in 1722. At least five pamphlets went to the press. The first was *A refutation of the false principles assumed and apply'd by the Reverend Mr. Joseph Pyke, ..., to which is added: Some short remarks on Sir Richard Blackmores's just prejudices against the Arian hypothesis. With a postscript concerning the real agreement between the Athanasians and the Socinians in the Trinitarian controversy*, dated November 16th 1721. It is a pamphlet with a very confusing title and contents.²⁹ Pyke was 'one of the most vehement and prolific writers

²⁵ Th. Morgan, *A defence of the two letters ... against Mr. Fancourt's enthusiasm retorted*, London, 1723, 3.

²⁶ E. Jacobs, *A funeral sermon occasioned by the death of the late reverend John Cumming, D.D., minister of the Scots church, in London. Who departed this life Sept. 7, 1729*, London, 1729.

²⁷ London, s.a., dated May 18th 1720.

²⁸ Morgan, *The grounds and principles*, 23-4, 65-6, 7-9.

²⁹ Joseph Pyke had studied at Bridgwater Academy and had been a minister in Blakeney, Gloucestershire, since 1715, and was from 1720 till 1726 minister at the Common Close in Warminster in Western Wiltshire, see A. Gordon, *Freedom after ejection: a review (1660-1692) of Presbyterian and Congregational nonconformity in England and Wales*, Manchester, 1917, 333; *Dissenting Academies Online*, retrieved 13.12.2017.

against Arianism'.³⁰ Pyke had written *An impartial view of the difficulties that affect the Trinitarian, or clog the Arian, scheme*, dated June 29th 1721. Morgan accuses him of writing 'a thick cloud of unintelligible terms', contrary to reason, and being a 'monotritheist'. One of the false principles was according to Morgan that Pyke was of the view that Jesus of Nazareth was not a human person: 'Man in general, but not man in particular'. In this refutation, Morgan hammers on the same question about Scripture: 'The question therefore is this, whether any thing ought to be made necessary to salvation and Christian communion, that the Holy Ghost in Scripture had not clearly, expressly, and definitively declared as such'.³¹ In the postscript he defines the difference between Athanasians and Socinians as follows: 'The one affirm, and the other deny the supreme deity or godhead of our lord Jesus Christ'. But the Socinians never denied 'the personal union of the supreme God with the man Jesus Christ'. According to Morgan, they agree on this union.³²

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§8: Two other pamphlets by Morgan

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Another pamphlet was written by Morgan under the pseudonym Philanthropus Oxoniensis in 1722 against the Master of Magdalene College, in Cambridge, Daniel Waterland: *A letter to the reverend Dr. Waterland occasion'd by his late writings in defence of the Athanasian hypothesis*. Waterland was known for his successful defence of Trinitarian orthodoxy.³³ He had published in 1719 a voluminous *Vindication of Christ's divinity* against the Rector of Rossington, John Jackson.³⁴ For reasons of caution Morgan chose a pseudonym, which he later relinquished in the publication of this pamphlet in the *Collection of tracts* in 1726. He complains about the confusion resulting from Waterland's use of terms such as hypostasis, substance and unity.³⁵ Morgan took a more Arian stand in his criticism of Waterland's Athanasian orthodoxy: 'Your hypothesis is really a contradiction'.³⁶ Waterland did not react to this pamphlet by Morgan.³⁷

In the same year, Morgan published a pamphlet under the title: *A letter to Sir Richard Blackmore occasioned by his book intituled Modern Arians unmasked*.³⁸ He had already written about Blackmore a year before.³⁹ He now again accuses him of offering 'no good

³⁰ A. Rosenberg, *Sir Richard Blackmore: a poet and physician of the augustan age*, Lincoln, NE, 1953, 128.

³¹ Th. Morgan, *A refutation of the false principles assumed and apply'd by the Reverend Mr. Joseph Pyke*, London, 1722, 4, 7, 11, 24, 34.

³² Morgan, *A refutation, postscript* (37-45) 42, 45.

³³ R.T. Holtby, *Daniel Waterland 1683-1740: a study in eighteenth-century orthodoxy*, Carlisle, 1966, preface, 27: 'Waterland's reputation as the principal champion of Trinitarian orthodoxy ... was recognised by friend and foe alike'.

³⁴ Holtby, *Daniel Waterland*, 21-22.

³⁵ (Th. Morgan), *A letter to the reverend Dr. Waterland occasion'd by his late writings in defence of the Athanasian hypothesis*, London, 1722, 3.

³⁶ (Morgan), *A letter*, 11.

³⁷ Holtby, *Daniel Waterland*, does not mention this pamphlet of Morgan.

³⁸ dated Marlborough, March 14th 1722.

³⁹ See § 7.

argument or reason at all'.⁴⁰ Morgan's unorthodox position was very clear. In this letter to Sir Richard Blackmore, some time physician in ordinary to King William III and to Queen Anne, he stated: 'For my own Part, I am fully and clearly perswaded, that the *Athanasian Scheme* relating to the *Trinity* and *Incarnation* is unscriptural and self-contradictory'.⁴¹ But he could also state that he was not 'declaring for Arianism'.⁴² Together with the letter to Waterland this indicates that Morgan was fast moving away from his Trinitarian confession in Frome to a more heterodox vision on the Trinity. With these pamphlets ends Morgan's contribution to the Salters' Hall pamphlet war.

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§9: Against the power of Enthusiasm

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The word "Enthusiasm" occurs with regularity in the titles and the contents of these tracts of Morgan. His object is clearly to defend Christianity against the power of Enthusiasm. According to Morgan, Enthusiasm is the belief in mysterious or unintelligible propositions. He complains how far reason and common sense may be lost in the wilds of Enthusiasm. Furthermore, he states that no force of reasoning can prevail against the weight and strength of Enthusiasm. 'When a man is well settled in his enthusiasm, and sufficiently heated with a mysterious fire, he may work himself up to a strong persuasion, not only without, and beyond, but even contrary to all rational evidence whatever'.⁴³ Morgan is by no means the only one who wrote against Enthusiasm at the time.⁴⁴ More than a hundred and twenty English books and pamphlets with the words *enthusiasm* or *enthusiast(s)* in the title appeared in the 18th century alone. In the previous century, during the Civil War Era, enthusiastic activity appears to have been at its height.⁴⁵ It is difficult to give a clear definition of Enthusiasm. According to Heyd the denotation of the term was very broad in the 17th century. The term had a variety of meanings. It could refer to a specific group within the broad spectrum of the Radical Reformation, such as the Anabaptists. But in general, the label was rather loosely used. Enthusiasm was seen as dangerous because it challenged the central mediating symbols and institutions of Christianity. Enthusiasm meant anarchy, disorder and licentiousness. Another author, the twentieth-century historian J.G.A. Pocock, was more convinced that Enthusiasm denoted the fury of the millennial sects.⁴⁶ In the 18th century,

⁴⁰ Morgan, *A letter to Sir Richard Blackmore*, 4.

⁴¹ Morgan, *A letter to Sir Richard Blackmore*, 62.

⁴² Morgan, *A letter to Sir Richard Blackmore*, 33; see above Chapter 1 § 12.

⁴³ (Morgan), *The nature and consequences*, 16; Morgan, *The absurdity*, 3; (Morgan), *The nature and consequences*, 14-15.

⁴⁴ See M. Heyd, *"Be sober and reasonable": The critique of enthusiasm in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries*, (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 63), Leiden, 1995, who however does not mention Morgan; L. Laborie, *Enlightening enthusiasm: prophecy and religious experience in early eighteenth-century England*, Manchester, 2015, 149.

⁴⁵ There are abundant examples of this enthusiastic activity, culminating in the activist group of the Fifth Monarchy men in the years from 1651, see K. Thomas, *Religion and the decline of magic, studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth- and seventeenth century England*, Harmondsworth, 1973, 156-71 (169-71).

⁴⁶ Heyd, *"Be sober and reasonable"*, 5, 6, 16, 22, 22-23, 40, 41; J.G.A. Pocock, 'Enthusiasm: the antiself of Enlightenment', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 60 (1997) 7-28 (10).

Enthusiasm was still suspect and viewed as the equal of religious fanaticism.⁴⁷ In his famous *Letter concerning enthusiasm*, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1708), ridiculed the enthusiasts, stating: ‘Good humour is not only the best security against enthusiasm, but the best foundation of piety and true religion’. Shaftesbury pleaded for a tolerant attitude towards Enthusiasm because it was in his eyes a medical phenomenon.⁴⁸ Nor did John Wesley like the word, as may be inferred from his sermon on *The nature of enthusiasm* (1750, and reprinted as a pamphlet in 1755, 1778 and 1789), in which he was ‘steering a course between sound and spurious enthusiasm’.⁴⁹ Later, he had to fight against the extravagancies of some fanatical Methodists such as George Bell and Thomas Maxfield. In December 1761, Wesley wrote to his brother Charles: ‘We are always in danger of enthusiasm, but I think no more than any time these twenty years’.⁵⁰ In the 19th century, Enthusiasm would become a more positive term. In the Oxford movement, Enthusiasm was the keynote of evangelical Christianity. It acquired a decidedly favourable sense, denoting a contrast to lukewarmness or indifference.⁵¹ So the battle against Enthusiasm, which Morgan took upon himself, was a typical eighteenth-century phenomenon. Morgan used the term to denote his less rational opponents.

§10: Master John Hildrop of Marlborough and Peter Nisbett of Bristol

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Morgan started another series of pamphlets on the theme of Enthusiasm in 1722: *Enthusiasm in distress: or, an examination of the reflections upon reason, in a letter to Phileleuterus Britannicus*, dated May 15th 1722. *Phileleuterus Britannicus* is a pseudonym for the religious writer John Hildrop.⁵² Hildrop was from 1703 Master of the Royal Free Grammar School at Marlborough. In 1722, Hildrop published anonymously his *Reflections upon reason*, a satire on freethinking. Morgan criticizes the author: ‘You, Sir, in this very book, have as much mistaken and perverted the right use of reason, both in name as thing, as any pretty gentleman, or minute philosopher in the world’. He states that Christianity is highly reasonable. He here also mentions that the deist who submits himself to the obligations of natural religion, makes a fair step, and a great advance towards Christianity.⁵³ This last phrase

⁴⁷ Ch.J. Abbey, ‘Enthusiasm’ in: Abbey and Overton, *The English church*, 226-78 (226); J.H. Overton and F. Relton, *The English church from the accession of George I to the end of the eighteenth century (1714-1800)*, London, 1924, 47.

⁴⁸ See Heyd, “*Be sober and reasonable*”, 211-40: ‘Shaftesbury and the limits of toleration concerning enthusiasm’; (A.A. Cooper, 3rd earl of Shaftesbury), *A letter concerning enthusiasm*, London, 1708, 35; Heyd, “*Be sober and reasonable*”, 218, 278.

⁴⁹ H. Boyles, *Romanticism and Methodism: the problem of religious enthusiasm*, Abingdon, 2017, 11.

⁵⁰ S.C. Carpenter, *Eighteenth century church and people*, London, 1959, 198; quoted by C.N. Impeta, *De leer der heiliging en volmaking bij Wesley en Fletcher*, Leiden, 1913, 267-275: *De strijd met de enthousiasten*, 267.

⁵¹ G. Faber, *Oxford apostles: a character study of the Oxford movement*, reprint, Harmondsworth, 1954, 83; P.B. Nockles, *The Oxford movement in context: Anglican high churchmanship 1760-1857*, reprint, Cambridge, 1997, 196.

⁵² J.M. Rigg, sub voce ‘Hildrop, John’, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, volume 27, Oxford, 2004, 97.

⁵³ Th. Morgan, *Enthusiasm in distress*, London, 1722, 8, 14, 16-7.

is a prudent indication that at this time Morgan is moving to the deist's position, but not accepting it whole-heartedly.⁵⁴

An answer to Morgan's pamphlet came from the hand of Peter Nisbett, dated Bristol, Jan. 28th 1722-3: *Comprehension, more properly than enthusiasm, in distress, proved by Mr. Thomas Morgan, a dissenting teacher. And farther explained, in a familiar letter to himself*, published in 1723.⁵⁵ He did not like Morgan very much: 'You can manage either side of a question, and banter your reader in a belief of what you scarce believe a word of yourself'.⁵⁶ Morgan reacted with *A postscript to enthusiasm in distress, occasion'd by a pamphlet, intituled, comprehension more properly than enthusiasm in distress, said to be written by one mr. Peter Nisbet*, published in 1723, in which he doubts whether there exists any such person called Nisbett.⁵⁷

Morgan asks him whether Scripture 'is not the only rule, and a sufficient rule of christian faith and practice?'.⁵⁸ Nisbett reacted with *Comprehension confusion. Mr. Nisbett's second letter to Mr. Morgan*, published in 1724. He quoted Fancourt's *Enthusiasm retorted* on the title page and in the rest of this pamphlet. The style of *Comprehension confusion* is the same as the first pamphlet of Nisbett: 'Your whole performance being only a demonstration what a bad cause you had undertaken'. At the end, the confusion is complete, when he sums up: 'Disputing with you was like hunting a Pole-cat, where a man was sure to get nothing but dirt and stink'.⁵⁹ Morgan had the last word in 1724 with *A second postscript to enthusiasm in distress*, dated Marlborough, May 13th 1724. Morgan was not amused with some insinuations from the side of Peter Nisbett. So he wrote in the *Postscript*: 'There is one very unfair and unchristian insinuation, that Mr. Nisbett has made up and down in his book, as if I had intended artfully to favour the cause of deism'.⁶⁰ There for the first time we hear that Thomas Morgan is suspected of adhering to Deism himself. This phrase in the *Postscript* indicates that at this time Morgan did not consider himself a deist.

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§11: A collection of tracts ... now revised and published altogether

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All these pamphlets published by Morgan in the years between 1719 and 1724 are reprinted in his *Collection of tracts*, published in 1726 (488 pages).⁶¹ In the extensive Preface to this collection he expresses a more critical view on some Christian doctrines than in his previous writings. 'No doctrines can be reasonable received, as coming from God ... that are either absurd, inconsistent and contradictory in themselves, or hurtful and mischievous in their ...

⁵⁴ Contra J. Redwood, *Reason, ridicule and religion. The age of Enlightenment in England 1660-1750*, London, 1976, 201: 'Morgan's attack on the *Reflexions upon Reason* defended the deists' position'.

⁵⁵ We have no information about this Peter Nisbett.

⁵⁶ (Nisbett), *Comprehension*, 5.

⁵⁷ Th. Morgan, *A postscript to enthusiasm in distress*, London, 1723, 4.

⁵⁸ Morgan, *A postscript*, 7.

⁵⁹ P. Nisbett, *Comprehension confusion. Mr. Nisbett's second letter to Mr. Morgan*, London, 1724, 3, 60.

⁶⁰ Morgan, *A postscript*, 19.

⁶¹ Harrison, *Oxford Dictionary*, 148, curiously calls it 'a compilation of Morgan's writings from the years 1717 to 1724'. Morgan started publishing only in 1719.

consequences'. Miracles he tentatively regards may offer a sufficient evidence and a criterion of a revelation of God.⁶² But generally speaking, his view of the Bible during the beginning of these years is orthodox, although with time the primacy of reason is taking over. We saw in these pamphlets by Morgan a growing interest in reason as a principle for interpreting the Scriptures. In these pamphlets, his theological vision makes a straight move from the 'Athanasian Scheme' to Arianism, though he did not declare himself an Arian.⁶³

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§12: The debate between Thomas Morgan and Thomas Chubb during the years 1727-1730

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From March 1727 onwards, Morgan became involved in a new debate, which concerned the theology of Robert Barclay.⁶⁴ It started with his *Letter to Mr. Thomas Chubb, occasioned by his two letters to a friend in vindication of human nature, humbly offer'd to the consideration of the people call'd Quakers*, dated March 9th 1727. Thomas Chubb, a Glover's apprentice at Salisbury, who in 1705 became a tallow-chandler's assistant, was a prolific author who wrote more than fifty tracts. From 1715 till 1717, he lived in London, but afterwards he returned to Salisbury and later was called the Sage of Salisbury.⁶⁵ Morgan had become interested in the Quakers because it seems he was going to work among them in Bristol as a medical practitioner, so William Whiston tells us: 'When he was going to practice physick at Bristol, among the rich Quakers there, he wrote a pamphlet for such assistance of good men, as much as might recommend himself to them'.⁶⁶

This phrase suggests a mixture of interests. Morgan defended the Quaker Robert Barclay with long quotations from the latter's famous *Apology for the true Christian divinity* (1676)⁶⁷, which has been called one of the most impressive theological writings of the century.⁶⁸ Among other things, it contains that famous Quaker principle of the subordination of the Scriptures to the inward light in the heart of the individual: the saving and spiritual light wherewith every man is enlightened.⁶⁹ Morgan reacted to Chubb's pamphlet because he discovered some mistakes in Chubb's reasoning. He even finds a plain instance of partiality and unfair dealing. Coming to the point, he says:

I cannot be at all satisfy'd from what you have offered, that Barclay, upon his principles, must give up the natural agency of man, and making him a patient only, or a mere passive

⁶² Morgan, *A collection*, xiv, xi.

⁶³ Morgan, *A letter to Sir Richard Blackmore*, 33.

⁶⁴ Wigelsworth, 'The disputed root', 33, says that 'the controversy between Chubb and Morgan began in 1723', but that is in my view not correct; there is no mention of Chubb in Morgan's pamphlets before 1727.

⁶⁵ C. Probyn, sub voce 'Chubb, Thomas', in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Volume 11, Oxford, 2004, 566-8 (567); T.L. Bushell, *The sage of Salisbury: Thomas Chubb 1679-1747*, London, 1968.

⁶⁶ Whiston, *Memoirs*, 271; cf before in Chapter 1 § 16.

⁶⁷ Published in 1676 in Latin and translated in English in 1678.

⁶⁸ L. Stephen, sub voce 'Barclay, Robert', in: *Dictionary of National Biography*, Volume 3, London, 1885, 169.

⁶⁹ See on this topic L. Eeg-Olafsson, *The conception of the inner light in Robert Barclay's theology*, (*Studia Theologica Lundensia* 5), Lund, 1954.

recipient, without any active power at all with respect to moral good and evil, right and wrong.

According to Morgan, Chubb has misunderstood Barclay on three points, with respect to the consequence of the Fall, the law of grace and the nature of divine aid. In order to prove his point Morgan quotes extensively from Barclay's *Apology*. Barclay, according to Morgan, did not give up the natural agency of man. Barclay asserted both free will, and grace, in such a manner as to render them perfectly consistent with, and reconcilable to each other. Morgan reproaches Chubb for not expressing or representing the true meaning of the author. Morgan at this time has a high opinion of revelation as he says: 'Tis plainly one great and principal design of the Christian revelation, to excite and encourage us to constant prayer, and a religious trust in and dependence upon God'.⁷⁰

Chubb reacted with a brief reply in *Three tracts*, of which the third was directed to Morgan: *Some remarks on Dr. Morgan's tract*, published in London in 1727, in which he tried to deny the charges made against him.

The discussion continued when Morgan, who in the meantime was living in Bristol, published *A farther vindication of Mr. Barclay's scheme, in reply to Mr. Chubb's remarks*, dated September 16th 1727. In this pamphlet, he continues to assert that Chubb has in fact greatly mistaken and misrepresented both Mr. Barclay and himself. That Morgan was no Quaker himself is clear from this phrase from *A farther vindication*: 'I shall only add, that if Mr. Chubb had writ against anything particular to Mr. Barclay and the Quakers, I should have left that people to have defended their own particularities, upon their own principles'.

That Morgan had no deist feelings at this time either is apparent from another phrase in his controversy with Chubb: 'I cannot persuade myself, that Christianity is nothing but natural deism, set in a wrong light'.⁷¹ To maintain that both Morgan and Chubb were deists in those days would require Morgan to anticipate a position, which the latter only acknowledges ten years later in *The moral philosopher*.⁷² I think it is important to be aware that Deism becomes part of Morgan's thinking in a later period than his controversy with Chubb.

Chubb reacted again with *Scripture evidence consider'd, in a view of the controversy betwixt the author and Mr. Barclay's defenders, viz. Mr. Beaven and Dr. Morgan* (London, 1728). He criticizes Morgan as follows: 'What end Dr. Morgan had in view in his engaging in this controversy, I do not pretend to judge of; but this I say, that as he has used me ill, without any provocation, so he has injured the Christian religion, under a shew of defending it'.⁷³

Finally, Morgan wrote to Chubb *A defence of natural and revealed religion, occasioned by Mr. Chubb's Scripture Evidence considered, in a view of the controversy betwixt himself and Mr. Barclay's defenders*, dated May 20th 1728.⁷⁴ In this publication, Scripture is present again in an interesting observation when Morgan declares: 'I have been at the same time defending

⁷⁰ Morgan, *A letter to mr. Thomas Chubb*, 3, 8-10, 15-20, 25, 30.

⁷¹ Morgan, *A farther vindication*, 6, 36, 35.

⁷² Contra Wigelsworth, 'The disputed root', 40, 42.

⁷³ Th. Chubb, *Scripture evidence consider'd*, London, 1728, 9.

⁷⁴ It is curious that Wigelsworth does not refer to this ultimate answer of Morgan.

both Scripture and Reason'.⁷⁵ For Morgan, the debate ended here. But for Chubb the debate continued as is clear from two pamphlets, which were printed in 1730.⁷⁶ Morgan never again entered into discussion with him. There is no indication whatsoever that they ever met. Between 1728 and 1737, Morgan did not publish any more theological pamphlets. In all probability he was more concerned with his medical work during this period.

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§13: *Philosophical principles of medicine and its impact*

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In 1725, Morgan published his *Philosophical principles of medicine*, nearly 500 pages, in three parts with in total 61 propositions, and dedicated to Sir Hans Sloane, President of the Royal College of Physicians. The three parts were about

the general laws of gravity and their effect upon animal bodys, the more particular laws which obtain in the motion and secretion of the vital fluids, applied to the principal diseases and irregularitys of the animal machine, ... the primary and chief intentions of medicine in the cure of diseases, problematically propos'd, and mechanically resolv'd.⁷⁷

In 1730 a second edition, with large additions, in more than 520 pages, would come from the press. This work testifies to Morgan's new interest in medical matters. In this connection he liked to refer to Newtonian philosophy and Newtonian principles, quoting Newton's *Principia*.⁷⁸ That Morgan was interested in Newton's ideas is also evident from his subscription to the work of the physician Henry Pemberton, entitled *A View of Isaac Newton's philosophy* (1728). Newton is present in Morgan's discussion with Bryan Robinson, Professor of Physic at Trinity College in Dublin. In his *Physico-Theology*, Morgan calls Newton that great philosopher.⁷⁹ Wigelsworth noted in this respect: 'No one could have mistaken Newton's influence'.⁸⁰

Morgan's book is full of mathematics and mathematical formulas and figures. It is astonishing that Morgan, alongside his theological pamphleteering, had the time to study Newton and medical books. He mentions in the *Philosophical principles* the physician and secretary to the

⁷⁵ Th. Morgan, *A defence of natural and revealed religion*, London, 1728, 21.

⁷⁶ The debate did not stop in 1727 as Wigelsworth suggests, 'The disputed root', 29, 42. Chubb's pamphlets were reprinted in *A collection of tracts on various subjects*, published in London, 1730. Therein we find two other tracts written by Chubb as answer to Morgan's *Defence of natural and revealed religion*: treatise xxvii: *Reflections on natural liberty; Wherein the case of liberty, and necessity, when considered, as a proper foundation for virtue and religion, for rewards and punishments, is examined. Occasioned by Dr. Morgan's tract, entitled, A defence of natural and revealed religion.*

Treatise xxxiii: *Reflections on virtue and vice. Wherein is shewn, what kind of virtue is, in reason, rewardable; and what kind of vice is, in reason, punishable. Occasioned by Dr. Morgan's tract, entitled, A defence of natural and revealed religion*, Th. Chubb, *A collection of tracts, on various subjects*, London, 1730, 371-82, 448-53.

⁷⁷ Morgan, *Philosophical principles*, title page.

⁷⁸ Morgan, *Philosophical principles*, 33, 95; Th. Morgan, *Philosophical principles of medicine*, 2nd edition, London, 1730, li, 32, 89, 91.

⁷⁹ Morgan, *Philosophical principles*, xxxv, 32, 31; H. Pemberton, *A view of Isaac Newton's philosophy*, London, 1728, 'a list of ... the subscriber's names'; Morgan, *Physico-Theology*, 298.

⁸⁰ Wigelsworth, *Deism*, 149.

Royal Society, James Jurin. He also quotes with approval from the *Tentamina medico-physica* by the physician James Keill, and does so even more in the second edition.⁸¹

Morgan's view on medicine is strictly materialistic. Man, like the animal body, is a pure machine. This phrase has its origin in the work of Keill.⁸² David Shuttleton has called Morgan a medico-mechanist.⁸³ Morgan belonged to the rational school of the iatromathematicians who believed that all the functions of the body were motivated by physics.⁸⁴

The famous Archibald Pitcairn, was 'the forgotten father of mathematical medicine'.⁸⁵ This concept, also called iatromechanism, reached its pinnacle of fame in the 1720s and 1730s. Afterwards, Vitalism gained the day. According to the vitalists, the body came to be seen as a living organism fully endowed with the life principle, rather than as an automaton-like machine.⁸⁶

The *Philosophical principles of medicine* was a great success. During Morgan's lifetime, it was quoted more or less favourably by many other medical writers in Britain.⁸⁷ The physician Andrew Hooke, whom we have already met, thought the *Philosophical principles* 'a book that can never be too much studied by the young physician'. Charles Perry called it an excellent

⁸¹ Morgan, *Philosophical principles*, 2nd edition, 112-3, 252: 'the learned Dr. Jurin'; 119, 183, 192, 243; on Keill and his *Tentamina* see F.M. Valadez and C.D O'Malley, 'James Keill of Northampton, physician, anatomist and physiologist', *Medical History*, 15 (1971) 317-35 (331).

⁸² D.E. Shuttleton, 'Methodism and dr. George Cheyne's "More enlightening principles" ', in: R. Porter, ed., *Medicine in the Enlightenment*, (Clio Medica 28), Amsterdam, 1995, 316-35 (318); Morgan, *Philosophical principles*, 2nd edition, vii; cf J.W. Yolton, *Thinking matter, materialism in eighteenth-century Britain*, Minneapolis, 1983, 33; J. Keill, *An account of animal secretion, the quantity of human blood in the humane body, and the muscular motion*, London, 1708, vi; on Keill see further A. Guerrini, 'James Keill, George Cheyne, and Newtonian physiology, 1690-1740', *Journal of the History of Biology*, 18 (1985) 247-66.

⁸³ D.E. Shuttleton, ' "Pamela's library": Samuel Richardson and dr. Cheyne's "Universal cure" ', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 23 (1999) 59-79 (61).

⁸⁴ G.S. Rousseau, *Enlightenment crossings: pre- and post-modern discourses, medical, scientific*, Manchester, 1991, 124 note 20; H.C. Jamieson, 'Catechism in medical history', *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 48 (1943) 539.

⁸⁵ Recently the 300-year legacy of iatromathematics has been remembered by H. Ashrafian, 'Mathematics in medicine: the 300-year legacy of iatromathematics', *The Lancet*, vol 382, issue 9907, p.1780, 30 November 2013.

⁸⁶ Brown, 'From mechanism to vitalism'; H. Ishizuka, 'The elasticity of the animal fibre: movement and life in enlightenment medicine', *History of Science*, 44 (2006) 435-68 (435-6).

⁸⁷ N.N., *Febrifugum magnum, morbifugum magnum: or, the grand febrifuge improved*, London, 1726, 96, 110, 158, 172, 182; W. Ritty, *A treatise of the urinary passages*, London, 1726, 25; J. Cook, *An anatomical and mechanical essay on the whole animal oeconomy*, Volume 2, London, 1730, 52; J. Cam, *A dissertation on the pox*, London, 1731, 38; B. Langrish, *A new essay on muscular motion*, London, 1733, 64; Th. Johnson, *Questiones philosophicae in justi systematis ordinem dispositae*, Cambridge, 1735, 33, 79; D. Turner, *A discourse concerning fevers*, London, 1739, 131, 167; Ch. Perry, *A treatise of diseases in general*, volume 1, London, 1741, v, xi-xii, xiv, xvi, xxiii; Volume 2, London, 1741, 230.

book.⁸⁸ Even the influential New England minister, Cotton Mather, referred to him favourably:

How much would the art of medicine be improved, if our physicians more generally had the mathematical skill of a Dr Mead or a Dr Morgan, and would go his way to work, mathematically, and by the laws of matter and motion, to find out the cause and cure of diseases.⁸⁹

A review in Latin appeared in Leipzig in Germany published in the *Acta Eruditorum* of February 1728.⁹⁰

The book was still read after Morgan's death. It was praised by David Stephenson in 1744.⁹¹ Morgan gained international fame when the famous Swiss physician, Albrecht von Haller, dedicated a paragraph to Morgan in his *Bibliotheca anatomica*, published in 1777.⁹² This medical work by Morgan had a vast distribution. The book is found in many eighteenth-century libraries and booksellers' catalogues in Britain and abroad.⁹³

Afterwards, the book seems to have been forgotten. Sometimes, a quotation from it can be found in a nineteenth-century medical dissertation.⁹⁴ In 1953, a famous 20th century British physician called this title by Morgan an interesting, but neglected book.⁹⁵ Interest in iatromathematics has brought Morgan back into the limelight again. Most recently, Morgan's book has been called, by the Italian mathematician Antonio Fasano, a cornerstone in the process by which medicine gradually adopted a rigorous scientific attitude.⁹⁶ Morgan deserves the attention of a professional medical historian.

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⁸⁸ In Chapter 1 § 14; A. Hooke, *An essay on physic*, London, 1734, 41; Ch. Perry, *An enquiry into the nature and principles of the spaw waters*, London, 1734, 50.

⁸⁹ Quoted by O.T. Beall and R.H. Shryock, *Cotton Mather, first significant figure in American medicine*, Baltimore, 1954, 154.

⁹⁰ N.N., *Acta Eruditorum*, mensis februarii 1728, 53-63; It is mentioned also by N. Regnault, *Philosophical conversations: or, a new system of physics, by way of dialogue*, translated into English ... by Thomas Dale, Volume 2, London, 1731, 161, 164.

⁹¹ D. Stephenson, *Medicine made to agree with the institutions of nature*, London, 1744, iv.

⁹² A. von Haller, *Hermann Boerhaave viri summi, sui praeceptoris methodus studii medici*, Volume 1, Amsterdam, 1751, 433; A. von Haller, *A dissertation on the motion of the blood*, London, 1757, 17; A. von Haller, *Anfangsgruende der Physiologie des menschlichen Koerpers*, Volume 1, Berlin, 1759, 870; A. von Haller, *Bibliotheca anatomica*, Volume 2, Lugduni Batavorum, 1777, 170-1.

⁹³ See Appendix § 1.

⁹⁴ H.M. Mensert, *Dissertatio medica inauguralis de diabete*, thesis Leiden, Amsterdam, 1841, 63 note.

⁹⁵ H. Cohen, 'The evolution of the concept of disease', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 48 (1955) 155-60 (159).

⁹⁶ Ashrafian, 'Mathematics'; A. Fasano and others, 'Blood coagulation: a puzzle for biologists, a maze for mathematicians', in: D. Ambrosi and others, eds., *Modeling of physiological flows*, Milan, 2012, 41-76 (43 note 4); on Morgan's book see further Wigelsworth, *Deism*, 148-50.

§14: *The mechanical practice of physick*

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In 1735, Morgan published *The mechanical practice of physick, in which the specifick method is examin'd and exploded; and the Bellinian hypothesis of animal secretion and muscular motion, consider'd and refuted. With some occasional remarks and scholia on dr. Lobb's treatise on the small pox, dr. Robinson on the Animal Oeconomy, and professor Boerhaave's Account of the animal spirits and muscular motion*. It was dedicated to Richard Mead, physician to King George II. It contained sixteen propositions in more than 380 pages. Newton is again present in this work.⁹⁷ Morgan complains in this work about 'the obscurity and uncertainty everywhere to be met with in the practice of physick'.⁹⁸ But physics is as consistent and rational a profession and practice as any other.

In this work, he refers to many more medical authorities. In the preface, he refers negatively to the mystic and physician Paracelsus, his disciple Joan Baptista van Helmont, and 'the great modern corrupter both of the theory and practice of physick' Lorenzo Bellini. He refers various times negatively to Bellini.⁹⁹ 'Bellini himself knew nothing of the true laws of motions, and had no regard at all of the chymistry of nature'.¹⁰⁰ More positively, he calls the neuro-anatomist Thomas Willis 'a perfect master of the corpuscularian philosophy as apply'd to physick'. His recommendation to oblige all physicians to talk English to their patients, and not to amuse them with technical words and terms of art is a modern insight. He is critical of various physicians such as Nicholas Culpeper and William Salmon, who 'used their best endeavours, to make every fool a physician, and every physician a fool'.¹⁰¹ Culpeper was famous as a doctor to the London poor and for his so-called *Culpeper's Herbal*, which was reprinted many times.¹⁰²

Morgan refers positively to the famous Leiden physician, Herman Boerhaave.¹⁰³ He talks very negatively about the *Treatise of the small pox* by Theophilus Lobb.¹⁰⁴ He refers many times favourably to other physicians.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁷ Th. Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, London, 1735, 59, 64, 70-1.

⁹⁸ Morgan, *The mechanical practice*, vii.

⁹⁹ Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, 35, 139, 146, 148-9, 156-7, 253, 256, 342; on Bellini see W.B. Fye, 'Lorenzo Bellini', *Clinical Cardiology*, 20 (1997) 181-2.

¹⁰⁰ Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, 139.

¹⁰¹ Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, ix, xiii-xv, 4.

¹⁰² R. Porter, *The greatest benefit to mankind: a medical history of humanity from antiquity to the present*, London, 1999, 210.

¹⁰³ Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, title page, 135, 201, 149: 'so great a man as professor Boerhaave'; Boerhaave is already present in the second edition of the *Philosophical principles of medicine*, 200.

¹⁰⁴ Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, 199-200, 203-4.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Sydenham, the father of English medicine, and his famous Laudanum, the tincture of opium, Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, 163, 166, 182, 193, 257. He quotes 'so great a mathematician as Dr. Jurin, in his dissertation *De motu aquarum fluentium*'. Further the London physician Dr. Cam of Bow Church Yard. He quotes 'that great man, and truly learned physician' John Freind, Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, 78, 218, 243; on Freind see J.S. Rowlinson, 'John Freind, physician, chemist, Jacobite and friend of Voltaire's', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 61 (2007) 109-27.

Furthermore, he refers negatively to ‘a very odd and surprizing book’: *Animal oeconomy* by Bryan Robinson, physician in Dublin.¹⁰⁶ Robinson was not amused. In a letter to George Cheyne, Robinson wrote on July 12th 1735: ‘I could have wish’d Dr. Morgan had considered my *Animal oeconomy* with a little more temper as well as care’.¹⁰⁷ This letter resulted in an answer from Morgan. On July 5th 1738, Morgan dated his last medical publication: *A letter to Dr. Cheyne occasioned by Dr. Robinson’s letter to him in defence of his treatise of the animal oeconomy against Dr. Morgan’s objections in his mechanical practice*.¹⁰⁸ Morgan asked for mediation between himself and Robinson by the vegetarian George Cheyne, who was the author of the popular *Essay of health and long life* (1724) and *The English malady* (1734), and one of the best known physicians in Britain.¹⁰⁹ It is not known whether they knew each other personally. By looking for important people in the medical world of his day, such as Sir Hans Sloane, Richard Mead and George Cheyne, to whom he might dedicate his publications, he tried to further his position. Morgan indicated some restrictions in this letter: ‘Though we scarce agree in any thing else, yet we both agree in this, that you are a very proper and competent judge of the matter in debate’. The question between Robinson and Morgan was: Who has and who has not understood Isaac Newton. ‘Whether he or I have most mistaken Sir Isaac Newton, I must appeal to you, Sir’.¹¹⁰ In the letter he shows again his abundant mathematical knowledge by using mathematical formulas. As far as I can ascertain, Cheyne never reacted.

It may be said that Morgan was well versed in medical literature. He openly showed his cynical criticism of many a colleague in the medical field. But *The mechanical practice of physick* had less success than its predecessor. I found fewer quotations for this book than from the *Philosophical principles of medicine*. It was quoted by the apothecary John King. Thomas Knight, Member of the Royal College of Physicians, also mentioned Morgan. It is referred to in the anonymous *A dissertation on sea-water*, published around 1755.¹¹¹ The *Philosophical*

¹⁰⁶ Morgan, *The mechanical practice of physick*, 9, 66-7.

¹⁰⁷ B. Robinson, *A treatise of the animal oeconomy*, volume 2, 3rd edition, London, 1738, 55; see T.P.C. Kirkpatrick, *History of the medical teaching in Trinity College Dublin and of the School of Physic in Ireland*, Dublin, 1912, 110.

¹⁰⁸ See on the discussion A.M. Roos, ‘Irish Newtonian physicians and their arguments: the case of Bryan Robinson’, in: E. Boran and M. Feingold, eds., *Reading Newton in early modern Europe*, (Scientific and Learned Cultures and their Institutions, 19), Leiden, 2017, 116-143 (139-142): ‘Robinson’s detractors: Dr. Thomas Morgan’.

¹⁰⁹ A. Guerrini, sub voce ‘Cheyne, George’, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Volume 11, Oxford, 2004, 373; on Cheyne see H. Viets, ‘George Cheyne, 1673-1743’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 23 (1949) 435-52, and A. Guerrini, *Obesity and depression in the Enlightenment. The life and times of George Cheyne*, Norman, 2000.

¹¹⁰ Th. Morgan, *A letter to Dr. Cheyne occasioned by Dr. Robinson’s letter to him in defence of his treatise of the animal oeconomy against Dr. Morgan’s objections in his mechanical practice*, London, 1738, 3, 5.

¹¹¹ J. King, *An essay on hot and cold bathing*, London, 1737, 53, 127; Th. Knight, *Reflections upon catholicons, or universal medicines*, London, 1749, 134; N.N., *A dissertation on sea-water*, London, s.a., 12.

Society of Edinburgh dealt with this work by Morgan in its medical essays.¹¹² Probably the turn to Vitalism was already in full flight. As we have already seen, Morgan's medical works had a vast distribution. His name also found its way with the progress of time into some medical histories.¹¹³ But he was subsequently forgotten. Most medical histories do not name him. Only recently can commentaries about his medical works again be found in modern books and articles about medical history, in which his work is characterized by Anita Guerrini as 'a rather unorthodox variety of Newtonian medicine'.¹¹⁴

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§15: Doubtful attributions

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In the controversy around Salters' Hall, another pamphlet, entitled *The friendly interposer: or, the true Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, stated*, (London, 1719), has been attributed to Morgan, but I do not endorse this view.¹¹⁵ The title page of this pamphlet is signed: *By a Physician*. On page 24 it is signed: *Philalethes*. So the reason for the identification seems clear. Philalethes is the pseudonym, which Morgan employs in his principal work *The moral philosopher, in a dialogue between Philalethes, a Christian Deist, and Theophanes, a Christian Jew*. But things are not so simple. Philalethes is used as a pseudonym by numerous authors in the eighteenth century. A look in library catalogues shows a bewildering use of this pseudonym.¹¹⁶ The combination is interesting. Was Morgan not also a physician? There are, however, a number of reasons to doubt the identification. First of all, Morgan was no physician at the time of the publication of this pamphlet. His medical interests only became public from the publication of his *Philosophical principles of medicine* in 1725. Secondly, there is the question of the London printer of this pamphlet: Richard Ford, at the

¹¹² N.N., *Medical essays and observations*, Volume 4, 2nd edition, Edinburgh, 1738, 469, 471, 478, 497, 510, 518; also in later published volumes; various parts of these essays have been translated into French and into German.

¹¹³ Such as K. Sprengel, *Histoire de la médecine depuis son origine jusqu'au dix-neuvième siècle, traduit de l'allemand par A.J.L. Jourdan*, Volume 5, Paris, 1815, 175-6; R.H. Rohatzsch, *Compendiöse Geschichte der Medizin*, Volume 1, Pforzheim, 1839, 370; E. Bouchut, *Histoire de la médecine et des doctrines médicales*, Volume 2, Paris, 1873, 217; J.H. Baas, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Medizin*, Stuttgart, 1876, 405.

¹¹⁴ M. Neuburger, 'An historical survey of the concept of nature from a medical viewpoint', *Isis*, 35 (1944) 16-28 (27 note 28); G.S. Rousseau, 'Science and the discovery of the imagination in enlightened England', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 3 (1969) 108-35 (123-4); A. Guerrini, 'Newtonianism, medicine and religion', in: O.P. Grell and A. Cunningham, eds., *Religio Medici, medicine and religion in seventeenth century England*, Aldershot, 1996, 293-312 (305-6); A. Lord, '“The great Arcana of the deity”: menstruation and menstrual disorders in eighteenth century British medical thought', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 73 (1999) 38-63 (47); Guerrini, *Obesity*, 153-4; L. Dacome, 'Living with the chair: private excreta, collective health and medical authority in the eighteenth century', *History of Science*, 39 (2001) 467-500 (473); Debus, *Chemistry*, 178-9; A.M. Roos, *The salt of the earth: natural philosophy, medicine and chymistry in England, 1650-1750*, (History of Science and Medicine Library 3), Leiden, 2007, 144 note 156; H. Ishizuka, '“Fibre body”, the concept of fibre in eighteenth-century medicine: c.1700-40', *Medical History*, 56 (2012) 562-84 (571-2).

¹¹⁵ Wigelsworth, *Deism*, 141 notes 112 and 114, 217; Wigelsworth, 'The disputed root', 32 note 18; Wigelsworth, 'A sheep', 278 note 44; Hudson, *Enlightenment*, 172 note 10, 201.

¹¹⁶ A look in *The National Union Catalog pre-1956 Imprints*, Volume 455, London, 1976, 251-256, sub voce 'Philalethes' is sufficient.

Angel in the Poultry. All the pamphlets Morgan wrote in the period 1719 till 1722 were printed in London, by James Roberts in Warwick Lane. He later engages with other printers, but never with Richard Ford. In the third place, the use of Greek fonts in the text and the notes of this pamphlet are atypical for Morgan.¹¹⁷ He never uses Greek fonts in those years. Fourthly, in his first pamphlet Morgan uses *a Protestant Dissenter* as a pseudonym. Finally, all the pamphlets written by Morgan in the Trinitarian controversy are collected in Morgan's *A collection of tracts. The friendly interposer* is not included in this collection. So there is no cogent reason to assume that Morgan wrote this pamphlet.¹¹⁸

The British Museum: General Catalogue of Printed Books attributes to Morgan: *Christianity revived, and Judaism subverted. Occasion'd by Mr. Chubb's late tracts, concerning Scripture inspiration, the resurrection of Christ; and the case of Abraham, in being commanded of God to offer up his Son. In a letter from a gentleman in the country to his friend in London*, London, 1734, printed for J. Roberts.¹¹⁹ It is dated June 27th 1734 and signed: *P.B.* An eighteenth-century hand on the title page of the copy in the British Library has ascribed it to Thomas Morgan, M.D. I myself long and until recently believed this attribution.¹²⁰ The content of this booklet has much in common with the negative views Morgan has on Judaism and on the Old Testament. But that makes the identification too easy. Searching for a reasonable interpretation of these initials *P.B.*, I have so far not found anything useful. Furthermore, Morgan lived in Bristol in 1734 and was not 'a gentleman in the country'. So I prefer not to acknowledge the authorship of this book as Morgan's.

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§16: Summary

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Between 1719 and 1724, Morgan was an ardent polemic – writing more than 480 pages – taking up his pen against more than ten opponents in the pamphlet war around the Salters' Hall Conference. His pamphlets testify to the development in Morgan's thinking away from Scriptural orthodoxy to the primacy of reason. His dislike of Enthusiasm is in line with the general religious opinion in the eighteenth century. He has moved away from his Trinitarian confession in Frome to a more Arian vision on the Trinity. After the break with the dissenting community of Marlborough he enters into discussion with the deist Thomas Chubb. It is important to realize that at this moment Morgan did not exhibit any deistic feelings. Most of his energy between 1725 and 1735 goes to the study of medicine. He is successful in publishing medical books – together, more than 900 pages - which had a ready national and international sale. He belonged to a medical school, the iatromathematicians, which lost the battle against Vitalism and therefore Morgan's medical work was rapidly forgotten in the second part of the eighteenth century. Only recently a fresh assessment of his medical studies has led to a new interest in his medical achievements.

¹¹⁷ N.N., *The friendly Interposer*, London, 1719, 12,14-15,17,21-22.

¹¹⁸ See for other arguments J. van den Berg, 'Is Thomas Morgan Philalethes?', *Notes and Queries*, 58 (2011) 400-1; J.R. Wigelsworth, '“God always acts suitable to his character, as a wise and good being”: Thomas Chubb and Thomas Morgan on miracles and providence', in: Hudson and others, eds., *Atheism and Deism revalued*: 157-172 (166-7 note 33) has in the meantime revoked his opinion.

¹¹⁹ N.N., *British Museum*, 375; nowadays the website of *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (retrieved 13.12.2017) gives: 'sometimes attributed to Thomas Morgan'.

¹²⁰ van den Berg, 'Thomas Morgan versus William Warburton', 85; J. van den Berg, 'English Deism and Germany: the Thomas Morgan controversy', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 59 (2008) 48-61 (49).