



Enlightenment and Dissent

No. 22 2003

ENLIGHTENMENT AND DISSENT

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D O Thomas (ed.)

1 William Morgan's *Memoirs of the
Life of the Rev. Richard Price*

D O Thomas (ed.)

EDITORIAL

This number represents the final legacy of D O Thomas to the journal. He had been working on an addition of Morgan's memoir of Price for quite a period of time, with the intention of publishing it in the journal. He completed the task before he died, but it has required some time to collate the various files relating to the memoir and to put together the final edited version as he intended. It has also been quite a complicated task for technical reasons not least those concerning the footnoting. Morgan sometimes footnotes his own footnotes. Further, there was a good deal of material in Morgan's footnotes which D O had edited. The solution adopted has been to leave Morgan's notes as footnotes and to place D O's notes as endnotes. Where the reader comes across a superscript asterisk in the text followed by a number, the asterisk is to Morgan's footnote and the number is to D O's endnote which will contain information relating to Morgan's footnote. As far as possible the format of the document has followed the original, and this accounts, amongst other things, for the inconsistent use of italics,

It is sad to relate that D O's close friend and collaborator and long-time member of the editorial board, John Stephens, died while this issue was being prepared, and shortly after he had completed a splendid catalogue of D O's library. D O's own endnotes to Morgan's memoir are indicative of the importance of their collaborative bibliography (with P A L Jones) of the works of Price. John had a huge fund of knowledge of eighteenth-century works and had been preparing a bibliography of Joseph Priestley. It is hoped that this will eventually be published. He will be sorely missed by scholars who sought his advice on a whole variety of questions, advice which was always freely given and much appreciated. We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow Ann.

The next issue will be the usual mix of articles and reviews and will follow this shortly. The losses we have suffered to the editorial board have necessitated changes and additions to the board which we shall announce with the next issue.

MHF
JD

INTRODUCTION

D O Thomas

William Morgan's life of Richard Price was the first substantial account of his uncle's life and the only one of any length written by a contemporary which has survived to this day. Towards the end of his life Price entertained the idea of writing an autobiography and had collected some materials towards it.¹ Either because he was continually distracted by more pressing matters or because he lacked the energy to pursue the idea to fruition, he failed to do more than assemble some notes and the manuscripts of these have not survived. After Price's death, his nephew, George Cadogan Morgan started to write a biography but this project was frustrated by his untimely death in 1798. It thus fell to George Cadogan's brother, William, to undertake the task. Unfortunately, the materials that George Cadogan had collected were left in such a disorganised state that little use could be made of them and William had to start afresh.

William was well suited to the task: he and Price had been in close contact throughout the last twenty years of Price's life, they had worked together on projects concerning insurance and national finance, and William had been an apt and devoted pupil and disciple. Although his account of his uncle's life contains a number of inaccuracies, due, doubtless, to his writing from memory long after the events he records had taken place, it is invaluable because it is the only one written by someone who knew his subject intimately for many years.

William Morgan's claim to fame does not rest upon his relationship with Price alone; he was a man of substantial achievement on his own account, especially in the part he played in the development of insurance and in particular in the contribution he made to the progress of the Society for Equitable Assurances (now The Equitable Life Assurance Society).

Born in Bridgend in the county of Glamorgan in South Wales in 1750, he was the elder son of William Morgan, a physician who

¹ See 'Richard Price's Journal ...', *The National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol. XXI, No 4 (Winter, 1980), 395.

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practised at Bridgend, and Sarah, a sister to Richard Price, the subject of the biography. His younger brother was George Cadogan Morgan, a polymath of considerable ability who died tragically as the result of an accident in his laboratory in 1798. It was thought that William would, like his father, make a career in medicine, and at the age of nineteen he went up to London to be apprenticed to an apothecary. This venture did not prove to be a success, for an altercation between the young William and his master ended in the latter being unceremoniously laid in a kennel [dumped in a gutter] with the consequent termination of their relationship. On 28 May 1770 he was entered at St Thomas's Hospital as one of the 'Pupils and Dressers' but it seems that he did not stay to finish his training.² He returned home to help his father in his practice but had hardly settled in before his father died. Morgan returned to London leaving his brother-in-law in charge of the practice. In 1773 when John Edwards, the Actuary to the Society for Equitable Assurances died, it occurred to Price that his nephew might like a career in insurance as an actuary. By this time Price had been advising the Society on actuarial matters for six or seven years. When it was put to him that he should develop the necessary skills in mathematics, the young William readily assented. He proved to be an apt pupil, making such swift progress in the new discipline that he was appointed Assistant Actuary to the Society in 1774 and Actuary in the following year. His early promise was recognized when his paper on 'Probability of survivorship' was awarded the Copley medal of the Royal Society in 1783. Seven years later he was elected Fellow of the society. Morgan remained in his post with the Equitable until 1830, thus completing fifty-five years of service to the Society during a period of rapid development and expansion. The details of Morgan's outstanding success as Actuary to the Equitable have been given in M E Ogborn's *Equitable Assurances*³ so, there is no need for me to repeat them here. All that is needed is that I should mark the highlights of his career and draw attention to the features that throw light on his relations with his

² M E Ogborn, *Equitable assurances: the story of life assurance in the experience of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, 1762–1962* (London, 1962), 101

³ Details as above.

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uncle.

When Morgan was appointed Actuary in 1775 the Society for Equitable Assurances had been in existence for over 12 years. During that period it had received considerable help from Richard Price, as the first three editions of *Observations on reversionary payments (1771-73)* testify. He helped in the collection of demographic materials, in the development of actuarial techniques, in the organization of the office and in the preparation of accounts. The state of the Society that Morgan inherited thus owed a great deal to Price's exertions. Morgan soon acquired an additional responsibility, the tracking of the Society's financial position, computing the value of its assets and liabilities. The work was laborious, involving complicated calculations of the value of every contract that the Society had entered into. The position established by the exercise was very encouraging: it showed that the liabilities of the Society amounted to only 40% of the assets. There was therefore a surplus of 60% of the assets, and in advising the Society as to what should be done with this surplus, Morgan was again influenced by Price. Such a successful outcome presented new problems. The Deed of Settlement stipulated that the profits of the business should be distributed among the existing members (i.e. those that held policies with the Society). But to distribute these profits would leave the Society vulnerable should there be an adverse shift in mortality. Price had repeatedly advised caution and in the name of prudence counselled against the depletion of the Society's capital. The Society was faced, as it would continue to be faced, with a difficult moral problem: the need to balance the claims of equity, legality, and prudence. Equity demanded that it should deal fairly with all members, balancing the claims of different sets of subscribers, the claims of the present and near future against those of the distant, of those whose policies would go off the books at an early date with those whose policies would take longer to mature. Legality demanded that policy should be determined in accordance with the Deed of Settlement. Prudence required that the Society should remain financially strong enough to withstand the heavy claims that would follow a fall in the expectation of life, and making provision against a fall in the value of the Society's assets. The problem is a difficult one as at all times

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the claims of equity and prudence may conflict. The situation was considerably eased by a striking piece of inventiveness – the creation of reversionary bonuses,⁴ which reconciled the need to retain funds in the Society with the need to be fair – the Society was, after all, ‘The Equitable’! But although this invention eased the situation it did not entirely remove the difficulties. Throughout his career as Actuary Morgan had to resist the claims of members who wanted to make inroads upon the capital of the Society either by reducing premiums or by increasing the bonuses.⁵ Nothing perhaps shows the prevalence of Price’s influence upon Morgan more than Morgan’s continuous steadfast resistance to the claims of members for distribution of the surplus. Price repeatedly warned the Society of the danger of deviating from the prudence of a conservative attitude and throughout his career Morgan remained loyal to the teaching of his mentor.

Another important contribution that Price made in this period was the construction of the mortality tables known as the Northampton Tables from the bills of mortality in the parish of All Saints in Northampton. These were adopted by the Society and were in use for all purposes for more than half a century.⁶

Morgan’s first publication on matters of insurance was *The doctrine of annuities and assurances on lives and survivorships, stated and explained*, which was published in 1779. Price encouraged him to undertake the work, revised the final draft and contributed an introduction in which he emphasized the importance of informing the public of the methods used in calculating the values of annuities and the desirability of acquainting them with the financial position of the Society for Equitable Assurances. Price added an appendix on ‘the state of population in England and Wales’. With this paper, which was published separately in the following year under the title, *An essay on the population of England and Wales from the Revolution to the present day*, Price

⁴ Ogborn, *Equitable assurances*, 110.

⁵ See, *A view of the rise and progress of the Equitable Society, and of the causes which have contributed to its success, to which are added remarks on some of the late misrepresentations respecting the rules and practice of the Society* (London, 1828).

⁶ Ogborn, *Equitable assurances*, 110.

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revived a controversy about the state of the population in England and Wales. Price was firmly convinced that it had been and was still decreasing, but he was firmly opposed by William Eden, John Howlett and William Wales who contraverted his thesis and criticised the methods by which he had arrived at it.⁷ The census of 1801 showed decisively that Price was wrong, and though Malthus averred that at the time and on the basis of the data available to him Price had had the better of the argument with his critics,⁸ none the less the extent of his error served to darken his reputation as a demographer. As always Morgan was to prove a staunch defender of his uncle long after the controversy had been decided against him. It was neither Price's method nor his calculating skills that were at fault but the data upon which he based his calculations. The returns of the Surveyor of the House and Window Duties were corrupt, largely because so many had an interest in the figures being inaccurate. Had they been accurate, Morgan insisted, by the methods which he used Price would have arrived at the correct figures and at the right conclusions.

⁷ See D O Thomas, 'Richard Price and the population controversy', *The Price-Priestley Newsletter*, 4 (1980), 43-62.

⁸ See T R Malthus, *An essay on the principle of population*, ed. Anthony Flew (Harmondsworth, 1970), 187: 'In the controversy which the question has occasioned, Dr Price undoubtedly appears to be much more completely master of his subject and to possess more accurate information, than his opponents'

MEMOIRS
OF
THE LIFE
OF
THE REV. RICHARD PRICE,
D.D. F.R.S.

BY
WILLIAM MORGAN, F.R.S.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. HUNTER, SUCCESSOR TO J. JOHNSON,
NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD;
AND R. REES NO. 62, PALL MALL.

1815.

RICHARD AND ARTHUR TAYLOR, PRINTERS, SHOE-LANE.

Preface

In writing the following Memoirs my chief design has been to give such a general account of Dr. Price as should lead the reader to form a right judgement of his principles and character. I have, therefore, confined myself to the more important parts of his life, without entering into minute details of little consequence, which at this distant period could have no effect in rendering the work either more useful or interesting—and in order to be as concise as possible, I have been very sparing in the use of his private correspondence; nor should I indeed, under any circumstances, have thought myself justified in gratifying an idle curiosity by the indiscriminate publication of letters which had been written in the confidence of private friendship.

It may possibly appear strange that so many years should have been suffered to pass away before any of the nearest friends or relatives of Dr. Price should have paid the tribute due to his memory of giving some account of his life. This arose in the first instance from the premature death of my brother George Morgan,¹ who had undertaken to write a very circumstantial history of his uncle's life, and had made a considerable progress in it, when, towards the close of the year 1798, a fatal disorder put a final period to this and all his other pursuits. The confused state in which his papers were found, and the indistinct shorthand in which they were written, rendered it impossible either to arrange or to understand them properly; and therefore, after many fruitless attempts, I was reluctantly obliged to give up the investigation and to take upon myself the task of writing a new, but more concise account, being aware that many facts which would have been highly gratifying to Dr. Price's *immediate* friends would now find few survivors to be interested in them.

My intimate connexion with Dr. Price has enabled me to give almost the whole of the facts in these Memoirs during the last twenty-two years of his life—and these are certainly the most important. Previous to that period, the few occurrences which distinguished his earlier years, I have either accidentally learned in conversation with him, or derived from those notes which he had prepared for the purpose of writing his own life. Having engaged in this work from no motive of self-interested ambition, I have been anxious only to render justice to the memory of a friend, by bearing my testimony to those virtues and talents which he so often displayed in the service of mankind, and on which I can never reflect without the deepest gratitude and veneration.

LONDON,
June 22d, 1815

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OF
THE LIFE
OF
RICHARD PRICE, D. D.

Though many years have lapsed since the death of Dr. Price, and the greater part of those friends, who would have been most interested in the account of his life, have followed him to the grave; I am not without hope that a few of them still remain who will be gratified by recollecting, and perhaps by being made better acquainted with, the habits and pursuits of one whom they had formerly known, and whose character they were accustomed to admire. Nor can the account of a life uniformly employed in promoting the best interests of mankind be unprofitable to any person, however little he may have previously known of it, or however distant he may have lived from the period in which it terminated. The exploits of heroes and conquerors are perhaps better fitted to excite the astonishment and applause of the world than the tranquil and retired occupations of the philosopher or the divine; but the former have in general little in them to soothe or gratify the best feelings of man, or to compensate for the painful emotions arising from the recital of the miseries and devastations with which they are signalized; while the latter, though destitute of the splendour which dazzles and deceives the multitude, have a tendency to dignify and exalt the human character, and excite us to glory,—not by indulging the

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destructive ambition of triumphing over our fellow-creatures, but by exerting far nobler efforts to control our passions and to triumph over ourselves. The following account therefore is given to the reader as the life of a man who sacrificed no principle to popular applause or private emolument, but who always endeavoured in silence and tranquillity to exemplify in his conduct those amiable qualities and the truth of those religious principles which he enforced in his writings; and its end will be fully attained, if in the least degree it inspires those sentiments of liberty and virtue which he so ardently inculcated, and which render his memory so dear to the friends that have survived him.

RICHARD PRICE, the son of a second marriage of Rice Price,² was born on the 23d of February 1723, at Tynton, in the parish of Langeinor, in the county of Glamorgan. His father for many years was the minister of a congregation of protestant dissenters at Bridgend in the same county, which was originally formed by Mr. Thomas, one of those clergymen who had been ejected from their livings at the restoration of Charles the Second.³ Of his earlier years I have very little to relate that is either important or interesting. Till the age of eight or ten years, he was educated partly at home, by a person retained in his father's house for that purpose, and partly by a person in the neighbourhood, by the name of Peters,⁴ who afterwards exchanged the profession of a country schoolmaster for that of a dissenting minister, and who was much esteemed by his pupil during the whole course of his life. Mr. Price, by his first marriage having two other sons, intended Richard, his youngest son, for trade; nor is it certain that he would have been diverted from this intention, had he lived long enough to carry it into execution. But, whatever his intentions were, he does not appear to have neglected his son's education.—Having taken him from the care of Mr. Peters, he placed him in a small school at

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Bridgend from which he was soon moved, on account of the moroseness and ill temper of his master, to another of a different description at Neath, which was kept by the Rev. Mr. Simmons,⁵ the minister of the dissenting congregation in that town. After continuing here about two years, he was sent to the village of Pentwyn in Carmarthenshire, for his further instruction under the Rev. Samuel Jones, a truly catholic and worthy man, whose religious principles he was always used to admire for their candour and liberality.⁶ What his father's motives were for moving him from this place—whether it was that Mr. Jones's sentiments in religion were too liberal, or that the youth might be more cheaply instructed elsewhere—I know not; but at the age of fifteen (when he had been at Pentwyn about three years) he was moved to the Rev. Vavasor Griffith's academy at Talgarth in Breconshire;⁷ where he was a student at the death of his father, in 1739. This event by no means improved either his present condition or future prospects.—From his earliest years his religious principles were very different from those of his father. The opinions of the one were candid, liberal, and benevolent; those of the other were narrow, selfish, and gloomy; and the effects of those opinions on the temper of both were, as might be expected, in direct opposition to each other. So bigoted was his father to his own creed, that one day finding the boy reading Dr. Clarke's Sermons, he flung the book in a rage into the fire, with the most bitter invectives against him for his want of faith and orthodoxy.⁸ As the God in whom Mr. Price believed was supposed to have formed the greater part of mankind for damnation, and to have reserved only a few of his favourites without any particular regard to their temper or conduct,—in like manner did this good man single out one of his children for his favourite, leaving him almost the whole of his property, and abandoning the rest of his family in a great measure to provide for themselves. The aristocratic principle

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of making one rich man in the family may possibly have united with his religious principles in disposing Mr. Price to make this partial distribution of his property. But without entering into the further discussion of his motives, I shall only observe, that his widow and other six children were in consequence involved in much difficulty and trouble. The eldest son, however, who practised physick at Newport in Monmouthshire, survived his disappointment but a short time.⁹ The widow, the mother of Richard (a most generous and excellent woman) quitted Tynton on the death of her husband, and, after languishing a few months at her temporary abode in Bridgend, died of a nervous fever in the beginning of May in the following year. Her son, together with his two sisters, who had moved with her to Bridgend, attended her in her last moments; and he has often expressed his admiration of the tranquillity and joy with which she viewed the approaches of death, and the prospect of a better world.

During the short interval which passed between the decease of his father and that of his mother, he continued at the academy at Talgarth; to which place he walked over the mountains of Brecon, in the severe frost of that year (1740); and it was in his way thither that his mind was first engaged in studying Butler's Analogy¹⁰—a work which never ceased to be the subject of his praise and admiration.

In the autumn which succeeded his mother's death, having now attained his 18th year, it was determined, in compliance with his own wishes, and the advice of his paternal uncle, Samuel Price,¹¹ who officiated as co-pastor with Dr. Watts, that he should be moved to a dissenting academy in London.—Having no means of conveyance, as he then lived with his two sisters who were no better provided for than himself, he had recourse to his brother,¹² the heir of his father's fortune, who supplied him with a horse to carry himself and a servant as far as Cardiff, a distance of twenty miles, from whence he

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was left to trudge on foot with his bundle in his hand to Bristol—a further distance of forty miles. But luckily for him, a good-natured lady, seeing a youth in this forlorn condition walking over rough and dirty roads, took him into her carriage a part of the way, and so far relieved him of his fatigue and sorrow. From Bristol he set off in a conveyance, which to the best of my recollection he told me was no other than a broad-wheeled waggon. Immediately on his arrival in London he was admitted into the academy founded by Mr. Coward,¹³ of which Mr Eames¹⁴ was the principal tutor, and lodged by his uncle (at whose expense he was chiefly maintained) in the house of a barber, in Pudding-lane. In this close and confined abode, which was rendered more noxious by the want of those ordinary conveniences which are necessary to health and cleanliness, he pursued his studies with the most unremitting zeal and delight.—But he soon felt the effects of having exchanged the pure atmosphere of Wales for the putrescent vapours of a narrow lane in London. In a few months he became afflicted with the jaundice, and was obliged to have recourse to the air of his native country for the recovery of his health. A summer's residence, however, among his relatives dispelled all his complaints, and he was enabled in the following winter to return to London, in order to resume his studies. Being now better accommodated, his health felt no further interruption; so that, during the remaining two years of his attendance at the academy, he devoted his whole time with *ardour and delight* (as he expresses himself in some of his private memoirs) to the study of mathematics, philosophy and theology.—When he had completed his education at the academy, under the instruction of the venerable Mr. Eames, of whose ability and virtue he always, and deservedly, spoke with the greatest respect and esteem, he was moved by the recommendations of his uncle to Stoke Newington, where he resided for near thirteen years, in the family of Mr. Streatfield, as his chaplain

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and companion.¹⁵ While he resided here, he occasionally officiated in different congregations, particularly at Dr. Chandler's meeting house in the Old Jewry.¹⁶ Here he seemed to acquire considerable popularity; but Dr. Chandler, for reasons best known to himself, advised him to be less energetic in his manner, and to deliver his discourses with more diffidence and modesty. This rebuke had its natural effect on the mild and unassuming temper of Mr. Price. To avoid an extreme into which he was in no danger of falling, he ran into the opposite extreme of a cold and lifeless delivery, which, by rendering him less popular with the congregation, disposed them to feel less regret when their minister had no further occasion for his services. During the latter years of his residence at Mr. Streatfield's he officiated principally at Edmonton, till he was chosen to be the morning preacher at Newington Green. By the death of Mr. Streatfield,¹⁷ and also of his uncle which happened in the year 1756, his circumstances were considerably improved; the former having bequeathed him a legacy in money, and the latter a house in Leadenhall-street, together with some other property. But though he was thus remembered by his uncle, he certainly had reason to expect that it would have been done more liberally.—But it is not improbable that those motives which influenced his father might have had some effect on the mind of his uncle, in the disposal of his fortune; for the greater part of it in both cases was left to the same person; and, it must be confessed, with proper discernment, if they intended that it should be duly preserved and improved. But it should be observed that Mr. Price never expressed the slightest disappointment.—On the contrary he always spoke of his uncle with respect and gratitude, which I believe, he very justly deserved. Being, however, a rigid Calvinist¹⁸ and tainted with the religious bigotry of that sect, it is not improbable that his nephew, who dared to think for himself, and to think differently from his uncle, might have incurred

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some displeasure on account of his opinions, notwithstanding the excellence of his moral conduct. In their conversation one day on controversial subjects, being asked whether he believed in the *proper divinity* of Jesus Christ, he very ingenuously answered in the negative, if by *proper divinity* was meant the equality of Jesus Christ with God. On which his uncle with some vehemence exclaimed “that he had rather see him transformed into a pig, than that he should have been brought up to be a dissenting minister without believing in the Trinity.” The horror expressed in this exclamation of the uncle will perhaps serve in some measure to account for the sparing manner in which he doled out a part of his fortune to the nephew who was the object of it.

The addition of this and other property to the little which he had inherited on the death of his mother, and the income arising from the congregation at Newington Green,¹⁹ determined Mr. Price to exchange his condition in life; and accordingly in June 1757 he was married to Miss Sarah Blundell,²⁰ originally of Belgrave in Leicestershire, the daughter of one of those unfortunate speculators who were ruined by the South Sea bubble in the year 1720. Miss Blundell after living with her mother for some years in a private lodging in London, had on her decease lately moved to Hackney, to live on the remains of that fortune which had been dissipated as far as her father had the power over it. In this place Mr. Price became acquainted with her, and formed a connexion which was to constitute a great part of the happiness of his future life. Having resided here during the first year after his marriage, he moved to Newington Green in the year 1758, in order to be near his congregation, and in that retired situation to pursue his studies with more tranquillity than he could have done in a narrow street and noisy thoroughfare at Hackney. It was, however, during his residence in this latter place that he published his treatise on the foundation of morals;²¹—a work, which was the fruit of

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his studies from his earliest years, and which first introduced him to an acquaintance with the late excellent Dr. Adams²² and as this acquaintance arose, not only from the similarity of their sentiments on this, but on many other important points in morals and religion, it produced a friendship between them which terminated only with their lives. The modesty, candor, and benevolence displayed in this work, conciliated the minds even of those who differed most widely in their sentiments from the author. In this number Mr. Hume²³ should be particularly mentioned, who, admiring the liberal manner in which his doctriness had been controverted, conceived so favourable an opinion of the writer, that it gave rise to an acquaintance, which was continued on both sides with uninterrupted esteem and friendship. Mr. Hume had been so little accustomed to civility from his theological adversaries, that his admiration was naturally excited by the least appearance of it in any of their publications.²⁴ Dr. Douglas (the late bishop of Salisbury),²⁵ Dr. Adams,²⁶ and Mr. Price, were splendid exceptions to this rudeness and bigotry. Having been opposed by these divines with the candor and respect which were due to his abilities, and which it is shameful should ever be wanting in any controversy, he was desirous of meeting them all together, in order to spend a few hours in familiar conversation with them.—Accordingly, they all dined by invitation at Mr. Cadell's in the Strand; and, as might be expected, passed their time in the utmost harmony and good humour. In a subsequent interview with Mr. Price, when Mr Hume visited him at his house at Newington Green, he candidly acknowledged that on one point Mr. Price had succeeded in convincing him that his arguments were inconclusive; but it does not appear that Mr. Hume, in consequence of this conviction, made any alteration in the subsequent edition of his Essays.²⁷ The treatise on morals,

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though it raised the reputation of the author both at home and abroad*,²⁸ procured comparatively but few readers.—An abstruse metaphysical disquisition is not very inviting in general, and therefore it is perhaps less surprising that 28 years should have elapsed before two editions of the work should be disposed of. In the year 1785 a third edition was published,²⁹ containing many corrections and additions, together with some remarks on Mr. Paley's Lectures on moral philosophy, &c.,³⁰ and a dissertation on the Being and Attributes of the Deity.—This work, so enlarged and corrected, the author considered as conveying his maturest thoughts on one of the most important subjects that can exercise the human mind. It would be improper, were I even so disposed, to enter here into an analysis of this excellent treatise. I shall only observe, that the author with his accustomed modesty was used to express himself greatly indebted in the composition of it to Hutcheson,³¹ Balguy,³² Clark,³³ Butler, and Hume; but particularly to the latter, whose doubts and objections led him to examine the ground on which he stood,

* On this occasion he received the following letter from his friend Dr. Franklin:—

“REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

Supposing that the foreign literary journals do not fall in your way, I send you the following account of your late work, as given in the *Bibliothèque des Sciences et des Beaux Arts* for January, February, and March, 1767. After reciting the title, the authors say, ‘On devoit déjà à Mr. Price un excellent Traité sur les principales questions de la Morale. L’Ouvrage dont on vient de voir le Titre mettra le sceau à la réputation de l’Auteur, et ne manquera sans doute pas d’être traduit en diverses langues. On y trouve tout ce qu’une méditation profonde, une parfaite connoissance de la religion, un esprit véritablement philosophique, une piété tendre et éclairée peuvent dicter de meilleur sur les sujets annoncés.’

With sincere esteem I am, dear sir, yours &c.

B. FRANKLIN

Craven Street, October 22, 1767.”

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before he ventured to raise his own structure upon it.³⁴

During the first years of his residence at Newington Green, Mr. Price devoted himself almost wholly to the composition of sermons; and so impressed was he with the necessity and importance of giving up his time entirely to works of this kind, that in some private memoirs which he has left of himself, he laments as a trifling waste of time the few hours which he spent in the study of mathematics and philosophy, and even in the harmless relaxation of visiting his friends. Excepting Dr. Franklin, Mr. Canton, and two or three other philosophical friends, his acquaintance at this period was chiefly confined to the members of his own congregation. Being naturally of weak spirits, this dull uniformity of the same scenes and pursuits was ill calculated either to cheer his mind or to improve his health. In the beginning of the year 1762 his wife was attacked by a disorder, under which she laboured with little or no intermission for more than twenty years, and of which she never perfectly recovered. In addition to this, he was himself afflicted with a bodily complaint which, though concealed from his friends, depressed his spirits, and often excited in him the most painful apprehensions of its consequences. Under these circumstances of sorrow and distress it is no wonder that a mind, disposed from its earliest years to piety and devotion, should be more than ordinarily impressed with the importance of religion, and regard the pursuit of all subjects unconnected with it as vain and trifling. His private afflictions, however, were confined to the precincts of his own breast, and did not prevent him from maintaining in company his usual cheerfulness, and securing to himself the esteem and affection of all who conversed with him.

The congregation to which he preached, though highly respectable, was very small; and therefore, instead of officiating to them twice a day, he was induced, from the hope of being more extensively useful, to accept an invitation

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in December 1762 to succeed Dr. Benson³⁵ as evening preacher in Poor Jewry Lane. But the experience of a few months convinced him that his sphere of usefulness was not likely to be much extended by this change. His hearers were equally thin in both places; which so discouraged him, that he had determined to give up preaching altogether, from an idea that his talents were totally unfit for the office of a public speaker.—Nor was it merely the thinness of his auditory that had the unhappy effect of discouraging him in the discharge of his duties; he was mortified also by their inattention so much as to be led, by a modesty peculiar to himself, to attribute that want of success which arose from the listless apathy of those whom he addressed, to his own weakness and incapacity.*

Regarding himself as incapable of giving effect to his moral instructions by delivering them from the pulpit, he consoled himself with the hope of rendering them useful to the world by conveying them in another manner. With this view he formed the sermons which he had preached on *private prayer* into a dissertation on that subject, and in the year 1767 published it with three other dissertations, on Providence—on the Junction of Virtuous Men in the heavenly state—and on Historical Evidence and Miracles.³⁶—This work had engaged his attention and occupied his time at intervals for more than seven years; and it was not without great diffidence and hesitation, that he was at last induced to publish it.—The Dissertation on Miracles had been written as

* He particularly mentions, in one of his private notes, that having preached in the afternoon on the *future judgement* with all the force and energy in his power, he had the mortification to find that neither his delivery nor the importance of the subject could keep a great part of his hearers from sleeping!—Had he recollected the hour of the day in which he addressed them, he would have been at no loss to discover the true cause of their lethargy.

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early as the year 1760, and read to Mr. Canton,³⁷ Mr. Rose,³⁸ and some other friends, who all concurred in recommending the publication of it.—In this dissertation, which was intended as an answer to Mr. Hume’s arguments against the credibility of miracles, Mr. Price had, as he thought, expressed himself improperly, by speaking of the *poor sophistry* of those arguments, and using other language of the same kind.—When he sent a copy of his book to Mr. Hume, who was then one of the under-secretaries of state, he made an apology to him, and promised that nothing of the kind should appear in another edition. He received in consequence a very flattering letter from Mr. Hume, which he regarded more as a matter of civility, than as a proof of its having wrought any change in the sentiments of that philosopher. When the work, however, appeared in a second edition he fulfilled his promise, and sent him a correct copy; for which he immediately received an acknowledgement, expressive of Mr. Hume’s *wonder at such scrupulosity in one of Mr. Price’s profession.*³⁹

On the death of his friend Mr. Bayes of Tunbridge Wells⁴⁰ in the year 1761, he was requested by the relatives of that truly ingenious man, to examine the papers which he had written on different subjects, and which his own modesty would never suffer him to make public. Among these Mr. Price found an imperfect solution of one of the most difficult problems in the doctrine of chances, for “determining from the number of times in which an unknown event has happened and failed, the chance that the probability of its happening in a single trial lies somewhere between any two degrees of probability that can be named.” The important purposes to which this problem might be applied, induced him to undertake the task of completing Mr. Bayes’s solution; but at this period of his life, conceiving his duty to require that he should be very sparing of the time which he allotted to any other studies than those immediately connected with his

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profession as a dissenting minister, he proceeded very slowly with the investigation, and did not finish it till after two years; when it was presented by Mr. Canton to the Royal Society, and published in their Transactions in 1763.⁴¹—Having sent a copy of his paper to Dr. Franklin, who was then in America, he had the satisfaction of witnessing its insertion the following year in the American Philosophical Transactions.⁴²—But notwithstanding the pains he had taken with the solution of this problem, Mr. Price still found reason to be dissatisfied with it, and in consequence added a supplement to his former paper; which being in like manner presented by Mr. Canton to the Royal Society, was published in the Philosophical Transactions in the year 1764.⁴³ In a note to his Dissertation on Miracles,⁴⁴ he has availed himself of this problem to confute an argument of Mr. Hume against the evidence of testimony when compared with the regard due to experience; and it is certain that it might be applied to other subjects no less interesting and important. By these two communications to the Royal Society, Mr. Price had proved himself not unworthy the honour of being admitted a member of that learned body, and he was accordingly elected in a few months after the publication of his second paper.⁴⁵ This he regarded as a desirable event on many accounts, but particularly as it might be the means of introducing him more into company; which in the present state of his spirits was highly necessary to his health. Indeed, the continued illness of Mrs. Price, rendered still more afflicting by his own malady and the natural feebleness of his constitution, seems to have made him indifferent to almost every other event. When Mr. Neale⁴⁶ and Mr. Furneaux⁴⁷ applied to him to become one of the tutors in Coward's Academy, in November 1762; and also when the congregation in Lewin's Mead, Bristol, in the following year wished to choose him as their minister to succeed Mr. Richards, he declined both these offers, principally on the ground of its being impossible for him to

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think of changing his situation while his wife laboured under her present disorder.⁴⁸ The dejection of mind produced by this circumstance led him to form a very unfavourable and unjust estimate of his own abilities. He thought himself qualified neither for the office of a tutor nor for that of a preacher, and often wished to retire from the world, in order, as he could not improve others, that he might at least improve himself. But although grieved and dispirited, he never uttered a murmur of discontent. His steadfast faith in an over-ruling Providence directing all events ultimately for our good, disposed him in all circumstances to be thankful for the comforts he enjoyed, and never suffered him a moment to repine at those which were withheld from him. In time, however, he became more familiarized to those scenes which at first had so deeply depressed his spirits; and though always affected by them, he so far recovered himself as to divide his hours more equally between the study of philosophical and religious subjects, and to view the result of his labours in both through a less gloomy and discouraging medium.—Still, however, the dread of mispending his time continued on some occasions to awaken his fears, particularly when engaged on speculative subjects.—Having bestowed considerable pains on the solution of a problem proposed to him by Mr. Canton respecting the effect of the compression of water by its own weight in a column two miles deep, he appears in some of his private notes to soothe his apprehension with a hope that he had at least been *innocently* employed when engaged in this investigation

Nearly about this time a proposal was made to him by the booksellers to publish a complete edition of all Sir Isaac Newton's works. But his diffidence of his own abilities, his want of spirits to engage in so arduous an undertaking, and possibly his former prejudices against devoting too much of his time and attention to subjects not immediately concerned with his profession, determined him to decline a work which

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has been since executed by a person who laboured under none of these difficulties.⁴⁹

Though Mr. Price had hitherto confined himself to metaphysical and religious subjects, and the reputation he had acquired by his writings was highly honourable to him by the great addition they made to the number of his friends and admirers, yet his popularity as a preacher was but little increased by them. In Newington Green and Poor Jewry Lane, his congregations were gradually dwindling away (for the ravages of death were repaired by no accession of new members); and so much was he discouraged by this circumstance, that I have often heard him say, that his attendants were now so few as to make it impossible for him to be animated before such an assembly; nay, that he thought every attempt at exertion or energy would be completely ridiculous. But it should be observed to the honour of those who did attend him, that their esteem and affection made all possible amends to him for the smallness of their number, and for the disappointment arising from the contracted sphere of his usefulness.

His dissertations on Providence and the Junction of Virtuous Men in a Future State gave rise to an acquaintance of very particular importance in the life of Mr. Price.—The late Marquis of Lansdowne (then Earl of Shelburne) having just been deprived of his wife,⁵⁰ and feeling himself deeply afflicted by the loss of that amiable and excellent lady, naturally became susceptible of religious impressions in that season of sorrow, and disposed to receive those consolations which are derived from the hope of a better state. By the recommendation of Mrs. Montague⁵¹ (who had for some years been intimately acquainted with Mr. Price) Lord Shelburne was induced to read the two dissertations above mentioned, and was so highly gratified by the perusal of them, that he immediately expressed a wish to Mrs. Montague to be introduced to the author. A day was accordingly

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appointed for this purpose at Mr. Price's house at Newington Green, where his lordship punctually attended; and after spending an hour or two in conversation, he was so well pleased with the unaffected simplicity of his new acquaintance, that he soon repeated his visit, and contracted a friendship for him which knew no interruption to the day of his death.—Of this friendly connexion I shall have other occasions to speak in the course of this history; but it will be proper here to observe, that it began in the year 1769,⁵² and continued for some time before Mr. Price had ever written on political subjects; though it is not improbable that it may have been more firmly established afterwards in consequence of those publications.

Not long after Lord Shelburne's visit to Newington Green, Mr. Price was honoured with an unexpected one from Lord Lyttelton,⁵³ and I believe also by the intervention of Mrs. Montague. The sentiments and character of this nobleman will easily explain the nature of his visit. Nay so purely religious do his motives appear to have been, that when Mr. Price at a subsequent interview mentioned his intention to him of publishing his "Appeal to the Public on the National Debt," he earnestly dissuaded him from it—no doubt for reasons similar to those which led Mr. Price in the more gloomy period of his life to consider his profession as excluding him from taking any part in the temporal affairs of this world.⁵⁴—The publication, however, of this pamphlet did not interrupt their acquaintance; nor do I believe on the other hand that it increased their intimacy.

It should be observed, that although Mr. Price had hitherto been so scrupulous in regard to the hours which he thought it his duty to devote to religious studies, and had never considered his time to have been properly employed when engaged in any other pursuits; yet in no period of his life was his mind so far alienated from the temporal concerns of the world, as to render him indifferent to the liberties of mankind,

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or to his own rights as a man and a member of society.—Having been brought up from his earliest youth in the principles of dissent from the established church, and having been confirmed in those principles by the reflection of maturer years, he naturally felt the injustice of those laws which deprived him of those rights on account of his religious opinions. He lived indeed to witness the repeal, or at least the modification, of some of them;⁵⁵ but the *Test-Act*,⁵⁶ the most exceptionable of all those laws, was suffered to remain, and, I am sorry to add, is still suffered to remain, a reproach to every principle of sound policy and religion.—Exclusive of the injustice of this law, Mr. Price considered it to be a profanation of a sacred ordinance; and he has often declared that on this ground, if he had been a member of the established church, no consideration should ever have prevailed upon him to submit to it as a qualification for civil office. But his objections as a dissenter were of a different kind. He regarded it as an encroachment on his civil liberty, and consequently as a grievance which ought never to be borne without exerting every peaceable effort to be relieved from it. The base compromise into which the dissenting ministers entered with Sir Robert Walpole in the preceding reign, when they bartered the liberties of their brethren for a pension, he always reprobated in the severest terms.⁵⁷ This pension, represented by that great father of corruption as the royal bounty of the sovereign, proceeding from his regard to his beloved subjects the dissenters, but in reality bestowed upon them from no other motive than to induce them to desist from their application to parliament for the repeal of the Test-Act, has been continued ever since with little variation*, and

* Sometimes the minister has burthened it with a *rider*, when from motives equally honourable he has wished privately to requite the services of an adherent, or when his other lists are too full to admit of an additional pensioner.

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exists a perpetual monument of their disgrace. So deeply impressed was Mr. Price with this sentiment, that being once applied to for his vote by the late Sir Edmund Thomas,⁵⁸ when canvassing for the county of Glamorgan, and being offered that worthy baronet's interest to procure him the disposal of this money among his brethren, he immediately replied, that the best service Sir Edmund could render him or his brethren would be, to advise the king's ministers to discontinue a donation which could only be regarded by every independent dissenter as the price of his liberty.

Having now officiated near fourteen years at Newington Green with the hopeless prospect of ever becoming extensively useful in that situation, he was the more easily induced to accept an invitation to succeed Mr. Law⁵⁹ as morning preacher at the Gravel-Pit meeting-house in Hackney.—But being still unwilling that his connexion with his old friends at Newington Green should be entirely broken off, he consented to remain with them as afternoon preacher, and in consequence resigned that service at Poor Jewry Lane. By this change one great cause of his despondency was removed; for his audience at Hackney was much more numerous than in either of the places at which he had hitherto officiated. During the first four or five years of his ministry, however, it increased very slowly; and it is probable that neither the excellence of his discourses, nor the impressive manner in which they were delivered, would have made any great addition to his hearers, had not other causes of a very different nature concurred to render him popular.

To the period nearly in which he was chosen minister to the congregation at Hackney, Mr. Price appears from the preceding account to have confined his studies almost exclusively to moral and religious subjects; but the different communications which he made to the Royal Society about this time seem to show that he was becoming less scrupulous in this respect, and disposed to consider philosophical

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inquiries not altogether inconsistent with the profession of a dissenting minister. In 1769 he wrote some observations, addressed in a letter to Dr. Franklin, on the expectations of lives—the increase of mankind—and the population of London—which were published in the Philosophical Transactions of that year.⁶⁰ In May 1770 he communicated to the Royal Society some observations on the proper method of calculating the values of contingent reversions,⁶¹ and in the following December he addressed another letter to Dr. Franklin on the effect of the aberration of light on the time of a transit of Venus over the sun;⁶² both of which papers were also published in the Philosophical Transactions of that year. In the first of these papers he corrected an error into which M. De Moivre⁶³ had fallen; and it may not be improper to mention a remarkable circumstance which attended the composition of it. From the high opinion he entertained of the accuracy of De Moivre, he conceived the error to be his own rather than that of so eminent a mathematician, and in consequence puzzled himself so much in the correction of it, that the colour of his hair, which was naturally black, became changed in different parts of his head into spots of perfect white. All this must have arisen from his usual diffidence in his own abilities; for no other cause can be assigned for his doubts and difficulties in a case which really admitted of none.

About two or three years prior to the publication of this paper Mr. Price had been referred to, by some gentlemen in the profession of the law, for his opinion of a plan by which they proposed to form themselves into a society for providing Annuities for their widows. This he found upon examination to be so defective, and he represented its insufficiency so strongly to them, that they determined to lay it wholly aside.—At the same time a great number of other societies were formed with the same view, and founded upon principles equally defective and ruinous. Conceiving that the public

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were greatly misled by these societies, and that infinite mischief would ultimately ensue if they were not speedily checked, he was led to regard the subject in so serious a light, that he thought it his duty to devote a principal part of his time and attention to the consideration of it. Accordingly, in the year 1769 his Treatise on Reversionary Payments, &c., was published, containing, among a variety of other matters, the solutions of many questions in the Doctrine of Annuities—Schemes for establishing Societies for the benefit of age and widows on just principles—and an exposure of the inadequacy of the Societies of this kind which had been lately formed, and which were continually forming in London and other parts of the kingdom.⁶⁴ The alarm and opposition excited by this work may be easily imagined. The more wise and prudent either reformed their plans, or dissolved their Societies altogether.⁶⁵—The more ignorant and obstinate persevered in their errors till they had fulfilled the author's predictions, and involved themselves in distress and ruin. By publishing a work of this kind, which immediately affects the temporal interests of mankind, Mr. Price had soon reason to conclude that the way to be generally known lies not in the direction of morals and metaphysics. The reputation, however, which he had now acquired, and the great addition which it had made to the number of his acquaintance, had no other effect on the natural humility of his mind than to cheer him with the hope that it might be the means of rendering his labours more useful to the world.—I know not whether I should mention one effect of it, the diploma which he received towards the latter end of the year 1769 from the University of Glasgow,⁶⁶ granting him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, and conferred upon him, certainly without his own solicitations, and I believe even without his previous knowledge*.

* It ought, however, to be observed that this degree was conferred

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In the Treatise on Reversionary Payments (of which a second edition was published in 1772) Dr. Price had given an Essay on Public Credit and the National Debt, reprehending the imprudent manner in which that debt had been suffered to accumulate in consequence of the alienation of the Sinking Fund. Towards the end of the same year he published a more formal work on this subject, under the title of an "Appeal to the public on the National Debt",⁶⁷ giving an account of the Management of the Sinking Fund from its first establishment in 1716 by Sir Robert Walpole to its total extinction in 1733, and representing the danger to which the kingdom was exposed by thus borrowing for ever without providing any means for the redemption of the debt. It would be improper here to enter into an analysis of that publication. It will be sufficient to observe that it made no pretension to any new discoveries, in representing the effects of compound interest, and therefore that it insisted chiefly on the necessity of restoring what had been so wisely established and so imprudently abandoned:—and in order to excite Parliament to resume this salutary measure, it gave the actual amount of the debt at that time compared with what it might have been, had not the operations of the fund been destroyed by the temporizing policy of its founder and of those who succeeded him in the administration of the public finances. This pamphlet, though written from the best motives and founded on the plainest and most incontrovertible principles, roused a host of opponents against the author, who abused his scheme as visionary, impracticable, and seditious. But they have long been consigned to oblivion, and it is not my wish to disturb

neither spontaneously nor gratuitously by the University. The application originated with some of his clerical friends in London, and the usual fees were paid by them unknown to Mr. Price, who always remained ignorant of the manner in which the degree was obtained, and to which side of the Tweed he was indebted for it.

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their repose.

The scheme which they abused with so much folly and ignorance has since been adopted by Parliament,⁶⁸ and now forms one of the chief bulwarks of our public credit. It is but justice, however, to Lord North to observe, that though unfriendly to the administration, he spoke in the House of Commons with great respect of some parts of this pamphlet, and so far proved himself to be possessed of more candour than one of his successors,⁶⁹ who could profit by the private advice and assistance of the author, in establishing a new and better method of redeeming the national debt, (by consigning among other provisions, the management of it to commissioners appointed by Parliament,) and afterwards could assume to himself the whole merit of the measure, without the slightest allusion to the source from which he derived his instruction.

The magnitude of the debt, though at that time it did not much exceed 140 millions, Dr. Price considered as an evil which threatened the nation with the most serious consequences. A peace of ten years had done but little to relieve the people from the burthens which pressed so heavily upon them, and depopulation, according to his opinion, was making rapid advances to render them less able to support those burthens; so that, in the event of another war, he foreboded nothing but bankruptcy and desolation. Impressed with these ideas, his views of public affairs at this time were particularly gloomy and desponding; and therefore, in recommending the measures which he thought most likely to save the nation from ruin, he acted more from a sense of duty and the benevolence of his own mind than from any confident hope of success.⁷⁰—But if the view of public affairs afforded him but little consolation, there was no period on the other hand in which he enjoyed greater tranquillity and happiness in private life. The complaints, which in former years so much affected his body and mind, had by moderate exercise on

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horseback—by the regular use of the cold bath—and by the temperate manner in which he lived, gradually disappeared. Mrs Price's illness, though it still continued, had its intervals of relief; and long habit, which naturally takes off the edge of our afflictions and reconciles us to them, had in some measure this effect on Dr. Price, but without lessening his sympathy or attention to one whom he justly considered as having every claim to his affection and esteem. His hours at this period were agreeably divided between his studies and his friends. As he lived in a retired situation, his morning pursuits were seldom interrupted; and his afternoons were no less profitably spent in the society of those who loved and admired him, as well for the amiableness of his dispositions as for the humility with which he always imparted his knowledge to those who conversed with him. Some of his evenings in each week he devoted to particular parties; among these was one which consisted of Mrs Montague, Mrs Chapone,⁷¹ the Rev. Mr. Burrows,⁷² Mr. Mulso⁷³ and several other persons of distinguished abilities, who met at each other's houses, and whose conversation was chiefly confined to modern literature. But the party in which he always expressed himself most agreeably entertained, and which then met at stated times I believe at a coffee-house in St. Paul's Churchyard, but whose meetings were afterwards moved to the London Coffee-house Ludgate-hill,⁷⁴ consisted of Dr. Franklin, Mr. Canton, Dr. Kippis,⁷⁵ and other philosophical gentlemen. In this society the conversation extended to subjects more congenial with Dr. Price's feelings and pursuits, and therefore it is the less to be wondered that it should have excited his preference. To the number of those who constituted this assembly should be added the illustrious name of Dr. Priestley, who had lately, by the recommendation of his friend Dr. Price, accepted the office of librarian to Lord Shelburne, and in consequence had his winter residence in London.⁷⁶ The astonishing discoveries made by this

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admirable philosopher, which formed the foundation of all modern chemistry, and which he was now pursuing with his usual ardor and ability, added much to the entertainment and instruction of the company. But unfortunately the rising disputes with the American colonies gradually introduced other subjects into discussion, and at length deprived the society of one of its brightest ornaments, by obliging Dr. Franklin to retire from this country*.⁷⁷

In the political contentions which agitated the kingdom from the commencement of the present reign, Dr. Price had hitherto taken no active part. As a friend to liberty, he always felt himself warmly interested in its support, and freely expressed his abhorrence of every attempt to encroach upon it. But in all he had written on the subject of the public finances, he had confined his censures to the enormous accumulation of the national debt, and to the improvident alienation of that fund by which it might have been redeemed. He had blamed no party in particular. From the administration of Sir Robert Walpole to that of Lord North the same course had been pursued, and therefore the same censure applied to all of them. But when it was determined to repair our dilapidated finances by a direct attack on the civil liberties of the American colonies, and the nation was to be plunged into a war to enforce unconditional submission to claims which were manifestly unjust, it was impossible, as a friend to the real interests of his country and to the undoubted rights of his fellow-subjects, that he should behold these violent measures without anxiety, or express his opinion of them without indignation. I feel no disposition, nor do I know that it would be proper, to enter further into an account of the rise and

* In his correspondence with Dr. Price, while he was at Paris, Dr. Franklin generally mentioned the Club at the London Coffee-house with the greatest regard and esteem, and at the same time never failed to express his regret at not having it in his power to attend the meetings of its virtuous and enlightened members.

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progress of the American war, than just to mention a few of those circumstances which had a principal effect in producing this unnatural contest, and on which Dr. Price founded his opinion of its injustice.

In the year 1763 the expense incurred by the American colonies in the late war was considered to have so far exceeded its due proportion, that they were compensated for the same by Parliament, in consequence of a direct recommendation from the King in their behalf. The imposition of the Stamp Duty therefore in 1765, during the administration of Mr. George Grenville,⁷⁸ had not the plea in its support of reimbursing the nation for any expenditure in defence of the colonies, but must have originated entirely from a determination of making them contribute, without their own consent, to the permanent revenue of the mother-country. The opposition and disturbances which might naturally have been expected to arise from a law passed with such an intention, produced its repeal in the following year, under the administration of the Marquis of Rockingham⁷⁹ This repeal, however, was accompanied with a resolution declaring that *the King and Parliament, had, have, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force to bind the colonies and people of America, subjects of the crown of Great Britain, in all cases whatever.*⁸⁰ A declaration in which tyranny was expressed in its strongest terms, was not likely to conciliate the minds of any people endued with the slightest spark of liberty, and consequently had little or no effect in appeasing those commotions which had been excited by the former acts of the British legislature. In the succeeding administration of the Duke of Grafton new laws of violence and concession were alternately enacted; and among the latter, an Act was passed in the year 1770 repealing the laws for raising revenue on every article *except a duty of one penny a pound on tea*, which, like the Declaratory Act of the Rockingham

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administration, seems to be reserved as fuel for a future combustion.⁸¹—Accordingly, in the year 1774 Lord North, who had succeeded the Duke of Grafton as first Lord of the Treasury,⁸² with the view of serving the East India Company, and at the same time of deriving a revenue from the American colonies, procured a law to be passed which gave them leave to export their tea (of which they had then about seventeen millions of pounds in their warehouses) to any country free of all duty whatever. The Company, after some hesitation, were induced by this permission to freight some ships with this article for different ports of America. The small quantities of English, compared with the much larger quantities of foreign teas, had hitherto led the colonies, with the exception of some few murmurs and discontents, to acquiesce in the trifling duty which they paid on this article. But when they perceived the immense quantities of it that were now introduced, and the evident design of the minister in so doing, the alarm became general throughout the provinces—the tea was thrown into the sea at Boston—other acts of violence succeeded—a civil war broke out—and on the issue of the contest, in the opinion of a great majority of the more enlightened and virtuous, depended the existence of the rights and liberties not only of America, but of this country.

Impressed with these sentiments, and alarmed at the fatal consequences of a war in which the resources, the public credit and prosperity of the kingdom were so deeply involved, Dr. Price was anxious that every possible effort should be exerted to oppose the prosecution of it*.⁸³ At the

* The following letter from Dr. Franklin will show the repugnance with which the Americans entered upon this war, and the interest which Dr. Price took in preserving and promoting peace between the two countries.

“I wish as ardently as you can do for peace, and should rejoice exceedingly in co-operating with you to that end.—But every ship from

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Britain brings some intelligence of new measures that tend more and more to exasperate, and it seems to me that, until you have found by dear experience the reducing us by force impracticable, you will think of nothing fair and reasonable. We have as yet resolved only on defensive measures. If you would recall your forces and stay at home, we should meditate nothing to injure you. A little time so given for cooling on both sides would have excellent effects. But you will goad and provoke us.—You despise us too much—and you are insensible of the Italian adage, that there is no *little enemy*.—I am persuaded that the body of the British people are our friends but they are changeable, and by your lying gazettes may soon be made our enemies. Our respect for them will proportionably diminish, and I see clearly we are on the high road to mutual family, hatred and detestation.—A separation of course will be inevitable. 'Tis a million of pities so fair a plan as we have hitherto been engaged in for increasing strength and empire with public felicity should be destroyed by the mangling hands of a few blundering ministers.—It will not be destroyed—God will protect and prosper it.—You will only exclude yourselves from any share in it. We hear that more ships and troops are coming out. We know that you may do us a great deal of mischief, but we are determined to bear it patiently as long as we can. But if you flatter yourselves with beating us into submission you know neither the people nor the country. The Congress is still sitting, and will wait the result of their *last* petition.”

Philadelphia, October 3, 1775.”

From the subjoined extract of a letter written in the February following by Mr. Ewing of Philadelphia, it will be seen that Dr. Franklin was fully justified in his predictions.

“It is not easy to conceive the spirit that reigns through the colonies, nor the determined resolution to suffer the last extremities rather than submit to the claims of Parliament to tax them without their consent. This spirit, like an electric shock, rose and pervaded all ranks and conditions of men upon the affair of Lexington; and every step of Administration since, has heightened the indignation they feel against the authors of their sufferings. Be assured that no oratory or speciousness of address are in danger of making the least impression upon them. I have conversed with many members of the Congress, and find them determined not to recede in the least from the terms they first proposed—at least till proposals are made them by

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commencement of hostilities the resistance of the colonies was by no means so popular among the multitude as might have been expected. This arose partly from the misrepresentation of ministers and their adherents, and partly perhaps from the ignorance and inattention of the public to the principles on which that resistance was founded. It was impossible therefore that Dr. Price could have rendered more effectual service to those exertions which he was so anxious to promote, than by leading the public to more correct opinions on the nature of civil liberty in general, and to a more thorough knowledge of the indefeasible rights which the Americans opposed to the claims of the mother-country. In the winter of 1775 he devoted the principal part of his time to this important work, and in the beginning of the following year published his "Observations on Civil Liberty, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America."⁸⁴ His natural diffidence and modesty did not suffer him to entertain very sanguine hopes of success, and therefore his feelings were the more highly gratified by the very favourable manner in which this work was received by the public.—So eagerly and universally was it read, that the press could not supply the demands for it.—In the course of a few days several thousands were sold; and such was the rapid progress of the impression which it made and of the admiration which it excited, that the friends and supporters of the Americans thought they could not better serve the cause than by extending the sale of it to all ranks of society. Application was in consequence made to Dr. Price for his permission to print a cheap edition of it immediately;⁸⁵ which with a noble disinterestedness he granted without hesitation, and thus sacrificed all private emoluments (which in this case would have been very considerable) to the support of a cause from

Administration," &c.

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which he could not possibly derive any other benefit than what arises from the consciousness of having endeavoured to deserve well of mankind. In proportion to the popularity and admiration which Dr. Price acquired by this invaluable work among the friends of American *freedom*, was the rancorous abuse which he received from the advocates of American *subjection*. The Rockinghamites, though they opposed the war on the ground of its *inexpediency*, never argued against the *injustice* of it; nor could they indeed have well done this, consistently with their Declaratory Act in 1767.⁸⁶ Dr. Price's principles therefore were much too liberal for their creed, and were regarded by them in a light no less unfavourable than by the most strenuous supporters of Administration. Hence that very equivocal friend of liberty, Mr. Edmund Burke, took occasion, in his letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, to censure some of Dr. Price's principles on the origin of government, and to advance sentiments of his own as to the omnipotence of the British Parliament, which proved that he differed from ministers only as to the *time* and not as to the *right* of taxing America.⁸⁷ I know not whether any others of the same party were among the numerous host of writers who attempted to refute and expose Dr. Price's opinions, for he noticed no other; and even in his remarks on Mr. Burke, he modestly defends himself, and with particular candour expresses his regret rather than the slightest resentment at having him for his opponent.⁸⁸—On the side of the ministry, his adversaries were in dreadful array. From Dr. Markham the archbishop of York,⁸⁹ to John Wesley⁹⁰ and his apostles in the Tabernacle, the preachers of the Gospel of peace denounced their anathemas against the friend of conciliation and harmony, whose only aim was to prevent the ravages of war, by attempting at least to point out the folly and injustice of it. Nothing could more strongly show the importance of this work and the effect it produced, than the immense number of pamphlets which were published in answer, or rather in abuse

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of it.⁹¹ The writers of these pamphlets consisted for the most part either of those who were the immediate pensioners of Government, such as Johnson,⁹² Shebbeare,⁹³ Macpherson,⁹⁴ Lind,⁹⁵ &c. or of such as hoped to recommend themselves to a place among that honourable band. The arguments, however, of the best of them, in Dr. Price's opinion, required no reply; and as to their abuse, he was so conscious of the rectitude of his own intentions, and blessed with a temper so mild and tranquil, that their invectives neither disturbed his repose nor excited his resentment.—He suffered them to expire in silence; and certainly this was the best service which he could render the authors of them. It is probable, however, that Dr. Price's opponents did not wholly consist of the pensioned adherents of Government. Some of them might have been incited by more honourable motives.—But from whatever source their opposition originated, it had but little effect in diminishing his popularity or checking the progress of his publication. —In the course of a few months, by means of the cheap edition, near 60,000 copies of it had been disposed of; and amidst the great number of private congratulations which he received on having so well supported the cause of liberty, he was gratified in a more public manner, by having the freedom of the city of London presented to him in a gold box by the aldermen and common council, as a “testimony of their approbation of his principles, and of the high sense which they entertained of the excellence of his observations on the justice and policy of the war with America.”⁹⁶—Nor was his popularity confined to this country:—On the western side of the Atlantic it so far prevailed, that these observations, in conjunction with another celebrated but less temperate pamphlet,⁹⁷ were believed to have had no inconsiderable effect in determining the Americans to declare their independence.

As the colonies were now denounced by Parliament to be

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in a state of actual rebellion, all direct intercourse between the two countries was necessarily destroyed. Through the medium of France, however, an indirect communication was continued, and Dr Price was constantly in the habit of having letters transmitted to him from America by his friend Dr. Franklin, who resided in Paris at that time as ambassador from the United States. These letters never failed to contain the warmest expressions of gratitude for the zeal and abilities with which he had written in defence of America, and in support of the cause of general liberty and justice. But in other respects they are altogether uninteresting, and contain no information, except the detail of some military operations (which had already appeared in the newspapers,) and the regret of the writers at the unnatural contest in which they were engaged. From the decided manner in which he had declared his sentiments, Dr. Price was aware of the peculiar circumstances of his situation, and therefore was particularly cautious in regard to his correspondence with his American friends. Among the few copies which are preserved of his letters to these persons, this is invariably the case, and in one of them⁹⁸ he observes that “he is become so marked and obnoxious that prudence requires him to be very cautious—that he avoids all correspondence even with Dr. Franklin, though so near him as Paris—and for this reason declines giving Mr. Gordon the assistance he desires in writing the History of the present war,”⁹⁹—adding, however, at the same time, “that any information respecting it would be very acceptable to him, for there was less danger in receiving than in sending accounts.” In another letter he makes an apology for not answering a very innocent question, merely on the same ground.¹⁰⁰ I know not how far this excessive caution was necessary in Dr. Price; but I believe that he alarmed himself much more than he had need to have done; for the administration of Lord North, though directed like that of one of his successors to a wrong object, was not signaled by

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sounding the tocsin against the friends of liberty, nor by an attempt at involving whole societies of them in one general proscription as conspirators and traitors against the laws and government of their country.¹⁰¹

In the spring of 1777 he published a second pamphlet, containing additional observations on the nature and value of civil liberty—on the war with America—and on the debts and resources of Great Britain.¹⁰² This work, in return for the honour which they had just conferred upon him, was dedicated to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London; and was written, partly with the view of explaining more fully his former observations on the nature of civil liberty, but principally with the view of warning the nation of the impolicy and danger of the war, by exhibiting a faithful account of the debts and taxes with which it was already encumbered. The popularity of the former pamphlet insured the success of this, though it wanted no such aid for its support. Being, however chiefly appropriated to the discussion of financial subjects, it was not to be expected that it should be so universally read, nor even that the more popular observations on civil liberty and the American war, though written with equal ardour and ability, should make the same impression, as when they first excited the public admiration by their novelty as well as their excellence. But though not quite so rapid in its sale as the former, this work passed through several editions, and stirred up a host of opponents equally numerous and virulent, who, like their predecessors, had as little effect in disturbing the author's peace as in influencing the opinions of the public.¹⁰³ The alarm with which Dr. Price contemplated the scarcity of coin compared with the redundancy of paper-money and the dreadful consequence to be apprehended from the failure of the Bank and the accumulation of the public debt, though felt by many in common with himself, appears to have been premature; and the sorrowful experience of the last eighteen

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years has proved that the gold may entirely disappear from circulation,—the kingdom be inundated with paper and base coin,—that the Bank may stop payment; and for many years after these events, that an unceasing expenditure may add above 500 millions to the debt, without deterring ministers from making still further additions, or alarming the nation with its nearer approach to the ruin which he foreboded. After the publication of these two pamphlets, Dr. Price had determined to take no further part in the political contentions of that time, but to retire, as he observes in some of his letters to his American correspondents, “an anxious spectator of the present contest, with the satisfaction of having endeavoured to communicate just ideas of government, and of the nature and value of civil liberty.”¹⁰⁴ In forming this determination he certainly mistook the disposition of his own mind, for his anxiety was much too intense to permit him to remain a silent spectator of events, on which he believed the welfare and happiness of this country and America so essentially to depend. Whenever Government therefore thought proper to proclaim a fast, he considered it more as a political than a religious ordinance, and always took an opportunity on that day, contrary to his invariable practice on other days of religious worship, to deliver his sentiments on the conduct of the war, and on the evil consequences which were likely to result from it.¹⁰⁵ His hearers on these occasions were very numerous; nor was it possible that they should not have been deeply impressed by the honest warmth and energy with which he delivered his discourses, and also by that mild simplicity of manner which distinguished his whole conduct, and which was formed to engage every heart in his favour, however much it might have been imbued with different opinions.—But of all these discourses he only published those which he delivered on the fast-days in the years 1779¹⁰⁶ and 1781.¹⁰⁷ To the former of these he was induced to add a postscript, in consequence of a violent attack from Dr. Lowth,

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bishop of London,¹⁰⁸ in a sermon preached on the preceding Ash-wednesday in the Chapel Royal, which he afterwards published and addressed to the clergy of his diocese.¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately for the bishop, he had maintained those very opinions in former times, which he now reprobated with so much vehemence; and Dr. Price, as the best answer, quoted a few passages from what the learned prelate had written in his earlier years, and left him to the choice either of condemning his old principles, or attempting the more difficult task of reconciling them with his new ones*.¹¹⁰

The abuse which was so unsparingly heaped on Dr. Price

* Dr. Price having asserted in his first tract, that “as far as in any instance the operation of any cause comes in to restrain the powers of self-government in a state, so far slavery is introduced,” and in his second tract, that “the representation of a kingdom ought to be complete, and that no state (a part of which only is represented in the legislature that governs it) can be said to be self-governed,” the bishop says that it follows from these assertions “that a vast MAJORITY of the people of England, all that have no votes for the representatives in parliament, are slaves;” and yet in a sermon preached at the assizes in Durham, in the year 1764, this very same Dr. Lowth observes, that “the greatest and most important privilege that any people can possibly enjoy, is to be governed by laws framed by their own advice or consent.” This he represents “as the true liberty of a state, and the particular happiness of the collective body of people in this country, in virtue of the right of representation which they enjoy, the act of representatives freely chosen by themselves being their own act.” In another part of his sermon he says that “the true and perfect liberty of a people consists in their enjoying security from oppression under the protection of THEIR OWN LAWS.” And again, that “the people of this nation do enjoy, as fully *as in the nature of things they are capable of enjoying*, and as far as they have the will and the virtue to enjoy it, the great advantage of being governed by laws of their own framing, or to which they give their free consent.” Here then we see the bishop maintaining the same principles with Dr. Price, against whom he inveighs with so much acrimony as an encourager of sedition and rebellion, and directly contradicts his own assertion, “that a *vast majority* of the people of England, having no votes for representatives in parliament, do not give their assent to the laws by which they are governed, and therefore are not *self-governed*.”

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by the advocates for the unconditional submission of the Americans, was amply compensated to him by the esteem and respect of the unbiassed friends of liberty and justice in this and other countries. Among the ablest of his correspondents may be numbered M. Turgot, the late comptroller of the finances in France, who, in consequence of the mention made of his administration in the second tract on civil liberty, wrote an admirable letter to Dr. Price on the subject, and continued his correspondence with him to the end of his life. The truly philosophic and liberal principles, together with the sound reasoning contained in M. Turgot's first letter, induced Dr. Price to insert a copy of it, after his death, in a subsequent publication*, and therefore it will be unnecessary to repeat the insertion of it in this work.¹¹¹

Although these excellent men entirely agreed in their opinions on civil and religious liberty, it appears from some parts of their correspondence, that they differed much as to their expectations in regard to the good effects of the American revolution to mankind. In his answer to M. Turgot's first letter Dr. Price says—"Happy is it for the subjects of the wretched and corrupt governments of Europe, that there is an asylum now opened for them in America. This has a tendency to soften the despotisms of Europe; and by operating in this way, and calling the attention of men to the principles of civil authority, our quarrel with America is likely to do the greatest service to mankind. I look indeed to the new world with satisfaction and triumph; and the time probably will come, when a great part of Europe will be flocking to a country where, unmolested by spiritual and civil tyranny, they will be able to enjoy in safety the exercise of reason and the rights of men."¹¹²—To which M. Turgot writes in reply, "Je ne vous parle plus des Américains; car quelque soit le denouement de cette guerre, j'ai un peu perdu

* In his advice to the Americans on the formation of their government.

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l'espérance de voir sur la terre une nation vraiment libre et vivant sans guerre. Ce spectacle est réservé à des siècles bien éloignés."¹¹³ It must be acknowledged that subsequent events have afforded melancholy proof that M. Turgot's despondency was well founded, and that the American revolution is not likely to fulfil the sanguine expectations of Dr. Price, either in softening the despotisms of the old world, or preventing the rage for war from inflaming the inhabitants of the new one. But Dr. Price was not singular in his expectations. Many of those wise and venerable persons who at that time directed the councils of America indulged the same hopes; and had equal wisdom and moderation prevailed in the councils of their successors, it is not probable that those hopes would have been so soon disappointed, or that the friends of peace should have had to lament, in the infant states of America, those follies and vices which have so long embroiled the old governments of Europe.

The honest and ardent zeal with which Dr. Price had defended the rights of America, and the great financial knowledge which he had displayed in his different publications, induced the Congress of the United States, as well in testimony of their gratitude as in the hope of availing themselves of his abilities, to send him a formal invitation to come and reside among a people who knew how to appreciate his talents, and who would be truly happy to see them exerted in their behalf. In the winter of 1778 the following letter,¹¹⁴ containing the resolution of Congress, was transmitted to him from their ambassadors in France:—

“Passy, near Paris, December 7, 1778.

SIR,

By one of the latest ships from America we had the pleasure of receiving from Congress an attested copy of their resolution of the sixth of October in these words: —

“In Congress, 6th of October, 1778.

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Resolved,

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

Extract from the Minutes,

CHARLES THOMPSON, Sec^{y.}”¹¹⁵

“From a great respect to the character of Dr. Price, we have much satisfaction in communicating this resolution. We request your answer, Sir, as soon as may be convenient. If it should be in the affirmative, you may depend upon us to discharge the expense of your journey and voyage, and for every assistance in our power to make your passage agreeable, as well as your reception and accommodation in our country. We have the honour to be, with the highest esteem and respect, sir,

Your most obedient

and most humble servants,

B. FRANKLIN.

ARTHUR LEE. * ¹¹⁶

* The following letter, written by Mr. Lee, accompanied this invitation:—

“*Paris, December 8th, 1778,*

DEAR SIR,

I cannot express the pleasure I felt at receiving the vote which accompanies this. I am in the fullest hope, that both your inclination and your circumstances will permit you to gratify our wishes.

You are sensible how much the future happiness of a people depends upon the proper management of their finances, how difficult it is to remedy original defects in all constitutions, and therefore how much ill you will prevent and how much good promote by giving the

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assistance that is requested.

It seems that where you are, your aid is not required. Those who conduct that government esteem themselves much abler to manage than you can advise. And indeed, considering how opposite their end is to ours, I think they are right. Their abilities are exactly shaped to their purpose—the ruin of the empire. Let me therefore beseech you to come where you will be welcome and useful.—It will be the noblest consolation for the calamities that must fall upon the old people to promote the happiness of the new.—As long there was any hope of preventing these calamities, your utmost endeavours were not wanting. But the total prevalence of vice and corruption has not left a probability of amendment.—In this situation, the pure and unambitioned voice of Congress has desired your assistance in a manner that bears the most honourable testimony of your merit, and of their wishes to promote the permanent good of the people who have reposed in them the guardianship of their rights and interests.

It is the voice of wisdom which calls you to the noblest of all works—the assisting to form a government which means to make the principles of equal justice and the general rights the chief objects of its attention. Generations yet unborn may bless the contributors to this inestimable work, and among them I trust the name of Dr. Price will hold a distinguished place.

I am, with the sincerest respect and friendship,
Dear sir, yours &c.

ARTHUR LEE.”

In answer to the *official* invitation of the American Commissioners, Dr. Price sent the following note inclosed in a private letter to Mr. Lee:

“Newington Green, January 19th, 1779.

Dr. Price returns his best thanks to the Honourable Dr. Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, Esqrs., for conveying to him the resolution of Congress of the 6th of October last, by which he is invited to become a member of the American States, and his assistance is desired in regulating their finances. It is not possible for him to express the sense he has of the honour this resolution does him, and the satisfaction with which he reflects on the favourable opinion of him which has occasioned it.—But he knows himself to be ill qualified for giving such assistance, and he is also so connected in this country,

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JOHN ADAMS¹¹⁷

Dr. PRICE.”

If we may reason from the manner in which the American finances have been since conducted, no people had greater need of assistance. But they were not likely to derive it from the personal exertions of Dr. Price.—However zealous he might have been in their support, however ready to communicate his advice, he was too much attached to this country, and connected by too many ties of friendship, and affection, to exchange his present abode, and at the advanced age of near threescore years to think of forming new connexions beyond the Atlantic. He did not hesitate, therefore, civilly to decline this invitation of the Congress; which, if no such ties had existed, the humble and modest opinion he always entertained of his own abilities would certainly have induced him to do.

It will be observed that in the conclusion of his first tract on civil liberty Dr. Price recommends a plan for conciliating the Americans which had been lately proposed in the House of Lords by the Earl of Shelburne; and this he was led to do, not only from its containing principles congenial with his own, but from the hope that it would derive greater weight when supported by such authority.¹¹⁸ It is very probable also that the intimate friendship which subsisted between Lord Shelburne and himself might have had some effect on Dr. Price in recommending this plan; and his friends expressed their fears at the time that such a recommendation might give

and advancing so fast into the evening of life, that he cannot think of a removal. He requests the favour of the honourable commissioners to transmit this reply to Congress, with assurances that he feels the warmest gratitude for the notice taken of him, and that he looks to the United States as now the hope, and likely soon to become the refuge, of mankind.”

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his work the appearance of a party-publication.—Nothing, however, was further from his intention.—Having no private interest to serve, he cared very little who were *in*, and who *out* of power;¹¹⁹ and if, instead of those measures which he considered as so destructive to the welfare and happiness of the kingdom, a system of peace and œconomy had been adopted, it would have been totally indifferent to him whether Lord North or Lord Shelburne administered the affairs of this country. No person engaged in political discussions with more disinterested views; and if he ever expressed a wish to see Lord Shelburne at the head of Administration, it arose from a belief that he would pursue such measures as would restore the nation to peace and prosperity, rather than from any motive of personal esteem and friendship.

His intimacy with Lord Shelburne necessarily produced a like intimacy with Mr Dunning¹²⁰ and Colonel Barré;¹²¹ and to the kind assistance of the latter he was indebted for most of the parliamentary documents which enabled him to write with so much accuracy on the public finances. Among other instances of profusion which distinguished this war from all that preceded it, were the shameful bargains that were made with the different contractors for supplying the army and navy with stores and provisions. Against some of these, and particularly against Alderman Harley's contract for sending coin to Canada,¹²² and Atkinson's rum contract,¹²³ Colonel Barré inveighed with his usual energy in the House of Commons.¹²⁴ But in order more effectually to expose these and other transactions of the same kind, it was determined that an account of them should be laid before the public, together with some observations on the profligate manner in which the resources of the country were lavished, and on the ruin which it threatened to the liberties and property of the people.—A small pamphlet was in consequence written under the title of "Facts addressed to the Subjects of Great Britain and Ireland;"¹²⁵ the financial part of which had been composed

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by Dr. Price, the other part principally by Mr. Horne Tooke.¹²⁶—When this pamphlet was ready for publication, Lord Shelburne objecting to some passages of it wished the whole to be suppressed. But Mr. Tooke thought differently on the occasion, and caused it immediately to be published in direct opposition to his Lordship's wishes. This necessarily produced a quarrel between them, which admitted of no reconciliation during the remainder of their lives. I know not what induced Lord Shelburne to object to the publication of this admirable pamphlet, which particularly recommended those very measures proposed by the Duke of Richmond¹²⁷ and himself in the House of Lords,¹²⁸ as the best means of saving the nation; and, while it exposed the extravagance of the present expenditure compared with that of former wars, recited only mere matters of fact deduced from documents which had already been laid before Parliament:—and as to the indignation which it expressed at the frauds of contractors and the criminal negligence of the Minister in his bargains with some of them, it only adopted in more moderate terms the language of Mr. Dunning, Colonel Barré, and his other friends, when they reprobated those abuses with so much severity and justice in the House of Commons. But it can now be of little use to enter further into this discussion, and it will be sufficient to observe that this anonymous pamphlet passed through seven or eight editions¹²⁹ in a few months, without exciting the wrath of the Attorney-General, or, I believe, awakening the Minister to more vigilance and œconomy in the expenditure of the public money.—But this destructive system of profusion, which consumed the resources of the country and threatened the utter ruin of public credit, was not the only evil which alarmed the apprehensions of Dr. Price. The increasing burthens which oppressed the poor, together with the growing luxury and extravagance which pervaded the higher ranks of society, were, in his opinion, making dreadful inroads into the population of the kingdom; and with

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a view of warning the nation of its danger, he published in 1779 an “Essay on the Population of England” from the Revolution to that Time,¹³⁰ in which, if the documents whence he derived his information had been correct, he clearly proved a decrease of more than *one fourth* in the number of inhabitants; or, in other words, that the population which in 1690 exceeded six millions and a half, had in less than a century been reduced to five millions. In the former period the number of houses amounted, according to the returns of the surveyors of the house and window duties, to 1,320,000—in the latter only to 952,000; and as Dr. Price was incontestably right in regard to the number of persons in each house, it is manifest, if these returns had been accurate, that he would have been perfectly correct in his conclusions.—But the surveyors, in returning the houses excused on account of poverty, appear to have been exceedingly deficient, and in consequence the conclusions of Dr. Price are proportionably incorrect. If the late enumerations are to be depended upon, the paupers are *five times* more numerous than he had imagined; and within the last ten years, notwithstanding a continued war with all its evils, the inhabitants of Great Britain have increased above a *million and a half*; and this increase is going on so rapidly according to these accounts, that we are in danger of proving the truth of Mr. Malthus’s theory, rather than of fulfilling the prediction of Dr. Price.¹³¹

But finance and politics were not the only subjects which at this period engaged Dr. Price’s time and attention. In consequence of Dr. Priestley’s disquisitions on matter and spirit¹³² which had just been published, he was led to make some observations on those parts which did not accord with his own sentiments, and to communicate them privately to the author, with the wish, however, that they might be published together with any remarks which he should think proper to make upon them. Dr. Priestley readily assented to his friend’s request, and it was consequently agreed that they should enter

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into an amicable discussion of those subjects; the one proposing his objections—the other answering them—the one again replying to these answers, and the other rejoining to these replies, till each should at length be satisfied that he had done all the justice in his power to his several arguments. This metaphysical controversy was distinguished from all others in one respect: It neither disturbed the friendship of the parties, nor abated the high opinion which each entertained of his adversary's talents and integrity; but, like all other controversies of the same kind, it left both as it found them, in the full persuasion of the truth of his own opinions.¹³³ I feel no desire to engage in metaphysical disquisitions, nor to enter into a minute account of this controversy. I shall therefore only observe on the subject of *matter*, that Dr Priestley, in opposition to Dr Price, maintained that it was neither solid, impenetrable, nor inert—that it was merely an extended surface possessed of certain powers of attraction and repulsion, and therefore capable of acting where it was not present; or, according to another definition, that it was composed of a number of indivisible centres of attraction and repulsion; and since these centres are mere imaginary points, Dr. Price observed that it can have no extension nor indeed any existence at all.—On the nature of mind and spirit, Dr. Priestley asserts that we have no soul separate from the body; but that the faculty of thinking, being the result of a certain arrangement of the parts of matter, is wholly carried on *in* and *by* the brain itself. On the contrary, Dr. Price maintains that mind is *one*, being totally distinct from the body, and admits of no division, and that on the supposition of the brain's being the sole organ of thought and perception, it will follow, from the circumstance of matter's being divisible, that the mind must be composed of a multitude of beings, and therefore that man may be divided into a multitude of *selves*. On the doctrine of *necessity* Dr. Priestley utterly denies the free

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agency of man—maintains that there is but one cause, one sole agent in nature, that no action or event could possibly have been different from what it has been, is, or will be; and that if all mankind were perfect philosophers and necessarians, they would ascribe to God their evil dispositions no less than their good ones; or, in other words, they would consider themselves as the fellow-workers with him in their vices as well as their virtues. From these new philosophical principles, as he calls them, Dr. Priestley finds that Christian Necessarians derive that excellence of character which renders them the most distinguished for active and sublime virtues!!—I shall not enter upon the arguments which Dr. Price opposed to the doctrine of necessity, nor upon those which Dr. Priestley advanced in support of it; but I cannot help thinking that it is as well for the world that neither Christ nor his apostles appear to have professed this new philosophy when they delivered their instructions to mankind.—How far either party succeeded in these discussions I am not anxious to decide. This will most probably be determined, as in all cases of the same kind, according to the preconceived opinions of those that read them. On one point, however, all must agree:—of the purity of the motives which led each of these good men to engage in the controversy there can be no doubt; nor is it possible not to admire the zeal and sincerity which they manifest throughout the whole of it in promoting the great cause of truth and virtue. The subjects of this controversy (in their nature abstruse and unsatisfactory) do not in general either engage the attention or interest the feelings of the public; and had Dr. Price always confined himself to the doubts and difficulties of metaphysics, it is certain that he might still have had reason to lament his unpopularity as a preacher; but having directed his studies to subjects more generally understood, and more immediately connected with the interest and happiness of mankind, the

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popularity which he justly acquired as the zealous defender of civil and religious liberty, he now also enjoyed as the animated advocate of morality and virtue. From his first publication on the American war, the sermons which he had formerly preached to a few persons scattered among the empty pews of his meeting-house, were now delivered to crowded and admiring congregations; and such was the excellence of his discourses—so devout and animated his manner of conducting the service, that those whose curiosity led them to hear him as the friend of liberty, transferred this admiration to the nobler qualities which he displayed as the friend of true religion and piety.¹³⁴

With the exception of two Fast Sermons which he published in 1779 and 1781, Dr. Price, during the remainder of the American war, continued a silent spectator of events; and his time, exclusive of the hours which his duties as a minister required, was chiefly employed in carrying on an extensive correspondence; of which, however, he was accustomed to complain as having become extremely irksome to him.—The different subjects on which he had written will partly account for the great number of his correspondents; and as he was rather slow in writing letters, it is no wonder that he should regret the toil of having so many to engage his attention.¹³⁵

The protracted continuance of the war had now involved the kingdom in considerable difficulties, and the prospect of forcing the Americans to unconditional submission was daily becoming more hopeless. Dr. Price therefore, though a silent, had never ceased to be an anxious spectator of events:—But the abuse and calumny with which he was assailed, increased in proportion to the nearer accomplishment of his wishes, and the disappointment of his opponents. He was not only represented as an abandoned profligate in some of those periodical publications which set truth and decency at defiance, but he was continually annoyed with anonymous

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letters, accusing him as a traitor, and even threatening him with assassination; but neither the scurrility of the one nor the menaces of the other had the least effect in disturbing the tranquillity of his temper, or in diminishing that cheerfulness and benevolence which endeared him to all his friends. At length, however, after expending above 150 millions in the attempt, the subjugation of America became utterly desperate, and the ministers, no longer supported by their usual majorities in the House of Commons, resigned their places in March 1782. A new administration was soon formed, composed of the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Shelburne, Mr. Fox, and other leading members of the opposition, who immediately adopted such measures as tended to conciliate the colonies and to restore a general peace in Europe and America*.¹³⁶ But they had scarcely commenced this salutary

* On the occasion of the peace, he received the following letter from Dr. Franklin, whose favourable opinion of his writings, made ample amends for all the abuse which had been heaped upon him by the pensioned advocates for American subjugation.

“*Passy, June 13, 1782.*”

DEAR SIR,

I congratulate you on the late revolution in your public affairs. Much good may arise from it, though possibly not all that good men and even the new ministers themselves may have wished or expected. The change, however, in the sentiments of the nation, *in which I see evident effects of your writings* with those of our deceased friend Mr Burgh*, and others of our valuable Club, should encourage you to proceed. The ancient Roman and Greek orators could only speak to the number of citizens capable of being assembled within the reach of their voice. Their writings had little effect, because the bulk of the people could not read.—Now by the press we can speak to nations; and good books and well-written pamphlets have great and general influence. The facility with which the same truths may be repeatedly enforced by placing them daily in different lights in newspapers which are every where read, gives a great chance of establishing them. And now we find that it is not only right to strike while the iron is hot, but that it may be very practicable to heat it by continually striking. I

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work, before the whole phalanx was broken up and destroyed by the death of the Marquis of Rockingham. On this unfortunate event a contention for power arose between the friends of Lord Shelburne and those of the Duke of Portland, which terminated in favour of the former, and consequently in the resignation and inveterate hatred of the latter. The cabals and intrigue which produced and fomented these dissensions form no part of my design in writing this history. I shall therefore only observe, that however much Dr. Price's friendship disposed him to consider Lord Shelburne in the right on this occasion, he by no means approved of some of the associates whom he had chosen for himself from among the members of Lord North's administration. Nevertheless, the abilities displayed in conducting the negotiation, for peace, and in bringing the war to a speedy and upon the whole a favourable termination—the plans also were in contemplation for restoring the finances, and the different measures which were proposed for improving the condition

suppose all may now correspond with more freedom, and I shall be glad to hear from you as often as may be convenient to you. Please to present my best respects to our good old friends of the London Coffee-house. I often figure to myself the pleasure I should have in being once more seated among them. With the greatest and most sincere esteem and affection. I am, my dear friend, yours ever,

B. FRANKLIN"

*[Morgan's note]: The death of this amiable and excellent person had happened a few weeks before the writing of this letter.—He had long been the intimate friend of Dr. Price and one of the principal members of his congregation at Newington Green.—He was the author of several valuable works on moral and political subjects, and in all of them proved himself the steadfast friend of virtue and liberty. His last publication, under the title of "Political Disquisitions", though written under the excruciating agonies of the stone, abounds with the most important information on the extreme defectiveness of the national representation, and cannot fail to be admired by all who wish to restore the constitution to its original purity.

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of the kingdom, led him and the friends of peace and liberty in general to entertain the highest hopes from this administration. In the King's speech, which was delivered at the opening of the session in December 1782, that part of it which expresses a wish "that such regulations may be established, such saving made, and future loans so constructed as to promote the means of their gradual redemption by a fixed course of payment," was suggested, and I believe inserted in the very words of Dr. Price. So intimate was his connexion at this time, that he was gravely offered by him the place of private Secretary*. It is hardly necessary to observe that he declined an offer so little suited to his habits and disposition, or that the honour and emoluments of office were as unnecessary to engage him in favour of a good administration, as they would have been ineffectual in securing his support of a bad one. His connexion with Lord Shelburne was continued from no motive of private interest; for though he had long been honoured with his confidence, he neither sought a place nor asked a favour for himself or his friends. His attachment therefore to him as prime-minister was disinterested in the highest degree, and, exclusive of the partiality of friendship, was founded on the hope and belief that he would pursue such measures as would restore public credit, and check that corruption which exhausted the resources and endangered the liberties of the country: nor do I know that there was any sufficient reason to apprehend that this hope would have been disappointed, had Lord Shelburne been continued long enough in power to carry his measures into execution. The former

* His Lordship surely could not be in earnest in making such an offer. It was no doubt meant as a compliment, and the simplicity of Dr. Price considered it in that light, though, as a friend observed, the Minister might as well have proposed to make him *Master of the horse*.

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principles and practice of some of his associates were perhaps unfavourable to the expectation of any substantial reform, and the gradual declension of Dr. Price's visits at Shelburne House did not render the prospect more encouraging.—But what might have been effected by this administration it is now of little consequence to inquire. After an existence of a few months it was overthrown by the coalition of two hostile parties,¹³⁷ who, forsaking every principle on which they had so long and so vehemently opposed each other, united together for its destruction, with the view of succeeding to the joint participation of a power which neither of them could have separately obtained. Having been thus forced to resign his office by a combination which sickened every honest man, Lord Shelburne, upon retiring into private life, renewed that intimacy with Dr. Price which had been partially and perhaps unavoidably interrupted by his public duties in a situation ill-fitted for the social intercourse of disinterested friendship.

Immediately on the termination of the war in 1783, Dr. Price published a small pamphlet, in which he gave an account of the funded and unfunded debt at the time of signing the preliminary articles of peace, which appears to have been increased by the war above 120 millions; and, in allusion to the King's speech at the opening of the session of Parliament, proposed a plan for conducting future loans and for redeeming the public debts.¹³⁸ But the ministers who recommended that measure had been succeeded by others who paid little regard to the recommendations of their predecessors. The next loan, therefore, was made on the same improvident terms with all former loans, and the very idea of rendering it conducive to the redemption of the debt was treated with ridicule and contempt. Disappointed in the hope of a better system of finance, Dr. Price contented himself with giving a very concise

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account of the principles on which this plan was founded, and of the good effects which were likely to result from it. In the course of a few months, however, these ministers shared the fate of those whom they had displaced, and revived the hope that a more enlightened policy might influence those who succeeded them. Encouraged by this prospect, Dr. Price in the following year published a Postscript to his former pamphlet,¹³⁹ in which he repeated his arguments in favour of the plan which he had lately proposed, and drew a comparison between the amount of the debt as stated by himself with its amount as stated in the Report presented to the House of Commons by the Commissioners who had been appointed by the new administration for examining the public accounts.¹⁴⁰ In this Report he had the satisfaction of seeing those measures, which had lately been treated with so little attention and respect, recommended in the strongest terms, and the necessity of abandoning the present ruinous system enforced by the same arguments with which he had long endeavoured in vain to impress the public.

The warm and active benevolence of Dr. Price was not confined to this country; but eager to promote the welfare and happiness of all mankind, it was equally gratified by the diffusion of knowledge, liberty, and virtue, whether those blessings were to be enjoyed on this, or on the other side of the globe. His exertions in favour of the American Colonies arose entirely from this principle; and having now succeeded in establishing their independence, it was his ardent wish that they might form such governments as would render it a benefit to the world. With this view he wrote a pamphlet*¹⁴¹ addressed to the

* It appears from a great number of the letters which he received from his friends in America, that he had long been requested to favour them with his advice in regard to the

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United States, which he distributed among them at his own expense, containing observations on the importance of the American revolution, and much valuable advice on the best means of securing those liberties for which they had successfully contended. The first object which he recommended to their attention was the establishment of a Sinking Fund for the redemption of their debts. The next was the cultivation of peace and the formation of a strict political union among themselves; on the preservation of which their credit, liberties, and even their existence depended:—and though the forms of their government were in general much more liberal than those of any other country, yet the observations which he introduced on

formation of their new governments; and the following extract from one of Dr. Rush's letters will be sufficient to show the high sense which some of the more enlightened men in that country entertained of his abilities.

“ *Philadelphia.*

—Most of the distresses of our country and of the mistakes which Europeans have formed of us have arisen from a belief that the American revolution is *over*. This is so far from being the case, that we have only finished the first act of the drama.—We have changed our forms of government; but it remains yet to effect a revolution in our principles, opinions, and manners, so as to accommodate them to the government we have adopted.—This is the most difficult part of the business of the patriots of our country.—It requires more wisdom and fortitude than to expel or to reduce armies into captivity.—I wish to see this idea inculcated by your pen.—Call upon the rulers of our country to lay the foundation of their empire in knowledge as well as virtue, &c. This will render the American revolution a blessing to mankind. As you have staked your reputation upon this great event with the world and with posterity, you must not desert us till you see the curtain drop and the last act of the drama closed. A small pamphlet addressed by you to the Congress and the Legislatures of each of the States would, I am sure, have more weight with our rulers than an hundred publications thrown out by the by the citizens of this country.”

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civil and religious liberty were not the less important, in leading them to more enlarged views in regard to the freedom of discussion, the liberty of conscience, and the civil establishment of religion. In warning them of the several dangers to which they were exposed, exclusive of those arising from internal wars, the unequal distribution of property, and the endless accumulation of debts, he cautioned them particularly against too eager a pursuit of foreign trade and its attendant evils—the establishment of banks—and the multiplication of paper-money. I know not what attention was paid to these admonitions when they were first delivered, except in a few instances among the more sober and virtuous members of the United States*¹⁴²; but late events have too clearly shown

* The following extracts afford some reason to hope that his advice, when first communicated to the people of America, was not wholly thrown away upon them.

Extract of a letter from Mr. Clark at Boston, dated April 1785.
“Your late publication is a noble testimony of that affection which you always possessed for these States. We are all sensible of the honour you have done us, and we gratefully acknowledge our obligation. Dr. Chauncy is delighted with the work. He thanks you most sincerely for the generous concern you have discovered for his country, and he hopes his country will have wisdom to adopt the measures you have recommended. Your chapter on liberal inquiry cannot be sufficiently admired.—I think it has already liberated some minds. May it be candidly read by all, and may you have the exalted happiness of seeing rational Christianity flourish by your labours!”

Extract of a letter from Dr. Wheeler of Dartmouth College, dated August 1785.
“Your observations on the *importance of the American Revolution* I have had the pleasure to read with particular attention.—I cannot tell you how great the applause is which its author receives throughout these States. The President, confined by a lingering disease, wrote a letter to the Assembly at their session last

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that their effects must have been very transient; and that wars, debts, taxes, paper-money, and the whole train of evils produced by Governments of the old world, are not likely to be soon abandoned by those of the new one.

The termination of the war and the successful issue of the contest in favour of liberty, once more restored Dr. Price to the more peaceful and agreeable pursuits of religious and philosophical subjects. From his earliest youth, his opinions on certain points in religion underwent little or no change. In his private letters to his friends a very short time after leaving the academy,¹⁴³ he appears, as in his latest discourses, to have considered the pre-existence of Christ, the exalted dignity of his nature, and the effect of his interposition in redeeming the distressed and degraded race of man from death and misery, to be fundamental doctrines of Christianity. But it should be observed that, although these sentiments were first imbibed by him at a period when zeal is apt to mislead the judgement, they were even then maintained with that diffidence and liberality which distinguished the writings of his maturer years. In general he laid very little stress on creeds and articles of faith. He preferred the *honest* though mistaken opinions of a virtuous and humble mind to the soundest orthodoxy of a conceited bigot, and was more gratified in encouraging a candid inquiry after truth than in making converts to his own system.¹⁴⁴ Among those who embraced the opposite extremes of Trinitarianism and Socinianism, though he

February, inclosing *the Observations, &c.*—He informed the Legislature that the remarks in this pamphlet were the best legacy which he could leave them.—He prayed earnestly that the spirit of them might animate the manners and dispositions of legislators and people to the latest age.”

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differed essentially from both, he had many friends whom he respected and esteemed; but he never wished to enter into any controversy with them on these subjects, though he had long intended to give a fair account of their opinions, with the view of explaining the reasons on which he founded his own. In the year 1786 therefore he published a volume of Sermons, of which half the number were appropriated to doctrinal, the other half to moral subjects.¹⁴⁵—In the former were stated, first, the points on which all Christians were agreed—next, the tenets peculiar to Trinitarians and Socinians—and lastly, those of the author himself, which preserved a middle course between those of the two preceding ones—It forms no part of my design, nor do I feel any inclination, to engage in theological disputes; it will be sufficient therefore to observe that, although Dr. Price's middle scheme seemed to have been better received by the Trinitarians than the Socinians*,¹⁴⁶ it had but little effect in satisfying either of them. Dr. Priestley, the strenuous

* Extract of a letter from Dr. Adams.

“Gloucester, 21st December, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I owe you a thousand thanks for your valuable present.—I have read your book with great pleasure.—It has indeed answered my highest expectations, and I yet expect more good from it than from any or all the things that I have read on the same subjects. There is a modesty and candour throughout, and something so conciliating, especially in the introduction, as will, I hope, gain it a serious attention from all parties.—And this with a little reason and reflection is all that is wanting to gain proselytes to your cause. At least I find daily, that the more I think on these subjects, the more I incline to almost all your opinions. The seasonable check which you have given to Socinianism will win you some favour from the fiercest Athanasians: and there is an argument in your book which I think will operate with great force against the peculiar doctrine of that creed, &c.”

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advocate of Socinianism, was among the first to notice these sermons, in a series of letters addressed to Dr. Price, who, from his high regard and respect for the author, was induced to insert a short reply to some of his principal objections, in an appendix to the second edition, which was published in the following year. Another zealous opponent he found in his friend Mr. Lindsey*¹⁴⁷, whose arguments appear to have succeeded no better in convincing him than those of Dr. Priestley. Of the good intentions of both he deservedly entertained the highest opinion; but he always

* From the following letter it will be seen that the confident manner in which his opinions were pronounced to be wrong, had but little effect in leading Dr. Price to forsake them.

“DEAR MR. LINDSEY,

May 14th, 1790.

I cannot avoid writing to you to return my best thanks for your second address, and for the very kind notice you have taken of me in it. Your favourable opinion cannot but give me particular pleasure, and I hope I shall never lose it.—I am afraid, however, that I shall be in danger of this, when I tell you, that after reading your book carefully, and being instructed by it, I remain unconvinced of the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ. This must, I doubt, appear to you a striking kind of obstinacy; for I find you think that you have infallibly settled this point; and you sometimes use expressions which imply, that no serious searcher after truth, who takes his opinion from the Bible, and is of a sound understanding, can embrace a different doctrine. But I know your candour; and you will, I doubt not, consider in my favour, that this is a time of life in which we are under the necessity of making up our minds; and it is my comfort, that whether I have done this on the side of truth or error, I shall be equally accepted, provided I have been serious, honest, and diligent in my inquiries. I wish you, Dear Sir, all happiness, and that the remainder of your useful and valuable life may be crowned with a constant increase of the enjoyments inseparable from exemplary integrity.

I am most affectionately yours,

R. PRICE.”

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felt hurt at their assuming to themselves and their sect exclusively, the appellation of *Unitarians*, (which belongs equally to Jews and Mahometans,) and treating with so much contumely the opinions of those who differed from them.¹⁴⁸ In regard to the Moral Sermons, which constituted the latter part of this volume, no difference of opinion existed. These were equally admired by all the friends of religion and virtue. The goodness of the Deity—the security and happiness of a virtuous course—and the assurance of a resurrection from the dead, are subjects on which all Christians are agreed; and the zeal and energy with which these great and important truths were enforced by the author of these sermons, make us almost regret that he had not devoted the whole of the volume to subjects of the same kind*.¹⁴⁹

* I hope it will not be improper to insert the following extracts of letters from two of his most distinguished friends on this occasion.

Extract of a letter from Mrs. Chapone, dated Carlisle, December 10th, 1786.

“I am exceedingly charmed with the sermon on the happiness of virtue—Here you are indeed a most powerful orator! You speak of what you thoroughly *know*, **and** with all the energy and moving eloquence that benevolence can inspire. Those on the goodness of God were also very delightful to me; but I almost wished you had not built so much on an assertion which perhaps would not be granted by all people—*that happiness so greatly prevails and preponderates in this world*. If you were to ask all your acquaintance (who nevertheless are among the best, and therefore the happiest part of mankind) whether they would choose to live their lives over again exactly as they have passed, rather than remain insensible till the general resurrection, perhaps they would not embrace the proposal as readily as you would expect. For my part, I think the belief of God’s goodness does not rest upon this. As **I** know not how much of our suffering

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A few months previous to the publication of these sermons Dr. Price had been visited by a severe domestic affliction in the loss of a wife, whose affectionate attention had long endeared her to him as one of the greatest blessings of his life. Although Mrs. Price's health, from the first year of her marriage, had never been perfectly restored, she had, however, so far recovered her strength and spirits as to be capable of enjoying the society of her friends, and contributing essentially to their comfort and happiness. The purity of her mind and the benevolence of her disposition had well fitted her to be the friend and companion of Dr.

arises from our own faults—how much is chastisement—how much is trial—nor how it may conduce to our future and eternal good; the miseries of life, even if shown to be greater than its enjoyments, would not stagger my faith in the goodness of God. *Though he kill me yet will I trust in him*, for were he not good, I must have been *wholly* evil. I cannot be better than my Maker: therefore whilst I feel *one spark* of benevolence in myself, I must attribute that quality to him in boundless perfection. Upon the whole, I sincerely admire your work and venerate the author; most particularly for that unlimited charity and candour, which is the genuine spirit of Christianity.”

Extract of a letter from Sir William Jones, dated Crishna Nagar, 26th September, 1788.

“I have lately read with delight a book in which all Christians are interested; a volume of Sermons preached by you, and showing the goodness both of your heart and of your judgment. I anxiously hope that I shall see you in perfect health some years hence on my return to Europe, where (despairing of public liberty) I shall, by God's blessing, pass the rest of my life in studying those parts of knowledge which are connected with the duty of good citizens, and in conversing with you and a few others who love their country better than their interest”

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Price; and though their union was never blessed with an addition to their family,¹⁵⁰ they were no less the objects of filial love and veneration to many of their younger relatives, whom they treated with all the care and kindness of the most affectionate parents. I do not know that in any part of Dr. Price's life the amiable benevolence of his temper shone with more lustre than during the last illness of Mrs. Price. The paralytic disorder with which she was affected, though slight in its first attack, had in the course of two years considerably impaired her faculties, and rendered her incapable of deriving much enjoyment either from reading or conversation. In order therefore, as far as lay in his power to contribute to her amusement, Dr. Price devoted a more than ordinary portion of his time to her company, and almost every afternoon sat down for an hour or two with the utmost patience and even cheerfulness to play cards with her—a sacrifice which can be fully appreciated only by a mind like his own. Her death in September 1786,¹⁵¹ though long expected and by no means undesirable, was, however, as deeply felt, and as sincerely lamented by him, as if it had been preceded by no malady to reconcile him to her dissolution.—But he felt and lamented like a good man, and never suffered his sorrow to render him less cheerful to his friends, or less interested in the welfare and happiness of his fellow-creatures.

About this period the Trustees of Mr. Coward's Academy, where in the earlier part of his life he had received his education, determined to move that seminary from London to a distant part of the country. To this they were induced, partly perhaps by their own orthodoxy, but professedly by a scrupulous adherence to the construction of Coward's will, which directed that all the students in his institution should be instructed in the principles of Calvinism, or, in other words, in principles diametrically opposite to those which had been taught there

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for many preceding years. This determination of Coward's trustees deprived the more liberal and enlightened dissenters in London of the only place in which young men of their persuasion could be brought up for the ministry. Accordingly a meeting was held among some of the principal friends of rational religion, and a subscription was set on foot with the view of establishing a college in the neighbourhood of London, for the education not only of Clerical but of Lay-students.¹⁵² A very considerable sum was raised in a short time for this purpose. A stately edifice was purchased in Hackney, and tutors were appointed for the different branches of literature and philosophy.¹⁵³ In support of an institution formed with such laudable views, Dr. Price not only contributed his share in the subscription, but consented to instruct the students in the higher branches of the mathematics—a work, for which his mildness, patience, and ability, would have rendered him highly qualified, had his time been less occupied, and his habits more accustomed to the mechanical drudgery of education*.¹⁵⁴ In addition to these services, he undertook, but with some reluctance, to preach a sermon at the opening of the academy in April 1787, and chose for his subject the evidence of a future improvement in the state of mankind.¹⁵⁵—Happy had his predictions been verified! or even had the prospect of this improvement been rendered more encouraging by the events of the last twenty years!—Of the Hackney institution it will be sufficient to observe that it began its course with splendour, and flattered the hopes of its more sanguine friends and benefactors with the mighty

* Dr. Price soon found himself incapable of attending to the duties of this office, and therefore resigned it in the second year after having undertaken it.—The wonder is, that he could ever be prevailed upon to undertake it at all.

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effects it was to produce on the rising generation; but that it soon gradually languished and decayed; and after an inglorious existence of a few years, and the expenditure of more than £20,000, sunk into irretrievable ruin. Dr. Price, however, had not the mortification of witnessing this catastrophe. To the last period of his life he continued his unavailing assistance to the institution; and it is probable, from the circumstance of his having bequeathed a small legacy towards its support, that he died unconscious of the ignorance and folly which were accelerating its destruction.¹⁵⁶

I have already observed that the measures recommended by Lord Shelburne for redeeming the national debt and abandoned by his immediate successors, had been again adopted by the following Administration. For two or three years after the conclusion of the American war the funds continued much depressed, and the revenue inadequate to the ordinary expenses of government, arising principally from the immense amount of the unfunded debt, and from the injudicious system of taxation which had been pursued during the war. As the best means of restoring public credit, Mr. Pitt, the present minister, determined upon a new and more regular arrangement of the taxes, and upon forming a plan which should reduce the debt, and thus inspire the nation with a hope that its burthens were neither to increase, nor even to continue for ever. Amidst a great variety of plans which were proposed to the minister for this purpose, he at length decided in favour of one which, previous to its being carried into effect, he very properly submitted to the judgement of Dr. Price, accompanied with the following letter:—

“Dear Sir,

The subject of the papers which I inclose will, I am sure, be an apology for the liberty I take in troubling you, and in requesting your opinion upon

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them. When you have had sufficient leisure to consider them, I should be greatly obliged to you if you will allow me to hope for the pleasure of seeing you at any time that is convenient to you.—The situation of the revenue certainly makes this the time to establish an effectual sinking fund. The general idea of converting the three-per-cents into a fund bearing a higher rate of interest, with a view to facilitate redemption, you have on many occasions suggested, and particularly in the papers you were so good to send me last year. The rise of the Stocks has made a material change since that period, and I am inclined to think something like the plan I now send you may be more adapted to the present circumstances. There may be, I believe, some inaccuracies in the calculations, but not such as to be very material. Before I form any decisive opinion, I wish to learn your sentiments upon it; and shall think myself obliged to you for any improvement you can suggest, if you think the principle a right one; or for any other proposal, which from your knowledge of the subject you may think preferable.”¹⁵⁷

Instead of bestowing much time in exposing this ineffective and miserable plan, which would have disgraced any minister that had adopted it, Dr. Price, in return, sent three other plans for Mr. Pitt’s perusal; but recommended one of them in preference to the other two, as the most powerful in its operations, and consequently the best adapted to the present circumstances of the country.¹⁵⁸ But this plan required the addition of £800,000 a year to the taxes, and Mr. Pitt, good man (who afterwards added 500 millions to the public debt), scrupled to burthen the nation with this new load, and therefore adopted one of the less efficient plans, which however he contrived to render still more inefficient by providing that its operations should be checked at the period when they were becoming

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most powerful.—Nevertheless, the plan, though crippled and mutilated in the first instance by Mr. Pitt, and still further crippled by his successors, has produced the most beneficial effects, and entitled the author of it to the gratitude of the nation. I am far from denying his share of merit to the minister who had the discretion to adopt any measure of this kind, and whose influence was exerted in carrying this particular measure into execution. But the friends of Dr. Price have reason to complain that, after enduring so much obloquy and abuse from his stupid opponents when he first proposed such a measure, and after patient perseverance for fourteen years, having succeeded at last in convincing Government of the necessity of it, he should be deprived of the meagre boon of being *noticed* amidst the high-sounding compliments which the minister bestowed upon himself in proposing the measure to Parliament.¹⁵⁹ When he boasted of having raised a pillar to public credit, it would have been as well if he had proposed to have Dr. Price's name inscribed with his own on the pedestal: but subsequent events have proved that these names would have been ill associated on the same column.—Dr. Price's plans were formed for the purpose of relieving the nation from its burthens. They were never designed for the purpose of forcing public credit to its utmost limits, or for being converted into instruments for increasing the mass of the debt to four times its former amount. Had he foreseen this to have been the consequence, it is probable that he would have been less strenuous in the recommendation of them. The pure and disinterested motives which directed all his actions rendered him anxious only for the public good; and on this principle he was solicitous that Mr. Pitt, in the establishment of a measure so essential to it, should receive all the instruction and assistance in his power. He assumed no other merit to himself than that of honest intention; and therefore, when he imagined that the great end he had in

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view was about to be accomplished, he was very little moved by the vanity and ingratitude of the minister in depriving him of all share in the praise and honour of it. The successors of Mr. Pitt have in this respect uniformly followed his example in their panegyrics on their great prototype. They have never ceased to extol his virtue in establishing the Sinking Fund, and to ascribe solely to his wisdom and ability the formation of the plan which has given so much energy to the operations of it. Whether this has proceeded from ignorance, or a disregard to truth and decency, I am little disposed to inquire; but it is with sincere regret that I observe in the number of these successors one Minister who should have been more discriminate in his praises of Mr. Pitt on this subject. Lord Henry Petty,¹⁶⁰ when Chancellor of the Exchequer, should have known that his late father in the House of Peers had on more than one occasion asserted Dr. Price's claim to the gratitude of the public;¹⁶¹ and instead of passing over his name in silence when expatiating on the benefits of the Sinking Fund, and ascribing the merits of it exclusively to Mr. Pitt, he should at least have admitted Dr. Price to a share in his panegyrics, and thus paid a tribute to the memory of a man whom his father had long been accustomed to address and treat as his friend. But I do not believe that Lord Henry Petty intended any disrespect to Dr. Price by his silence; nor in itself was it a matter of much consequence that on this occasion he should have imitated the example of Mr. Pitt and his followers. It would, however, have been as well, if, while extolling the virtue which introduced and the wisdom which formed the plan for redeeming the national debt, he had chosen to give fresh energy to its operations, rather than divert them to other purposes, and instead of making the first inroad upon a fund which ought to have been held sacred and inviolate, he had guarded it by more powerful securities against the

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encroachments of future Ministers.—But, unfortunately, his successors have profited, by the example to make further inroads upon it in aid of that enormous expenditure which, after having exhausted the ordinary resources of the country, is now gradually destroying the last support of its credit and security. It is melancholy to observe the indifference, or rather the complacency, with which this fatal measure is regarded by the nation. They suffer themselves to be deluded by the temporary relief which they derived from the appropriation of the Sinking Fund to the immediate exigencies of Government, and are thus led to acquiesce in a continued course of extravagance which must ultimately oppress and overwhelm them.

In his ardent zeal for the establishment of this fund Dr. Price does not appear to have duly reflected on the fate of a similar measure in the former reign.¹⁶² The existence of a fund which chiefly depends on the frugality and forbearance of ministers must always be very precarious; and unless succeeding ministers should become more saving and virtuous than their predecessors, it is in vain to hope that any establishment of this kind will long be suffered to proceed without interruption in those seasons of difficulty which have so often been produced by an improvident expenditure of the public money.—The accumulations of a Sinking Fund afford a ready supply for an exhausted Treasury; and since the danger of their being misapplied will always increase with their magnitude, it is not probable, if we reason from past experience, that they will ever be permitted to proceed so far as to produce their full effect in exonerating the country from its burthens. In short, it is of little consequence what plan is adopted for redeeming the public debts if an unsparing profusion perpetually augments them; and whether the merit of such plan be assigned to Dr. Price or to Mr. Pitt, the nation in this case will have to regard the author only as having furnished

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ministers with the means of extending the bounds of public credit, and thus rendering its ruin ultimately more general and dreadful.

Dr. Price's acquaintance with Mr. Pitt, as well as his publications on the subject of the national debt, were closed with the establishment of the Sinking Fund in 1786. Had he lived, however, it was his intention to have given an account of the public finances for the four succeeding years*,¹⁶³ in order to prove that the ordinary revenue, so far from providing a million surplus for that fund, as Mr. Pitt pretended, had been deficient to a greater amount; and that such million had in fact been derived from loans, extraordinary receipts, and other means which would probably fail in future[†],¹⁶⁴ and leave the country in a worse state than if the Sinking Fund had never been established.—How far this might have been the case, had the nation continued in a state of peace, it is difficult to determine: but the long and expensive wars in which it has been engaged have rendered these speculations of little consequence; nor have they any connexion either with the life or the writings of Dr. Price, who never could have contemplated a debt of 800 millions; or, if he had lived to witness it, would long ago have ceased in despair to propose any plan for its redemption.

The death of Mrs. Price, the declining state of his own health, and the growing infirmities of age, had tended greatly to depress Dr. Price's spirits, and to alienate his

* In the fifth edition of his *Observations on Reversionary Payments*, which he had just begun to prepare for the press at the time of his last illness in 1791.

† This work I endeavoured to supply in a pamphlet which I published soon after Dr. Price's death, containing a *Review* of his different writings on the public finances.

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mind from all political subjects. With a disposition naturally grave and serious, it is no wonder that in this season of sorrow and affliction he should choose to fix his thoughts on objects from which he was more likely to derive comfort than from the fruitless attempt to reform the abuses of a corrupt Administration. To the duties of his profession, which however he was used to lament as having become too burthensome for him, he wished to devote the principal part of his time at this period. The sermons which he had preached and approved in his youth no longer satisfied the more severe judgement of his maturer years, and he thought that he could not be better employed than in correcting or new composing them, as they appeared to him to be more or less capable of amendment. It was his intention therefore, if his life should be spared, to select a sufficient number to form a single volume, and to close his labours with the publication of them.—But this intention was never fulfilled. The numerous acquaintance and extensive correspondence which occupied so much of his time, and which he was in the constant habit of bewailing as the greatest impediment to his literary pursuits, had now increased so considerably as to become a very serious evil to him, and made it less a matter of surprise than regret, that in the depressed state of his mind he should not have been able to accomplish this purpose.¹⁶⁵

After a residence of near thirty years in Newington Green, Dr. Price, in the spring of the year 1787, exchanged his quiet abode in that place for another more public and much less agreeable to himself in the neighbouring village of Hackney. The dilapidated state of his house—the resignation of his office as minister to the congregation—the death of the greater number of those members who had long been his most intimate friends—and more especially the hope that a change of scene might divert his thoughts

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from the sorrowful recollection of the loss which he had lately sustained in his own family,—all concurred in overcoming his partiality for his old dwelling, and determined him with much reluctance to move from it. At this time indeed every exertion was painful to him, and he seemed to be almost as much oppressed by a dread of the trouble attending his removal, as by his sorrow at quitting a place where he had enjoyed so many hours of comfort and happiness. In a few weeks, however, after he had been settled in his new habitation, his widow-sister, Mrs Morgan,¹⁶⁶ who from her birth had resided in Wales, but whose affection for her brother was not lessened by the distance which had always separated them, came to live with him at Hackney, and to take upon herself the management of his household concerns. It was her most ardent wish, by the exercise of every kind attention, to soothe the cares and sorrows of his life; nor was it possible that he could have had a friend more dear to him, nor better fitted, by the benevolence of her disposition, to render him happy. Dr. Price had never enjoyed a strong constitution, nor had the return of more than three-score years tended to improve it.—Hitherto, however, by a simple and regular course of life—by an unvaried attention to the use of moderate exercise—and by cultivating that meek and tranquil temper of mind, which suffers itself neither to be inflamed by resentment nor disquieted by the cares of the world, he had so far preserved his health as to be seldom interrupted by sickness, either in the pursuit of his studies or in the discharge of his public duties.—But no effort of human wisdom or virtue will always avail in keeping our bodies from decay. The strongest constitution must yield at last to the ravages of time; and therefore it is not surprising that the feeble frame of Dr. Price, though fostered with ever so much care and prudence, should feel the effects of them. For more than forty years of his

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life he had been accustomed to ride an hour or two every day before dinner, and three or four times in the week to use the cold bath, which had always been of particular service to him. But a complaint in his head attended with the loss of the sense of smelling prevented him from enjoying the benefit of this recreation, and a constant pain in his back extending down his right leg, with other symptoms which too plainly marked the nature of his disease to be mistaken, rendered him incapable of taking his favourite exercise on horseback, or even of walking to any great distance without much difficulty.—These privations soon began to have a very serious effect on his health and spirits. He now regarded himself as declining fast into the vale of years, and considered those maladies as monitors to warn him of the necessity of closing his labours and retiring from the world.—But on this head his apprehensions were altogether unfounded, and could have arisen only from the humble opinion which he entertained of his own abilities. The disorders of his body, however much they might have depressed his spirits, never had the least effect in impairing the faculties of his mind. These remained to the latest period of his life in their full vigour, and it will be seen that on proper occasions they were still capable of being exerted with all their wonted force and energy.

The death of our friends is one of those severe trials which awaits us all, but more especially when our lives are prolonged to the period which Dr. Price had now attained. The associates of his earlier years were successively dropping into the grave, and the natural depression of his spirits rendered him more susceptible of the effects of these afflictions. To the long list which he enumerates in his private memoirs on this occasion, he mentions with particular sorrow and affection the death of Dr. Shipley, the bishop of St. Asaph,¹⁶⁷ and of Dr. Adams, the master of Pembroke-college Oxford, whom he had long esteemed

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for their virtues, and numbered among the most valued of his friends. Entertaining the same liberal opinions in religion and politics, it is no wonder that these excellent men should be endeared to each other, and that a friendship founded on the union of such principles should have endured to the end of their lives. In the month of December, 1788, Dr. Adams, whose age and infirmities led him to anticipate the events which were soon to follow, closed a friendly correspondence which had been continued for many years with a most affecting letter—in which he informs him that his own life is drawing fast towards a close; and after encouraging him to persevere in those labours which he had invariably exerted in promoting the best interests of mankind, he concludes with expressing a hope that their friendship, which had so long been cultivated to their mutual happiness in this world, might be renewed and continued for ever in a better.¹⁶⁸

Dr. Adams did not live many days. After writing this letter; nor did he leave a friend to survive him, more sincerely grieved at his death than the person to whom it was addressed. His acquaintance with Dr. Price commenced in the year 1757, and arose from the publication of Dr. Price's Review of the principal questions in morals,¹⁶⁹ in which the same account is given of the nature of virtue and moral obligations, with the account given by himself in a sermon which he had formerly published. But it was not merely on the subject of morals that they were agreed in opinion. From the whole of their long correspondence it appears that they were equally well agreed on subjects of more interest, which unhappily have too often divided and embittered the minds of Christians against each other.¹⁷⁰

Not many months after the death of these two friends, Dr. Price had to lament the loss of another, in the

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amiable and benevolent Mr. Howard, who died a martyr to the great cause of humanity, to which he had, so long and so nobly devoted his time and fortune.¹⁷¹ With him he had lived from his earlier years on terms of the most intimate friendship and affection; and on all occasions was consulted by him with an ingenuous confidence which belongs only to virtuous minds. In all his visits to the different prisons in Great Britain, in Ireland, and on the continent of Europe, this good man never failed to communicate an account of his labours to Dr. Price, and to submit to his inspection and judgement the invaluable works which contained the results of those labours, before they were given to the public. The numerous letters which were written by each of them during an intimacy of so many years would be very improperly introduced into this work. Perhaps, however, the following letter, the last which Mr. Howard ever wrote to Dr. Price, may not be uninteresting, as it serves to give some idea of the kind and benevolent spirit which pervades throughout the whole of their correspondence.

“Moscow, September 22nd, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND

Your kind desire of hearing from me engages me to write. When I left England I first stopped at Amsterdam.—I proceeded to Osnaburgh, Hanover, Brunswick, and Berlin, then to Konigsburgh, Riga, and Petersburgh; at all which places I visited the prisons and hospitals, which were all flung open to me, and in some the burgo-masters accompanied me into the dungeons as well as into the other rooms of confinement. I arrived a few days ago in this city, and have begun my rounds.—The hospitals are in a sad state.—Upwards of seventy thousand sailors and recruits died last year in the hospitals. I labour to convey the torch of philanthropy into these distant regions, as in God’s hand no

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instrument is weak, and in whose presence no flesh must glory.

I go through Poland into Hungary.—I hope to have a few nights of this moon in my journey to Warsaw, which is about one thousand miles.—I am pure well the weather clear—the mornings fresh—thermometer 48°, but have not yet begun fires. I wish for a mild winter, and shall then make some progress in my European expedition.

My medical acquaintance give me but little hopes of escaping the plague in Turkey; but my spirits do not at all fail me, and indeed I do not look back, but would readily endure any hardships and encounter any dangers to be an honour to my Christian profession.—I long to hear from my friend, yet I know not *where* he can direct to me, unless at Sir Robert Ainslie's, Constantinople.—I will hope all things.—Remember me to sister, nieces, and Mr. Morgan.—I am, my much esteemed friend, most affectionately and sincerely yours,

JOHN HOWARD.”¹⁷²

To this letter Dr. Price returned an answer directed to Constantinople.—But, alas! Mr. Howard never arrived there to receive it. After having braved contagion in all the loathsome dungeons in his own and other countries, and exposed himself even to the ravages of the plague in Turkey and Asia Minor; he was at last seized at Cherson in the Crimea with a putrid fever, which after twelve days sickness terminated his usefulness in this world, and raised him to a nobler state of existence in a better.¹⁷³

This period appears to have been particularly fatal to those who had longest shared in the friendship and esteem of Dr. Price. In a few months after having received an account of Mr. Howard's death, a letter from Dr. Rush of Philadelphia conveyed to him the same mournful account of the venerable Dr. Franklin. His advanced age,

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and the painful disorder under which he had laboured, had long prepared his friends for the decease of that illustrious philosopher. But Dr. Price was not the less affected by an event, however much anticipated, which added one more to the number of those deaths which had lately so often embittered his sorrows. His views, however, of the progressive state of knowledge and virtue in the world, served to increase his affection for his surviving friends, and afforded him a consolation under his afflictions which Dr. Franklin, towards the close of his life, does not appear to have possessed. The following letter, being the last he ever wrote to Dr. Price, seems to have been written under a depression of mind which led him to entertain a very unfavourable opinion of those he was to leave behind him.

“Philadelphia, May 31st, 1789.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I lately received your kind letter inclosing one from Miss Kitty Shipley informing me of the good Bishop's decease, which afflicted me greatly.¹⁷⁴ My friends drop off one after another, when my age and infirmities prevent my making new ones; and if I still retained the necessary activity and ability, I hardly see among the rising generation where I could make them of equal goodness; so that the longer I live I must expect to be more wretched. As we draw nearer the conclusion of life, Nature furnishes us with more helps to wean us from it,—among which one of the most powerful is the loss of such dear friends.

My best wishes attend you, being ever, with a sincere and great esteem, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN”¹⁷⁵

This gloomy view of the future race of mankind has in all times been the common failing of old age: and who shall say, if the snows of more than fourscore winters should whiten

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his head, that he will be exempted from it? But it should be recollected that this letter was written by Dr. Franklin when a severe disorder was hastening the dissolution of his frame, and rendering him less susceptible of pleasure from any external object. In his last moments, however, his mind exhibited no symptoms of decay, and he left the world with the same cheerfulness and composure¹⁷⁶ as he had always lived in it*.¹⁷⁷

* In Dr. Rush's letter, to which I have already alluded, the following account of is given of Dr. Franklin's death:

“ *Philadelphia, April 24th, 1790.*

DEAR SIR,

—The papers will inform you of the death of our late illustrious friend Dr. Franklin.—The evening of his life was marked by the same activity of his moral and intellectual powers which distinguished its meridian. Three days before he died he dictated a letter upon very important business relative to the boundaries of the United States to Mr. Jefferson, and three weeks before his death he wrote and published a very agreeable and ingenious parody upon a speech of a Member of Congress in favour of the slavery of the Africans. His conversation with his family upon the subject of his dissolution was free and cheerful.—A few days before he died he rose from his bed, and begged that it might be made up for him, so that he might die in a *decent manner*. His daughter told him that she hoped he would recover, and live many years longer. He calmly replied ‘*He hoped not.*’ Upon being advised to change his position in bed that he might breathe *easy*, he said, ‘*A dying man can do nothing easy.*’ His will has extended his benevolence beyond the grave. He has left 1,000*l.* to the City of Boston and the same sum to the City of Philadelphia. That to our city is to be put out on compound interest for fifteen years, and afterwards to be applied to supply the inhabitants with water by means of aqueducts; for before that time he predicted that the water at present obtained from pumps, will be so much contaminated by the increase of offal matters in our city as to be unwholesome. The remainder of his estate he has bequeathed to his daughter and grandson, excepting from it only a legacy to

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Of all the events which distinguished Dr. Price's life,

his sister in Boston, and all his lands in Nova Scotia to his son, Governor Franklin, now in London.

All orders and bodies of people among us have vied with each other in paying tributes of respect to his memory. The Philosophical Society, of which he was President, have ordered a funeral oration to be delivered in honour of his illustrious character. Even the Government of the United States have shared in the general sympathy, agreeing to wear mourning for one month for him, and thus proclaiming to the world that republicans are not deficient in gratitude to those who have deserved well of their country by their wisdom and virtue.

I had like to have forgotten to mention that he desired, in his will that the elegant epitaph (suggested by his original occupation) which he composed for himself some years ago, should be inscribed upon his tomb-stone. By this request he has declared his belief in the Christian doctrine of a resurrection.

From, my dear Sir, yours sincerely,

BENJAMIN RUSH."

It does not appear from this account that Dr. Franklin's equanimity arose from his belief in a future state; and some have even suspected that the epitaph which he wrote for himself was intended rather to display his wit than to prove his faith in the doctrine which it inculcated. But his private letters, and especially those which he wrote in his later years, which could never be intended for such a display, remove every suspicion of this kind. It may perhaps be true that his creed did not include the whole of the Old Testament—a scepticism by no means peculiar to Unbelievers. As to his faith in the New Testament, he acknowledges in his correspondence with Dr. Price some years before his death, that he had never hitherto examined the evidences of Christianity, but that he fully intended to consider the subject with all the care and attention which its importance required. I can find no traces of the effect of this examination in his subsequent letters, and it is not improbable that, like Festus the Roman governor, he always continued to put it off to a more convenient season.

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none interested or agitated him so much as the French revolution. This at the first moment of its explosion raised his hopes to the highest point, and brightened all his prospects of the future improvement and happiness of mankind; and the gratification which he had often enjoyed in reflecting on the active part he had taken in the American war, was now still further increased, from considering the present revolution to have been produced by the successful issue of that contest. On the subject of this stupendous event, so auspicious in its beginning—so dreadful in its progress—the opinions of a great majority of the nation were in unison with those of Dr. Price; and even the Ministry for a moment seemed to join in the general exultation. But the fervour of their joy was soon succeeded by feelings of a very different kind, and afforded little to encourage the hopes of those who participated with Dr. Price in the triumph of French liberty—a triumph, short indeed and transitory, but, happily for him, obscured during the remainder of his life by no clouds to darken his prospect, or to chill the ardour with which he fondly hoped to extend and perpetuate its blessings to all the nations of the earth. Having never had the mortification to witness those sanguinary and atrocious deeds which disgraced, and ultimately overturned the revolution, the circumstances of his life can have no connexion with them, and consequently the recital of those deeds (at all times painful and disgusting) would be particularly improper on the present occasion.

During the first and second years of its progress Dr. Price exerted himself in a very conspicuous manner; and even before it burst forth to astonish the world, he was by no means an indifferent spectator of the events which were preparing the way for it. From his correspondence with Mr. Jefferson, at that time the American ambassador at Paris,¹⁷⁸ it appears that he was well informed of the difficulties of the French government, and of the very

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imprudent measures with which it was attempted to surmount them*. The last letter, however, which he received from Mr. Jefferson, though written only four days previous to the destruction of the Bastile, did not lessen his astonishment at the first intelligence of that convulsion, or dispose him to think it possible that a despotism of eight centuries, supported by an immense army, could be overthrown by the tumultuous populace of the city of Paris.¹⁷⁹ But when the stability of the revolution appeared to be confirmed by subsequent events, his former apprehensions gave way to the most sincere joy, and he became so anxious to receive the earliest accounts of the proceedings in France, that he could hardly be prevailed upon to continue his wonted time in Wales (whither he had gone in the month of August as usual for the benefit of sea-bathing) rather than hasten back to London in order that he might be nearer to the source of intelligence.¹⁸⁰ On his return from the country he was solicited by several of the friends of freedom to preach on the approaching anniversary of the English revolution, which it was intended to celebrate with more than usual festivity, in order to testify their joy on account of the late glorious events in the neighbouring kingdom. Though he declined a similar application in the preceding year, which being the hundredth anniversary of the revolution had also

* In these letters a particular account is given of the proceedings of government, and of the successive assemblies of the Notables and States-general, and also a judicious conjecture of the probable issue of the disputes between the Court, the Clergy, the Noblesse, and the Tiers Etats. But subsequent events having long ago either fulfilled or falsified these conjectures, and the subject itself affording but little consolation to the friends of peace and liberty, I shall not prolong the discussion of it by inserting those letters, however interesting they may have been when written by Mr. Jefferson.

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been celebrated in a very distinguished manner; yet on this occasion he appears for a moment to have forgotten that depression of spirits which he had then urged as an excuse for his non-compliance, and was persuaded to engage in a work on which he afterwards reflected with great anxiety, under the apprehension that neither his strength nor his abilities were equal to the accomplishment of it.—In this, however, he was happily mistaken. The importance of the subject seemed to have animated him with new spirits, nor did he ever exert his talents in the great cause of liberty with more energy and effect than on that occasion. While delivering his discourse to an overflowing congregation, and expatiating with irresistible eloquence on the brilliant prospects which now illumined the benighted nations of Europe, such was the ardour and enthusiasm with which he inspired his auditors, that they could hardly be restrained by the sacredness of the place from bursting into open shouts of applause.¹⁸¹ But in the midst of all this rapture to which his congregation were transported, he was himself in considerable bodily pain, and often apprehended that he should not be able to proceed with the service. Happily, however, he continued his exertions with an energy apparently unabated to the conclusion of it; nor were any but his nearest friends acquainted with the severe trial to which his zeal and fortitude had just been exposed. Immediately on his return home, the pain and fatigue entirely overpowered his spirits, and it was some hours before the utmost attention of his friends could afford him any relief.—But so ardent were his wishes to avail himself of every opportunity of supporting the cause, and extending the happy effects of the French revolution, that he exerted himself, though still weak and languid, to attend the dinner that day at the London Tavern to move a Congratulatory Address to the National Assembly*,¹⁸²

* At the Anniversary Meeting of the Society for commemorating

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which was received and adopted with the warmest approbation and unanimity; and it was resolved that it should be transmitted by the chairman, Earl Stanhope,¹⁸³ to the Duke de la Rochfoucauld¹⁸⁴ to be presented by him to the Assembly. In compliance also with the unanimous request of the company, he consented to the publication of his Sermon,¹⁸⁵ which on its appearance in print was immediately read and admired with a fervour little inferior to that which had been heard in the Old Jewry.—In an appendix to this sermon were inserted the answer of the National Assembly to the Congratulatory Address of the Society, together with letters of thanks from the different patriotic bodies in France—all of them breathing the purest sentiments of liberty, but now rendered of too little interest to form a part of this history, even if they had not already been given to the public.¹⁸⁶

the Revolution in GREAT BRITAIN, held at the London Tavern, November 4th, 1789, Dr. Price moved, and it was unanimously resolved, that the following *Congratulatory Address* to the National Assembly of FRANCE be transmitted to them, signed by the chairman:—

“The Society for commemorating the Revolution in GREAT BRITAIN, disdaining national partialities, and rejoicing in every triumph of liberty and justice over arbitrary power, offer to the National Assembly of FRANCE their congratulations on the Revolution in that country, and on the prospect it gives to the two first kingdoms in the world, of a common participation in the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

They cannot help adding their ardent wishes of a happy settlement of so important a Revolution, and at the same time expressing the particular satisfaction with which they reflect on the tendency of the glorious example given in FRANCE to encourage other nations to assert the unalienable rights of mankind, and thereby to introduce a general reformation in the governments of EUROPE, and to make the world free and happy.”

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The hopes and expectations of the friends of freedom at this time appear to have been raised to an extraordinary height, and particularly those of Dr. Price. Nay, so well assured was he of the establishment of a free constitution in France, and of the subsequent overthrow of despotism throughout Europe as the consequence of it, that he never failed to express his gratitude to Heaven for having extended his life to the present happy period, in which “after sharing the benefits of one revolution, he had been spared to be a witness to two other revolutions, both glorious.”¹⁸⁷ But some of his correspondents were not quite so sanguine in their expectations from the last of these revolutions; and among these the late American ambassador, Mr. John Adams. In a long letter which he wrote to Dr. Price at this time, so far from congratulating him on the occasion, he expresses himself in terms of contempt in regard to the French revolution; and after asking rather too severely what good was to be expected from a nation of atheists, he concludes with foretelling the destruction of a million of human beings as the probable consequence of it.¹⁸⁸ These harsh censures and gloomy predictions were particularly ungrateful to Dr. Price; nor can it be denied that they must have then appeared as the effusions of a splenetic mind, rather than as the sober reflections of an unbiassed understanding. From the numerous letters which he was continually receiving from some of the most enlightened and respectable persons in France*,¹⁸⁹ as well as from the

* Extract of a letter from M. Rabaut de St. Etienne.

“—There is an object still more important on which I wish to engage your attention.—For some years past it has been warmly insisted on by thinking minds, that an alliance between England and France was the true policy of both countries. The appearance of war between England and Spain has turned the attention of the French to this object, and I behold with pleasure the increase of this opinion.—

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general tenor of their proceedings in the National Assembly, Dr. Price had every reason to entertain a very different opinion from that of Mr. Adams. Their resolutions in favour of civil and religious liberty—their declared wish to cooperate with England in cultivating the arts of peace, and preserving the tranquillity of Europe, led him to cherish the hope that religion, being freed from the superstition and tyranny by which it had long been disgraced, would henceforward destroy infidelity, and perpetuate the peace and harmony of the world. While indulging in this hope, he was naturally interested in the scenes which were

When, indeed, there were in France only a master and his slaves, neither one nor the other could have hoped for such an alliance, nor depended on its solidity.—But the maxims of the National Assembly are well known to you—These maxims are now become constitutional, and our nation has thought that it owes to the rights of the people, the same respect that individuals ought to have for the rights of each other.—An alliance with such a nation, it appears to me, would be a contract virtue. —Such an alliance would constitute the happiness of two nations, who in the midst of hostilities esteemed each other.—You would find great resources in the diminution of your armaments. We should reap great advantages from such a union, and Europe would be compelled to enter into this immense vortex, &c. &c. Your Lord Chatham has said, *Peace with France and war with all Europe*; we might then say, that *peace between England and France would give peace to Europe.*”

The letters from the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Messrs. Le Roy, Keralio, &c., all breathe the same spirit: but it is now of little use to insert them, as they would serve only to increase our sorrow, in reflecting that most of those good men were the first victims of the atrocious cruelties of a revolution which had begun with such favourable auspices, and which they had vainly hoped to have rendered a blessing to themselves and the world.

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now passing in France; and therefore it is no wonder that he should avail himself of every opportunity of acquiring an intimate knowledge of the characters which were the principal movers of them. In consequence of the active part which he had taken in the present revolution, he necessarily became acquainted with most of the French patriots who visited this country, and was constantly in the habit either of meeting them abroad, or entertaining them at his own house. From the liberal principles of government which they displayed in their conversation, he derived every encouragement to hope for the ultimate success of their cause, and thus to excite him to further exertions in support of it.¹⁹⁰

On the 14th of July, 1790, it was determined to celebrate the first Anniversary of the Revolution by inviting the friends of liberty to dine together at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand; and Dr. Price consented to officiate as one of the stewards on the occasion.¹⁹¹—Having himself given a short account of this dinner in a private letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, I do not know that a better idea can be conveyed of the meeting, and the spirit with which it was conducted, than by the insertion of that part of his letter which refers to it.

“Our feast on the 14th of July was very animating, and I think with satisfaction on the concern I had in calling together the friends of the Revolution in France to testify on that day their joy. This meeting has, I find, in France been mistaken for a meeting of our Revolutionary Society. But the members of this Society made but an inconsiderable part of that company, and it is probable that they will make but an inconsiderable part of the company that will attend our annual feast on the 4th of November next, for commemorating the British Revolution. Earl Stanhope has been the chairman, and I hope he will continue to be so; but the

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Society has at present no fixed president. It is, however, now increasing, and it will, I hope, in time become sufficiently respectable to deserve the notice with which your Society of 1789 has honoured it.”¹⁹²

The notice taken in France of the speech made by Dr. Price in prefacing his toast at this dinner, and the principles laid down in the discourse which he had delivered at the Old Jewry in November, drew torrents of abuse upon him from Mr. Edmund Burke, who, as if possessed by some daemon of the nether regions, had never ceased from the first moment of the revolution to declaim in a manner the most outrageous against it, and against all the friends and supporters of it.¹⁹³ The phantoms which his own disordered imagination had raised to alarm and inflame the members of the House of Commons, unhappily succeeded too well in misleading the more timid and lukewarm friends of liberty, and thus, by detaching them from their more steady associates, served to encourage Ministers to a more open avowal of their hostility, and to the prosecution of measures which otherwise they would never have dared to propose. But Dr. Price was spared the mortification of beholding Great Britain leagued with the despotic sovereigns of Europe in their attempts to crush the rising liberties of France, or of witnessing the devastation and carnage which have desolated the world for the last twenty years.

As to the rancorous invectives of Mr. Burke, which he had poured fourth in a volume of 400 pages, it neither disturbed the tranquillity of his mind, nor had any other effect than convincing him that the violent passions of the author had deranged his understanding; and what other opinion could be formed of a man, who in bewailing the French revolution seriously lamented that “*the age of chivalry is gone—that the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever—that the unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly*

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sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone!"¹⁹⁴ Such indeed was the inveterate antipathy of Mr. Burke to the French revolution, that in the paroxysm of his rage he denies even the principles on which the English revolution was established.—These, Dr. Price observes, consist of the three following:—

“First, the right to liberty of conscience in religious matters.—Secondly, the right to resist power when abused.—And Thirdly, the right to choose our own governors, to cashier them for misconduct, and to frame a government for ourselves.

On these three principles, and more especially the last, was the Revolution founded. Were it not true that liberty of conscience is a sacred right; that power abused justifies resistance; and that civil authority is a delegation from the people:—were not all this true; the Revolution would have been, not an *Assertion*, but an *Invasion* of rights; not a *Revolution* but a *Rebellion**.” To these self-evident truths Mr. Burke opposes the most unqualified abuse—denies that any such right as that of choosing its governors, or cashiering them for misconduct, exists in the nation—and has the hardihood to declare “that the people of England utterly disclaim it, and will resist the practical assertion of it with their lives and fortunes;”¹⁹⁵ that is, they will sacrifice their lives and fortunes, not to maintain their rights, but to maintain that they have *no* rights. This is truly a paradox worthy of the author, and exceeded only by the greater paradox of the Government’s having pensioned him for traducing the principles on which it is founded.

After all the horrors of the late revolution, and the numerous vices and cruelties with which it has been disgraced, it is some consolation to the friends of freedom, to find those principles recognised by the very potentates

* See Discourse on the Love of our Country, page 34.

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who, at the beginning of this revolution, had armed for their extermination. When the allied Monarchs had entered within the walls of Paris, they had been taught by dire experience to acknowledge that the people had the *power* as well as the right to choose and cashier their rulers. Instead therefore of dictating to the French people the form of their new government, or insisting on the restoration of their old one, they found it necessary to make the following declaration, disclaiming in the most unequivocal manner any interference of that kind :—

“The armies of the allied powers have occupied the capital of France.—The allied sovereigns receive favourably the wish of the French nation.—They declare, that if the conditions of peace ought to contain stronger guarantees when the question was to bind down the ambition of Buonaparté, they may be more favourable when, by a return to a wise government, France herself offers the assurance of this repose.

The Sovereigns proclaim in consequence that they will no more treat with Napoleon Buonaparté, nor with any of his family.

That they respect the integrity of ancient France as it existed under its legitimate* kings. They may even do

* This reference to the *legitimate kings* of France seems to imply, that the allied powers never recognised that country otherwise than as a *kingdom*, and therefore that they regarded its government, during the last twenty-four years, as *illegitimate*.—But how does this accord with their Declaration from Frankfort on the 1st of December, in which they announce that “Victory having conducted their armies to the banks of the Rhine, the first use which their Imperial and Royal Majesties have made of that Victory, has been to offer peace to HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH, and that the conditions of that peace are founded on the independence of the *French* EMPIRE.” &c.

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more, because they profess it as a principle, that for the happiness of Europe, France must be great and strong.

That they will recognise and guaranty the Constitution which France shall adopt.—They therefore invite the Senate to name immediately a Provisional Government, which may provide for the wants of the Administration, and prepare the Constitution which shall suit the French people.

The intentions which I have just expressed are common to *all* the Allied Powers.

(Signed) ALEXANDER

*Paris, March 31st, 1814.
Three o'clock in the afternoon.*"¹⁹⁶

What has Dr. Price said, or what has he contended for, more than is conceded in this declaration? No longer then let the servile and pensioned advocates of power traduce the memory of this virtuous man.—No longer let them profanely dare to assert the right of kings to be divine, or derived from any other source than the free consent and suffrages of the people.—Here we behold the greatest sovereigns of Europe compelled to acknowledge those rights which Burke had so peremptorily denied, and a Monarch whose ancestors had reigned over France for more than 800 years, raised to the throne, not on the ground of inheritance and indefeasible right, but under a new and solemn compact, founded on the unalienable rights of the people to choose their own form of government and to appoint those whom they should think fit to preside over it. Had Dr. Price lived to witness these scenes, it would probably have given him some pleasure to see his own principles established on the ruins of those of his great reviler; but it would have been a pleasure embittered by so much pain and mortification, that perhaps it has been happier

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for him to have quitted the world in the early period of the revolution, than to have survived those atrocious crimes which have stained the annals of Europe for the last twenty years.

With his stewardship at the Commemoration-dinner, on the 14th of July, terminated the *public* exertions of Dr. Price in support of civil and religious liberty. In the beginning of August he took his usual excursion to the sea-coast near Newton in Glamorganshire, where he had been accustomed to spend a few weeks in the summer among his relatives with much benefit to his health and spirits. In this retired situation he had now determined to employ his leisure hours in writing some memoirs of his own life, with the view of prefixing them to the additional volume of sermons which he had so long intended to publish. But though he continued his stay beyond his usual time in the country, he appears to have made no further progress in this work than just to write an imperfect sketch of the more important events of his latter years; and to form the plan which he meant to adopt in giving a more ample detail of them. On his return to London in the month of October, he expressed himself to have passed his time very happily in the country, but lamented his growing infirmities and total unfitness for any work that required either time or attention. The complaint in his leg, which he attributed to rheumatism, but afterwards proved to be the symptom of a more fatal disorder, still continued to deprive him of his usual exercise, and in consequence to increase the natural depression of his spirits. During the following winter, therefore, he became more and more indisposed to engage in his former literary pursuits, so that he neither resumed the history of his own life, nor the correction of those sermons with which he had intended to close the labours of it.— Some of his friends had urged him to reply to Mr. Burke's late publication; but at this period his spirits

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were not equal to the task, even if he had thought it necessary to engage in it. He added, however, a few notes to the last edition of his discourse *On the Love of our Country*, in answer to some of those despotic principles of Burke which had long been exploded by the more enlightened part of mankind, but never deigned to defend his own principles, or to notice the abusive language with which they had been assailed.¹⁹⁷

In one respect Dr. Price differed essentially from his friend Dr. Priestley. When engaged in one pursuit, he never could apply his mind properly to any other; and this will in some measure account for his not having proceeded either with his memoirs or sermons after his return from the country. The Fourth Edition of his Treatise on *Reversionary Payments*, which he always considered as one of the most important of his works, had for some time been out of print; and being much importuned to publish a new edition without delay, and wishing to enlarge and improve some parts of it, he directed his principal attention to it during the course of the following winter. But even here his progress was very slow, extending only to a few remarks in an imperfect state, and of use only as they serve to show what he intended to have done if he had lived to accomplish his purpose. Before the first volume was printed off, in which he had made no alterations of any consequence, his labours ceased and the completion of this work devolved upon myself—a task, which having been twice repeated since that period, proves the value of the work, and the high estimation in which it is held by the public.¹⁹⁸ Though less fitted for his former literary pursuits, Dr. Price continued to discharge his duties as a minister with little or no interruption. In the beginning of February, 1791, he attended the funeral of a friend to Bunhill-fields without feeling much inconvenience from being

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exposed to the air in that cold season of the year, though he observed on his return that “this method of conducting funerals was the sure way of sending the living after the dead.” In the course of a month he attended the remains of another friend to the same place, and on this occasion the event unfortunately proved the truth of his late observation. Having staid some time to speak over the grave with no effectual covering to secure him from the inclemency of the weather, he was seized in the afternoon with shivering and other symptoms of fever, which on the following day increased so much as to render it necessary to have recourse to medical assistance. His disorder, however, did not appear to be very alarming, and had so far abated in the course of about ten days as to enable him to ride out in a carriage for the benefit of the air, by which he expressed himself to be so much refreshed, that his friends were encouraged to entertain the fond hope of his speedy and complete recovery.—But, alas! this hope was soon dispelled—other symptoms succeeded to those of his first disorder, which, if not immediately removed, threatened the most fatal consequences. On the next morning after his ride he was seized with a complaint in the neck of the bladder, which having resisted all internal remedies, was relieved only by surgical assistance. But this relief was merely temporary—the cause of the disorder still remained—and the repetition of the operation became necessary. At first recourse was had to it only two or three times a day; but the pain and irritation continually increasing, the repetition became more frequent, till at last the surgeon was hardly gone from the bed-side before he was sent for again to give another moment’s relief to his afflicted patient. These dreadful agonies were borne for a month nearly, with a resignation which never uttered a sigh nor a murmur; and to the last hour of his life this good man retained the same placid and benevolent temper of mind which prevailed

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throughout the whole course of it; and when the last attempt was made to relieve him without effect, he gently reclined himself upon his bed—observing that all was now over; and though the irritation continued for some hours after, he never expressed a wish to have the attempt repeated. In this state he lay from six o'clock in the afternoon till midnight, the faculties of his mind still remaining entire, but his strength gradually sinking. Soon after midnight an evident alteration took place, which denoted the speedy termination of all his sufferings; and a few minutes before three o'clock in the morning, having looked upon his nephew who attended him with apparent complacency, he drew some short inspirations and quietly breathed his last.¹⁹⁹

Such was the concluding scene of Dr. Price's life. Distinguished from his earliest years for the meekness and equanimity of his temper, no injuries excited him to improper resentment—no pain or affliction to impatience and discontent. Convinced of the great truths which he had so constantly taught, and so well exemplified in every period of his life, he calmly sunk under the last conflict of nature with a well-founded hope of rising again to a more glorious existence in a better state.

Having never had any children of his own, his great partiality for his relatives, united to the benevolent disposition of his mind, had long induced him to take under his particular care and protection his two nephews,²⁰⁰ who having had the happiness of being thus nearly related to him, received from him all the kindness and affection of the fondest parent.—To them he intrusted the distribution of his property after his decease, which he divided among his relatives with that strict regard to equity and justice which regulated all the actions of his life.²⁰¹ The management of his funeral, in consequence, devolved upon them, who had determined, in conformity with his wishes, that it should be as private as possible. But in this instance, I am sorry to say, they suffered

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their better judgement to be overpowered by the solicitations of his friends and admirers, who, insisting that it would be highly unbecoming that so good and great a man should sink into the grave without some public testimony of respect to his memory, so far prevailed upon them as to have the time of the funeral fixed for the *day* instead of the *night*, as they had at first intended.—By this means an opportunity of attending it was afforded to all who chose that method of testifying their respect for the deceased. So far as regarded the funeral itself, having been conducted by the direction and at the expense of the executors, it was as plain as if it had been performed in private: but the long procession of coaches certainly gave it a different appearance; and had not the designs of some of the visitors been peremptorily resisted by the executors, of proceeding through some of the most public streets of London, in their way to Bunhill-fields, the whole would have degenerated into a pageant very unsuitable to the remains of the modest and humble person who was to be the subject of it.²⁰² The funeral service having been performed by his amiable and intimate friend Dr. Kippis,²⁰³ in a manner truly solemn and impressive, all that was mortal of Dr. Price was deposited in the same grave with his wife and uncle, till the morning of the great day, which shall burst the chains of death and restore them to a new life of endless happiness and joy.

On the next Sunday after the funeral Dr. Priestley preached a sermon on the occasion to a numerous audience at the meeting-house in Hackney; nor was it possible that any one could have been found better qualified to pay this last tribute to his memory than the person who for more than thirty years had enjoyed and deserved his highest esteem and affection. This sermon of Dr. Priestley was soon after published at the request of the congregation, and possibly read by some of them with the same feelings as it had been delivered;²⁰⁴ but since all connexion between them and Dr.

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Price's relatives was necessarily broken off at his decease, and a great part of them have long ago followed him to the grave, I know very little of that body, nor am I aware that any of their proceedings subsequent to his death have displayed such peculiar regard to his memory as to have the least claim to be recorded in the history of his life.

In reviewing the life of Dr. Price it is impossible not to admire the modesty, candour, and piety by which it was so eminently distinguished. Though he never formed an opinion which was not the result of long and patient investigation, he always maintained it with a diffidence of his own abilities, and a readiness to admit its proper weight to every argument which could be urged against it. His great object was to ascertain the truth; and as he felt his own liability to error in the pursuit of it, he wished to make every allowance for the mistakes of others, and to respect the honest inquirer, however widely his opinion might differ from his own. Having no temporal interest to promote, nor worldly ambition to gratify, he quietly proceeded in the straight path of his duty, solicitous to procure the approbation of his own conscience rather than the applause of the world. Convinced that whatever debases must necessarily corrupt the human mind, he regarded all usurpation and tyranny as the worst enemies of truth and virtue; and considered every effort in support of civil and religious liberty as directed to the dearest and most important interests of mankind. To improve himself and others in the practice of virtue was the great and prevailing principle which governed all the actions of his life. To this end his moral and political publications were equally directed; and although his success might not always correspond with his wishes, he never suffered himself to be discouraged in his endeavours, nor to relinquish the hope which he has often expressed, *that he had not lived in vain in the world.*—But of all the qualities which adorned the life of Dr. Price, none rendered him more the object of love

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and veneration than his unaffected piety and devotion. In all seasons and under all circumstances the great truths of religion were ever present to his mind; and the noble motives which they held forth as an encouragement to virtue had their full effect on his temper and conduct, in rendering a disposition naturally mild and benevolent still more amiable, and in raising a soul naturally serious and devout to a sublimer and more fervent adoration of the Deity. In private conversation his meekness and simplicity* won and

* Of the simplicity and meekness of Dr. Price, the following beautiful description is given by his friend Mrs. Chapone, in the character of *Simplicius* :

“While the vain man is painfully striving to outshine all the company, and to attract their admiration by false wit, forced compliments; and studied graces, he must surely be mortified to observe, how constantly *Simplicius* engages their attention, respect, and complacency, without having once thought of himself as a person of any consequence among them. *Simplicius* imparts his superior knowledge, when called upon, as easily and naturally as he would tell you what it is o’clock; and with the same readiness and good will informs the most ignorant, or confers with the most learned. He is as willing to receive information as to give it, and to join the company, as far as he is able, in the most trifling conversation into which they happen to fall, as in the most serious and sublime. If he disputes, it is with as much candour on the most important and interesting as on the most insignificant subjects, and he is not less patient in hearing than in answering his antagonist. If you talk to him of himself or his works, he accepts praise or acknowledges defects with equal meekness, and it is impossible to suspect him of affectation in either. We are more obliged and gratified by the plain unexaggerated expressions of his regard, than by the compliments and attentions of the most accomplished pattern of high breeding; because his benevolence and sincerity are so strongly marked in every look, word, and action, that we are convinced his civilities are offered for our sakes, not for his own, and are the natural effects of real kindness, not the studied ornaments of behaviour. Everyone is desirous to show him kindness in return, which we know, will be

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ameliorated the hearts of all who had the happiness of his friendship or acquaintance. In the services of religion, the humble and devout manner in which he addressed the Deity, and the animated fervour with which he enforced the divine truths and precepts of the Gospel, never failed to impress his hearers with a just sense of his own sincerity, and of the awful importance of those duties which he so earnestly enjoined upon them. In his discourses he seldom or ever deviated into the bewildering paths of theological controversy. The great end he always had in view was, to convey to his hearers right notions of the Deity as the foundation of all rational religion, and to instill into their minds the necessity of a virtuous course as the only means of securing his favour. Though steadfastly attached from his earliest years to the Christian religion, and to his own opinion of its nature and design, he indulged no evil passions or prejudice against those who entertained different opinions—or even who rejected it altogether.—His candour and liberality in this respect were indeed truly exemplary. Inspired by the mild spirit of Christianity, he condemned no man for his excess or for his want of faith; and happy had it been for mankind if all who professed the same religion had been guided by the same spirit. Blest with a

accepted just as it is meant. All are ready to pay him that deference which he does not desire, and to give him credit for more than he assumes, or even for more than he possesses. With a person ungraceful, and with manners unpolished by the world, his behaviour is always proper, easy, and respectable; as free from constraint and servility in the highest company, as from haughtiness and insolence in the lowest. His dignity arises from his humility; and the sweetness, gentleness, and frankness of his manners, from the real goodness and rectitude of his heart, which lies open to inspection in all the fearlessness of truth, without any need of disguise or ornament.” Mrs. *Chapone’s* Miscellanies, Essay I.

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mind so mild and gentle, it was impossible that Dr. Price should not be alive to all the offices of humanity and compassion. Out of a moderate fortune which, with his sober and frugal habits, rendered him independent, he allotted a considerable portion to the duties of private charity. On all occasions his hand and heart were ever ready to relieve the distressed and indigent, and he only regretted that it was not in his power to be more extensively useful to his fellow-creatures. To his other virtues might be added the equanimity of his temper, which never suffered itself to be ruffled by passion or soured by resentment. But I shall dwell no longer on this subject, however agreeable it may be to my own feelings to expatiate upon it, or to commemorate those virtues which I have had the happiness for so many years to witness and admire.—Nor were the *talents* of Dr. Price less the objects of admiration than the virtuous dispositions of his mind.—Whether he wrote on the more abstruse subjects of mathematics, political arithmetic, and metaphysics, or on the more popular and important ones of religion and morality, he equally manifested his abilities by the plain and perspicuous manner in which he delivered his arguments; and if he did not always succeed in converting the reader to his own opinions, he seldom or ever failed to secure his approbation of the candour and sincerity with which they were maintained.

Having already given an account of Dr. Price's writings in the order in which they were published, it will be unnecessary here to enter into the further discussion of them. On one or two subjects I might possibly venture, though not without considerable diffidence, to express some doubts: but on all the great points in politics and religion, in which I have ever agreed with him, it would indeed be a vain labour to attempt the explanation or defence of opinions which he has enforced with so much truth and energy.

Here then I shall close these memoirs; and I am happy in

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the opportunity they give me of expressing the gratitude I owe to the memory of Dr. Price, and in declaring that no part of my past life affords me greater pleasure in the recollection of it, than those years in which I enjoyed his society and friendship—and that I look for no higher gratification in the remaining part of it than to be numbered among those who have not only enjoyed but have *deserved* his friendship.

THE END.

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PUBLISHED BY THE SAME AUTHOR

The Doctrine of Annuities and Assurances on Lives and Survivorships, stated and explained. (1779)

A REVIEW of Dr. Price's writings on the subject of the Finances of this Kingdom, to which are added the three plans communicated by him to Mr. Pitt in 1786, for redeeming the National Debt. (1792)

Also a *Supplement* to the above *Review*, stating the Amount of the Public Debt in 1795.

FACTS addressed to the serious attention of the People of Great Britain, respecting the Expense of the war, and the state of the National Debt in 1796. 4th edit.

ADDITIONAL FACTS addressed to the serious attention of the people of Great Britain, respecting the expence of the war and the state of the National Debt. 4th edit. (1796)

An APPEAL to the People of Great Britain on the present alarming state of the Public Finances, and of Public Credit. 3rd edit. 1797.

A COMPARATIVE VIEW of the public finances, from the beginning to the close of the late administration, (1801)

A SUPPLEMENT to the *Comparative View*, containing an account of the Management of the finances to the present time, 1803.

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END NOTES

Abbreviations:

- Bibliography* D O Thomas, John Stephens and P A L Jones eds, *Bibliography of the works of Richard Price* (Aldershot, 1993).
- Correspondence* D O Thomas, & W Bernard Peach, *The correspondence of Richard Price, 1748-91* (3 vols., Durham N.C. and Cardiff, 1983-92).
- Honest mind* D O Thomas, *The Honest mind. The thought and work of Richard Price* (Oxford, 1977).
- Journal* Beryl Thomas and D O Thomas, 'Richard Price's Journal for the period 25 March 1787 to 6 February 1791', *National Library of Wales Journal*, XXI (1980), 366-413.
- Political Writings* D O Thomas (ed.), *Price: Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1991).
- Roland Thomas Roland Thomas, *Richard Price, philosopher and apostle of liberty* (London, 1924).
- Walter Wilson, *The history and antiquities of dissenting churches and meeting houses, in London, Westminster and Southwark* (4 vols. London, 1808-14).

¹ George Cadogan Morgan (1754-98), minister and teacher, second son of William Morgan (1708-72), a surgeon and an apothecary at Bridgend, and Sarah (1726-1803), a sister to Richard Price. George Cadogan Morgan was educated at Cowbridge Grammar School, Jesus College, Oxford and Coward's Academy at Hoxton. He began his career in the ministry at the Octagon in Norwich in 1776 and remained there until 1785 when he moved to

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Yarmouth. While he was at Norwich he married Anne 'Nancy' Hurry, the daughter of William Hurry, a wealthy merchant and member of one of the most prominent Dissenting families in Norfolk. In 1787 he became an assistant to Price at New College, Hackney, resigning that appointment in 1791 to concentrate his attention on his own school. He died on 17 November 1798. It is said that he inhaled some poison while conducting a chemical experiment that led to a pulmonary consumption which caused his death. See D O Thomas, 'George Cadogan Morgan', *The Price-Priestley Newsletter*, III (1979), 53-70.

² Rice Price (1673-1739) was the son of Rees and Catherine Price of Tyn-ton. He was educated at Brynllwarch Academy under Samuel Jones and from 1695 assisted his tutor at the Academy and in the pulpit at Brynllwarch and at Cildeudy. On Samuel Jones's death in 1697 the Academy, moved to Abergavenny but it returned to Rice Price at Tyn-ton before being moved to Carmarthen in 1704. Dr John Evans's list of Non-conformist congregations includes Rice Price as an Independent minister at Cildeudy c. 1715. He also officiated at the meeting places established at Newcastle, Bridgend, and at City, Bettws. He was twice married. His first wife was Mary Gibbon (or Gybbon) by whom he had four children, John (1701-77), Samuel (his executor), Mary, who married Walter Coffin, and Ann, who married a Mr Phillips. His second wife was Catherine Richards (1697-1740), the daughter of a physician at Bridgend, by whom he had two daughters, Sarah, who married William Morgan and was the mother of the author of the biography (see n.1 above), Elizabeth, and one son, Richard, the subject of the biography. See D O Thomas, 'Rice Price's will', *The Price-Priestley Newsletter*, II (1978), 98-107.

³ The identity of this person is obscure: no one labouring under the surname Thomas seems to fit. Perhaps Morgan was thinking of Thomas Joseph who is referred to by Thomas Richards as having been granted a licence to preach at Bridgend in 1672. Earlier he had been ejected from the living at Llangeinor. See Thomas Richards, *Wales under the Penal Code, 1662-1687* (London, 1925), 91, 125.

⁴ Richard Peters who lived in the vicinity of Tyn-ton and later became a Dissenting minister. See Roland Thomas, 9-10.

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⁵ Joseph Simmons, a Dissenting minister and first pastor of Maes yr Haf at Neath. See Roland Thomas, 10.

⁶ Samuel Jones (d.1767/68), Congregationalist minister and tutor. He was minister at Capel Seion, Llanddarog (1720-1752) and at Tirdoncyn, Llangyfelach (1720-1759). He kept a school at Pentwyn, Llanon, which Price attended for four years. During his lectures on science Samuel Jones used to nurse a human skeleton on his knee. Geraint H. Jenkins, *The foundations of modern Wales 1642-1780* (Oxford, 1987), 315.

⁷ Vavasour Griffiths (d.1741), minister and tutor. In his youth he attended the celebrated academy kept by Samuel Jones at Tewkesbury. In 1726 he was a minister at Maesgwyn, nr. Bugeildy, Knighton in Radnorshire where he opened a school. In 1735 he accepted an invitation to become head of Carmarthen Academy when it moved to Llwynllwyd, near Hay. In 1736/37 he moved his home to Chancefield, Talgarth. Roland Thomas holds that it was at Chancefield that Price was taught by Griffiths.

⁸ Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), Rector of St James, Piccadilly. Morgan is probably referring to either *Six sermons on several occasions* (1718), or *Seventeen sermons on various occasions* (1724). What excited Rice Price's passion was Clarke's critique of orthodox Trinitarianism as set out in his *The Scripture doctrine of the Trinity* (1712).

⁹ This assertion is puzzling. The eldest son, according to Rice Price's will, was John, who became known as John Price of Park. He lived until 1777, thirty eight years after his father's death. Roland Thomas (14ff.) says that Rice Price made John his heir, passing over his eldest son who was then practising physic at Newport, 'and who survived his disappointment but a short time'. This is not supported by any evidence in Rice Price's will.

¹⁰ Price frequently acknowledged his debt to Butler. In the preface to the first edition of the *A review of the principal questions and difficulties in morals* (1758), he writes, 'There is no writer to whom I have so much reason to acknowledge myself indebted, as Dr. Butler, the late Bishop of Durham'. Professor Raphael suggests that Price omitted this preface from the third edition (1787) 'perhaps because he had by that time realized that his obligations to

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Butler were not so central as he had formerly supposed'. (D D Raphael ed., Richard Price, *A review* [Oxford, 1948; rev. 1974], 5. This edition was published in 1948, with a revised impression in 1974, and was based on the 1787 edition). However, in his 'Dissertation on the being and attributes of the Deity' (first published as an Appendix in the 1787 edition of the *Review*) Price included Butler among three of the 'greatest names this world has ever known (291). In the second edition of *Four Dissertations*, in his 'Dissertation on the Importance of Christianity, the Nature of Historical Evidence, and Miracles', he wrote, 'Some of the principal observations which I have made may be found in the chapter of Bishop Butler's *Analogy* on the supposed presumption against a Revelation considered as miraculous. Had I remembered this, it is probable I should not have thought of drawing up this dissertation' (440n.). In *Observations on the importance of the American revolution* he wrote, 'I reckon it happy for me that this book was one of the first that fell into my hands. It taught me the proper mode of reasoning on moral and religious subjects, and particularly the importance of paying due regard to the imperfections of human knowledge. His Sermons also, I then thought, and do still think, excellent' (2nd edn., 61-62). Perhaps the most telling evidence lies in the Benjamin West portrait, executed in 1788, in which Price is shown reading a letter from Franklin; the book on the table is Butler's *Analogy*.

¹¹ Samuel Price (1676-1756) was the son of Rees Price of Tyn-ton and the younger brother of Rice Price, Richard Price's father. He was educated at Brynllwarch and at Attercliffe Academy. In 1703 he became assistant to Isaac Watts, the celebrated hymn writer, at St. Mary Axe in Bury (or Berry) Street, London, co-pastor in 1713, and pastor after Watts's death in 1748. Some of his sermons were published in *Faith and practice represented in fifty-four sermons on the principal heads of the Christian religion preached at Berry Street, 1733* (2 vols, 1735). These sermons show him to have been an orthodox Calvinist promising the severest punishments in the after-life to evil-doers. In private Samuel does not seem to have been as fearsome as he was in the pulpit; Samuel Davies records in his diary that when he dined with him on 23

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January 1754 he found him to be 'a humble affectionate Gent', and again on January 27 he was treated 'with all the tender Affection of a Father'. See William Pilcher ed., *The Reverend Samuel Davies abroad* (Chicago, 1967), 61, 63. See also Walter Wilson, I, 319-320.

¹² Presumably Samuel Price, Rice Price's executor.

¹³ When Price was a student there Coward's Academy was at Tenter Alley, Moorfields, London. The Academy had been founded in 1701 by William Coward, a wealthy Dissenter. On his death in 1738 he bequeathed £150,000 to a trust for charitable and educational purposes. See Carl B Cone, *Torchbearer of freedom: the influence of Richard Price on eighteenth century thought* (Lexington, 1952), 11-12. John Eames (see n. 14 below) was the principal tutor during Price's stay. On Eames's death the Academy moved to Wellclose Square under the direction of David Jennings, and in 1762 on Jennings's death it moved to Hoxton. At that time Price was invited to become a tutor at the Academy but he declined. Two students at Coward's Academy who influenced Price's career were Thomas Bayes and John Howard.

¹⁴ John Eames (d. 1744) became assistant tutor to Thomas Ridgely at Coward's Academy in 1712, and on Ridgely's death in 1738 he became principal tutor. A disciple and friend of Sir Isaac Newton he built up the reputation of the Academy as the leading Dissenting Academy for instruction in mathematics and science in Britain. It is from him that Price acquired his skills in mathematics, skills that were to be invaluable in the part he played in the development of the Society for Equitable Assurances and in the development of insurance generally.

¹⁵ George Streatfield (d. 1757), a wealthy merchant-tailor and Dissenter living in Stoke Newington. Price remained in his household as chaplain from the time he left the Academy in Tenter Alley until Streatfield's death, a period of nearly thirteen years. During that time Streatfield became involved in one of the most famous legal cases of the century in which three Dissenters (one of whom was Streatfield) were proceeded against for refusing to accept the office of Sheriff in the Corporation of London. They pleaded that they were unable to accept office because it would

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require them to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles which on grounds of conscience they were unable to do. The Corporation argued that they could not plead disability on grounds of conscience because nonconformity was a crime. The case eventually reached the House of Lords (although by this time Streatfield had been released from the case as he did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Corporation) where the Dissenters won a famous victory thanks to Lord Mansfield who declared that Nonconformity was certainly not a crime. See Anthony Lincoln, *Some political and social ideas of English Dissent 1763-1800* (Cambridge, 1938), 46; *Honest mind*, 13-15.

¹⁶ Samuel Chandler (1693-1766) attended Samuel Jones's Academy at Tewkesbury and in 1716 became a minister with the Presbyterians at Peckham. In 1720 he was a casualty of the South Sea Bubble having ventured a fortune he acquired on his marriage. Straitened in his circumstances he opened a bookshop which he kept for two or three years. In 1726 he became assistant at Old Jewry and in 1729 co-pastor there with Thomas Leavesly. He was an accomplished classical scholar and a keen controversialist. His many publications include *A vindication of the Christian religion*, (1725; *Reflections on the conduct of the modern Deists* (1727), *The history of persecution* (1736) and *A critical history of the life of David* (1766). Chandler was a Fellow of the Royal Society and one of Price's sponsors when he was elected fellow in 1765. When Samuel Davies breakfasted with him on 3 January 1754, he noted that Chandler 'was a Presbyterian Minister of uncommon sagacity and Readiness. He has been formerly suspected of Arminianism and Socinianism but now he appears to be a moderate Calvinist'. See Pilcher ed., *Davies abroad*, 47, 48.

¹⁷ George Streatfield died in January, 1757.

¹⁸ See n. 11 above.

¹⁹ Price became minister at Newington Green with effect from 25 March 1758. His stipend when he began his ministry there was 12 pounds ten shillings per quarter.

²⁰ Sarah Blundell was born in 1728. She married Richard Price on 16 June 1757 at the Church in Stoke Newington. The wedding took place before and not after, as Morgan suggests, Price became

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minister at Newington Green; they went to live on the Green so that they could be near the meeting-house. Sarah suffered her first attack of palsy in 1762 and thereafter suffered several further attacks which left her increasingly debilitated. She died on 29 September 1786. For a long time after her death Price was overwhelmed with grief (see *Journal*, 377). There is no reason to doubt that their marriage was, despite Sarah's affliction, an exceedingly happy one.

²¹ I.e., *A review of the principal questions and difficulties in morals* (1758).

²² William Adams (1706-89) became Rector of Coude in 1755 and Master of Pembroke College, Oxford in 1775. Morgan's account of the beginning of their friendship is confirmed by the following passage in Price's *Journal*, 'My acquaintance with him was occasioned by the publication of my book on morals about 32 years ago. He had then published a sermon on the nature of virtue and religious obligation in which he gave the same account of moral obligations that I had given.' The sermon in question was William Adams, *The nature and obligation of virtue ...* (1754). Price and Adams found themselves in agreement on several other topics, notably in theology and on the nature of love of country. Their friendship shows that Anglican and Dissenter were not always bitterly opposed to each other and that either of them could collaborate to defend the other from attacks by writers ostensibly on his own side. Price helped Adams by seeing his sermon, *A test of true and false doctrines* (1770), through the press (see *Correspondence*, I, 84) and by supporting Adams in a controversy he had with John Rotheram, the author of *An apology for the Athanasian Creed* (1769). Although it is known that Price did some reviewing, the only one that has as yet been identified is his review of Adams's *An answer to Rotheram's apology for the Athanasian Creed* (1773) which was published in the *Monthly Review*, XLVIII (1773), 475-81. [For the attribution to Price see B C Nangle, *The Monthly Review first series* (1749-1789) (Oxford, 1934), 53.] What commended Adams to Price was his insistence that virtuous practice and not the adoption of questionable theology is essential to salvation, that moral judgement is based upon rational principles,

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and that religious establishments in Britain are in need of reform. All this was music to Price's ears. For a comparison of Adams's and Price's views on love of country, see Martin Fitzpatrick, 'Reflections on a footnote: Richard Price and love of country', *Enlightenment and Dissent*, no. 6 (1987), 41-58.

²³ Morgan implies that Price and David Hume became acquainted after Hume read Price's *Review*. This conjecture has been demolished by John Stephens in his article, 'When did David Hume meet Richard Price?', *The Price-Priestley Newsletter*, no. 4 (1780), 30-39. As Stephens maintains, Price's acquaintance with Hume began not with the publication of the *Review* but after the publication of the dissertation 'on the importance of Christianity, the nature of historical evidence and miracles', which was published in *Four dissertations* in 1767. The famous dinner that Cadell gave to Hume and some of his critics took place, in all probability after 1767. What lends colour to this conjecture is that the other two of those known to have been guests at the dinner were William Adams and John Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, both of whom had written against Hume on miracles. In the first edition of *Four dissertations* Price had written that Hume's objection to belief in miracles 'is founded on indisputable fallacies and is indeed nothing but a poor though specious sophism'. Price regretted this remark, apologized to Hume, and suppressed it in the second 1768 edition.

²⁴ See John Stephens, op.cit., and *Correspondence*, I, 45-47.

²⁵ John Douglas (1721-1807), F.R.S., F.S.A. He became Bishop of Carlisle in 1787 and Bishop of Salisbury in 1791.

²⁶ Adams's contribution to the debate was published in *An essay on Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles* (1752).

²⁷ See Bernard Peach, "'On what point did Richard Price convince David Hume of a mistake'", with a note by Henri Laboucheix', *The Price-Priestley Newsletter*, no. 2 (1978), 76-81; Stephens, op. cit.; Bernard Peach, 'Hume's mistake', *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, XLI, no. 2 (Apr.-June, 1980), 331-34; David Raynor, 'Hume's mistake – another guess', *Hume Studies*, VII (1981), 164-67. Raynor argues that Price convinced Hume of an error in the *Treatise*, I, iv, 1.

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²⁸ See *Correspondence*, I, 53-54.

²⁹ The third edition of the *Review* was published in 1787.

³⁰ William Paley, *The principles of moral and political philosophy* (1785).

³¹ Francis Hutcheson (1684-1746), Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow.

³² John Balguy (1686-1748), Vicar of Northallerton.

³³ I.e., Samuel Clarke.

³⁴ In *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution* Price wrote, 'I owe much to the philosophical writings of Mr Hume, which I likewise studied early in life. Though an enemy to his scepticism, I have profited by it. By attacking, with great ability, every principle of truth and reason, he put me upon examining the ground upon which I stood, and taught me not hastily to take things for granted' (1785 edn.), 62.

³⁵ George Benson (1699-1762) was pastor with the Presbyterians at Poor Jewry Lane from 1740 until the year of his death in 1762, succeeding William Harris. Nathaniel Lardner was assistant pastor at Poor Jewry Lane from 1729 to 1751. Benson won renown as a biblical scholar and commentator on St Paul. His *The history of the life of Jesus Christ* was published posthumously in 1764. In theology he had pronounced leanings towards Socinianism. Though eminent as a scholar, Benson was unpopular as a preacher, a factor that probably contributed to the decline in the numbers of the congregation which Price found so distressing when he was a preacher there. Benson's successor as pastor was Ebenezer Radcliffe, a staunch supporter of the movement for the relief of the Dissenters from subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. Radcliffe was pastor throughout the whole period Price was assistant pastor. See Walter Wilson, I, 113-125.

³⁶ *Four dissertations* contained: (a) 'On Providence'; (b) 'On Prayer'; (c) 'On the reasons for expecting that virtuous men shall meet after Death in a state of happiness'; and (d) 'On the importance of Christianity, the nature of historical evidence and miracles'.

³⁷ John Canton (1718-72), F.R.S., Master of Spital Square Academy. When Price was elected to the Royal Society, Canton

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was one of his sponsors.

³⁸ William Rose (1719-86) of Chiswick was co-editor of the *Monthly Review*, and a member of the Club of Honest Whigs. He achieved immortality in the pages of Boswell's *Life*. '[W]hen he [Johnson] would not allow the Scotch writers to have merit, the late Dr. Rose, of Chiswick, asserted that he could name one Scotch writer, whom Dr. Johnson himself would allow to have written better than any man of the age; and upon Johnson's asking who it was, answered, "Lord Bute, when he signed the warrant for the pension".' See George Birkbeck Hill ed., *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (6 vols., Oxford, 1887), VI, 168.

³⁹ See n.23 above.

⁴⁰ Thomas Bayes (1702-1761), F.R.S., Dissenting minister and mathematician, son of Joshua Bayes (1671-1748), also a Dissenting Minister. Educated at Coward's Academy at Tenter Alley, Moorfields where he was a pupil of John Eames, he became a minister with the Presbyterians at the Meeting House at Mount Zion, Tunbridge Wells in 1731. He was elected F.R.S. in 1742. His work on probability was published posthumously (n. 41 below). See J D Holland, 'The Reverend Thomas Bayes, F.R.S. (1701-1762)', *The Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A, 125 (1962), 451-61.

⁴¹ 'An essay towards solving a problem in the doctrine of chances', *Phil. Trans.*, LIII (1764), 370-418.

⁴² Morgan seems to be mistaken: no evidence to substantiate this claim has been found.

⁴³ 'A demonstration of the second rule in the essay ... in the doctrine of chances', *Phil. Trans.*, LIV (1764), 296-325.

⁴⁴ See J Stephens ed., *Four dissertations* (Bristol, 1990), 395-98.

⁴⁵ Price became F.R.S. on 5 December 1765. His sponsors included Benjamin Franklin, John Canton, Samuel Chandler, John Ellicot, Israel Mauduit and Matthew Raper. See *Honest mind*, 134.

⁴⁶ Possibly Nathaniel Neal, son of Daniel Neal, the historian and a nephew of Nathaniel Lardner. He was an eminent attorney and secretary to the Million Bank and author of *A free and serious remonstrance to Protestant Ministers, on occasion of the decay of religion* (1775). See Walter Wilson, III, 101.

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⁴⁷ Philip Furneaux (1727-1783), was educated under David Jennings at Wellclose Square. He became Pastor to the Independents at Clapham in 1753. He was author of *Letters to the Honourable Mr. Justice Blackstone concerning his exposition of the Act of Toleration* (1770), and *An essay on toleration* (1773). He was a member of the Club of Honest Whigs.

⁴⁸ There is no evidence in the Minute Book of the Meeting Place at Lewin's Mead, Bristol, of Price having received such an invitation. See *Honest mind*, 127-28.

⁴⁹ This work was undertaken by Samuel Horsley (1733-1806), F.R.S, and Secretary to the Royal Society (1773-1778). His edition of Newton's works, *Opera quae exstant omnia*, the only collected edition, was published in five volumes by John Nichols in London in the years 1779-1785. Horsley was a High Churchman and a future Bishop of St. David's (1787-93), of Rochester (1793-1802) and of St. Asaph (1802-1806). He was especially hostile to heterodox Dissent and spent years controverting Joseph Priestley's theology and metaphysics.

⁵⁰ The first Lady Shelburne, formerly Lady Sophia Carteret, died on 5 Jan. 1771 (Lord Fitzmaurice, *Life of William, Earl of Shelburne* [2 vols, 2nd edn. London, 1912], I, 431).

⁵¹ Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800), the original 'blue stocking', was a member of a Friday evening club to which Price belonged. The Earl of Shelburne and Lord Lyttelton were also members.

⁵² Morgan was mistaken about the date of Price's first meeting with Shelburne, for the evidence in Price's *Correspondence* indicates that they did not meet before 22 March 1771 when Price wrote to Mrs Montagu after she had told him that Shelburne wished to call upon him at his home in Newington Green (See *Correspondence*, I, 96-7). Morgan's mistake led Shelburne's biographer, Lord Fitzmaurice, to deny the veracity of the story that Shelburne wished to meet Price after reading the dissertation 'On the reasons for expecting that virtuous men shall meet after death in a state of happiness' when he was in mourning following the death of Lady Shelburne. Lady Shelburne died in January 1771: so the story could not have been true had Shelburne met Price in 1769. But if they did not meet until March 1771 or thereabouts it could be

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well-founded. See Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, I, 432.

⁵³ George, first Baron Lyttelton (1709-73), author of *Observations on the conversion of St. Paul* (1747). Lyttelton had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the years 1755-6 with no very conspicuous success, and perhaps the experience induced him to counsel Price to leave financial matters well alone and stick to divinity instead.

⁵⁴ *An appeal to the public on the subject of the National Debt* (1772).

⁵⁵ In 1779 a Bill was enacted to relieve Dissenting ministers and teachers from subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles by substituting a declaration of belief in the Old and New Testaments. See Ursula Henriques, *Religious toleration in England, 1787-1833* (London, 1961), 56-57.

⁵⁶ The Test and Corporation Acts were not repealed until 1828 (Henriques, *Religious toleration*, 183-84).

⁵⁷ The Regium Donum, instituted in 1723, was a fund for the relief of Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations, Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist. Price was not alone in reprobating its use. See N C Hunt, *Two early political associations: the Quaker and the Dissenting Deputies in the age of Sir Robert Walpole* (Oxford, 1961), 119.

⁵⁸ Sir Edmund Thomas (1712-67), M.P. for Chippenham (1741-54) and for Glamorgan (1761-67). He began a canvas of Glamorgan in 1759. See Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, *The history of Parliament, 1745-1790* (3 vols., London, 1964), III, 522.

⁵⁹ Price began his ministry at Hackney in March 1770. His immediate predecessor, for a few months, was a Mr. Law about whom 'nothing is known', and prior to him the minister was Timothy Laugher (1724-69) who became minister in 1746. See Alan R Ruston, *Presbyterianism and early Unitarianism in Hackney* (Watford, 1980), 12-14.

⁶⁰ 'Observations on the Expectations of Lives', *Phil. Trans.*, LIX (1770), 89-125; *Correspondence*, I, 58-59.

⁶¹ 'Observations on the proper method of calculating the values of reversions', *Phil. Trans.*, LX (1770), 268-76.

⁶² 'On the effect of the Aberration of Light on the Time of a Transit of Venus', *Phil. Trans.*, LX (1771), 536-40.

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⁶³ Abraham de Moivre (1667-1754), F.R.S., mathematician, author of *The doctrine of chances* (1718); *Annuities upon lives* (1725).

⁶⁴ It was in 1771, and not 1769, that Price's *Observations on reversionary payments* was first published.

⁶⁵ An excellent example of the effectiveness of Price's advice can be seen in the history of the short-lived Friendly Society of Annuitants. Price wrote to them on 13 July 1771, explaining in what ways the scheme they operated was deficient. The Society took his criticisms to heart and shortly afterwards their scheme was wound up and the Society itself disbanded. See *Correspondence*, III, 342-44

⁶⁶ It was by Marischal College, Aberdeen that Price was awarded the degree of D.D. on 7 August 1769. See *Honest mind*, 143.

⁶⁷ See n.54.

⁶⁸ The Sinking Fund Act, 1786. For Price's part in the preparation of this legislation, see *Honest mind*, 249-255.

⁶⁹ Morgan refers here to William Pitt the Younger whom he criticizes strenuously for his failure to acknowledge the contribution Price made to the preparation of the Sinking Fund Bill. See his *A review of Dr. Price's writings on the subject of the finances of this kingdom...* (1792).

⁷⁰ Throughout the period when he was concerned with the reform of the public finances, Price paid particular attention to the need to prevent 'corruption', to prevent ministers raiding the sinking fund when it was politically expedient to do so. The need to prevent politicians undermining the scheme was met by placing the ultimate control over the Sinking Fund in the hands of independent Commissioners. But the device had its disadvantages, as became clear during the Napoleonic Wars. The determination to proceed with the redemption of debt when the Government's expenditure far exceeded its income and when it paid a higher rate of interest on the money it raised than was borne by the debt it redeemed resulted in heavy losses, losses for which Price incurred a great deal of posthumous blame. What was intended to be a safeguard against corruption prevented the more flexible operation of Sinking Fund procedures that the times required.

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⁷¹ Mrs Hester Chapone (1727-1801), authoress. She published *Letters on the improvement of the mind* (1773; *Miscellanies in prose and verse* (1775); and *A letter to a newly-married lady* (1777).

⁷² The Rev. John Burrows (1731/2-1786), Rector of St Clement Danes.

⁷³ Thomas Mulso, father of Mrs Hester Chapone (see n.71).

⁷⁴ See Verner W. Crane, 'The Club of Honest Whigs: Friends of science and liberty', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., XXIII, No. 2 (Apr. 1966), 210-35.

⁷⁵ Andrew Kippis (1725-95), D.D., F.R.S. was pastor at St Prince's St, Westminster from 1753 until 1786. He became Professor of Belles Lettres at New College, Hackney in 1786. Editor of *Biographia Britannica*. He was a member of the Club of Honest Whigs.

⁷⁶ Priestley became Shelburne's librarian in March 1773, having accepted the invitation to do so in December 1772. For the part Price played in making the arrangements see *Correspondence*, I, 132-36, 145-46.

⁷⁷ Franklin left England for America on 20 March 1775, embarking at Portsmouth. See Esmond Wright, *Benjamin Franklin and American independence* (London, 1966), 123.

⁷⁸ George Grenville was First Lord of the Treasury from 6 April, 1763 until 10 July 1765.

⁷⁹ The Marquis of Rockingham was First Lord of the Treasury from 13 July 1765 until 30 July 1766.

⁸⁰ The Declaratory Act (6 Geo.III c.12) was passed in 1766.

⁸¹ In 1770 Lord North repealed the Townshend duties on all goods with the exception of that on tea.

⁸² Lord North was First Lord of the Treasury from 28 January 1770 until 20 March 1782. He succeeded the Duke of Grafton who had been First Lord since 2 August 1766.

⁸³ There are a few variants in Morgan's transcription of this letter from Franklin to Price from the text reproduced in *Correspondence*, I, 229-30. Line 15: for 'Gazette' Morgan reads 'Gazettes'; line 17: for 'mutual enmity. Hatred, detestation, and separation' Morgan reads 'mutual family hatred and detestation. A

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separation'. The MS of the letter, which is held by the American Philosophical Society, also contains extracts in Price's shorthand from a letter written by Ewing to Price dated 4 February 1776. It is highly probable that it was from these notes that Morgan derived his addendum to Franklin's letter. John Ewing (1732-1802), D.D., was Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church at Philadelphia.

⁸⁴ *Observations on the nature of civil liberty and the justice and policy of the war with America* was published on 10 February 1776. The first edition was sold out in three days. On the details of the complicated story of the publication of this work see, *Bibliography*, 54-80.

⁸⁵ Whereas the first seven editions sold at two shillings each, the cheaper edition sold at four pence or one hundred for a guinea. See *Bibliography*, 54-80

⁸⁶ See n. 80.

⁸⁷ See *A letter from Edmund Burke, esq; one of the representatives in Parliament for the city of Bristol, to John Farr, and John Harris, esqrs. sheriffs of that city, on the affairs of America* (1777): 'There are people who have split and anatomised the doctrine of free government as if it were an abstract question concerning metaphysical liberty and necessity, and not a matter of moral prudence and natural feeling'. See Bernard Peach, *Richard Price and the ethical foundations of the American Revolution* (Durham, N.C., 1979), 272.

⁸⁸ In his 'General Introduction' to *Two tracts on civil liberty*, Price refers to Burke as 'a writer of the first character' and as 'the masterly writer'. On Burke's aversion to precise definition Price writes, 'Though he chooses to decry enquiries into the nature of liberty there are, I am persuaded, few in the world whose zeal for it is more united to extensive knowledge and an exalted understanding.' Peach, *Price and the ethical foundations*, 47, 48, 50 n. 'c'.

⁸⁹ William Markham (1719-1807), Archbishop of York (1776-1807). On 21 February 1777 he preached a sermon in the parish church of St Mary-le-Bow to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. In this sermon, which was published later in the year, Markham alarmed the Dissenters when he hinted that

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the time may come when the Dissenters should have to be placed under the same restraints as the Roman Catholics. Further disquiet was caused by his claim that after a victorious conclusion of the war steps should be taken to extend the episcopate in America. Price replied to Markham in his 'General Introduction' to *Two tracts*. See Peach, *Price and the ethical foundations*, 51-53 and (for extracts from Markham's sermon), 261-65 .

⁹⁰ John Wesley attacked Price in *Some observations on liberty occasioned, by a late tract* (1776). See Peach, *Price and the ethical foundations*, 245-52. In his *Journal* on 4 April 1776, Wesley wrote, 'I began an answer to that dangerous Tract, Dr. Price's 'Observations upon Liberty'; which, if practised, would overturn all government, and bring in universal anarchy', cited by Carl Cone, 'Richard Price and the Constitution of the United States', *American Historical Review*, LIII (July 1948), 726-47.

⁹¹ For details of the pamphlets either attacking or supporting Price on the American War, see *Bibliography*, 70-79.

⁹² Samuel Johnson, it is true, received a pension of 200 pounds per annum in 1762, but none of his pamphlets were written in direct criticism of Price. His *Taxation no tyranny* was published in 1775. Price refers to it in *Observations on the nature of civil liberty*. See J P Hardy, *The political writings of Dr Johnson: a selection* (London, 1968), ix, and Peach, *Price and the ethical foundations*, 90

⁹³ John Shebbeare (1709-88), political writer. He was awarded a pension of 200 pounds per annum in 1764 and supported the government of the day in newspapers and pamphlets. He wrote virulently against Price: see his *An essay on the origin, progress, and establishment of national society* (1776).

⁹⁴ James Macpherson (1736-96) to whom the authorship of *The rights of Great Britain asserted against the claims of America...* (1776) has been attributed, was employed by the Government. He claimed, and at the time was believed, to be the translator of the Ossianic poems, which were in fact his own literary forgeries in which he made use of Gaelic ballads.

⁹⁵ John Lind (1737-81), author of *Three letters to Dr Price*, whom Price thought the ablest of those who had written 'virulent

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invectives against him'. Peach, *Price and the ethical foundations*, 134. On 14 February 1777, Jeremy Bentham wrote to Samuel Bentham, 'Dr. Price is coming out with some more of his stuff, in which Lind I understand is to be attacked. He was saying t'other day to Cadell the bookseller that none of all the attacks that have been made upon him have hurt him except Lind's', *The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham, 1748-1832*, ed. Timothy L S Sprigge (11 vols., London, 1968-2000), II, 23-24.

⁹⁶ On 14 March 1776 the Common Council of the City of London resolved to present Price with the Freedom of the City of London. See D O Thomas, 'Richard Price and the Freedom of the City of London', *Enlightenment and Dissent*, no. 8 (1989), 90-109. Morgan's quotation, or what purports to be one, is a very free paraphrase of the resolution passed by the Common Council. Cf. the entry on the verso of the title page of the ninth edition of *Observations on the nature of civil liberty* (1776).

⁹⁷ Thomas Paine's *Common sense* was published in Philadelphia on 10 January 1776. Although Price argued that the Americans had the right to choose their own forms of government and to be independent if they so wished, he regretted the prospect of separation. Paine, on the other hand, advocated independence unreservedly. The language that Paine used to describe George III, 'hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh', far exceeded in severity anything that Price wrote at any time in his career. See Philip S Foner, *The complete writings of Thomas Paine* (2 vols., New York, 1945 repr. 1969), I, 3-46.

⁹⁸ See Price to John Winthrop, 15 June 1777, *Correspondence*, I, 258-59. '(I am become a person so marked and obnoxious that prudence requires me to be very cautious. So true is this, that I avoid all *Correspondence* with Dr Franklin, tho' so near to me at Paris. For this reason I cannot give Mr Gordon the assistance he desires in writing the History of the present war) ... Any accounts which you can send me will always be very acceptable.'

⁹⁹ William Gordon (1728-1801), Dissenting minister who resided in America from 1770-1785. In December 1788, after his return to England, he published, in four volumes, *The history of the rise, progress, and establishment, of the independence of the United*

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States of America.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Price to Arthur Lee, 15 June 1777, 'I should be much more large and explicit in answering your letter, were I not obliged to be very cautious.' *Correspondence*, I, 258.

¹⁰¹ Another disparaging reference to William Pitt. Cf. n.69 above.

¹⁰² *Additional observations on the nature and value of civil liberty, and the war with America; also observations on the schemes for raising money by public loans; an historical deduction and, analysis of the National Debt; and a brief account of the debts and resources of France* (1777).

¹⁰³ Morgan exaggerates the extent to which the pamphlet circulated. It did not do nearly so well as *Observations on the nature of civil liberty* had done. See *Bibliography*, 80-87. It is strange that Morgan makes no reference here to *Two tracts*, the 1778 publication which republished *Observations and Additional observations*.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Price to Arthur Lee, 15 June 1777, 'I have taken my leave of politics; and am now in the situation of a silent spectator waiting with inexpressible anxiety the issue of one of the most important struggles that ever took place among mankind.' *Correspondence*, I, 258. See also Price to John Winthrop, 15 June 1777, *Correspondence*, I, 258-59.

¹⁰⁵ On 28 May 1779 Price wrote to van der Capellen, 'My feelings drew from me on our public Fast day in February last a sermon in which, contrary to my usual practice in the pulpit, I enter'd a little into politics, and took notice of our public measures and the state of parties among us.' *Correspondence*, I, 42. Later in his career he was heavily criticized for bringing politics into the pulpit.

¹⁰⁶ *A sermon delivered to a congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Hackney, on the 10th of February last [1779] being the day appointed for a General Fast* (1779). Price added to the second edition of his sermon a postscript incorporated into the title: *Remarks on a passage in the Bishop of London's sermon preached at the Chapel Royal on Ash Wednesday last* (1779).

¹⁰⁷ *A discourse addressed to a congregation at Hackney on February 21, 1781 being the day appointed for a Public Fast* (1781).

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¹⁰⁸ Robert Lowth (1710-87), F.R.S., became Bishop of London in 1777.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Lowth, *Sermon preached at the Chapel Royal on Ash Wednesday, 1779*.

¹¹⁰ For the citation of Price, see *Observations on the nature of civil liberty*, 2nd edn., 5: 'As far as in any instance, the operation of any cause comes in to restrain the power of self-government so far slavery is introduced.' And *Additional observations*, 2nd edn., 6: 'No state a part of which only is represented in the Legislature that governs it, is self governed.' Of Lowth, see *Sermon preached at the Chapel Royal on Ash Wednesday, 1779*, 17, and, *Sermon preached at the Assizes at Durham in 1764*. The extracts from Lowth's 1764 sermon (11-14) are cited by Price in the Postscript to his *Fast Sermon of 1779* (6-7); see above n. 106.

¹¹¹ Morgan's account of what happened in this instance is a little confusing. In *Additional observations* Price wrote a very favourable account of Turgot's tenure of the office of Comptroller-General, but included in it a passage which gave offence by implying that one of the reasons why Turgot lost office was 'a want of address'. In a letter (now lost) Turgot wrote to Price to give him a fuller and more accurate account of what had happened. Before Price had an opportunity to remove the offending passage it had appeared in all the editions of *Additional observations* and in the first edition of *Two tracts*, but he was able to suppress it in the second and subsequent editions of the latter work. On 22 March 1778 Turgot wrote to Price again and, in a lengthy letter in which he discussed many topics in American affairs, thanked Price for making the changes he had requested. *Correspondence*, 11, 3-19. It was this letter, Turgot's second letter, that Price included in *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution*.

¹¹² None of the manuscripts of Price's letters to Turgot appear to have survived.

¹¹³ Turgot to Price, 22 August, 1780, *Correspondence II*, 68-9.

¹¹⁴ *Correspondence*, II, 29-30.

¹¹⁵ Charles Thompson (1729-1824), served as Secretary to the Continental Congress for its duration (1774 to 1789).

¹¹⁶ Arthur Lee (1740-92) was appointed, together with Benjamin

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Franklin and Silas Deane, in October 1776 to negotiate a treaty with France. He returned to America in 1780. For the footnoted letters see *Correspondence*, II, 30-31, 34-35.

¹¹⁷ John Adams (1735-1826), President of the United States (1797-1801).

¹¹⁸ *Observations on the nature of civil liberty*, 104-109; Peach, *Price and the ethical foundations*, 119-123.

¹¹⁹ Cf. The conclusion of *Observations on the nature of civil liberty*, 2nd edn., 109, 'For my own part, if this is not to be the consequence of any future changes in the ministry, and the system of corruption, lately so much improved, is to go on, I think it totally indifferent to the kingdom who are in, or who are out of power.'

¹²⁰ John Dunning (1731-83), 1st Baron Ashburton, was Solicitor General from 1768 to 1770.

¹²¹ Isaac Barré (1726-1802), MP for Chipping Wycombe (1761-74) and for Calne (1774-1790), was Treasurer to the Navy in Rockingham's second administration, and Paymaster-General in Shelburne's administration.

¹²² Thomas Harley, contractor and MP. Together with his partner, John Drummond, and later with Henry Drummond, Harley was awarded contracts to supply gold and silver specie to the armed forces in North America. For a detailed account of their services to the Government see Norman Baker, *Government and contractors: the British Treasury and war supplies, 1775-1783* (London, 1971), 175-83.

¹²³ Richard Atkinson (d.1785), partner in Mure, Son and Atkinson. The contract this partnership received in 1775 to supply the armed forces in North America with rum was bitterly attacked by Price and Horne Tooke in *Facts* (see n. 125 below), 50-66.

¹²⁴ See Peter Brown, *The Chathamites. A study in the relationship between personalities and ideas in the second half of the eighteenth century* (London, 1967), 214.

¹²⁵ *Facts: addressed to the landholders, stockholders, merchants, farmers, manufacturers, traders, proprietors of every description, and generally to all the subjects of Great Britain* (1780). Price contributed the second and the eighth essays in this pamphlet, both concerned with Lord North's conduct of the finances of the

kingdom. See Alexander Stephens, *Memoirs of John Horne Tooke* (2 vols., London, 1813), II, 21.

¹²⁶ John Horne Tooke (1736-1812), a radical reformer and publicist of various attainments. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, he was ordained an Anglican priest. He took an interest in philology, publishing *The diversions of Purley* in 1796 and 1798. He supported John Wilkes and was imprisoned in 1778 for promoting a subscription for the families of Americans killed at Lexington. He was prosecuted in 1794 for claiming that Parliament was not a representative of the people of Britain. How Price came to collaborate with Horne Tooke is not known nor why Shelburne should have been so offended by the publication of *Facts*. See Cone, *Torchbearer of freedom*, 132-34.

¹²⁷ Charles Lennox, third Duke of Richmond and Aubigny (1735-1806), Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 1766, Master General of the Ordnance, 1782-3, 1783-1795.

¹²⁸ On 7 December 1779 Richmond introduced in the House of Lords a motion protesting against 'the waste of public treasure'; on 15 December Shelburne introduced two motions, one protesting against the rise of expenditure in the extraordinaries, the other seeking a committee of enquiry into public expenditure. See *Facts*, 6-8 and *Parliamentary History*, XX, 1255-67, 1285-95.

¹²⁹ See, *Bibliography*, 105-109. Strictly speaking there were six impressions of the first edition of this work and of two of these there were two issues. According to the title-pages, however, these are all different 'editions', numbering up to the eighth

¹³⁰ Price's 'Essay, containing an account of the progress from the Revolution, and the present state of population in England and Wales' was published in William Morgan's, *The doctrine of annuities and assurances on lives and survivorships, stated, and explained* (1779). In the following year the essay was published independently under the title, *An essay on the population of England and Wales, from the Revolution to the present time*.

¹³¹ Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834). He was Curate of Oakwood in Surrey at the time of writing his *An essay on the principle of population as it effects the future improvement of society, with remarks on the speculations of Mr. Godwin, M.*

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Condorcet and other writers, published in 1798. Whereas Price thought that the population of England and Wales was declining, Malthus thought that it had been and was increasing, and would continue to do so until it was checked by the lack of resources to sustain it. Malthus criticised Price for his apparent failure to realise that population growth is limited by finite natural resources (*An essay on the principle of population*, new edn., ed. with intro. Anthony Flew, Harmondsworth, 1970, p.196). In discussing population growth in the Northern states of America Price had followed Ezra Stiles in maintaining that the population doubled every twenty-five years, and in the back settlements every fifteen years and seemed to imply that they would continue to grow indefinitely at these rates. But in commenting on the debate on the state of the population that Price had with John Howlett, William Wales, and Sir William Eden, Malthus wrote. 'Dr Price undoubtedly appears to be much more completely master of his subject, and to possess more accurate information than his opponents;' (ibid., 187).

¹³² Joseph Priestley, *Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit. To which is added, the history of the philosophical doctrine concerning the origin of the soul, and the nature of matter; with its influence on Christianity, especially with respect to the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ* (1777).

¹³³ *A free discussion of the doctrines of materialism, and, of philosophical necessity, in a Correspondence between Dr. Price and, Dr. Priestley ...* (1778).

¹³⁴ On the wide variety of responses to Price's pulpit oratory see D O Thomas, 'Richard Price's ministry' (Papers of D O Thomas, Dr. Williams's Library). All the evidence confirms Morgan's claim that it was celebrity that drew the crowds to hear him preach and fill the pews that had much to his distress been vacant earlier in his career.

¹³⁵ See the anguished note that was the last entry Price made in his *Journal* (396), 'I should be much happier than I am had I no letters to write. They are indeed a sad burden to me.'

¹³⁶ James Burgh (1714-1775), schoolmaster, moralist and political reformer. Price and Burgh were close friends, influencing the development of each other's thought. Burgh kept a school at Stoke

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Newington and he and his pupils attended Price's meeting house on the Green. He was a member of the Club of Honest Whigs, 'our valuable club' in Franklin's description (See n. 74, above). Morgan is mistaken as to the date of Burgh's death which occurred on 26 August 1775. Burgh's most influential work was his *Political disquisitions* (3 vols. 1774-1775), providing radicals with a fund of information, and influencing political developments both in Britain and in the United States. Burgh's other works include: *Britain's remembrancer* (1746); *Thoughts on education* (1747); *The dignity of human nature* (1754); *The art of speaking* (1761); *Crito; or, essays on several subjects* (1767). See Carla H Hay, *James Burgh, spokesman for reform in Hanoverian England* (Washington, D.C., 1979), 40-44. For the full text of Franklin's letter, see *Correspondence*, II, 127-28.

¹³⁷ I.e. The Fox-North coalition.

¹³⁸ Richard Price, *The state of the public debts and finances at signing the preliminary articles of peace in January 1783. With a plan for raising money by public loans and for redeeming the public debts* (1783).

¹³⁹ Richard Price, *Postscript to a pamphlet by Dr. Price on the state of the public debts and, finances, at signing the preliminary articles of peace in January* (1783).

¹⁴⁰ On 4 December 1783 the Commissioners for Examining, Taking and Stating the Public Accounts laid their Eleventh report before Parliament. See *Journal of the House of Commons*, XXXIX, 771ff.; *Honest mind*, 248.

¹⁴¹ Richard Price, *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution and the means of making it a benefit to the world* (1784). For the complete text of the footnoted letter, Benjamin Rush to Richard Price, 25 May 1786, see *Correspondence*, III, 30-32. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813), was a physician and humanitarian, and signatory of the Declaration of Independence. He joined the staff of the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1783.

¹⁴² John Clark (1755-1798) was ordained minister at the First Church in Boston in 1778. Charles Chauncy (1705-1787) was his colleague and minister of the First Church in Boston. In

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controversy with Price he defended the universalist position against Price's annihilationism. 'Dr. Wheeler' was John Wheelock (1754-1817), President of Dartmouth College. Meshech Weare (1713-1786) became President of the State of New Hampshire in 1784. A much fuller, but incomplete, version of Clarke's letter is printed in *Correspondence*, II, 273-74, and John Wheelock's complete letter in *Correspondence*, II, 303-4. For the text of Weare's recommendation of Price's pamphlet to the General Court of New Hampshire, see Cone, *Torchbearer of freedom*, 116.

¹⁴³ With the exception of Price's letter to Miss Ashurst (*Correspondence*, I, 3-5) none of these letters seem to have survived.

¹⁴⁴ In *The evidence for a future period of improvement in the state of mankind, with the means and duty of promoting it* (1787), 38, Price writes, 'Nothing is very important except an *Honest mind*, nothing fundamental except righteous practice, and a sincere desire to know and to do the will of God'.

¹⁴⁵ *Sermons on the Christian doctrine as received by the different denominations of Christians. To which are added, sermons on the security and happiness of a virtuous course, on the goodness of God, and the resurrection of Lazarus* (1787). According to the titlepages, the first and the second editions were published in the same year. Morgan might have been influenced by the fact that some copies of the first were circulating in 1786.

¹⁴⁶ Adams's letter to Price, 21 December 1786, is reprinted in *Correspondence*, III, 104.

¹⁴⁷ Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808) became Vicar of Catterick in 1763 but after the failure of the Feathers Tavern Petition in 1772 to obtain relief for Anglican clergy from subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, he resigned his benefice to become the leader of the Unitarians and founder of the first Unitarian Chapel in England in Essex Street in 1774. R. Price letter to Lindsey, 14 May 1790, is reprinted in *Correspondence*, III, 292.

¹⁴⁸ In the Introduction to his *Second Address to the students of Oxford and Cambridge* (1790), xxx, Lindsey wrote, that he 'takes blame to himself for having in the former part, without just grounds, included Dr. Price in Bishop Butler's gloomy conclusions

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concerning the character of the moral governor of the world whose notions in this respect that excellent person is so far from approving, as from countenancing the bishop's metaphysical superficial way of introducing two new deities among Christians, without ever in any proper way consulting the Bible about them'. Price had complained to Lindsey that in his first *Address* he had misrepresented his Arianism; in May or June Lindsey had replied saying that he would amend the offending passage in his *Second Address* (*Correspondence*, III, 176). Price wrote thanking Lindsey for making the correction (Price to Lindsey, 2 June 1788, *Correspondence*, III, 177).

The dispute as to whether Price could be described as a Unitarian turned on whether an Arian who believed as Price did in the pre-existence of Christ could also be a Unitarian. In *Sermons on the Christian doctrine*, 2nd edn., 69-70, Price wrote 'By Unitarians I mean those Christians who believe there is but one God, and one object of religious worship; and that this one God is the Father only, and not a trinity, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' A Unitarian, therefore, may or may not be a believer in the pre-existence of Christ. In a series of letters evoked partly by Price's *Sermons on the Christian doctrine* Priestley objected to Price's definition as 'quite arbitrary and unnecessarily complex'. He preferred a simpler definition, namely 'a believer in one God, or one person properly entitled to the appellation of God, whether he was an object of worship or not'. If an addition to this definition was required, a Unitarian was 'a believer in one God or one being concerned in the creation and care of the world.' (See *Letters to Dr. Horne, Dean of Canterbury... to the Rev. Dr. Price, and to the Rev. Mr Parkhurst* [Birmingham, 1788], 115). Priestley thought that Price could not claim to be an Unitarian because the powers he attributed to Christ made him a God. He held that Price believed Christ to be the creator of the world and all its dependencies, that he is the power that maintains it in its present form, that he is the redeemer of mankind and the person upon whom men depend for their salvation. Such a being would not only be a proper object of petitionary prayer, and a proper object of worship, but also a God. Arians, such as Price, therefore hold that there are two Gods not

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one. Price counters this attack by maintaining that Priestley was mistaken in what he thought Arians believed about the person of Christ.

¹⁴⁹ For the full text of these letters see: Mrs Hester Chapone to Price, 10 December 1786, *Correspondence*, III, 97-98 and, Sir William Jones to Price, 26 September 1788, *Correspondence*, III, 181-82.,

¹⁵⁰ In his *A budget of paradoxes* (London, 1872) Augustus de Morgan has the following comment on Morgan's use of the term 'family': 'Had a family many will say: but a man and his wife are a family, even without children. An actuary may be allowed to be accurate in this matter, of which I was reminded by what an actuary wrote of another actuary. William Morgan, in the life of his uncle, Dr. Richard Price says that the Doctor and his wife were 'never blessed with any addition to their family', I never met with such accuracy elsewhere.'

¹⁵¹ Sarah Price died on 29 September 1786.

¹⁵² The College was instituted on 10 March 1786. For the history of the College see H McLachlan, *English education under the Test Acts* (Manchester, 1931), 246-255; idem, 'The Old Hackney College, 1786-1796', *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, III, No. 3, 185-205.

¹⁵³ The College was housed at Homerton Hall, Hackney, at one time owned by Stamp Brooksbank. For the details of Price's brief career as a tutor see *Journal*, 367ff.

¹⁵⁴ Price gave up teaching at the College altogether in June 1788. See *Journal*, 371.

¹⁵⁵ Morgan is in error in saying that Price preached a sermon at the opening of the Academy. That honour fell to Andrew Kippis who preached at the Old Jewry on 26 April 1786. See Andrew Kippis, *A sermon preached at the old Jewry, on Wednesday the 26th of April, 1786, on occasion of a new academical institution among Protestant Dissenters, for the education of their ministers and youth*. Price's address was given in the year following: see Richard Price, *The evidence for a future state of improvement in the state of mankind, with the means and duty of promoting it, represented in a discourse delivered on Wednesday the 25th of*

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April, 1787, at the meeting-house in the old Jewry, London to the supporters of a new academical institution among Protestant Dissenters (1787), reprinted *Political Writings*, 152-75.

¹⁵⁶ Price left fifty pounds in his will to the 'Collegiate Institution lately established at Hackney', 'Journal', 402.

¹⁵⁷ William Pitt, to Price, 8 January, 1786, *Correspondence*, II, 330.

¹⁵⁸ See William Morgan, *A review of Dr. Price's writings on the subject of the finances of this kingdom. To which are added, The three plans communicated by him to Mr. Pitt in the near 1786, for redeeming the National Debt: ...* (1792) Morgan also reprinted the three plans in the 6th edition of *Observations on reversionary Payments* (1803), I, 316-36.

¹⁵⁹ Morgan criticized Pitt very bitterly for his failure to acknowledge in public the debt he owed to Price and for his claiming all the credit for reviving Sinking Fund procedures.

¹⁶⁰ Lord Henry Petty, son of the 1st Marquis of Lansdowne (better known as the Earl of Shelburne), became the 3rd Marquis of Lansdowne in 1809. He entered Parliament as the member for Calne in 1803. At the age of 25 was Chancellor of the Exchequer (1806-1807) in the Ministry of All the Talents, the first of many appointments in a long ministerial career.

¹⁶¹ For Shelburne's debt to Price on financial matters, see *Honest mind*, 244ff.

¹⁶² Morgan ignores the passages in Price's writings where he deplors the failure to maintain Sinking Fund procedures for the redemption of the National Debt. See in particular, the Preface to the second edition of *An appeal to the public on the subject of the national debt* (1772), and also the re-issue with an additional Preface in 1774.

¹⁶³ The fifth edition of *Observations on reversionary payments* was edited and seen through the press after Price's death in 1791 by Morgan himself. This edition was published in 1792.

¹⁶⁴ William Morgan, *A review of Dr. Price's writings on the subject of the finances of this kingdom* (1792).

¹⁶⁵ In his journal for 6 January 1788, Price wrote, 'I look upon myself as having no more to do as an author except perhaps the

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publication of a volume of sermons entirely practical, should my life be spared.' A year later, on 14 January 1789 he wrote, 'I have in view publishing another volume of my sermons, but I have not yet begun my preparations for it. And perhaps it may never be accomplished' (*Journal*, 383 and 389). The project was not completed by Price, but William Morgan himself fulfilled Price's intentions by publishing a collection of his sermons under the title, *Sermons on various subjects*, in 1816.

¹⁶⁶ Sarah Morgan (1726-1803), sister to Richard Price and mother of William Morgan. She had eight children, four sons and four daughters. Her husband, William Morgan, died in 1772. In May 1787 when Price settled at St Thomas's Square, Hackney, Sarah and her youngest daughter Sarah ('Sally') came up to London to keep house for him.

¹⁶⁷ Jonathan Shipley (1714-1789), Bishop of St Asaph. He was the 'excellent writer' referred to by Price in *Observations on the nature of civil liberty* (see *Political writings*, 46).

¹⁶⁸ On 21 December 1788, Price wrote in his journal, 'I received a few days ago a letter from my friend Dr Adams with a present of brawn and also of some sermons which he has printed in order to be left with his friends as a memorial of himself and a mark of his regard. His letter concludes with the words: 'I am grown very infirm and find all my powers much enfeebled. My breath is become so weak that I am carried every day to the Cathedral. Yet upon the whole I enjoy more than I ought to expect in my 83rd year. Farewell, my dear friend, for the present. Live long to be happy by being useful.' *Journal*, 388.

¹⁶⁹ 1758, was the year in which Price's *Review* was published.

¹⁷⁰ See n. 22 above.

¹⁷¹ John Howard (1726-1790), the prison reformer. Price and Howard were both students at Coward's Academy: later when they were both living in Stoke Newington their acquaintance developed into a firm and lasting friendship. Price assisted Howard in the preparation of his works for publication, and Howard helped Price by enabling him to acquire statistics on mortality on the Continent. See *Journal*, 372-73.

¹⁷² The original letter reprinted in *Correspondence*, III, 258-59.

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¹⁷³ Howard died at Kherson in South Russia on 20 January 1790, of a camp fever which he caught while attending a young woman who had contracted the disease.

¹⁷⁴ Catherine Louise 'Kitty Shipley (1760-1840), daughter of Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St Asaph. See Garland Hampton Cannon ed., *The letters of Sir William Jones* (2 vols. Oxford, 1970), I, 65.

¹⁷⁵ The original letter reprinted in *Correspondence*, III, 228.

¹⁷⁶ Franklin, whose father Josiah had emigrated to New England to avoid religious persecution, was brought up 'piously in the Dissenting way'. He wrote in his *Autobiography* [ed. Leonard W. Labaree et. al, (New Haven, 1964) 113-14], 'But I was scarce fifteen when, after doubting by turns of several Points as I found them disputed in the different Books I read, I began to doubt of Revelation itself. Some Books against Deism fell into my Hands; they were said to be the substance of Sermons preached at Boyle's Lectures. It happened that they wrought an Effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them. For the Arguments of the Deists which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the Refutations. In short I soon became a thorough Deist.' See also 146-48, 162. In a letter to Franklin written about 30 May 1790 in which he commented on a copy of Franklin's *Autobiography* that had been sent to him for his perusal, Richard Price after complimenting Franklin upon his performance, added 'I cannot however help wishing that the qualities and talents which produced this eminence had been aided by a faith in Christianity and the animating hopes of a resurrection to an endless life with which it inspires.' See *Journal*, 397.

¹⁷⁷ The full letter is printed in *Correspondence*, III, 285-7. Franklin's 'On the slave trade', in which he lampooned James Jackson, who represented Georgia in Congress, was published in the *Federal Gazette*. See J Bigelow ed., *The works of Benjamin Franklin* (10 vols, London, 1904), X, 196-200. The eulogy to Franklin was delivered by William Smith. Franklin's daughter was Sarah Franklin Bache (1743-1808); his grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache (1769-1798); his sister Jane Mecom (1712-1798); and his son, William Franklin (c.1731-1813). Regarding the

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'elegant epitaph', Rush was mistaken. In his will Franklin asked only that his wife's and his name should be placed on his tomb. The epitaph which he wrote for himself earlier in his career, but which did not appear on his tomb, reads: The Body / of Benjamin Franklin / Printer / Like the cover of an old book / its contents torn out / And stript of its lettering and gilding/ Lies here, food for worms. / But the work shall not be lost / For it will (as he believed) appear once more / In a new and more elegant edition / Revised and corrected / by / The Author. See L H Butterfield ed., *Letters of Benjamin Rush* (2 vols., Princeton N.J, 1951), I, 565.

¹⁷⁸ See Price to Thomas Jefferson, c. April, 1788; 26 October, 1788; 4 May, and 3 August 1789; and Thomas Jefferson to Price, 11 July 1788, 8 January, 19 May, 12 and 17 July 1789, *Correspondence*, III, 173-74, 182-84, 218-19, 247-49, 179-80, 231-37.

¹⁷⁹ See Thomas Jefferson to Price, 12 July 1789, *Correspondence*, III, 231-34. The Bastille fell on 14 July.

¹⁸⁰ Price set out for Glamorgan on 3 August 1789 intending to stay for a month or five weeks, but he was away for seven weeks, returning to London on 21 September. See *Journal*, 390-91.

¹⁸¹ Price's address to the members of the Revolution Society was delivered on 4 November 1789. On the reasons why he declined the invitation in 1788, see *Journal*, 386, and on his apprehensiveness in 1789, *ibid.*, 388.

¹⁸² The address was signed by Earl Stanhope (see following note), Chairman of the Society for Commemorating the Revolution. See Richard Price, *A discourse on the love of our country* (3rd edn., London, 1790), Appendix 13.

¹⁸³ Charles Stanhope (1753-1816) became Lord Mahon and heir to the peerage in 1763. M.P. for Chipping Wycombe (1780-1786). He succeeded to the title and became the third Earl Stanhope in 1786.

¹⁸⁴ The Duc de la Rochefoucauld d'Enville became a victim of the revolution he helped to promote: he was stoned to death at Gisors on 14 September 1792.

¹⁸⁵ Richard Price, *A discourse on the love of our country* (1789), reprinted in *Political writings*, 176-96.

¹⁸⁶ This material was published in the Appendix to the third

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edition of *A discourse* (1790), 14-34.

¹⁸⁷ *A discourse* (2nd edn., 1789), 49.

¹⁸⁸ John Adams to Price, 19 April 1790. *Correspondence*, III, 281-83.

¹⁸⁹ A MS containing the extracted passage is held at Cyfarthfa Castle Museum. As Bernard Peach has shown the recipient of this letter, despite Morgan, was someone other than Price, see *Correspondence*, III, 298. For the letters RP received from the Duc de la Rochefoucauld d'Enville, see *Correspondence*, III, 349ff. No letters from Le Roy seem to have survived. For the *Correspondence* with Keralio, see *Correspondence*, III, 268, 297-98. Louis-Felix Guinement de Keralio (1731-1793) was a soldier and a professor of military science and a correspondent of Franklin. He translated Price's *A discourse* into French. See *Bibliography*, 151-52, 160-61.

¹⁹⁰ One of the most prominent of these visitors to England was Mirabeau who translated Price's *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution* into French. See *Bibliography*, 118-21.

¹⁹¹ For a detailed account of this dinner, attended by 652, see Albert Goodwin, *The friends of liberty: the English democratic movement in the age of the French Revolution* (London, 1979), 122ff. Price proposed a toast, 'An Alliance between France and Great Britain, for perpetuating peace, and making the world happy.' The text of Price's speech on this occasion was published in *Additions to Dr. Price's discourse on the love of our country* (London, 1790), 35-37. See also *Journal*, 398-99.

¹⁹² Price wrote to Rochefoucauld on the day following the dinner on the 14th to give him an account of what had transpired (see Price to Rochefoucauld, 15 July 1790, *Correspondence*, III, 307-09). The letter containing the extract to which Morgan refers was written later, on 14 October, 1790. *Correspondence*, III, 325-28.

¹⁹³ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the revolution in France* (1790).

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, ed. William B Todd (New York, 1965), 91.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁹⁶ Alexander I (1777-1825), Emperor of Russia (1801-25).

¹⁹⁷ In the fourth edition (which was not the last), and in later editions of *A discourse on the love of our country*, Price introduced

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a short preface and a lengthy note in which he replied to Burke, see *Political writings*, 176-77, 190.

¹⁹⁸ The fifth edition of observations on reversionary payments was published in 1792, the sixth in 1803 and the seventh in 1812, all three edited and seen through the press by Morgan himself. See *Bibliography*, 38-41.

¹⁹⁹ Price died on 19 April 1791. For Price's will see *Journal*, Appendix V, 400-02.

²⁰⁰ I.e. George Cadogan Morgan and William Morgan himself.

²⁰¹ For Price's will, see *Journal*, Appendix V, 400-02.

²⁰² An account of Price's funeral together with an obituary was published in *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXI, 389-90. See also, *The official guide to Bunhill Fields* (1991), 24-25.

²⁰³ Andrew Kippis, *An address delivered at the interment of the late Dr. Richard Price* (1791).

²⁰⁴ Joseph Priestley, *A discourse on the death of Dr. Price* (1791).

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