On April 24, 1665 Henry More, fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge wrote to Lady Ann Conway, his long-time correspondent:

"I could heartily wish myself with your Ladiship againe, if it were not for those crosse statutes of the Colledge. But some friends have been so buisy lately with their might and spight, that they had like to have given me a long play day. They articled very peevishly against Dr Cudworth, but their chief design so far as I see was against me. This is no more then stratagem of the old Serpent, to putt Christians into beasts skins and then to worry them. The first they did in that infamous pamphlet, the second they attempted in this mischievously ment assault. But the Archbishop, as I am informed, has suppressed this designe, and understands pretty well the imperviousnesse and bigotisme of some of my Adversaries. So that I keep the saddle yet, though not in a journey to Ragley. I have layd aside all thoughts of answering that foul Pamphlet, and the rather because I understand it will please the Archbishop of Canterbury the better. If it were not for the personall lyes in it, I should not weigh it a straw, for all their enquirys were answered before they were writt if any reads the Apologia with his Observations."1

The disputes to which More refers centred around a mixture of administrative and doctrinal objections against both More and Cudworth. In Cudworth's case, the attack by Ralph Widdrington, a fellow of Christ's College, concerned his administration as Master of the College, but the background to the continuing assault was Cudworth's suspect theological views. With More, however, the attack from without the College was

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explicitly theological, but within, it was associated with questions about More's keeping residence as required by the College statutes. More's most serious opponents sought to show that he was an heretic, a charge which also told against Cudworth and others in Christ's. On June 29, 1665, More wrote to Lady Conway: "Ra. Widdrington has petitioned the Archbishop against the Colledge as a seminary of Heretics." The alleged Cambridge heretics were known to their orthodox University critics as Latitudinarians, a nickname coined in the University early in the Restoration. In Richard Baxter's view, More was the leader of the Latitude-men in the early sixties.  

More and Cudworth had been subject to attacks by High-churchmen from the time of the Restoration. They had been educated in the University and ordained in the Church of England before the cataclysmic events which brought down both Church and Monarchy. Yet unlike their loyalist colleagues, some of whom survived to see their fortunes and careers revive in 1660, More and Cudworth had led successful academic lives in inter-regnum Cambridge, and More, along with Widdrington and others at Christ's, was known to have signed the Engagement: "I do declare and promise, that I will be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England, as the same is now established, without a King or a House of Lords." It would have been surprising if some, at least, of the High churchmen who returned to positions in Cambridge in the Restoration had not critically viewed the morality and Anglican loyalty of their attempt to straddle successfully the failed world of the Commonwealth and the new order of King and Church.

In Cudworth's case, the opposition to his continuance as Master of Christ's related to the way he exercised his position, although his known

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though largely unpublished views were very similar to More’s, as The True Intellectual System of the Universe (1678) was to show at a late date. More’s situation, however, was somewhat different. Suspicions about his Anglican orthodoxy and loyalty were directly based on his writings. By the eve of the Restoration, More was the author of a number of substantial works in natural and revealed theology in which a Platonic-Cartesian natural theology and theory of nature were recommended together with certain of the condemned theological views of Origen. Some of these works provided little opportunity for the expression of ecclesiological views, but this was not true of An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness (1660), More’s major christological study. This book was largely finished before the Restoration, but the preface to the work provided More with a needed opportunity to adjust the unepiscopal ecclesiology of the text to the new situation of uncertainty about the future shape of the restored episcopal Church.

Between the appearance of An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness (1660) and More’s April, 1665 letter to Lady Conway, the hopes that the restored Church of England would not become an authoritarian form of episcopal government had been dashed, and the danger that a restrictive understanding of doctrinal orthodoxy would be imposed, where it could, was far from uncertain, at least in Cambridge. A generous tolerance of a morally based, socially non-divisive Dissent had been denied by both Church and State. Such Anglican triumphalism could hardly hope to maintain itself indefinitely, as both the early and later history of the Restored Stuart monarchy showed, but even at the beginning of this period there were clergy, amongst those who conformed, in accord with the Act of Uniformity in 1662, who were deeply opposed to policies designed to marginalise decent non-conformity and to promote an over-precise understanding of orthodoxy, most notably the Latitudinarians.

The best known early statement of Latitudinarian principles is S.P.’s A Brief Account of the New-Sect of Latitude-Men, which appeared shortly before the implementation of the Act of Uniformity in August, 1662. In this tract, the Latitudinarian case for tolerance or liberty of conscience within and without the Church is argued together with a recommendation of new anti-scholastic, Platonic-Cartesian ways in philosophy and theology. These policies of a relaxed episcopal polity together with an openness to revisions in natural and revealed theology can be found expressed in whole or in part in a number of early Latitudinarian works: George Rust’s A Letter of Resolution Concerning Origen and the Chief of his Opinions (1661) and a Sermon Preached at New-Town (1663), Joseph Glanvill’s The Vanity of Dogmatizing (1661) and Lux Orientalis (1662), Edward Stillingfleet’s Irenicum (1661?) and Origines Sacrae (1662). But
the most striking expressions of this Latitudinarian approach are to be found in Henry More's works, especially *An Antidote Against Atheism* (1653), *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659) and *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness* (1660). In these works one version of the widescale doctrinal revision which could but need not accompany a Latitudinarian openness is outlined, and, in the *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, amongst a number of Origenist doctrines, More argues forcefully for the principle which grounds Latitudinarian tolerance in religious affairs, viz., the divinely given liberty of conscience within the bounds of morality and social cohesiveness.4

In the conflicts surrounding the restoration of Anglican control in the universities, it was inevitable that More would receive critical treatment. His prominence as a well established author, the radicalness of his Latitudinarian views, his position as a long-serving university teacher, all made him an important focus of anti-Latitudinarian criticism within the University. More, however, was no easy target. His determination to fight for his Latitudinarian theology within the Church and the University can be seen in a number of places: 'The Preface General' to his *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings* (1662), *A Modest Inquiry of the Mystery of Iniquity* (1664) and, in the same volume, *The Apology of Dr. Henry More* (1664). This last work was a direct response to the unpublished charges of his University critics against the theology of the *Grand Mystery of Godliness*. More's defence of his position led the author of the criticisms, Joseph Beaumont, to write *Some Observations upon the Apology of Dr. Henry More for his Mystery of Godliness* (1665), with the imprimatur of the Vice-chancellor, Anthony Sparrow, stigmatising More's book as heretical.5

In his April 1665 letter to Lady Conway More describes Beaumont's *Observations* as "that infamous pamphlet", "that foul Pamphlet", yet the serious consequences of such publicised University criticism could not be ignored. But at the point when the conflict had taken such a dangerous turn, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Gilbert Sheldon, stepped in to protect More from the worst intentions of his opponents. The dispute seems to

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5 See R.Crocker, *op.cit.*, pp.6ff. More's personal view of the conflict, as distinct from his published remarks in his works, can be read in the Conway Letters.
have been silenced by the year's end, for there is no reference to the problems in More's correspondence in the *Conway Letters* after a letter to Boyle on November 27, 1665, though murmurs of opposition continued to be heard: "But it seems", John Worthington wrote in September, 1668, "the divinity of the D[ivine] D[ialogues (1668)] does not go well down with some of your neighbours."^6 The crisis days of 1665, however, had passed. The Epistle Dedicatory to the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, is More's public expression of gratitude to Sheldon for his support and a statement of the obligation which More had incurred.

At a distance and even at the time, Sheldon's actions might have seemed surprising. Why should the leading ecclesiastical figure in Restoration Anglicanism involve himself in this particular university conflict?^7 And why should he protect More, the most radical and publicised of Latitudinarians, from his catholic minded, bishop-centred, anti-Dissent critics who were Sheldon's ideological allies in defending a high view of the Church of England?

Part of the answer to the first question is to be found in the importance of the universities as Anglican institutions in the Restoration Church^8 and in the prominence of those involved in the dispute. More's university opponents included three, perhaps four of the divines who took part in the Savoy Conference on the episcopal side — Herbert Thorndike, Anthony Sparrow, John Pearson, and most likely, Peter Gunning — apart from other notable loyalist divines who had been appointed to Cambridge positions. The mixture of theology, Church policy, persons of standing, and statutes involved in the Christ's College disputes had probably reached a stage where Sheldon's views were not only sought, perhaps by the Chancellor of the University and the Visitor to Christ's College, the Earl of Manchester, but were required for an orderly resolution of the continuing problems at the College.^9 The increasingly public nature of the dispute after More

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^9 Mrs Michelle Courtney of Christ's College kindly provided the information that the Earl of Manchester, Edward Montagu, was Visitor
published his *Mystery of Iniquity* and *The Apology of Dr. Henry More* followed by Beaumont's *Some Observations* probably intensified the need to find a speedy end to the More-issue in the interests of the University and the Church at large.

It is one thing, however, to provide a likely explanation how Sheldon came to be involved in determining the issues between More and his critics, another to explain why he used his influence to protect More. Sheldon did not suffer from any Latitudinarian softness towards dissent from the Church of England. In 1663, for example, he wrote of his approval of the harsh measures used to suppress non-conformity: "'Tis only a resolute execution of the law that might cure this disease — all other remedies have and will increase it — and 'tis necessary that they who will not be governed as men by reason and persuasion, should be governed as beasts by power of force; all other courses will be ineffectual, ever have been so, ever will be!" Those who had a reputation for toleration of or for comprehension of non-conformity in the national Church were apt to secure his censure. The appointment of the leading Latitudinarian John Wilkins as Bishop of Chester in 1668 did not meet with Sheldon's approval because, amongst other things, he was judged to be "a man not well affected to the Church of England". And the theological liberalism of Jeremy Taylor's *The Liberty of Prophesying* and *Unum Necessarium* is, according to C.J.Stranks, what lies behind Sheldon's view, expressed at the time of Taylor's death in 1667, that he was "a man of dangerous temper, apt to break out in to extravagancies, and I have had till of late yeares, much to doe with him to keep him in order and to find diversions for him."10

Why then did Sheldon, who understood himself as "holding fast and true orthodox profession of the Catholique faith of Christ, foretold by the prophets and preached to the world by Christ himself, his blessed Apostles, and their successors, being a true member of his Catholique Church within to the College. The Visitor had been called in by Widdrington in 1663 against Thomas Standish, More's friend. See *Conway Letters*, p.220.

the Communion of a living part thereof, the present Church of England" 11 protect the Origenist and Latitudinarian More from his catholic minded Anglican critics?

Before seeking to answer this question, it is important to note that this was not the first occasion on which Sheldon had acted in the interests of individual Cambridge Latitudinarians. Most notably, he had protected Cudworth in one of the skirmishes of the campaign against him as Master of Christ's. In a letter to John Worthington, September 8, 1664, Cudworth canvassed the propriety of dedicating his sermon on The Christian's Victory, I Corinthians 15:5-7, as an expression of gratitude for his help:

"I have been desired both by some at Cambridge and some others at London to print that sermon which I preached last at Lincoln's Inn, which I had preached before at St. Mary's; which I would not do unless I should dedicate it to my Lord of Canterbury. But I cannot tell whether it be not absurd to do so, because it was not preached before him. But there are some obligations upon me, and some prudential reasons why I should make some public acknowledgment of my obligations to him, and I have nothing else in readiness, or like to be. For besides his presenting me to a living, I owe my station here merely to his favour, there having [been] a great conspiracy and plot laid not long since, when he was much assaulted also and set upon by divers for his concurrence; but he alone diverted the business at that time."12

The recipient of Cudworth's letter, John Worthington, a close member of the circle of Cambridge Platonists, also benefited from Sheldon's patronage. At the Restoration, Worthington lost his position as Master of Jesus College and in 1666 ended up in a country parish on More's nomination, to which Sheldon added a prebendarship at Lincoln Cathedral. After his wife's death, he suffered from the isolation and pined because of the lack of fit company. With the Archbishop's help, however, he was eventually appointed as lecturer in the parish of Hackney where

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12 J.Worthington, The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington, ed., J.Crossley, Vol.II, pt.1, The Chetham Society, 36 [O.S.], 1855, p.135. Crossley believes that the sermon was published without a dedication. See also Cudworth's letters, especially Nov.21, 1664 where he discusses these matters in further detail (pp.150-51) and Nov.24 (pp.151-52).
Sheldon had once been parish priest, though he did not live to take up the position.  

As these incidents show, Sheldon's support and patronage were not limited to those who were known to share the precise details of his particular Anglican vision for the religious affairs of the nation. Within the scope of that vision there was space for a liberality of opinion and a variety of emphases concerning theological and religious matters. Indeed, it could hardly have been otherwise in a national Church whose clergy had to affirm, in accord with the Act of Uniformity (1662), their "unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled the Book of Common Prayer". In the event, a number of circumstances such as varieties of interpretation, differences about essentials, and the long history of controversies about the teachings and intentions of the Articles and the Prayer Book documents made for a wide range of belief within conformist ranks concerning ecclesiological and other issues. Those who conformed, Richard Baxter writes, were "of three sorts": "Some of the old ministers, called Presbyterians formerly ... subscribed to the parliament's words, and put their own sense upon them only by word of mouth, or in some by-paper"; the Latitudinarians, "ingenious men and scholars, and of universal principles and free, abhorring at first the imposition of these little things, but thinking them not great enough to stick at when imposed"; and those conformists "that were heartily such throughout", though some of these, not "the high and swaying party ", were "more moderate (in their private wishes) to the Nonconformists, and did profess themselves that they could not subscribe and declare if they did not put a more favourable sense on the words than that which the Nonconformists supposed to be the plain sense". The issue of conformity in such circumstances was acceptance of the authority of Parliament and public loyalty to the Church of England — episcopal polity, Prayer Book services, and symbols of faith — not personal

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agreement with an unspecified set of answers to a variety of disputed questions concerning such matters.

Yet while the Restoration Church had to allow for a diversity of views within its ranks, it was a diversity contained within the teachings of the ancient creeds and councils and the Reformation teachings of the Church. In Cambridge the recently installed High Church theologians believed that More had seriously strayed from the path of Anglican orthodoxy into ancient heresies and would not accept the necessary restraint of doctrinal authority. On November 27, 1665 More wrote to Robert Boyle:

"What you conceive of so free speaking and writing, that it is likely to procure me many adversaries, I am not only of the same opinion, but have the certain knowledge and experience of it; and may very likely find the effect of it in a rude manner this very day; Dr. Sparrow visiting us this afternoon: but knowing so well what is at the bottom, I shall, I hope, bear cheerfully whatever he is able to do against me. For I heard one say, that he protested he would prosecute my opinions so long as he lived. And what opinions nettle him and Mr. Thorndike most, is not hard to conjecture. I must confess, it is very hard for me to suppress my zeal for the protestant religion; and I thank God it is so. You see how the case stands with me, and therefore you will excuse me, if I abruptly take leave".16

Sheldon, however, would not fully support the aims of those who sought, in More's words, "to have given me a long play day", by driving him from Christ's College and the University. Why this is so is explained in large part in the account of an interview between More and Sheldon at Lambeth Palace, held at the Archbishop's request, which most likely took place after the finishing of the *Enchiridion Ethicum* in 166517 or its appearance in 1667 and the licensing or publication of the first volume of *Divine Dialogues* (1668) with its restricted but still troublesome presentation of his theological views.18

16 *Conway Letters*, p.264.
17 In his letter, April 24, 1665, to Lady Conway, More says "I am dressing up my Ethicks as your Ladiship phrases it. I hope I shall have transcrib'd all within this 3 weekes or there abouts." (*Conway Letters*, p.235.)
In the Epistle Dedicatory\textsuperscript{19} to the \textit{Enchiridion Metaphysicum} (1671), More records that Sheldon "thanked me for the trouble I took in promoting the knowledge of the finest of Objects, and openly professed your own warm approval of a \textit{Liberal method of philosophizing}, provided it does no harm to Religion, Peace and the Institutions of the Church." The Archbishop, it appears, was prepared to distinguish between More as a philosophical theologian, writing in support of a theistic view of nature, man and God, and More as a dogmatic theologian interpreting and explaining the details of divine revelation. Sheldon, More says, had shown "keen appreciation of my \textit{Enchiridion Ethicum} [1667]", a work in moral philosophy,\textsuperscript{20} whereas in 1665 it had been intimated to More that Sheldon did not wish him to reply to Beaumont's \textit{Some Observations}, with its critique of More's dogmatic theories. More himself saw the two sides of his work as united, and it is likely that his Cambridge opponents were not much inclined to draw a distinction between his works in natural and revealed theologies,\textsuperscript{21} perhaps because they saw a common Platonic influence running through them both in opposition to more traditional scholastic approaches. Sheldon, however, appears to have appreciated More's view that natural theology had to address the problems of a new age of scientific endeavour.\textsuperscript{22} It is highly unlikely that More would commend

\textsuperscript{19} Quotations are from J.M. Lee's translation of the Epistle Dedicatory.

\textsuperscript{20} Sheldon was also interested to know of Cudworth's plans to write a book on moral philosophy; see Cudworth's Jan. 1665 letter, \textit{The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington}, Chetham Society, 36, 1855, p.100. Sheldon, according to his chaplain Samuel Parker, placed "the chief point of religion in the practice of a good life" (quoted in E. Carpenter, \textit{Cantuar} [London 1971], p.212), an emphasis which might help explain his interest in some of the theories of More and Cudworth.

\textsuperscript{21} "But me thinks I hear some men say, all innovations are dangerous; \textit{Philosophy} and \textit{Divinity} are so inter-woven by the School-men, that it cannot be safe to separate them; \textit{new Philosophy} will bring in \textit{new Divinity}; and freedom in the one will make men desire a liberty in the other." (\textit{A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men}, [London 1662], p.22.) Note reference to an attack on \textit{An Antidote Against Atheism} in More's June 3, 1669 letter to Lady Conway (\textit{Conway Letters}, p.295).

\textsuperscript{22} In \textit{The Apology of Dr. Henry More}, bound with \textit{A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity} (London 1664), More says "That the Age we live in is Seculum Philosophicum, a Searching, Inquisitive, Rational and Philosophical Age, is a truth so plain that it cannot be hid". (p.482). More says he feels an obligation "To manage the truth of our
his attempt in the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* to link metaphysics with the scientific concerns of the London Philosophical Society by saying that the Archbishop "would derive no small pleasure from observing that we Clergy take a far from idle interest in the performance within this distinguished Society of the most subtle experiments of Natural Philosophy", unless the Archbishop had indicated in some way his interest in efforts to keep natural theology abreast of contemporary ways of understanding the world.

Yet if Sheldon was prepared to see value in More the philosophical theologian, he was clearly less enamoured of his revealed theology. He gave More a "Fatherly Admonition against somehow jeopardising Religion and the Peace of the Church by philosophical freedom". In other words, More's critics had a point, and the price of archiepiscopal protection was to be restraint from further stirring up of disputes in these tender matters of revealed theology. In the Epistle Dedicatory, More protests, as he probably had that day at Lambeth, that he was guiltless both in intention and in deed, but he had to acknowledge that "while some have been loud in their approval of my works, others have snarled, and yet others have rained upon my head the stout blows of their protest."

How did Sheldon come to his view of the best way to resolve the conflict surrounding More? Various considerations can be advanced as factors which might have played a role. The political influence of the Conway and Finch families; the divisiveness for the Church of the policy being pursued by More's opponents, given his prominence amongst the Latitudinarians; the difficulty of trying to establish that More, a publicly expressed supporter of conformity, was a heretic, particularly in view of the defences of his position which he had already established in his writings; the lack of substance to the claims about the abuse of College statutes concerning residence. And perhaps there was the recognition that More could more or less be silenced without recourse to severe and perhaps ultimately unworkable or dangerous remedies. Sheldon had had considerable academic experience and knew well the problems of

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Religion in such a way as would be most gaining upon men of a more Rational and Philosophical Genius, the present Age abounding so much with such." (ibid.) See also, e.g., S.P., *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men*, p.24.

conscience and integrity which were apt to trouble the devout and critical minds of a Chillingworth or a Taylor or a More.24

He is also likely to have recognised that More was essentially an academic indifferent to preferment rather than a cleric seeking an ecclesiastical career, for Richard Baxter would not have been alone in recognising this fact about More and some of the other University based Latitudinarians. In his account of the Latitudinarian conformists, Baxter writes: "some (with Dr. More, their leader) lived privately in colleges, and sought not any preferment in the world; and others set themselves to rise."25 If More had combined his learning with the ambition or necessity "to rise", he might well have been viewed by Sheldon in much the same way as a Wilkins or a Taylor. But as a scholar amongst scholars, whose leading figures were solidly in favour of catholic orthodoxy and harsh policies towards Dissent, More and his small band of colleagues were, perhaps, best dealt with by being left alone to exercise their virtues and contained or silenced in those matters where their contribution was harmful or unhelpful, provided they were agreeable to such restraint.

Whether such speculation about Sheldon's motives are correct — they are compatible with Burnet's account of Sheldon's virtues26 — it is clear that More welcomed his support. Of the interview he had with the Archbishop, More writes: "I have always considered myself bound to your Lordship by a strong bond of gratitude, ever since you so kindly summoned me to your palace at Lambeth, conversed there with me ...". And More seems to have kept his side of the agreement with Sheldon, at least as much as could be reasonably expected of him in the circumstances. From the mid-sixties onwards, some of the theological doctrines which had offended are absent from his writings, though not the crucial Origenistic doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul. None of his earlier writings were withdrawn though when he collected his philosophical and theological works for a complete Latin edition (1675-79) he did not include The Apology of Dr. Henry More,27 his reply to Beaumont's Some

24 On More's friendship with Jeremy Taylor and Taylor's connection with the Conway family, see Marjorie Nicolson's comments, Conway Letters, pp.118-21, 171. For More, Chillingworth is "that excellent Writer". (The Apology of Dr. Henry More [London 1664], p.540.)
26 Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time, 1, p.303.
27 Worthington, who had earlier advised More to revise his works so as "to leave them with the best advantage to posterity" (Correspondence and Diary, 2,pt.ii, p.308, op.cit.) later counselled More to leave The
Observations, and the chapter in *The Grand Mystery of Godliness* [bk.x, ch.10] in which he defends liberty of conscience was recast, though the spirit remains much the same, and the 1660 preface to the work was omitted. The second volume of the *Divine Dialogues* (1668) which had originally appeared pseudonymously and without a dedication was provided in the third volume of the *Opera Omnia* (pp.647-8) with a fulsome tribute to Sheldon, in a further dedicatory expression of More’s admiration.

When the second volume of the *Divine Dialogues* originally appeared, it had appended *A Brief Discourse of the True Grounds of the Certainty of Faith in Points of Religion*. The Discourse states the methodology which provides the common basis of Latitudinarian theologies, both Platonist and non-Platonist. In the *Opera Omnia*, this tract stands as an independent work, a witness, like the *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, to the continuity of More’s position as a Latitudinarian and a Christian Platonist. If the criticism of his position in the early and mid-sixties and his struggle for survival as an academic had forced More, under the patronage of Sheldon, to be more restrained in expressing the full range of his published views, it did not lead him to resile from most, if any, of the positions which had led to his being denounced as heretical and a danger to the University. But after the Archbishop’s intervention More ceases to be the outspoken and prophetic scholar in defence of Latitudinarianism and Platonic theology which he had been earlier in the decade. He continued to produce a number of scholarly and controversial works in both dogmatic and natural theology, including the *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*. But the future of Latitudinarianism both as a theological style and a party within the Church lay with those who had left the universities, of necessity or by choice, "and set themselves to rise".

**Translations [JML]**

*See over.*

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**Apology** out of the Latin edition on the ground that it would draw the attention of readers "of other nations" (p.345) to English criticism of little real worth.

28 For More’s account of his visit to Lambeth to have the work licensed see *Conway Letters*, pp.302-3.
A MANUAL OF METAPHYSICS:

or,

A Succinct and Lucid Dissertation

ON INCORPOREAL OBJECTS

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PART ONE:

THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE

of Incorporeal Objects in General.

In which as many of the Phenomena of the Universe as possible are weighed against the Mechanical Laws of Descartes, and in which is exposed the Vanity and Falsity of his Philosophy and indeed of that of anyone else who supposes that Such Phenomena are reducible to purely Mechanical Causes.

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by

HENRY MORE

of Cambridge

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"... esteem both, but follow the more accurate."
- Aristotle, Metaphysics [XII, 1073b 16-17]

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LONDON

Printed by E. Flesher. Sold at Wm. Morden's Bookshop, Cambridge, 1671.

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EPISTLE DEDICATORY

to

The Most Eminent and Reverend Father and Lord in Christ

GILBERT

Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England, &c.

There were, most Reverend Sir, many considerations which might have held me back from dedicating to You my ENCHIRIDION METAPHYSICUM [A MANUAL OF METAPHYSICS]; but an even greater number which ought to impel me to the Undertaking suggested themselves. The chief consideration that restrained me was this: I thought it scarcely fitting to dedicate a paltry Work, not yet half-finished, to one of your Lordship's position and attainments, to one whose every possession and action have about them a grandeur and a splendour, and who has spent his substance so liberally on State and on Church, as befits one who is the soul of munificence, building at OXFORD an ample and beautiful theatre while Himself remaining the proven Theatre of Prudence, Kindness, Generosity and other like Virtues.

On this score I might indeed have been deservedly ashamed to bring forth so trifling and imperfect a thing which, when introduced into the

29 The Greek is eis to koinon kai eis to theion; cf. Aristotle, NE IV.2.1122b 19-23. Sheldon as Aristotelian homo magnificus, the great-souled man.

30 The Sheldonian Theatre was dedicated on 9 July, 1669. Sheldon was not present and never saw the building he had funded. The festivities were marked by a speech by Dr. Robert South in which, John Evelyn recorded, he attacked the Royal Society "as underminers of the University, which was very foolish and untrue, as well as unseasonable". (The Diary of John Evelyn, ed., E.S.de Beer, [Oxford 1955], 3, pp.531-2.). See also John Wallis's remarks on South's speech in his letter to Boyle, (Robert Boyle, The Works, ed., T. Birch [1772; Hildesheim 1966], vol.6.) Edward Fowler writes, in his defense of the Latitude-men, that "the word of a foot and a half long ["Latitudinarianism"]... accompanied good store of other Bumbasts, and little Witticisms, in seasoning, not long since, the stately Oxonian Theatre." (The Principles and Practices, Of Certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England [London 1670], p.9-10.)
splendid and Illustrious company of Your Lordship's Reputation, Deeds, and Virtues, pales like a guttering candle before the light of the Sun. But then I began to reflect that small, contemptible things are capable of representing great and magnificent ones: the mighty Sun can be portrayed by a tiny flame, and learned men have concluded that the Vestal fire placed in the midst of the Temple signified the light of a deeper wisdom. At once it occurred to me that even this imperfect little Work might possibly and even fittingly be made the Monument of Your Perfections and, in brief, that this First Part of my Work might perhaps not unreasonably be also regarded as an independent and finished treatise on the nature and existence of Incorporeal Objects in general.

As for the dedication, there were among the considerations which insistently prompted me to dedicate it to Your Lordship the following. Firstly there was your keen appreciation of my Enchiridion Ethicum [A Manual of Ethics], and this inspired me with the not inconsiderable hope that my present Enchiridion Metaphysicum would also have Your welcome, especially since it is accepted that the stability and perfection of Moral Philosophy depends chiefly upon a knowledge of Metaphysics.

But what whetted my purpose more than anything else was the hope that You might find it an agreeable sight, to see how appropriate (with God's blessing) is my employment in this work of some celebrated Experiments of the London Philosophical Society (founded so auspiciously by His Majesty to the perpetual memory of His Name) in advancing the interests of my own Faculty of Theology, and how clearly I prove the existence of Incorporeal Objects by the Light of these Corporeal Experiments; and such proof is surely the prop and mainstay of all Religion and true Theology. I concluded accordingly that You would derive no small pleasure from observing that we Clergy take a far from idle interest in the performance within this distinguished Society of the most subtle experiments of Natural Philosophy; for we draw from them, and can demonstrate to others, a complete certainty about those objects which are set above Nature, though are of a kind to which some who would not be taken as common Philosophers are clearly as blind as Bats in daylight.31

Lastly, I have Always considered myself bound to your Lordship by a strong bond of gratitude, ever since you so kindly summoned me to your Palace at Lambeth, conversed there with me, thanked me for the trouble I took in promoting the knowledge of the finest of Objects, and openly professed your own warm approval of a Liberal method of philosophizing, provided it does no harm to Religion, Peace, and the Institutions of the Church. Such has been my debt, and I could not help wondering how I might one day give You some proof of my gratitude; and since that which I now give You has so worthy an aim, and accords so well with our Priestly Office, I shall indeed hope that it will not lack Your welcome.

As for your Fatherly Admonition against somehow jeopardising Religion and the Peace of the Church by philosophical Freedom, for myself I warmly welcomed your Godly pronouncement, and that for several reasons: firstly, because of its reverent and careful provision for the safety of Religion and the peace of the Church, and of the suggestion so deftly conveyed by it that Liberty of philosophizing, kept within proper bounds, can be quite compatible with the good of the Church; secondly, and chiefly, because of my own awareness of the remoteness of any possibility of my harming Religion by my liberal manner of philosophizing, and of my corresponding certainty that, on the contrary, almost all my Writings up to now have had as their aim the defence and support of those things that promote the interest of Religion and the peace of the Church. I have now laboured many years in performing this task with all the integrity and diligence of which I have been capable. I was not hired for a fee; nor was I seduced by expediency. My only motives have been a sincere love of Truth and a keen desire to further the public Good.

I would of course allow that I have had a rather mixed success: while some have been loud in their approval of my works, others have snarled, and yet others have rained upon my head the stout blows of their protest. So far, indeed, as I am concerned, I hold that both Christianity and Philosophy undoubtedly forbid me to carry on a controversy by abusing my adversary, but that I ought rather, in a lively and patient spirit (by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as the Apostle [II Cor.6:8] says), to go on in that straight and unswerving path to what is best, to supplicate, earnestly and with unfeigned charity, every blessing for my scurrilous and spiteful critics, and to display a much keener gratitude to those who have been frank and courteous. This, my Lord, is chiefly the reason why I have dedicated to Your memory this Little Treatise on Metaphysics, so that it may be able to stand as an enduring memorial both of Your Kindness to me and, in turn, of my Gratitude to you, who am

Your Grace's most humble and devoted Servant,

HENRY MORE