

Matthew Tindal of Oxford (1657-1733) published a work that became known as "The Deist's Bible". He entitled it *Christianity as Old as the Creation: or, The Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1730). Tindal deduced the being and attributes of God by *a priori* reason. He asserted that, as man reasons downward from the knowledge of the attributes of God to knowledge of himself, the religion of nature, including all of the moral precepts requisite for leading the life of virtue and achieving ultimate salvation, then follows. Scripture, with all of its ambiguities, is thus not only unnecessary but is actually confusing to men of reason.

The principal ideas advanced in this work are:

- (1) Because the nature of God is unchangeable, it can be inferred that God will treat all men at all times in the same way by supplying them all with the same sufficient means of recognizing and discharging their duties.
- (2) The religion of nature is the standard of judgment of what is acceptable in revelation, for the latter can add nothing to the perfection of the former.
- (3) Whether externally or internally revealed, true religion is constant in both doctrine and precept.
- (4) The Gospel is a republication of the religion of nature.

Other English deists included Charles Blount (1654-1693), Anthony Collins (1676-1729), William Wollaston (1660-1724), Thomas Woolston (1670-1731), Thomas Chubb (1679-1746), Thomas Morgan (d. 1743), Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751), and Peter Annet (1693-1769).

On the continent, Francois-Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire (1694-1778) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) were regarded as deists.

In the United States, Ethan Allen (1738-1789) of Litchfield, Vermont, published a book entitled *Reason, the Only Oracle of Man, or a Compendious System of Natural Religion* (1784). In this work he stated his belief in human responsibility and immortality, but rejected prophecy and revelation.

Thomas Jefferson of Philadelphia and Monticello (1743-1826) compiled but never published in his lifetime a work that later came to be known as *The Jefferson Bible, being The Life and Morals of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*. In it he extols Jesus as a man for his moral teachings, omits ambiguous and controversial passages, and while rejecting many of the supernatural elements, presents what he considered to be the core of Christian morality.

A compilation of the basic tenets of Deism yields what might be called "The Creed of Deism", as follows:

- (1) The physical world is comprised of matter in motion.
- (2) This motion can be described and formulated in terms of regular mathematical laws.
- (3) Orderly motion does not arise out of chance movement or out of the nature of matter itself.
- (4) Order implies an ordering intelligence; therefore the laws of nature must have been imposed upon matter by a supreme intelligence, which we call God.
- (5) It would seem natural and reasonable to attribute to God not only the