

DRYDEN'S RELIGIOUS POEMS
AND THEIR DEBT
TO DOGMA

By

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Preface

To associate Dryden with dogma might seem to be a contradiction in terms to those who ordinarily think of the poet as being skeptical only. The notion of his being dogmatic can never quite be accepted by those who believe that skepticism and dogmatism mutually exclude each other. The notion is not true, however, when one applies the two terms to Dryden. He was a skeptic in philosophy and a dogmatist in religion.

Parts One and Two of this study deal with facts. Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther are examined in comparison with the sources of their ideas, the doctrines of the Church of England and of the Roman Catholic Church. No attempt has been made to refer to any one book of doctrine with the purpose of asserting that that particular work was the one most responsible for Dryden's ideas, the one on which he kept one eye while writing the poems. Rather, the books mentioned are cited only as means by which the doctrines of both churches may have come to his attention. These books were merely the formal, explicit presentation of the ideas of the two churches, and while they have many qualities in themselves other than doctrine, it was not my intention to make them appear as the immediate causes of the poems. In relating doctrine to Dryden I have sought the doctrine itself and the ideas contained therein, not the means, particularly, by which they were conveyed. Their importance for us consists in their coming to Dryden's notice.

The last part of The Hind and the Panther is not examined at all because it deals not with doctrinal matters but with a domestic situation, i. e., the intrigue at the Court of King James, and is therefore outside the scope of this investigation. Any reader desiring comment on this phase of the poem can find it in Professor Bredvold's work, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden.

Part Three of this paper, the conclusion, deals in a way with this book. In this last chapter I have attempted to expand somewhat Bredvold's contention that Dryden's conversion to Catholicism came as a result of his philosophic skepticism finding the authority it sought in the Roman Church. I believe that there was a certain amount of religious dogmatism which made itself evident in the religious poems. I base my belief on the facts assembled in Parts One and Two.

I am grateful for the assistance rendered by the Librarians of Oklahoma A. and M. College, and am particularly in debt to the Rev. Lawrence Spencer, O. S. B., abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Gregory, Shamee, Oklahoma, for his help in locating much of the material pertinent to the Council of Trent which I make use of in Part Two.

Jay Richard Cummings

Stillwater, Oklahoma
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Part One

Religio Laici was first published in November, 1682, and a different edition appeared later in the year. A third edition was issued in 1683, but the variations in the text were very minute and they were probably not due to Dryden at all.¹ The poem represented Dryden's swearing of allegiance to the Church of England, and its publication followed by twenty years the passing of the Act of Uniformity by which Dissenters were excluded from municipal corporations, clergymen who refused to accept ordination and the Book of Common Prayer were deprived of their livings, and religious assemblies not according to the form of the Church of England were prohibited.² The Test Act of 1673 also had as its object the strengthening of the Anglican position, for by this Act, all holders of civil, naval, or military office were required to receive Holy Communion according to the rites of the Anglican Church.³

The poem of over four hundred and fifty lines has been praised for its manner of forthright presentation and authority, qualities which prompted George Saintsbury to call it "our best English didactic poem."⁴ This criticism complements an earlier one made by Samuel Johnson, who called it "almost the only work of Dryden which

¹ George R. Noyes, in The Poetical Works of John Dryden, ed. George R. Noyes, p. 157.

² Stanley Morison, English Prayer Books, p. 134.

³ Henry O. Wakeman, History of the Church of England, p. 382.

⁴ George Saintsbury, in John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury, p. 120.

can be considered as a voluntary effusion."⁵

The poem begins with Dryden's championing the cause of Revelation against Deism, that philosophical system which attempted to base religion on truths discovered in nature and by Reason. Dryden was not alone in this anti-rationalism, since records of the time indicate that much pamphleteering was done on the subject and that Dryden was acquainted with many of the tracts.⁶

The poem continues with a reference to the Critical History of the Old Testament, by the French priest, Father Simon, an erudite Biblical scholar, whose work represented the epitome of Scriptural scholarship in that he handled a multitude of details in a systematically critical manner.⁷ Dryden was impressed with the work (Bredvold says that his reading of it was "perhaps the most critical event in his intellectual life"),⁸ and the Preface to the poem was written to "an ingenious young Gentleman, my friend, upon his Translation of the Critical History of the Old Testament."⁹ The spontaneity of the passages in the poem which concern Father Simon's work, in spite of the allusion to the current rumor that Simon was undermining all Christianity,¹⁰ seems to indicate Dryden's

⁵ Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, p. 120.

⁶ Alan Dugald McKillop, English Literature from Dryden to Burns, pp. 124-126.

⁷ Louis I. Bredvold, The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, pp. 98-99.

⁸ Ibid., p. 106.

⁹ John Dryden, The Poetical Works of John Dryden, ed. George R. Noyes, p. 161.

¹⁰ "For some, who have his secret meaning guess'd,
Have found our author not too much a priest:
For fashion sake he seems to have recourse
To Pope, and councils, and tradition's force." (252-255)

admiration for the priest's scholarship and also does much to substantiate Johnson's criticism that Religio Laici was "a voluntary effusion."

The remainder of the poem deals with the "layman's faith," that is, the superiority of the Bible over other records of Christ and His teachings; the Bible, per se; the Anglican philosophy of Scripture; the argument for private interpretation of the Bible and the excesses to which such interpretation might be carried; the "branch theory" of Christianity; the question of salvation outside the Church; in short, the Christianity that Dryden professed. These sections represent a direct affirmation in poetry of those important canons of the Anglican faith, The Thirty-Nine Articles, and they also indicate Dryden's debt to the Book of Common Prayer.

The Thirty-Nine Articles began when Henry VIII authorized a Convocation to draw up Ten Articles in 1536.¹¹ The book of the Ten Articles was divided into two parts, the first containing five articles on Things Necessary to Salvation, i.e., creeds, baptism, penance, Eucharist, and justification, and the second part treating Ceremonies, containing articles on images, worship of saints, prayers to saints, rites, and purgatory.¹²

In 1538 three more articles based on the Lutheran confession of Augsburg were added. The number continued to increase until by 1550 the original ten had grown into a code of forty, to which all

¹¹ Wakeman, op. cit., p. 252.

¹² Ibid., pp. 252-253.

those who desired ecclesiastical office had to subscribe. By 1552 there were forty-two articles which every member of the Anglican faith had to believe.¹³

In 1562, under Elizabeth, the forty-two articles of 1552 were revised and reduced to thirty-nine by a committee of bishops, but the final draft was not agreed upon by Convocation and the queen until 1571, at which time it was promulgated. These articles, together with the homilies, were appended to that work which is still entitled Queen Elizabeth's Book of Common Prayer, the complete prayer book of the Anglican Church.¹⁴

This book had gone through much revision by Dryden's time, the most recent being in 1662, after Charles, two years before, in an effort toward unifying the country, had established a Royal Commission with authority to make revisions in the book. The edition appeared, as mentioned above, as the revised Book of Common Prayer in 1662.¹⁵

The appearance of this new edition, the Act of Uniformity of 1663, the Conventicle Act of 1664, which made it a penal offense for anyone to be present at any other service than that set forth by the Book of Common Prayer, and the Test Act of 1673 are all to be taken into account if an understanding of the causes which occasioned the writing of the poem is to be gained. The Crown had been striving for nationalism in religion as well as in politics,

¹³ Ibid., p. 289.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 308.

¹⁵ Morison, op. cit., pp. 133-136.

and this trend characterized the reign of Charles II. Dryden's poem happened to be in accord with this policy.

Dryden began his Anglican apology with the idea that the Bible, when compared with any other record of God's word, was far superior:

If then Heav'n's will must needs be understood,
 (Which must, if we want cure, and Heaven be good,)
 Let all records of will reveal'd be shown;
 With Scripture all in equal balance thrown,
 And our one sacred book will be that one. (121-125)

Having examined the Bible in comparison with these other "records of will", Dryden concentrated his attention on the Book per se, and his investigation caused him to admit that its words were God's, that its style had a supernatural quality which put the efforts of mere human reason to shame:

Then for the style; majestic and divine,
 It speaks no less than God in every line:
 Commanding words; whose force is still the same
 As the first fiat that produc'd our frame.
 All faiths beside or did by arms ascend,
 Or sense indulg'd has made mankind their friends:
 This only doctrine does our lusts oppose,
 Unfed by nature's soil, in which it grows;
 Gross to our interests, curbing sense and sin;
 Oppress'd without, and undermin'd within,
 It thrives thro' pain; its own tormentors tires,
 And with a stubborn patience still aspires.
 To what can Reason such effects assign,
 Transcending nature, but to laws divine? (152-165)

The supremacy of the Bible and its own essential integrity, together with its sufficiency for salvation, is given most explicitly in Article VI of The Thirty-Nine Articles:

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of Faith, or be thought requisite or

necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and the New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

On the whole question of salvation outside the Church, Dryden agreed with the Athanasian Creed, yet he modified the seventeenth century comprehension of the idea somewhat. His Preface stated that Bishop Athanasius only intended to exclude heretics, not pagans, from Heaven,¹⁶ and Dryden repeated this idea in the poem:

Nor does it balk my charity, to find
Th' Egyptian Bishop of another mind:
For tho' his creed eternal truth contains,
'T is hard for man to doom to endless pains
All who believ'd not all his zeal requir'd,
Unless he first could prove he was inspir'd.
Then let us either think he meant to say
This faith, where publish'd, was the only way;
Or else conclude that, Arius to confute,
The good old man, too eager in dispute,
Flew high; and, as his Christian fury rose,
Damn'd all for heretics who durst oppose. (212-223.)

This Athanasian Creed is mentioned in The Thirty-Nine Articles¹⁷ and is found in its entirety in the Book of Common Prayer. It provided, in part, that

Whosoever shall be saved; before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith....And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity....And that they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic Faith: which except a man believe

¹⁶ John Dryden, The Poetical Works of John Dryden, ed. George R. Noyes, p. 159.

¹⁷ "The Three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture." (Article VIII., Of the Three Creeds)

faithfully, he cannot be saved.¹⁸

Dryden's reasonable expansion of the Creed to include amongst those destined for salvation people who might have never heard of the Faith, which he mentions in the twenty four lines preceding the above passage,¹⁹ was indeed in conformity with an attempt at national unity, since such a tolerant view of the unfaithful was likely to be more favorably received than one which set out to damn infidels from the start. The idea was certainly in agreement with The Thirty-Nine Articles. The idea that any sect should presume to declare that salvation or damnation was determined by adherence to that sect's principles was clearly forbidden by Anglican law:

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved. (Article XVIII., Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ.)

Dryden next lashed out at the Catholic idea of the validity of oral tradition. He questioned the veracity of such tradition:

If written words from time are not secur'd,
How can we think have oral sounds endur'd? (270-271)

Thus, first traditions were a proof alone,
Could we be certain such they were, so known;

¹⁸ Book of Common Prayer, "Creed of St. Athanasius."

¹⁹ Religio Laici, 188-211.

But since some flaws in long descent may be,
They make not truth, but probability. (342-345.)

He also clearly stated that he doubted the possibility of any Church's having certitude regarding tradition. He taunted the Catholics about their notion of infallibility by declaring that an infallible church could certainly repair the Scripture in places where corruption or loss had occurred:

Such an omniscient Church we wish indeed;
'T were worth both Testaments; and cast in the Creed:
But if this mother be a guide so sure,
As can all doubts resolve, all truth secure,
Then her infallibility as well
Where copies are corrupt or lame can tell;
Restore lost canon with as little pains,
As truly explicate what still remains;
Which yet no council dare pretend to do,
Unless like Esdras they could write it new:
Strange confidence, still to interpret true,
Yet not be sure that all they have explain'd
Is in the blest original contain'd. (282-294.)

On this matter, too, Dryden follows Anglican argument. The notion that general councils could be wrong and that in the past they had been so, and that tradition by itself was invalid, was stated in the Articles:

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (for as much as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not govern'd with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture. (Article XXI., Of the Authority of General Councils)

Here, too, Dryden used the inductive method of reasoning to ascertain the "probability of tradition". This was quite different

from the deductive method that he employed later in The Hind and the Panther.²⁰

But at this time in his life he recoiled from the Roman Catholic view that tradition was as valid as Scripture and stated the Anglican position on the matter. He said that Scripture as a whole was sufficient for any Christian, though it was in some places obscure. The obscurities were only in non-essential matters, however, which were not important enough to cause anyone to raise any major doubts as to the Bible's sufficiency. Speaking for himself, he said that the opinions of others on the obscure passages would be valid for others, but as for him, his own beliefs on doubtful matters would suffice for his salvation;

More safe, and much more modest 't is, to say
God would not leave mankind without a way;
And that the Scriptures, tho' not everywhere
Free from corruption, or intire, or clear,
Are uncorrupt, sufficient, clear, intire,
In all things which our needful faith require.
If others in the same glass better see,
'T is for themselves they look, but not for me:
For MY salvation must its doom receive,
Not from what OTHERS but what I believe. (295-304.)

Dryden had sufficient warranty for making such a statement. One of The Thirty-Nine Articles provided that diverse ceremonies and rites were allowable if these did not offend the word of God. Private judgment was respected in doubtful matters if the judgment was in conformity with the Anglican idea of God's word. While such a decree gave the elasticity Dryden needed for making his

²⁰ Infra, p. 22.

comment, he was further supported by another provision of that same Article which stated that those ceremonies and rites which were of man's doing could be changed and abolished in accordance with what at the time was considered edifying. Because of the importance of this doctrine, the entire Article demands presentation here:

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly alike; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying. (Article XXXIV., Of the Traditions of the Church.)

Dryden continued his argument for the Church of England by attempting to refute the Catholics who presumed the right of their Church to interpret Scripture. He offered his ideas on what has since been termed the "branch theory" of Christianity, *i. e.*, that the universal Church is one, made up of the Roman, Anglican, and Eastern Churches, with all their respective communions, each entirely independent of one another, yet bound together as branches of the one Church. Dryden granted the Papists that they were a part of the Church and that they were the "handers down" of the Scriptures to the world. But he also maintained that what was handed down was for every man and that it was the common property of mankind:

The partial Papists would infer from hence
 Their Church, in last resort, should judge the sense;
 But first they would assume, with wondrous art,
 Themselves to be the whole, who are but part
 Of that vast frame, the Church; yet grant they were
 The handers down, can they from thence infer
 A right t' interpret? or would they alone
 Who brought the present, claim it for their own?
 The book's a common largess to mankind,
 Not more for them than every man design'd;
 The welcome news is in the letter found;
 The carrier's not commission'd to expound.
 It speaks itself, and what it does contain,
 In all things needful to be known, is plain. (356-369)

On this point, too, Dryden was indebted to the Articles. The Anglican Church had declared the universal Church to be composed of all those that were in communion with Christ. Wherever there existed a congregation of faithful men and wherever was preached the Word of God, together with the Sacraments being administered, there was the visible Church of Christ. That other churches had erred, not only in matters of their living and their manner of ceremony, but in matters of faith as well, was also declared by this article.²¹

Dryden's ideas on the last point that he mentioned were ones which he was later to expand, and in another sense, contract, in The Hind and the Panther. The notion of private interpretation of Scripture had been denied by Catholics and carried to excess by Dissenters.²² Dryden at this time in his life saw the need for

²¹ "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to same.

"As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith." (Article XIX., Of the Church)

²² Wakeman, op. cit., pp. 377-379.

private interpretation, yet he also saw the limits that had to be placed upon it. He sympathized with the Crown in this matter, which had already disapproved of the extravagant use of the Bible by Dissenters:

'T is true, my friend, (and far be flattery hence,)
 This good had full as bad a consequence:
 The book thus put in every vulgar hand,
 Which each presum'd he best could understand,
 The common rule was made the common prey,
 And at the mercy of the rabble lay.
 The tender page with horny fists was gall'd,
 And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd:
 The spirit gave the doctoral degree;
 And every member of a company
 Was of his trade and of the Bible free. (398-408.)

By 1662 it was clear that neither absorption nor extermination of the Dissenters by the Anglicans was possible, and that Puritanism had to go forth into the wilderness.²³ Dryden knew this, and in spite of his tolerant view concerning those for whom salvation was possible, mentioned earlier in connection with the Athanasian Creed, he ridiculed what he felt to be excessive on the Dissenters' part.

He answered the Catholics summarily as well, having already refuted their claim to sole interpretation earlier in the poem. He urged the private interpretation of Scriptural matters in the light of what the early Church Fathers had said, and he advocated that disputed passages should remain outside the average man's inspection and subsequent judgment. As a check for the zealous, Dryden asked that the common good be the norm in interpretation, so that no one individual's sentiment would "disturb the public peace:"

²³ Ibid., p. 379.

Faith is not built on disquisitions vain;
 The things we must believe are few and plain:
 But since men will believe more than they need,
 And every man will make himself a creed,
 In doubtful questions 't is the safest way
 To learn what unsuspected ancients say;
 For 't is not likely we should higher soar
 In search of heav'n, than all the Church before;
 Nor can we be deceiv'd, unless we see
 The Scripture and the Fathers disagree.
 If, after all, they stand suspected still,
 (For no man's faith depends upon his will;
 'T is some relief that points not clearly known
 Without such hazard may be let alone.
 And after hearing what our Church can say,
 If still our Reason runs another way,
 That private Reason 't is more just to curb,
 Than by disputes the public peace disturb.
 For points obscure are of small use to learn;
 But common quiet is mankind's concern. (431-450)

Here Dryden was using a rather strict interpretation of the idea contained in The Thirty-Nine Articles. The Church of England maintained that whereas it had authority in matters of controversy, the Church merely acted as a witness and as a custodian of the Bible, and it would not enforce anything not duly authorized by Scripture as necessary to salvation.²⁴ The "curbing of the reason" was rather a strong remedy that Dryden advocated.

But on reviewing the whole poem together with the Articles, one sees that the ideas expressed in Religio Laici, with the ex-

²⁴ "The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation." (Article XX., Of the Authority of the Church)

ception of the argument against Deism and the digression in praise of Father Simon's book, can be found in The Thirty-Nine Articles. These ideas were the basis of the Anglican faith, the one which Dryden accepted when he wrote the poem. As a practicing Anglican, which he was at the time, he saw evidences of these ideas every time he opened his prayer book, and as a member of the Court, he knew of the prevailing policy of conformity.

Free from any compulsion, to our knowledge, therefore voluntarily, he made his profession of allegiance in poetry in accordance with the Anglican Faith, and if it may be repeated, the poem does affirm the explicit dogma of the Anglican Church. Dryden was not the originator of his Church's ideas, but merely the poetizer of the position of the Church of England.

Part Two

The Hind and the Panther was published anonymously in the early spring of 1687 and was licensed for the press in April. Two more editions appeared during that year, and though Dryden's name was not on the original title pages, his authorship of the poem was no secret.¹ Two years before, Dryden had publicly become a Roman Catholic, and the poem was an outcome of his conversion, inasmuch as in it he attempted to justify his move by presenting a hypothetical debate between two animals who gave arguments, respectively, for Protestantism and Catholicism.

The poem of twenty-six hundred lines is divided into three parts, the first, according to Dryden's own remarks to the reader, "consisting mostly of general characters and narration,"² the second "being matters of dispute, and chiefly concerning Church authority,"³ while the third "has more of the nature of domestic conversation."⁴ Parts One and Two offer the debate, and Part Three gives a good picture of the state of Roman Catholicism in England at the time, together with Dryden's personal views on the intrigue centering around the Jesuit Father Petre in the Court of Catholic James II. Part Three is outside the scope of a study which is concerned with doctrine, and there will be no further mention of the thirteen hundred lines which comprise it. Professor Bredvold's

¹ Noyes, in The Poetical Works of John Dryden, ed. Noyes, p. 216.

² Dryden, The Poetical Works of John Dryden, ed. Noyes, p. 217.

³ Loc. cit.

⁴ Loc. cit.

book offers a complete insight into this domestic situation.⁵

A few critics have felt that the poem lacks something in its method of presentation. George Saintsbury commented on this weakness by saying that it was "so desultory that it could not prove anything."⁶ Others have thought its manner superb but its content faulty. Mark Van Doren had this opinion:

Here again it was form not content, that Dryden enriched himself with. His arguments are often not without serious flaw; but his manner is impeccable. He discovered which gestures convince; he acquired "the air of proving something."⁷

Samuel Johnson dismissed the poem as somewhat of a neat absurdity.⁸

All his critics have seen weaknesses, but only one ever seems to have tried to give a reason for it. Jonathan Swift came closest to locating the source of the difficulty when he called the poem "a complete abstract of sixteen thousand school men from Scotus to Bellarmine."⁹

Swift's rather sweeping statement must be modified. When any individual states his reasons for belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, he does, consciously or unconsciously, subscribe to the teachings of Duns Scotus and Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, and he does confirm the opinion of "sixteen thousand schoolmen." We can

⁵ Bredvold, op. cit., pp. 174-182.

⁶ Saintsbury, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

⁷ Mark Van Doren, The Poetry of John Dryden, pp. 16-17.

⁸ Johnson, op. cit., pp. 125-127.

⁹ Jonathan Swift, Tale of a Tub, ed. William A. Eddy, p. 419.

assume Dryden to have been familiar with Catholic practices and teachings if only because such practices and teachings were commonly discussed by everyone in England in his time. But the compendium of Catholic knowledge in Dryden's day (which still is regarded as a most authoritative source), was the work defined by the Council of Trent. The Council, though held over one hundred years before Dryden's conversion, provided the basis for the dogma of the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century and in the times thereafter.¹⁰

The members of the Council, legates, ambassadors, and theologians,¹¹ representing every major order of the Catholic Church, Augustinians, Benedictines, Capuchins, Carthusians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Marianists, and the rest, including also bishops or their duly authorized representatives from every diocese in Catholic Christendom, met in order that the internal reform necessary for the Church, the need for which had occasioned the actions of Luther and other reformers, might be expedited and that the dogmatic decrees which defined matters of faith might be issued. It was decided by the members that both of these objects be resolved simultaneously, neither one nor the other of itself having precedence on the agenda.¹²

The Council of Trent was declared in session by Pope Paul III

¹⁰ The Catholic Catechism, ed. Peter Cardinal Gasparri, p. xi.

¹¹ Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, ed. J. Waterworth, pp. 290-311.

¹² John Laux, Church History, p. 478.

in December, 1545, was prorogued several times, remained suspended for ten years (1552-1562), and was terminated in December of 1563 when the last session was held and the bishops were dismissed. In January, 1564, Pope Pius IV,¹³ who had followed Paul III (1534-1549), Julius III (1550-1555), and Marcellus II (1555), gave his legal confirmation to the Council with the bull, Benedictus Deus, which made the work done by the Council Church law.¹⁴ The reform decrees embraced a large part of Christian life and still form the basis of ecclesiastical discipline in the Roman Church because of the comprehensive legislation affecting cardinals, bishops, priests, and seminarians.¹⁵

On matters of faith the Council declared that Scripture and tradition were the two sources of divine revelation; that all the books of the Old and the New Testament were equally inspired because they have God as their author, and that the Scriptures in matters pertaining to faith and morals could not be interpreted against the authoritative interpretation of the Church or against the unanimous consent of the fathers. The Council approved the Vulgate edition of the Bible to be used solely by the western Church, and made other dogmatic definitions concerning original sin, justification, the Sacraments in general and each Sacrament in particular, the sacrifice of the Mass, purgatory, the invocation and veneration of the saints, the relics of the saints, sacred

¹³ Ibid., appendix p. 12.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 477.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 479.

images, and indulgences.¹⁶

While the decrees of the Council of Trent do not contain the complete Catholic faith, they do clarify what was thought necessary to define at that time in answer to the supposedly heretical attacks of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and other reformers. The Council ordered the preparation of a catechism based on the results of the sessions which would contain an exposition of Catholic doctrine, designed especially for the use of parish priests and other teachers of religion. Called the Catechism of the Council of Trent, or more simply, The Roman Catechism, it was first published under the aegis of Pope Pius V, who had succeeded Pius IV, in 1566.¹⁷ After publication the book was distributed throughout the world to be used principally in the teaching of religion to non-Catholics, and it helped bring about the needed uniformity.¹⁸

Whether or not Dryden ever held a copy of this catechism in his hands, and if so, which edition, does not concern us any more than the identity of the priest who heard Dryden's profession of the Catholic faith and who conditionally baptized him. The answer to these questions, while certainly helpful in other respects must be considered inconsequential as regards our subject. The important thing is that the work done by the delegates to the Council of Trent formed the basis for the clergy's instruction in the catechism to

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 478-479.

¹⁷ The Catechism of the Council of Trent, ed. J. Donovan, p. 15.

¹⁸ Laur, op. cit., p. 480.

all non-Catholics in Dryden's time. This work is in use even in the present day, although parts of it have been edited to suit the later pronouncements of the Vatican Council of 1870. We may never know just how much doctrine Dryden absorbed by direct reading or by personal contact with Catholic priests. He may perhaps have never even seen a copy of the Roman Catechism, although such a supposition is doubtful inasmuch as all converts were required to be familiar with doctrinal matters before baptism in the Roman Church.¹⁹

This much however we do know. Every priest in Dryden's day was acquainted with the results of the Council. If at any time a priest was asked to state the Catholic position on certain matters, he drew his ideas from that council and quite probably expressed himself in the very same words because of the precision of the decrees themselves.²⁰

Dryden, then, at the time of his instructions in Catholicism, was confronted with the work of the Council either explicitly or implicitly. He professed his faith in accordance with the doctrines defined therein. When we compare the poem with the decrees of the Council we will see how he absorbed and applied them.

The poem begins with the Catholic Hind speaking to the Anglican Panther in the same vein of anti-rationalism that was used by Dryden in Religio Laici against the Deists. As a sort of preliminary to

¹⁹ C. Molloy, A Catechism for Inquirers, p. 3.

²⁰ M. Sheehan, Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine, p. 155.

the other points of discussion which are to follow, Dryden refers to the idea of faith several times:

God thus asserted: man is to believe
Beyond what sense and reason can conceive. (118-119.)

Reason by sense no more can understand;
The game is play'd into another hand. (126-127.)

He also mentions the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, a point on which both Churches agreed; yet the manner in which Christ was present was a disputed point between them. Dryden did not argue the manner at all, but merely referred to the idea itself:

Could He his Godhead veil with flesh and blood,
And not veil these again to be our food? (134-135.)

The Council of Trent had supposed that it would be defining dogma for those who already possessed faith above and beyond their own reasoning powers. But the Council had gone one step further in asserting that more than faith was required.²¹ Dryden was content to stop, however, after he had presented the notion of faith.

Concerning God's ability and power, and especially Christ's potentiality for being contained in the bread and wine of the Holy Feast, a fact which Dryden had alluded to in the passage cited above, the Council declared that

²¹ "If anyone saith that nothing besides faith is commanded in the Gospel; that other things are indifferent, neither commanded nor prohibited, but free; or that the ten commandments nowise appertain to Christians; let him be anathema." (Session VI., Canon XIX, A.D. 1547) Waterworth, op. cit., p. 47.

...it is indeed a crime the most unworthy that they [the words of Christ] should be wrested, by certain contentious and wicked men, to fictitious and imaginary tropes, whereby the verity of the flesh and blood of Christ is denied, contrary to the universal sense of the Church, which, as the pillar and ground of truth, has detested, as satanical, these inventions devised by impious men; she recognising, with a mind ever grateful and unforgetting, this most excellent benefit of Christ. (Session XIII, Chapter I., A.D. 1551)²²

It might also be mentioned here that the description given by Dryden to the Catholic Church in the very first line, calling the Hind "immortal and unchang'd," is a notion which he postulated throughout the poem. The Council, too, quite early in its sessions, used an identical idea as a premise.²³ This is worthy of note, for in this poem Dryden adopted an entirely new method of argumentation, that is, new for him. Instead of arguing inductively as he did in Religio Laici, he argued deductively and thereby took a traditionally Catholic position from the outset. The deductive method has always been associated with the Catholic Church, especially since the time of Aquinas.²⁴

After both participants in the debate had sparred lightly, the

²² Ibid., p. 76.

²³ "Moreover, whereas it is the chief care, solicitude, and intention of this sacred and holy council, that, the darkness of heresies, which during so many years has covered the earth, being dispelled, the light, brightness, and purity of Catholic truth may, by the assistance of Jesus Christ, who is the true light, shine forth." (Session II., Decree on the manner of Living, A.D. 1546) The Council also said "For which cause, this council has thought good, that the Symbol of faith which the holy Roman Church makes use of,---as being the principle wherein all who profess the faith of Christ necessarily agree, and that firm and alone foundation against which the gates of hell shall never prevail,---be expressed in the very same words in which it is read in all the churches." (Session III., Decree Touching the Symbol of Faith, A.D. 1546) Ibid., pp. 14-16.

²⁴ Paul J. Glenn, Dialectics, pp. iv-vii.

the business of the disputed points became the subject of the conversation. Dryden continued from his deductive position and introduced the idea of the necessity of only one Church by reducing to absurdity the notion that more than one could exist in accordance with the Divine Will. He cited, by way of example, the dissension current in his time in Protestant countries:

"For that which must direct the whole must be
 Bound in one bond of faith and unity,
 But all your sev'ral Churches disagree.
 The consubstantiating Church and priest
 Refuse communion to the Calvinist:
 The French reform'd from preaching you restrain,
 Because you judge their ordination vain;
 And so they judge of yours, but donors must ordain.
 In short, in doctrine, or in discipline,
 Not one reform'd can with another join:
 But all from each as from damnation fly;
 No union they pretend, but in non-Popery." (1023-1034.)

Dryden used these lines as a prelude to his incorporation of the Nicene Creed (explicitly named by him) into the poem. Here Dryden took the notions of unity, sanctity, universality, and apostolicity and defined each one of them. These particular passages deserve to be included in their entirety:

"One in herself, not rent by schism, but sound,
 Entire, one solid shining diamond;
 Not sparkles shatter'd into sects like you:
 One is the Church, and must be to be true;
 One central principle of unity.
 "As undivided, so from errors free,
 As one in faith, so one in sanctity.
 Thus she, and none but she, th' insulting rage
 Of heretics oppos'd from age to age:" (1098-1106.)

"Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread,
 Like the fair ocean from her mother-bed;
 From east to west triumphantly she rides,
 All shores are water'd by her wealthy tides:

The gospel-sound diffus'd from pole to pole,
 Where winds can carry, and where waves can roll;
 The selfsame doctrine of the sacred page
 Convey'd to ev'ry clime, in ev'ry age." (1120-1127.)

"Thus, of three marks, which in the Creed we view,
 Not one of all can be applied to you:
 Much less the fourth; in vain, alas, you seek
 Th' ambitious title of apostolic:
 Godlike descent ! 't is well your blood can be
 Prov'd noble in the third or fourth degree:
 For all of ancient that you had before
 (I mean what is not borrow'd from our store)
 Was error fulminated o'er and o'er;
 Old heresies condemn'd in ages past,
 By care and time recover'd from the blast." (1148-1158.)

Each of these above passages shows to what extent a poet can absorb and explain simple doctrine. The words, "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic" were first used by the fathers at the Council of Nicea-Constantinople in 381 A.D., and the words form an integral part of what has since been called the Nicene Creed.²⁵ The words were further approved by Pius IV, reigning Pontiff at the last session of the Council of Trent. His ratification of them, together with a complete affirmation of the entire work of the Council, may be found, in addition to being in his bull, Benedictus Deus, in what is now termed the Profession of Pius IV (originally entitled Inimctam Nobis), which every convert from 1564 A.D. to the present is required to recite and to which every convert must subscribe.²⁶

²⁵ "Credo in ... unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam." (Council of Constantinople, Symbolum Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum, A.D. 381) Henry Denzinger, Enchiridion Symbolorum, p. 42.

²⁶ "Unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Romanam Ecclesiarum matrem et magistram agnosco." (Pius IV., Professio Fidei Tridentina, A.D. 1564) Ibid., p. 348.

These words can also be found in the Apostles' Creed, in the Ordinary of the Mass.²⁷

It is difficult to doubt, in view of the poetical passages, Dryden's familiarity with the exact words, much more the ideas, of the Council of Trent on this subject.²⁸

But one of Dryden's principal debts to the Council is to be found in another topic, one which caused much argument between Protestants and Catholics in his day. The Church of England, following the example set by Luther and Calvin on the Continent, disavowed the Catholic idea that oral tradition was as valid as sacred Scripture. By oral tradition the Catholics meant the precepts which were received by the Apostles from Christ or from other Apostles by word of mouth which were, in turn, handed down to the apostolic successors in that fashion, and which served as a basis for the early adherents to the Christian faith. Catholics had always held that this tradition was not human opinion but the divine teaching of an infallible apostolate established by Christ.²⁹

Dryden, whose search for authority in Church and State had already commenced with the writing of Religio Laici,³⁰ seized upon this controverted point and stated the Catholic position. This position was, however, in spite of the constancy of his quest, different from the one that he took in the earlier poem. He began by

²⁷ Charles Callan and John McHugh, ed., The Catholic Missal, p. 65.

²⁸ "I believe in....one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." (Session III., Decree Touching the Symbol of Faith, A.D. 1546) Waterworth, op. cit., p. 17.

²⁹ Bertrand Conway, The Question Box, p. 78.

³⁰ Bredvold, op. cit., p. 126.

saying that the Anglican Church could not use the wealth of theological information that had accrued during those early and subsequent years:

The wretched Panther cries aloud for aid
To Church and councils, whom she first betray'd;
No help from Fathers or tradition's trains
Those ancient guides she taught us to disdain,
And by that Scripture which she once abus'd
To reformation stands herself accus'd. (468-473.)

Dryden then made use of Church history to support his argument. He referred to the "Nicene Council" of 325 A.D., a council called for the express purpose of condemning the Arian heresy and for defining certain matters relating to the Sonship of Christ and the liturgy and discipline of the early Church.³¹ Dryden drew a parallel between the action taken at the fourth century council with that of his own day by raising this question:

"Have not all heretics the same pretense
To plead the Scriptures in their own defense?
How did the Nicene Council then decide
That strong debate? was it by Scripture tried?
No, sure to those the rebel would not yield;
Squadrons of texts he marshal'd in the field;
That was but civil war, an equal set,
Where piles with piles, and eagles eagles met.
With texts point-blank and plain he fac'd the foe:
And did not Sathan tempt our Savior so?
The good old bishops took a simpler way;
Each ask'd but what he heard his father say,
Or how he was instructed in his youth,
And by tradition's force upheld the truth." (726-739.)

Dryden concluded his argument on this point by showing how

³¹ Laux, op. cit., p. 112.

oral tradition took precedence in the early Church. In doing this he tried to show the untenability of the Anglican position. He reasoned that the Anglicans, while claiming apostolic succession, yet urged the supremacy of the Bible over oral tradition in matters of faith. Dryden attempted to point out how each claim would exclude the other, since he felt that an apostolic Church would venerate tradition not only for its precedence in time but also out of devotion to the One who instituted it:

"From his apostles the first age receiv'd
 Eternal truth, and what they taught believ'd.
 Thus by tradition faith was planted first;
 Succeeding flocks succeeding pastors nurs'd.
 This was the way our wise Redeemer chose,
 (Who sure could all things for the best dispose,)
 To fence his fold from their encroaching foes." (879-885)

Here Dryden was again indebted to the Council of Trent. In one of its early sessions the Council issued a decree that concerned Canonical Scriptures, and contained in that pronouncement were all the judgments of the fathers on that subject. The decree gives priority to oral tradition, Christ having "first promulgated by his own mouth" the Gospel and having ordered the Apostles to preach it to every creature. Because of the importance of this decree and because of its similarity to the poem in both terminology and content, it is included below:

The sacred and holy, oecumenical, and general Synod of Trent,—lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the same three legates of the Apostolic See presiding therein,—keeping this always in view, that, errors being removed, the purity itself of the Gospel be preserved in the Church; which (Gospel),

before promised through the prophets in the holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded to be preached by His Apostles to every creature, as the fountain of all, both saving truth, and moral discipline; and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand; (the Synod) following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence, all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament—seeing that one God is the author of both—as also the said traditions, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession. (Session IV., Decree Concerning Canonical Scripture, A.D. 1546)³²

The Council, of course, was very precise on the matter, and it was this precision, mentioned earlier, which was most responsible for the adoption of a catechism based on the findings of the assembled bishops and representatives. Dryden's views on the subject coincide with those expressed at the Council, even to a point where he poetizes the part which deals with the passing of the word from hand to hand, as it were. Dryden's religious instruction could not have failed to acquaint him with the above doctrine and the passages in the poem which mention it show the direct result of that teaching.

Continuing with his discussion of disputed points, Dryden had much to say about the invalidity of private Scriptural interpretation. Here he carried into his Catholicism his earlier belief that human reason should be curbed, a belief which he had expressed in

³² Waterworth, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

Religio Laici. The Hind and the Panther expressed the logical outcome of this early idea.

Private interpretation of Scripture had its beginnings, as a matter of faith, with Luther, and the idea found its way into the Anglican Church.³³ During Dryden's time it was on this point that most of the arguments between Protestants and Catholics centered.³⁴ Dryden introduced his new stand early in Part One, and he attempted to illustrate just how untenable was the position of the Anglicans in the matter:

And, after all her winding ways are tried,
If doubts arise, she slips herself aside,
And leaves the private conscience for the guide.
If then that conscience set th' offender free,
It bars her claim to Church aucturity. (476-480.)

Dryden brought this idea up again later in the poem, while the Hind was debating hotly with the Panther. Once more Dryden tried to reduce to absurdity the notion which made Scripture the only rule of faith and the interpreter of that Scripture private conscience. Moreover, he haughtily ridiculed the Anglicans for what he thought to be their innovation in regard to their idea that some tradition was to be venerated:

"Friend," said the Hind, "you quit your former ground,
Where all your faith you did on Scripture found:
Now 't is tradition join'd with Holy Writ;
But thus your memory betrays your wit." (744-747.)

³³ Laux, op. cit., pp. 427-428.

³⁴ Bredvold, op. cit., p. 95.

He then employed dialectic to try to prove the Anglican idea invalid:

"Thus, when you said tradition must be tried
By Sacred Writ, whose sense yourselves decide,
You said no more, but that yourselves must be
The judges of the Scripture sense, not we." (776-779.)

When the Panther replied that the Hind assumed too much and that the Church of England did make use of its own councils to decide disputed matters in the Text, the Hind replied that national meetings were no better than individual interpretations, since the national councils were composed of members who would advocate their own judgments and who would not submit to any final authority to settle individual differences. Without a judge, said the Hind, the national council could serve no purpose at all, as "begging the question" would be the result:

"Nor can a council national decide,
But with subordination to her guide:
(I wish the cause were on that issue tried.)
Much less the Scripture; for suppose debate
Betwixt pretenders to a fair estate,
Bequeath'd by some legator's last intent;
(Such is our dying Savior's testament:)
The will is prov'd, is open'd, and is read;
The doubtful heirs their diff'ring titles plead:
All vouch the words their int'rest to maintain,
And each pretends by those his cause is plain.
Shall then the testament award the right?
No, that's the Hungary for which they fight;
The field of battle, subject of debate;
The thing contended for, the fair estate.
The sense is intricate, 't is only clear
What vowels and what consonants are there.
Therefore 't is plain, its meaning must be tried
Before some judge appointed to decide." (942-960.)

Since this subject offered so much discussion among Protestants and Catholics in Dryden's time, (and still causes much

concern in the present day), Dryden certainly sought an authoritative source on which to base his new conviction. He would have had to of necessity, because of the very nature of the question. One who advocated authority had to seek that authority before arguing in order to make any judgment at all.

Such an authority was the Decree Concerning the Edition and Use of Sacred Books, issued by the Council of Trent. Prompted by Luther's statement that the Bible could be interpreted by anyone, "even by the humble miller's maid, nay, by a child of nine,"³⁵ the fathers of the Council were most explicit in denouncing this idea. The matter was taken up and defined in an early session (IV., 1546). The decree stated, in effect, that an authority was needed to interpret Scripture in order that the universality of the Church be preserved, and that all who individually interpreted the Text contrary to the sense of the Roman Church were "profaners" who had wrested the divine office of interpretation from the Holy See and had thereby disturbed the Word of God.³⁶

³⁵ M. Grisar, Luther, p. 386.

³⁶ "Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, It decrees, that no one, relying on his own skill, shall,---in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine,---wresting the sacred Scriptures to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church,---whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures,---hath held and doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers; even though such interpretations were never (intended) to be at any time published.... Besides the above, wishing to repress that temerity, by which the words and sentences of sacred Scripture are turned and twisted to all sorts of profane uses, to wit, to things scurrilous, fabulous, vain, to flatteries, detractions, superstitions, impious, and diabolical incantations, sorceries, and defamatory libels; (the Synod) commands and enjoins, for

Considering the influence of the Roman Catechism on all the converts in the seventeenth century, together with the indirect influence of the Council exercised by means of the clergy in its instruction of converts, one sees clearly from the poem that this decree was known to Dryden.

Having concluded that a national church which advocated private interpretation was invalid, Dryden pressed the idea of an unflinching authority whose responsibility it would be to judge the sense of the Biblical text and also to do what was considered necessary for the welfare of the Church. This guide is mentioned early in Part One:

But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide! (64-65)

It would be the duty of this guide to offer the final judgment on the difficult passages in Scripture. The guide would clarify those obscurities which are to be found throughout the Old and the New Testament:

"And what one saint has said of holy Paul,
He darkly writ, is true applied to all.
For this obscurity could Heav'n provide
More prudently than by a living guide,
As doubts arose, the difference to decide?
A guide was therefore needful, therefore made;
And, if appointed, sure to be obey'd." (916-922.)

the doing away with this kind of irreverence and contempt, and that no one may henceforth dare in any way to apply the words of sacred Scripture to these and such like purposes; that all men of this description, profaners and violaters of the word of God, be by the bishops restrained by the penalties of law, and others of their own appointment." (Session IV., Decree Concerning the Edition and Use of Canonical Books, A. D. 1546) Waterworth, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

Only a Church which possessed such an authority could be the true Church:

"It then remains, that Church can only be
The guide, which owns unfailing certainty;
Or else you slip your hold, and change your side,
Relapsing from a necessary guide." (1055-1058.)

Such an authority was the Pope, who, together with his councils, could clarify the "doubtful text," since the Pope was "assisted from above with God's unfailing grace:"

"Thus some contract and some enlarge the space;
In Pope and council who denies the place,
Assisted from above with God's unfailing grace?
Those canons all the needful points contain;
Their sense so obvious, and their words so plain,
That no disputes about the doubtful text
Have, hitherto, the lab'ring world perplex'd." (665-671.)

Dryden had been confronted with the need for a guide, and certain that the Pope and his councils fulfilled that need because of their Divine helper, he became a Catholic. Both faith and reason combined aided him in his decision:

"I then affirm that this unfailing guide
In Pope and gen'ral councils must reside;
Both lawful, both combin'd: what one decrees
By numerous votes, the other ratifies:
On this undoubted sense the Church relies." (652-656.)

This authority of the Pope and his councils was of course the crux of the whole argument in Dryden's time. Ever since Luther denied the power of the Papacy, the idea of Papal infallibility had been questioned.³⁷ The infallibility referred to the Pope's freedom

³⁷ Conway, op. cit., p. 171.

from error in clarifying the Gospel, and the Protestant rejection of this doctrine was caused by the idea that no human agency could possess such a power.³⁸ The Pope claimed infallibility when he spoke ex cathedra, i. e., when he spoke officially as the supreme pastor of his Church, when he defined a doctrine irrevocably, when he spoke on matters of faith and morals, which included the content of Divine Revelation, and when he intended to "bind the Church" under pain of mortal sin or excommunication.³⁹

This notion was repugnant to most of the English people in the seventeenth century who had lived under the jurisdiction of the national Protestant Church of England which had had its origin formally over one hundred years before. The arbiters of law, doctrine, and worship of the Anglican Church were the English sovereigns and their Parliaments, but many problems were solved by the private consciences of the individuals themselves.

Dryden's recognition of the Papacy at that time as the final authority in such matters as Scripture and doctrine was a distinctly Catholic act. In recognizing the Pope, he was indebted to the Council of Trent, which had spent much time making the Papal position clear. The Pontiff was called "the Vicar of Christ on earth" by the Council.⁴⁰ which also declared him to be the spokesman of Christ, the one who

³⁸ Ibid., p. 172.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁰ (Session VI., Chapter I., On Reformation, A. D. 1547) Waterworth, op. cit., p. 49.

should have the ultimate authority on matters discussed and approved by the Councils.⁴¹

The indirect influence of the Council was felt by Dryden when he did make his affirmation of Papal power because this cardinal point of dispute was defined therein. The Council's statement ratified the ideas of some of the earlier councils, especially those of the Fourth Constantinopolitan (869 A. D.), which had made clear the Church's position on the subject.⁴² Moreover, the Council declared that it was the duty of the members of the Catholic faith to ratify all the decrees of the Council.⁴³ Dryden, in becoming a Catholic, did so by this move.

⁴¹ "The sacred and holy, oecumenical and general Synod of Trent, ---lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the same legates of the Apostolic See presiding therein---not confiding in human strength, but relying on the succour and assistance of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has promised that he would give to His Church a mouth and wisdom, hath especially in view to restore at length to its native purity and splendor the doctrine of the Catholic Faith.... It hath thought good that Fathers, specially chosen for this inquiry, should carefully consider what ought to be done in the matter of censures and of books, ... that It may more easily separate the various and strange doctrines, as cockle from the wheat of Christian truth." (Session XVIII., Decree on the Choice of Books, A. D. 1562) Ibid., p. 133.

⁴² Laux, op. cit., p. 295.

⁴³ "And should any difficulty arise in regard to receiving those decrees, or should anything be met with which it does not believe, requiring explanation or definition, the Holy Synod trusts that, besides the other remedies appointed in this Council, the most blessed Roman Pontiff will make it his care that, for the glory of God and for the tranquillity of the Church, the necessities of the provinces be provided for... even by the celebration of a general Council, if he judge it necessary;" (Session XXV., Chapter XXI., On Receiving and Observing the Decrees of the Council, A. D. 1563) Waterworth, op. cit., pp. 280-281.

There remained but one more argument for Dryden to engage in after asserting the invalidity of private interpretation and affirming the unfailing certainty of the Pope in defining matters of faith. As a corollary to the latter, Dryden felt that he had to mention the validity of Church pronouncements in the early years of the Church and thereafter. This was a simple thing for him to do, logically, for he had already concluded arguments which led up to this point. Once the authority had been established, those things approved by that authority had to stand, of themselves, as doctrine.

The Protestant objection to the validity of the pronouncements of the Vatican rested with the idea that Papal decrees, since they became articles of faith for Catholics, represent innovations in the Christianity described and defined in Scripture—a natural assumption for those who base Christianity upon the Scripture alone.

The Catholic Church, however, by its decrees, states that no new articles of faith are declared which are not contained implicitly in the revelations of Christ to the Apostles.⁴⁴ The definitions, the Church asserts, are fuller and more precise explanations of these revelations, and the decrees are issued only in times of controversy or at the appearance of some new devotion contrary to Church practice, in order that the Church might decide upon a point which needs clarification.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Sheehan, op. cit., p. 158.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 158.

Dryden was acquainted with the arguments advanced by both sides. He summed up those offered by the Protestants, weighed them in accordance with his judgment, and then affirmed the Catholic idea:

"'T is said with ease, but never can be prov'd,
The Church her old foundations has remov'd,
And built new doctrines on unstable sands:
Judge that, ye winds and rains; you prov'd her, yet she stands.
Those ancient doctrines, charg'd on her for new,
Shew when, and how, and from what hands they grew.
We claim no pow'r, when heresies grow bold,
To coin new faith, but still declare the old.
How else could that obscene disease be purg'd,
When controverted texts are vainly urg'd?
To prove tradition new, there's somewhat more
Requir'd, than saying: ' 'T was not used before.'" (1159-1170.)

The Council of Trent said in one of its opening sessions that the aim of the Council was to define certain controverted doctrines. The definitions would be ascertained after an examination of the articles contained in the deposit of Faith, Scripture and tradition.⁴⁶ The Council had to make such a declaration in order to justify its existence at all, for if it were not possible for the members to issue

⁴⁶ "This sacred and holy, oecumenical, and general Synod of Trent ... considering the magnitude of the matters to be treated of, especially of those comprised under the two heads, of the extirpating of heresies, and the reforming of manners, for the sake of which chiefly it is assembled, and recognising with the apostles, that its wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the spirits of wickedness in the high places, exhorts, with the same apostle, all and each, above all things, to be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power, in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith they may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one, and to take the helmet of salvation, with the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God. Wherefore, that this its pious solicitude may begin and proceed by the grace of God, it ordains and decrees that, above all other things, a confession of faith is to be set forth; following here-in the examples of the Fathers, who... with this alone, at times, have ... drawn the unbelieving to the faith, overthrown heretics, and confirmed the faithful." (Session III., Decree Touching the Symbol of Faith, A. D. 1546) Waterworth, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

decrees, there could never have been any general council that had defining as its purpose.

The passage quoted from The Hind and the Panther echoed the words of the Council. Those present at Trent did not feel that they were declaring innovations in the faith. The Council maintained that it was upholding and defending with "the shield of faith" Christ's implicit teachings.⁴⁷ Dryden said the very same thing in his poem.

⁴⁷ Loc. cit.

Part Three

A cursory reading of the two religious poems would leave the casual reader with the impression that mighty forces indeed had worked on Dryden's mind between the years 1682 and 1687. His changing allegiance would be most evident should two rather striking passages, which I shall take up in a moment, be compared. The reader would see that in Religio Laici more than Dryden's anti-clericalism, traditional with him both before and after his Catholic conversion,¹ seemed to motivate him in his denunciation of Catholicism as it had been practiced in England in preceding ages. He poured out his distrust of that religion with something more than a bias against clerics:

In times o'ergrown with rust and ignorance,
A gainful trade their clergy did advance;
When want of learning kept the laymen low,
And not but priests were authoriz'd to know;
When what small knowledge was, in them did dwell,
And he a god who could but read or spell:
Then Mother Church did mightily prevail;
She parcell'd out the Bible by retail;
But still expounded what she sold or gave,
To keep it in her power to damn and save:
Scripture was scarce, and, as the market went,
Poor laymen took salvation on content;
As needy men take money, good or bad;
God's word they had not, but the priest's they had. (370-384.)

Quite different was his approach, the reader would say, in The Hind and the Panther, where he takes the opposite view. No longer did Dryden consider earlier generations of Englishmen to be dupes of the

¹ E. S. de Beer, "Dryden's Anti-Clericalism." Notes and Queries, CLXXIX (1940), 254-257.

clergy, content with "the priest's word." Instead, the idea of "erring ancestors, drown'd in the abyss of deep idolatry" was repugnant to him:

"But if you cannot think (nor sure you can
 Suppose in God what were unjust in man)
 That he, the fountain of eternal grace,
 Should suffer Falsehood, for so long a space,
 To banish Truth, and to usurp her place;
 That sev'n successive ages should be lost,
 And preach damnation at their proper cost;
 That all your erring ancestors should die,
 Drown'd in th' abyss of deep idolatry;
 If piety forbid such thoughts to rise,
 Awake, and open your unwilling eyes:
 God has left nothing for each age undone,
 From this to that wherein he sent his Son:
 Then think but well of Him, and half your work is done." (1197-1210.)

Indeed, what a profound change took place in such a short period of time in a man over fifty years of age, an age where among average men, we are accustomed to think ideas are quite stable and immutable! Perhaps, however, our casual reader might say, Dryden's own testimony regarding change, which we have, might explain it. Or perhaps the opportunities of greater preferment and more money would be sufficient explanation for such a move. But there might be a possibility, continues our reader after a little thought, that no change at all was involved, and that a certain continuity existed in both poems. Let us examine these three aspects.

First, the matter of Dryden's attitude toward change. We have on good authority that "changeableness was beyond dispute one of the dominant characteristics of his mind."² Dryden admitted this himself,

² Bredvold, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

when, in his Dedication to Aureng-Zebe (1676) he stated that change was the one great property of humanity, something which flowed from man's very nature:

As I am a man, I must be changeable: and sometimes the gravest of us all are so, even upon ridiculous accidents. Our minds are perpetually wrought on by the temperament of our bodies; which makes me suspect, they are nearer allied, than either our philosophers or school divines allow them to be.³

Such an admission as this would be enough evidence for the casual reader, who, whatever his opinion of Dryden's moral character might be from the statement, would then attribute Dryden's conversion to this dominant trait in his nature. The idea would be more valid, however, if it could be shown that his attitude toward change was in keeping with the times, inasmuch as Dryden's temper was the same as that of his age.⁴ If it could be asserted that the entire nation was in a state of flux on the question of becoming a Catholic, and that many Englishmen made the move in the direction of Rome because of their immediate intellectual or philosophic conviction, then the proof could stop right there. In other words, if it could be said that Dryden's conversion came as a result of his ability to remain in the foreground of his times, epitomizing all that was thought and acted in his day; that his change of faith could be considered representative of what many other people were doing, the argument would hold water.

³ Dryden, John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury, I, 342.

⁴ "... the ideas of John Dryden were not his peculiar property. They were representative ideas of the age, growing out of the dominant temper of the age, which also happened to be the temper of Dryden himself." Bredvold, op. cit., p. 98.

However, this is not the case. Although the age was an argumentative one, a time filled with much controversy and pamphleteering, there were remarkably few Catholic conversions, and those not of much intellectual consequence.⁵ Dryden's becoming a Catholic was a distinctly singular act in the sense that he was not following the current of the thought of his day at all, and for the "representative mind of the age" to make such a move was certainly not in accordance with that judgment of him which states that he is never to be considered for his originality as a thinker,⁶ but rather only in terms of his ability to follow trends.

If then, in this one instance, our casual reader asks, Dryden showed some originality and initiative, was it not for some political preferment or some financial recompense? For if Dryden on nearly all other occasions followed his age, is it unjust to suspect that in this one particular time when he "stepped out of line" there should have been a promise of personal reward to prompt him?

The point is well taken, and is one that has caused much discussion for many years. For a while it was fashionable to relegate Dryden to that group of political time-servers who would forsake everything, including their integrity, for money or for a sinecure.⁷ Recent scholarship, however, has unearthed the fact that many of the early insinuations about his pension as Poet Laureate can be proved

⁵ Ibid., p. 169.

⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

⁷ Cf. S. H. Monk, "Dryden Studies, A Survey 1920-1945," A Journal of English Literary History (ELH), XIV (1947), 46-63.

gratuitous and that no additional benefits were bestowed upon him when he became a Catholic.⁸ Moreover, this same study has revealed that English Catholics were not living in a "springtime of peace and prosperity under the blessing of a monarch of their own persuasion."⁹ On the contrary, Catholics in England were more apprehensive of their status then than they would have been under a Protestant king. At least, in the alternative case, they would have known what treatment to expect, but under James no Catholic felt secure, since each one knew that the coming of Protestant William, James' son-in-law, would bring great changes to their way of living, because the immoderate measures taken by James for their protection were bound to have a disagreeable effect on a Protestant king.¹⁰

Confronted by such conclusive evidence given by Bredvold, the casual reader is unable to "enlarge with weak defense against so strong a charge"¹¹ and must examine more closely the historical facts connected with the poems in order that he might be able to discover whether a change in Dryden's attitude took place, and should the results of the investigation reveal a gradual development of Dryden's thought, the reader (by virtue of this inspection no longer to be dubbed 'casual'), would want to know of just what this continuity consisted.

⁸ Bredvold, op. cit., p. 5.

⁹ Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 165.

¹¹ The Hind and the Panther, 869-870.

Professor Bredvold's Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden can provide the answer to this question; yet his investigation, it seems to me, failed to expand one phase of the poet's thought. Dryden's relationship to dogma is not discussed, but since this study is an expansion, an examination of Bredvold is in order.

Dryden, he begins, was a skeptic, and this skepticism molded his entire outlook on life. This philosophy existed in Dryden's time in all possible forms of development, and it was quite commonplace to find one form of it in complete opposition to another. The degree to which it was carried ranged from the moderate, which held that some certainty could be had in matters of revelation and moral truth, to the extreme, which doubted that anything at all could be known with certitude. In either case, the system was anti-rationalistic.¹²

It must be mentioned here that the skepticism referred to was a philosophical method of approach, closely akin to its etymological definition, (Greek, skeptesthai), which meant "to consider, to look about carefully."¹³ The modern connotation of the word, implying a state of religious unbelief, was not meant at all. Bredvold attempted to show that philosophically Dryden applied the skeptical method, namely, observation, comparison, hypothesis, and conclusion; and possibly in some instances, he made a pronouncement as to the relativity

¹² Bredvold, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

¹³ Paul J. Glenn, Criteriology, p. 169.

of that conclusion.¹⁴

Bredvold did not have to search too diligently before coming up with evidence to support his contention. Not like so many of the obscurities of Dryden's biography which are the result of the poet's refusal to answer many of the attacks made upon him, in this matter Dryden was explicit in his adherence to that philosophical system. In the Preface to Sylvae (1685) he says:

If I am not mistaken, the distinguishing character of Lucretius (I mean of his soul and genius) is a certain kind of noble pride, and positive assertions of his opinions. He is everywhere confident of his own reason, and assuming an absolute command, not only over the vulgar reader, but even his patron, Memmius.... These are the considerations which I had of that author, before I attempted to translate some parts of him. And accordingly, I laid by my natural diffidence and skepticism for a while, to take up that dogmatic way of his, which, as I said, is so much his character, as to make him that individual poet.¹⁵

Dryden "laid by his natural skepticism" for the nonce, only to take it up again after making his translation. And why not? Skepticism provided many weapons for those who thought that anti-rationalism was the soundest defense of religion, and Dryden, who had an almost innate distrust of reason, (witness his attack upon Deism in Religio Laici), was not to be caught without battle equipment.

This anti-rationalism had developed within Protestantism in an attempt to get away from the "reasonable faith" of the Catholics. Dryden's Preface to Religio Laici mentions that "they who would prove

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 171-172.

¹⁵ John Dryden, Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker, I, 259-260.

religion by reason do but weaken the cause which they endeavor to support."¹⁶ It, however, was the Catholic controversialists who eventually came to use the argument with dexterity and logic, and turned it to their own purposes, since many Protestants had made remarks about the unreasonableness of the Catholic Church. That the Protestants should so exalt reason made it possible for the Catholics to ridicule them, and an attack on reason in the seventeenth century came clearly to be recognized as a Roman Catholic argument, even though the Church itself condemned the method, inasmuch as the whole tradition of Catholicism was opposed to a philosophy which disparaged reason. Nevertheless, Catholic apologists employed skeptical principles against Protestantism and Rationalism.¹⁷

It was clear that by 1660 the question of religious knowledge and authority was the one central point of dispute in the whole controversy between Protestants and Catholics. Anglican efforts were concentrated toward demonstrating the power of the individual to interpret the Bible, while Catholic arguments were in the nature of destructive criticisms of this type of religious authority.¹⁸

Bredvold contends that Dryden's distrust of reason was evidenced by his appeal to Anglicans in Religio Laici for the moderate employment of private judgment in order that the public peace might not be disturbed, and partially for that reason, he says, "Religio Laici

¹⁶ Dryden, The Poetical Works of John Dryden, ed. Noyes, p. 158.

¹⁷ Bredvold, op. cit., pp. 27; 73-74.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

belongs rather to Roman Catholic than Anglican apologetics."¹⁹ Such evidence can be questioned, however, since the Thirty-Nine Articles provides that all Anglicans should exercise this moderation. Dryden was not different from any other member of the Church of England in his beliefs when he made that statement.

But Dryden's attitude toward Deism in the same piece was more indicative of his Roman Catholic thought. He did not approve of rationalism, neither philosophic nor religious (in the Preface he criticized Anglican divines who maintained that man, through his reason, "has been able to find that there is one supreme agent or intellectual being which we call God"),²⁰ and he was already searching for that authority in Church and State in Religio Laici for that reason, since the problem of religious knowledge in his day was never far removed from the problem of authority.²¹

In the first poem Dryden's suggestion to seek the opinions of the early Fathers on doubtful matters really did not provide the ultimate authority that he was looking for, since it only substituted the individualism of isolated theologians for the individualism of private, lay persons. In the last analysis, a final authority above and beyond human reason was still lacking.

Dryden himself was probably not satisfied with this. He wanted a living guide, and the desire for "such an omniscient Church" was

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁰ Dryden, The Poetical Works of John Dryden, ed. Noyes, p. 158.

²¹ Bredvold, op. cit., p. 129.

strong in him then. He gave more to the Church of England than was required when he advocated curbs on the private spirit which were to some extent in excess of the restrictions decreed in The Thirty-Nine Articles.²²

Dryden seemed to believe that the unity and perpetuity of the Church could only be preserved by the sacrifice of the individual reason to the common good. He probably felt that the belief, moreover, was too strong for a Church of England man to have. He moved towards authority, and when his skepticism, which had developed with his later years, was confronted by Catholic Church doctrine, he did not ask for demonstrable proof. The fact that the Catholic Church asserted the authority which he sought, the assertion being supposedly based on something beyond human reason, was enough to cause his skeptical nature to submit. The Hind and the Panther also exhibited anti-rational tendencies, like the earlier poem, but this time they were directed against the Protestants, instead of, as in 1682, the Deists. Church allegiance had changed, but his nature had not.

Bredvold, while mentioning Dryden's distrust of dogmatism in relation to his approval of skepticism, implies that it would be impossible for Dryden to be both, that is, a skeptic and a dogmatist at the same time. He feels, and not without some cause, that skepticism and dogmatism mutually exclude each other. It is my intention to illustrate that it was possible, and still is for that matter, for a man, a poet, Dryden, to have been both, even though he himself would

²² Supra, pp. 13-14.

probably never have admitted that he could be so.

I say that he would probably be the last to admit this because his answer to the charge made by his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Howard, that he was "magisterial" in An Essay on Dramatic Poesy, states that he believed himself to be functioning as a critic by means of skeptical principles only, in that the form of the critical piece was that of the essay, and that the manner of presentation was only one of opinion which reserved the final judgment to the reader:

...in vindication of myself, I must crave leave to say, that my whole discourse was skeptical, according to that way of reasoning which is used by Socrates, Plato, and all the Academics of old, which Tully and the best of the ancients followed, and which is imitated by the modest inquisitions of the Royal Society. That it is so, not only the name will show, which is an essay, but the frame and composition of the work. You see it is a dialogue sustained by several persons, of several opinions, all of them left doubtful, to be determined by the readers in general.²³

It, however, is hard to deny (and in this I take the side of Sir Robert Howard), that Dryden for a moment bordered on philosophic dogmatism in the essay proper, even though he weakly qualified his pronouncements with the opening phrase, "I am of the opinion." The tone is clearly dogmatic:

I am of the opinion, that they cannot be good poets, who are not accustomed to argue well. False reasonings and colors of speech are the certain marks of one who does not understand the stage; for moral truth is the mistress of the poet as much as the philosopher; poesy must resemble natural truth, but it must be ethical.²⁴

²³ Dryden, Essays of John Dryden, ed. Ker, I, 124.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 121.

In the above passage Dryden was close to philosophic dogmatism, yet Bredvold, using Dryden's own words on the subject, maintains that this cannot be so, inasmuch as Dryden possessed an avowed distrust of the dogmatic, inclining instead toward skepticism. It would be useful at this point to clarify some definitions, in order that the problem and solution might be correctly viewed.

We are indebted to Bredvold for his ascertainment of skepticism as he uses the word. We take it to mean a philosophic system, an attitude in Dryden's case, which held back, temporarily at least, the judgment of the mind until the evidence had been weighed, and then questioned the validity of the mind's making such a conclusion. This skepticism is totally different from its religious meaning, a state of unbelief. Bredvold's use of the term we might take to be synonymous with the "open mind" philosophy of the modern day, a system which operates in the same way; the steps are the same.

What Bredvold means by dogmatism, however, is left unexplained. Shall we take this term also in its philosophic sense, or shall we take it in its religious meaning? The fact that this term dogmatism has two meanings, just as its complement, skepticism, is one which often escapes attention. Are we to assume Bredvold meant dogmatism as a philosophical system? If this is the case, in spite of the attitude evidenced by An Essay on Dramatic Poesy, we can agree with him, since Dryden's vindication of the piece makes it clear that he did not believe himself to be dogmatic, even though, objectively, the essay is of a dogmatic character insofar as the tone implies that which Dryden states is to be taken as Gospel. Belief in that dicta

is another matter altogether, and I think that is what Dryden had in mind when he qualified his doctrines of criticism by saying, "I am of the opinion."

Dogmatism and its cognates dogma and dogmatic are derived from the Greek verb dokein, "to think."²⁵ Thus it appears that there is no etymological ground, at least, for the rather repulsive connotation which is attached to these terms as used in casual speech. The usual idea is that dogma is a declaration, defiant and brutal, which docile persons are expected to accept as truth, without asking for evidence. A dogmatist is currently understood to be a hard-headed individual equipped with a set of ready-made judgments that are warranted to resist the action of the intellect. However, this is not the case.

Philosophical dogmatism has been divided into two kinds, exaggerated and qualified.²⁶ The former maintains that certitude may be obtained only through the assertion of fundamental, self-evident, non-demonstrable truths. The latter concerns itself only with those acts which can express truth, that is, judgments. If the judgments of the mind are found to square with reality, then the validity of the thought is inferred from this agreement.²⁷ These two methods, rather than systems, figure in discussing philosophic dogmatism.

²⁵ Glenn, op. cit., p. 155.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 156.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 157.

It is hardly conceivable that Dryden would have liked to have his name allied with the second kind of dogmatics, but the idea of self-evidence had its appeal for him. We know of his anti-rational feelings, and we know that he accepted certain ideas on faith that could never be proved by reason. His doubt and distrust of the human intellect was too great to allow him to place such high regard on the power of the mind. For him dogmatism was the same as rationalism in that both gave too high a regard for reason, and it was his belief in a power beyond reason that moved him to act as he did in the matter of his religious affiliation.

But dogmatism has another aspect and can be viewed from the standpoint of religion, just as skepticism can be. And in this aspect of the subject, more caution must be exercised before any judgments regarding Dryden can be made. As skepticism in religion is taken to be synonymous with "unbelief," dogmatism in religious matters is used for "belief," belief in the law and word of God, and since this is so, anyone who professes religion at all may be called, in a loose sense, of course, a dogmatist.

This is not offered as pure logic, or as some might choose to call it, sophistry or casuistry. No amount of logic could ever induce the skeptic to change his attitude at all, simply because it is an attitude, and it is therefore more than a logical system. Consequently, it is immune to attacks and refutations which stem from a purely dialectal source. It is true, also, that the religious dogmatist, because he believes with something more than his intellect, cannot be persuaded to do otherwise by arguments advanced by mere human reason.

In the last analysis, the relationship and the affinity of the two systems can hardly escape notice and comment. On the one hand is the philosophic skeptic doubting because he distrusts human reasoning powers, and on the other is the religious dogmatist unmoved by logic because of his supernatural faith. Such is the nature of this religious dogmatism of which I speak.

For illustrative purposes I submit the following definition from the Catholic Dictionary. In defining dogma as "a truth directly proposed by the Church for belief as an article of divine revelation,"²⁸ the two-fold relationship of the term is given as it is used religiously. First, it is a truth, supposedly, of divine revelation, and it is therefore to be believed, even if it is a mystery. Secondly, it is the authoritative teaching of that Church, and as such, presupposes a disposed group of the faithful who would accept it from that authority. The notion of its being an arbitrary doctrine, imposed no one knows quite why, is a false supposition, since dogma is supposedly based on Scripture and proposed by a duly constituted authority. The content of a dogma, it is asserted, is truth revealed by God and thereby meant to be believed; it is not to be believed just because many people have the idea that it should be.

There might be an objection made here that the doctrines of the Church of England cannot be then called dogma in the strict sense, for the Anglican Church makes no claim to having unfailing authority, though it does regard its doctrinal pronouncements as founded in

²⁸ Catholic Dictionary, p. 154.

revelation. The objection is a good one, and up to a point, valid. It is true that no anathematizing is to be found in the Church of England comparable to that of the Church of Rome, yet what the Anglican Church proposes is meant to be believed by those Anglicans who subscribe to The Thirty-Nine Articles. A member of the Church of England must believe in its doctrines. If he does not, he is not damned to hell but is free to choose another faith. But if he elects to remain in the fold, he necessarily subscribes to those doctrines which the Anglican Church has proposed for belief by the faithful. These doctrines, then, assertedly based on revelation and proposed by an authority, can be called dogmas.

For the Catholic, however, religious dogma has more than one denotation and a variety of connotations. There are general dogmas (those truths revealed to all men, e. g., the Resurrection) and special dogmas (those revealed to private individuals, e. g., Christ's appearance before St. Paul). Dogmas may be considered as material (only revealed, e. g., the notion of the assumption of Mary into heaven) or formal (the doctrine of the Assumption defined). They may be pure (truths known only by revelation, e. g., the Trinity) or mixed (known by both revelation and philosophy, e. g., essence and existence of God). They can be symbolic (contained in the symbols of the Church) or non-symbolic (the remainder). Some dogmas are necessary (necessary for salvation, e. g., baptism), but others are voluntary (should be believed, but not necessary for salvation, e. g., fast days). The Catholic believes that the efficacy of dogma can best be established by seeing the relationship between law and lawyers and judges, as opposed to law in the layman's hands. He also believes that dogma is

immutable, since, he feels, dogma is truth and truth cannot change. But more important than all this, the Catholic believes that dogma must be believed in order that the unity and the authority of the Church be preserved.²⁹

Parts One and Two of this study have illustrated, I hope, Dryden's debt to the explicit dogmas of both churches by indicating the sources of the ideas of the two religions that he embraced. In Part Three I have tried to show just what is meant by a religious dogmatist. He is a person who believes he has certitude in matters pertaining to God, and he bases his certitude on faith in a supernatural power and in the ministers of that power. Then too a religious dogmatic accepts authority in order to preserve unity. Dryden was a skeptic by temperament, and this explains how and why he sought something authoritative. Authority had an appeal to his mind and nature, and he moved from one church to another in search of that authority.

But when he thought he had it and what he did with it cannot be explained in terms of skepticism. Something more is involved, and that something is religious dogmatism. He propounded the doctrines of both churches dogmatically, and while he left much disputed matter to be debated by theologians and controversialists more versed than he in Church doctrines, like transubstantiation versus consubstantiation, purgatory, the sacraments, and sacred images, he was content to illustrate in terms of dogma just what appealed to him in both religions.

²⁹ Daniel Coghlan, "Dogma," Catholic Encyclopedia, V, 89-91.

At first he thought the way the Anglican Church handled the matter of Scriptural interpretation was the right one. Then he seemed to feel that he had seen more in the Church of England than was there, and he moved towards Rome because the Catholic Church asserted explicitly what he wanted to hear as far as authority was concerned. When he once accepted this authority as he did, he was content to accept its decisions and doctrines on all religious matters. His skepticism led him where he had to go, but once there, his open and doubting mind took, on faith, what he held to be truth, and he displayed certitude in making his exposition of that truth.

In Religio Laici he thought that he had this certainty, but when he had convinced himself that it was not so, he sought a firmer and more authoritative church to fill in what he thought to be a void. When his skeptical nature, inclined as it was to accept a supra-human authority, closed upon what he felt to be indubitable truth, he was no longer a skeptic, but had become a dogmatist in matters of religion. And so we find in this phase of Dryden's work just one more example of paradox existing in "an age which dearly loved the paradoxical."

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