

The Sleeping Habits of Matter and Spirit: Samuel Clarke and Anthony Collins on the Immortality of the Soul¹

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In 1706, Samuel Clarke, Newtonian and theologian, engaged in a debate with Anthony Collins, deist and country gentleman, over the nature of the soul and matter. Both men were responding to the work of Henry Dodwell, who earlier that year suggested that the soul was a substance naturally mortal, which was given immortality by God alone. While historians have long noted this debate, the underlying assumptions and intellectual debts of both Clarke and Collins have not been fully explored. Clarke's arguments clearly revealed his Newtonianism and, what is more, it is now evident that he shared Newton's conception of the soul. Collins followed a deist interpretation of both the soul and matter, a view first proposed by the deist John Toland. This article brings these assumptions to light and in so doing, demonstrates that Clarke was even more Newtonian than was previously thought and that deists shared more of a worldview than the denial of revelation.

Among the anxious divines who in the early eighteenth century saw the spectre of deism as an increasing shadow of darkness, which threatened to cover England in unbelief concerning revealed religion, was Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), theologian and close friend of Isaac Newton (1642-1727). One of the deists whom Clarke sought to refute, in an attempt to demonstrate the errors of these heretics to the English public, was Anthony Collins (1676-1729). The first literary duel between the two men occurred in a series of pamphlets published between 1706 and 1708 brought about by the work of Henry Dodwell (1641-1711), who in early 1706 hypothesized that the human soul was naturally

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mortal. While historians and philosophers have long noted this debate,² the underlying assumptions that Clarke and Collins brought with them have not been explored fully. Not surprisingly, Clarke's arguments reveal his allegiance to Newton. In addition to natural philosophy, I suggest that Clarke also shared Newton's view concerning the fate of the soul. The evidence reveals that both Clarke and Newton were Christian Mortalists who believed that from the death of the body until the Second Coming, the soul had no conscious existence. Clarke's position against both Dodwell and Collins is better understood in this light. In the pamphlets, Collins followed a deist interpretation of the soul and matter, adapted from the writings of John Toland (1670-1722), the most infamous deist in England prior to this episode. In this article, I illustrate the intellectual debts of Clarke and Collins and in so doing, demonstrate that Clarke was much closer to Newton in matters of theology than was previously thought and that deists shared more of a worldview than the denial of revelation.

We begin by outlining the impetus for the dispute. In 1688, the divine and scholar Henry Dodwell was made Camden Professor of ancient history at Oxford University. He held the post until 1691, when his refusal to swear allegiance to William and Mary made him a non-juror. This new status did not tarnish Dodwell's reputation as a man of high intellect and great learning.³ However, praise turned to disbelief when, in 1706, Dodwell published his views on the nature of soul. That Dodwell addressed the topic raised no concerns, as natural philosophers and theologians had wrestled with questions concerning the soul for decades.⁴ It was instead the uniqueness of Dodwell's views that sent

² The majority of dedicated studies that address this episode are by philosophers who evaluate the validity of the arguments Collins and Clarke advanced in their pamphlets. Ezio Vailati, "Clarke's extended Soul," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 31 (1993): 387-403; William L. Rowe, "Causality and Free Will in the Controversy Between Collins and Clarke," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987): 51-67; Howard M. Ducharme, "Personal Identity Samuel Clarke," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 24 (1986): 359-83; Robin Attfield, "Clarke, Collins and Compounds," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15 (1977): 45-54.

³ J. P. Ferguson, *An Eighteenth Century Heretic, Dr. Samuel Clarke* (Kington: The Roundwood Press, 1976), 36; Philip C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 60.

⁴ For example, see Kenelm Digby, *Two Treatises in the one of which, The Nature of Bodies; in the other, The Nature of Mans Soule; is Lookked into: in the ways of discovery, of the Immortality of Reasonable Soules* (Paris, 1644); Walter Charleton, *The Immortality of the Humane Soul* (London, 1657).

stunned theologians to their desks, pen in hand, to refute him.⁵ The full title of the book reveals much of its contents: *An Epistolary Discourse, proving from the Scriptures and the First Fathers, that the soul is a principle Naturally Mortal, but Immortalized actually by the Pleasure of God to Punish or Reward, by its union with the Divine Baptismal Spirit, wherein is proved that none have the power of giving this Divine Immortalizing Spirit since the Apostles but only the Bishops*. In short, Dodwell's position was that at Creation, God gave Adam 'Afflatus'-the breath of life-which provided humanity with a living soul. God also added his divine breath-*pnoe*-which qualified this soul for immortality. After the Fall, God removed 'Afflatus' and his breath of life, which made humanity and the soul mortal. God allowed *pnoe* to remain at his discretion.⁶ Thus, at death, the soul still qualified for immortality, but without the breath of life, the soul continued only by the desire of God; it had in itself no natural tendency to immortality.

Why Dodwell would advocate this view of the soul is best answered by examining his defense of the position. In his view, the question was not one of the soul, but rather the power of God. Dodwell used an analogy between the soul and the body to demonstrate the point:

Who doubts but that our Bodies are naturally Mortal? Yet who does therefore believe them actually Mortal after the Resurrection and the General Judgment? And what can hinder but that the same Divine Power which can and shall then Immortalize the Mortal Body, so as to qualifie it for eternal Punishment of which it had not otherwise been capable, may expose a mortal Soul to Immortal never ending punishment, as easily as themselves believe it preformed in the Case of the body?⁷

Anticipating problems with this belief, Dodwell quickly reminded readers that he did not think the soul dependent on the body for existence. Rather, he claimed the soul was continued "from the Divine Flation, which, in reference to the Flatus, was by the Antients [*sic*] thought free and Arbitrary, not necessity of the Divine Nature..."⁸ "I took it," he argued, "to be God's pleasure to continue all Souls to the

⁵ Vailati, "Clarke's Extended Soul," 391.

⁶ Almond, *Heaven and Hell*, 61.

⁷ Henry Dodwell, *A Preliminary Defence of the Epistolary Discourse, Concerning the Distinction Between Soul and Spirit* (London, 1707), 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

Day of Judgement.”⁹ God may indeed continue the soul’s existence for all eternity, but He was in no way bound to do so. Moving away from arguments based on God’s power, Dodwell supported his belief by examining the soul as a created substance. Being a creation of God, the soul depended entirely upon God for its existence, as did all other created entities. In Dodwell’s view, “There can be nor punishment but of created beings. Nor has any created being a Right or Power to last for ever independent of the Divine arbitrary pleasure. God therefore must be pleased by his own free act to Immortalize it, if in can pretend to any immortality at all.”¹⁰ Thus, Dodwell viewed his book as a testimony to the absolute power of God. Clarke, like many other readers, was not convinced and took issue with the idea of a mortal soul.

Before proceeding with Clarke’s specific objections to Dodwell, it is necessary to describe, in some detail, his natural philosophy in addition to his views on the soul and the afterlife, as they provide the context and, indeed, the motivation for his rebuttal. Clarke’s contemporary reputation rested on his appointment to the Boyle lectureship for both 1704 and 1705,¹¹ an annual series of sermons defending Christianity established in the will of the English natural philosopher Robert Boyle.¹² Clarke’s first set of lectures, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, argued that the universe operated under the continual guidance of God.¹³ It was here that Clarke first attacked the deists. His target was the Irish philosopher and deist John Toland, who earlier in the year suggested motion to be an essential property of matter. To support his claim, Toland used the work of Isaac Newton.¹⁴ Toland’s interpretation of Newton’s natural philosophy could not stand unchallenged, and Clarke included a rebuttal in the sermon: “One late Author [Toland] has ventur’d to assert, and pretended to prove that Motion, that is, that *Conatus to Motion*, is essential to all Matter...*A Conatus* to move some one determinate way, cannot be essential to any Particle of Matter, but

⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹¹ Ferguson, *Samuel Clarke*, 23; Larry Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science: Rhetoric, Technology, and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 85.

¹² “Boyle’s Will” in R. E. W. Maddison, *The Life of Robert Boyle* (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 1969), 274. The lectures are commonly viewed as the first public dissemination of Newton’s natural philosophy, which until then remained the intellectual property of a few scholars.

¹³ Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (London, 1705), *passim*.

¹⁴ John Toland, *Letters to Serena* (London, 1704), 131-239.

must arise from some External Cause..."¹⁵ For Clarke, the "External Cause" was the power of God. He was able to correct Toland through his intimate knowledge of Newton's work. In 1704, Clarke was translating Newton's *Opticks* into Latin, a translation undertaken at Newton's request.¹⁶ Although his famed correspondence with Leibniz lay a decade in the future, Clarke was proving himself an astute pupil of Newton. Indeed, according to the biography prefixed to his *Works*, "He was presently Master of the Chief parts of the *Newtonian Philosophy*..."¹⁷

In addition to learning Newton's natural philosophy, Clarke also assimilated much of Newton's theology. As Stephen Snobelen has recently reminded us, Newton was a heretic.¹⁸ Chief among Newton's heterodoxical beliefs was the denial of the Trinity. After protracted biblical studies, Newton adopted a position similar to that of Arianism. Scholars recognize that as Clarke translated the *Opticks*, he also converted to Newton's Arianism.¹⁹ We know this to be the case because in 1712, after much consideration, Clarke published his views on the falsity of the Trinity.²⁰ After outcries and threats of censure, Clarke retracted his views and promised no future discussions on the Trinity. This restriction only applied to overt expressions of Arianism. However, it is clear from Clarke's works that he did not alter his views, as contemporary observers identified many heretical aspects in his writings.²¹ What is more, recent studies have revealed that Newton used the "General Scholium" appended to the second edition of the *Principia* (1713) to provide support for Clarke's Arian writings, demonstrating shared theological beliefs between the two men.²²

¹⁵ Clarke, *Attributes of God*, 47.

¹⁶ Larry Stewart, "Samuel Clarke, Newtonianism, and the Factions of Post-Revolutionary England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42 (1981): 54.

¹⁷ Samuel Clarke, *The Works*, 4 vols. (London, 1738), I:i.

¹⁸ Stephen Snobelen, "Isaac Newton, heretic: the strategies of a Nicodemite," *British Journal for the History of Science* 32 (1999): 381.

¹⁹ Stephen Snobelen, "Caution, Conscience and the Newtonian Reformation: The Public and Private Heresies of Newton, Clarke and Whiston," *Enlightenment and Dissent* 16 (1997): 160; Larry Stewart, "Samuel Clarke," 56.

²⁰ See Clarke, *Works*, Vol. 4, *passim*.

²¹ Snobelen, "Public and Private Heresies," 169-70.

²² Larry Stewart, "Seeing Through the Scholium: Religion and Reading Newton in the Eighteenth Century," *History of Science* 34 (1996): 123-65; Stephen D. Snobelen, "'God of Gods, and Lord of Lords': The Theology of Isaac Newton's General Scholium to the *Principia*," *Osiris* 16 (2001): 171-2, 186-7, 191-3. Snobelen claims no doubts remain that "Newton and Clarke were singing from the same hymn sheet."

I wish to suggest that Clarke and Newton shared another facet of heretical theology besides Arianism, that of Christian Mortalism. Traditionally, English theologians believed the soul to be a spiritual substance that when freed from the body, continued to exist in another realm, Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory. Christian Mortalists believed that the soul had no conscious existence between the death of the body and the Second Coming of Christ. Moreover, there would be no judgement of souls until the Second Coming. Mortalism was divided into two types, both of which held that the ultimate fate of the body was linked to the ultimate fate of the soul. The first group, the 'annihilationists,' claimed that the body could never be resurrected and, therefore, neither could the soul: both simply ceased to exist at the time of death. This group, often identified as either Libertine or Familist, was by far the more heretical of the two. The second type of Mortalist was the 'soul sleeper,' who still advocated an afterlife, albeit a delayed one. There were two varieties of 'soul sleepers,' the 'Thnetopsychists' and the 'Psychopannychists.' The former believed that the soul only slept in a figurative way; at death, both the body and the soul lost all cohesion. They would be reunited at the Final Judgement, but until then, they existed as separate parts, with no knowledge of the passing of time. The Psychopannychists, on the other hand, held that at death, the soul and the body maintained their form but the soul left the body and actually slept until awakened by God, to be rejoined with its material body.²³

James E. Force first identified Newton's Mortalism and has since been joined in this assessment by other scholars, notably Snobelen. Force believes Newton to have been a Mortalist of the Psychopannychist variety for two reasons. First, Newton's conception of God was that of Lord God, as seen in Genesis. This was the God of the Old Testament, who could at any moment intervene in His creation. The continued regular operation of the world was entirely contingent upon God voluntarily maintaining it. All of creation, be it material body or immaterial soul, depended entirely upon God for its motion and being.²⁴

²³ Norman T. Burns, *Christian Mortalism from Tyndale to Milton* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 7, 12, 13-15, 18.

²⁴ James E. Force, "Jewish Monotheism, Christian Heresy, and Sir Isaac Newton," in *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, eds. Raymond B. Waddington and Arthur H. Williamson (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1994), 262-4. See *idem*, "The God of Abraham and Isaac (Newton)," in *The Books of Nature and Scripture*, eds. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), 179-200.

According to Force, Newton's Mortalism flowed naturally from his belief in an all-controlling God: souls did not move to Heaven until God desired them to do so. Second, he noted Newton's protracted work in exegesis and eschatology. Force points to a manuscript in which Newton compiled several biblical passages in order to demonstrate that there was no consciousness between death and the resurrection:

*In death there is no remembrance of thee in the grave who shall give thee thanks. Psal. 6.5 Shal thy loving kindness be declared in ye grave thy wonders in the dark & thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? Psal 88. 11, 12. The dead praise not ye lord neither any that go down in silence. Psal 115.17. The dead know nothing...There is no work nor knowledge nor wisdom in ye grave. Eccles. 9.5, 10. The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee Isa. 38.18. God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from ye dead, not an inheritance...in heaven 1 Pet.1.3,4 which is a much as to say that without ye resurrection there is no hope, no inheritance in heaven.*²⁵

In combination with these writings is Newton's study of the prophetic passages in the Bible, especially those found in Daniel 12:3: "[M]any of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life and some to the reproach of eternal abhorrence." Newton's interest is evident in the many references to it in his theological manuscripts, where he stresses the notion that souls 'sleep' until their final judgement. Also evident is Newton's belief that judgment did not occur until the Second Coming:

[T]he people of ye Jews shall be destroyed every one that shall be found written in ye book & of at ye same time many of those that sleep in ye Dust shall awake to everlasting life & others to everlasting contempt. ~~Here is ye judge~~ & yt he among ye rest shall at ye time stand in his love. Here is ye judgement of both quick & dead.²⁶

²⁵ William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, MS, "Paradoxical Questions concerning ye mortals & actions of Athanasius & his followers," under the heading "Quest. Whether Athanasius did not set on the foot the invocation of saints," quoted in Force, "Christian Heresy, and Sir Isaac Newton," 267-8.

²⁶ Yahuda Manuscript 10, f. 1v. (Strikeouts indicate Newton's deletions). Newton's manuscripts are taken from the microfilm collection issued by Chadwyck-Healey, Cambridge, in 1991.

Moreover,

Then sounds ye 7th of last Trumpet & the †Everlasting‡ Kingdom of God is come & the time of the dead that they should be judged & yt God should reward his servants the Prophets & Lambs...For immediately after the great hibulation & return of the Jewish Captivity do they that sleep in the dust of the Earth awake some to everlasting life & some to shame & everlasting contempt.²⁷

Snobelen agrees with Force that Newton was a Mortalist, but disagrees over the classification of it, believing Newton to have been a Thnetopsychist rather than a Psychopannychist.²⁸ He supports this hypothesis with a manuscript in which Newton suggested “That ye resurrection from ye dead is called living again & therefore between death & the resurrection men do not live. That men are rewarded before the day of judgement at Christs coming not before.”²⁹ Snobelen believes this passage to be highly suggestive of the Thnetopsychist view that the soul only ‘slept’ in a figurative way but was actually dead. As with other aspects of his theology, Newton is not always easy to peg into an exact school or type. Clearly, his Mortalism shows aspects of both the Thnetopsychist and Psychopannychist views. Because Mortalism related the fate of the soul to that of the body, the bulk of Newton’s manuscript writings tend to favor the Psychopannychist type.³⁰

Clarke’s Mortalism is subtle and difficult to prove. However, it, too, is evident in his writings. Newton could afford to be explicit in the presentation of his heretical views, as he wrote them for his own use and not for public consumption. In the case of Clarke, aside from a very few manuscript pages of correspondence, only his published works are extant, where out of necessity he had to be careful with overtly heretical statements. The first clue to Clarke’s Mortalism comes from his quotation of Daniel 12:3, to which he added another line: “Many that sleep in the dust of the Earth, shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to shame and everlasting Contempt...*Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*”³¹ The answer to the appended question is given in

²⁷ Yahuda MS 6, f. 8r. (Arrows indicate Newton’s insertions).

²⁸ Personal communication with the author, 23 September 2000.

²⁹ Yahuda MS 7.2e, f. 4v.

³⁰ See Yahuda MS 6, f. 12; Yahuda MS 9.2, f. 19v; Andrew University ASC MS N47 HER, f. 5.

³¹ Clarke, “Sermon CXXI” *Works*, II: 40.

subsequent sermons. According to Clarke, the world was divided into “Two great Portions, of *Light* and *Darkness*;...The *One* of these, is the Kingdom of *God*, the Kingdom of *Righteousness*, the Kingdom of *Light*: The *Other* is, the Kingdom of *Satan*, the Power of *Darkness*, the Domination of *Sin*, or the Prevailing of *Wickedness* among Men.”³² Those people who lived by the way of the spirit and of the flesh respectively populated the two worlds. Those who correctly lived by way of the spirit would be rewarded with life after the death of the body, while those who did not would die after the death of the body.³³ Clarke argued that it was not in the nature of God to cause death, “(For God made not Death; neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the Living; but invites all men to come and take of the Waters of Life freely;) but they perish, by their own Carelessness and Sensuality, by their own Disobedience, willfulness and Impenitency; being unfit for, and incapable of the Happiness of Heaven.”³⁴

Clarke explained how one escaped everlasting death in “Sermon LXXVIII: How Christ has given us the Victory over Death.” There were two kinds of death, “either natural and temporal, which is the Death of the body; or eternal, which is the Death and Destruction of the Soul.”³⁵ Death of the body was unavoidable; death of the soul was not. When the body dies, “the soul should survive the dissolution of the body and be capable of receiving in a future state the reward or punishment due the good or evil of it hath done in this life...But that the body should be again forced out of the dust and reunited to the Soul, from which it was separated from Death...”³⁶

The idea that the soul received its reward or punishment in a future state is key in establishing Clarke’s Mortalism. That the soul survived the death of the body intact, to be judged in the future, is an indication of the heresy. Moreover, Clarke states: “The victory over temporal death shall be in some measure universal; For all shall rise again from the dead...yet there is a greater destruction, into which they who *believe not God and obey not his Gospel shall at last fall*; that is the second death...now from this death those and those only shall be delivered by Christ, *who hear the Word of God and keep it*...The resurrection of the dead is only in order to that final judgement, which shall pass upon all mankind...”³⁷

³² Clarke, “Sermon CXXIII,” *Works*, II: 49.

³³ Clarke, “Sermon CXXIII,” *Works*, II: 52.

³⁴ Clarke, “Sermon LXIII,” *Works*, I: 390.

³⁵ Clarke, “Sermon LXXVIII,” *Works*, I: 482.

³⁶ Clarke, “Sermon LXXVIII,” *Works*, I: 482.

³⁷ Clarke, “Sermon LXXVIII,” *Works*, I: 487.

In this passage, Clarke followed Newton's interpretation of Daniel 12:3 in claiming that all souls would be joined with their bodies for judgement. It was only at the threshold of the second death that sinners were punished for their transgressions against God. Before this time there was nothing. Both the bodies and souls of sinners were destroyed by God. For Clarke, there was no Hell, only oblivion. Those of the faithful who lived by way of spirit were then raised into Heaven. Taken together, these passages suggest that Clarke was a Mortalist of the Psychopannychist variety. Although there is no textual evidence that Clarke adopted his Mortalism directly from the work of Newton, it is acknowledged that Newton and Clarke shared many facets of theology; it should not be surprising that they were both Mortalists.

In his Boyle Lecture of 1705, Clarke described the nature of the soul: "There is very great Reason," he explained, "to believe the Soul to be Immortal..."³⁸ Following his mentor, Newton, Clarke noted that material substance was composed of "innumerable divisible" parts. These parts could be disassembled and reconstituted into another form without harm to the object they composed. He also reminded his readers that the soul, which was made up of one indivisible substance, was known to be the location of thinking and of consciousness. Therefore, the soul, unlike matter, could not be made of many parts because it would result in "innumerable Consciousnesses."³⁹ The soul was as a result incorruptible: its cohesion was maintained *ad infinitum*, and was therefore immortal.

In addition to stating his view of the soul, Clarke used the above lectures to provide sustained refutation of the deists, of whom he identified four types. First, there were those who denied God any role in the continual operation of the universe.⁴⁰ Then there were those who denied that God took any interest in the good and evil of humanity.⁴¹ The third variety denied the immortality of the human soul.⁴² Finally, there were deists who "pretend to believe only so far, as it is discoverable by the Light of Nature; without believing any Divine Revelation. These, I say, are the only true Deists."⁴³ Clarke quickly dismissed the first three forms of deism as leading only to atheism, thus having no validity. He

³⁸ Samuel Clarke, *A Discourse Concerning Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion, and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion* (London, 1706), 179.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 179-80.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 37.

was careful not to ignore the last group. However, while Clarke doubted if any members of this fourth form actually existed, he still proceeded to use his treatise to demonstrate that the denial of revelation was foolhardy. Moreover, he explained to his readers that "...there is no consistent Scheme of Deism left, all modern Deists being forced to shift from one Cavit to another, and having no fixt and certain principles to adhere to..."⁴⁴ Clarke thus both denied the existence of deism and questioned the intellectual abilities of possible adherents for good measure.

The ink on Dodwell's book was hardly dry in 1706 when Clarke published his rebuttal. This was not Clarke's first exposure to Dodwell. He had seen the name before in the work of his former adversary John Toland. In 1699, Toland turned to Dodwell in support of his view that since the doctrines of the church were established in A.D. 360 at the Council of Laodicea, they were therefore not divine.⁴⁵ Clarke responded to this view and made special mention of Dodwell.⁴⁶ Thus, perhaps Clarke continued to identify Dodwell as sympathetic to the deist cause. This seems a reasonable assumption, as Dodwell's position on the soul articulated Clarke's third type of deist. "It is a Thing of very ill Consequence," Clarke chastised Dodwell in his printed response, "when Men of so great reputation in the world for learning, in their discourses upon the most important doctrines of Religion, rashly and upon very little Grounds, allow themselves to advance new and crude notions..."⁴⁷

In private communication between the two men, Dodwell inquired how his unconventional views on the soul would benefit unbelievers:

I know no Atheist in England, that can take advantage from the primitive Doctrine of Natural Mortality...⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁵ See Toland's comments in British Library, Additional Manuscript 4372 ff. 37r-v, 38r. 39r. (Hereafter BL Add. MS.). See also John Toland, *Amyntor. Or, a Defence of Milton's Life* (London, 1699), 69-78. After quoting Dodwell for nine pages, Toland claimed he and Dodwell shared many aspects of theology.

⁴⁶ Samuel Clarke, *Some Reflections on that Part of a Book Called Amyntor, or the Defence of Milton's Life, which relates to the Writings of the Primitive Fathers and the Canon of the New Testament in Works*, III: 925.

⁴⁷ Samuel Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell; wherein all arguments in his Epistolary Discourse Against the Immortality of the Soul are Particularly Answered. The Sixth Edition* (London, 1731), 1.

⁴⁸ BL Add. MS 4370, f. 1r.

Clarke responded that:

You say indeed, you know no atheist in England, that can take advantage of the Doctrine of Natural Mortality. If I had assured him, that you allow none the benefit of actual Mortality I never Supposed, Sr, that you did allow them the benefit of Actual Mortality, you can never persuade them that they shall not have the benefit of Actual Immortality to Punishment has always been made use of by unbelievers, as an Objection against Religion; And you have greatly strengthened that Objection because it is plainly more Incredible that a good God should Immortalise to Punishment a Mortal Creature, than that he condemn an Immortal one to Immortal punishment.⁴⁹

Clarke's chief concern, as he made clear to Dodwell, lay in his belief that the denial of an afterlife would lead people to live with no fear of divine retribution or reward for their actions on earth. In his published attack, Clarke conceded that Dodwell never actually claimed that the soul must perish upon the death of the body, but he was worried that that was how the argument would be read by "Men of loose Principles and vicious Lives," who would give up fear of divine retribution.⁵⁰ It was not the threat of Hell that such people risked, as Clarke's theology denied its existence, but rather being refused the glory of Heaven. The actual difference between Clarke and Dodwell is subtle but significant. Both stressed the absolute power of God, though in different ways. An immortal soul did not tarnish God's power, as Clarke explained: "When we speak of the Soul as created naturally immortal, we mean that it is by the Divine Pleasure created such a Substance, as not having in it self any Composition, or any principle or Corruption, will naturally of it self continue for ever; that is, will not by any natural decay, or by any power of Nature, be dissolved or destroyed; But yet nevertheless depends continually upon God, who has the power to destroy or annihilate it, if he should think fit."⁵¹

For Dodwell, God maintained a mortal soul at his discretion, whereas for Clarke, the continual existence of the immortal soul depended on God, who could destroy it at any time. Clarke's contentions against Dodwell were consistent with his brand of Mortalism: the soul must survive the death of the body and be able to be either raised into Heaven or be destroyed by God. Building a straw man, Clarke claimed the denial

⁴⁹ BL Add. MS 4370, f. 2r. (underlining in original).

⁵⁰ Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 2-3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

of immortal souls due to the space needed to keep them was without merit. He argued: "Is not the universe large enough, for God to dispose of all his creatures into states suitable to their natures? Are there not in God's Houses many Mansions?"⁵² This statement supports the Psychopannychist view that souls existed intact inside the house of God until they were judged. Clarke feared that by suggesting the soul was mortal, Dodwell's argument would lead to the mistaken conclusion that it was material. The same phrase also appears in Newton's theological writings. For Newton, this description of God's house demonstrated that divine guidance controlled the soul beyond its existence on Earth.⁵³ That both men employed the same words to illustrate the fate of the soul is further evidence that they shared the same view.

Repeating arguments he made in the Boyle Lecture, Clarke stated: "The soul therefore, whose power of thinking is undeniable one Individual Consciousness, cannot possibly be a Material Substance," because matter consisted of individual parts, which were actually separate.⁵⁴ In concluding, Clarke urged Dodwell to make amends for his poor theology. He should, Clarke wrote, "think of some means of making satisfaction to the Church, to whom you have given so great Offence; and of preventing the effect of that Incouragement, which your notions in this matter...have given to Immorality and contempt of religion."⁵⁵

Clarke did not have to wait long for his fears to be realized. Shortly after he printed his attack on Dodwell, a defense appeared written by the deist Anthony Collins. Collins' father and grandfather were both lawyers and it was expected that Anthony would follow in their footsteps. He studied at Eton before moving to King's College, Cambridge.⁵⁶ Like many young men of means, Collins left Cambridge prior to completing his degree. He never pursued a career as a lawyer, preferring the life of a country gentleman. In 1698, he married Martha Child, daughter of Sir Francis Child, a wealthy banker. After Martha's death in 1703, Collins moved to Essex, where he took the positions of Justice of the Peace,

⁵² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵³ James E. Force, "'Children of the Resurrection' and 'Children of the Dust': Confronting Mortality and Immortality with Newton and Hume," in *Everything Connects: In Conference with Richard H. Popkin: Essays in His Honor*, eds. James E. Force and David S. Katz (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 141.

⁵⁴ Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 23.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁵⁶ James O' Higgins, *Anthony Collins: The Man and his Works* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 2-3.

Treasurer, and Deputy Lieutenant, holding these posts until his death in 1729.⁵⁷

His life left him much time for intellectual pursuits. He was particularly intrigued by the work of John Locke, whom he befriended in early 1704, quickly becoming a beloved companion to the aged philosopher. Locke claimed no single person understood his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* better than Collins,⁵⁸ whom Locke employed as an agent in Oxford and as an intermediary on publishing matters. Collins also learned much from his association with many of the age's most radical thinkers, including Toland. We know that Toland visited Collins at his country estate on at least two separate occasions.⁵⁹ The familiarity between the two men is further established by the contents of Collins' library, which contained many of Toland's manuscripts and forty-eight of his books, including *Letters to Serena*, where Toland described gravity and demonstrated how his and Newton's views were similar.⁶⁰ Toland's claim that Christianity must be free of any mysterious content also held much interest for Collins, as did Toland's argument that only through a free exchange of ideas could a society truly free itself from tyranny.⁶¹

Why Collins, a deist, would defend the writings of a non-juring Christian seems uncertain. The most likely conclusion is that Collins believed Clarke's letter to Dodwell curtailed the right of all people to share their ideas. This is supported by Collins' reminder to Clarke that no danger lay in the free examination of all beliefs, even such closely guarded ones as the immortality of the soul: "There is nothing more unreasonable than to imagine there is any dangerous consequence in

⁵⁷ James O' Higgins, *Determinism and Freewill: Anthony Collins' A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 3; *Idem*, *Anthony Collins*, 3.

⁵⁸ John Locke to Anthony Collins, 3 April 1704, in O' Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 5.

⁵⁹ See BL Add. MS 4295 f. 40r and BL Add. MS 4282 f. 141v.

⁶⁰ O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 37. On Toland's use of Newton's natural philosophy see: Jeffrey R. Wigelsworth, "The Nominal Essence of Motion: John Toland's Natural Philosophy, 1696-1704" (master's thesis, University of Calgary, 2000), 108-25; Margaret C. Jacob, "John Toland and the Newtonian Ideology," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969): 307-331.

⁶¹ O'Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 13-15. On Toland's views, see *Christianity not Mysterious* (London, 1696); *Idem*, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament, Shewing that a Restraint of the Press is Inconsistent with the Protestant Religion and Dangerous to the Liberties of Nation* (London, 1698).

allowing Men fairly to examine the Grounds of received Opinions.”⁶² Dodwell’s book, according to Collins, “showed a noble example of Freedom and Liberty in attacking the received opinion of the Natural Immortality of the Soul.” As for Clarke’s notions concerning the immortality of soul, Collins wrote: “By Soul, I suppose, Mr. Clarke means a Substance with a power of thinking.”⁶³ He then questioned Clarke’s definition of matter, specifically the belief that it was not capable of thought. Collins asked whether God could not have added the power of thought to material matter. Moreover, he saw no reason why an individual power could not exist within a system of matter, which was composed of separate particles.⁶⁴ Even if one admitted Clarke’s position, Collins claimed it still did not lead to the conclusion that the soul was immortal: “But after all, supposing Mr. Clarke had proved that Consciousness could only reside in an individual being, and that That individual being must be an immaterial Being, the soul would not then be proved naturally immortal...”⁶⁵

Clarke did not linger in response. He was troubled by Collins’ suggestion that the power of thinking, which Clarke saw as belonging exclusively to the immaterial soul, could reside in a material substance or a system of matter. What happened if the particles of the thinking system were separated into constitute parts? More troubling: “Suppose then the smallest imaginable particle of matter, imbued with Consciousness or thought: yet by the power of God, this particle may be divided into two distinct parts; and then what will naturally become of its power of thinking? If that power will continue in it unchanged; then there must either be two distinct consciounesses, in two separate parts; or else the power continues in the intermediate Space, as well as in the parts themselves...”⁶⁶

Clarke believed that once Collins considered the above argument, he would realize the error of his position. Clearly, matter could not think by virtue of its being divisible. Consciousness could not be divided; therefore, it must be contained within a substance that was indivisible. For Clarke, this was the immortal soul. This argument is also consistent

⁶² Anthony Collins, *A Letter to the Learned Mr. Henry Dodwell* in Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 73.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 78-9.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁶⁶ Samuel Clarke, *A Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 98.

with Clarke's belief that the soul survived the death of the body intact to be judged in a future state. The same was not true of the material body.

Collins was not satisfied with Clarke's clarification and penned a response. He again raised his belief that a system of matter may indeed have the power to think: "I cannot see," professed Collins, "but that an individual power [i.e. thought] may reside in a material system, [which] consists of actually separate and distinct parts...Now if an individual power can be lodg'd by God in, or superadded to which is not an individual being...the very soul and strength of Mr. Clark's Demonstration is gone."⁶⁷ In support of his position, Collins noted the example of the rose, in which all the various parts came together to produce the "pleasant sensation in our senses." In a discourse that began over the nature of the soul, Collins stated that the question at hand was "whether a system of matter can have a power of thinking, or an individual Consciousness superadded to it..."⁶⁸ Using a popular early modern metaphor to support his argument, Collins proposed that there were many examples of cases where the whole was greater than its parts: "[T]hat a Whole is not the same with a Piece of a Clock: for the Power resulting from the different contributing powers in the system, neither belong to any part of the system when consider'd by itself..."⁶⁹ Just as a clock could not operate until all its parts worked in harmony, the same was true of the possibility of the power of thinking existing in a material soul. The soul could not think until all the parts were united.

Collins' similarity to Toland is seen in that this metaphor was also used by Toland to assert that gravity was inherent in the "Fabrick of the Universe." He claimed that gravity resulted from the interconnectedness of all parts of the universe and to think otherwise was to believe that "the Wheels, and Springs, and Chains of a Watch can perform all those Motions separately which they do together."⁷⁰ The universe operated as a clock, with all the "Springs and Chains" working in harmony. If separate parts existed, they would be as a spring removed from a watch. It could do nothing until it was inserted among the other pieces. The same was true of Collins' thinking material soul.

Collins then changed the direction of his discourse to consider the nature of gravity. He took issue with Clarke's position that gravity was the result "of the continu'd and regular operation of some other Being on

⁶⁷ Anthony Collins, *A Reply to Mr. Clark's Defence of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell: The Second Edition Corrected* (London, 1709), 5-6.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁰ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 184.

Matter..." For Collins, it was evident that "Matter gravitates by virtue of powers originally placed in it by God, and is now left to itself to act by virtue of those Original Powers. And it is as conceivable that Matter should act by virtue of those powers, as than an Immaterial Being should originally put it into motion, or continue it in motion."⁷¹ Collins used this explanation of gravity to illustrate his claim that powers may indeed be given to material substance. Again, Collins' source appears to be Toland, who claimed that gravity could not exist among unconnected pieces of matter, for it "depends on the Constitution and Fabrick of the Universe; which is to say, that [it is] the Consequences of the World in actual being..."⁷²

Matter having in itself the power of gravity may have been self-evident to Collins, but it was hardly so for a Newtonian like Clarke. Clarke had seen the suggestion before, since it was identical to that advanced by Toland and refuted by Clarke in 1704. Another deistical reading of gravity could not go unanswered. In the opening paragraphs of his *Second Defence*, Clarke indicated that he no longer wished to debate Collins, but that the questions should be left for the readers to decide for themselves. That stated, he would once more explain his views, but unless Collins provided sufficient cause, he would not respond again.⁷³ Clarke began by further clarifying his notion of the oneness of consciousness and the soul wherein it was contained: "[W]hen I speak of my own consciousness, and call it an individual power; I mean thereby to express that it is really and truly one undivided consciousness and not a multitude of distinct consciousnesses added together."⁷⁴ Clarke believed that this would finally silence his adversary.

As for Collins' interpretation of gravity, Clarke was quick to dismiss it. He advised Collins that "This opinion of yours, I cannot but think, Sir, to be a great Mistake in your Philosophy. For when a stone that was at rest, does of it self, upon its support being removed, begin to fall downward; what is it that causes the Stone to begin to move? Is it possible to be an Effect produced without a cause? Is it impelled without any Impeller?"⁷⁵ This was the same dismissal given Toland: matter did not move without the action of God; it was also the Newtonian interpretation.

⁷¹ Collins, *A Reply to Mr. Clarke's Defence*, 23.

⁷² Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 184.

⁷³ Samuel Clarke, *A Second Defence of an Argument Made Use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 148.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

Apparently, Collins did have new arguments, as he responded to Clarke's latest defense with his *Reflection on Mr. Clarke's Second Defence*. Collins admitted that readers might be tired of "the continuance of this Dispute, concerning the Possibility of Matter's thinking..." Despite Clarke's previous clarification, Collins held fast to his opinion, stating that "either Matter was made originally capable of thinking, or may be made by God capable of thinking after its beginning to exist; and not withstanding that any part of it may really actually think, yet by the virtue of that capacity some system may by composition and division become the subjects of thinking."⁷⁶

As in his previous letter, Collins used the analogy of motion being added to matter. He questioned why Clarke viewed it as impossible that qualities or powers could be superadded to matter after its initial creation. Collins argued that "If Matter is not essentially active, as I presume Mr. Clarke contends it is not, I would ask, upon the Supposition of some parts of it being at absolute rest, whether finite material beings in Motion were not sufficiently of themselves to put them into motion? Was not Matter's capacity of Motion sufficient to make it move, as soon as it was impelled by another being? In like manner, a Capacity to think may be sufficient to cause us to think..."⁷⁷

In Collins' interpretation of motion, the capacity to move was a sufficient cause to effect the actuality of movement. Moreover, he argued that once the power of motion was granted to matter, no further guidance was needed, as matter then became capable of self-motion. Was the same not also true of thought? The potential of a system of matter to think was the same as actual thinking, for the potential and fulfillment of the potential could not be separate qualities.

To further demonstrate his point, Collins returned to his interpretation of gravity as being a property of matter. Reflecting on Clarke's example of the motion of the stone, Collins stated that "the Question is...whether another being, or a Being Distinct from Matter, does continually impel it..."⁷⁸ In Collins' view, the parts of matter naturally received that mode of motion known as gravity. He wondered why, if that was the case, gravity had continually perplexed the minds of natural philosophers, when its cause was easily understood: "[F]or once motion is supposed, and that all Matter is in constant Motion, and perpetually striking one part against another, as I think no body doubts, one part of Matter must

⁷⁶ Anthony Collins, *Reflections on Mr. Clarke's Second Defence of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 195.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 217.

be determined one way, and another part the other way; and Gravitation being one Mode of Motion, viz. A Tendency Towards the Center, (whether it be of the whole Vortex, or only of our Earth, or the particular Center of that peculiar Motion which depends upon the Sphere of its activity)...⁷⁹

Leaving aside, for the moment, this misreading of gravity as understood by Clarke and demonstrated by Newton, we need to gloss Collins' notions. Collins took this view of gravity because, as he explained, "it was my opinion that Matter did act by virtue of powers placed in it by God." Therefore, gravity was a power existing inside matter. Also, once God placed gravity in matter, he no longer needed to direct motion, as all motion was now self-motion. Once more, Collins used concepts written by Toland, who suggested that God could have given the power of self-motion to material substances. "God was able to create this Matter," Toland wrote, "active as well as extended, that he cou'd give it the one property as well as the other, and then no reason can be assign'd why he should not endue it with the former as well as the latter; is it likewise no necessity that he should ever rather always direct its motion?"⁸⁰

To support this view of gravity, Collins, like Toland, turned to the master himself, Isaac Newton. Quoting from the *Principia*, Collins boldly asserted that "The incomparable Sir Isaac Newton is of the Opinion, 'That several Phenomena of Nature may depend on certain forces, whereby from causes (or powers) yet undiscovered, the particles of Bodies are mutually impelled against each other, and cohere according to regular figures, whereby they recede or are driven from one another; which Forces or powers being yet unknown, the philosophers hitherto have attempted Nature in Vain.'⁸¹

Clearly, Collins read this passage to mean that the forces moving matter were inside it and that "mutually impelled" lent itself to support his notion of self-motion. For Collins, these powers were no longer unknown, as they resided in the system of matter in the same way that thought may reside in a system of matter. Recalling his clock example, these powers only existed within the system, but not in the individual parts.

It is in his refutation of Collins' interpretation of both gravity and Newton that Clarke's Newtonian allegiances are most clear, though they are evident in the entire dispute. Clarke began by stating that he believed

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 218-9.

⁸⁰ Toland, *Letters to Serena*, 234-5.

⁸¹ Collins, *Reflection on Mr. Clarke's Second Defence*, 220.

the question settled, but that he would once again answer Collins. Perhaps the appropriation of Newton by another deist coloured Clarke's mind, as he ascribed to Collins a view that is not evident in the text of his letter. Clarke believed that Collins had suggested that thinking matter to be a mode of its motion, yet the evidence suggests that Collins only used the analogy of motion and thought as constituting powers of systems of matter, not to demonstrate that one flowed from the other.

Not dwelling on subjects he felt were already addressed in the previous letters, Clarke quickly moved to the subject of gravity, addressing Collins:

I did imagine Sir, when I expressed my self with such brevity in the first Answer, you had been so well acquainted with Natural Philosophy, as not to be ignorant that it has been demonstrated even Mathematically, that Gravitation cannot arise from the Configurations and Texture of the parts of matter...because if it did, it would not be proportional to the quantity of matter. And if material impulse, be not the cause of Gravity; then some Being that is not material must out of necessity be allowed to be the cause of it.⁸²

Clarke here echoes Newton, who in 1693 advised the classical scholar Richard Bentley that:

Gravity must be caused by an agent acting constantly according to certain laws, but whether this agent be material or immaterial is a question I leave to ye consideration of my readers...gravity may put ye planets into motion but without ye divine power it could never put them into such a Circulating motion as they have about ye Sun & therefore for this as well as other reasons I am compelled to ascribe ye frame of this Systeme to an intelligent agent.⁸³

This view is also consistent with Collins' example of the stone, that it did not move until an "Impeller," or Newton's "agent acting constantly," desired it to do so. Clearly, both Clarke and Newton wished to undermine the notion that gravity was part of matter or that gravity alone was responsible for the operation of the universe. Both men believed that

⁸² Samuel Clarke, *A Third Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 295.

⁸³ Newton to Bentley, 25 February 1692/3, in *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*. Vol. 3, eds. H. W. Turnbull et al. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1961), 254; Newton to Bentley, 17 January 1692/3, in *Ibid.*, 240.

God was the cause of gravity and that He was always present in the creation.⁸⁴ Collins' reading of gravity did more than misunderstand Newton-it diminished the power of God.

Clarke saved his most venomous words to examine the adoption of Newton by his adversary: "Now to insinuate to your reader by such a citation, that this great Man is of your opinion in the present question; when on the contrary, the very sentence you cite, was spoke by him...not concerning Gravitation, but concerning Other more particular Phenomena of Nature, in express Contradiction to those of Gravitation; and when in that whole book, from one end to the other, he is professedly confuting and showing the absolute Impossibility of your Notion of Gravitation; and when he has elsewhere in express words declared, that by the terms 'forces and powers,' he does not mean...to signify the efficient cause of certain determinate motions of matter, but only to express the Action..."⁸⁵ Not only had Collins deliberately misread Newton, he had used Newton to support philosophy that was un-Newtonian. For Clarke, the greater of the two crimes was the use of Newton's name in the context of a mistaken view of gravity. Gravity was a divine act of God; thus, the correct interpretation was crucial.

Collins responded to this attack on his conception of gravity by claiming that he understood space in a different way than did Clarke, that perhaps space was the place of matter and that the one could not be considered apart from the other; moreover, one could have a vacuum without describing it as space without any matter. In this view, real space did not exist, but only when abstractly considered. In contrast, for Clarke as for Newton, space was the place of God's being. As God was an infinite being, so too was the place of his activity infinite. This real space existed independently of material substances. A vacuum was a part of real space, which was void of all material substance, but still contained God.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ On Newton's search for the divine cause of gravity, see Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs, *The Janus Faces of Genius: The Role of Alchemy in Newton's Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 185-92; J. E. McGuire, "The Fate of the Date: The Theology of Newton's *Principia* Revisited," in *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*, ed. Margaret J. Olser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 288-94.

⁸⁵ Clarke, *A Third Defence*, 299-300.

⁸⁶ J. E. McGuire, "Newton on Place, Time and God: An Unpublished Source," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 11 (1978): 114-29; *Idem*, "Newton on Space and Time."

In defense of his view, Collins turned to the work of another natural philosopher, Robert Boyle. It is evident that Collins held Boyle's work in high regard, as his library contained thirty-two of Boyle's books.⁸⁷ According to his reading of the air-pump experiments, Collins believed Boyle defined a vacuum as "a vessel out of which the air is exhausted...by which he understands not a space wherein there is no Body at all, but such as either altogether, or almost devoid of air..." This notion appealed to Collins, who explained to Clarke that "I use the term vacuum in the aforesaid sense, because it is so far from being evident that all matter is exhausted."⁸⁸ Thus, Collins could maintain that gravity was caused by the action of matter, even in the vacuum of space. While Boyle did make the above statement, he did so within the context of certain theological suppositions, which Collins ignored.⁸⁹ Boyle would not have accepted this use of his work. Collins concluded by stating that until Clarke was able to prove his interpretations wrong beyond any doubt, he was free to write as he wished. Clarke did respond to this final challenge, but only to restate his views. His frustrations and impatience with Collins are evident in the opening to his last letter: "Of Repeating the same things over and over again there is no End."⁹⁰ There were no further letters from Collins and the correspondence ended.

Dodwell remained silent throughout the entire exchange between Clarke and Collins, contributing no pamphlets or clarifications of his work. It is very unlikely he welcomed the support from Collins. His subsequent writings demonstrate that his theology remained opposed to that of his unsolicited supporter. In 1711, Dodwell published a tract defending the tradition and ceremonies in the Christian religion, a work no deist would have written.⁹¹ It is also unlikely that Collins felt any real affinity with Dodwell; rather he used the opportunity to attack Clarke, who was hostile to thinkers such as himself.

⁸⁷ O' Higgins, *Anthony Collins*, 28.

⁸⁸ Anthony Collins, *An Answer to Mr. Clarke's Third Defense of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 382.

⁸⁹ On the theology of Boyle's experiments, see Jane E. Jenkins, "Arguing About Nothing: Henry More and Robert Boyle on the Theological Implications of the Void," in *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*, ed. Margaret J. Olser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153-79.

⁹⁰ Samuel Clarke, *A Fourth Defence of an Argument Made use of in a Letter to Mr. Dodwell* in Clarke, *A Letter to Mr. Dodwell*, 393.

⁹¹ Henry Dodwell, *A Discourse Concerning the Use of Incense in Divine Offices* (London, 1711).

This dispute set the stage, and tested Clarke's tolerance, for further encounters with Collins.⁹² The two adversaries met face to face in 1711 at the salon of Lady Caverly, a devout Christian who enjoyed the conversation of other likeminded thinkers. Her common law husband, Sir John Hubern, was an unbeliever who enjoyed the company of people like himself. Scholars of these diverse views were invited to debate theological matters, presumably for the entertainment of their hosts.⁹³ According to William Whiston, who also attended these meetings, the participants had "friendly debates about the truth of the Bible and the Christian Religion."⁹⁴ Considering the history between Clarke and Collins, one wonders just how friendly the debates were in actuality. As an example of Clarke's lingering resentment, we look to 1718. In that year, Collins complained to Pierre Desmaizeaux that in the response to his *Philosophical Enquiry*, in which Collins repeated many of the same themes he previously advanced in defense of Dodwell, Clarke used the opportunity "to act the bigot against me; for what he says in the close of his Remarks shows that he will act the bigot to serve his purpose."⁹⁵ Clarke's purpose, as it had been in 1706 and continued to be, was the defense of the theology that underpinned the Newtonian worldview. Given the initial encounter between the two men, Collins should have expected nothing less.

In this study, we have seen how the intellectual associations of Clarke and Collins manifested themselves in their debate over the soul and the nature of matter. Without an appreciation of this background, one cannot fully comprehend Clarke's bitterness towards Collins, nor Collins' reading of Newton and conception of matter, which are less surprising in light of his friendship with Toland. That Toland and Collins shared many facets of natural philosophy is suggestive of a deist worldview that encompassed more than simply a denial of revelation. Although Clarke could claim in 1705 that "There is now no such thing, as a consistent

⁹² On such disputes, see James E. Force, "Biblical Interpretation, Newton, and English Deism," in *Scepticisms and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, eds. Richard H. Popkin and Arjo Vanderjagt (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993); *Idem*, "The Newtonians and Deism," in *Essays on the Context, Nature, and Influence of Isaac Newton's Theology*, eds. James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990); Stephen Snobelen, "The Argument over Prophecy: An Eighteenth Century Debate Between William Whiston and Anthony Collins," *Lumen* 15 (1996).

⁹³ Snobelen, "The Argument over Prophecy," 202.

⁹⁴ William Whiston, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. William Whiston* (London, 1749), 182.

⁹⁵ BL MS 4282, f. 150r.

Scheme of Deism,"⁹⁶ this seemed no longer to be the case after 1706. It remains to be seen if future scholarship will concur with my interpretation of Clarke's notion of the soul. However, contemporary observers of the dispute knew from where Clarke's arguments came. In 1725, The Scottish cleric Robert Woodrow commented that "I am told that Dr. Clerk [Clarke] is extremely intimat with Sir Isaack Neuton, and much of what he published [is] from him; particularly what he has writ against [Anthony] Collins and others is all the fruits of his conversations with Sir Isaack."⁹⁷ We now know that more than a common conception of gravity came out of this friendship; so too did Clarke's notion of the soul.

⁹⁶ Clarke, *Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion*, 42.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Snobelen, "Isaac Newton, heretic," 413.