VOLTAIRE: NATURAL SCIENTIFIC LIGHT AGAINST CHRISTIAN CRIMINALITY – METHODOLOGIES OF TARGETING

Western thought, since the Renaissance, shows a repeated development of methods aimed at attacking Christianity, from Machiavelli’s Classicist militarism up to William James’ ‘empty’ Pragmatism. Methods have aims, and aims are subject to norms and criteria. A summit of anti-Christian enmity – in middle Modernity - was the pre-Revolutionary French philosophers, headed by Voltaire. In the previous article I have shown how the Neo-Classicist Voltaire developed a hermeneutic in which the Classical Greeks and Romans always appear as tolerant and virtuous, and Christianity is presented as misleading, intolerant, oppressive, violent and criminal – all through its history. In this article I investigate the nature of ‘light’ in the name ‘Enlightenment’, in order to understand Voltaire’s alternative to Christianity. I argue that the philosophical term ‘light’ was rooted in Plato, developed and adapted by Augustine and Scholasticism, and became a basis for group mystical elitism in Joachim of Fiore. In Modernity – specifically Voltaire – the light becomes a replacement of the Medieval divine Logos (Law-word) – a new light for elitist groups. Modernity separated the Origin (causa efficiens) from the Destiny (causa finalis): the divine was split between ‘Nature’ (origin) and (super-natural) ‘Rationality’ (scientific and civil); linked these two with the faith in progress. The ‘light’ was insight into ‘natural law’ a priori in consciousness; an ambiguous ‘natural law’ expressing the bio-mechanical and the basis of civility, driving humankind to progress. Thus insight into the laws of physics – from Logos Newton via Caesar Voltaire – provides the basis for a rational society: scientific reason supports practical reason. Voltaire’s insistence on the natural right of women to be incubators of workers and soldiers (adopted by the French Revolutionaries) shows how difficult it was to derive the human from the natural.

Key Terms: Logos, light, Newton, Plato, Augustine, natural law, naturalism progress, scientism, causa efficiens, finalis, hermeneutics.

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ontwikkeld en aangepaas is deur Augustinus en die Skolastiek, asook deur die Katholieke kerk, in die Middeleeue. Die淟ig hoofstuk duid sedert die 13de eeu deur Thomas Aquinas, die 'noue Logos, deur die Skolastiek en die Katholieke Kerk, deur die ~

Enlightenment, “natural law”, (bio-)“physics”, “instinct”, “sentiment”, “innate”, “moral science” and “morality” have all been closely associated since the beginning of the 16th century. Vico still tried to separate physical natural law from social natural law, with God as the archetype legislator for both. But exactly his archetypal conception of God-and-law (derived from especially the Alexandrine Neo-Platonic Church Fathers), allowed for a deterministic Law-God. The Janus-like faith-in-progress with Nature as Origin and Human-Divine (mostly civil) Royalty as Destiny, needed to link natural processes with the divine, but rationalistic Enlightenment exactly meant the emancipation of the citizen into full knowledge of natural law, unified the physical with the moral law: 5

1 THE ‘LIGHT’ OF THE ‘EN-LIGHT-EN-MENT’

How did Voltaire intend to crush the head of the infamous? The negative side of Voltaire’s attack was Neo-Classicism: show how good the Classical people were, and how twisted the minds of the Christians were in Ancient times and at present still are. On the positive side the process of rational enlightening was supposed to do the trick. In the following example the Queen of his conception of enlightenment are brought together:

[5] Damned be a people imbecile and barbarous enough to think that there is a God for his province only: this is blasphemy. What? The light of the sun illumines all the eyes, and the light of God enlightens only a small and sickly nation in a corner of the globe! What a horror! What folly! The divinity speaks in the heart of all human beings and the bonds of caring love unites them from one end of the universe to the other (CC, 1764:109-10).

Voltaire’s work is spread out over short essays, dictionary inscriptions, literary works and catechisms. Enlightening Voltaire’s work is spread out over short essays, dictionary fragments to create archetypes; these archetypes then had to be measured against given divine law. Vico rationalised Locke’s “empiricism” into a sensualism similar to Turge’s. One link more ought to be mentioned: the Renaissance and early Modern recovery of Platoism. Some studies have been done about the pre-Enlightenment, especially regarding ‘free thinking’ in Europe in the vicinity of Spinoza and Descartes and then Hume’s “En-light-eners” in France, the

Enlightenment is a historical period of transition from especially the Alexandrine Neo-Platonic Church Fathers), for both government and the citizens will soon discover the absurdity of this. This is especially true for the substance of the nation and the means to defend it: if the frame of the government, laws, detrimental to society will soon be taken off the books (Quasen, 1965:374-5).

Quasen was the leader of the Physiocratic economic determinism. They defended a free agricultural market, for agriculture they considered as the basis of civil society. Quasen’s conception of enlightenment already shows the emerging base of natural laws: a foundation to enhance the government, laws detrimental to society will soon be taken off the books. This specific type of unification of the “physical natural law” with the “moral natural law” was easily changed into a sensualistic naturalism by Turge, Voltaire followed him closely.

Forms of the word ‘light’ were quite widely used to indicate Les Lumières (The Light-en-eners) in France, the Aufklärung (literally “clearing up”) in Germany and also “Enlightenment” in the UK and the US. Voltaire sometimes used the term éclairé (“illuminated”) (cf. especially: Neuton’s De philosophie de Neuton 2 (EN, 1739) the laws form the ensemble of what is called ‘natural law’ (Quasen, 1965:374-5).

[2] Natural laws are either physical or moral. One understands here under “physical law” the regular course of every physical event which is evidently the most advantageous for humankind. One understands here under ‘moral law’ the rule of every human action conforming to the physical order which is evidently the most advantageous for humankind. These laws form the ensemble of what is called ‘natural law’ (Quasen, 1965:374-5).

between God’s physical light (the sun) and his moral light (the commandments). He not only destroyed the oft-cited and erroneous taboos, he also destroyed the confessional and ideological prejudice which has been there in the minds of all men. Being-enlightened can thus also be seen as having Cartesian clarity of mind. An essay in which derivations of terms like “light”, “clarity”, “purity” forms a whole discursive network is the Advice to a journalist, where journalist treatment of science and the arts is discussed in detail (cf. further CF, 1739).

Historically the “light” motif has Ancient sources. Firstly the metaphor of an intellectual “sun” in Plato’s works, that has connected himself as mythological sun in mythological suns of all ages. This is the new given life in Egyptian Neo-Platonism, adapted by the Alexandrine Church Fathers, who fused it with the Biblical Logos into God’s illuminating Word. Augustine adapted this further by giving it a more direct sense of the experience of a spiritual and sensuous level of light, the practical level of reason, and the illuminated level of the intellectual in direct contact with divine light. This tripartite individual mystical road was changed into a process of reason and experience, in a direct super-sensuous light that brings insight into natural [i.e. given] law, arguing that reason has an innate light that sees natural law internally when stimulated by experience. Descartes rationalised the inner sight (inner ideas), Locke accentuated the role of sense experience. In Locke this led to a double conception of law: on the one hand rational intuition intra-mindally linked up experiential fragments to create archetypes; these archetypes then had to be measured
The thought of Descartes implies a similar view of God in relation to the world. The definition of law [5] is found one century later repeated by Auguste Comte. In spite of his Humanistic dedication of freedom, the world of middle Modernity was a more essentialist and rock-hard nominalism5 than that of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Calvin or Newton. Differing two latter two allowed for a more “voluntarist” (idea of God.) The most serious influence in the direction of a completely normistic determinism was probably the reduction of “science” to the deductive model of mathematics and physics. A mechanical God creates by deducing causes that have determined effects, a mathematical God calculates and works from the ideas of perfect circles and straight lines according to the fixed rules of geometry. God’s omnipotence cannot create a 2+2 into 5 or 3. Confronted by Bonaparte about the absence of a world-creator from his theory, Laplace is said to have answered:

[5] This hypothesis, honoured Sir, in fact does explain everything, but does not allow to predict anything. In so far as being-a-scholar, I have to furnish myself of work that permits predictions (Laplac, 2012). Direct quote?

Laplace’s statement was thus not the simple ‘atheist’ one of not needing the hypothesis of a creator-god. It is rather anti-metaphysical (early positivist) statement of Cartesian science as power – prediction (based upon fixed causal law) is the basis of mastery (science as explanation – especially in terms of origins - went into the theological-metaphysical death).[6] Voltaire himself possibly believed more in God than the author of Cudworth (1748: 29). The idea of “light”, however, was easily and quite soon adopted into a secular, purified natural theology under the influence of Descartes, Hobbes and others, purified from the traditional “orthodoxy” of the Cambridge Platonists. Some say that the Medieval idea of “natural law” intended a restriction against human depravity; The Modern interpretation it is rather a liberation towards human autonomous rational design (cf. Willey, 1961-167; Chalk, 1951-335). This is a misunderstanding: As Modernity progressed, the conception of reality – including the idea of God – was progressively modelled on physical law; the beginning of Montesquieu’s famous: l’Esprit des lois (1748):

In enlightenment the exit of the human being out of his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to engage your own understanding without the leadership of another. This immaturity is self-imposed if the idea of it does not exist or if understanding, but in a lack of decisiveness and courage to put your own understanding to use without the leadership of another. Soper uae! Dare to put your own understanding to use!5

The “light” [5] is thus the slogan of the Enlightenment (Kant, 1977-53). Kant next attacks the leaders for keeping the people dumb. He was not the first: the whole project of the French Encyclopédie and the 18th century philosophers was aimed at enlightening the immature and superstitious, especially against priestly subterfuge.14 In Kant’s narrative there is nature-historical movement from animalism to civil culture; the upwards natural driving forces of unsociability (conflict, competition, war) cause human beings into sociability (covenants for own protection) by balancing competitive powers with a rational, civil order as outcome. This is the enrichment-ing process. The problem was that the granite law-fixed reality was an essential requirement for: the doctrine of emancipation: the autonomous individual subject could not emancipate itself, its free choices were taken into a visible ocean of the great historical “market” mechanism. Whereas Kant’s near predecessors got stuck in totalitarian state praxticalism, la raison de l’état being the controlling subject of the super-normal and of full emancipation, Kant moved beyond to this to an internationalist critical practical idealism: All individual choices are absorbed into a fixed-law nature-cultural history.15 Voltaire was a very young contemporary of Turgot, situated between Vico and Turgot on the one hand, and the ‘younger’ Kant on the other. Philosophically Voltaire was an essentially practical metaphysical, a systematic thinker. In style and form he anticipated Nietzsche rather than Kant. But he shared many themes with especially Turgot and Kant and also with the 19th century liberals. Locke and the Cambridge Platonist, Wyermars14. His instance on tolerance and human dignity have a Lockean ring; his allegorical Bible satires remind one of Myers who viewed all of the Genesis creation story as but allegory; his scientific, sensualist view of good knowledge generation was near Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, but especially Turgot. But he had a good sense of the practice of life founded mostly on the sub-rational; yet he aimed at progress towards practical rationality in a tolerant, completely secular civil society with strictly Hobbesian [ancient pagan] control over religion. He remained in the mode of la raison de l’état.

For a start one can look at Voltaire’s hopes from another angle: the way of becoming enlightened, of sourcing the light, namely providing informative knowledge. This was the reason for the Encyclopédie Française and for Voltaire’s own Dictionnaire Philosophique. The Encyclopedists and Voltaire seriously believed that people had been drenched in misinformation and superstition by the powerful, notably the Protestant and Catholic Church. The situation. Natural science was Voltaire’s hope; together with companion, Emilie du Chatelet, he popularised Newton all over Europe, and with the English author, Pope, he could say:

[7] ‘Nature and nature’s laws lay hid in night; God said “Let Newton be’ and all was light.’


9 Laws, in their extended signification, are necessary connections that flow from the nature of things; and in this sense all beings have their laws, the godhead had his laws, the material world has his laws, the intelligences superior to human beings have their laws, the brute animals have their laws, human kind has its laws. ... There is therefore an original Reason and the laws are relationships between it and the different beings, and relationships between the diverse beings amonging themselves. God needed a relationship with the world, as creator and as conservor: the laws according to which he created are those according to which he conserves. He is following the rules because he knows them, he knows them because he has made them; he has made them, because a relationship between them and his wisdom and power was necessary (1748: 29).
The intention was popular education, enlightenment of the public; removing ignorance and giving good information in a pleasant and digestible way. The literary inclinations of Voltaire often lead to exaggeration, twisting the facts, substituting one piece of guesswork with an imaginative other, bordering on propaganda. He kept courage though, even when faced by exile or the Bastille.

Plate A is the frontispiece to Voltaire's *Elemens de la Philosophie de Newton* (1729), his interpretation of Isaac Newton's work. Voltaire, philosophe, sits at a desk, translating the inspired work of Newton. The manuscript is illuminated by a divine light coming from behind Newton, reflected down to Voltaire by a muse, representing Voltaire's mistress Émilie du Châtelet, who actually translated Newton and collaborated with Voltaire to make sense of Newton's work.

Plate B is the – almost iconic – frontispiece of Vico's *Scienca Nuova* (first edition 1744; second 1749, third 1764). The Sun provides light to lady Metaphysics, who in ecstasy sees into the divine mind via the all-seeing eye of divine Providence, standing on physical nature (the object of natural philosophers), resting, only partially, on the altar of pagan religions. On the zodiac are the signs of Leo – *agi-culture* as mastery, studied by Vicenian social science, and Virgo, indicating the advent of religious time reckoning based upon agriculture. The divine light is reflected via a convex jewel (the required purity of religious time reckoning based upon agriculture. The divine light is reflected via a convex jewel (the required purity of

**PLATE A**

**PLATE B**

his view of culture encompasses a wide variety of human functions. This is not yet the complete semi-materialist base-superstructure idea one finds soon after in the capitalist class thinker, Turgot, according to whom the interaction between human senses and the earth produced the first form of culture: *agi-culture* (cf. further Turgot, 1973, chapter 3 ff.). Noteworthy in the Enlightenment context, Turgot finds the language of the farmer to be the first format of the (quasi-mathematical, scientific) expression of natural law. He was a Physiocrat who believed that nature governs (through sensualist empirical science).

**PLATE C**

**PLATE D**

**PLATE E**

**PLATE F**

Plate D *Immaculate Conception* (1678), F *St Bernard and the Virgin* (1655), by Murillo. In the 1655 and 1678 paintings Mary had just received the message that she was expecting the Saviour, and she conserved the message in her heart. Her face is one of wonder; she apparently stands on the moon and a cloud is supported by baby-like angels. The angels are in amazement and adoration. St Bernard is seen in adoration of Mary in Plate G. She has baby Jesus in her left arm, and has an open breast so as to feed the baby, but is looking at the Saint. St Bernard is pointing to the Scriptures: ‘so that the Scriptures may be fulfilled...’ The central spaces of the paintings are illuminated, but the source of light is hidden. The atmosphere is one of wonder, silence, humility, adoration and upliftment (cf. further Gartn, 1995:32-34).

3.1 Reality as history

In the era from Defoe (1661-1731) up to Kant, Hegel and Fichte, a new view of reality and history came into being: Lessing had recovered Joachim of Flore’s mystical view of history, and Rousseau had re-invented the state as a mystical unity.

Against the background of the idea of group mysticism (following the Joachimist tradition) reality was believed to be in progress with the human being as the leading light. Natural history and human history were in one another’s extension. In fact the history of humankind was seen as the history of god-becoming-in-the-world – through self-loving competition, science, technology and organisation in a civil community. The poisonous sting of the faith in progress lies in the assumption that some humans have a natural advantage and right of control over others, as groups, races, or nations. Defoe’s (especially *Robinson Crusoe*) characters represent groups, such as a rational Western world traveller, Crusoe, would have met. Crusoe sets about enlightening them, guided by Lockean tolerance. But note: in Defoe history is *‘storyed’* – it is an imaginative narrative reading contemporary cultural ‘levels’ back into history. Within decades Vico developed this into the earliest Modern ‘scientific’ method of historiography.

The ‘enlightened’ often want to be good to the ‘unenlightened’. This was rooted in the Platonic and Augustinian views on ‘illumination’: the distinction between philosopher-kings and other citizens in Plato, and between clericals and laity in the Medieval Church. Modernity had some dangerous roots in Medieval illuminative mysticism. Medieval mysticism, however, was mostly individual, Modernity’s had become a dangerous, very elitist, group mysticism (mostly centred in the colour contrasts, the open breasts, the nude cupids all around. Minerva (since 2nd century BC identified with Athena), standing at the back dressed soldier-like and armed, goddess of wisdom, medicine, arts, colour, science, trade, and, notably, of WAR. She wears a see-through dress, accentuating her femininity; but combined with male, soldier attire. Four of the Muses have musical instruments (even a piano!); a violin is lying on the ground and a book lies between the feet of Cupid. A playful atmosphere, quasi innocent, youthful. A Pan-like nature-spiritual atmosphere pervades this detail. The Cupids are independent (standing and running on their own feet) (cf. Parada & Maicar, 2012).
Roman militarism and intellectual culture is present in Voltaire chiefest of sciences' and 'the combining of letters, creative the goddess of fine and intellectual arts, that is 'numbers, the triangular face of the Providential Eye - divine reason, the surrounded by Masonic instruments including the triangular and socio-cultural hieroglyphics down below , Voltaire is instruments of geometry and construction not the angelic halo of a Catholic saint. The scientific writer is Voltaire wears the laurel wreath of a Roman official (a Caesar), and Voltaire have instruments of geometry and construction in a structurally similar manner to the Medieval idea of a ‘divine’ (cf. Venter, 1992; 2002). Voltaire rejected the Leibnizian was creative and thus a necessary phase in human progress. The close association of – almost identification – of rationality, ‘reason, that may be used as an epoch and guarantee of progress in and towards enlightened civil society’. Voltaire placed his hope broadly in rational enlightenment, based upon scientific enlightenment and fulfilled in the enlightened civil society.

It is a time of, disgust of, satori or rather of reason, that may be used as an epoch and guarantee of public tranquility. Controversy is an eidemic disease that nears its end, and what is now needed is gentile treatment. It is to the interest of the State that its expatriated children should return modestly to the homelands of their fathers. Humanity demands it, reason counsels it, and politics need not fear it (1765: 5 ff.).

Voltaire’s plead for the Republicans, his intervention in favour of the Calas family gained him support in Calvinist Southern France. He heartily fought for the cause of tolerance, it is his method that is questionable. In many ways he stood nearer to Calvinism than to Catholicism, he preferred a man, in the latter. Given his satirical hermeticism, his ‘alliance’ to Catholicism might have been part of a game. His and other philosophes’ criticism contributed much to the ‘de-Christianising’ of France during the Revolution.

Note, however, the basis of his trust: progress in and towards rationality – the availability of good books, the humanising influence of Voltaire’s work: it was not a time of . . . reason, that may be used as an epoch and guarantee of public tranquility’ (quote [7]).

The close association of – almost identification – of ‘rationality with ‘peace’, ‘tranquility’, ‘justice’ and ‘righteousness’ was characteristic of early and middle Modernity. In order to account for the absence of peace, the faith in progress in terms of a diagnosis of naturally postponed or delayed rationality, combined with that of ‘the reason of state’, was developed. The ‘natural’ was seen as a state of conflict; but such conflict was creative and thus a necessary phase in human progress. ‘The true faith’ was the principle of the Enlightenment and of society. What Voltaire’s hermeneutics of changing the facts of the past has remained the format of revolutionary presentations of history.17

17 Mao tse-Tung’s government changed the photographs and inscriptions on school history textbooks as leader fall in or out of favour with the Supreme Leaders. Pol Pot – apart from the genocide of his own people – conducted family albums and had them burnt: the people’s history had to start with his revolution. Changing names of cities and streets is not simply honouring the new, but in fact an enlightened revolutionary violation of historical continuity: it is an act in one’s own sovereignty with regard to the events of the past while unearthing the good from it as if it were all your own.
Modernity's struggle to find the 'rational human' in the 'natural law' was an adherent of this type of Deism. Hegel in fact simply Dalit. As-god, the Law is the real god. Voltaire (read his poem on the Earthquakes at Lisbon, 1755; cf. also 1764-5 s. v. Tout est bien) was an adherent of this type of Deism. Hegel in fact simply explicates the dialectic already present Modernity – natural law driven from the theatre of man as super-natural. Voltaire (in quote [8]) inserts into natural law that which he wants to derive out of it: working inter-individual human relationships.

4.2 Of ‘love’ and ‘self-love’

Thus in Voltaire the Modern naturalist always lurked nearby. Explaining love firstly in terms of animal desire and coupling, he struggles to differentiate between animal desire and its human counterpart, sexual love, to which he reduced all ‘love’. Socratic (homosexual) love and pedantry are said to be not-normal, exactly because normalising it would mean extinction of the species, which ‘nature’ certainly could not allow. In line with this was also Voltaire’s ‘capitalist’ side, self-love, or the preservation of the species.

18 [9] This self-love (amour propre) is the instrument of our conservation; it appears to be the instrument of the perpetuation of the species; it is necessary, it is dear to us, it gives us pleasure, and one ought to protect it (1764-5: 5 s Amour propre – author’s translation). (Cf. also Amour nommé Soulurrieu, Amour et Pédérastie.)

Modernity transformed the intellect-will issue from the Middle Ages more or less into reason-versus-desire [already in Descartes and Hobbes]. From Descartes over Turgot and later Feuerbach, Deism, the sort of atheism, remained. When Voltaire spoke about ‘self-love, ‘desire’ (very often murderous and selfish) had already been presented as the mechanism not only of survival, but also of progress. Voltaire searched for moderation of this.

One logically has to ask Voltaire: how do you conceive of the relationship between ‘self-love’ and ‘tolerance’? The suggested answer meant that a ‘enlightenment’ we would progressively become more human, more rational. However, his description of ‘natural law’ in quote [8], is one of cultured family life in a settled environment – this exactly fits Rousseau’s description of ‘civil society’ in the Discourse on inequality (1709: 122) and clashes with the latter’s idea of the free, pre-civil nomad. It is already way beyond the Hobbesian natural of selfishness. The relationship between self-love and humane behaviour remains unclear.

Also important is that for the sake of enlightenment of practical life, the disclosure of natural law was of necessity. The atmosphere of naturalism enforced a view of science following the model of mathematics and physics (in Locke this even goes for natural theology); the a priori basis of natural law is the sub-rational. Even where the sciences (including the ‘historical’ ones) are subservient to praxis, the natural science model remained dominant. Voltaire knew but three intellectual disciplines: physics, morals, and philosophy. And one has to remember that the special sciences at that time were still considered part of ‘philosophy’. Broadly speaking it is the philosopher that leads the way to understanding ‘natural law’, i.e. to en-lighten-ment.

Since philosophers do not have any particular interest, they cannot but talk in favour of reason and the public interest (DSDP: 8). The happiest that can overcome the people, is that the prince be a philosopher. The philosopher prince knows that the more that reason makes progress in his states, the less will be the disputes, the theological quarrels, the warrior mentality, the superstition, do evil: he will therefore encourage reason.

Such progress will suffice to annihilate, for example, in a few years, all the disputes about grace... (DSDP: 9).

5 APPRECIATION

I love Voltaire for his penetrating criticism of everybody, also his fellow philosophers for their materialism and exaggerated mechanistic thinking, for his sense of justice, even defending those whose opinions he found disgusting, for his honest struggle with God and Leibnizean theodicy. But he formed part of a group of atmosphere creators: revolutionary terror has not disappeared since 1789. His intentions were liberal: piecemeal change of mentality by accentuation of some facts, suppression of the opposite of the sermon’s intention (as if all his religious, enlightened, authority in the five catechisms he wrote. Here my focus was the alternative, specifically the meaning of ‘light’ in ‘En-lighten-ment’. ‘Enlightening’, with its long history going back to the Pythagoreans and even to the Egyptian belief in universal control for the well-being of humankind.

One would want to know precisely why this happened in the Western world. Usually the motivation is searched for one-sidedly in the Greek and Roman world. But when one reads Bacon’s work on method (and the utopian documents from those days), one sees a tendency to recover the gospels of the gospel of peace and love from among the ashes of Church religion.

The attitude had already been: let us purge our reason from all kinds of prejudices and put our shoulders to the wheel. Optimism about human abilities under unhindered rational world abounded. In the 18th century Vico and Quesnay explicitly base their ‘optimism’ about progress on God-given reason bringing man into natural law. But surely the contents of ‘natural law’ had a prescientific basis: in DSDP (1750: 12 ff). Thus this two-pronged approach: on the one hand the denigration of superstition and power abuse by Christianity (over against the pure and rational behaviour of the Greeks and the Romans) and the other hand the possibility that reason having ‘lost the power of reasoning’. He believed that ‘every sensible and honest man’ had to hold ‘the Christian sect in horror’ (cf. Hawt, 197). If one talks this talk, and while preaching one practically denies what one preaches, and one acts totally differently: one may help to support the opposite of the sermon’s intention (as if all Christians were equally guilty of the atrocities committed by the powerful).

In the previous article 19 I showed how his Neo-Classicist prejudices were made operational. But he did develop an alternative: a cult of science and reason – to philosophise with an ancient thought, and one is taken seriously: he may be an enlightened, authority in the five catechisms he wrote. Here my focus was the alternative, specifically the meaning of ‘light’ in ‘En-lighten-ment’. ‘Enlightening’, with its long history going back to the Pythagoreans and even to the Egyptian belief in universal control for the well-being of humankind.

on the other the transfer of the Classical rationality and Logos to physical science and rational insight: ‘natural law’ in its Modern form is the LIGHT!

It was a reductionist light. Voltaire awards the right to the philosophising king to regulate monastic vows, for natural law directs the propagation of the human species (and the subjection of the clergy to a civil constitution, a cartoon appeared, entitled, Decree of the National Assembly that suppresses the male and female religious orders – Tuesday 16 February 1790, containing the following inscription:

[1] Let this day be joyful my Sisters: yes the kind names of ‘mother’ and ‘spouse’ is really preferable to that of ‘nun’ – it gives you all the rights of Nature as well as to us.

This can be read as a summary of Voltaire’s arguments just more than 25 years before. Note that this is more than only

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