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Chapter Seven: Reactions after Morgan’s death and abroad

§1: Introduction

In this chapter, we shall look at the reactions, which arose after Morgan’s death in January 1743. These reactions appeared till about ten years after the first publication of *The moral philosopher*. Although Morgan was forgotten in England in the second part of the 18th century, the ideas of Deism continued to be discussed. Afterwards, we shall look at the reactions abroad, especially in Germany, the Netherlands and in the New World. We will see that these reactions endured much longer in the 18th century. Especially in Germany, the impact was impressive.

§2: Morgan’s place in the *Dunciad* of Alexander Pope

Morgan has been eternalized with a place in the 1743 edition of the *Dunciad* by the poet Alexander Pope. The *Dunciad* is one of the most famous satirical landmarks of the British eighteenth century. For clear reasons of alliteration, Morgan appears together with the philosopher and satirist Bernard Mandeville in Book II, line 414:

Morgan and Mandeville could prate no more.1

No doubt it was Pope’s friend William Warburton who suggested he include Morgan in the list of dunces. So Warburton took his revenge for Morgan’s attack on him in the *Brief examination of the Rev. Mr Warburton’s Divine legation of Moses ... by a society of gentlemen*, published in February 1742.2 But because of his death in January 1743 Morgan did not have the pleasure of knowing about his presence in the *Dunciad*. In 1744, Warburton wrote a commentary on the *Dunciad*, in which he explained his negative feelings about Morgan with a profound hatred.3 Thus it is understandable that later generations saw in Warburton Morgan’s greatest adversary. Later editions of the *Dunciad* sometimes contain other commentaries, speaking about Morgan erroneously as a dissenting minister at Bristol.4

§3: Reactions after Morgan’s death

In the year of his death a lot of authors took notice of Morgan. Many Independent ministers reacted negatively. In 1743, Philipp Doddridge spoke of ‘that unhappy creature that called himself the moral philosopher’.5 Doddridge gave much attention to Morgan in his lectures at Northampton academy, which were published after his death by his pupil, Samuel Clark, minister of the Old Meeting in Birmingham, in 1763. Doddridge speaks of Morgan’s ‘great many false and absurd things relating to the Jewish history’; his entirely false assertion

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2 See for the details van den Berg, “Morgan and Mandeville could prate no more”.

3 See above Chapter 3 § 8 and Chapter 4 § 4.


5 Ph. Doddridge, *An answer to a late pamphlet, intitled, Christianity not founded on argument*, London, 1743, 45.
about the differences among the Apostles; his objections to the character of the Old Testament saints; the priestcraft, which Morgan finds in the stories of the Old Testament and many other topics. Samuel Chandler continued in 1743 with *A defence of the prime ministry and character of Joseph*, in answer to the misrepresentations and calumnies of the late T. Morgan, M.D., and moral philosopher. It is a continuation of his *Vindication of the Old Testament*, in which he defended Abraham. This work is dedicated to the defence of Joseph, exposing ‘the malice that appears throughout the whole of it’. In the eyes of Chandler, Morgan ‘has truly desecrated himself’. All together, this author wrote more than 640 pages against Morgan. In 1746, the influential dissenting minister of Liverpool, Henry Winder, criticized Morgan occasionally in the second volume of *A critical and chronological history of the rise, progress, declension, and revival of knowledge*. But also among Anglicans we find negative reactions, though these are not as substantial as those by the Independents. The Vicar of Bledwel in Shropshire, William Worthington, spoke incidentally with respect to Morgan, referring to his unjust aspersions and scandalous invectives. In 1744, the theologian Matthew Horbery, Chaplain to the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, criticized Morgan incidentally in his book written against William Whiston, *An enquiry into the Scripture-doctrine concerning the duration of future punishment*: ‘There is a man indeed who calls himself, or his book, the Moral Philosopher, who denies all this’. A year later the Dean and future Bishop of Carlisle, Edmund Law, in his much reprinted work *Considerations on the state of the world with regard to the theory of religion*, ..., being the substance of some sermons preach’d before the University of Cambridge, quoted The moral philosopher negatively many times, calling Morgan a profligate and loose modern writer. The famous Hebrew scholar Benjamin Kennicott quoted The moral philosopher once in the second of his *Dissertations*, on the oblation of Cain and Abel, calling him one of the great doctors of infidelity.

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7 Cf Chapter 4 § 8.


9 Another Independent minister was John Mason of West Street Chapel in Dorking in Surrey, who quoted The moral philosopher various times in his pamphlet *A plain and modest plea for Christianity, or, a sober and rational appeal to infidels*, as a formulator of the deist’s creed, London, 1743, 58, 60.


Thereafter, the sources dried up until the publications of Skelton at the end of the 1740s and Leland in the 1750s with their lists of deists. Skelton says ironically that the ‘Moral philosopher … made the tour of all opinions relating to religion and physic; and, having found little else than prejudice and nonsense every-where, threw new light in great abundance, on both those branches of knowledge’. Leland concluded that ‘there have been few writers who have been more effectually confuted and exposed, than he that was pleased to honour himself with the title of the moral philosopher’. He regarded Morgan as a writer of great vivacity. So there was a long and persistent tradition of criticism in the first ten years after the publication of The moral philosopher. Mostly the judgment was negative. Only a few contemporaries dared to defend him publicly. The religious controversialist Peter Annet defended him in 1744 under the pseudonym Mencius Philalethes in The history of Joseph consider’d; or, The moral philosopher vindicated against Mr. Samuel Chandler’s defence of the prime ministry and character of Joseph. Another defender was Morgan’s friend Thomas Amory in his positive comments in his Memoirs published in 1755 on the character of Morgan. ‘I know he passes with most people for a father of infidels, and is always mentioned by the faith-men as the vilest of mortals’. Amory refers various times to Christian Deism without declaring himself to be a Christian deist. Only once in the (autobiographical?) Life of John Buncle does he call himself a Christian deist.

We have to wait for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to find positive comments about Morgan. But the works of Thomas Morgan are found in many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century libraries and in many catalogues of booksellers in Britain.

§4: Deism did not fade away after the 1740s

Many authors have argued that Deism faded away after the 1740s. But Deism was not dead in the second part of the 18th century. We recognize it in many situations and in many books. In 1776, the Quaker Robert Applegarth wrote A theological survey of the human understanding. Intended as antidote against modern deism. Deism was winning ground in England in the second part of the 18th century. Deism was discussed among the London Debating Societies. Deism entered the world of fiction. Deists appear in various novels by Henry Fielding such as The history of the adventures of Joseph Andrews (Book One Chapter

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16 Leland, A view, 2nd edition, Volume 1, 236, 221.
17 Reventlow, The authority, 407, stated that the already mentioned Moses Lowman wrote in 1748 A rational ritual of the Hebrew worship against Morgan, but this book has nothing to do with Morgan.
18 (Amory), Memoirs, 416: ‘great goodness and strict morality; 516: ‘But was Morgan a Christian, after all what the doctors have writ against him? He was’.
19 (Amory), Memoirs 513.
20 (Amory), Memoirs, 9, 61, 267; (Th. Amory), The life of John Buncle, Volume 1, London, 1756, 380.
17), The life of Mr. Jonathan Wild, the great (Book Four Chapter 14), The history of Tom Jones, a foundling (Book Four Chapter 4, Book Five Chapter 8), and Amelia (Book One Chapter 4), though he himself was no deist.\textsuperscript{23} More people openly declared being deists. The novelist Charlotte Lennox, née Ramsay, marking herself as a deist, has a lady appear in her novel Henrietta, published in 1758, who openly says — and also in front of her servants —: ‘I am a deist, … I believe there is an intelligent cause which governs the world by physical rules.’\textsuperscript{24} Many people referred to the deism of their youth like the Methodist missionary Thomas Coke, who wrote from Leeds on April 14\textsuperscript{th} 1813 in a letter to the politician William Wilberforce about his youth as deist at Oxford.\textsuperscript{25}

On the other hand the number of deists, freethinkers, and infidels was not so great. The devout Anglican Samuel Johnson is reported to have said on April 14\textsuperscript{th} 1775: ‘Sir, there is a great cry about infidelity; but there are, in reality, very few infidels. I have heard a person, originally a Quaker, but now, I am afraid, a Deist, say, that he did not believe there were, in all England, above two hundred infidels’.\textsuperscript{26} He referred to his friend the physician Richard Brocklesby. Public opinion maintained that Deism was growing. On March 10\textsuperscript{th} 1779, the politician John Wilkes stated in the House of Commons: ‘Deism, indeed, Sir, sound pure deism has made a rapid progress, not only in this island, but in every part of the continent. It is almost the religion of Europe …; every year adds to the number of disciples of deism’. Wilkes himself was a deist.\textsuperscript{27} Even in Holland there was awareness of the many deists in England, as was written in 1781 (in the midst of the fourth Anglo-Dutch war of 1780-1784) in the anonymous pamphlet published in Amsterdam Engelsche tieranny, in vier samenspraaken.\textsuperscript{28} At the end of the century, William Hamilton Reid published in London his Rise and dissolution of the infidel societies in this metropolis, in which Morgan is mentioned as belonging to ‘the second race of infidels’.\textsuperscript{29}

But by the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, Morgan has been forgotten. In 1790, the anecdotist William Seward called him, as we saw already in the Introduction, the author of a now-forgotten performance against religion.\textsuperscript{30} In the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Morgan is mentioned from time to time, sometimes negatively, sometimes positively. The library of the Anglican Archbishop of Dublin, William Magee contained a copy of The moral philosopher. Magee had written against Morgan in 1801 in his book about the atonement, referring to his absurd idea of the


\textsuperscript{24} Ch. Lennox, Henrietta, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, Volume 2, London, 1761, 110.


\textsuperscript{28} N.N., Engelsche Tieranny, in vier samenspraaken, Amsterdam, 1781, 58: ‘Deïsten, waarvan Engeland vol is’.

\textsuperscript{29} W.H. Reid, The rise and dissolution of the infidel societies in this metropolis, London, 1800, 89.

\textsuperscript{30} (Seward), ‘Drossiana viii’, 332.
origin of sacrifice. But the London deist bookseller and publisher on Fleet Street, Richard Carlile, published in 1819 *The Deist; or, moral philosopher. Being an impartial inquiry after moral and theological truths: selected from the writings of the most celebrated authors in ancient and modern times*, a work in which Thomas Morgan is mentioned three times in a letter to Dr. Samuel Chandler, originally published by Peter Annet.

§5: Reactions in the Netherlands

On the continent, there appeared long and critical reviews of *The moral philosopher* in the *Bibliothèque Britannique, ou Histoire des Ouvrages des Savans de la Grande Bretagne*, and short notices in the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée des Ouvrages des Savans de l’Europe*, published in the Netherlands in The Hague and Amsterdam, respectively. The book made much noise and gave much to discuss. The *Bibliothèque Britannique* gave attention to all the publications of Morgan. Already at the end of 1737, the *Bibliothèque Britannique* knew that Morgan was the author of *The moral philosopher*. The book is accused of being chaotic in structure. It undermines the concept of revelation to set up a natural religion in place of it. Twenty years after Morgan’s death, a local preacher in Maassluis near Rotterdam, Johannes Martinus Hoffmann, warned his compatriots in August 1764 against Morgan and other freethinkers.

In the meantime, some of the publications by Morgan’s British adversaries, such as Lowman and Leland, had been translated into Dutch. Lowman’s by the printer Daniel van Damme in 1747 and reprinted in 1768. Leland’s by Engelbert Nooteboom, in three parts, in 1776–78.

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33 *Bibliothèque Britannique*, 8/2 (1737) 430-1; 9/1 (1737) 216; 10/1 (1737) 1-19; 12/2 (1739) 331-54; 13/2 (1739) 261-324; 16/2, (1741) 326-9.

34 *Bibliothèque Raisonnée*, 18 (1737) 220; 19 (1737) 230; 22 (1739) 483; 26 (1741) 467; 28 (1742) 478.

35 *Bibliothèque Britannique*, 10/1 (1737) 4: ‘Et en effet ce livre a fait du bruit dès qu’il a paru, & il continue à faire du bruit. Les Déistes décidez le vantent comme un ouvrage excellent: le Chrétiens indécis en parlent comme d’un ouvrage redoutable’.

36 *Bibliothèque Britannique*, 10/1 (1737) 14 : ‘Mr. Morgan, que la voix publique avait nommé le père de cet ouvrage’.

37 *Bibliothèque Britannique*, 10/1 (1737) 14 : ‘qu’il manque de l’ordre … un chaos à débrouiller’.

38 *Bibliothèque Britannique*, 17/1 (1741) 225 : pour saper la révélation par les fondemens, en tâchant de reduire tout à la religion naturelle’.


40 M. Lowman, *Verhandeling over de Burgerlijke of volks regeeringe der Israeliten, waar in de waare oogmerken en de aardt hunner regeeringe worden opengelegt, ... in het Nederduitsch overgezet ... door Daniel van Damme*, Leiden, 1747; reissue, Leiden, 1768.
From time to time, one sees some negative observations about Morgan made by Dutch apologists like the barrister Hendrik Constantyn Cras, and the theologians Jacob van Nuys Klinkenberg, Ysbrand van Hamelsveld, Wilhelmus Antonius van Vloten en Jan Scharp. The church historian Annaeus IJpeij gave at the end of the century much critical attention to Morgan. But according to the Dutch reformed minister Gerard Cornelis van Balen Blanken, there have not been many deists in the Netherlands. Much depends on what one defines as Deism. But the reviews and the translations of apologetic literature indicates that the orthodox were worried about the possible influence of English deists.

§6: Reactions in Germany

In Germany, much attention has in general been given to the works of the English deists. Johann Lorenz Schmidt, the translator of the rationalist Wertheimer Bibel (1735), also translated Tindal’s principal work in 1741. As far as Morgan is concerned, much disapproving attention was paid to The moral philosopher, which I have described extensively in an article published in 2008. The church historian Michael Lilienthal in Königsberg in East Prussia already had in 1741 the works of Morgan and many of his British opponents in

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41 J. Leland, Het godlyk gezag van het Oude en Nieuwe testament verdeedigt … tegen de onrechtmaatige betichtingen en valsch reedeneeringen van een boek: getiteld zeedenkundigen filozoof, uit het Engelsch vertaald door Engelbert Nooteboom, Utrecht, 1776-78.


43 A. IJpeij, Geschiedenis van de kristelijke kerk in de achttiende eeuw, eerste deel tweede stuk, Utrecht, 1798, 327-342 (327): he calls The moral philosopher ‘het hoofdmagazijn … waaruit de nieuwe ongeloovigen hunne wapenen steeds wechhaalen’.


46 Voigt, Der Englische Deismus, passim.


48 van den Berg, ‘English Deism and Germany’, 48-61.
his library. Throughout Germany, academic theses were defended against the deistical danger. The famous theologian, historian and biographer, Christian Gottlieb Joecher, dedicated in 1745 in Leipzig a thesis to the Morgan controversy entitled *Historiae controversiarum a Thoma Morgano excitatarum*. His negative judgment of Morgan in plain Latin is typical:

\[ Quis non stupeat haec legens...in nullo unquam libro a christianae civitatis homine conscripto, tot scommata, tantas calumnias, tot criminationes, tantasque blasphemias in nostrum religionem eiusque venerandos auctores fuisse coniecta? \]

Another thesis was written in 1745 in Halle by Christian Ernst von Windheim: *Disputatio de Paullo gentium apostolo contra Thomam Morganum*. Von Windheim was professor of philosophy and oriental languages in Erlangen from 1755. Especially at the University in Halle, attention was given to the English deists. The theologian Siegmund Jakob Baumgarten, who was the most important figure in Halle in the transition from Pietism to Rationalism, gave a nearly complete survey of Morgan’s work and of his British critics till 1750 in which he is very critical of Morgan. But also a man such as the poet and dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing wrote many reviews for learned journals and in one of them he referred disapprovingly to Morgan. Many more reactions could have been named.

Another aspect of the influence in Germany is contained in the many translations of English apologetical literature in the German language. The books of the apologists Lowman, Chapman and Hallett were translated by Johann Friedrich Esaias Steffens, pastor in Stade near Hamburg, and published in Hamburg in 1755 and in 1759-61, respectively. Johann Heinrich Meyenberg from Uelzen in Lower Saxony translated Lowman’s dissertation also as *Abhandlung von der bürgerlichen Regimentsverfassung der Hebräer*, published in Celle in Lower Saxony in 1756 with a preface about Jewish theocracy by Lorenz Hagemann, court chaplain in Hanover. Leland’s *Divine authority* was translated by Andreas Gottlob Masch, court chaplain in Neustrelitz (Mecklenburg-Strelitz), and published in Rostock and Wismar in 1756, with a preface of more than twenty pages by Siegmund Baumgarten. Masch speaks of

49 M. Lilienthal, Teologische Bibliothec, das ist richtiges Verzeichniss, zulängliche Beschreibung, und bescheidene Beurtheilung der dahin gehörigen vornehmsten Schriften welche in M. Michael Lilienthals ..., Bücher-Vorrat befindlich sind, Königsberg, 1741.

50 Chr.G. Joecher, *Historiae controversiarum a Thoma Morgano excitatarum*, Lipsiae, 1745, 6-7; (English translation: ‘Who is not stupefied, to read in any book written by a member of the Christian community, so many scandalous expressions, calumnies, criminations and blasphemies, thrown at our religion and its honourable authors?’).


the malicious unbelief of Morgan. It was reprinted in Schwerin in 1786. Translations of Morgan’s work in German, however, do not exist. In his Freydenker-Lexicon the German pastor Johann Anton Trinius in the county of Mansfeld dedicated eighteen pages to Morgan. So Morgan’s ideas were disseminated by his German opponents all over Germany.

§7: Hermann Samuel Reimarus

One man especially received attention in this process. The German deist, Hermann Samuel Reimarus, was the greatest systematian of Deism. He has been mentioned as one of those who used the Biblical criticism of the deists and specifically of Thomas Morgan in his own work. Already the famous theologian David Friedrich Strauss referred many times to Morgan as a predecessor of Reimarus. Strauss mentions as comparable topics the priest fraud, the extermination of the peoples of Canaan, the criticism of the patriarchs, the Egyptian plagues, the miracles of Moses, and the absence of the doctrine of immortality in the Old Testament.


57 Gerdmar, Roots of theological anti-Semitism, 31, overstates his case when he says: ‘Halle was also influenced by Thomas Morgan’s translated and published writings’.

58 Trinius, Freydenker-Lexicon, 369-87, in which he also attributes some pamphlets wrongly to Morgan.


But especially for Reimarus this use of Morgan cannot be proven beyond doubt. Reimarus usually quotes his English sources, of which I counted more than twenty-five in the Apologie. He quotes people like Spencer and Selden, Whiston and Middleton, but also Toland and Lardner. He is sometimes very specific. So, for example, he quotes John Toland and admits the use of his Tetradymus. He refers various times to Anthony Collins. But he refers also to the apologists, such as William Warburton. But he never refers to Morgan. One has to observe that the first drafts of the Apologie were already drawn up in the early 1730s, years before the publication of The moral philosopher. Another question is the possibility that Reimarus may have known the work of Thomas Morgan. There we indeed find the three volumes of The moral philosopher. But the simple fact of the presence of some book in a library catalogue does in itself not prove that it was read by or used in the extant work of the owner of the library. Reimarus never quoted Thomas Morgan’s work in his Apologie. It can only be said that Reimarus had more English deist works in his library than he quoted in his published works. And that it is surprising that no references can be found to Morgan. The same may be said for other works of Reimarus. Among references to, for example, the deists Collins, Woolston and Tindal, there are none to Morgan. It has been argued that Reimarus encountered the works of the English deists including Morgan during his research trip in England in 1720-1721. But as far as Morgan is


64 Alexander, Reimarus, Volume 1, 728: ‘Die Engeländer haben sich durch der Collins genötiget gesehen, die buchstäbliche Weissagungen von Christo beynahe aufzugeben, und bloss eine accomodationem darin zu erkennen’.


69 Loeser, Die Kritik, 112.

concerned, that is quite impossible because at that time Morgan had not written his deist works. Another authority emphasized that the frequent stress on English influence in older historiography about Reimarus is both groundless and highly misleading. We may conclude with the cautious formulation that many of Reimarus’ results were fruit of English Bible criticism, which he radicalized and systematized. The Apologie of Reimarus is indeed more systematically constructed as criticism of the Old and the New Testament, but it was never published during his lifetime. In all these respects, it is a totally different work from The moral philosopher.

§8: France

In France, there is nearly no response to be found. In contrast to Germany, Morgan had no traceable influence in France. Voltaire, for example, criticized the Old Testament very harshly, but there is no influence of Morgan to be found. It is with some caution that these English influences have to be studied. Others maintain that Voltaire was heavily influenced by the deists. Although Edward Bouverie Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, argued in 1828 that Voltaire derived his critical objections from, among others, Morgan, this is not correct. None of Morgan’s deist books are to be found in the catalogue of the library of Voltaire in Ferney, nor in Saint Petersburg. Voltaire never refers to a single work by Thomas Morgan and they probably never met each other. Voltaire depended more on other deists. The same can be said of Denis Diderot.
There is evidence that Paul Baron D’Holbach sought more information about Morgan, asking for it in a letter from Paris to his friend John Wilkes, dated 10 December 1767, but the Editor of the letter already observed that no trace of Morgan is to be found in the works of d’Holbach.

There were others in France interested in Morgan, like the Roman Catholic apologetic theologian Nicolas Sylvestre Bergier. Bergier, who quotes Morgan many times, describes him as an English deist who argued against the miracles of Moses. Morgan’s name appeared once in the article on Physiologie in the supplement of the Encyclopédie. All in all, it is clear that Morgan was more known in Germany than in France.

§9: Reactions in America

In New England, The moral philosopher was also disseminated early. Thus Jeremiah Condy, the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston, wrote on February 8th 1738 from London to his friend the Reverend John Sparhawk, pastor of the first church in Salem: ‘According to you wish I send you Morgans Moral Philosopher’. He sent also Hallett’s pamphlet and Morgan’s rejoinder.

James Logan of Philadelphia, friend and counselor of William Penn, wrote on August 16th 1738 to the physician and naturalist John Fothergill: ‘I have been told of a late piece calld (I think) the Moral Philosopher being ye Result of Several conferences on ye Subject of Morals … Pray buy or direct L.Williams to buy these for me’. A year later he wrote to Fothergill on April 6th 1739 that he ‘was misled by the title of the Moral Philosopher and the information of a parson who, having seen it, had read little more in it than the preface or otherwise should not have sent for so vile a Piece. I had seen something of Morgan’s before & join with thee in thy Sentiments of him’.


Cf H. Sänger, Juden und Altes Testament bei Diderot, Wertheim am Main, 1933.

P. Vernière, ‘Deux lettres inédites de D’Holbach à Wilkes’, Revue de Littérature Comparée, 28 (1954) 482-6 (486): ‘I am told the worcks of one Morgan have been esteemed in your country, but I don’t know the titles’; 486 note: ‘Aucune trace de Morgan ne demeure dans l’oeuvre ultérieure de baron’.


N.N., Supplément à l’Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, volume 4, Amsterdam, 1777, 356: ‘jatro-mathémaciens, esprit fort d’ailleurs, porta dans le médecine le même esprit d’incrédulité, qui le séduisit par rapport à la religion’.


As another sign of early knowledge in America, Morgan is also mentioned in the fourth of the Maryland eclogues of the poet and minister Thomas Cradock, who emigrated to Maryland in 1744, line 34-5:

Now Tindal’s system’s ev’ry where received,
And Collins, Morgan, Whoostan all believ’d.  

In America, Deism was the religion of the educated class by the middle of the 18th century. The Quaker Sophia Wigington Hume complained in the middle of the century to her fellow inhabitants of South Carolina about the daily growth of infidelity and Deism. Various of the founding fathers such as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were deists. In the autobiography of Franklin we find a remembrance of his youth:

But I was scarce fifteen, when, after doubting by turns of several points, as I found them disputed in the different books I read, I began to doubt of Revelation itself. Some books against Deism fell into my hands; they were said to be the substance of sermons preached at Boyle’s Lectures. It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them; for the arguments of the Deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the refutations; in short, I soon became a thorough Deist.

It is a typical description of the way along which many founding fathers were to become deists. Franklin was involved in the Deism trial against the Presbyterian minister Samuel Hemphill in Philadelphia in 1735. Philadelphia was the capital of American Deism. Many members of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia were deists, but we have to remember the observation: ‘Deists are difficult to identify because at times they differ from Christians only in emphasis’. Another made a similar observation when he stated that a satisfactory definition of American Deism in a few sentences is almost as difficult as describing an American.

88 S. Hume, An exhortation to the inhabitants of the province of South Carolina, London, 1752, 133.
89 Fr. Lambert, The founding fathers and the place of religion in America, Princeton, 2003, 159-79: ‘Deists enter the religious marketplace’.
Twelve years after Morgan’s death, John Adams, who was to become the second President of the United States, related about his stay in 1755 in Worcester, New England: ‘Here I found Morgan’s Moral Philosopher, which I was informed had circulated with some freedom in that town, and that the principles of Deism had made considerable progress among persons in that and other towns in the country’. A copy of The moral philosopher was found in his library when it was donated to the town of Quincy in the county of Norfolk, in 1823. At the end of the 18th century, we find another person who, just like Morgan, called himself a Christian deist: John Hargrove, a Swedenborgian, minister of the New Jerusalem Church in Baltimore, who wrote in 1801 The temple of truth, in which he said of himself: ‘I am a deist it is true, but take notice I am not a mere deist – I am more – I am a Christian deist’. We have no indication that Hargrove knew the work of Morgan, but his struggle against Deism supposes his probable antipathy against the Christian Deism of Morgan.

§10: Summary

The moral philosopher received much critical attention in other countries, especially in Germany, the Netherlands, and also America. In England, the discussions ran until ten years after the first publication of The moral philosopher. Afterwards, the fire extinguished. Towards the close of the century, Morgan was forgotten. Only the booksellers of London knew his name.

But on the continent and in America the discussion continued for a longer time. At least five of the apologetic works published in English against Morgan were translated into German, two into Dutch. Many critical comments appeared in journals in the German and French languages. Especially in Germany, the reaction was impressive.

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94 C.F. Adams, ed., The works of John Adams, second president of the United States, Volume 2, Boston, 1853, 3; see for other deists in Worcester during that time, K.J. Moynihan, A history of Worcester, 1674-1848, Charleston, SC, 2007, 59, 66; N.N., Deeds and other documents relating to the several pieces of land, and to the library presented to the town of Quincy, by president Adams, together with a catalogue of the books, Cambridge, 1823, 37.

95 J. Hargrove, The temple of truth, Baltimore, 1801, 36.