

A PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENTARY

NATURAL LAW AND
ENLIGHTENMENT CLASSICS

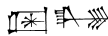
Knud Haakonssen
General Editor

NATURAL LAW AND
ENLIGHTENMENT CLASSICS

*A Philosophical Commentary
on These Words of the Gospel,
Luke 14.23, “Compel Them
to Come In, That My
House May Be Full”*

Pierre Bayle

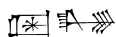
Edited, with an Introduction, by
John Kilcullen and Chandran Kukathas



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INTRODUCTION

Liberalism makes it a matter of moral principle not to use coercive means, threats, and inducements to impede the spread of ideas we reject, even when they seem not only wrong but dangerous. In Bayle's time many Christians believed that God himself had commanded the use of such means to prevent the spread of religious error, but even apart from this theological opinion it will seem natural to many people to block the spread of dangerous ideas by force, if that is the most effective way. Coercive methods may often be ineffective, but the liberal believes that even when they are effective, or might be, they are wrong. The earliest and still perhaps the most persuasive argument in favor of this basic tenet of liberalism is Pierre Bayle's *Philosophical Commentary on these words of the gospel (Luke 14.23)*, "Compel them to come in, that my House may be full."

Bayle's Life

Pierre Bayle, the second son of a Protestant pastor, was born on 18 June 1647 in Le Carla (now Carla-Bayle) in the Compté de Foix, at the foot of the Pyrenees. With his brothers, Jacob and Joseph, he learned to read and write in the town's only school, and furthered his education with the help of his father, who introduced him to Latin and Greek as well as to the various books found in his own library and those of his colleagues living nearby. Jean Bayle's modest circumstances made it impossible for him to send his younger son to secondary school until Jacob had finished his theological studies, and Pierre was twenty-one when he set out for the academy at Puylaurens. Already in love with books and learning but disappointed by the school's low standards, Pierre left three months later for Toulouse and was accepted as a day-pupil in a Jesuit college, where he was instructed

in Aristotelian philosophy and logic. Unable, as a young country scholar, to defend his Protestant faith against the arguments of his teachers, on 19 March 1669 he converted to Catholicism, to the dismay of his Huguenot family.

Bayle's conversion did not last long. By the time he stood to defend his Master's thesis in August 1670 he had become thoroughly disaffected with Catholic practice and was no longer satisfied intellectually by its doctrine. But if abandoning his Protestant faith had taken considerable moral courage, abjuring Catholicism—even for the religion of one's birth—was positively dangerous, since under French law “relapsed heretics” incurred heavy penalties. Nonetheless, Bayle converted again and fled to Geneva, never to see his parents or younger brother again.

In Geneva Bayle also abandoned his Aristotelian views and, under the influence of his fellow students at the Academy, Jacques Basnage (1653–1723) and Vincent Minutoli (1640–1710), became a follower of Descartes's philosophy. After two years as tutor in a noble family near Geneva, Bayle returned to France to other tutorships, going under the name Bèle to avoid being identified as a lapsed Catholic. In 1675 he competed for and won the chair in philosophy at the Protestant Academy of Sedan.

At the Academy Bayle formed a close friendship with the professor of theology and Hebrew, Pierre Jurieu (1637–1713), and enjoyed the benefits of his patronage and of his extensive library. In Sedan he read Malebranche (1638–1715) and Spinoza (1632–77), and began to produce writings of his own. This academic life was disrupted by political developments. The religious toleration the Huguenots had enjoyed since the 1598 Edict of Nantes was slowly eroded during the reign of Louis XIV (1638–1715). In 1681 the Academy at Sedan was abolished by royal decree, and Bayle and Jurieu moved to the École Illustre in Rotterdam to take up chairs in philosophy and theology respectively, Bayle carrying with him the manuscript of *Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet*.

That work was first published anonymously under the title *Letter on the Comet* in March 1682 and gained substantial public attention, not only because Bayle attacked superstition but also because he argued that a society of atheists could endure, contrary to the widespread belief at the time that belief in God is necessary to social cohesion. But it was the publication in

May that year of Bayle's reply to Louis Maimbourg's (1620?–1686) anti-Huguenot tract, *History of Calvinism*, that brought about greater controversy. Bayle's *General Criticism of M. Maimbourg's History of Calvinism* was well-received among Protestants and some Catholics, going into a second edition in November 1682, but it incurred the wrath of the authorities. The consequences were disastrous for Bayle. The burning of the book by the public hangman in Paris in March 1683 served only to increase sales; but the imprisonment of Jacob Bayle was another matter. Unable to capture the author of the *General Criticism*, the authorities incarcerated his only remaining relative; Jacob died in his cell on 12 November 1685.

The other unhappy consequence of Bayle's publication of his *General Criticism* was that it cast his colleague Jurieu's own response to M. Maimbourg's *History* in poor light, leading to a jealousy on the part of the theologian that would turn their friendship into a bitter enmity. In 1685 Bayle began work on several enterprises, including his *Philosophical Commentary*. The work was presented as an anonymous translation from the English of a work by "Mr John Fox of Bruggs." Bayle concealed his identity to avoid controversy with Jurieu, with whom he sought to maintain good relations. Nonetheless, Jurieu attacked the work, though pretending not to know the author. While Bayle had been led to a deep conviction that religious persecution was indefensible, Jurieu held to the traditional Calvinist belief that persecution was warranted if undertaken in defense of the true faith against the false. While Bayle called for toleration, Jurieu preached holy war, encouraged by the success of the Protestant William of Orange in taking the English throne from his Catholic father-in-law, James II. The ensuing battle of pamphlets further soured relations between the two men. In 1693 Jurieu succeeded in persuading the municipal council of Rotterdam to suppress Bayle's post at the *École Illustre*.

By this time Bayle had already commenced work on his most ambitious project, the *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. Relieved of his post by the municipal council and assured of a small annuity from his friend and publisher, Reinier Leers, he was now free to devote himself to his writing. The *Dictionary* was published in December 1696 and was an immediate success. The first edition sold out within months, and Bayle promptly began work on a second. But the work also provoked controversy and attracted the

attention of the Walloon Consistory in Rotterdam, anxious about several entries thought scandalous to the faithful—because obscene, unduly tolerant of atheists, skeptics, and Manicheans, and insufficiently respectful of King David, on whose crimes and failings Bayle had dwelt at length in the *Dictionary*'s most controversial entry. The second edition, published in December 1701, toned down several of the articles and included four "clarifications" to mollify the authorities.

Bayle's last years were devoted to scholarship, and he produced several more works, including his four-volume *Reply to the Questions of a Provincial* (1703–7), in which he continued his battle with those who, in his view, offered facile solutions to the problem of evil and implausible arguments to reconcile reason and faith. Though he often had visitors because of his now considerable reputation, he died alone, after a prolonged illness, on 28 December 1706, surrounded by his books and papers.

Bayle's writings at once prefigured and did much to shape the European Enlightenment. When his *Dictionary* eventually found its way back to France, it became one of the most widely read works of the eighteenth century, and the one most readily found in private libraries. Voltaire and Diderot declared their indebtedness to it, while Thomas Jefferson included it in the one hundred books to form the basis of the Library of Congress. Leibniz felt compelled to respond to Bayle in his *Theodicy*, while Benjamin Franklin was moved to defend Bayle's thesis that atheists could form a coherent society, a thesis also defended by Bernard Mandeville. Early in the eighteenth century the *Dictionary*, *Thoughts on the Comet*, and *Philosophical Commentary* were translated into English, and the *Dictionary* and *Thoughts on the Comet* were translated into German. Herder, Hume, Lessing, Montesquieu, and Rousseau studied and discussed Bayle's work, which was well known to philosophers and poets as well as to some politicians and monarchs. His influence was immense.

Religious Conflicts of the Times

To understand Bayle's thought and its impact, it is important to see it not only from the perspective of later thought, but also in relation to the political and intellectual circumstances of early modern Europe. Politics and philosophy at this time were dominated by questions of religion.

Bayle was born four years after Louis XIV became king. Louis saw himself as God's representative in France, with the right to appoint bishops and abbots. He would bow to the pope in matters of faith and morals, but the French clergy were bound to the king in matters of state. The king's claims were supported by the "Gallican" party among the Catholic clergy. The Ultramontanes, members of the clergy who asserted the absolute authority of the pope, were in the minority. The Catholic clergy were further divided over the conflict between the Jesuits and the Jansenists.

Reluctant to concede anything to the temporal authority of the papacy, Louis was even less willing to tolerate the presence in France of dissenting religious sects. Lutheran works first appeared in Paris in 1519. By the mid-1530s the ideas of John Calvin, a French exile in Geneva, began to spread. Calvinist (commonly called "Huguenot") pastors trained in Geneva entered the country in large numbers, and by 1562 there were 2,000 Calvinist churches in France. Catherine de Médicis, ruling through her young son, Charles IX (1560–74), abandoned the policy of repression and, with the chancellor, Michel de L'Hospital, attempted to bring about religious compromise and offer the Calvinists a measure of toleration. The violent Catholic reaction, led by François, Duke de Guise, led to a civil war that lasted nearly forty years. The most famous incident was the massacre of Huguenots on the eve of the feast day of St. Bartholomew on 24 August 1572. Eventually, because of the death of the Catholic heir to the throne, the Huguenot leader Henry of Navarre became the legitimate heir and, after further fighting, became king as Henry IV (1589–1610). To secure his position, he converted to Roman Catholicism, but on 13 April 1598 he promulgated the Edict of Nantes, which granted the Huguenots a considerable measure of religious toleration. The Edict guaranteed the Huguenots freedom of conscience and the right to practice their religion publicly in certain areas of the country, and it also gave them a number of fortresses as surety against attack. Huguenots were made eligible to hold some public offices formerly available only to Catholics and to attend schools and universities. During the time of the Frondes (civil disturbances that almost brought down the monarchy) the Huguenots remained loyal to Louis XIV, who publicly thanked them.

There was good reason why many Huguenots were likely to be loyal subjects. An important element of Calvin's teaching was that subjects

should obey the secular authority without resistance. This idea became more difficult for Huguenots to accept after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and the theory of justifiable rebellion against tyrannical rule for a while acquired a greater following. However, when a more tolerant attitude among Catholics was expressed by the "Politique" Party, led by Chancellor L'Hospital, who thought the Huguenots should be tolerated in the interests of peace, the Huguenots returned to Calvin's doctrine of non-resistance. Pierre Bayle himself always believed that the temporal authority of the king could not rightly be resisted.

In 1660 an assembly of the French clergy asked that the king close the Huguenots' colleges and hospitals and exclude them from public offices. In 1670 it suggested that, at seven years of age, a child be deemed capable of abjuring Protestantism, and that those who did abjure be taken from their parents. The clergy subsequently called for mixed marriages to be annulled and for the children of such unions to be considered illegitimate. Louis XIV gradually acceded to the demands of the clergy. The 1670s and '80s thus became decades of increasingly severe repression for Huguenots. By 1670 Huguenots were forbidden to establish or maintain colleges; attempted emigration was punishable by imprisonment and loss of property; and those caught helping would-be emigrants were sentenced to life in the galleys. A fund was established to pay Huguenots to convert to Catholicism, and there were hefty punishments for lapsed converts.

Between 1682 and 1685 most of the remaining Huguenot churches were closed or torn down. Worshipers discovered among the ruins were severely punished as enemies of the state. In 1681 the minister of war, Louvois, suggested to Louis that the Huguenots should be coerced through the practice of lodging troops in private homes at the expense of owners (dragonnade or "dragooning"). The soldiers' excesses included looting, rape, and beating their hosts, and the terror they provoked led even Louis to condemn their violence. But it continued at the insistence of the minister of war, who tried to keep news of violence from the king. Spreading through France, the dragonnades brought about many conversions, but hundreds of thousands left France. In October 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked, Louis declaring it unnecessary now that France was again entirely Catholic. For the Huguenots who were left, the dragonnades continued, and some his-

torians have concluded that the holy terror of 1685 was worse than the revolutionary Terror of 1793. Of the 400,000 “converts” who were made to attend Mass and receive the Eucharist, those who refused the consecrated wafers were punished, often cruelly. Men were imprisoned, and women sent to convents, and children were taken from their parents, baptized as Catholics, and sent out for adoption.

The horror of the repression goes some way to explaining Bayle’s passion in the *Philosophical Commentary*. He was well aware that his brother’s fate was one shared by many French Protestants. Though the 400,000 Huguenots who managed to leave France were generously received throughout Europe, only a minority of French Catholics condemned the massacres of the Revocation, even in private. Such luminaries as Bossuet, Fénelon, and La Fontaine, among others, praised Louis for his courage and resolve. Arnauld wrote privately that “if even half of what is reported about the coercion of the Huguenots is true it is deplorable” and likely to make the Catholic religion odious—but what he deplored was the use of coercion without adequate provision for instruction. It was left to Bayle to advance the view that violence against the dissenters could not be Christian and could not be justified.

In this he found few supporters even among his Calvinist coreligionists. Calvin himself had argued vigorously in support of persecution, notably in his writings following the execution of Michael Servetus, who was burned as a blasphemous heretic in Geneva in October 1553 for propounding doctrines that questioned received beliefs about the Trinity and denied that Christ was the Eternal Son. Some of Servetus’s views associated him with the Anabaptists, a sect whose rejection of civil authority had led to their being regarded as dangerous fanatics deserving of suppression. Protestant thinking was divided on the question of suppressing even the Anabaptists, and the prosecution of Servetus, led by Calvin, caused great uneasiness among the various Swiss churches, in Basle, Berne, Geneva, and Zurich. It was only Calvin’s zeal that ensured Servetus’s execution, but the distress and soul-searching it provoked led to Calvin’s most concerted attempt to show that it was the duty of the Christian magistrate to suppress heresy and punish heretics. The most difficult philosophical question Calvin had to confront here was one raised by Sébastien Castellion (1515–63):

if highly complex theological doctrines had been debated for thousands of years and yet remained unsettled, with none having proven demonstrably true, how could men justify killing one another for their differences in opinion on these matters? Calvin answered that this contention implied that nothing could be known and brought into question everything, even belief in God. But he went further, anticipating the objection that authorizing the civil magistrate to suppress heresy by force would justify Catholic suppression of Protestants. His reply was that Catholic persecution was impermissible because Protestants were in the right.

The Argument of the *Philosophical Commentary*

Whether possession of the truth justifies religious persecution is the question Bayle confronted in the *Philosophical Commentary*. French Catholics, for the most part, were in no doubt that it does and that they possessed the truth. But the Calvinists saw matters the same way but in reverse; their objection to the persecution against them was that it was perpetrated by heretics against the innocent followers of the true faith, Calvinism. For Bayle this stance was morally untenable. Bayle's *Commentary* is a critique of *all* coercion in religious matters, as being inconsistent with reason. To the extent that the *Commentary* is further intended to demonstrate that persecution is incompatible with Christianity, it also turns into an argument about the philosophical basis of theology, and indeed about the sovereignty of reason. His thesis is that natural law must guide the interpretation of religious doctrine. In the very first chapter of the *Philosophical Commentary* Bayle makes his stand:

Thus the whole Body of Divines, of what Party soever, after having cry'd up Revelation, the Meritoriousness of Faith, and Profoundness of Mysterys, till they are quite out of breath, come to pay their homage at last at the Footstool of the Throne of Reason, and acknowledg, tho they won't speak out (but their Conduct is a Language expressive and eloquent enough) That Reason, speaking to us by the Axioms of natural Light, or metaphysical Truths, is the supreme Tribunal, and final Judg without Appeal of whatever's propos'd to the human Mind. Let it ne'er then be pretended more, that Theology is the Queen, and Philosophy the Handmaid;

for the Divines themselves by their Conduct confess, that of the two they look on the latter as the Sovereign Mistress: and from hence proceed all those Efforts and Tortures of Wit and Invention, to avoid the Charge of running counter to strict Demonstration. Rather than expose themselves to such a Scandal, they'l shift the very Principles of Philosophy, discredit this or that System, according as they find their Account in it; by all these Proceedings plainly recognizing the Supremacy of Philosophy, and the indispensable obligation they are under of making their court to it; they'd ne'er be at all this Pains to cultivate its good Graces, and keep parallel with its Laws, were they not of Opinion, that whatever Doctrine is not vouch'd, as I may say, confirm'd and register'd in the supreme Court of Reason and natural Light, stands on a very tottering and crazy Foundation. (pp. 67–68)

It is Bayle's intention in the *Philosophical Commentary* to examine closely the case for righteous persecution by the light of reason, to show how sorely it is wanting. The theory he proposes as an alternative is a doctrine of mutual toleration, under which those who disagree on matters of faith are entitled to try to persuade each other of what each takes to be the truth, but not entitled to force an opponent's alleged erring conscience to convert to an alleged true faith.

In the Gospel according to Luke, Jesus offers a parable of the man who prepared a great feast but found that the many people he had invited refused his invitation. Angry, this lord commanded his servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). From St. Augustine (354–430) on, Christian apologists had appealed to this verse to justify forcible conversion. Bayle's contention, however, is that this interpretation cannot be correct. His commentary on the passage is "philosophical," not historical or literal. Instead of entering into discussion of its literal sense, Bayle argues that Christ cannot have intended in these words to command anything contrary to what the natural light of reason reveals to us about right and wrong. Bayle argues that the natural light shows that the use of force to obtain conversion is morally wrong and that therefore, whatever the correct literal interpretation of the text may be, Christ cannot have intended it as a command to persecute.

The *Commentary* is divided into four parts. Part I establishes the case

Bayle wishes to put against the alleged literal interpretation of Luke 14:23. It begins with his statement in Chapter 1 that the principles of reason must govern all our interpretations of Scripture. In succeeding chapters he argues that the alleged literal sense is contrary to the natural light of reason; that it is contrary to the spirit of the gospel; that it causes a confusion of vice and virtue, to the ruination of society; that it gives infidels a pretext for expelling Christians from their dominions; that it leads inevitably to crimes; that it deprives the Christian religion of an important argument against Mohammedanism; that it makes the complaints of the first Christians against their pagan persecutors invalid; and that it exposes Christians to continual oppression without any hope of ending the disputes between persecutors and the persecuted.

Part II of the *Commentary* replies to a series of objections. Here Bayle responds to those who might think his case exaggerates the violence implicit in the doctrine of compulsion, fails to recognize that force was condoned by the laws given by God to the people in the Old Testament and by the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, threatens, by excessive toleration, to throw the state into confusion, and neglects the fact that the literal reading of “compel” authorizes only violence in defense of truth. Bayle’s replies answer these various objections, but also work toward the construction of his own positive doctrine of toleration as a viable alternative to the theory of righteous persecution and to the ideas of the “half-tolerationists” who think that general toleration is absurd. The erroneous conscience, Bayle tries to show, has the same rights as an enlightened one. Those who are mistaken are entitled to no less respect than those blessed with insight, if they are sincere in their belief in the rightness of their convictions. The dispute between persecutor and persecuted cannot be resolved by invoking the superior rights of truth—since what is the truth is precisely what is at issue. Each therefore has an equal claim to the tolerance of the other. Since, however, one of them must be in error, we can only conclude that the claims of an erroneous conscience are equal to those of an enlightened one.

At the center of Bayle’s doctrine is a theory of the morality of conscience. An act is never more sinful than when it is undertaken with the conscious belief that it is wrong. On the other hand, an innocent mistake

on a point of fact may excuse: a woman who sleeps with a man she mistakes for her husband does not sin if the mistake is an honest one. These points were generally accepted, but Bayle goes further, and argues that an innocent mistake over moral principle or religious doctrine may also excuse, and that an act done in error is not sinful and may be praiseworthy. If an error is the result of sinful negligence or self-deception, the sin is in the negligence or self-deception, not in the actions that result from the error.

On the other hand, there is no greater wrong than forcing a person to perform an act he believes to be wrong. To force conscience is to force a person into a state of sin, for it means causing a person to act contrary to what he believes is the voice of God. Indeed, even tempting a person to act against conscience by making threats or offering inducements is wrong. In the end, God will judge us not by the real qualities of our actions but by our intentions—by our purity of heart. All God requires is that people act on what seems to them to be the truth, after as much inquiry as seems to them appropriate. This doctrine lies at the center of Bayle's theory of toleration and is the point that must bear the greatest critical weight.

Parts I and II were published together in 1686. Part III of the *Commentary*, published in 1687, offers a critical commentary on passages from St. Augustine included in a book published recently on the orders of the Archbishop of Paris, entitled *The Conformity of the Conduct of the Church of France for reuniting the Protestants, with that of the Church of Africk for reuniting the Donatists to the Catholick Church*. Commenting on these passages, Bayle takes Augustine to task for the weakness of his defense of the persecution of the Donatists, applying and reinforcing the arguments of Parts I and II. What is striking about this part of the work, however, is the vigor with which Bayle pursues Augustine, a figure revered by all the various Christian denominations—from the Jesuit Molinists to the Jansenists, Arminians, and Calvinists. In answering Augustine, Bayle is taking on arguments advanced, or at least accepted, by his fellow Huguenots, following the line of Calvin's reasoning in his defense of the execution of Servetus. While individual chapters take St. Augustine to task for a variety of failings, from misinterpreting biblical passages and drawing implausible conclusions from Old Testament stories to reasoning poorly and begging ques-

tions, one concern dominates Bayle's attack. He wants to show, again and again, that the principle of persecution always rebounds upon the orthodox. If the case for persecution is sound, it may be used with equal warrant by heretics. The consequence of St. Augustine's position, if accepted, would simply be to arm all sects against each other.

Part IV, the "Supplement" to the *Philosophical Commentary*, published in 1688, is a fragment of a much longer, otherwise unpublished reply to criticisms of the earlier Parts advanced by Jurieu in his *Rights of two sovereigns in matters of religion, conscience and the prince; to destroy the dogma of the indifference of religion and universal tolerance, against a book entitled "Philosophical Commentary."* In this part Bayle develops in detail an argument already sketched in Part II, Chapter 10, and in Part III, that if Christ had commanded true believers to persecute, then, since as God he must have been able to foresee that Christians would disagree about what is the truth, he would have commanded an unending war between sects; since this would be contrary to divine goodness, he cannot have intended to give such a command. In Part IV he also refutes in detail the Augustinian idea that error in religious and moral matters is a punishment for original sin leading to further punishable sins: Bayle argues that even apart from sin, resolving the doctrinal disputes that divide Christians is beyond the capacity of ordinary people, perhaps of anyone. Sin, original or personal, therefore does not explain the differences of opinion among Christians.

However, it seems to follow from Bayle's principles that persecutors themselves do no wrong, and may even act meritoriously, if they sincerely believe that they ought to persecute. Bayle offers three replies. The first is that for persecutors to be excused by sincerity their beliefs must really be sincere, the product of an honest search for the truth rather than negligence and "criminal Passion," which is unlikely. Second, in persecuting, persecutors will stir up in themselves passions of hatred and anger which in themselves involve sinning, and they would then invariably be tempted into further sinful actions—thereby strengthening the presumption that they err not out of sincerity. Third, Bayle points out that, even if persecutors are sincere in their belief in the rightness of persecution, we must endeavor to correct their error (which is the aim of Bayle's book) and meanwhile restrain them from actions so pernicious to human society. We must not

persecute would-be persecutors, but we may and must take precautions against their ever having power to act on their intolerant convictions.

The Influence of the *Philosophical Commentary*

The *Philosophical Commentary* is not as well known as Locke's *Letter concerning toleration*, published shortly after Bayle's much longer treatise. But Bayle's work offers an account of the case for toleration that is more comprehensive, and in many ways deeper, than Locke's. Whereas Locke takes as his main premise the notion going back to Marsilius of Padua that the state is concerned only with the protection of this-worldly interests, a premise that would never have been conceded by the people Locke needed to convince, Bayle's premises are ones that even Christians most inclined to persecute would have had to accept. As he often says, arguments are of no value if they "beg the question," i.e. somehow assume what they are supposed to prove. The distinctive mark of Bayle's intellectual style is his energetic effort to argue from "common principles" acceptable to people to whose practices he was most deeply opposed. As a champion of rational argument, Bayle is hard to match, and it is not surprising that he exerted the influence he did on the philosophers of the Enlightenment. Since Augustine's time, European thought has struggled with the question of toleration in religion, and more recently with similar questions of tolerating diverse views in politics and morality; all these questions have become urgent again at the present time. Much can be learned from a careful study of Bayle's engagement in the *Philosophical Commentary* with problems that remain very much alive.

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A NOTE ON THE PRESENT TRANSLATION

This edition of the *Philosophical Commentary* is an amended version of the first English translation, which appeared in London in 1708. The author of the translation, which remains the only complete rendering of the *Commentary* into English, is unknown. A more recent translation by Amie Godman Tannenbaum was published in 1987, but it omits Part III and the Supplement.¹

We have checked the text of the 1708 translation against the French text (from <http://gallica.bnf.fr/>) and made silent changes to correct omissions, misprints, and mistranslations and to clarify places where change in the meaning of English words would make the translation unintelligible or misleading to the modern reader.² We have also implemented the corrigenda of the 1708 edition. We have not tried to make the translation more literal; in our judgment it is rather free (in the manner of the time), but substantially very faithful, and lively. The pagination of the 1708 edition is indicated inside angle brackets.

We have identified and supplied details for Bayle's various references and translated passages quoted in foreign languages, unless Bayle himself supplies a translation or paraphrase. We have left the titles of works referred to in the original language unless the title illustrates Bayle's argument, and then we have translated it. In notes and appendixes we have provided information needed for reading the work with reasonable comprehension. Footnotes of the 1708 edition are indicated by asterisk, dagger, etc. Notes

1. Amie Godman Tannenbaum, *Pierre Bayle's Philosophical Commentary. A Modern Translation and Critical Interpretation* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987).

2. See "Alterations to the 1708 Translation," in the Appendixes.