

Preface and More-With Updates



The Trip -- 1997 -- Reading and Reflection

My wife and I are making plans to return to Scotland and England with the Logans and the group from the Westminster Theological Seminary for at least one more time--June 30-July 18, 1997. I always try to prepare by doing some reading in advance and pondering related issues. In this journal preface, several books are to be discussed in pretty much the order in which they were read.

First, I finally managed to get hold of a copy of *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince* by Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661). Sinclair Ferguson, Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster, lectures on *Lex, Rex* on our British tours. Rutherford was a noted preacher and scholar (at St. Andrews), and the author of many books, including *Lex, Rex* and *The Due Right of Presbyteries*, both published in 1644. He is perhaps best known for this service in London, where (in 1643) he joined the group of “divines,” who

prepared the “Westminster Confession of Faith” and related documents. But his *Lex, Rex* was, to say the least, considered politically incorrect. The copy of *Lex, Rex* that I have is a reprint (published by Sprinkle Publications, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1982) and in an introduction it is noted that the book was...

considered by the government as “inveighing against monarchie and laying ground for rebellion,” and ordered to be burned by the hand of the common hangman at Edinburgh. It met with similar treatment at St. Andrews, and also at London; and a proclamation was issued, that every person in possession of a copy, who did not deliver it up to the king’s solicitor, should be treated as an enemy to the government. (p. xix)



I could not help noting how much the principal argument of the book resembled an argument used by Plato in the *Republic*. It will be recalled that, in the *Republic*, Plato relates the long discussions Socrates had with a group of younger men on the nature of justice. One of the young men, Thrasymachus, a tough minded man of the world, one of those chaps who has lived in the real world, says, “What I say is that ‘just’ or ‘right’ mean nothing but what is in the interest of the stronger party” (in the old Cornford translation, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, this is on p.18).

It is natural (isn’t it?) to think that justice has something to do with leadership of the state and the art of statecraft. Plato considers the art of medicine and shipbuilding as analogous. But one of my old teachers (the late Howard D. Roelofs, if you must know), often used a Biblical analogy, from the story of David and Bathsheba. David was attracted to Bathsheba, though she was the wife of a soldier in his army, Uriah the Hittite. David seduced Bathsheba and wanted to have her as one of his own wives, so he had Uriah killed. In the King James Version, the story is that David wrote a letter to Joab, his general, telling him: “Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die” (II Samuel, 11:15).

David had to repent for this in sackcloth and ashes. Why? What did he do that was so wrong? He was commander-in-chief of the Israelite armies. Somebody had to be there where the battle was “hottest,”

and that soldier would probably die--why not Uriah? In the old Gregory Peck movie, he (Uriah) even wanted to go--why not send him? The point is (and it is Plato's point and Rutherford's, too) that it is one thing to act as commander-in-chief, and quite another to use that position to further our own interests, e.g. stealing someone's wife. Thus Plato could say (on p. 28 of my text), "If we are to speak strictly, the physician, as such, produces health; the builder, a house; and then each, in his further capacity as wage-earner, gets his pay."

For Rutherford, a major question is "Should a citizen obey a lawful prince?" and the answer is "Of course." But when a man uses his position for his own ends, he is no longer a lawful prince. In one of his clearest paragraphs, Rutherford sums up his case (p. 145):

The ruler, as the ruler, and the nature and intrinsical end of the office is, that he bear God's sword as an avenger to execute wrath on him that doth evil,--and so cannot be resisted without sin. But the man who is the ruler, and commandeth things unlawful, and killeth the innocent, carrieth the papist's and prelate's sword to execute, not the righteous judgment of the Lord upon the ill-doer, but his own private revenge upon him that doth well; therefore, the man may be resisted, the office may not be resisted; and they must be two different things.

And speaking of the case of King David, Rutherford added,

Whatever David did, though he was a king, he did it not as king; he deflowered not Bathsheba as king, and Bathsheba might with bodily resistance and violence lawfully have resisted King David, though kingly power remained in him, while he should thus attempt to commit adultery...(p. 149).

Plato would have agreed. Unfortunately, such philosophical subtleties were too much for the government of Charles I and seemed contrary to the doctrine of the divine right of kings.

Rutherford is not easy reading, so I next sought refuge in a more recent philosophical work, a book in the Oxford Studies in Theological Ethics series, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits and God's Assistance* by John E. Hare (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996). John Hare is a professor of philosophy at Calvin College, and in 1996 he served as keynote speaker at the Wheaton College Philosophy Conference on the topic of "Religion and Philosophy." I found his book disappointing. So far as I could understand his book, Hare wants to argue that Kant and others (presumably including John Hare) have seen

a “gap” between what we feel we have a duty to do (or to be??) and what in this mortal frame, we are able to do. God is brought in to fill the gap, supernaturally. I found the book poorly argued and am certain that Kant saw no such “gap,” and would not have sought to “fill” it in the way Hare suggests. But I would like to see the book reviewed by someone better versed in Christian Ethics, such as Bill Edgar at Westminster, or Dan McGee or John Wood at Baylor, because I can’t help thinking (honestly) that I must have missed



something.

After plowing through two rather tough books, by Rutherford and Hare, I thought I deserved something lighter and read a new book of popular history, *Faith and Treason: the Story of the Gunpowder Plot*, by Antonia Fraser (Doubleday, New York, 1996). My wife Rosemary read this one, too, and we both enjoyed it very much. The book tells the story of the 1605 Catholic plot to blow up the House of Parliament, kill the king (James VI and I), and wipe out the entire Protestant government in a single stroke. The plot failed, of course, and the notorious Guy Fawkes and several other plotters lost their lives, often being executed in the most brutal ways possible. Today in England, November 5 is

still celebrated as Guy Fawkes Day, a national holiday, with bonfires, parties, etc. In her book, Antonia Fraser gives the Catholics a sympathetic hearing. The Catholics were a persecuted religious minority. They were often mistreated, hunted, refused the right to practice their religion publicly. They were forced to worship in secret, and to keep their clergy well hidden. The Catholics constructed hiding places for their priests, called “Priests’ holes”; some such places were so well hidden that they are only just being found in the 20th Century. We get to see one such hiding place, in a fireplace at Blanchland, on our Westminster tours. The book raises interesting questions. If we, as Reformed Protestants, are sure we have the Truth, are we justified in suppressing religious minorities? After all, if a man (or woman) deliberately infects people

with AIDS, we lock them up. AIDS only destroys the mortal body; a heretic can bring destruction to our immortal souls, so why not lock up heretics? On the other hand, if Catholics have rights too, and these rights are denied them by their governments, are they justified in using whatever means are necessary (including terrorism) to have their rights respected?

Interestingly, Ms. Fraser makes much of the fact that Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was heavily influenced by events surrounding the Gunpowder Plot. For example, at the start of Scene III of Act II, Macbeth has murdered wise old King Duncan, and then there is a knock on the castle door, which Macbeth obviously cannot answer (bloody hands and such). As a bit of comic relief, the Porter who answers the door is drunk and shouts insults at the intruders who disturb his sleep. Among other things...

Who's there, i' th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven. O, come in, equivocator.

Shakespeare's audience would have caught the joke. Ms. Fraser devotes a rather full discussion (esp. pp. 239-244) to the topic of equivocation. Catholics worked out a procedure, called "equivocation," by which they could avoid simply lying under governmental interrogations, without giving away secrets they did not wish to reveal. The Protestant authorities tended to belittle and ridicule such practices, as mere hypocrisy, at best.

Ms. Fraser's book was lighter reading. I needed to get back to work and found a really excellent book, *The Sovereignty of Reason, the Defense of Rationality in the Early English Enlightenment* by Frederick C. Beiser, who is Professor of Philosophy at Indiana University (Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1996).

Beiser begins his book with a quotation from the Preface to the First Edition of Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). I think I was first introduced to that work by Professor Samuel S. S. Browne at the University of Cincinnati sometime during the 1957-58 school year. I still have the book we used, and I tend to mark up my books to indicate how important a passage seemed to me. My books have

underlining, and marginal notes, as “Note,” “Impt.,” and “Very Impt.,” etc. So I looked up the quote, a footnote, actually, in which Kant said:

Our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism, and to criticism everything must submit. Religion through its sanctity, and law-giving through its majesty, may seek to exempt themselves from it. But they then awaken just suspicion, and cannot claim the sincere respect which reason accords only to that which has been able to sustain the test of free and open examination. (My old text is Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, abridged edition, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, Macmillan & Co., Limited, London, 1952, p.7)

I was interested to find that, almost 40 years ago now, I had underscored only the first sentence and made no marginal notes; apparently the passage made little or no impact. I’m sure I just thought “Yes, certainly!” I care about my religious faith; we want it to be rational, don’t we?

By contrast, I now feel certain the passage quoted would make my friend Sam Logan, President of Westminster Theological, profoundly uncomfortable. President Logan is a church historian, and a good one. In his lectures, he often uses a very detailed historical chart. I still recall being confused when I noted, on the 1992 historical chart, that Sam had, beside the year 1696, the notes,

John Toland publishes *Christianity not Mysterious*, considered the first major work of English Deism. Drawing heavily upon Locke, Toland asserts the absolute authority of human reason which judges Scripture just as it does any other book.

It was clear that Logan meant to be critical of Toland’s book and to disparage this undue dependence on “mere human reason.” Again, I was puzzled! What’s wrong with reason? If the religion we accept is true, I wondered, can’t it stand the test of human reason? And why the emphases on human reason; isn’t there just plain reason? Do we need to fear that?

Beiser notes that Kant wrote as an outstanding example of an Enlightenment (Aufklärung) philosopher. In 1781, what he wrote on this topic seemed perfectly acceptable, even obvious (and so it seemed to me, in 1957-58). But he (Beiser) also shows that this was not always the case. He notes that the great Reformers, especially Calvin, would not have found Kant’s quote acceptable, and neither would such English Puritans as Thomas Cartwright, in the early Seventeenth Century. He (Beiser again) helps me by

explaining why the Reformers and Puritans (and maybe Sam Logan, too) would speak so disparagingly of “mere human reason.” First, the Puritans considered the Bible to be the literal, inspired word of God, in no need of any other support. A second reason, which makes sense to me, is that the Reformers (and Puritans) were not Platonists but accepted the nominalism of William of Ockham.

Beiser explains what this means:

The ultimate effect of this tradition was to demote reason to the status of a merely *human* authority. Since the ideas of reason are not eternal archetypes or divine laws, but simply human modes of apprehension, and since such apprehension is directed by the will, reason becomes an essentially carnal faculty. For the Protestant tradition, this meant that the authority of reason cannot possibly be on par with that of Scripture. While reason has a merely *human*, Scripture has a *divine* authority. Cartwright and other Puritans were to endorse this doctrine explicitly. The authority of Scripture stands to reason, Cartwright wrote, as a “*cleare fountaine*” to a “*filthy puddle*.” (pp. 52-53)

Beiser’s book also has useful chapters on Richard Hooker’s *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* of 1593, which is a defense of the use of reason, and also (and better) chapters on “Cambridge Platonism” and “Toland and the Deism Controversy.”

Obviously, again, Ralph Cudworth (1617-88), Henry More (1614-87) and others of the Cambridge scholars were Platonists, (of a sort), so they would not have considered reason “merely human.” In these chapters, Beiser explains how scholars came to have more and more confidence in the use of reason, in all areas, including religion. It should be noted also that

Cudworth’s principal work bore the title, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678), and he also had an ethics book published after his death, *A Treatise Concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* (1731,

Cambridge University Press has published a new edition, edited by Sarah Hutton, in 1996). Notice, especially, those words, ‘true,’ ‘intellectual,’ ‘eternal,’ and ‘immutable’; if I may use a Texas vernacular, we ain’t talking “mere human reason” here! Beiser’s concluding chapter on “Faith in Reason” closes with a reference to those “...early liberal divines of seventeenth century England. With justice, their portraits still adorn the dining halls of Cambridge and Oxford” (p. 327). Those who “travel with Sam” to Cambridge will recall the portrait of Ralph Cudworth in the dining room where we eat at Christ’s College, Cambridge.



Professor Beiser has another book I also consulted, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy From Kant to Fichte* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987). The book was published

earlier than the book on the *Sovereignty of Reason*, but covers a later period, German philosophy from roughly 1781-1794. In this book, the author shows that many German scholars of the late Eighteenth Century (e.g. Hamann and Jacobi) were disappointed, and indeed felt betrayed, by the results of the “Aufklärung.” Early on, they had embraced the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason, because they saw it as adding welcome support for their beliefs in morals, politics, and of course, religion. If reason and revelation both lead the same way--and the new science depended so heavily on reason--why not accept it? But, as many German scholars of this period saw things, the outstanding products of “reason” in their age were the philosophies of Spinoza and David Hume. In short, the unbridled use of human reason seemed to them to lead inevitably to skepticism, atheism and (Jacobi coined the term) nihilism. So they abandoned reason. But, sadly, what they sought, instead, was an emphasis on direct experience, feeling, intuition, and even irrationalism (remember the influence Hamann had on Kierkegaard!).

Beiser is aware that this is not the end of the story. The Nineteenth Century saw possibly the wildest explosion of rationalistic system-building in the entire history of Western thought. Consider (if we're up to such mental gymnastics) the great systems of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and (in a different way) that of Karl Marx. In our 20th Century there was a large-scale rejection of system-building, in favor of British analytic philosophy, in all its varied forms, or perhaps American pragmatism, or, on the continent again, phenomenology and existentialism. But even this resume simplifies the account. And who knows what the next century will bring? I shudder at the thought.

I feel sure that, in Britain and (even more) in America, many scholars continued, at least through the first two-thirds of the Nineteenth Century, to accept the Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense, as their guide in such matters. Some of these scholars taught at the Princeton Theological Seminary, when Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge were at the helm there, and at least as far south as Baylor University at Independence, Texas, during the tenure of President William Carey Crane (d. 1885). It is a complicated matter, worthy of another book, to decide whether the Scots' “Common Sense” resembles (and in what ways) the “reason” of the Cambridge Platonists. The Scots and their nineteenth century American

disciples were convinced that reason and revelation both lead in the same direction. My colleagues Mike Beaty, Todd Buras, and Larry Lyon have discussed this issue in a number of papers related to their Lilly Project on the place of religion in the academic world (see, for example, their recent “Baptist Higher Education: a Conflict in Terms?” in Baylor’s alumni magazine, *The Baylor Line*, Winter, 1997, pp. 42-51). It must be admitted that very few of us (I may be the only one left!) still share much confidence in “Common Sense” in our “Postmodern” world. Today, many philosophers and theologians refuse to speak of anything as “true” at all, and seem to have little regard for either reason or Scripture.

The previous paragraph reminds me that I also read, within the past few months, a reprint of a nineteenth century biography of one of the finest minds American Presbyterianism has yet produced, James Henley Thornwell. Thornwell (1812-1862) was one of the major Presbyterian churchmen and scholars of the ante-bellum South. He was educated at South Carolina College in Columbia, then became a professor and later president there, and still later became president of their seminary. He was a good theologian and philosopher, well read in the Scots: Hume, Reid, Dugald Stewart, and he especially admired Sir William Hamilton. I think I first ran across references to Thornwell in reading one of my favorite books, E. Brooks Holifield’s *The Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795-1860* (Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1978). A year or so ago I read a more recent biography, *The Metaphysical Confederacy: James Henley Thornwell and the Synthesis of Southern Values* by James Oscar Farmer, Jr. (Mercer University Press, Macon, Georgia 1986). But probably the best work on Thornwell remains the biography done (in 1875) by his friend B. M. Palmer, *The Life and Letters of James Henley Thornwell* (first published 1875, reprinted 1986). I have read the Palmer volume, but not (“Had we but world enough and time...!”) the four-volume set of Thornwell’s *Collected Writings* (both--the biography and the set-- are reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1986). I shall spare my readers (if any) details of Thornwell’s life, but there is one incident, which took place when he was a college student of 19 in Columbia, South Carolina, that requires an extended quotation, from the Palmer biography:

During an evening stroll, he stumbles into the book store of the town, and finds lying upon the counter a small volume, entitled “Confession of Faith.” He had never before heard of its existence; he only saw that it contained a systematic exposition of Christian doctrine. It is needless to apprise the reader that it

was the Westminster Confession. He bought it for twenty-five cents, carried it home, and, as he himself testifies, read it entirely through that night. "For the first time," he adds, "I felt that I had met with a system which held together with the strictest logical connection; granting its premises, the conclusions were bound to follow." He could not immediately pronounce it true, without a careful comparison of the text with the scriptural proofs at the bottom of each page. But he was arrested by the consistency and rigour of its logic. This book determined him as a Calvinist and a Presbyterian; although he had never been thrown into contact with this branch of the Church of Christ, and had never been, but once, within any of its sanctuaries of worship.

Scholars, such as Sam Logan, who place high value on the Westminster Confession, may be pleased to see how great an impact it made on the young genius. I was reminded of this recently when I read a short review of the Confession in the *Presbyterian Outlook* (March 10, 1997), "The Book of Confessions: a Thumbnail Sketch, Part IV: Westminster" by Earl S. Johnson, Jr., (pp. 5, 13), who is listed as an adjunct professor at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School. Johnson has a less favorable assessment of the works of the Westminster divines. Though he has faint praise for "...the precise biblically based propositions they contain" and acknowledges that some sections may still be studied with profit, he has reservations.

Whereas Thornwell praised the logic of the Confession, Johnson is critical:

...by writing only with a propositional logic the Westminster divines often ignored the emerging rationality that scientific study was beginning to supply, by concentrating on abstractions and ignoring history they sacrificed relevance and liveliness, by focusing on matters of truth and skirting tolerance they produced documents which often appear to be stiff and inflexible today. By insisting on the literal interpretation of Scripture, Westminster necessitated the writing of subsequent confessions which understood the Bible in light of higher criticism....

There is more, but it only gets worse. This may only show that I am growing old, but I for one have had my fill of outcries for "tolerance," "relevance," and "liveliness." What do such words mean in a statement of faith? "Well, this is what I think, but what do I know?" or "I guess I think Jesus rose from the dead, but I could be wrong?" Whatever happened to "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise." It is a sad statement of how far we have come, in the wrong direction, that we would seek to condemn the work of men such as Rutherford and Alexander Henderson, on the ground that they focused on the truth, rather than on "tolerance" or "relevance." Forgive us, Father, for we have sinned.

I tend to be a slow reader and would have trouble getting through a set of four thick volumes. My wife does better and has recently finished the latest of a set (she's read them all!) of books I want to read,

too. The book is *Drums of Autumn* (1997) by Diana Gabaldon (880 pages!) This is the fourth of the “voyager” novels; the others are *Outlander* (1991), *Dragonfly in Amber* (1992), and *Voyager* (1994, all four are published by Delacorte Press of the Doubleday Co., New York). The novels have an unlikely premise. A twentieth century woman, who just happens to have medical training, travels to Scotland, visits one of the circles of stones there, and then somehow finds a “niche” in the stones, and passes through--“through”?--to 18th century Scotland! As all right-thinking women do, she falls in love with a Scotsman. But he follows the “Bonnie Prince” to Culloden and is seriously wounded there. After many adventures, the couple, now a family, escape to the New World and settle in North Carolina (further adventures...). My wife does not indulge in that many fantasy novels. But Ms. Gabaldon clearly has a talent for telling a story. My wife finds she just can’t put these books down, and they give a real “you are there!” sense of Scottish history which is not so easily gained by reading dry-as-dust history texts. This woman (Ms. Gabaldon, that is) has solid academic credentials, and she can write!

Speaking of dry-as-dust history texts, I have also secured a copy of one of the books President Logan frequently mentions in his lectures on our British tours and set myself the tough job of working through it. The book is, of course, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, by Henning Graf Reventlow (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1985). My task was made somewhat easier by reading an excellent review article on the book, “The Origins of Modern Attacks on Biblical Authority” by Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (*Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol 49, 1987, pp. 119-142). Reventlow is Professor of Old Testament at the University of Bochum, Germany. His book is a work of immense, encyclopedic scholarship. That is at once its strength, and its greatest problem. It is so detailed that the reader can get lost amid the footnotes (212 pages of footnotes!). For all that, the work is, as Logan claims, extremely important, and worth the trouble. In some ways, it complements the work of Frederick Beiser, especially his book *The Sovereignty of Reason*, as for example, when Reventlow says of Wyclif’s method of interpreting the Scripture (p. 35):

The Bible derives its absolute authority from the fact that with unprecedented consistency, and in contrast to the nominalistic approach which had previously been taught in Oxford, Wyclif adopted realistic philosophy and its Platonic Augustinian understanding of the world and of reality and applied it to the

Bible: the Bible belongs to the eternal world of ideas, indeed it is the primal image of all eternal truth (*prima veritas*) and the book of life. For that reason it is sufficient (*sufficiens*) in itself. All universal concepts and the eternal moral laws are contained in it; indeed it is identical with the Logos, with Christ himself. This idealistic view at the same time carries with it firm trust in human reason: the eternal truths of universal concepts and morality can already be discovered in the earthly sphere by reason, and the truths of faith are similarly demonstrable *aposteriori* by reason; thus the Bible cannot contain anything which would not be in accord with reason.

The book also has lengthy discussions of Hooker's work on ecclesiastical polity, Thomas Hobbes, the Puritans, the Deists, etc., etc.

I wouldn't attempt to do another review of the Reventlow volume, but a couple of additional remarks may be in order. This may seem an odd way to get to it, but I once read a biography of Charles Hodge, central figure at the Princeton Theological Seminary during the 19th century. Archibald Alexander, the first president of the Seminary, sent the young Hodge to Germany for further training. It sometimes seems that the Germans invented graduate education, as we know it. At any rate, I seem to recall that Alexander advised his young-protégé, "Remember that you breathe a poisoned atmosphere."

What did that mean? The assumption seems to be that while America was the last bastion of the pure Christian faith, Germany was filled with free thought, "higher" criticism, etc. Reventlow's thesis is then, that Hodge could have found these things closer to home. In fact, he argues convincingly that, in 17th century British Latitudinarianism and Deism, the seeds were to be found for all of these later problems for the Faith.

Philosophers will find extended discussion of Locke, Butler, and Toland especially useful. This is not to say that all philosophers will be completely convinced. I can't help thinking that his assessment of the work of Bishop Butler is overly harsh. Reventlow thinks that Butler's arguments rather clumsily fall into the Deist trap. He says of Butler, "In fact his philosophical arguments are extremely weak; he was not in a position to make genuinely theological ones (p. 349). This is quoted by Logan in a valuable paper he wrote for *The Westminster Theological Journal* (Vol. 57, No. 1, 1995, pp. 145-163). The paper is entitled "Theological Decline in Christian Institutions and the Value of Van Til's Epistemology" (the quote is on p. 162). Logan approves of Reventlow's verdict on Butler and notes that it is very much in line with the

criticisms made of Butler (and Paley, and many others) by the late Cornelius Van Til. When I first read this quote in a manuscript Professor Logan was kind enough to send me, I objected strongly, perhaps a bit too strongly. The quote in isolation could suggest (it did to me) that Reventlow meant to say that all of Butler's philosophical arguments were weak. And that is simply not true. For example, Butler's responses to Hobbes' egoism are excellent, models of their kind. The problem is that Bishop Joseph Butler is known for two major works; his book on ethics, *Fifteen Sermons in Subjects Chiefly Ethical Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, (1726), and a work of Christian apologetics, the *Analogy of Religion*, published ten years later in 1736. As a philosophy student, I first read Butler's work on ethics almost 40 years ago and have been teaching part or all of Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* for almost that same time. I think I once read his *Analogy*, but I'm not entirely sure. So I'm not really in a good position to judge Butler's apologetics (I have never had a course on apologetics). I say this because reading Reventlow has convinced me that in fact he was speaking only of Butler's *Analogy*. Reventlow has very little to say about Butler's ethics. So what I need to do is take a closer look at the *Analogy* and read this part of Reventlow's book again. For now, I know that quoting authorities proves nothing, but.... I note that in his recent biography of Van Til (*Cornelius Van Til, an Analysis of His Thought*, P & R Publishing, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1995), John Frame takes a more charitable view, and concludes that "...it would be best for us to give him [Butler] more benefit of the doubt than Van Til does" (p. 275). Also, in the recent "Arguments of the Philosophers" series, Terence Penelhum has a book, *Butler* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1985), in which he devotes more than half the text to Butler's apologetic. Butler was born in 1692, so in 1992, the Oxford University Press published *Joseph Butler's Moral and Religious Thought: Tercentenary Essays*, edited by Christopher Cunliffe, with a number of useful essays on Butler's religious work. Again, "had we but world enough and time...." Someday....

It would be possible to repeat much of the above with a parallel account of Reventlow's lengthy critical analysis of the work of John Locke. Again, most philosophy students will have read Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and should be well acquainted with the central arguments of that work. Many of us also read Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*--in my intro classes, I have my students read

Locke's *Second Treatise*, which provides the philosophical underpinnings for the *Declaration of Independence*. Very few philosophers work their way through Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*. But the *Reasonableness* is the central focus of Reventlow's lengthy discussions of Locke (pp. 243-285). Indeed, the value of Reventlow's work for philosophers may be that he offers extended, competent analyses of major philosophical works that we philosophers rarely read.

And philosophy student that I am, I have to draw a conclusion or two from all this. Reventlow and Beiser (though I am not sure that was Beiser's intent) make a good case for those who want to say that human reason should not be given the authority to judge Scripture. Evangelicals often say this, but I think Beiser and Reventlow say it better. It seems plausible to me to make the nominalist versus Platonist (or neo-Platonist, or Cambridge Platonist, or whatever) comparison, and to say that if the Platonist is wrong (as most of us today would say he is wrong) then Reason is a limited faculty, at best. Philosophers could also cite Alasdair MacIntyre's excellent recent book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1988). Kant could claim that reason should judge religion in the same way that he could claim that the moral law, being universal in scope, must apply to all rational creatures (men, angels, even God). Kant could say this because he assumed that reason is simply reason, wherever found. MacIntyre's well-argued claim is that just as there are varying accounts of justice, there are as many varying accounts of reason, and what is to count as being "rational." And there is no over arching, culture-neutral reason (perhaps REASON, in caps) to adjudicate disputes. But I also think Evangelicals harm their cause by speaking as they often do, of "unregenerate" reason. I say this for two reasons: this is insulting, and it is question-begging. I should think that if the aim of a debate is to defeat an opponent, then perhaps you might want to insult him. But if the goal is, with love and compassion, to win a convert, this is doubtful strategy. Further, I should think the point is not that Christians possess some superior reason that the sinner lacks, but the Christian realizes that human reason, including his own, is incompetent to question the authority of Scripture. Permit me to close this section of my bibliographical essay by noting that MacIntyre's book has an interesting short account of the career of one man--Thomas Halyburton--who most Evangelicals would agree did it right, in his book, *Natural Religion Insufficient and Revealed Necessary, to*

Man's Happiness in his Present State (Edinburgh, 1714, see MacIntyre, pp. 243-247). Halyburton was Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews. The copy of his book which I own was printed in Albany, New York, in 1812, so the book was known in America. The copy I own has, just after the Preface, a list of "Recommendations" for Halyburton's fight against Deism, featuring a list of Presbyterian pastors. The first name on the list is that of "Samuel Miller, D.D.," who, the next year, 1813, became the second professor at the Princeton Theological Seminary.

Perhaps I was saving the best for last. I next turned to the recent two-volume history of the *Princeton Seminary* by David B. Calhoun. The first volume bears the title, *Faith and Learning, 1812-1868* (The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1994). This period, at the old-Princeton Seminary, may have been American Presbyterianism's finest hour.

The second volume has the sub-title, *The Majestic Testimony, 1869-1929*, and was also published by the Banner of Truth Trust, in 1996. It is difficult to summarize two fairly hefty volumes, so a few brief comments must suffice. As might be expected, there is required background reading. Mark A. Noll has written an essential work, *Princeton and the Republic, 1768-1822* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1989) and edited an extremely valuable anthology, *The Princeton Theology, 1812-1921* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1983). There is also a more or less "official" history, *Princeton Theological Seminary, a Narrative History, 1812-1992* (Princeton University Press, 1992), by William K. Selden.

This seems no place for a personal remark, but I hope the reader will be understanding. Many years ago, when I began my doctoral dissertation on Kierkegaard, I thought philosophers were expected to be critical, so I devoted many pages to attempting to demolish Kierkegaard's arguments. One of my teachers took me to task for this, "It may be easy to make Kierkegaard look foolish, but you make yourself look foolish, too--because then one wonders why writing on Kierkegaard is worth the effort." I say this because philosophers so often make this mistake (and perhaps some theologians do, too). David Calhoun demonstrates a really incredible knowledge of the Princeton Seminary, its people, and its Christian message,

as these existed from 1812-1929. He also writes as a fan, with a real love, indeed a passion, for his subject. He is not a disinterested analyst; he does not pretend to be.

Volume One is a history of the founding and early years of the Seminary. Chapters are devoted to the first faculty members: Archibald Alexander, Samuel Miller, and Charles Hodge. In some ways, this is a book about books, such as Alexander's *Brief Outline of the Evidences of the Christian Religion* (1825), his work on moral philosophy, *Outlines of Moral Science* (Scribner's, New York, 1852), and Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, published in three volumes in 1871-73, and recently reprinted (B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979). Much discussion is also given to the scholarly periodical, *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, which Hodge edited for so many years, clearly one of the finest academic periodicals of the nineteenth century.

Alexander, Hodge, Miller, and the many members of their families who followed them to Princeton, made the Seminary a center of the "Old School" Presbyterian theology, or simply old style Calvinism. The nineteenth century saw many innovations in Christian theology, but not at Princeton. They resisted the Unitarianism that swept over Boston and the Harvard campus, the "New Haven" theology of Nathaniel Taylor at Yale, the revivalism of Charles Finney, etc. For philosophy students, the chapter on "The Old Doctrines of Calvinism" (in vol. I, pp. 211-235) is an extremely valuable account of the disputes in which the Princeton theologians were involved. Again, ...had we but world enough and time...it would be useful to compare (and contrast) Calhoun's account with that of Bruce Kuklick, who covers much of the same ground in his *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985, especially chapters 4-7).

Volume Two of Calhoun's work deals with the later (1869-1929) Princeton theologians, especially Benjamin B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen. Of course, there is more, and more required background reading. Since the president of Princeton University during most of the last part of the nineteenth century was James McCosh, an excellent source is J. David Hoeveler, Jr.'s *James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition, from Glasgow to Princeton*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey,

1981). Once more, Calhoun details the conflicts, the rise of liberal tendencies in theology, which led Machen and others to leave Princeton, and to establish the Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Once more, too, the reader will want to consult another work, *The Presbyterian Controversy*, by Bradley J. Longfield (Oxford University Press, New York, 1991). Philosophers will find a useful summary in Calhoun's second volume, chapter 22, on "The Princeton Theology" (pp. 399-429). I was pleased to note that "at Princeton--as in much of early nineteenth-century Protestantism--Scottish Common Sense Philosophy reigned. Congregationalists at Yale and Unitarians at Harvard embraced it as enthusiastically as did Presbyterian Princeton" (p. 413).

Please indulge one further personal reaction. I know that J. Gresham Machen and Cornelius Van Til were great scholars, and I honor their later work at Westminster, but my favorite Princeton scholar was B. B. Warfield. I find I just can't fathom the Dutch Reformed tradition of Van Til and, earlier, of Abraham Kuyper, and was pleased to read that "B. B. Warfield and the Princetonians, however, were baffled by Dr. Kuyper's apologetic method" (Calhoun, Vol. 2, p. 180). Me, too! And despite what I admitted earlier about "mere human reason," I cannot help feeling a certain satisfaction to find, two pages later (p. 182), Warfield quoted as saying, "It is the distinction of Christianity that it came into the world clothed with the mission to reason its way to dominion." I often have my doubts,--not the sort of doubts Van Til had, but doubts, nonetheless--but I want to believe that Warfield was right. Actually, the real reason I admire Warfield so much is that he was the type of scholar I would like to be. He seems to have had that in depth, encyclopedic knowledge that I envy much more than the sort of flashy innovations that pass for works of genius today. I think that Warfield's book on the work of the Westminster "divines" is a major classic, one of the very best religious books I've ever read. The book, *The Westminster Assembly and its Work* (reprinted by Still Waters Revival Books, Edmonton, Canada, 1991), does not read like a novel, but it is rewarding; I really cannot do justice to a book of that quality. But I digress. Close this section by saying that Calhoun's work is rewarding, too. His two volumes make a very "good read"; I was almost sorry to finish them.

But finish them I did, and the reading goes on. I don't know why, but I took from the shelves a

book I've owned for years, but left unread, *The Tradition of Scottish Philosophy*, by Alexander Broadie (Barnes & Noble, Savage, Maryland, 1990). I think I assumed this was yet another book on eighteenth century Scottish philosophy, but it is really concerned with philosophy as taught in Scotland in the early sixteenth century, with comparisons with the later eighteenth century thinkers Hutcheson, Hume and Reid. It is noted, for example, that the sixteenth-century philosophers were nominalists, as were the Reformers--and David Hume. The early Scottish philosophers discussed were largely members of a "circle" led by John Mair (Mair seems to be an early form of Major). Mair taught in Paris, but much of his career was spent at St. Andrews; he was at one point provost of St. Salvator's College. There is much more, but one important detail for anyone who travels with a group from the Westminster Seminary, is that a member of John Mair's circle, William Manderston, taught at the University of Paris, where one of his students was Patrick Hamilton. Hamilton took his M.A. in Paris in 1520, attended the University of Louvain, then St. Andrews, the back to Marburg on the continent again. He returned once more to Scotland to preach; on our Westminster tours we are shown the spot, in St. Andrews, where Patrick Hamilton was burned at the stake, in 1528.

Is all of this enough reading for the tour? It would appear that we are well prepared. But...the latest communication from President Logan lists several books we should read. We have most of them, but two new ones are listed: John Macleod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation*, and what is described as a "fascinating historical murder mystery," *The Appin Murder: the Killing of the Red Fox* by Seamus Carney. As might have been expected, neither book is in print in the U.S. Both seem to be completely unavailable--even at the Westminster Seminary's own bookstore (I checked).

Sam wins again.

Update -- 1999

But we should never give up, and accept defeat. At the gift shop in Stirling, near the Bannockburn

battlefield, we found a paperback copy of *The Appin Murder: the Killing of the Red Fox* by Seamus Carney (Birlinn Limited, Edinburgh, 1994). It's an intriguing historical mystery. The story is that one of those nasty Campbells had been shot in the back at long range (that's the Appin murder). This particular Campbell had worked with the English and abused his fellow Scots after the defeat at Culloden. His passing was not mourned. But the English could not let the killer of someone who had worked for them go unpunished--somebody had to hang. And somebody was hanged. In 1997, we even stopped the coach and some of us went up the hill to the spot where the execution was carried out. But the old man who was hanged was probably not the murderer. The murderer was probably Alan Breck Stewart. It will be recalled that he figured large in R. L. Stevenson's *Kidnapped*. The old man who was hanged for the crime could not have done the deed, most scholars say, because the task required exceptional marksmanship. Alan Breck Stewart could have.

I actually found the John MacLeod book on the web, on the website for the Free Church College, Edinburgh. It turns out MacLeod was Principal there for many years. The contents of the book first saw the light of day as a series of lectures given at the Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, in April of 1939. I wrote the Free Church College, and obtained a copy of the book, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation* by John MacLeod (Reformed Academic Press, Greenville, South Carolina, 1995). It really is, as Dr. Logan realized, an excellent volume of church history. I was especially interested in Chapter VII--"The 18th Century Contrast--Evangelicals and Moderates." To say the least, Dr. MacLeod gave a less than flattering account of the "moderate" clergy. I do not wish to dispute that account, but readers may want to balance it a bit, by contrasting it with a more recent scholarly work, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: the Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* by Richard B. Sher (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1985). Many years ago, I did a short review of this book for the *Journal of Church and State* (Vol. 28, No. 1, Winter, 1986, pp. 130-132). It might also be fun to read something written by one of those "moderates," the *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle, Minister of Inveresk*, (William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1860).

There are a number of other books, read since 1997, which would be relevant, but enough is enough. I list only one more slender volume that I found useful, giving a quite different slant on things, *Listening for the heartbeat of God, a Celtic Spirituality*, by J. Philip Newell (Paulist Press, 1997). The author claims that most of Christian thought today is dominated by the harsh, rule-governed teaching of the "Big Fisherman," the Apostle Peter. But there is, he claims, a quite different, more loving and accepting spiritual tradition that can be traced back to John, the Beloved Disciple. This is the tradition that he sees behind the Celtic faith, the faith represented in our world by the Iona Community, led for so many years by the Rev. George MacLeod. Since the Westminster tour visits Iona, this book might be of some interest.

Again, enough, there must be a stop somewhere.

As a great librarian I know is constantly saying, "Keep your minds active and read." Hopefully, the thoughts I've expressed here will help.

Oh...one more thing...Dr.Logan expects an encyclopedic knowledge of British (esp. Scottish) theology and church history,so perhaps a couple of reference works should be listed.Especially helpful is the Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology.edited by David F. Wright,David C. Lachman,and Donald E. Meek (InterVarsity Press,Downers Grove,Illinois,1993),and the more recent Dictionary of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America,edited by D.G.Hart and Mark A. Noll (InterVarsity Press(Downers Grove,Illinois ,1999).Why was I not surprised to find that the excellent article on"Puritanism" in the latter volume was written by S.T.Logan?

E.H.D.