

David E. WHITE and Michael J. MARANDA, *Bishop Butler and Logic, Love, and the Pursuit of Happiness in the Age of Unreason* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). Newcastle Upon Tyne, U.K., Lady Stephenson Library, 2021, 15 × 23 cm, 330 p., £ 64.99, ISBN 978-1-5275-7388-8

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par exemple d'une exhortation à la vie casanière à une mise en garde adressée aux moralisateurs, ou bien encore de la mise en évidence de la misère de l'homme à la nécessaire prise de conscience de sa grandeur. Pour Pascal, comme seule issue à cette contradiction, comme seule solution à cette « énigme » (p. 51), il s'agit en réalité de « reconnaître l'Amour comme personne, créateur et sauveur, Jésus-Christ » (p. 48). Dans le sillage de Jean-Luc Marion, l'auteur souligne ainsi le caractère salutaire de l'œuvre de Pascal: « l'ordre de la charité est incomparablement plus élevé et incomensurablement plus admirable que ce dont la seule intelligence est capable » (p. 49). Et dans le dialogue nécessaire entretenu avec la raison, il contribue à un questionnement portant fondamentalement sur la foi, qu' « on la cultive ou la rejette » (p. 56). Relativement court, cet ouvrage s'adressera donc, comme Pascal lui-même, à toutes celles et tous ceux qui, aujourd'hui comme hier, à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur du milieu académique, osent se poser la question de Dieu.

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David E. WHITE and Michael J. MARANDA, **Bishop Butler and Logic, Love, and the Pursuit of Happiness in the Age of Unreason** (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). Newcastle Upon Tyne, U.K., Lady Stephenson Library, 2021, 15 × 23 cm, 330 p., £ 64.99, ISBN 978-1-5275-7388-8.

Five focal points – Butler, logic, love, happiness, unreason – tumble about in the title of this book. They are enough to give a potential reader pause. Intrepid ones will of course go forward, but they have to wait until page 55 for the co-authors, David White and Michael Maranda, to clarify their purpose: “Our intent in surveying Butler’s whole work on philosophy and religion,” they explain, “is to set out his main ideas with the aim of making clear the value to be gained by getting to know him better, and by helping to make him better known.” Such an aim is praiseworthy, but may also be overly ambitious.

As its title suggests, this book is a ticket to everywhere. Many subjects are named, the middle three of which – logic, love, and pursuit of happiness – are important concepts in the thought of Joseph Butler. The puzzling subject is the last one named: “the age of unreason.” To what period of history do these words refer? Are the co-authors calling the Enlightenment, where Joseph Butler was one of the brightest lights, unreasonable? Or do they apply “unreason” to the present generation, known, as it is, for virtue-signalling wokeness, fake news, fake ethics, climate delirium, and so on? Surely no generation has surpassed the present one in unreason! If that is the co-authors’ view, then they must be proposing Bishop Butler as a remedy for our madness. A very reasonable thing to do.

The co-authors embrace reason, common sense and common language. They are nimble thinkers, capable of defending the logic of Bishop Butler, and of demonstrating the philosophical importance of his different notions of love and their role in the pursuit of human happiness.

As you read your way into this book, there is no resisting the authors' excitement about every aspect of Butler's thought. They open innumerable inviting paths for exploration, the only problem being that a lifetime is too brief to explore them all. Unlike most academic books, this one does not begin by declaring a single thesis and then attempt to prove that thesis. Instead it leads us in all directions.

The book's plenitude is neither an error nor an oversight. Its co-authors tell us in their preface that they were not intending "to satisfy the intellectual needs of academics. (p. xiv) "Our concern is religion and ethics," they declare on p. 11. And so it should be, for those were also concerns of Butler, whose views the co-authors are attempting to draw to our attention and clarify. Their method, they continue, is "empirical and evidence-based." With its help, they promise to lay bare "the critical reading and thinking that is at the heart of Butler's system" (p. 13).

No doubt Butler's critical reading and thinking would differ in some ways from ours. The co-authors are aware of that fact and do not hesitate to borrow from "the canons of contemporary analytic philosophy" (p. 131) in explaining Butler. Contemporary Christian analytic philosophers such as Richard Swinburne, Alvin Plantinga and William Lane Craig make occasional cameo appearances as the discussion unfolds.

If, as already acknowledged, one of the virtues of this book is the vast number of ideas it is prepared to entertain, or criticize, or defend, its vice is that all these ideas, like the atoms of Lucretius, have a propensity to swerve. So the co-authors, in addition to identifying and expounding Butler's thought, do not hesitate to confront it with the thought of atheism, theism, Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, and ancient paganism. Butler is even summoned to consider Indian mysticism, the moral treatment of animals, slaves and the insane (pp. 229-233).

Broad-mindedness at this level risks distracting the readers it attracts. It does, however, indicate some of the extraordinary resilience and contemporary relevance of Bishop Butler's thought.

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## PHILOSOPHIE

Béatrice BIZOT, **Violence et fraternité. Une lecture du récit de Caïn et Abel**, préface d'Olivier ARTUS. Bruxelles - Bern - Berlin - New York - Oxford - Wien, Peter Lang, 2022, 14,8 × 22 cm, 224 p., ISBN 978-2-87574-655-9.

For centuries, our world had been marked by violence in its cruel and destructive dimensions. In our time, the war between Russia and Ukraine and the battle between Israel and Hamas show us that violence does not diminish in any way. These conflicts were caused by those who are near and dear to one another. It is relevant, therefore, to go back to the beginning of the Bible in order to examine how violence emerges within the context of a fraternal relationship. This is what Béatrice Bizot, a professor