

**WISHART, BAXTER & HUME'S LETTER FROM A GENTLEMAN\***

"However that all objections may be taken off with more advantage and clearness, I beg leave to lay down the following principle... It is impossible the effect should be perfecter than its cause... [D]enyng this principle leads to downright Atheism..."

- Andrew Baxter (*Enquiry Into the Human Soul*, I,357-61)

"From the preceding Specimen it will appear, that the Author maintains... Principles leading to downright Atheism, by denying the Doctrine of Causes and Effects..."

- Hume's critic in *A Letter from a Gentleman*

**Paul Russell**

*University of British Columbia*

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Hume's *Letter from a Gentleman* is an important document for Hume scholarship because, among other things, it serves as a useful tool for the interpretation and analysis of Hume's philosophical intentions in the *Treatise*.<sup>1</sup> The *Letter* itself, however, raises several difficult problems of interpretation. One of the most important of these concerns the identity of Hume's "accuser" -- the author of "*A Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality &c.*", to which Hume is responding in the *Letter*. Clearly the interpretation of the *Letter*, and of its relevance to the *Treatise*, will vary depending on who is identified as the source of the accusations against Hume, and what is made of this person's motivation and philosophical commitments. The immediate difficulty is that the *Specimen* is presented anonymously, and thus conjectures must be made about the author on the basis of available evidence.

It is widely accepted, in the relevant secondary literature, that Hume's accuser was William Wishart. Wishart, indeed, is generally presented as the only possible source of the accusations against Hume, and no other candidate has been given any serious consideration. My concerns in this paper center on three points that relate to this matter. First, I argue that while a strong case has been made for Wishart, there are several significant difficulties and puzzles relating to it that have been given insufficient consideration. To this extent, there is some basis for reasonable doubt about the case for Wishart. Second, I argue that there is intriguing and substantial evidence that Andrew Baxter may have been the author of the *Specimen*. I describe and examine this evidence and explain its significance for the interpretation of the *Letter*. Third, I return to the case for Wishart and reconsider it in light of the evidence marshalled in support of the attribution to Baxter. I argue that if Wishart was the author of the *Specimen* (and doubts about this persist), then the established picture of Wishart as a disciple of Shaftesbury and the moral sense school requires substantial amendment. Although my discussion focuses largely on the question of the identity of the author of the *Specimen*, my fundamental concern throughout will be with the *philosophical* significance of the criticisms and replies presented in the *Letter*, and their relevance to the general interpretation of Hume's *Treatise*.

## ***I. Hume's Letter and the Chair "Affair"***

Hume's effort to secure the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University in 1745 has been the subject of considerable interest in recent years, and a great deal of illuminating material has been presented regarding it.<sup>2</sup> The publication of the *Letter* in May 1745 is closely bound-up with this episode. The contents of the *Letter* make plain why it was written. The *Letter* is a short pamphlet that falls into two parts. The first part reproduces an earlier paper or pamphlet, entitled "*A Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality &c.*" The *Specimen* consists of lengthy citations from the *Treatise* and concludes with a "*Sum of the Charge*". The "Sum" catalogues a variety of "errors" that Hume, it is claimed, maintains in the *Treatise*.<sup>3</sup> These "errors", in respect of both religion and morality, are of a nature that would clearly disqualify Hume from the position that he was being considered for.<sup>4</sup> The second part of the *Letter* is Hume's reply to the "accusations" levelled against him.

At the time that Hume wrote his reply he was living in England, near St. Albans (not far from London). It appears that Hume was sent a copy of the *Specimen* by John Coutts, who was, along with Henry Home (Lord Kames), Hume's principal supporter. Coutts informed Hume that the *Specimen* had been "industriously spread about". Hume replied immediately on

May 8th, and his reply was published in the form of the *Letter* in Edinburgh on 21 May.<sup>5</sup> All of this occurred at a critical time in the process of the election. In early April the Edinburgh town council, which was immediately responsible for the appointment, decided to postpone the election until they received an "avisamentum" from the ministers of Edinburgh. There followed a period of active "politicking" of various kinds until the ministers met on May 28th. On this occasion Hume was judged by the ministers as unfit for the position, and this effectively put an end to his candidacy. The following week the town council met and an election was held between two candidates. The candidate who was elected was William Cleghorn, who had been acting in place of the previous professor, John Pringle.<sup>6</sup> The defeated candidate was William Wishart, the Principal of Edinburgh University and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

When Mossner & Price published the *Letter* in 1967 they suggested that the author of the *Specimen* was Wishart and their account of this matter has been widely accepted. I believe, however, that although the case for Wishart is strong, it is not conclusive, as several difficulties arise for this conjecture (independently of the merits of any alternative conjecture). On the face of it, the case for Wishart's authorship receives considerable support from remarks that Hume made to Henry Home (Lord Kames) in a letter written 13 June, 1745 (shortly after Hume's "defeat"). The relevant passage reads:

"I am sorry you shou'd have found yourself oblig'd to print the Letter I wrote to Mr Coutts, it being so hastily compos'd that I scarce had time to revise it. Indeed the Charge was so weak, that it did not require much time to answer it, if the matter had been to be judg'd by Reason. The Principal found himself reduc'd to this Dilemma; either to draw Heresies from my Principles by Inferences & Deductions, which he knew wou'd never do with the Ministers & Town Council. Or if he made use of my Words, he must pervert them & misrepresent them in the grossest way in the World."  
(NHL, 15)

The Principal to whom Hume refers in this passage is evidently Wishart, and Hume is clearly aware that Wishart was (as Mossner & Price put it) his "chief antagonist among the clergy and the man primarily responsible for his defeat" (LG,xvi). In a letter written to James Johnstone on June 18th Hume, once again, attributes his defeat to "the cabals of the Principal, the bigotry of the clergy, and the credulity of the mob" (LET, I, 62).

These letters to Kames and Johnstone might be thought to show, by themselves, that Wishart was Hume's accuser (i.e. the author of the *Specimen*), but some caution is required here. In the first place, while it is clear enough that Hume believed that Wishart was leading the opposition against him (and Hume was right about this), it does not follow that Hume also believed that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen* -- as these are clearly distinct issues. More specifically, Hume's remarks may be read as showing only that he believed that Wishart used the *Specimen* (and possibly other pamphlets) to attack him and this, clearly, falls short of showing that Hume believed that Wishart was the author of the pamphlet in question. Furthermore, even if we grant that the letter to Kames shows that Hume believed (at the time) that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen*, it still fails to prove that Wishart was in fact the author (or even that Hume continued to believe this). It is not inconceivable, after all, that Hume could be mistaken -- and independent evidence may suggest this. As things stand,

therefore, we require more evidence if we are to establish conclusively that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen*. The evidence cited by Mossner & Price leaves at least some room for legitimate doubt on this matter.<sup>7</sup>

In light of these observations, it is especially important to keep in mind that Wishart was far from being the only major "antagonist" that Hume had to reckon with. As early as the summer of 1744, Hume complained to his friend William Mure that "the accusation of Heresy, Deism, Scepticism, Atheism &c.." was being directed against him. (Hume to Mure, 4 August, 1744: LET,55-9). He expresses particular surprise that this accusation was supported by Francis Hutcheson and William Leechman -- both of whom, like Wishart, had "liberal" leanings, but were based at Glasgow. In general, it is very clear that opposition to Hume's candidacy had more than one significant source. In these circumstances, therefore, we need to consider two further questions: (1) How plausible is it, given what we know about Wishart and the content of the *Letter*, that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen*?; and (2) Is there any evidence that someone else might have written the *Specimen*?

## ***II. Scepticism, Atheism and the Philosophy of Clarke***

The six "charges" levelled against Hume in the "Sum" are (in abbreviated form): (1) "universal scepticism"; (2) "downright atheism"; (3) "Errors concerning the very Being and Existence of a God..."; (4) "Errors concerning God's being the first Cause..."; (5) "denying the immateriality of the Soul"; and (6) "denying the natural and essential Difference betwixt Right and Wrong..." (LG,17-18) The substance of the charges made corresponds closely to the basic duties of "the professor of pneumatology and ethical philosophy" and this may explain, in part, their general scope and nature. However, the charges are plainly weighted heavily on the side of metaphysical issues, with a particular emphasis on the issue of causation as it relates to the being and activity of God (i.e. charges 2 and 4) and the immateriality of the soul (charge 5). The details of some of these accusations merit closer examination.

The most fundamental and comprehensive accusations are that Hume maintains "universal scepticism" and "downright atheism". These two charges are closely linked together in the accuser's presentation. Hume's sceptical commitments are characterized in terms of "the Folly of pretending to believe any Thing with Certainty" (LG,17). Hume's "atheism" rests on his "denying the Doctrine of Causes and Effects" (an objection which touches on issues raised throughout much of the *Specimen* - LG,6-14). Hume's accuser especially objects to two related positions that Hume takes up on this subject: (a) Hume denies the principle -- 'Whatever begins to exist must have a Cause of Existence' (LG,11); and he (b) asserts (instead) the "curious Nostrum" -- "That any Thing may produce any Thing"(T,173,247,249-50 are cited). The critic claims that it is Hume's objective to "explode" what is "the first step in the Argument for the being of a Supreme Cause" (LG,11). Hume's "curious Nostrum" is cited a second time in the context of the fifth charge that he denies the immateriality of the soul ("from which the Argument is taken for its natural immortality" - LG,13). Hume asserts, says his critic, that "Motion may be and actually is the Cause of Thought and Perception: And no wonder, for any Thing may be the Cause or Effect of any Thing; which evidently gives the Advantage to the Materialists above their Adversaries" (LG, 13 - a "maim'd" citation from T,249-50).

Hume is also accused of bringing into doubt the doctrine that God "first created Matter, and gave it its original Impulse, and likewise supports its Existence" (LG,18). The passage of the *Treatise* cited at LG,12-13 to support this charge (i.e. T,159-60) is one in which Hume questions the view of the Cartesians who, he says, maintain that matter is "entirely unactive" and consider that God "is the only active being in the universe, and as the immediate cause of every alteration in matter." Hume maintains against this view that "we have no idea of a being endow'd with any power, much less of one endow'd with infinite power" (T,160,248 cited at LG,12-13). It was this issue, as debated between Hume and his accuser, that gave rise to a well-known footnote in the first *Enquiry* concerning "our modern metaphysicians" and the *vis inertiae* of matter (the significance of which I will explain below).

Hume's critic concludes with the charge that Hume saps "the Foundation of Morality, by denying the natural and essential Difference betwixt Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, Justice and Injustice..." (LG,18). This charge is supported by citing passages in which Hume denies that actions can be judged "reasonable or unreasonable" and in which he argues that justice is an artificial, not a natural virtue. In respect of Hume's views on justice, the author of the *Specimen* draws attention to the similarities with the account of Hobbes, particularly in respect of the selfish motive to justice and its dependence on human conventions (LG,14-17).

Hume's reply to his accuser may be characterized in the following general terms. First, Hume is concerned to discredit both the (related) accusations of "universal scepticism" and "downright atheism". His sceptical principles, he maintains, do not commit him to any form of "universal doubt" (LG,19). His more limited objective is simply to "abate the Pride of *mere human Reasoners*, by showing them, that even with regard to Principles which seem the clearest, and which they are necessitated from the strongest Instincts of nature to embrace, they are not able to attain a full Consistence and absolute Certainty" (LG,19). In other words, Hume is concerned to repudiate the dogmatic pretensions of some philosophers, but this does not commit him to "universal doubt". He goes on to point out that it is "a service to Piety" to show the limits of human reason in face of the "great Mysteries" of the Christian religion. He suggests, moreover, that "too great a Confidence in mere human Reason" has led to "the various Tribes of Hereticks, the Arians, Socinians, and Deists" (LG,21). The most celebrated thinker associated with the charge of "Arianism, Socinianism, Deism etc." at this time was Samuel Clarke, whose *Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712) had led to an extended controversy that was strongly felt in the Scottish Church and universities.<sup>8</sup>

In the subsequent pages of the *Letter* Hume is careful to present himself as advancing arguments that have already been advanced by philosophers who can in no way be suspected of anti-Christian intentions. Hume does make plain, however, that the (dogmatic) rationalism of Samuel Clarke is a particularly prominent target of his critical arguments. More specifically, Hume acknowledges that both Clarke's "metaphysical argument *a priori*" for the existence of God (LG, 23) and Clarke's moral rationalism (LG,30) are rejected by the principles that are advanced in the *Treatise*. Nevertheless, Hume points out that there are other "metaphysical arguments" for God's existence ("Des Cartes's for instance, which has always been esteemed as solid and convincing as the other" - LG,23), and that other moralists -- such as "Mr. Hutchison" -- share his doubts about Clarke and Wollaston's moral rationalism (LG,30-31).<sup>9</sup>

One of the most striking features of Hume's reply to his accuser is that he represents the accusations as coming from a (dogmatic) philosopher of the school of Clarke. For example, as explained, the fact that in this context Hume links his dismissive remarks concerning those

who aspire to secure "absolute certainty" and place "too great a Confidence on mere human Reason" with a reference to "Arians, Socinians and Deists", strongly suggests that he identifies the criticism as coming from a Clarkean orientation of some general kind. Moreover, the specific content of the "charges" made against Hume -- especially the remarks concerning "the Argument for the Being of a Supreme Cause" (LG,11) -- suggest that Hume is right about this matter. Note also that in his replies to his accuser Hume cites Clarke more often than any other thinker. Apart from the two citations discussed above relating to Clarke's "metaphysical argument a priori" and moral rationalism, Hume also mentions Clarke in relation to the issue of the inactivity of matter (LG,28-9 -- I return to this issue below).<sup>10</sup> In dealing with his (Clarkean) critic, Hume's strategy is to refer to a series of orthodox (i.e. Christian) thinkers who anticipate his own opposition to various particular aspects of Clarke's philosophy (e.g. Descartes, Berkeley, and Hutcheson). By this means he hopes to discredit the more serious "charges" levelled against him. The general point that Hume wants to establish, therefore, is that to oppose Clarke's brand of dogmatic Christian rationalism is not to be committed to "scepticism" and "atheism".

### ***III. Wishart and the Specimen***

Given the content of the arguments of the *Letter*, is it plausible that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen*? There are several serious difficulties that arise for this conjecture and they require more detailed consideration than they have so far received. Wishart has been described by Mossner as a member of the "'Popular' or Evangelical Party".<sup>11</sup> As it stands, this is certainly misleading. Wishart was one of the leading lights of the liberal and progressive clergy in Scotland at this time. Along with his friends and colleagues at Edinburgh University -- such as George Turnbull, Robert Wallace, John Stevenson and Colin MacLaurin -- Wishart played an important role in the activities of the "Rankenian" club.<sup>12</sup> The members of this club, which was founded in 1717, were especially devoted to the philosophical principles and ideals of Lord Shaftesbury -- such as toleration, taste and reasonable religion. These were ideals that were firmly opposed by Calvinist Evangelicals, who continued as a strong force in the Church of Scotland well into the middle of the century. However, it is also important not to exaggerate the extent of Wishart's "liberalism".<sup>13</sup> Early biographical accounts of Wishart, for example, make clear that despite his liberal tendencies and associations he was nevertheless a Calvinist "in sentiment" and retained a "zealous attachment" to the (Calvinist) doctrine of predestination.<sup>14</sup> Wishart, moreover, played a leading role in the opposition to the "Moderates" during the important debates concerning the law of patronage in 1752-53.<sup>15</sup> Finally, along with other leading progressives, such as Hutcheson and Leechman, Wishart was, as noted, very active in the campaign against Hume in 1745.<sup>16</sup>

Wishart seems to have been an effective and dynamic university and church administrator and activist, but his published philosophical achievements are both meagre and modest. Moreover, apart from a (limited) interest in Berkeley's philosophy, his publications contain very little on the metaphysical disputes that engaged his own contemporaries.<sup>17</sup> Prior to 1745 the only publications by Wishart that had drawn any public interest were a couple of sermons that he had preached at London in 1731 and 1732.<sup>18</sup> The "liberal" content of these sermons led to him being charged with heresy in 1737. Ironically enough, among the doctrines that his critics claimed were "inconsistent" with the "standards" of the Church of Scotland, was

Wishart's defence of principles of "liberty of conscience". Wishart's critics charged that his defence of "liberty" put him in the same company of "Colins, Tindal, Woolston, Mandevil and the like", and that he was "better acquainted" with the teachings of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* than the Bible.<sup>19</sup> In response to all this Wishart wrote further pamphlets in (successful) defence of himself and his (limited) commitment to "liberty".<sup>20</sup>

Apart from his defence of religious toleration, Wishart's pamphlets are heavily oriented toward general issues of moral philosophy. Both his published work and his correspondence make explicit his considerable admiration for Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Butler. The relevant secondary literature on Wishart reflects this, and presents Wishart as fundamentally a Rankenian "disciple of Shaftesbury" and the moral sense school.<sup>21</sup> In one published sermon Wishart defends "the certain and unchangeable Difference betwixt Moral Good and Evil" on the basis of our experience of moral conscience, which informs us as what kinds of conduct is injurious to our neighbours and ourselves. In the other published sermon Wishart argues against (Hobbist) egoism and defends the principles of Christian charity and love (benevolence). Wishart's remarks in these sermons betray (consistent with the teaching of Shaftesbury) a distrust of "subtle Metaphysicians" and their "perplexities" and a scepticism regarding moral "deductions".<sup>22</sup> Clearly, then, the general character and content of Wishart's work suggests, not a (Clarkean) metaphysician of any kind, but rather a preacher-moralist who is more concerned with promoting the practice of Christian virtue, than defending its philosophical foundations.<sup>23</sup> There are, however, aspects of the *Letter* that are consistent with Wishart being the author of the *Specimen*. The most obvious of these is the last "charge" against Hume (that he denies the natural and essential difference between right and wrong etc.), which is entirely consistent with Wishart's interest in this matter. It could also be argued that Hume's sardonic reference to "Arians, Socinians and Deists" alludes to accusations that were levelled against Wishart by his critics during the heresy proceedings of 1737 (*Observations*, 23). But significant problems remain. The entire weight of the "charge" against Hume is one that places considerable emphasis on metaphysical issues. This is not what we have reason to expect from Wishart, considered with reference to the evidence of his published work. As explained, Wishart was plainly a follower of the moral sense school of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Butler, and there is no evidence in the relevant literature of any substantial contribution to metaphysical subjects (of a Clarkean or any other kind).

Although the secondary literature generally presents Wishart as a follower or "disciple" of Shaftesbury, none present him as a follower or "disciple" of Clarke. This point is worth emphasizing, since the evidence suggests that the author of the *Specimen* was not only familiar with Clarke's philosophy but, more importantly, embraced his philosophical principles. It is, of course, likely that Wishart was familiar with Clarke's philosophy -- but this is, obviously, a different matter. Clearly, then, there are important features relating to the content of the *Letter* that jar with the conjecture that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen* (whether he used this work or not). While there is much to suggest that the author of the *Specimen* was a follower of Clarke, both Wishart's publications and the established view of Wishart in the relevant secondary literature suggest that his philosophical orientation and commitments were of a rather different character.

There are a few other (awkward) facts that raise some further doubts about the case for Wishart. Wishart's experience of writing and publishing pamphlets around his own heresy case, it may be said, lends support to the case for his writing the *Specimen*. However, the facts surrounding Wishart's experience of being charged with heresy do not rest comfortably with

the view that Wishart (subsequently) wrote the *Specimen*. In the first place, there is a clear difference between arguing and campaigning against a candidate in the context of a meeting held for the purpose of an "avisamentum", and printing and circulating in public a pamphlet that accuses a person of "downright Atheism" (a charge with serious consequences at this time). The method and tone employed against Hume seems excessive coming from a man whose own published work vigorously defends "the glorious Principle of Liberty of Conscience" (*Liberty*, 3). In reply to this it may be pointed out that Wishart, although a defender of "liberty", was nevertheless willing to draw a line at a certain point -- which Hume clearly crossed. In a letter or speech written in the wake of the part that he played in the professorship controversy, Wishart makes plain that he is averse to any unnecessary persecutions. "I can", he says, "lay my hand on my breast, and say, there is no man living has a greater aversion than I to *speaking* or *insinuating* the least evil of any person, even that I know or believe it to be true, unless necessity, for the compassing of a greater good, or preventing a greater evil, appears to require it." In the circumstances, it was only because Wishart believed that Hume's candidacy posed "a great danger" to society that he was willing to take such a "strenuous part" against Hume.<sup>24</sup> This activity, it may be argued, might well have included writing the *Specimen*. However, if it did, Wishart says nothing about it in the context of his letter -- which is a frank and open account of his activities. The crucial point remains, however, that Wishart's known activities as a pamphlet writer do not involve writing accusations against "downright Atheists". Rather, they involve, most notably, a prominent and vigorous defence of the principles of "liberty of conscience". This, at least, makes Wishart something less than an obvious author of the *Specimen*.

On the basis of the evidence considered so far, the status of the case for Wishart may be summarized as follows. Hume's remarks in his letters to Kames and Johnstone, although significant, do not constitute conclusive evidence that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen*. First, there is some ambiguity in Hume's remarks, and it is not clear whether he believes that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen* or only that Wishart used these papers against him. Second, even if Hume believed that Wishart was the author of the *Specimen*, it is not impossible that he was mistaken. There are, in any case, some significant difficulties about the attribution to Wishart. In particular, the content of the *Letter* suggests that the author of the *Specimen* was a follower of Clarke's philosophy and primarily concerned with issues of metaphysics and natural religion (especially the issue of causation). Wishart does not fit these requirements very neatly, as the evidence of his own writings suggest a moralist in the school of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. Moreover, Wishart's "aversion" to "speaking or insinuating the least evil of any person" seems out of keeping with the strong (and dangerous) terms in which Hume is attacked by author of the *Specimen*. In general, the nature and tone of the accusations against Hume suggest a person of a different character and philosophical orientation than Wishart. Nevertheless, in the absence of any alternative, the case for Wishart remains the only plausible hypothesis. The crucial question, therefore, is whether there is any evidence that someone other than Wishart could be the source of the *Specimen*?

#### *IV. Baxter & the Specimen*

On 21st May, 1745 an advertisement in the Edinburgh Caledonian Mercury announced the publication of Hume's Letter. On 27th and 28th May, 1745 -- the day before and the day of the minister's "avisamentum" meeting -- another advertisement appeared in the same newspaper, announcing the publication of new editions of two works by the Scottish philosopher Andrew Baxter. The books advertised were the third edition of Baxter's *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul* and the second edition of *Matho*.<sup>25</sup> The advertisement contains words of praise from William Warburton, the influential divine and celebrated controversialist. Warburton was both a very good friend of Baxter's, and a notoriously hostile critic of Hume's.<sup>26</sup> Warburton praises Baxter's *Human Soul* in the following terms:

He who would see the justest and precisest Notion of God and the Soul may read this Book; one of the most finished of the Kind in my humble Opinion, that the present Times, greatly advanc'd in true Philosophy, have produced.<sup>27</sup>

The number of editions of Baxter's books that had appeared by 1745 is clear evidence that his work enjoyed considerable influence at this time -- not the least in Scotland itself.

Warburton was not the only influential contemporary of Baxter's to praise his work. In 1735, just two years after the first edition of *Human Soul* had appeared, it drew a response from Rev. John Jackson, a close follower and active defender of Clarke's philosophy and theology.<sup>28</sup> In his *Dissertation on Matter and Spirit* Jackson describes Baxter as an "ingenious author" and "a judicious and fine reasoner" (*Dissertation*, 12, 14). Jackson says that "the Main Design" of Baxter's *Human Soul*

is to confute *Atheism* by a Demonstration of the universal Providence of an Omnipotent and All-wise Agent distinct from, and independent of Matter, and who is the *Creator, Preserver and Director* of it. This Argument he hath handled with great Judgment and learning; and has so demonstratively confuted the Scheme of *Atheism*, that this Book is highly worthy [of] the serious and careful perusal of all Lovers of Truth and Religion" (*Dissertation*, 40).

Jackson's comments, along with those of Warburton, give a clear picture of the nature of Baxter's philosophy and his objectives in *Human Soul*. Baxter was, as McCosh puts it, a Scottish philosopher who belongs "to the school of Samuel Clarke, to whom he often refers, and always with admiration."<sup>29</sup> Baxter's philosophy follows closely the path taken by Clarke. It sets out to defend the Christian religion and refute the atheistic philosophy of Lucretius, Hobbes, Spinoza and their followers.<sup>30</sup> Baxter's "confutation of atheism" is pursued on the basis of a "demonstrative" or "mathematical" methodology (in line with Clarke). Jackson's description of Baxter's project in *Human Soul* suggests a very neat fit with what we might reasonably expect of the author of the *Specimen*. The question arises, therefore, whether there is any further evidence to suggest that Baxter was the author?

Baxter and Hume would almost certainly be (well) known to each other, and it is entirely possible that they had some personal contact. For a period of over thirty years, until his death

in 1750, Baxter was associated with the Hays of Drumelzier, for whom he served as a tutor and trusted advisor and agent. The Hays of Drumelzier resided at Duns Castle in Berwickshire, only a few miles from Hume's family home at Chirnside -- and close to the home of Kames. In 1723 Baxter had a philosophical correspondence with Kames. The correspondence concerned the philosophy of Clarke, and it rapidly degenerated into an acrimonious exchange involving sharp disagreement regarding the vis inertiae of matter (i.e. its inactivity -- this being an issue that was fundamental to Baxter's subsequent effort to "confute Atheists": *Human Soul*, I,80-2).<sup>31</sup> Hume shared very similar philosophical interests with both Kames and Baxter, including a keen interest in the activity of matter. Since Hume was from an early age a very close friend of Kames, he may well have been familiar with Kames's correspondence and the dispute with Baxter.<sup>32</sup>

Baxter was also involved in another local (Berwickshire) controversy that Hume would very likely have followed with some interest. In 1732 Baxter published a pamphlet attacking the freethinking philosophy of William Dudgeon, who lived near Coldstream (only a few miles from Chirnside and Duns).<sup>33</sup> Baxter's hostile attack on Dudgeon -- which concerned his views on morality, necessity and the doctrine of a future state -- was closely linked to a prosecution of Dudgeon by the Presbytery of Chirnside. One of the leading figures in this prosecution was Hume's uncle, the Rev. George Home, who was the minister at Chirnside.<sup>34</sup> This prosecution must have caused Hume some alarm since he was, at this time, advancing freethinking views that were similar to Dudgeon's in a number of important respects.<sup>35</sup> In general, Hume shared Dudgeon's hostility to the philosophy of Clarke, and he was attracted to a blend of ideas not unlike those that interested Dudgeon and offended Baxter (e.g. Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Collins, and Berkeley).<sup>36</sup>

It is clear, then, that Hume and Baxter moved in circles where they were very likely known to each other, and that the nature of these contacts were unlikely to have produced friendly feeling. It is of particular significance, therefore, that some of Hume's sceptical arguments in his philosophical writings were evidently directed against Baxter. More specifically, in an important passage of his first *Enquiry* Hume appears to have Baxter especially in view as obvious and prominent target of his critical remarks. In the context of his discussion of the origin of our idea of necessity (i.e. power), Hume examines the hypothesis of some philosophers that "every thing is full of God" (E,70-73: Hume's discussion in this context draws heavily from his remarks at T,159-61). These philosophers, Hume says, "rob nature, and all created beings, of every power, in order to render their dependence on the Deity still more sensible and immediate" (E,71). Hume goes on to comment on this in scathing terms, saying that we are "got into a fairy land, long ere we have reached the last steps of [this] theory" (E,72). Although, Hume grants, it is true that we are

ignorant ... of the manner in which bodies operate on each other...are we not equally ignorant of the manner or force by which a mind, even the supreme mind, operates either on itself or on body?... Were our ignorance, therefore, a good reason for rejecting any thing, we should be led into that principle of denying all energy in the Supreme Being as much as the grossest matter. We surely comprehend as little the operations of one as of the other." (E,72-73)

In a long and well-known footnote to this passage, Hume refers to the philosophers whom he is criticizing as "our modern metaphysicians". "Modern metaphysicians", Hume says, ascribe a *vis inertiae* to matter, the view that matter is inert and has no powers of any kind. Hume comments on this doctrine as follows:

It was never the meaning of Sir Isaac Newton to rob second causes of all force or energy; though some of his followers have endeavoured to establish that theory upon his authority... Des Cartes insinuated that doctrine of the universal and sole efficacy of the Deity, without insisting on it. **Malebranche** and other **Cartesians** made it the foundation of all their philosophy. It had, however, no authority in England. **Locke**, **Clarke**, and **Cudworth**, never so much as take notice of it, but suppose all along, that matter has a real, though subordinate and derived power. By what means has it become so prevalent among our modern metaphysicians? (E,73n)

Who, then, are the "modern metaphysicians" to whom Hume refers? Contemporary scholars, such as John Yolton and Kenneth Winkler, have identified Baxter as the most obvious and notable target of Hume's criticisms in this context.<sup>37</sup> Notes to an article on Baxter in *Biographia Britannica*, published over two centuries ago, also suggest that Baxter is Hume's specific target in this context.

It is well known, that the great principle on which our author [Baxter] builds his curious reasoning... is the *vis inertiae* of matter... Mr. Hume made some objections to Mr. Baxter's system, though without naming him, in his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. It is probable that Mr. Baxter did not think Mr. Hume to be enough of a natural philosopher to merit particular notice; or he might not have seen Mr. Hume's *Philosophical Essays*, which were first published only two years before our author's death.

The article goes on to discuss Baxter's dispute with "a more formidable antagonist", Colin MacLaurin. Shortly before he died in 1750 Baxter published an *Appendix to the First Part of the Enquiry*.<sup>38</sup> This work was written largely as a defence of the doctrine of the *vis inertiae* of matter against criticism put forward by MacLaurin, a very eminent Newtonian and a Rankenian associate of Wishart. The remarks in the article on Baxter, in any case, betray an unmistakable disdain for Hume and his philosophy.<sup>39</sup> Although no mention is made in this context of Baxter's specific hostility to the *Treatise*, Kippis does make plain, in an article on "Clarke", that Hume's earlier work would be no more to Baxter's taste. (I discuss this below.)

What is the relevance to Hume's *Letter* of the fact that Baxter is an especially prominent and obvious target of these passages in the first *Enquiry* (published in 1748, less than three years after LG)? The footnote at E,73n follows, very closely, Hume's reply to his accuser's fourth charge in the "Sum". The charge made is that Hume maintains "errors concerning God's being the first Cause, the prime Mover of the Universe... and likewise supports its Existence..." (LG,18). In his reply Hume says;

No one till *Des Cartes* and *Malebranche*, ever entertained an Opinion that Matter had no Force either *primary* or *secondary*... But, tho' this Opinion be very innocent, it never gained great Credit, especially in England, where it was considered as too much contrary to received popular Opinions, and too little supported by philosophical Arguments, ever to be admitted as any Thing but a *mere Hypothesis*. *Cudworth, Lock and Clark* make little or no mention of it. Sir *Isaac Newton* (tho' some of his Followers have taken a different Turn of thinking) plainly rejects it, by substituting the Hypothesis of an Aethereal Fluid, not the immediate Volition of the Deity, as the Cause of Attraction." (LG,28-29)

Clearly, then, as a casual glance indicates, the relevant passages in the *Letter* and first *Enquiry* (i.e. LG,28-29; E,73n) substantially overlap in content. Indeed, Hume's remarks in the *Enquiry* seem to have been taken directly from the *Letter*, and only slightly modified.<sup>40</sup> In light of this, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that, as Baxter is an obvious and prominent target of Hume's remarks in the *Enquiry* passage, then he is no less an obvious and prominent target of Hume's remarks in the *Letter* -- where the same general point is being made against Hume's "accuser".

The allusion and reference to Baxter's philosophy in this context is intriguing, because Baxter (unlike Wishart) fits very closely the general profile that we would expect of the author of the *Specimen*. More specifically, Baxter was Scotland's most distinguished and eminent disciple of Clarke, and he had made particularly influential contributions on the subject of the immateriality of the soul and problems of causation as they relate to questions of natural religion.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, unlike Wishart, Baxter had an established record of attacking "downright Atheists" in print; he had been involved in an acrimonious controversy with Kames (a close friend of Hume's and a strong backer in his effort to secure the Edinburgh Chair); and Baxter was personally well-connected with several of Hume's most powerful opponents in Edinburgh, most notably Gavin Hamilton and the Hay family associated with the Marquis of Tweeddale.

Several of these matters require further documentation, but first I want to examine a more detailed piece of textual evidence that suggests that Baxter could well be the author of the *Specimen* -- evidence which also tells against the case for Wishart. Apart from the parallel passages in the *Letter* and *Specimen* described above, there are several other indications that Baxter might have written the *Specimen*. One item, however, is especially interesting. The second charge against Hume is that he maintains "Principles leading to *downright Atheism*" (LG,17). The principle that particularly offends Hume's accuser is, as we noted, Hume's "curious Nostrum" -- "That any thing may produce any thing" (LG,10). This principle, his critic notes, leads to denying "the first step for the Being of a Supreme Cause (i.e. "the metaphysical argument a priori", cp. LG,11 and 23). The extent of Baxter's reputation as a prominent and strict defender of Clarke's a priori argument is apparent in Kippis's comments in his *Biographia Britannica* article on Clarke. "The late Mr. Andrew Baxter", says Kippis, "could not bear to have the argument a priori treated with contempt" (III, 608). Immediately following this observation concerning Baxter's devotion to Clarke's a priori argument, Kippis proceeds (in the same paragraph) to cite an equally notable example of someone who rejected this argument: "Some language which, perhaps, was indiscreetly used by Dr. Clarke in his *Demonstration*, was perverted by Mr. Hume, in his first work, the *Treatise on human Nature*,"

to atheistical purposes." These remarks make very plain that Hume's "curious Nostrum" would have aroused the strongest opposition from Baxter. Moreover, the (strong) opposition between Baxter and Hume on this subject was widely enough known among their own contemporaries, that it actually merited comment in Kippis's article on Clarke.

In *Human Soul* Baxter discusses at some length the fundamental causal principle that underlies his own (Clarkean) philosophy -- a principle that he claims is forgotten "by the generality of sceptical Writers" (EHS, I,357). The principle Baxter relies on is that a cause cannot be "less perfect" than its effect.

If the cause could communicate to the effect what it had not itself, then any cause might bring to pass any effect... And at last, all this would end in this; that in reality no cause was necessary to produce any effect: for one part of the effect might as well exist without a cause, as another."

(EHS, I,358-59 - my emphasis)<sup>42</sup>

Baxter argues that if we reject the causal principle he recommends (i.e. causes cannot be less perfect than their effects), and embrace the principle he rejects (i.e. that any thing could produce any thing), this would lead to "a *necessary absence of reason in nature*, an universal defect of truth!" (EHS, I,359 - Baxter's emphasis). More importantly, its final result, Baxter maintains, would be "denying [the] eternal Mind itself" (EHS, I,359). He sums up this argument by concluding that "denying this principle leads to *downright Atheism*" (EHS, I,361 - my emphasis).

Clearly, then, the (striking) phrase "downright atheism" appears not only in a relevant work by Baxter, it also appears in a context that is directly relevant to the specific nature of the charges advanced in the *Specimen*.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, this phrase appears, not only in Baxter's *Human Soul*, but also in another work that is, again, of direct relevance to the charges placed against Hume in the *Specimen*. Baxter's 1732 pamphlet attack on Dudgeon includes criticism of his views on responsibility and (future) punishment. He argues, in particular, that Dudgeon's views on this subject "would subvert all society" and that they lead "to down right Anarchy and Atheism" (*Reflections*, 15). In language that follows closely the sixth charge laid against Hume in the *Specimen*, Baxter also claims that Dudgeon "pulls up the Roots of morality, takes away the Distinction betwixt Just and Unjust, Right and Wrong, Good and Evil..." (*Reflections*, 12).<sup>44</sup> Given the evidence for Baxter being the author of the *Specimen* already cited, it is a significant fact that the expression "downright Atheism" appears in two of Baxter's earlier works, both of which are directly relevant to the charges advanced against Hume in the *Specimen*.

The significance of Baxter's use of the expression "downright Atheism" does not turn on the claim that this expression is unique to his style.<sup>45</sup> Its significance rests, rather, with comparative merits of the case for Baxter and for Wishart. From this perspective it is clear that: (a) this expression was used by Baxter in (other) contexts that are directly relevant to the specific charge in the *Specimen*; and (b) this phrase does not appear in any of Wishart's published work -- much less in some relevant context in his work. So considered, therefore, the appearance of this expression in the context of the *Specimen* seems (weighty) evidence in favour of the case for Baxter and against the case for Wishart. It is always possible, of course, to claim that it is simply a matter of "mere coincidence" that Wishart, in a context that is so obviously relevant to Baxter's influential philosophical contributions, used language that was

characteristic Baxter's manner of expression, and uncharacteristic of his own work. In my view, however, if the case for Wishart can be sustained, more than this needs to be said.<sup>46</sup>

The evidence cited above constitutes a substantial case for attributing the authorship of the *Specimen* to Baxter. There are, however, several objections that need to be considered. For example, with respect to the content of the *Specimen* there is one feature that may raise some doubts about Baxter's authorship, and this concerns an omission. Baxter's 1732 pamphlet attack on Dudgeon places particular emphasis on Dudgeon's necessitarianism. Baxter puts Dudgeon in the company of thinkers such as Leibniz and Collins and, following Clarke, he defends the opposing free will position (i.e. "liberty of indifference"). In the *Treatise* Hume, famously, defends the necessitarian position taken by Hobbes and Collins (and Dudgeon), and firmly rejects the free will position of Clarke (and Baxter).<sup>47</sup> Given this, it might seem reasonable to expect Baxter to raise this issue in the *Specimen*. I believe, however, that the omission of this issue by Baxter (or, indeed, by any author in the circumstances) has a straightforward explanation. Although the free will or "Arminian" position was something of an orthodoxy among Anglican divines in England at this time, the situation in Scotland was quite different. The Scottish Church was still greatly divided on this issue, as it had been for many generations. More specifically, traditional Calvinists could not be expected to endorse any "Arminian" doctrine. Hence, any critic of Hume's, who wanted support from this quarter, would be well-advised to avoid the (divisive) matter of free will altogether. It is not surprising, therefore, that given the immediate purposes of the *Specimen*, its author (Baxter/Wishart) stayed clear of criticism of this kind.<sup>48</sup>

There is a further consideration, in this case external to the content of the *Specimen*, that may also appear to work against the hypothesis that Baxter wrote the *Specimen*. From 1741-1747 Baxter was residing in the continent, mainly at Utrecht.<sup>49</sup> How, then, it may be asked, could Baxter be involved in the activities concerning Hume and the Edinburgh Chair in 1745? There is, however, no great difficulty in this. The physical absence of Baxter from Scotland no more suggests that he was not the author of the *Specimen*, than Hume's residence at St. Alban's proves that he did not write the *Letter*. The *Biographia Britannica* article on Baxter notes that his "friends and correspondents were numerous".<sup>50</sup> Baxter would certainly have maintained regular contact with his own family at Berwick, the Hay family at Duns, as well as other friends and correspondents in Scotland -- any (number) of whom may have kept Baxter apprised of events that were unfolding in Edinburgh. It should also be remembered that Hume's candidacy was launched in the summer of 1744, and that as early as August of that year Hume was complaining to friends of accusations of "...Scepticism, Atheism &c..." being directed against him. It is clear, therefore, that there was a long period of time during which Baxter could have been informed about Hume's candidacy and for him to prepare a pamphlet for use against Hume -- something which he was both highly motivated and particularly well qualified to do.<sup>51</sup>

Without more specific evidence concerning Baxter's contacts with Edinburgh, it is idle to speculate in any detail about exactly how and when he may have got involved. It is worth noting, however, that there are several specific channels through which Baxter could have become involved. The most interesting of these concern Baxter's connections with various individuals who were leading the opposition to Hume at Edinburgh (i.e. individuals other than Wishart). Opposition to Hume on the Edinburgh Town Council was led by Bailie Gavin Hamilton.<sup>52</sup> Hamilton was the uncle of John Cleghorn, who was eventually appointed to the Chair, and he was also a relative of William Leechman, who was an early opponent of

Hume's candidacy. Hamilton's profession was that of an Edinburgh publisher and bookseller. Among the pieces that he had published were the first edition of Baxter's *Human Soul* and Baxter's 1732 pamphlet attack on Dudgeon.<sup>53</sup> Suffice it to note, therefore, that Hamilton clearly knew Baxter; he was (through his knowledge of the book-trade) well-placed to know that Baxter was experienced and particularly suited to write a pamphlet attack of this nature; and obviously Hamilton could print and circulate any papers that Baxter produced for him.

Significant contact and relations between Baxter and the political forces aligned against Hume extend further than this. As I have explained, Baxter was a trusted advisor of the Hay family that was based at Duns (i.e. Hays of Drumelzier). This family is one branch of the more extended Hay family associated with John Hay, 4th Marquis of Tweeddale and Secretary of State for Scotland (1742-1746). Tweeddale's correspondence during April and May 1745 indicates the extent to which his agents in Edinburgh, most notably another kinsman, Thomas Hay of Huntingdon, were active in the campaign against Hume. On 16 April, 1745 Thomas Hay wrote to Tweeddale to assure him that "no assistance that can be given Bailie Hamilton & his friends Shall be wanting".<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Tweeddale, as already noted, was a substantial subscriber to the first edition of Baxter's *Human Soul*. It is, therefore, not impossible that Baxter's connections with the Hay family could have led to his involvement in the campaign against Hume. It is also possible that these various contacts overlapped and served (doubly) to draw-in Baxter. Clearly, then, Baxter's association with both Gavin Hamilton and the Hay family would make him an obvious person to recruit for their purposes. The crucial point remains, however, that there is some significant evidence that Baxter may have written the *Specimen*, and his absence from Scotland at this time in no way tells against this.

If Baxter was the author of the *Specimen* then it is a matter of some importance for the general interpretation of the *Treatise*. I have argued elsewhere, independently of the specific thesis advanced in this paper (i.e. the case for Baxter being the author of the *Specimen*), that Hume's *Treatise* is a work that belongs squarely in the "atheistic" tradition of Hobbes, Spinoza and their followers.<sup>55</sup> Related to this, I have also argued that the philosophy of Clarke is an especially prominent target of Hume's sceptical arguments in the *Treatise*. The philosophy of the *Treatise* is, therefore, highly representative of the "sceptical" and "atheistical" philosophy that Baxter held in such contempt, and which he set out to refute demonstrably in *Human Soul*. It would be very obvious to Baxter that the philosophical principles advanced by Hume in the *Treatise* were diametrically opposed, not only to his own philosophy, but also to Clarke's -- a thinker whom Baxter held in the highest esteem. When the *Letter* is considered from this perspective -- that is, the fundamental opposition between Hume and Baxter -- it is both consistent with, and lends further support to, the "atheistic" interpretation which has (independently) been argued for.<sup>56</sup>

The case for Baxter can be summarized as follows. In general, the content of the *Letter* -- both the accusations and Hume's replies -- suggest that the author of the *Specimen* was a (dogmatic, rationalist) follower of Clarke. Whereas Wishart does not seem to fit this description, Baxter fits it very well. Several more specific features of the *Specimen* indicate that it may have been written by Baxter. (1) Passages that Hume used in his reply to his "accuser" in the *Letter*, were employed by Hume just a few years later in the first *Enquiry* (with no significant alterations) and directed pointedly against Baxter's philosophical views. (2) In *Human Soul* Baxter uses the (forceful) expression "downright Atheism" in a context that is directly relevant to the specific criticism levelled against Hume in the *Specimen*, where

Hume is (similarly) accused of "Principles leading to downright Atheism, by denying the Doctrine of Causes and Effects" (LG,17). The expression "downright Atheism" appears in none of Wishart's published work and, although characteristic of Baxter's style, it is not characteristic of Wishart's style. (3) Hume's accuser in the *Specimen* places considerable emphasis on issues of causation as they relate to problems of natural religion -- specifically, the proof a priori and the immortality of the soul. This accords well with Baxter's particular philosophical interests and influential contributions, which Hume's philosophy directly challenges. The emphasis on these issues, however, is not consistent with Wishart's philosophical orientation and concerns (i.e. considered as a moralist of the Shaftesbury-Hutcheson school). It has also been shown that Baxter had an acrimonious relationship with Kames, a close friend of Hume's and a strong supporter in his campaign for the Edinburgh Chair; that Baxter, in alliance with Hume's uncle at Chirnside, was involved in the prosecution of Dudgeon, against whom who wrote a pamphlet (charging him with "atheism", "scepticism" etc.); and that Baxter was a close friend of influential enemies of Hume's such as Warburton and, more significantly, Hamilton and the Hay family, who were (with Wishart) Hume's most active opponents in this context. Finally, it has been shown that Baxter would not only be highly motivated to attack Hume's philosophical principles, he had both the time and opportunity to write the *Specimen* and to place it in the hands of his friends at Edinburgh, so they could use this material at an appropriate moment. In sum, if Wishart was not the author of the *Specimen* -- and we have shown that there is some basis for reasonable doubt about this -- then a strong case can be made for Baxter.

## **V. The Case for Wishart Revisited -- and Revised**

The thesis of this paper has two distinct components: (a) I have presented evidence that raises some doubts about the attribution to Wishart; and (b) I have presented evidence for the attribution to Baxter. It is possible, of course, that some commentators will remain (wholly) confident that Wishart wrote the *Specimen*, and (categorically) reject the case for Baxter. Even these commentators, however, must acknowledge that the specific issues raised in respect of the case for Wishart need to be addressed and clarified. A number of difficulties have been considered, but the critical problem is that whereas the author of the *Specimen* appears to have significant commitments to the Clarkeian school, the established account of Wishart does not cohere with this. The problem is not simply that Wishart appears to belong to a different school from the author of the *Specimen*, but that he appears to belong to an opposing school -- making it very difficult to see how these claims can be reconciled. With this problem in view, two questions must be considered: (1) is it plausible to suppose that a thinker such as Wishart could have combined Clarkeian and Shaftesburyan philosophical commitments?; and (2) is there any evidence (which is missing from the established view) that Wishart had Clarkeian commitments or sympathies? Even those who are confident that Wishart wrote the *Specimen* need to address these matters.

Baxter's attitude to Shaftesbury, as revealed in *Human Soul* (II,276n,351-52n), makes plain why it is problematic to maintain that Wishart (may have) combined Clarkeian and Shaftesburyan philosophical commitments. Baxter represents Shaftesbury as a thinker who questions whether God could create matter and who severs morality from religion. In general, he associates Shaftesbury with sceptics and enemies of morality and religion such as Bayle

and Collins. The example of Hutcheson, Shaftesbury's most prominent follower in Scotland, also makes plain that this opposition moved in the other direction. At an early age, while a student at Glasgow, Hutcheson found himself unconvinced by Clarke's philosophy and rejected its rationalism -- in both metaphysics and morals.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, among Hutcheson's earliest and most forceful critics was John Balguy, a close disciple of Clarke.<sup>58</sup> In general, it was not uncommon for admirers of Clarke to deem Hutcheson's philosophy suspect because of its affinities with Shaftesbury's philosophy.<sup>59</sup> These observations suggest that significant puzzles attach to the suggestion that Wishart, an evident admirer of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, could be the author of a pamphlet which clearly defends Clarkean philosophical principles.<sup>60</sup>

It is arguable, however, that such a combination of philosophical commitments was not impossible for thinker of Wishart's particular background. The first point to be made is that while there was, as indicated, significant conflict between Clarkeans and Shaftesburyans, this was not universally the case, and that to a certain extent the example of Hutcheson bears this out. When Hutcheson was a student at Glasgow he studied under John Simson, Professor of Divinity. Simson has been described as the founder of the Scottish Enlightenment and his teaching did much to introduce the "New Light" theology into Scotland.<sup>61</sup> His close allegiance to the philosophy of Clarke led to charges of heresy, primarily on the ground of Arianism and Socinianism. An unsuccessful case against Simson was pursued in 1717, but a second prosecution begun in 1725 was eventually successful and led to Simson losing his Chair in 1729 (thus being denied the right to teach any further). Hutcheson's biographer W.R. Scott suggests that while Hutcheson rejected Clarke's rationalist philosophy, he nevertheless remained a "disciple of Simson", whose liberal and progressive theological outlook he shared.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, although a follower of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson was sensitive to the criticism put forward by the Clarkeans, and he made some effort in his later work to put distance between himself and Shaftesbury.<sup>63</sup>

The example of Hutcheson, therefore, suggests that the "New Light" thinkers based at Glasgow in the early years of the Scottish Enlightenment drew on the philosophy of *both* Clarke and Shaftesbury, and to this extent shared common cause, despite other philosophical differences. What they shared, in particular, was opposition on two fronts: on one side they opposed the conservative rigidity of the Evangelicals, and on the other, the moral and social doctrine of Hobbes and his followers. Any thinker who shared this general outlook, might well have drawn from both these traditions, and there is some evidence that this was Wishart's situation.

During the late 1720's, while the Simson prosecution was bubbling away, Wishart resided in Glasgow as a minister. He was, more importantly, on friendly terms with Simson and played an important part in the effort to defend him.<sup>64</sup> After leaving Glasgow in 1729 Wishart went to London where he was minister at the Scots Church, Founders'-Hall. A number of dissenting ministers -- including several influential figures in the circles that Wishart was close to -- were (very) favourably disposed to Clarke's philosophy and had Arian tendencies.<sup>65</sup> Finally, along with many other dissenting ministers, Wishart was on good terms with Bishop Hoadly, who was a particularly prominent colleague and close friend of Clarke's.<sup>66</sup> These considerations clearly lend support to the view that Wishart might have had significant Clarkean philosophical commitments. If this claim is accepted, however, then the established (Shaftesbury-Hutcheson) account of Wishart clearly requires some substantial revision and amendment.

Let us grant, in light of the above considerations, that Wishart's various connections suggest that he (might have) had Clarkeian sympathies. The evidence of the *Specimen* and Hume's replies in the *Letter* suggest, as noted, that Hume's accuser is not just drawing on Clarke, but seems to be drawing more immediately from the work of Baxter. There are several considerations that may also account for this. We know, for example, that long before the issue of the Edinburgh chair arose, John Stevenson, Wishart's colleague and close friend, was using Baxter's *Human Soul* in a public context at Edinburgh University that involved Wishart's presence.<sup>67</sup> We also know that some among the circle of English dissenting ministers with whom Wishart was closely associated, regarded the Baxter's philosophy as a particularly distinguished contribution to (Newtonian) natural religion.<sup>68</sup> Most importantly, however, the fact that Wishart was actually a subscriber to Baxter's *Human Soul* shows that it is entirely possible that he used this work as the basis for his own attack on Hume's (atheistical/sceptical) philosophy. Indeed, for all the reasons cited above, Baxter's *Human Soul* would be a very obvious work for Wishart to use for the purpose at hand. Clearly, then, the hypothesis that Wishart used Baxter's work in these circumstances, does much to remove some important puzzles.<sup>69</sup>

Although a reasonable case can be made for this revised (Clarkean) account of Wishart's philosophical orientation, difficulties remain. It is important to note, for example, that Wishart's own writings provide little or no support for this conjecture, and indeed some of the remarks in his writings seem to tell against it. It also remains unclear how Wishart combined the various (divergent) elements in his philosophy. These general difficulties do not present themselves in the case of Baxter, since he was a firm and clear follower of Clarke (and no admirer of Shaftesbury). Moreover, on the basis of the evidence cited, it could equally be argued that since Wishart was a subscriber to *Human Soul*, and had knowledge of Baxter as well as (a number of) common friends and connections, he may also have been one of Baxter's correspondents, and thus could easily have received papers against Hume (directly or indirectly) from Baxter. Wishart (Hamilton, the Hays et al) would be well aware that testimony against Hume coming from a philosopher of Baxter's distinction and reputation would be especially damaging -- not the least because Baxter was so highly regarded by many in the specific audience they were addressing (i.e. Presbyterian ministers). On the evidence available, this hypothesis seems no less reasonable, than the suggestion that Wishart drew directly from Baxter's work (a hypothesis that has its own difficulties).

## **VI. The Letter and the "Atheism" of Hume's Treatise**

The thesis that I have argued for in this paper is open to strong and weak interpretations. The strong version claims that there is substantial reason to question the case for Wishart and maintains that, on the evidence presented, a better case can be made for Baxter. The weak version claims only that as puzzles and difficulties arise from the attribution to Wishart some degree of doubt is called for, and that there is at least some evidence to support the alternative case for Baxter (even if it is less persuasive). My own view lies somewhere between these two versions.<sup>70</sup> What is unreasonable, I think, is to maintain that one case is beyond doubt and the other beyond credit. It is necessary, then, to weigh the evidence for *both* cases and assign some probability to each -- and reasonable people may diverge widely on this. Nevertheless, the best case to be made for Wishart is in the form of the revised (Clarkean) account outlined

above. From this perspective it is clear that -- whether Baxter wrote the *Specimen* or not -- Clarke and Baxter have important roles to play in this context. If Wishart was the author, then this aspect of his criticism of Hume's philosophy requires further examination and consideration. Much of the philosophical interest of the *Letter*, and its relevance to the interpretation of the *Treatise*, rests with the fact that Hume represents his accuser as a (dogmatic) defender of Clarke's philosophy. Andrew Baxter's influential defence and elaboration of Clarke's doctrines made him Scotland's most celebrated champion of Clarke, and his reputation was at its height at the time that the *Letter* appeared. The specific contents of the *Letter* strongly suggest that, directly or indirectly, Baxter's work is a significant force behind the attack on Hume. When the *Letter* is read from this perspective then it becomes clear that Hume's accuser recognized that the philosophy of the *Treatise* involves a sceptical assault on the edifice of Clarke's dogmatic defence of the Christian religion, and that it is a work in the (downright) "atheistic" tradition of Hobbes, Spinoza and their followers.<sup>71</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

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(1) David Hume, *A Letter from a Gentleman to his friend in Edinburgh* [1745], edited by E.C. Mossner and J.V. Price (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967) [abbreviated as LG]. Other references are to *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by L.A. Selby-Bigge, rev. by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) [T]; *Hume's Enquiries*, ed. by Selby-Bigge, rev. by Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) [E]; *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols., edited by J.Y.T. Greig (Clarendon Press, 1932) [LET]; *New Letters of David Hume*, edited by R. Klibansky and E.C. Mossner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954) [NHL].

(2) The standard account of this episode is Ernest Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), chp.12; and Mossner & Price, introduction to the *Letter*. For recent criticism of these accounts, and more detail on the "affair" at Edinburgh, see in M.A. Stewart, "The Kirk and the Infidel" (Lancaster University Publications Office, 1995). Also helpful on this episode are Richard B. Sher, "Professors of virtue", in M.A. Stewart, ed., *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); and Roger L. Emerson, "The 'affair' at Edinburgh and the 'project' at Glasgow", in M.A. Stewart & J.P. Wright, eds., *Hume and Hume's Connexions* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

(3) Hume's remarks suggest that it is possible that the "*Specimen*" and the "*Charge*" were produced as separate papers (LG,3,18-19). He states, however, that the "Sum" is intended "to contain the Substance of the whole", and he implies that he is dealing with just one accuser (LG, 32-33). A letter written by Thomas Hay -- who was very active in the campaign against Hume -- also suggests that there was more than one pamphlet involved in the case against Hume. (Hay to Lord Tweeddale, 1 June, 1745: Nat. Lib. Scot., Ms. 7066, fo.85) Different interpretations, however, can be put on Hay's remarks. See Mossner & Price, LG,xiv; and Stewart, "*Kirk and Infidel*", 18.

(4) The teaching responsibilities of the Professor of Moral Philosophy included "pneumatics", covering a number of issues relevant to metaphysics and natural religion.

(5) Kames seems to have been closely involved in the publication of the *Letter*. See Hume's remarks in his letter to Kames dated June 13, 1745 (NHL,15). It is quite possible that Hume's reply was modified or "edited" by his friends at Edinburgh before it was published. (I will cite evidence below that makes clear that the substance of the *Letter* nevertheless comes directly from Hume's hand.)

(6) Pringle had been on leave since 1742 when he went to Flanders as a physician with the British forces. He was not a distinguished philosopher, but was a distinguished physician and scientist.

(7) It is significant that Mossner & Price do not regard Hume's letter to Kames (June 13th) as itself conclusive evidence that (Hume believed that) Wishart was the author of the *Specimen*. To provide further support for this claim they place heavy emphasis on the fact that in the *Letter* (LG,33) Hume says that the author of the *Specimen* had "perverted" his arguments in the *Treatise*, and that in a letter to Kames he used the same term (i.e. "pervert") to describe

what Wishart had done to his words. (See the remarks at LG,xviii, where Mossner & Price say that the "use of the word 'pervert' immediately catches one's eye...") As I have indicated, however, Hume's remarks may be read as suggesting only that he took the view that Wishart used the *Specimen* against him, and was thus also guilty of "perverting" the arguments of the *Treatise* by means of "broken and partial citations" (i.e. as taken from the *Specimen*).

(8) Clarke's anti-Trinitarian doctrine played an important role in the protracted Church prosecution (1725-29) of John Simson, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow. The relevance of this prosecution to Wishart and the intellectual background of the *Letter* is discussed in more detail below.

(9) Hume's remarks in this context, like much else that he says in the *Letter*, are patently evasive and insincere. See, e.g., his letter Hutcheson (March 1740: LET,I,40) on the theological implications of resting morality on feeling and not reason.

(10) Hume's accuser cites only two philosophers in the *Specimen*: Hobbes and Spinoza (LG,13,16). At this time Hobbes and Spinoza were infamous as the most celebrated philosophers of "atheism", and they were the particular target of Clarke's influential demonstrative arguments in defence of the Christian religion.

(11) Mossner, *Life*, 160.

(12) Wishart's involvement with the Rankenians is discussed in M.A. Stewart, "Berkeley and the Rankenian Club", *Hermathena* (1985), 25-45. Stewart says that "throughout [Wishart's] career his liberal theology, anti-evangelical style, and espousal of the Moral Sense philosophy made him an object of suspicion and mistrust among the Calvinists in the kirk" (p.30).

(13) Wishart's family members were connected with different "parties" in the Church of Scotland at this time. It is rather ironic, given Wishart's "liberal" leanings, that his father-in-law was Thomas Halyburton, whose posthumous work *Natural Religion Insufficient* (Edinburgh, 1714) was an particularly influential and severe statement of old-school Calvinism.

(14) For further details see, in particular, the biographical sketch of Wishart in Walter Wilson, *Dissenting Churches in London* (London: 1808), 4 Vols.; II,494-96. See also the references to Wishart in articles in the *Biographia Britannica*, 2nd ed. (London: 1784), art. "Thomas Amory" and "George Benson".

(15) In a letter written in May, 1742 Wishart reports to his friend George Benson that he is "at present, in greatest favour with those called our strict folks, having lately joined with them (or headed them) in opposing some forward measures of our court Divines, in imposing ministers on reluctant congregations, upon presentations; and this I did upon the principles of liberty, and rights of mankind." (Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, II,496.)

(16) Wishart's (complex) relations with the "Moderates" are examined in Richard Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), chps. 2 and 4 (esp. pp.51-2,153-54).

(17) On Wishart's interest in Berkeley see M.A. Stewart, "William Wishart, an Early Critic of Alciphron", *Berkely Newsletter* (1982/83), 5-9. In 1734 Wishart wrote a pamphlet that was critical of various features of Berkeley's *Alciphron* and he makes, in particular, some effort to defend Shaftesbury against criticism contained in that work. However, Wishart's discussion of metaphysical issues is thin.

(18) William Wishart, *Charity the end of the commandment* (Edinburgh, 1731); Wishart, *The certain and unchangeable difference betwixt moral good and evil* (London, 1732).

(19) *Observations on Dr. Wishart's two Sermons* (Edinburgh, 1737), 2,5,32-3.

(20) *Answers for W.W...* (1738); [GWITMARPSCHELDON] *The Principals of Liberty of Conscience Stated and Defended* (Edinburgh, 1739).

(21) See, e.g., the influential work of Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), esp. 202-03. More recent studies have done little to challenge this general view of Wishart's philosophical orientation.

(22) In *Charity* (p.29) Wishart states that "the main End of the Chriatian institution is not to try our wit and exercise our penetration, or to train us up to exquisite and subtle Metaphysicians; but to purify our hearts to Love..." In *Unchangeable Difference* (p. 14) he claims that the sense of moral beauty and deformity is not derived from "deductions of reasons" or formed as a result of "a long train of argument". Claims of this kind do not sit comfortably with the philosophy of Clarke (or other rationalist moralists such as Wollaston).

(23) Wishart's private papers (Edin. Univ. Lib.: La. II. 114/115) provide some further evidence concerning his activities and (philosophical) interests. Unfortunately this material is less helpful than it might otherwise be because Wishart usually employs an obscure form of shorthand which is very difficult to decipher. Moreover, the material available is often undated and fragmentary in form. Suffice it to say, however, that after examination I have not found any of Wishart's papers that directly relate to the *Specimen* (nor am I aware of anyone else having done so).

(24) Wishart's letter (dated June 5, 1745) is reproduced in Stewart, "*Kirk and Infidel*", 25-8. Given the nature of Wishart's general concerns about Hume, his vigorous opposition is hardly surprising -- as plainly Wishart was no "liberal" by contemporary standards. What is surprising, however, is the specific method and tone employed, given Wishart's stated "aversion" to public attacks of this kind. As I explain below, this is not true of Baxter, as he had a positive enthusiasm for persecuting those whom he regarded as "downright atheists" and "sceptics".

(25) Andrew Baxter, *An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul; wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is evinced, from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (London: 1745); and *Matho; or, The Cosmotheoria Puerilis. A Dialogue...*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London, 1745). (A third edition of *Matho* was published in 1765.) I note that Baxter's books were published by Andrew Millar, who in 1742 had published Hume's *Essays*, and became Hume's "chief London publisher" (Mossner, *Life*, 114,146). My references to Baxter's *Human Soul* are to the 2nd ed. (1737), reprinted by Routledge/Thoemmes, 1990. [abbreviated as EHS]

(26) On Warburton's close friendship with Baxter see the article on Baxter in *Biographia Britannica*, II,26. The Warburton-Hume antagonism is documented in Mossner, *Life*, see esp.121-24,324-25,617-18. In his autobiographical sketch, written shortly before he died, Hume refers to "Dr Warburtons Railing" -- remarks that attest to the depth of ill-feeling between these two men.

(27) William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated* [1738], 4 vols. (New York: Garland, 1978), I, 419 (Bk.3, sec.4). Warburton's praise of Baxter appears in the context of a (characteristic) passage "Railing" against "the impious Phantasm of Spinozism".

(28) John Jackson, *A Dissertation on Matter and Spirit* (London, 1735). For useful background on Baxter and Jackson in this context see John W. Yolton, *Thinking Matter: Materialism in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 95-100, 138-41, 170-71.

(29) McCosh, *Scottish Philosophy*, 42. Baxter was not a "Rankenian", and although he shared their (critical) interest in Berkeley's philosophy, he did not share their admiration for Shaftesbury (see *Human Soul*, II, 276n,351-55n). Among our own contemporaries, interest in Baxter has emphasized his role as an early critic of Berkeley, rather than as a follower of Clarke. chp.5.

(30) The subtitle of Clarke's *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* [1704] describes this work as an "Answer to Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, and their Followers". On Clarke's enormous reputation and influence in the eighteenth century see the article on him in *Biographia Britannica*; where Clarke's *Demonstration* is described as "a production of great importance in the annals of English literature...on account of its intrinsic excellence, the receptions it hath met with, the influence it hath had on the opinions of men, and the strictures, remarks, and disquisitions to which it has given occasion." (III,607).

(31) The Baxter-Kames correspondence, Scot. Rec. Off. GD 24/1/546; and see Ian Ross, *Lord Kames*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 65-67,174-75. Kames subsequently published his views on the activity of matter in his essay "Of the Laws of Motion". This essay appears in a collection published by the Edinburgh Philosophical Society, with a preface by Hume: *Essays and Observations Physical and Literary* (Edinburgh, 1754).

(32) Although Baxter asked Kames (23 July, 1723) to destroy their correspondence, Kames kept these letters (and thus they would likely have been available to Hume). For details of Hume's early relations with Kames see Mossner, *Life*, 58-60; and Ross, *Kames*, 75-85. See also Hume's letter to Kames of 13 June, 1745, where he says that he has "always regarded [Kames] as the best Friend, in every respect, I ever possess" (NHL,17).

(33) Andrew Baxter, *Some Reflections on a late pamphlet called, The State of the Moral World Considered* (Edinburgh, 1732). Dudgeon's *State of the Moral World* (Edinburgh, 1732) is reprinted in Dudgeon's *Philosophical Works* (Edinburgh, 1765; reprinted London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1994). Recently a letter from Baxter to Warburton, dated 16 May, 1740, has been discovered and published by Heiner Klemme [*Archiv fur Geschichte der Philosophie*, 74 (1992), 256-57]. This interesting letter confirms Baxter's authorship of *Reflections*, and shows that Baxter and Warburton were corresponding shortly after Hume published the first two Books of the *Treatise* (which may have just been reviewed by Warburton: Mossner, *Life*, 123-24).

(34) A brief account of the Dudgeon prosecution is presented in McCosh, *Scottish Philosophy*, 111. (For the Church records of this prosecution see Scot. Rec. Off. CH2/516/3; CH2/265/2; CH1/3.) The Dudgeon prosecution may have been a factor in Hume's decision to leave Chirnside in 1734 -- certainly his own philosophical views could not have met with his uncle's approval. (On the close relationship between Baxter and the ministers of the Presbytery of Chirnside see note 53.)

(35) These views include, most notably, necessitarianism, moral sense ethics, immaterialism and (deep) anti-clericalism. The relative neglect of Dudgeon's work in the secondary literature is surprising, especially in light of the significant affinities between Hume's and Dudgeon's thought (as noted by McCosh, *Scottish Philosophy*, 112).

(36) Dudgeon responded to Baxter's accusations in *A Letter to the Author of the State of the Moral World Considered* (London, 1734), and in another pamphlet *A Discourse* (London, [incorrectly dated 1731]). (The former work is reprinted in Dudgeon's *Works*.) A few years later Dudgeon published *Some Additional Letters to The Revd. John Jackson* (London, 1737), an exchange with Jackson primarily over issues arising from Clarke's philosophy. Dudgeon

complains (*Letter XI*: 20 July, 1737) that he has "suffered" at the hands of "our [Scottish] clergy", who are, he notes, "just now prosecuting a Gentleman for publishing two excellent moral Discourses, preach'd in London". The gentleman concerned is, of course, Wishart.

(37) Yolton, *Thinking Matter*, 99-100; Kenneth P. Winkler, "Our Modern Metaphysicians", *British Society for the History of Philosophy Newsletter*, 4 (1989),35-40. On Baxter's relation to Malebranche see Yolton, *Thinking Matter*,97, 139-41; and Dugald Stewart, *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (Edinburgh: Little, Brown & Co., 1854), 3 Vols.: "The metaphysical doctrine maintained by Baxter, in opposition to Maclaurin, seems to coincide nearly with Malebranche's theory of Occasional Causes..." (II,388).

(38) Baxter, *Appendix* (London, 1750). Baxter is responding to Maclaurin's *An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries* (London: 1748), esp. pp. 95,111,388-89. The Maclaurin-Baxter exchange indicates significant disagreement among (Scottish) Newtonians along the the general lines that Hume alludes to in his note (E,73n). There is a brief account of this exchange in the *Scots Magazine*, April 1750 (p.181). In the same issue (p.206) there is a notice of the death at Whittingehame "in the 70th year of his age, Mr. Andrew Baxter, well known for his philosophical writings..." This is, in itself, clear evidence of Baxter's prominence in Scotland at this time.

(39) This feature of the article may come directly from Baxter's son, as he supplied the authors (i.e. Kippis and Towers) with relevant biographical details concerning his father's life.

(40) Another parallel passage can be found between LG,26 and E,158n, where Hume is concerned with abstract ideas and gives the example of a black or white horse.

(41) Baxter maintains that his position on the *vis inertiae* of matter follows Clarke on this subject. See, in particular, the long citation that Baxter gives (EHS,I,98-99n) from Part II of Clarke's *Demonstration*. The passage cited (Clarke's *Works*,II,697-98) plainly supports Baxter's claim that he is "not singular in advancing these things: a much greater man [Clarke] carries the argument just the same length..." For this reason, Hume's remarks to the contrary (in both the *Letter* and the first *Enquiry*) are puzzling. Winkler makes some effort to explain Hume's interpretation of Clarke in "Our Modern Metaphysicians".

(42) Hume, famously, directly challenges this general account of the foundation of causal reasoning at *Treatise*, I,iii,3, where he says: "Accordingly we shall find upon examination, that every demonstration, which has been produc'd for the necessity of a cause, is fallacious and sophistical." (T,80; and cp. T,172)

(43) The expression "downright" is used quite frequently by Baxter and it is indicative of an intensity of style that Baxter was aware of. In his correspondence with John Wilkes (21 August, 1747) Baxter acknowledges that he "writes too much in passion" and he acknowledges that the source of this is his "animosity against irreligion". (Brit. Lib., Add. MSS. 30,867, fo.23).

(44) Baxter's rationalistic account of morals is most apparent in his (posthumous) *The evidence of reason in proof of the immortality of the soul...* (London, 1779). See also the tenth dialogue of *Matho*. Fundamental to Baxter's moral theory is the view that morality is founded on religion, and especially on the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul.

(45) For example, the expression "downright atheism" appears in John Jackson's *Dissertation on Matter and Spirit* (p.iv) -- although in a context where Jackson is plainly following Baxter's line of argument and employing his language. The phrase also appears a number of times in Clarke's *Discourse*.

(46) I will discuss below the possibility that Wishart has used Baxter's work. Suffice it to say that if this is the case, then Wishart's philosophical orientation was rather different than the established picture suggests, and Baxter's philosophy remains an important (and neglected) aspect of the background to the *Letter*.

(47) McCosh says that "it is a circumstance worthy of being noted that this doctrine [philosophical necessity] was upheld by three men, who arose about the same period and in much the same district of country, -- [William] Dudgeon, David Hume, and Henry Home..." (Scottish Philosophy, 176). In his 1740 letter to Warburton (see note 34 above) Baxter refers to his dispute with Dudgeon as "a Squabble betwixt my Antagonists and me." Could the other "antagonists" be Hume and Kames? They were all necessitarian opponents of Baxter's free will doctrine; and this is what the "squabble" was about.

(48) In relation to this matter, it is significant that the Presbytery of Chirnside, although they pursued other charges raised by Baxter in his *Reflections*, did not condemn Dudgeon's necessitarianism.

(49) Baxter's letter to Wilkes dated 21 August, 1747 makes it clear that he had not been back to Scotland since he left in 1741.

(50) *Biographia Britannica*, II,26; the article names, in particular, Warburton and Stephen Poyntz. While Baxter was away at Utrecht, his wife and children stayed at Berwick. Moreover, during 1744-1745 Baxter was preparing new editions of his work, and this would likely have involved correspondence with both London (i.e. Andrew Millar) and Edinburgh.

(51) It is not impossible, for example, that the *Specimen* was written and made available to Wishart and his colleagues well in advance of the final stages of the campaign against Hume. In any case, as I go on to explain, there are several individuals who were well-placed to liaise between Baxter and Wishart (if this was necessary), and pass papers on for use at an appropriate moment.

(52) For background on the politics of the opposition to Hume's candidacy see Mossner & Price's introduction to the *Letter*; Stewart, "*Kirk and Infidel*"; Sher, "Professors of virtue"; and Emerson, "The 'affair' at Edinburgh...". Sher and Emerson are especially helpful on Gavin Hamilton's role in the "affair". Hamilton's father, William Hamilton, was Professor of Divinity, and then Principal at Edinburgh University, from 1709-1732. The elder Hamilton was an influential figure in the growth of "early moderatism", and several of his students, including Wishart, were prominent Rankenians. On this see Henry Sefton, "Neu-lights and Preachers Legal", in *Church, Politics and Society: Scotland 1408-1929*, edited by Norman MacDougall (Edinburgh, 1983), 187-196. Gavin Hamilton's brother-in-law was James Balfour, who succeeded Cleghorn as Professor of Moral Philosophy in 1754. In 1753 Hamilton published Balfour's *Delineation of the Nature and Obligation of Morality* -- a book written against Hume. For further biographical details, see Warren McDougall, "Gavin Hamilton, Bookseller in Edinburgh", *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 1 (1978), 1-19.

(53) Hamilton published the first edition of *Human Soul* (1733) along with Andrew Millar and several other booksellers in London. Baxter's subscribers are listed in this work and include several professors at Edinburgh University: William Wishart, Colin MacLaurin, and Robert Steuart. A number of ministers also subscribed including, most notably, three of the ministers involved in the Presbytery of Chirnside prosecution of Dudgeon. There are also a number of English dissenting ministers who subscribed (several of whom belonged to circles that Wishart was closely associated with). The most substantial subscribers were the Hays of

Drumelzier, and their relative the Marquis of Tweeddale -- who took several copies. (See below on Tweeddale and the Hays.)

(54) NLS Ms. 7065, fo.158. Emerson observes that Thomas Hay's assurance of assistance to Hamilton in this letter indicates something that "clearly had been his policy for some time." Emerson, "The 'affair' at Edinburgh...", 12. In another letter to Tweeddale, dated 23 April, 1745 (NLS Ms. 7065, fo.168), Hay alludes to the possibility that his uncle at Mordington -- whom he describes as "a neighbour" of Hume's and presumably of his "acquaintance" -- is already "engaged" in the campaign against him.

(55) These papers include: Hume's *Treatise* and Hobbes's *The Elements of Law*, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46 (1985), 51-64; "'Atheism' and the Title-Page of Hume's *Treatise*", 14 (1988), 400-23; "Skepticism and Natural Religion in Hume's *Treatise*", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49 (1988), 247-65; "A Hobbist Tory: Johnson on Hume", *Hume Studies*, 16 (1990), 75-79; "Epigram, Pantheists and Freethought in Hume's *Treatise*", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 54 (1993), 659-73; "Hume's *Treatise* and the Clarke-Collins Controversy", *Hume Studies*, 21 (1995), 95-115; "Clarke's Extended God and Hume's 'Atheism'", *Enlightenment and Dissent: Special Issue on Clarke*, ed. by James Dybikowski (forthcoming).

(56) It may also be noted that Baxter is a more influential and more interesting thinker than Wishart. His work drew comment, not only from thinkers such as John Jackson and William Warburton (both of whom were influential in their own time), but also involved him in controversy with Colin MacLaurin, and later gave rise to extended criticism from Joseph Priestley. Baxter's philosophy, therefore, has claim to a place of some significance in the history of eighteenth-century Newtonianism and the development of the Scottish Enlightenment.

(57) In his "Life" of Hutcheson, which is prefaced to Hutcheson's *System of Moral Philosophy* (London, 1755), Leechman notes (pp.iii-vi) that Hutcheson, while studying theology at Glasgow under Simson, developed serious doubts about Clarke's demonstrative method. He also notes, however, that Hutcheson greatly respected Clarke's "singular abilities and virtues".

(58) For a brief account of Balguy's defence of Clarke and his criticism of Hutcheson (and Shaftesbury) see W.R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, (Cambridge, 1900), 103-06.

(59) Warburton, in a letter to Hurd, apologizes for abusing Hutcheson, but goes on to complain that "his giving so much vogue to Shaftesbury's system has hurt the science of Morals, and his giving so much credit to Shaftesbury's book has done discredit to Religion." (*Letters from a Late Eminent Prelate to One of His Friends*, 2nd ed. [London, 1809], p.82.) In contrast to his contempt for Shaftesbury, Warburton held the work of Clarke (who he links with Baxter) in high esteem. See, in particular, the remarks in "On the Study of Theology", in Warburton, *A Selection of Unpublished Papers* (London, 1841), 362-66.

(60) There is further evidence of opposition and conflict between followers of Clarke and Shaftesbury in the various debates that gripped the Scottish Church and universities in the 1750's. One of the more interesting items relating to this is John Witherspoon's *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (1753; in *Works*, [Edinburgh, 1805], Vol. VI). Witherspoon was a sharp critic of the "Moderate" or liberal wing of the Scottish clergy, a group of men that solidified over the issue of church patronage in the early 1750's (a matter on which Wishart was leading the opposition). Witherspoon's book, is a satire on the doctrine and practices of the "moderate men", and as the title suggests, he portrays them as followers of Shaftesbury. He also represents them as defenders and friends of "atheists" (most notably Hume) and, in general, as an intellectual and social elite who sneer at fundamental tenets of (evangelical) religion. It is,

however, a significant fact that while Witherspoon claims that the "moderates" regard the works of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Leibniz, Collins, Tindal, Dudgeon, Bayle and others as "most necessary", they nevertheless have treated the work of Clarke with "derision" (183-84). Evidently, then, opponents of the "Moderates" such as Witherspoon, differentiated sharply between the philosophy of Shaftesbury and Clarke, and saw the latter as a bulwark against the dangerous and corrupting tendencies of the former.

(61) James Cameron, "Theological Controversy: A Factor in the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment", in R.H. Campbell & A. Skinner, eds., *The Origins & Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), 122; McCosh, *Scottish Philosophy*, 52.

(62) Scott, *Hutcheson*, 19-21.

(63) In his Preface to the second edition of his *Inquiry into Beauty & Virtue* (1726), Hutcheson explicitly distances himself from Shaftesbury's "prejudices against Christianity". (On changes in Hutcheson's moral philosophy see Scott, *Hutcheson*, Chps. 9-11.) It is also significant that Hutcheson did not repudiate all of aspects of Clarke's philosophy; see his (approving) reference in *System* (p.200n) to Clarke's argument for the immateriality of the soul, which is linked with praise of "Mr. Baxter's ingenious book on this subject".

(64) Peter Jones, "The Scottish professoriate and the polite academy", in I. Hont & M. Ignatieff, *Wealth and Virtue* (Cambridge, 1983), 98. See also William Law Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union: A History of Scotland from 1695 to 1747* (Glasgow: 1905), 224-34. Many of the details of the Simson case, and Wishart's role in it, are documented in *The Correspondence of Rev. Robert Wodrow* (Edinburgh, 1893). Wishart's efforts in defence of Simson likely played a role in the charges of heresy that he faced several years later.

(65) As already noted, Wishart's circle of friends and correspondents among English dissenting ministers included Thomas Amory. The *Biographia Britannica* says that Amory's "sentiments, with regard to both natural and revealed religion, nearly agreed with those of Dr. Samuel Clarke, and of the eminent Divines who were Coadjutors with that great man." (I,178).

(66) Wishart's "An Essay on the indispensable Necessity of a holy and good Life to the Happiness of Heaven" (published in his *Discourses on several Subjects*, 1752) is dedicated to Hoadly.

(67) Stevenson, who was Professor of Natural Philosophy, required his students to write essays which were then presented before the Faculty (a practice revived by Wishart). Some essays written in the late 1730's concern discussions of Berkeley's philosophy and draw heavily on Baxter's work as a source of criticism. (The essays are preserved at Edinburgh University Library: MS.Dc.4.54). For more detail on this see George Davie, "Berkeley's Impact on Scottish Philosophy", *Philosophy*, 40 (1965), 222-34 [reprinted in *A Passion for Ideas, Essays on the Scottish Enlightenment* Vol.II (Polygon: Edinburgh, 1994)]; M.A. Stewart, "Berkeley and the Rankenian Club", 39-40; and Jones, "The Scottish professoriate and the polite academy", 99-101.

(68) Evidence of this can be found in Thomas Amory's preface to the *Sermons of Henry Grove*, a respected and influential thinker among English dissenters. Amory states: "On this account also Mr. Grove would often express himself much pleased with the excellent use Dr. S. Clarke has made of the *Newtonian* Philosophy, particularly of the Law of Gravitation, to demonstrate the continual providence and Energy of the Almighty; and yet more, with the further improvements made by Baxter in this argument, in that master-piece of metaphysical reasoning, his *Enquiry into the Nature of the Soul*, a book which makes the attentive mind

clearly discern the presence of the Deity every where, and demonstrates that we cannot account for a single motion without his constant influence executing those laws of nature, which his infinite wisdom has exhibited." (Grove, *Sermons*, 4 Vols., 3rd ed. [London: 1745]; I,xix.) The first edition of this work appeared in 1740, and the second in 1741-2. Among the heaviest subscribers to Grove's *Sermons* was William Wishart, who took six sets of this work. (I am grateful to Anita Johnson of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for helping me locate the above reference.)

(69) On this account, for example, it is possible to reconcile the evidence that Hume believed that Wishart wrote the *Specimen* with the observation that his replies are directed pointedly against the Clarke-Baxter position. Hume, on this account, was simply alive to the fact that the Clarke-Baxter philosophy was the principal source of Wishart's "charges" against him.

(70) By way of clarification, it should be said, however, that if Wishart is rightly understood (as per the established account) as simply belonging to the moral sense school of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, then it is (much) more likely that Baxter wrote the *Specimen*.

(71) On this, see the papers cited in note 55.