

RUSKIN AND HIS “GOOD MASTER,” WILLIAM BUCKLAND

By Van Akin Burd

To Rev: Dr. Buckland

The enclosed having come into my hands being a Letter written by my Son to a Literary gentleman who had lent him a Work of Dr. Croly containing some remarks on your *Rel^a Deluv^a*, I having thought it might amuse you to see the Zeal of one of your Disciples, & therefore take the liberty of sending it, but I have a twofold motive believing that should your leisure ever allow of your glancing at the paper you might have an estimate of my Sons Knowledge of the Science he takes such delight in & aid him the more easily by occasional hints which the Intercourse so indulgently granted him by you may afford him the means of deriving.

I remember once having the pleasure of traveling from London with you mentioning that my Son had gone to a Sale only to get a Sight of you.

You may conclude therefore that the attentions which you have so kindly bestowed on him (an entire stranger to you) could not have been given where they were more eagerly desired or more highly valued & with offer of my best thanks for these attentions to my Son & apologizing for this Intrusion I remain Sir

Respectfully & truly
Yr obliged Serv[ant]
John J. Ruskin

Herne Hill near London
4 Nov. 1837

To Rev: Dr. Buckland¹

The unpublished letter above from John James Ruskin to one of his son’s professors at Oxford, his son John in only his third term at Christ Church, may strike us as an intrusion on the young man’s privacy and as a classic example of parental apple polishing. Addressed to the famous lecturer in geology, the Rev. William Buckland (1784–1856) who was also a canon of Christ Church, the letter will help us to understand the importance of Buckland’s lectures in Ruskin’s conception of geology in his later debates with the evolutionists. Had Ruskin attended earlier his preparatory school in London, King’s College, he might have

heard the youthful geologist Charles Lyell, but these lectures proving unpopular and coming under attack, Lyell had been replaced by the Evangelical Rev. Thomas Dale whose lectures on English language and literature Ruskin would hear instead. Young Ruskin heard talk at King's that Lyell had asserted "his *well grounded* geological facts, upon very vague conjecture," so he reported this sarcasm to his father (RFL 1: 336). Thus Ruskin had missed exposure to the views Lyell was then developing for the first volume of his *Principles of Geology* (1830–33) wherein he argues that the great changes in the earth throughout history were caused by forces still in action. As a student Lyell had heard Buckland's lectures at Oxford, but he now opposes Buckland's view that these later changes were due to the great flood described in Mosaic history, as Buckland had argued in his *Reliquae Diluviae, or Observations on the Organic Remains attending the Action of a Universal Deluge* (1823).

The flood, according to Buckland, had brought in the diluvial mud and gravel covering the bones of prehistoric animals, like the hyenas recently found in Kirkdale and other caves that he had been exploring. Some human remains also had been found in caves, but Buckland insists that these are post-diluvian, not of the same antiquity as those of the animals. The mountains and rivers, perhaps even the English channel, as we see them today, were carved not by rivers or upheavals of nature, but by the force of the flood only a few thousand years ago (Buckland, *Reliquae* 164, 64). The ease of John James's reference to Buckland's *Diluviae* in his letter suggests that he, as well as his son, may have read the book, although his account books do not record its purchase.² An avid reader, John James did purchase in 1837 for 35s. Buckland's *Bridgewater Treatise* (1836), a series whose purpose was to prove, by the aids of science, "The Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation" (1836) (RFL 1: 393–94nl). He did not buy any of the three volumes of Lyell's *Principles* despite their popularity. Not until 1843 may we be sure that John Ruskin owned the *Principles* by which time he had come into his own income. John James was obviously a supporter of the Oxford school of geology of which Buckland was the leader.

This letter from John James came into my possession in 1974 on the death of Helen Gill Viljoen who left me some papers and drawings, which she had inherited from that obscure collector of Ruskin in Barrow-in-Furness, F. J. Sharp, although this letter does not appear on Sharp's own list of his manuscripts.³ Had I known about the letter earlier, I might have included it in my edition of *The Ruskin Family Letters* in 1973. The letter would have opened an additional insight on Ruskin's days at Oxford, especially on his devotion to Buckland, and the character of Ruskin's father. The importance of the letter led me to present it to the Morgan Library in 1984 for safe keeping, and by whose kindness I am now permitted to publish this and other unpublished letters from that library cited in this paper.

Ostensibly, the purpose of John James's letter is to forward to his son's lecturer (apparently without John's permission) a copy of a letter, now lost, from John to an unidentified "literary gentleman" who had lent him a work by the Rev. George Croly, then rector of St. Stephens, Walbrook, in which Croly comments favorably on Buckland's *Reliquae Diluviae*. Croly was a great friend of the Ruskins. John James would write of his wit after a visit in January 1839: "He was magnificent. I can imagine no conversational power superior to [his] easy throwing off of good things" (RFL 2: 657–58n3). Croly, according to an anonymous reviewer of his writings, including his frequent contributions to periodicals, was one of those "staunch, steadfast church-of-England Protestants" and apparently a Tory in politics (Anon. 318) – qualities dear to the Ruskins.

In spotting this favorable reference to Buckland's *Diluviae*, John Ruskin was reflecting in part his own Evangelical background to which his mother had trained him from infancy. Genesis, written by the hand of Moses, was to be read as the early history of the earth and mankind, not a word to be doubted. His mother, that "implacable brooding matriarch" as A. O. J. Cockshut describes her in his notes to the Whitehouse edition of Ruskin's autobiography *Praeterita* (Cockshut 507), had driven him daily through the Bible until he went to Oxford, the last verse of the Apocalypse followed by the first verses of Genesis (LE 35: 40). A Bible in Ruskin's collection, one given to him by his parents with their inscription of their son's dates of birth and baptism and now preserved in the Ruskin Museum in Coniston, carries the traditional marginal dating of the creation in 4004BC and Noah's flood in 2349, as the Irish Archbishop James Ussher had calculated in the seventeenth century. On their second visit to the Alps in 1835, Ruskin then age sixteen, had composed a long poem, "A Tour through France," wherein he wrote of these mountains and the great flood:

When o'er the world the conquering deluge ran,
Rolling its monstrous mountain surges, far and wide
O'er many an ancient mountain's lordly span (LE 2: 407)

lines reminiscent of the description of Noah's flood in Genesis 7.19: "and all the high hills, that were under the high heavens were covered." Ruskin's geological instincts were early and "never to be abated," he writes later (LE 35: 120), even publishing two short geological notes in *Loudon's Magazine of Natural History* before attending King's. As early as 1831 he had compiled a mineralogical dictionary of the specimens he was collecting on the family tours.⁴ At the same time in his youth, so he asserts in his autobiography (LE 35: 189), "it had never entered into my head to doubt a word of the Bible."

John James had no need to tell Buckland of his son's zeal for mineralogy and geology. On Saturday, 4 February 1837, only a month after Ruskin had entered residence in Christ Church, John, although committed to classical studies, had enrolled in Buckland's lectures on mineralogy, as shown in the enrollment records of Buckland's classes from 1814 to 1849, the date when Buckland ceased to lecture at Oxford. These records in the original lined quarto notebooks still preserved in the Museum of Natural History, Oxford,⁵ and hitherto overlooked by writers on Ruskin, testify to John's zeal as he attends all of Buckland's lectures on mineralogy and geology throughout his studies at Oxford. For his first course in mineralogy, John was the only student registered from Christ Church. These lectures cost John James an extra fee, usually two guineas for each series as shown in Buckland's notebook, these charges in addition to the tuition that John James would have paid for his son's required studies. By mid-February 1837, John had already inspected Buckland's specimens in the old Ashmolean Museum next to the Clarendon building where three times a week at two o'clock Buckland gave his lectures, alternating his series on mineralogy with another on geology. By early March Ruskin had shown Buckland some of his own mineral collection (which apparently he had brought with him from home), Buckland declaring he had never seen a more perfect crystal than one of Ruskin's (RFL 2: 448). Later that month, on a geologic walk with two companions to the nearby hills of Shotover, Ruskin encountered Buckland who looked "mightily pleased," as Ruskin's mother reports, to see these young men so engaged, John later on this walk kicking up

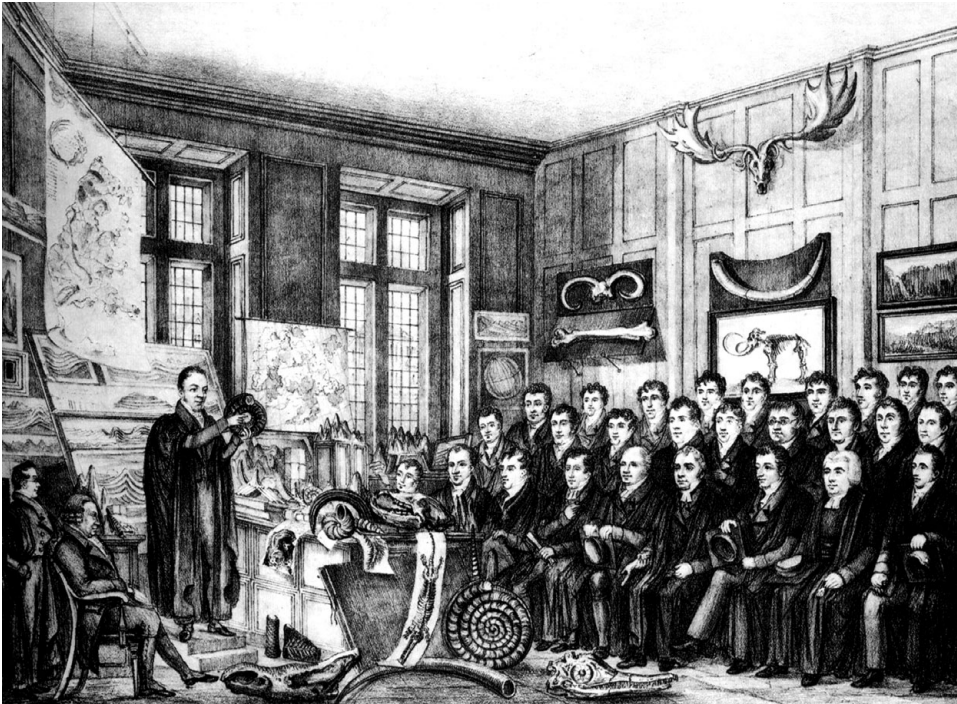


Figure 1. The Geological Lecture Room, Oxford, showing William Buckland lecturing on fossils. Illustration from Elizabeth Oke Gordon, *The Life and Correspondence of William Buckland* (London: Murray, 1894), 33.

from the clay a piece of the backbone of what he believed to be a brontosaurus (RFL 2: 509).

An illustration in Buckland's biography, written by his daughter Elizabeth Oke (later Gordon), enables us to visualize Buckland's lectures, the visiting dons in the front row, students in the second, Buckland in his academic gown lecturing in front aided by charts and prehistoric bones on the floor (Gordon 33; Figure 1). "His lecture room in the Ashmolean filled at once," the Rev. W. Tuckwell recalls in his memories of Oxford, "not so much with undergraduates as with dons, attracted by his liveliness and the novelty of his subject" (35). Buckland's class enrollment records do not list visiting dons, only the undergraduates and an occasional outsider paying the tuition. We can picture Ruskin in the second row at these lectures, wearing his silken gown and velvet cap designating his status as a gentleman commoner. John James saw to it that his son was always properly dressed. In October 1837, according to John James's account book, young Ruskin had new trousers, a frock dress coat, silk vest, and socks (MS 28, RL). He looks quite the dandy in the Thomas Richmond portrait, painted near the time of Ruskin's graduation in 1842 (Figure 2). Buckland indeed was often humorous. In a lecture on mineralogy in April 1840, according to Ruskin's diary, Buckland remarked that taking the first three Greek scholars at Oxford, "he believed it would be utterly



Figure 2. Thomas Richmond, *John Ruskin*. Oil on canvas, c. 1842. Courtesy of the Ruskin Library, University of Lancaster. Photograph courtesy of Dr. James Dearden.

impossible to knock into the head of any one of them the differences between one stone and another” (Evans and Whitehouse 1: 76).

The more popular series on geology beginning in April 1837 attracted a few other members from Christ Church besides Ruskin, including his later tutor in Greek, Osborne

Gordon, and one “tuft,” as Mrs. Ruskin refers to sons of the aristocracy (identified by the gold tassel on their caps), the young Marquis of Kildare (his title always included in Buckland’s records) of whom Ruskin would speak well in *Praeterita* (LE 35: 192). In 1842 Buckland announces his series on geology as on the “Composition, Structure, and Physical Revolutions of the Earth, and the Change in Animal and Vegetable Nature that have attended them.”⁶ Although the classes usually were limited to twenty students, Buckland accepted a larger number in October 1837 when he announced eight lectures on geology to include a “Demonstration of Organic Remains figured in his Bridgewater Treatise,” the fee for this special series only one guinea. Despite doubts about the role of geology in a college of theology and some opinion that Buckland was trying to square the circle in his efforts to “square his account of the Deluge with orthodoxy” (Bill 10), Thomas Gaisford, Dean of Christ Church, perhaps with some reservations, supported the lectures in Ruskin’s day. In 1839, according to Mrs. Ruskin, the Dean meeting Ruskin on his way to the lectures, said “. . . very good I like that young men should attend to Sciences but do not let it occupy you too much” (RFL 2: 590).

As early as April 1837 Buckland had invited John to his lodgings in the Great Quad of Christ Church where he met several visiting geologists, including Charles Darwin, fresh from his discoveries aboard the H. M. S. *Beagle*, whom Ruskin had heard read a paper earlier at the Geological Society in London (RFL 2: 463). This dinner was only the first of these invitations for John, as later he was often included at Buckland’s famous breakfasts where he became friends with Mrs. Buckland and their children, especially Elizabeth Oke (1830–1919) on whose art work he would later make suggestions. Charmed with what he calls Buckland’s “merry life” (LE 35: 207), young Ruskin must have observed the fossils and animals the geologist kept in his lodgings, including the dining room. Perhaps he saw Billy, the now aged hyena that Buckland had imported while writing the *Reliquae* to study his habits in gnawing bones (Stringer 21–23). “I have always regretted a day . . . on which I missed a delicate toast of mice,” Ruskin recalls in *Praeterita* of his morning visits. On the occasion of a visiting mining engineer, Ruskin was included for breakfast, Buckland asking him to bring the portfolios of his drawings of Christ Church and elsewhere which the visitor admired (Richardson 165). As Buckland learned of Ruskin’s skill in drawing, he asked him to make diagrams for use in his lectures. Buckland, so Ruskin declares in his autobiography, was “always ready to help me” (LE 35: 205, 198). From Buckland’s example, Ruskin may well have learned the value of visual illustrations for his own lectures of later years.

If Ruskin took notes on Buckland’s lectures other than the few in his diary, they have been lost. In mid-February 1837, according to Mrs. Ruskin, John heard in Buckland’s lecture that day “something quite new to him” (RFL 2: 436). If Buckland followed the lines of thought in his Bridgewater Treatise, *Geology and Mineralogy*, he soon would have introduced into his lectures the “innumerable extinct races of animals and vegetables; in each giving evidences of design and contrivances . . . unfolding records of the greatness of the Almighty Author of the Universe, written by the finger of God Himself” (*Geology* 1: 5–6). The word “day” in Genesis, as he would explain, may mean a “long period.” The word “beginning” may express an undefined period of time perhaps millions of years ago. The question was not the correctness of the Mosaic narrative but our interpretation of it (*Geology* 1: 8, 17, 33). This latitude in reading Genesis may have been new to young Ruskin. In his Treatise Buckland never mentions his earlier conviction about the universality of Noah’s flood. The Bible, he admits now, cannot be read as a detailed account of geological phenomena, but only as a

“guide of religious belief and moral conduct” (*Geology* 1: 15). At some point in his lectures, as in his Treatise (*Geology* 2: 8), Buckland also may have described the geology of the volcanic district of the Auvergne in France to which John James Ruskin would take his ailing son in 1840 when overwork obliges John to delay his studies at Oxford for a period of rest.

John James’s obsequious letter is scarcely that of a self-effacing father but one who wishes to share his son’s experience at Oxford. Well educated in Edinburgh in his youth, but not a university graduate, he is living his son’s life vicariously, later in “tearful joy” when John takes the Newdigate prize in poetry during John’s third year (LE 35: 613). Also planted in this letter are the seeds of what Helen Viljoen in her unfinished biography of Ruskin calls the “ruinous struggle” between father and son when John James later tries to interfere in John’s life (Spates, “John Ruskin’s Dark Star” 163ff). John James’s concern in his letter for Buckland’s busy life was not misplaced. Buckland, now the father of a large family, had only recently completed his Bridgwater Treatise on which he and his wife had sometimes worked all night (Gordon 193).

The biographies have told us how Ruskin’s mother accompanied by her young cousin Mary Richardson, Nurse Anne, and maid Lucy Tovey, all moved to Oxford near the beginning of the Hilary term in January 1837 to be near John, taking lodging in the High Street only a short walk from the rear entrance to Christ Church. Both parents dreaded leaving the family home in London, but Mrs. Ruskin had consoled herself with the hope they might meet “with some good clergymen in Oxford” (RFL 1: 407). To his credit Ruskin recalls in *Praeterita*, “I was not ashamed, but pleased, that my mother came to Oxford with me to take such care of me as she could.” She was there, he adds, “simply that she might be at hand in case of accident or sudden illness” (LE 35: 199–200) – an explanation that A. O. Cockshut labels in his notes “unconvincing” (Cockshut 507). The truth probably lies in Mrs. Ruskin’s declaration in a letter to her husband early in their stay that she “could not rest where I could not see him [John] daily” (RFL 2: 432). John James, busy during the week traveling among his wine customers, would often join the family for weekends, thus meeting some of the young men with whom John was classmate, occasionally hosting them for a dinner.

Ruskin exaggerates in *Praeterita* when he writes that he “always got round to the High Street to my mother’s tea at seven, and amused myself till Tom [the college bell] rang in, and I got with a run to Canterbury gate” (LE 35: 200). He did try to give his mother daily assurance of his well being, however, either by short visits, a breakfast, lunch, a visit between lectures, a message sent over by his servant Thomas Hughes, or the frequent evening tea when he could tell his mother “whatever had pleased or profited him in the day’s activities” (LE 35: 200). Mrs. Ruskin’s location enabled her to catch glimpses of her son if he were in the High Street, once seeing him as he walked arm in arm with one of his gold tasseled friends, a sight that she reports to her husband, knowing how this would please him (RFL 2: 611). Ruskin’s relationship with his mother did not go unobserved, one of his contemporaries recalling that Ruskin “was nearly always seen with some female relative, which was rather remarkable at that day” (Quiller-Couch 352).

Ruskin’s attendance at Buckland’s lectures was voluntary. His assigned subjects the first term in his classical studies were Herodotus, books 1 and 3, Cicero’s orations, and “Translations” in all of which he would be graded “Bene” (Eddington 26). In contrast to many of his classmates, he was there for serious study. Shortly after his arrival, as is well

known from his autobiography (LE 35: 195–96), he was embarrassed by having to read aloud his weekly theme in hall before the assembled undergraduates. He would persist with Buckland's lectures into the Hilary term of 1840, John James still willing to pay the extra guineas of tuition, even though attendance at these lectures had begun to decline. "I wish John would enter for Dr. Buckland's lectures now commencing – if only one Guinea," the frugal John James wrote his wife in February 1840 (RFL 2: 656).⁷ By this point John James had achieved at least the notice, if not acquaintance, of Buckland himself who had suggested to John that his father attend a lecture in London on the North American Indians. "Nobody but Dr. Buckland would have moved me from a good fire at 9 Night to go 4 miles & on a very cold night with besides a severe headache," so John James writes his son afterwards. The lecturer was interesting, he continues, but "Dr. Buckland beats all the world – Coleridge was a flow of soul – Hazlitt good Thirlwall good – the conversations of Wordsworth pleasing but even the Stage Coach conversations of Dr. Buckland beats them all – his whole Conversation is wit more refined . . . more easy & more playful." Apparently John James and Buckland had shared another coach ride together, as he adds, "I think him the most delightful companion I ever met with & yet I had very little of him – for such is my awe & admiration for high talent that I was dumb & stupid to a degree beyond . . . my ordinary average stupidity . . . you will allow me credit for sending you to *all* his lectures for he never can be the same" (RFL 2: 656–57).

Mrs. Ruskin and her son were in the cathedral of Christ Church in late January 1839 when Buckland delivered his sermon subsequently published as a pamphlet titled, *An Inquiry whether the Sentence of Death Pronounced at the Fall of Man included the Whole Animal Creation or Was Restricted to the Human Race*. His purpose, according to this now rare source, was to help his audience of future clergymen understand the Scriptural difficulties in reconciling his text from Romans 5.12, "As by one man sin came into the world, and death by sin," with the discoveries of geologists that extinct races of animals had roamed the earth before the fall of man. Scripture, Buckland asserts in an argument dense with Biblical citations and allusions to Milton, does not claim that the brute creation became subject to death only through Adam's fall (Buckland, *Inquiry* 18). Of this sermon, Mrs. Ruskin wrote her husband that John must explain to him "how Dr. Buckland got over his difficulties without impugning the Scripture account." She could only say that Buckland "proves at least to his own satisfaction that these antedated animals (if one may so term them) eat, and were eaten by each other so that if they did not die naturally, they were killed. The question is a very puzzling one." She adds that she thinks it would be wise in the Dr. and his compeers "if they would let the Bible alone" (RFL 2: 583–84).

John James on his travels puzzled over the question with some Wesleyan missionaries. "If Sin brought Death how was Death previously there," John James asks his wife after this conversation. "The monsters as we must let them live by Geologists Chronology – ceased to live by the power of Deity but in a way yet not called dying. It was not what we understand by death" (RFL 2: 576). The sermon apparently was convincing to the young Ruskin as the issue stayed on his mind. "There is not *one* text in Scripture out of which you can squeeze the slightest evidence that death did not take place with the lower animals," so he would write Edward Clayton, a college friend, in 1843 (LE 1: 477–78). Thus through Buckland's lectures, his books and this sermon, Ruskin saw geology as demonstrating a divine design in nature that with some latitude in interpreting the chronology of Genesis does not contradict the "Sacred Volume" as Buckland describes the Bible in his sermon.

On Sundays Ruskin would go to church with his mother (and father if in town). Following the routine of the Buckland family, Ruskin very likely attended the morning service in the cathedral. In the forenoon each family went to hear an evangelical preacher, Mrs. Buckland with her children to the nearby St. Ebbe's (Gordon 111), the Ruskins to St. Peter-in-the-East on New College Lane not far from Mrs. Ruskin's rooms where they heard the Rev. Walter Kerr Hamilton (RFL 2: 463), described as an "earnest evangelical preacher" (ODNB 24: 909). In the afternoon, like Buckland himself, they attended the University church of St. Mary the Virgin, always a sight to see the dignitaries and students file in from the High Street. On one occasion John James brought his visiting French associate in the wine business (Catholic and speaking little English) to see the spectacle, standing discretely outside near the porch (RFL 2: 597).

At the University church, the Ruskins and Buckland would have heard the sermons of John Henry Newman, then vicar of St. Mary, and known something of the controversy over *Tracts for the Times* in No. 90 of which Newman would show that the articles of the Anglican Church were consistent with Catholic doctrine. Ruskin seems to have taken little notice of this, nor does the controversy come up in Buckland's biography. Mrs. Ruskin hearing something of the Oxford Movement, "Puseyism," as it was sometimes called because of the supporting role of Edward Pusey of Oriel College, told her husband of her regret that these theological differences had risen. "What are the real doctrines of what is termed 'Puseyism'?" she asks of her son in June 1843. Any time she had heard Newman preach, "he seemed to me like Oliver Cromwell" (RFL 2: 740). John James, on one of his weekend visits, apparently had heard Pusey preach and commented afterwards to his son that "Pusey has a crack in his Divinity if not in his Skull" (RFL 2: 681). John did not disagree. In 1843, reading one of Newman's essays, he would comment in his diary: "Curious essay of Newman's. I read some pages . . . full of intellect but doubtful in tendency. I fear insidious" (Evans and Whitehouse 1: 240).

The recent exhibition at the Ruskin Library at Lancaster, of Chris Orr's perceptive cartoons of Ruskin began with his sketch, *A Chump at Oxford*, in which the innocent freshman Ruskin stares elsewhere, overlooking the temptations of the city, including a supine woman available in a skiff in the river near his feet. Ruskin was aware of these temptations but they were beyond him. In *Praeterita* Ruskin writes there was "not the slightest fear of my gambling, for I had never touched a card, and looked upon dice as people now do dynamite. No fear of my being tempted by the strange woman" (LE 35: 188).

Records of the temptations of Oxford are to be found in the weekly Hebdomadal Board Meetings of the University and the Oxford Police Records. Only the year before Ruskin arrived at Oxford, the Oxford town clerk had asked for an increased donation "for the maintenance of Prostitutes confined by the authority of the University in the city Gaol."⁸ The police records for 1837 show a total of 80 women usually committed to solitary confinement.⁹ College rules for the boys ordered them not to wander in the streets at night. College proctors were to clear the streets of prostitutes in the daytime, the police at night. On 11 October 1836, near the time of Ruskin's matriculation that month, the Mayor of Oxford notified the college he had "that morning bound over two Members of the University between whom a challenge had passed."¹⁰ Soon after John's arrival in Oxford the senior proctor drew the attention of the Board to some members of the University "concerned" in horse racing upon Cotsford Heath,¹¹ a favorite violation of the rules, particularly by those students permitted by their parents and the Dean to maintain horses in the stables near Christ Church. Ruskin had barely

settled in his rooms in Peckwater, than the boys lit a bonfire in his Quad, a riotous occasion for which four of the “young gentlemen,” as the students were called, were “restricted.”¹² Although Ruskin would be generally respected by his classmates for his drawings, his skill at chess, the supply of his father’s wines, and perhaps at least once for a speech he gave in the Union, his subject then including a poetic description of the Alps (Lake 39), teasing was to be expected. Early in 1837, according to Mrs. Ruskin, the boys tried to break down the oak door to his rooms – an offense punishable by rustication – but they soon entered through his window, having climbed the Palladian columns of Peckwater or walked the narrow ledge between the windows of the rooms on the second floor. These Oxonians, Mrs. Ruskin says, “run such risks” (RFL 2: 447). Later she told of her son being chased around the Quad at night, John “obliged to take refuge in . . . buildings where the turns and corners made his pursuers despair of seizing him” (RFL 2: 592).

Busy with his studies, geology, and writing sad poems to his youthful and soon to be lost love, Adèle Domecq, the Catholic daughter of John James’s Spanish associate in the wine business [as in “The Mirror”: “It saw, it knew thy loveliness, thy burning lip, and glancing eye” (LE 2: 19)] and competing for the Newdigate prize in poetry even during his first year, Ruskin in later years would write to his favorite tutor Walter Lucas Brown, with whom he kept up correspondence, “of the dead waste of three or four months in writing poems for the Newdigate. . . . No man who could write poetry ever wanted a prize to make him do it.” Instead of forcing him to study Greek history and Latin grammar, Ruskin asserts, they should have offered him drawing and mineralogy – Buckland’s lectures (Bradley 755). Instead he had to prepare for examination questions like “Compare the use of the article in Homer with that in the age of Pericles.”¹³

Some of the other lads may have written poems but in fun, although I have found none extant by Ruskin’s classmates. The “New and Gorgeous Pantomine . . . Prince Cherrytop and the Good Fairy Fairfuck,” allegedly printed at the Oxford University Press in 1879, at one time preserved in the locked case of the Henry Spencer Ashbee collection of erotica in the British Library (P.C. 15. a. 13, BL), gives an example of what the other boys might write. Or the undated anonymous doggerel, “Song of Roderick Dhu,” preserved among the Howley Papers in the library of Lambeth Palace, written at Christ Church on the occasion of Dean Gaisford’s marriage in 1815, ridiculing the Dean’s courtship: “In Greek I believe I must utter my passion / For Greek’s more familiar than English to me” (MS 22124). Other verses, once in the Ashbee collection, but now lost, picture the night life on the High Street as Ruskin would have heard about it: “The shades of night were falling fast, / As up and down the High Street passed / A youth, who bore inside his gown / A prick-stand he could not keep down / . . . Beware the proctor’s stealthy walk, / Beware the dirty smut you talk” The lines end when the proctor, the “Bulldog,” catches up with this troubled student (Fraxi 1: 186–87). Such ribaldry could reach even table in the dining hall; a visitor during Ruskin’s first year recalled one of the gold-tufts reproving the jesters: “This sort of thing is not fit for a boy to hear” (Morris 67). Ruskin’s later correspondence with Henry Acland has a letter postmarked 1 September 1841, in which Ruskin confesses “I did not make many friends at college . . . by my own folly.”¹⁴

Ruskin, however, not blind to the mischief of the other young men, later in a burst of temper, criticizes his father for his weekend dinners for Ruskin’s classmates: “You and my mother used to be delighted when I associated with men like Lords March & Ward – men who had their drawers filed with pictures of naked bawds – who walked openly with their

harlots in the sweet country lanes – men who swore, who diced, who drank, who knew *nothing* except the names of racehorses” (WL: 369–70).

Ruskin was not one of them. When he withdrew from Oxford in 1840 because of health, his recuperation included a long tour of France and Italy with his parents. His letters and diary for these months are not those of a prospective clergyman but a geologist. In a letter to Thomas Dale, his former teacher at King’s College, he tells of their approach in southern France to the “volcanic cliffs and black lavas of Auvergne” (LE 1: 377) – whose geologic importance he had learned from Buckland. Observing a granite mine in France, he describes in his diary the “gneiss below; veins of cal[cium] spar with galena, 16 ounces in the cwt. of silver. . . . I never will work hard again at classics,” he declares, “for all the honours on earth” (Evans and Whitehouse 1: 83). But he kept Buckland in mind: in February 1841 writing him from Naples about a disastrous landslide exposing a hill of limestone, a descriptive letter that was later read to the Ashmolean Society (LE 1: 211).

The numerous invitations to the Bucklands have kept Ruskin on familiar terms with the geologist’s family even after the completion of his studies in 1842. In 1845 Buckland, perhaps dismayed in Oxford with the Tractarian attacks on science and natural theology and the decline of attendance in his lectures,¹⁵ welcomed an appointment to be Dean of Westminster. He had been living too amid the ridicule of his earlier *Reliquae Diluviae*, his late concession that glaciers had once covered the British Isles, the popularity of Lyell’s thesis that Buckland could never accept – Buckland considering Lyell’s work as “full of shifting hypotheses and bold theory,” so he wrote in a letter cited by Nicolas Rupke (120). Nor had Buckland tolerated in his Treatise some “speculative philosophers” who had referred “the origin of existing organizations, either to an eternal succession of the same species, or to the formation of more recent from ancient species” – forerunners of the evolutionists (Buckland, *Geology* 1: 50–55).

Buckland retained his conviction that man and the earth are the special creation of God. Even the deposits of salt, he had argued in his Bridgewater Treatise, were located for the future convenience of man so that he need not travel great distances to the sea for this essential commodity; the strata of coal were placed with the “ulterior prospective view to the future uses of man” (*Geology* 1: 403) for the location of his iron foundries.

The unpublished letters from Ruskin to Mrs. Buckland, a mineralogist herself, hitherto unnoticed at the Huntington Library, run at least through her husband’s death in 1856. It is a correspondence, along with other unpublished letters at the Morgan Library, that shows much of Ruskin’s long devotion to his former teacher and his family. In 1840, as these letters attest, Ruskin was helping with diagrams for Buckland’s lectures. The move of the geologist’s family to London in 1845 brought the new Dean of Westminster within visiting distance of the Ruskins at Denmark Hill, including an invitation for Buckland to see Ruskin’s Turners, as we learn from a letter at the Morgan Library (File MA 2457, PML).

Mrs. Buckland appears to be the only person to whom Ruskin wrote the day before he left home to travel to Perth to marry Effie Gray in 1848. In a letter in the Huntington collection dated 13 March, he writes:

and I leave tomorrow for Scotland – not however without the hope that you will permit me on my return to ask of you that the kindness you have always shown to *me*, may be in some degree extended also to a young Scottish lady who has consented to leave her good friends & fair country – in order

to put a happy term to my philosophership. I have but few friends whose countenance I desire for her – of those few you are among the chief. . . . I have little to tell you of her – except that she has an open heart and a gentle temper; is singularly cheerful – unaffected – humble – and firm of purpose – and that I am sadly afraid I do not half deserve her. . . . I hope to bring her up from Scotland with me early in May.¹⁶

Surprisingly Ruskin also wrote Mrs. Buckland from Keswick on his honeymoon. He had been slow to write, he tells her in his letter dated 22 April [1848], “but that I have been buried among the Highland moors ever since my marriage – and the fine weather has kept us wandering all day long.” They had sent cards to no one, he writes, because “my wife’s *acquaintances* and mine were too numerous to be received en masse at Denmark Hill” – his lame explanation for the lack of plans for a reception other than by the family for the arrival of the newlyweds at his home. At Keswick, Ruskin adds, “We have been staying here the whole of the week, happy in the ministry of a good and able clergyman” (HM 57242, HL) This impassive correspondence, I may say parenthetically, reminds us of Viljoen’s belief that it was Ruskin’s parents who pressed Ruskin to marry Effie (Spates, *Imperfect Round* 131), this cool honeymoon only the beginning of a disastrous marriage.

On Buckland’s decline in 1849, when he would be treated in Oxford for some mental illness, according to an unpublished letter, this one undated, Ruskin begs Mrs. Buckland to persuade her husband “to make Denmark Hill his residence when he next comes to town – Our air is at least pure compared with that of London – and the quiet and freshness of the country would surely be better for the invalid than the waste & noise of the streets – Dr. Buckland would have a room *entirely* to himself for his papers or work. . . . Dr. Buckland must thoroughly understand that coming here would not be going into society – but into a desert. . . .” Ruskin would be in the house but never stirring “out of my mineralroom” (File MA 2457, PML). By February 1850, we learn from a note from John James to his son that he has heard through his coachman of the decline in the Dean’s health. “every Servant is discharged, and the family will move into retirement in Oxford. Do *not* write to the family. The Dr. I fear is wrong in head, & a bad case but say nothing” (File L3, RL).

Perhaps the questions on her art work that Elizabeth Buckland had directed to Ruskin by 1857, and probably earlier, may have been among those leading to the writing of his text, *The Elements of Drawing*, in 1857. His detailed advice to “Bessie,” as Ruskin knew her, is further evidence of his long attachment to the Buckland family. Filling some twenty long unnumbered sheets of foolscap, preserved in the Gordon Archive in the Devon Record Office in Exeter, England, and hitherto overlooked, Elizabeth asks her questions in one column, usually the left, and Ruskin answers on the opposite side.¹⁷ Drawing from nature, as Ruskin would advise in his *Elements*, Elizabeth asks, for example, “What colours for the dark part of bright stemmed trees – ash, black walnut? There I am quite at fault.” Ruskin’s reply: “Recipes for colour are very partially helpful and the proportions used must depend upon the eye and taste of the student.” He adds: “This is a difficult question, one capable of receiving such various replies.”

On another sheet Elizabeth asks: “Question – is my pencil outline too loose? I wish to keep my pencil slack in my hand that it might yield quite tenderly to impressions in any direction.” On another sheet Ruskin includes a fine sketch of perhaps his own hand in a relaxed position to illustrate its proper position for drawing.

In one instance Elizabeth writes more personally that, for several years, she had given up drawing “Till Ruskin’s books opened new light.” In a personal moment Ruskin too reflects: “When I was a boy I was taught by a drawing master [Charles Runciman] who had not the slightest feeling for nature but the great object was to be able to do this neatly and round [illustration]. At last I came in the way of an amateur [Copley Fielding] who really could draw and taught me the ideas of arm position” (LE 35: 76–77, 212–16). Elsewhere Ruskin in his notes to Elizabeth explains that curved lines are more beautiful than straight ones, the need for three lights in a composition as he illustrates in a sketch of a Gothic window and the frequent trefoil of nature, what he calls for in *The Elements of Drawing* to exhibit “The Providential government of the world” (LE 15: 162).

During the 1850s – a crucial decade in geologic discoveries, Ruskin was writing on *The Stones of Venice*, the melancholy third and fourth volumes of his *Modern Painters*, and by 1857 had begun the arranging of the Turner bequest at the National Gallery, a depressing experience as he discovers the erotica in Turner’s sketch books, and comes to believe that these failures in Turner came from his “want of faith” (LE 7: 442). This and other influences would lead to Ruskin’s disillusion with Evangelicism, at the same time in 1859 beginning his obsessive love for the deeply Evangelical child, Rose La Touche. Lyell, in contrast, was traveling in North America, was twice elected President of the Geological Society, was publishing papers, and collecting ideas for his *Antiquity of Man* (1863). Darwin, his voyage around the world on the *Beagle* long behind him, was living at home compiling his evidence on the origin of species. Early in this decade Ruskin had shown his bewilderment with this activity. “If only the Geologists would let me alone, I could do very well,” he cries to his former classmate, Henry Acland in 1851, “but these dreadful hammers! I hear the clink of them” (LE 36: 115).

In a remarkable letter to Mrs. Buckland dated 10 February 1856, Ruskin explains his own failure to follow up on his geologic studies. Declining an invitation to visit her on the Isle of Guernsey where she had gone because of her health and had thought that Ruskin might be interested in the rocky landscape, he writes of his depressed spirits – as in his diary he sometimes counts his assumed number of days he has left to him of life. He writes her:

every day of my life that passes,” he writes her, “leaving me – as I take care to calculate – one day less of *possible* time for carrying out many purposes which I would fain give some tittle of execution to, while I still have some little *morning* feeling left about life – fastens me closer to the oar – and my oars, unluckily, are at present not those of the dredging boat, which, by the bye, as said boat has, I believe, *no* oars – They could not easily be. But I mean that my work lies either among old books and pictures, or in the *non-molluscous* part of geology & natural history, I having taken up for special study, (such as I have time for) – everything *underneath* those tiresome fossils, and caring very little about any rock that appears to have been Mud, or to have had crabs and oysters in it. Modern geology always seems to me to go scraping about in the gutter after the fashion of dirty children amid the oyster and periwinkle heaps on the New Road. I don’t like that ancient & fishlike smell of it, but keep among the Gneiss and Protogine, hating so much as a belemnite.¹⁸ I do not doubt that those double-natured or no-natured salt water things are very pretty, alive – but they disgust me by their perpetual gabbling and turning themselves inside out, and on the whole – I think for purple and rose colour & pretty shapes. I may do well enough with convolvuluses and such things – which don’t eat each other up – backwards & forwards, all day long. So when you are quite well again – which I hope will be soon – and back again at Oxford – some time when flowers are gay & lawns green – with

much more pleasure than at Guernsey. I like rocks, but not under 3,000 feet high – at least, I consider them as mockers and pretenders on a less scale. (HM 57248, HL)

From Buckland's study of rocks and fossils, Ruskin is moving to natural theology. In this decade of his life he will become a "theologian of nature," as C. Stephen Finley describes him in his definitive study of this stage of Ruskin's thinking, *Nature's Covenant* (1980). The promise of the rainbow after Noah's flood is now to be read in nature; Ruskin has found an emblematic relationship between God and nature (Finley 37). He would like to be among the rocks of Protogine, he had told Mrs. Buckland – stones found on Mount Blanc and by legend its most ancient – stones named for that mythic first woman born after the great flood with which Zeus had covered the earth as a punishment for man's impiety. Protogena was the daughter of Deucalion and Pyrrha – Deucalion being the son of Prometheus who survived the deluge to regenerate the human race. This is the decade in which Ruskin is turning to the Greeks for symbols of his vision of a moral universe, as Dinah Birch explains in her brilliant study of Ruskin and the Greek myths. It was Buckland himself, however, who had first directed Ruskin in the direction of natural theology. In the concluding chapter of Buckland's *Geology and Mineralogy* (1: 586), he declares that "Geology has thus lighted a new lamp along the path of Natural Theology."

Although Ruskin declares in *Praeterita* that in 1858 his "evangelical beliefs are put away, to be debated no more" (LE 35: 496), Finley shows that this is only partially true. Ruskin put away beliefs such as the Calvinist notion about the depravity of man, and the Evangelical strictures on Sunday, but he retains the faith of the passages of the Bible he had memorized in his youth, the Psalms, as Ruskin writes in *Praeterita*, "that had established my soul in life" (LE 35: 42). In Psalm 91, Ruskin's favorite, he had found in God his refuge and strength; "in him will I trust," as the second verse reads. His epilogue to the new edition of *Modern Painters* in 1888 speaks of the religious school "to which I attached mistaken importance in my youth" – belief in the Fall, the Redemption, Eternal Punishment, Immortality. In *Modern Painters* Ruskin believes now in this epilogue, he had taught that man can be happy only in the "presence and guidance of a Personal Deity. . . . Otherwise he is little more than a mollusc" (LE 7: 402), a creature of the mud that Buckland had described and illustrated in his *Bridgewater Treatise*.

Ruskin's devotion to the Bible through his middle years appears, for example, in 1876 when he carries to Venice the Bible his mother had used daily before her death five years previously. As Ruskin writes in his diary, it was this Bible he opens at random on Christmas morning – a trust in chance for important decisions, as he may have learned from the habit of St. Francis – to a passage in Deuteronomy (29.29) in which Moses declares that while the secret things belong to God, "those things which are revealed belong unto us" (Evans and Whitehouse 3: 920) – Ruskin's reading of the presence of a spirit in nature.

In the draft of his autobiography which he never intended to publish, Darwin, forgetting Buckland's earlier hospitality, describes the geologist as coarse and a buffoon in his lectures (Darwin 102). The tide has brought in evolution; Buckland and Ruskin are left in the wash, both loyal to their devotion to the Bible. T. H. Huxley in 1868 describes protoplasm as the basis of life (Huxley 130–65), and somewhat later, natural religion as a delusion. The beauty of a hedge only masks the carnage of nature (Desmond 558).

In geology Ruskin would stay within the perimeters of Buckland's books and lectures. Ruskin's book on geology, *Deucalion* (1875), possibly intended as a textbook in science for

the schools of St. George, credits Buckland as his “good master” (LE 26: 134). In a sense, *Deucalion* compiled from his lectures, is Ruskin’s *Reliquae Deluviae*; instead of Noah’s flood leaving the world as we see it, Ruskin uses the flood from which Deucalion rescues man. Deucalion’s story, Ruskin asserts, is “as true” as the story of Noah, and “incomparably truer than the Darwinian Theory” (LE 26: 99).

Like Buckland, Ruskin attacks Lyell (now Sir Thomas) “whose great theorem of the constancy and power of existing phenomena was only in measure proved, – in a larger measure disputable; and in the broadest bearings of it, entirely false,” he declares in *Deucalion* (LE 26: 117). Ruskin may have overlooked the liberal Margaret Bell’s use of Lyell’s text with the girls at Winnington Hall (WL 66), but he now fears the “spectre of relativity,” as Francis O’Gorman describes Ruskin’s vigorous attack in *Deucalion* on Darwin and John Tyndall, the latter the Professor of Natural Philosophy at London’s Royal Institution. In an essay that could not be bettered, O’Gorman shows how the “backbone” of *Deucalion* is concerned with “the teaching of certainty and . . . a world of stable and dependable truth” (O’Gorman 49).

Here, O’Gorman asserts, Ruskin presents himself as the “interpreter of a divinely fashioned nature in which moral truths are persistently articulated to those who have eyes to see them” (48). *Deucalion* is indeed a textbook on Ruskin’s way to see as it had been the theme in his inaugural address at the Cambridge School of Art in 1858. Our power of seeing mountains “depends on the cultivation of the instrument of sight itself, and of the soul that uses it,” Ruskin writes in *Deucalion* (LE 26: 103). He attacks those who look at nature only through microscopes (LE 26: 104), his lament over the growing divorce between the men of science and the artist. Where Buckland had described the three eras of geologic history by their scientific names (paleozoic, etc.), Ruskin lists them only by number (“The First Period,” etc.), and has little to say of them. Speculation on the origin of life is a waste of time (LE 26: 320). In his youth Ruskin had attended Buckland’s lectures in both geology and mineralogy, but now he says that “geology tells us nothing very interesting.” It tells us only “about a world that once was” (LE 26: 243–44). *Deucalion* contains more mineralogy than geology. Thus Ruskin, with his love of the Bible and his “understanding of the world in divine terms,” as O’Gorman describes him (46), should be seen as what we call today a “creationist,” a believer in the beneficent design of the universe he had found in Buckland.

Had O’Gorman known of the lost correspondence between Ruskin and the Bucklands, he might have added this long and loyal friendship to the major influences that shaped *Deucalion* and Ruskin’s thinking in the later stages of his life.

State University of New York, College at Cortland

NOTES

I am indebted to Prof. John Fauth, a geologist, and Prof. James Spates, a Ruskin scholar, for their reading and suggestions on this paper.

Abbreviated References:

Bodl	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BL	British Library, London
HL	Huntington Library, San Marino, Cal.

RL	Ruskin Library, Lancaster University, U.K.
LE	Cook and Wedderburn, <i>The Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin</i>
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
PML	Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
RFL	Burd, ed. <i>The Ruskin Family Letters</i>
WL	Burd, ed. <i>The Winnington Letters</i>

1. ALS, File MA 4073, PML. For copyright permission to publish all of the hitherto unpublished Ruskin letters and other papers from Ruskin's hand in this essay, I thank the Ruskin Literary Trustees, the Guild of St. George. The earlier coach ride which John James shared with Buckland was probably in the winter of 1836 when John was still a student at King's College. "I am very glad you saw Mr. Buckland," John writes his father on 27 February 1836, "I wish I had been with you – indeed I flatter myself that if I were travelling with you, you would not have so many headaches" (RFL 1: 325).
2. I am indebted to Dr. James Dearden of Bembridge, Isle of Wight, for this suggestion that the Ruskins had read the *Diluviae*. He is compiling a list of books in Ruskin's library and the dates of their arrival in the collection.
3. ALS, MA 3451, PML. On the verso of John James's letter, a previous owner, obviously not Buckland, but perhaps some editor, has scribbled: "Ruskin's notes on hyenas *other matters nonsense*," followed by three illegible initials.
4. A page of this dictionary is preserved in the Ruskin Museum, Coniston.
5. OUM, BuP, Bodl. I am indebted to Rupke (261) for bringing these records to my attention, and to Mr. Christopher Leadbeator in helping me to read them.
6. "Notice from the Reader in Geology, 15 April 1842," included in scrapbook, "Christ Church Common Room, 1836–44," Christ Church Library, Oxford.
7. Buckland's class enrollment records show that while the other students paid two guineas for tuition in this series of lectures, John James was permitted to pay only one.
8. Hebdomadal Board Meetings (1836–41), WP8/24/5, 81, Bodl.
9. Oxford Police Records, 1837–38, MSS. Top. Oxon b, 163, Bodl.
10. Oxford Police Records, 1837–38, MSS. Top. Oxon b, 94, Bodl.
11. Hebdomadal Board Meetings (1836–41), WP8/24/8, 94, Bodl.
12. Christ Church Archives, "Christ Church Common Rooms, 1836–41," Christ Church Library.
13. Christ Church Archives, "Christ Church Common Rooms, 1836–41," Christ Church Library.
14. MS Acland, d. 72, Bodl.
15. Christ Church Archives, "Christ Church Common Rooms, 1836–41," Christ Church Library. This file has a note from Charles Daubeny telling of the decline of attendance at college lectures, Buckland reporting he used to have 50 in Geology and 30 in Mineralogy, but now has only 30 and 16 in these classes.
16. HM 57241, HL. I cite this letter and others from the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, with their kind permission. For the provenance of these letters, see *Huntington Library Quarterly* 37.1 (Winter 1994): 93.
17. These pages are quoted with the generous permission of the private owners of the Gordon archive, Roderick Gordon and Diana Harman.
18. The New Road runs west from the High Street through the medieval remains of the city past the ruins of the old castle. The belemnite is an extinct animal related to the cuttlefish.

WORKS CITED

- Anonymous. "Dr. Croly." *Littell's Living Age* 6 (12 Aug. 1854): 318–21.
- Bill, E. G. W. "The Old Christ Church." *Christ Church Papers, No. 1, Christ Church and Reform, 1850-1867*. Ed. E. G. W. Bill and J. F. A. Mason. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1970. 1–23.

- Birch, Dinah. *Ruskin's Myths*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1988.
- Bradley, Alexander. “Ruskin at Oxford: Pupil and Master.” *Studies in English Literature* 32 (1992): 747–64.
- Buckland, William. Class Attendance Records. University Museum Archives, Oxford.
- . *Geology and Mineralogy*. 2 vols. London: Carey, 1836.
- . *An Inquiry whether the Sentence of Death Pronounced at the Fall of Man included the Whole Animal Creation or Was Restricted to the Human Race*. London: Murray, 1839.
- . *Reliquae Diluviae, or Observations on Organic Remains contained in Caves, Fissures, and Diluvial Gravel and in Other Geological Phenomena Attesting the Action of an Universal Deluge*. London: Murray, 1823.
- Burd, Van Akin, ed. *The Ruskin Family Letters*. 2 vols. Cornell: Cornell UP, 1973.
- . ed. *The Winnington Letters*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1969.
- Cockshut, A. O. J., ed. *The Whitehouse Edition of John Ruskin's Praeterita*. Keele: Keele UP, 1994.
- Cook, E. T., and Alexander Wedderburn, eds. *The Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin*. 39 vols. London: Allen, 1903–12.
- Darwin, Charles. *Autobiography of Charles Darwin*. Ed. Nora Barlow. London: Collins, 1958.
- Desmond, Adrian. *Huxley: from Devil's Disciple to Evolution's High Priest*. London: Addison-Wesley, 1998.
- Eddington, Ross. “John Ruskin's Classical Education.” *Ruskin Review and Bulletin* 1.1 (2004): 20–39.
- Evans, Joan and John Howard Whitehouse, eds. *Diaries of John Ruskin*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1956.
- Finley, C. Stephen. *Nature's Covenant, Figures of Landscape in Ruskin*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1992.
- Fraxi, Pisanus. *Bibliography of Prohibited Books*. 3 vols. London: Brussell, 1927.
- Gordon, Mrs. Elizabeth Oke Buckland. *Life and Correspondence of William Buckland*. London: Murray, 1894.
- Huxley, Thomas Henry. “On the Physical Basis of Life,” *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews*. London: MacMillan, 1870.
- Lake, Katherine, ed. *Memorials of Dean Lake*. London: Arnold, 1908.
- Morris, William O'Connor. *Memories and Thoughts of a Life*. London: George Allen, 1895.
- O'Gorman, Francis. “‘The Eagle and the Whale?’ Ruskin's Argument with John Tyndal.” *Time and Tide. Ruskin and Science*. Ed. Michael Wheeler. London: Pilkington, 1996. 45–64.
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 60 vols. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.
- Quiller-Couch, Lilian M., ed. *Reminiscences of Oxford by Oxford Men*. Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1892.
- Richardson, Benjamin Ward. *Thomas Sopwith*, London: Longmans, 1891.
- Rupke, Nicolas A. *Great Chain of History: William Buckland and the English School of Geology (1814–48)*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1983.
- Spates, James L. *The Imperfect Round: Helen Gill Viljoen's Life of Ruskin*. Rochester: RIT, 2005.
- . “John Ruskin's Dark Star: New Lights on his Life based on the Unpublished Biographic Materials and Research of Helen Gill Viljoen.” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 82 (2000): 135–91.
- Stephen, Sir Leslie, and Sir Sydney Lee, eds. *Dictionary of National Biography*. 21 vols. London: Oxford UP, 1921–22.
- Stringer, Chris. *Homo Britannicus, The Incredible Story of Human Life in Britain*. London: Allen Lane, 2006.
- Tuckwell, W. *Reminiscences of Oxford*. London: Cassell, 1900.