

Box Turtle Kincaid's Failure to Address Arguments on the Heidelberg Catechism and the Centurion Story

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Box Turtle Timothy Kincaid's puerile personal attacks have intensified in direct proportion to his inability to answer an array of arguments for which he has no reasonable answer (see his "second update" to his "tortured logic" piece [here](#) and his "[Robert Gagnon and the Grand Box Turtle Whirl of Immorality](#)" (also his "[Gagnon Revisited](#)" which I respond to [elsewhere](#)).

Box Turtle Kincaid Grow Nastier as His Inability to Defend Rationally His Remarks Rises

His favorite word to describe detailed, reasoned responses to his numerous fallacies in argumentation is "rant" (translation: Kincaid feels overwhelmed by the number of rational arguments posed against him). My "jargonistic language," which is nothing more than the normal language that scholars use for discussing historical-critical issues, upsets him (translation: Kincaid feels like he is out of his league). He asks where I went "to grammar school" and what "junior high writing class" I had. While operating in that childish mode, he gets all worked up, angrily referring to my "frothing indignation," "obsessive desire," "laughable proclamations and self-importance," "pomposity," "wild presumptions," and "very wacky way of thinking." In a clear case of psychological projection, he harangues me for allegedly "not reading carefully, making wild assumptions, and lashing out indiscriminately" and thinks that he has driven me "to rage." Then, with the irony escaping him, he whines about *my* alleged "personal insults and general hostility."

The behavior reminds one of an angry child who, after being corrected for unleashing a torrent of name-calling, whines about being picked on. Compare Kincaid's language with the "[principles](#)" that are suppose to govern the

"boxturtlebulletin.com" site: 1. "We are compassionate." 2. "We are tolerant." 3. "We are civil." 4. "We are honest." 5. "We are hopeful." I guess they forgot to leave out: 6. "We are modest." And finally: 7. "We are self-deceived." Although there is a danger that one might be driven to uncontrollable laughter by such absurdities, I really cannot laugh at Timothy Kincaid, for there is nothing funny about what he has become.

Once More, the Heidelberg Catechism

Here we focus on what little rebuttal he offers to my arguments regarding why a retranslation of the Heidelberg Catechism is without merit ([here](#)) and why the story of Jesus and the centurion in no way suggests Jesus' support for homosexual relations ([here](#)).

As regards the Heidelberg Catechism retranslation, he states only:

His reasons, while way too lengthy and numerous to discuss, are worth reading if you appreciate pomposity and self importance. Some are quite comical. For example: "Changing any text in the PCUSA Book of Confessions is a time-consuming (and costly) process" and the only reason for revisiting the translation is "a less-than-fully-honest homosexualist agenda". And, my favorite, the reasons the German Catechism didn't have "homosexual perversion" in it originally was because "it would scandalize children."

The important point to note here is that the derogatory comments, "his reasons ... are worth reading if you appreciate pomposity" and "comical"—more evidence of his compassion, tolerance, and civility, I suppose—mask the fact that he has absolutely no reasoned response to a single one of my seven arguments ([here](#)). They are, in his words, "too lengthy and numerous to discuss." In other words, Kincaid has no case to offer. Recapping my seven points:

1. *Retranslations of confessions are discouraged in the PCUSA unless errors in the original translation fundamentally affect the confession's status as a reliable exposition of Scripture.*
2. *The Catechism clearly alludes to, and partially cites, 1 Cor 6:9, which expressly lists "men who lie with a male" among offenders barred from the kingdom of God.*
3. *A homosexualist agenda, not translation purity: Why there is no outrage at the addition of "the covetous" and "swindlers" to the English translation from the text of 1 Cor 6:9.*
4. *The probable reason for the omission of any reference to homosexual practice in the Catechism: It would scandalize children.*
5. *This supposition is confirmed by the strong but oblique visceral opposition to homosexual practice from Calvin on.*

6. *Hermeneutical regression: Today's homosexualist motive for deleting "homosexual perversion" stands in diametrical opposition to the original motive for its omission.*
7. *The hypocrisy of the "Spirit, not letter" people suddenly so obsessed by the "letter" is apparent.*

Regarding the first point, Kincaid states that it is "comical" for me to suggest that "changing any text in the PCUSA Book of Confessions is a time-consuming (and costly) process." Precisely what is "comical" about the statement Kincaid conveniently doesn't say. Anyone who knows anything about the PCUSA would concede my point as accurate, inasmuch as the process of changing a translation in the *Book of Confessions* requires not only General Assembly approval but also, subsequent to that, appointment of a committee to issue a report to the next General Assembly, debate by all the presbyteries (with two-thirds of the presbyteries needing to approve the retranslation), and a final debate and discussion at the next General Assembly.

Most importantly, Kincaid fails to connect this point to my larger point that the steep curve for changing translations of confessions was designed to discourage retranslations unless errors in the original translation affect fundamentally the confession's status as an "authentic and reliable exposition of what *Scripture* leads us to believe and do" (W-4.4003; my emphasis). The insertion of "homosexual perversion" into a text that clearly alludes to 1 Cor 6:9, a passage of Scripture that equally clearly refers to men who have sex with males in a list of offenders who "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (see the appendix [here](#)) is not a translation error that affects fundamentally the confession's status as an "authentic and reliable exposition of what *Scripture* leads us to believe and do." Kincaid completely ignores this point.

Kincaid also labels as "comic," but again without reasoned argument, my statement that "'translation purity' is not the concern behind the push for retranslation [of the Heidelberg Catechism] but rather a less-than-fully-honest homosexualist agenda." Homosexualists—a term that Kincaid dislikes intensely (even as he uses the term "homophobes") but which I think perfectly describes those seeking to coerce acceptance of the immorality of homosexual practice on church and society—have not called for a retranslation of the Heidelberg Catechism because "grabbers" (i.e., the covetous) and "swindlers" were added from 1 Cor 6:9 to the list of offenders given in the original German of Q 87 (4.086) of the Catechism. Obviously a homosexualist agenda is in play here; in other words, a concerted effort to eliminate from the constitutional documents of the PCUSA any opposition to homosexual practice.

Kincaid mocks my argument that "the probable reason for the omission of any reference to homosexual practice in the Catechism is: It would scandalize

children," calling the argument his "favorite." Once more Kincaid offers no rational argument. Clearly it would be historically absurd to argue that any sixteenth-century Reformer would have deleted a reference to homosexual practice because of a favorable opinion toward such behavior. Concerns for scandalizing youth through overt references to homosexual practice were felt well into the 20th century, as evidenced by the Loeb Classical Library series, which regularly translated texts mentioning homosexual practice into Latin rather than into the standard English to avoid scandalizing the young. Calvin's own commentary on 1 Cor 6:9 and on Rom 1:26-27 confirms the use of oblique language precisely because of the heinousness with which the behavior was regarded.

Accordingly, it doesn't take any magical powers to know what the response of the German translators Zacharias Ursinus and Kaspar Olevianus or any other sixteenth-century Reformer (all of whom had an extremely high view of scriptural inspiration) would have been to two adult men in a homosexual union, committed or otherwise. This point also renders irrelevant any appeal to Luther's translation of *arsenokoitai* in 1 Cor 6:9 as "Knabenschänder," "violaters of boys" or "boy-abusers" as an attempt to limit the indictment of homosexual practice to coercive pederasty (as one of the comments to Kincaid's posting illogically argues). It takes no more magical powers to discern the Reformers' unanimous objection to homosexual practice per se than it does to discern the view of the sixteenth-century Reformers toward adult-committed forms of incest.

It is clear that Kincaid has no rational case, but only immature comments, against my series of arguments opposing a retranslation of the Heidelberg Catechism. Kincaid continues to call my position a "propensity to finding words on a page that appear not have [*sic*] been written there" while, oddly enough, neither he nor anyone else in favor of a retranslation has expressed any outrage over the fact that the English translators added "grabbers" (covetous) and "swindlers" from the offender list in 1 Cor 6:9 to original German text of Catechism. I oppose homosexualist efforts to remove "homosexual perversion" as a means to justifying homosexual practice, a purpose that is diametrically opposed to the spirit of the original Catechism and to the letter and spirit of the Scripture that the Catechism honors.

Jesus' Distance Healing of the Official's Boy at Capernaum

The absence of rational argumentation is also evident in Kincaid's "response" ([here](#)) to my arguments that the story of Jesus and the centurion offers no support whatsoever for homosexual unions ([here](#)). Kincaid now insists that he never "much cared" anyway whether the story supports a homosexualist reading. "As in my original post, i do not make any assumptions about the historicity of

the Biblical tale (a fact which avoided Gagnon's notice). I have no notion as to whether the individual under discussion was Jewish or Roman, civic or military, or whether the suffering one was a slave, a lover, or a son."

Yet Kincaid did charge me in his original posting with deciding "that homophobia trumps written witness" when I argued [here](#) that the earliest recoverable core behind the story of the centurion in Matt 8:5-13 par. Luke 7:1-10 and the story of the royal official in John 4:46b-54 involved a Jewish official and his son. Incidentally and for the record, I drew this conclusion about the tradition history of the story nearly a quarter of a century ago, when I was a seminary student and long before I was aware that this story could be misappropriated as evidence for Jesus' support of homosexual relations. The case for this historical reconstruction stands independently of what one's views on homosexual practice are. If the reconstruction is accurate (and neither Kincaid nor anyone else have shown it to be in error), then Kincaid's charge that I put "homophobia" (a term as ludicrous as "polyphobia" or "incest-phobia") over written witness is shown to be bogus.

Kincaid also mischaracterized my position as "a desire to read what isn't there and to ignore what is present," when in reality I certainly "read" what Matthew and Luke each had to say at the same time that I read what John had to say, in no way ignoring "what is present" but instead wrestling with what appears to be two different versions of the same original event. As I pointed out in my response ([here](#)), an analogy exists in the case of whether Jesus met the centurion directly (Matthew) or only indirectly through the double delegation of Jewish elders and other friends (Luke). Jesus obviously didn't do both. Wrestling with the question of whether the centurion met Jesus directly or only through intermediaries is not a case of "reading what isn't there" and "ignoring what is present."

Although Kincaid stated in comments added to his original posting that he didn't really know whether a homosexual relationship was involved in the story, he did caution another person who posted a comment not "to get bogged down" with the fact that a sexual relationship with a slave would be a coercive one. And he did conclude: "If it were to be accepted that this was a same-sex couple, this would be evidence of Christ's implicit blessing of a same-sex couple which could revolutionize the way that Christians [*sic*] view gay couples. Frankly, I don't know if that interpretation is correct. *But I do know that Gagnon has to leap in circles to avoid that interpretation*" (my emphasis). My response to his posting showed that, far from "leaping in circles," the case against a homosexualist reading of this story was overwhelming.

Even now Kincaid calls the case that I made "pure comedy" and a "rant" and says that he finds my "assumptions to be laughable." Yet, he adds, "I'm not

going to spend time trying to refute him," which is another way of saying that he has no case when he claims that the arguments I put forward are "laughable." It is another case of all heat, no light with Kincaid.

Jesus, "Dogs," and the Holy

Despite saying that he isn't going to spend time refuting me, he in fact attempts to do so at one point, in an additional posting entitled, "[My Very Favorite Gagnonism](#)." This is the only place where Kincaid apparently thinks that he has a chance at successfully ridiculing anything that I say in the centurion article. Kincaid picks the tenth of 12 arguments that I make regarding evidence of Jesus' opposition to homosexual practice (sec. VI, end, [here](#)). Here is what I say:

Jesus' saying about not giving what is "holy" to the "dogs" (Matt 7:6), an apparent allusion to Deuteronomic law (Deut 23:17-18) and texts in 1-2 Kings that indict the *qedeshim*, self-designated "holy ones" identified as "dogs" for their attempt to erase their masculinity by serving as the passive-receptive partners in man-male intercourse.

According to Kincaid,

You may have heard of Matthew 7:1-6. You may even have thought it was about acceptance and tolerance and withholding judgment of others. Well not according to Gagnon.... I kid you not! Robert Gagnon believes the text on not judging is really a condemnation of bottom boys.

True to form, Kincaid once more misrepresents my position. I do not believe that "the text on not judging is really a condemnation of bottom boys." "The text on not judging" comprises 7:1-5, not 7:6. The saying in 7:6 about not giving "what is holy to dogs" and not throwing "your pearls before swine" *obviously* does not continue the theme, "Don't judge," because the very characterization of some group of persons as "dogs" and "swine" implies a negative *judgment* of some persons (add it to the pile of obvious points missed by Kincaid). Matthew puts this saying, drawn from his special tradition, immediately after the block of "Q" sayings about not judging (7:1-5) as a way of *qualifying* an improper, absolute reading of the "not judging" texts.

Jesus' words about not judging clearly do not mean that Jesus' followers are never to evaluate whether the behavior of others is bad. For if that were so, Jesus' comments about rebuking and disciplining those in the community who do not repent would make no sense (Matt 18:15-17; compare Luke 17:3-4). It would be impossible to explain the series of three judgment sayings that close the Sermon on the Mount (7:13-27) or the many other judgments that Jesus makes regarding the evil deeds of others. He even refers to "this generation" as an "evil and adulterous generation" (Matt 12:39-45; 16:4; 17:17). Jesus'

message about not judging is about not judging others without introspection about one's own sins or over matters of relative insignificance. Even the saying about the "log" in one's own eyes presumes that evaluations of the actions of others are appropriate when done rightly ("*first* take the log out of your own eye *and then* you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye").

The saying in 7:6 presumes also that determinations must be made as to who the "dogs" and "swines" are to whom "what is holy" ought not be given. Contrary to what Kincaid claims, I am not saying that the "dogs" in 7:6 refer *only* or even *directly* to the cult figures in the Old Testament known as the *qedeshim* (literally, the "holy [or: consecrated, sacred] ones"), cultic figures who feminized their appearance and sometimes served as the passive-receptive partners in man-male intercourse. I am suggesting that Jesus *alludes to*, or *echoes*, Deut 23:17-18, a text that prohibits these "dogs" from giving money received from abominable practices to the holy place, where the ark is stationed. This is the *only* other text in the Bible where "dogs" and "holy" are combined, which itself is a strong indication of an echo. A partial parallel is the offender list in Revelation 21:8 and 22:15, which identify "the dogs" and "the abominable" in what some scholars believe may also be an allusion to passive-receptive partners in man-male intercourse (for example, David Aune's massive commentary on Revelation considers the connection to homosexual practice possible; also Bruce Metzger).

Jesus' point is something like the following: If the temple is too holy to receive the fees from homosexual cult prostitutes, then the message of the kingdom, which is holier still, should not be entrusted to those who mock holiness through their continuance in abominable practices (see my *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views* [Fortress Press, 2003], 73). So Jesus employs a lesser-to-the-greater argument: If even that is the case, how much more this. So I am not even arguing that in Matt 7:6 Jesus is singling out passive-receptive partners in same-sex intercourse. I am rather saying that Jesus' apparent allusion or echo to Deut 23:17-18 *presumes* his agreement with the disgust that the Deuteronomic law shows for men who actively emasculate themselves and engage in homosexual relations with other men, with Jesus going on to make a further point about the even greater sanctity of his proclamation about the kingdom of God and not allowing it to be mocked by those who continue in egregious immoral practices of whatever sort, including, of course, homosexual practice.

Such nuanced arguments appear to be beyond Kincaid's capacity to understand correctly. He has only one objective in his postings about me: not to understand issues of truth, much less to characterize my position accurately and fairly, but rather to dissuade others from being influenced by my work so that his own self-serving homosexualist agenda will not be impeded in any way. In attempting to mock my argument here he only underscores his own unfortunate ignorance.

This is not something to be angry or gleeful about but rather something to be mourned in Kincaid's character.

Kincaid states that my historical reconstruction will not "prove to be beneficial" to "literalists." Most persons with a high view of Scripture recognize nowadays that not everything related in every biblical narrative represents exactly what happened. Most recognize that sometimes theology is recast as narrative or source materials vary—God apparently not considering it crucial that every last detail be recorded exactly in the oral and written transmission of tradition. I do not propose that this is so extensive as to make impossible all historical reconstruction. In the Last Supper, for example, few would argue that Jesus' precise words over the cup were both "This is my blood of the covenant" (Mark, Matthew) and "This is the new covenant in my blood" (Paul, Luke). Few would argue that Jesus' abstinence from wine statement occurred both before the words over the bread (Luke) and after (Mark, Matthew). Few would argue that the cleansing of the temple episode happened both at the start of Jesus' ministry (John) and at the end (the Synoptic Gospels).

At any rate, I have shown in my previous response that even if Jesus met a Gentile centurion and his "boy" there is no convincing basis for arguing (a) the centurion and his "boy" were in a homosexual relationship and (b) Jesus gave tacit approval to such a relationship. How this would not be "beneficial" to those who presume an historical Gentile centurion and his slave I know not.

We are at the point where it should be clear to all but the most confirmed ideologues in homosexualist circles that Box Turtle Kincaid has made false accusations and spoken irresponsibly and abusively about matters concerning which he has little knowledge.