

**Leviathan Against Behemoth: Hobbes and Milton
on Religious Conflict and the State**

by

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**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

How did Thomas Hobbes and John Milton understand the relation between religiously based conflict and the sovereign state? Milton's thought is an ideal counterpoint to Hobbes's understanding of religious strife as a threat to the peace and comfortable self-preservation of the members of society. Little scholarly work has been devoted to comparing the two thinkers. Historically, they reflected on the same events of the day in 17th century England, notably the civil war. Philosophically, their theories ran counter to each other. This thesis compares various aspects of the ideas of Milton and Hobbes with respect to religious strife and the foundations of the sovereign state. I argue that their theories represent two competing strains of modern political thought. Milton advocated resistance to political authority on the pretext of religious liberty. His political thought is an eloquent and comprehensive expression of revolutionary Protestantism, in a form which is both deeply religious and republican. Hobbes, on the other hand, sought to neutralise the potential harm posed by such religious justifications of revolution, through a new political science which set out the conditions for peaceful and commodious living.

The treatment of the two thinkers is three-fold. First, their contrasting accounts of pride underlay radically opposing conceptions of the proper relations between subject, sovereign, and God. Second, Milton's interpretation of classical and Biblical views on kingship provide a theo-historical framework of his resistance to the monarchy and Long Parliament during the English civil war, culminating in his proposal for a “free commonwealth.” In contrast, Hobbes advanced a doctrine of the rights and duties of sovereignty which is both less edifying and more democratic than Milton's religious republicanism. Third, their divergent conceptions of liberty in relation to law—Miltonian free will as opposed to Hobbesian regulated freedom—are linked to their illuminating stands

on ecclesiastical authority: Milton's Protestant justification for separating church and state, and Hobbes's advocacy of the state regulation of religion alongside toleration of inward belief.

Acknowledgements

My deepest thanks must go to my supervisor and mentor, Edward Andrew, who has provided unstinting support, invaluable counsel, and copious alcohol throughout the writing of this dissertation. Perhaps the best characterisation of his contribution is Hobbes's description of the laws in relation to the people: "to direct and keep them in such a motion, as not to hurt themselves by their own impetuous desires, rashnesse, or indiscretion, as Hedges are set, not to stop Travellers, but to keep them in the way." He has helped keep me from immobility for the past three years.

My thanks also to Ronald Beiner, Alkis Kontos, Tom Pangle, and William Mathie for their thoughtful comments and criticisms. Among those who have ensured that I keep my feet on the ground amidst flighty speculations are my parents, Janet Kow, Greg Kushner, Tamsyn Kushner, Blaise Ting, Fred Ting, Christopher Raymond, Tristan Gurney, Albert Wong, Josh Goldstein, Maureen Hiebert, Heather Macquarrie, Anna Lanoszka, Jung-Hee Cho, and Orson Welles.

And I should not forget a source of both inspiration and intoxication to me. She has been my muse and mistress during the crests and troughs of my life as a graduate student. As William Hogarth wrote of her:

Beer, happy Produce of our Isle
Can sinewy Strength impart,
And wearied with Fatigue and Toil
Can cheer each manly Heart.

Labour and Art upheld by Thee
Successfully advance.
We quaff Thy balmy Juice with Glee
And Water leave to France.

Genius of Health, thy grateful Taste
Rivals the Cup of Jove,
And warms each English generous Breast
With Liberty and Love.

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Chapter One: Introduction

His widowe assures me that Mr. T. Hobbs was not one of his acquaintances, that her husband did not like him at all, but he would acknowledge him to be a man of great parts, and a learned man. Their interests and tenets did run counter to each other; *vide* in Hobbes's *Behemoth*.

John Aubrey, "Life of John Milton"¹

Scholars of the history of political thought have generally overlooked the contrasts between the thought of Thomas Hobbes and that of John Milton.² The utility of such a comparison would appear obvious: both were Englishmen reflecting upon the same events in their country, particularly the English revolution of the 1640's and 50's, which included civil war, the establishment of republican rule—for the only time in English history—and the eventual restoration of the monarchy. Furthermore, as they were among the greatest thinkers of their time—perhaps among the greatest thinkers of all time—their insights into the causes of the conflict and the political upheavals of the English revolution are especially valuable for scholars of early modern political thought. In particular, there is a common theme in their reflections on the English civil war: the prevalence of religiously based conflict. Thus, their analyses are crucial for understanding how the most thoughtful men in that turbulent period understood the relation between religious conflict and the state.

This dissertation is not an attempt to provide an historically comprehensive depiction of the English revolution. Instead, my argument is based on the view that a comparison of Hobbes and Milton on the political implications of religiously based conflict is one (though by no means the only) way to highlight certain themes in the political thought of both thinkers. Although Hobbes's political thought was more systematic than Milton's, his conception of religion as a part of political life has been the subject of greater controversy. I shall principally address Hobbes's understanding of religious conflict and the sovereign state, using several elements of Milton's religious and political thought—in his pamphlets and some of his poems, especially his masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*—to bring

out certain issues Hobbes was grappling with and to act as a counterpoint to the thought of Hobbes. I want to explore just what “interests and tenets did run counter to each other.”

The contrasting arguments of Hobbes and Milton are framed in this dissertation as the opposition of Leviathan to Behemoth, representing the sovereign state against the forces of religiously based political revolution. These symbols meant more to Hobbes than the state and its religious opponents, but I shall restrict myself to these meanings.

Characterising Milton as a representative of Behemoth might suggest a bias in favour of the Hobbesian Leviathan. I also want, however, to emphasise the tremendous power of Behemoth, as manifested in the profound and forceful views of the revolutionary Milton. After all, Leviathan, as Carl Schmitt pointed out, was often identified with the devil, and Milton himself referred to Leviathan as a demonic sea-monster.³ This may be, from a Miltonian perspective, a legitimate usage, in terms of the absolute sovereign power embodied by the Hobbesian Leviathan and Hobbes’s antipathy towards religious zeal. I shall argue, however, that Hobbes’s Leviathan is intended to reflect neither the divinity nor the demonic tyranny of the state.

Now, this focus on the contrast between Hobbes and Milton differs from that of most other treatments of Hobbes on religion. Hobbes’s contemporaries tended to condemn his “irreligion” and “atheism,” as they were generally more interested in refuting than understanding his thought.⁴ Such efforts at refutation can be quite useful for our understanding of Hobbes: for example, the controversy over free will between Hobbes and Bishop Bramhall will be addressed in chapter four. Furthermore, such writers directly engaged with Hobbes in ways Milton did not, though it has been argued that Milton may have had Hobbes’s *De Cive* in mind when he wrote *Areopagitica*.⁵ Even if they did not think much of each other, however, we shall explore the potentially rich debate of ideas through a comparison of the two thinkers and their fundamental disagreements. After all, extensive commentaries by one’s contemporaries are not necessarily the most cogent critiques.⁶

Perhaps the most provocative remarks on Hobbes on religion were made in the eighteenth century, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In his chapter on civil religion in the *Social Contract*, Rousseau compared, among other things, the particular gods of the pagans with the otherworldly God of Christianity. The latter, unlike the former, separated the “theological system from the political system.” The result has been “a perpetual jurisdictional conflict” in Christian states, to the detriment of political unity. Hobbes, along among Christian authors, clearly understood that church and state must be unified. But he should have seen that “the dominating spirit of Christianity was incompatible with his system,” i.e., that a Christian civil religion is impossible because the ambitions of Christian priests inevitably undermine the supremacy of the civil power.⁷ Leaving aside Rousseau’s complex analysis of paganism, Christianity, and civil religion—subjects fit for entire theses—his assessment of Hobbes raises some crucial points and queries about Hobbes’s treatment of religion which will be addressed in this thesis. Rousseau alluded to the conflict brought about by the division of church and state in the Christian world. Did Hobbes fail to recognise the divisiveness of Christianity? How did he propose to reunite church and state, if at all? And to what extent can Hobbes be deemed a Christian author?

Twentieth century scholarship on Hobbes has been extremely varied in its treatment of these questions. One approach has been to regard religion as peripheral to his political theory. David Gauthier, for example, has written that “God plays only a secondary part in his system.” In other words, all the essential elements of Hobbes’s political philosophy in *Leviathan* are contained in the first two parts; the remaining half of the book, though in fact longer than the first half, principally demonstrate that “Hobbes’s account of natural religion, and his interpretation of Christianity...afford support to his secular moral and political system.”⁸ Gauthier may indeed be correct to view the latter half as a confirmation of the former, and to regard his interpretation of Christianity as providing further proof of his accounts of human nature, natural law, and sovereignty. Nevertheless, Hobbes himself denied that religion is of only secondary importance. God may not be a necessary part of

the logical structure of his arguments in *Leviathan*, but religious conflict is arguably a problem with which he grappled throughout his political opus. If we read Hobbes in light of opposing arguments of thoughtful contemporaries such as Milton, then we see that all the political thinkers of his time were concerned with religious issues surrounding the political upheavals in England. I shall not attempt to reformulate the logic of Hobbes's arguments, but rather examine areas of his thought pertaining to the topic of this dissertation.

Now, Gauthier's insistence that God is secondary in Hobbes's system was in part a response to Howard Warrender's study of Hobbes.⁹ Before and after Gauthier, there has been a general school of thought which has stressed Hobbes's theism in his theory of political obligation. The earliest proponents of this position, including Warrender, A.E. Taylor, and F.C. Hood, have tended to focus on the laws of nature (prescribing peace if possible and obedience to sovereigns once instituted) as divine commands or ethical obligations beyond the need for self-preservation and thus arising from duty to God.¹⁰ Later scholars in this vein have turned to Hobbes's interpretation of scripture in order to emphasise the theistic elements of political obligation. A.P. Martinich, for example, argues that "Hobbes's remarks about religion are...obviously consonant with orthodox Christianity, typical of seventeenth century Christianity," and goes to great lengths to characterise Hobbes's theology as authentically Calvinist.¹¹ The orthodoxy of private beliefs Hobbes may or may not have had will not be addressed here. Nevertheless, by comparing Hobbes with Milton, I hope to bring out the relative status of religion in the political thought of these two thinkers. While religious convictions spurred Milton to political engagement, religion in Hobbes's account is problematic rather than foundational to his thinking. Even Martinich concedes that Hobbes "wanted to neutralise religion politically so that it would serve the cause of peace rather than war."¹² I shall attempt to show that this aspect of religion in Hobbes—as having provided pretexts for sedition—is the

more useful for understanding his philosophy in the context of the religious conflict of the English civil war.

In reaction to the theist school of Hobbes scholarship, certain writers have maintained that Hobbes was a secret atheist who cleverly concealed his assault on religion behind pretended piety. These self-proclaimed followers of Leo Strauss regard the debate between Hobbes and his opponents as a struggle between philosophical atheism and genuine Christianity. Edwin Curley argues that Hobbes employed a great deal of irony in his treatment of religious matters, so that his declarations of supposed piety mean, if read carefully, exactly the opposite. Likewise, Paul D. Cooke maintains that "Hobbes disguised the full meaning of his work with a diaphanous veil that both reveals and hides" the subversive teaching that human beings have no higher authorities than themselves. In contrast, they write, Milton's sincerity as a Christian is not open to doubt.¹³ In other words, Hobbes, unlike Milton and other religious thinkers, is alleged to belong to a tradition of philosophers who disguise their atheism from all but the most perceptive readers, thus avoiding persecution by political and religious authorities while secretly undermining the conventional beliefs of society.

We shall examine some of the specific parts of Hobbes's work which have been adduced as evidence of his secret atheism. At this stage, however, we may observe three things. First, as noted above, Hobbes was widely denounced as an atheist in his time. Second, the only readers who have apparently been "duped" are modern commentators such as Warrender and Martinich. And third, Curley and Cooke believe that philosophers such as Hobbes were principally responsible for the subversion of Christianity in modern society. Taking these three points together, Hobbes would appear to have been a largely unsuccessful secret atheist who still somehow managed to bring about the decline of revealed religion in the Western world—a rather implausible hypothesis. In this thesis, no assumptions or conclusions will be made about Hobbes's sincerity—as he wrote, a person's inward faith is invisible¹⁴--and we shall instead concentrate on the differences

between Hobbes and Milton over key philosophical issues as expressed in their writings. Hobbes's antagonism towards certain uses or abuses of religion may be indicative of a secret atheism, but we shall not be employing his possible private beliefs as a basis for interpreting his texts.

Other scholars have been less interested in the personal convictions underlying Hobbes's writings than the reinterpretation of religion which was a part of his political project. A prominent example is J.G.A. Pocock's attempt to justify the importance of the last half of *Leviathan*. In his view, parts three and four mark a departure from the derivation of political authority from nature to a new consideration of authority situated in prophetic history as revealed in scripture. Pocock thus questioned the traditional interpretation of Hobbes's thought as based on ahistorical rationality alone. Charles D. Tarlton, Eldon Eisenach, David Johnston, and S.A. Lloyd also grapple with the disjunction between the purely rational account of government and the reinterpretation of Christianity. They, however, attempt to join the two halves of *Leviathan*. Tarlton argues that Hobbes sought to appropriate the techniques of religious deceivers to support political authority. Eisenach thinks that Hobbes reinterpreted Christianity to embrace all possible institutional forms of religion so that they could be employed as the sovereign judges. Johnston regards the reinterpretation as part of a project to transform the culture of his time, i.e., to turn superstitious human beings into rational egoists fit for obedience. And Lloyd interprets Hobbes as seeking to rationalise religion and so harmonise transcendent moral and religious interests with peace.¹⁵

These writers all regard Hobbes as a major religious innovator. With respect to the conflict of the civil war and the struggle between *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*, however, the chief importance of his account of religion may lie in its critical aspects. After all, given the religious pretexts for sedition in Hobbes's time, it may be that he was principally interested in rendering religion politically harmless rather than in tapping into its power to enforce obedience by non-rational means or to indoctrinate the people. Rousseau characterised the

unification of church and state in Hobbes as a “remedy,” which might suggest that Hobbes’s assessment of religion was not a transformative project. These comments do not necessarily refute the views of the aforementioned writers; but they do imply that the latter half of *Leviathan* should be read in light of the sceptical spirit pervading the entire work, suggesting a continuity throughout the four parts with respect to the seditious uses of religion. Hobbes thought that he was the founder of a new political science, not of a new religion. A reconceptualisation of certain religious doctrines may be part of this new science of politics, but such an account may be a largely negative one, particularly when viewed in contrast to the aggressively religious politics of thinkers such as Milton.

A comparison of Hobbes and Milton on religious conflict and the state must take into account Hobbes’s criticisms of the seditious religious sects of his time, in his *Behemoth* as well as in *Leviathan*. Indeed, Aubrey indicated the opposition of their views with reference to Hobbes’s remarks on the Independents (among whom he included Milton), particularly the connection he drew between the writings of the Presbyterian Salmasius and the Independent Milton, as being rhetorical exercises that could have been written by the same man.¹⁶ We shall determine what Hobbes meant by this remark in chapters three and four; here we may note the importance of his assessment of the civil war for our comparison, especially as Milton’s political thought is evidently suffused with reflections on the war. Most twentieth century scholarship on Hobbes has not, however, taken much notice of *Behemoth*. One cause of this general neglect may be the overriding focus on the structure of Hobbes’s arguments or on his private beliefs, to the exclusion of other historical considerations. After all, *Behemoth* may appear at first glance to be merely the application of Hobbes’s political philosophy to particular historical events: an Hobbesian analysis which does not add to the political teaching contained in his other works.

Nevertheless, since *Leviathan*—regarded by almost all scholars as Hobbes’s most important political work—was “occasioned by the disorders of the present time,”¹⁷

Hobbes's assessment of the English civil war in *Behemoth* may elucidate parts of his argument in *Leviathan*. For example, C.B. Macpherson's short but thoughtful discussion of *Behemoth* is part of his general analysis which situates Hobbes in the changing socio-economic circumstances of his time, particularly the development of a new market morality which Macpherson terms "possessive individualism." He emphasises passages of *Behemoth* which allude to the resistance to the king's authority on the basis of protecting unconditional property rights, and to the economic content of the new religious doctrines--for example, the fact that the Presbyterian ministers did not condemn the "lucrative vices of men and handicraft," which enhanced their appeal to the people. In a similar vein, Richard Ashcraft argues that *Behemoth* is significant for understanding Hobbes's thought because it shows his rejection of ideological and class divisions as bases of political life.¹⁸ Although he tries to distance himself from Macpherson's analysis, their arguments share a similar focus on class conflict in the English civil war. While they usefully highlight the economic causes of the war, however, they do not address the religious underpinnings of the conflict. Resistance to encroachments on economic freedom was indeed a major element of the war in Hobbes's view, but so too were religious doctrines which provided justifications for revolution in defence of religious freedom. It is the latter aspect of the civil war that we shall focus upon in our analysis. Thus, we shall engage more recent studies which have focused on the religious sedition of the English civil war, particularly writings by Mark Whitaker and Stephen Holmes.¹⁹

While Hobbes scholars have tended to neglect the context of religious conflict, Milton scholars have usually divorced *Paradise Lost* from his political pamphlets. The separation of Milton the poet from Milton the revolutionary is understandable: *Paradise Lost* was first published seven years after the restoration of the English monarchy, when Milton's efforts to convince Oliver and Richard Cromwell of the need for further political reforms came to nought. There is, after all, much to *Paradise Lost* which is not overtly political, unlike the predominantly political concerns of Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Nevertheless,

there have been some major studies which have persuasively situated Milton's poetic and prose works in the context of the English revolution—Christopher Hill's book being a notable example²⁰—which will aid us in pursuing some underlying themes throughout Milton's works that are relevant to our comparison.

We are drawing upon *Paradise Lost* because of the need to ground his political analysis and prescriptions in his religious views. Some writers have isolated his republicanism from his Protestantism: one scholar characterises his thought as generally unoriginal, "chiefly memorable for the magnificence of the literary form in which he clothed ideas already known to everyone..."²¹ Milton did distinguish political from religious freedom, but his polemics against tyranny as well as his Independentist ecclesiastical politics are informed by an elaborate conception of divine and human history, most brilliantly expressed in *Paradise Lost*. Thus, his ideas have an originality which can be discerned in the religious premises of his revolutionary politics.

The body of the thesis is divided into three main sections. The first deals with the problem of pride, particularly religious pride, as a source of conflict. We shall begin with the central tenets of the divine right of kings, as explicated by James I. For James and other Stuart writers, it is the expression of pride to resist one's divinely sanctioned monarch. In contrast, Milton warned against proud kings such as James and his son, Charles I. I highlight passages of *Paradise Lost* which reveal the Satanic origins of pride, its presence in the mother of humanity, and the consequent Satanic pride of earthly tyrants in human history. This forms a prelude to a close examination of part one of *Leviathan*, at least of those sections which pertain to the meaning of pride for Hobbes, to its possible role in the origins of human conflict, and to how, in a religious form, it may constitute a particular problem for peace. Finally, I shall address the institution of a sovereign power, characterised by Hobbes as *Leviathan*, the "King of the Proud."²² Now, one might question the decision to focus on pride in Hobbes and Milton: in particular, is Hobbes's account of pride a sufficient explanation of his theory of conflict? I shall not, however, be

claiming that pride is necessarily the central concept in Hobbes's theory. Instead, I wish merely to emphasise the element of pride, especially religious pride, as *one* motive force of certain kinds of conflict. Individuals possessed of excessive pride, including religious fanatics among many others, will not participate in the social contract. I do not claim that religious pride is a necessary dimension of Hobbes's conception of the state of nature: rather, the concept of religious pride in Hobbes's analysis helps us to understand some of the roots of religious conflict, particularly in the context of the English civil war; and civil wars generally share certain features with the Hobbes's hypothetical model of the war of all against all.

The second section takes up the Miltonian challenge to Hobbes: is the Leviathan a proud king? In order to answer this question, I address their conceptions of tyranny and sovereignty. I shall first examine Milton's account of the origin of political authority, according to his interpretations of classical thinkers and especially Biblical scripture in the Old and New Testaments. I then compare Hobbes's interpretations of kingship in scripture, including the relation between God and earthly commonwealths. I turn to Milton's specific political prescriptions—namely, his advocacy of a religious form of republicanism against the backdrop of the English civil war. In contrast to the aristocratic virtue of Milton's free commonwealth, I examine Hobbes's assessment of the three forms of government and of the rights of sovereignty. As the context of my discussion is the civil war, my interpretation of Hobbes with respect to sovereigns' rights and duties—including the harmonisation of public and private interests with respect to lawmaking and education—will refer solely to the maintenance of peace and commodious living *within* the commonwealth.

The discussion of the free commonwealth gives rise to the issue of what freedom means for the two thinkers. Thus, in the third and final section, I examine their contrasting accounts of freedom, sin, moral responsibility, and punishment; the relation of liberty to law for Hobbes; and the implications of Miltonian free will and Hobbesian civil freedom

for their assessments of the proper relation between church and state. Milton wrote of civil freedom in contradistinction to tyranny, but the highest freedom for him is a religious form of liberty centring on the free will as guided by individual conscience. My discussion of Hobbes will probe his very different conceptions of freedom, sin, and punishment, and examine the scope of liberty that should be allowed within the framework of civil law. Furthermore, their opposing conceptions of liberty underpin specific prescriptions for harmonising ecclesiastical and civil power. Ultimately, in light of the comparison of Hobbes and Milton, I shall reach some tentative conclusions in regard to the issues raised by Rousseau on Hobbes.

The concluding chapter sums up the analysis made in this dissertation and raises some questions concerning the relevance of Hobbes's and Milton's thought for religion and politics in contemporary society.

 Notes to Chapter One

¹ John Aubrey, *Brief Lives and Other Selected Writings* (London: The Cresset Press, 1949), 73.

² There has not yet been a book-length comparison of Hobbes and Milton, while the only articles chiefly devoted to this topic are historical studies of limited utility for our purposes: Marjorie Nicolson, "Milton and Hobbes," *Studies in Philology* 23 (1926), 405-433; and Don M. Wolfe, "Milton and Hobbes: A Contrast in Social Temper," *Studies in Philology* 41 (1944), 410-426.

³ Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, trans. by George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 6-11; and John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Complete Poems*, ed. by John Leonard (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998), 1.200-208.

⁴ See Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 45.

⁵ Nicolson, "Milton and Hobbes," 405-433. I shall not be directly addressing *Areopagitica*; nevertheless, the contrast between Miltonian free-will and Hobbesian law, also discussed by Nicolson, will be examined in chapter four.

⁶ Quentin Skinner argues, however, that "a knowledge of this intellectual milieu is not merely of historical but also of exegetical significance for the student of Hobbes's political thought." Skinner, "The Context of Hobbes's Theory of Political Obligation," in *Hobbes and Rousseau*, ed. by Maurice Cranston and Richard S. Peters (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 110. Skinner is right to argue that historical context should be considered when assessing Hobbes's thought. But he ignores the text for the context: Skinner assumes (wrongly) that the views of self-proclaimed "Hobbiists" of the seventeenth century are accurate interpretations of Hobbes, without examining the texts themselves. In this dissertation I attempt at some balance between text and context by comparing Hobbes and Milton. Such an approach may not completely satisfy textualists and contextualists; but at least neither the one nor the other will be entirely neglected.

⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social*, ed. by Pierre Burgelin (Paris: Flammarion, 1992), bk. 4, chap. 8, 158-162.

⁸ David P. Gauthier, *The Logic of Leviathan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 178-206.

⁹ *Ibid.*, v.

¹⁰ Howard Warrender, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); F.C. Hood, *The Divine Politics of Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); and A.E. Taylor, "The Ethical Doctrine of Hobbes," in *Hobbes Studies*, ed. by K.C. Brown (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 35-55.

¹¹ A.P. Martinich, *The Two Gods of Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 14 and *passim*.

¹² *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³ Edwin Curley, "'I Durst Not Write So Boldly,' or, How to Read Hobbes's Theological-Political Treatise," in *Hobbes e Spinoza, Scienza e Politica*, ed. by Daniela Bostrenghi (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1992), 497-593; and Paul D. Cooke, *Hobbes and Christianity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 36-38 and 216.

¹⁴ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. by C.B. Macpherson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), chap. 42, 550-551. Subsequent references to *Leviathan* are to this edition, unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁵ J.G.A. Pocock, "Time, History, and Eschatology in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes," in *Politics, Language, and Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 148-201; Charles D. Tarlton, "The Creation and Maintenance of Government: A Neglected Dimension of Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Political Studies* 29 (1978), 307-327; Eldon J. Eisenach, "Hobbes on Church, State, and Religion," *History of Political Thought* 3 (1982), 215-243; David Johnston, *The Rhetoric of Leviathan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); and S.A. Lloyd, *Ideals as Interests in Hobbes's Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

¹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth*, ed. by Ferdinand Tönnies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 163-164.

¹⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Review & Conclusion, 728.

¹⁸ C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 64-67; and Richard Ashcraft, "Ideology and Class in Hobbes's Political Theory," *Political Theory* 6 (1978), 27-62.

¹⁹ Mark Whitaker, "Hobbes's View of the Reformation," *History of Political Thought* 9 (1988), 45-58; and Stephen Holmes, "Political Psychology in Hobbes's *Behemoth*," in *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory*, ed. by Mary G. Dietz (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1990), 120-152.

²⁰ Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977).

²¹ George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, 4th ed. (Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press, 1973), 470.

²² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 28, 362.

Chapter Two: The King of the Proud and the Proud King

Hobbes's *Leviathan* was first published in 1651. At the end of part two of *Leviathan*, Hobbes explained the meaning of the book's title:

Hitherto I have set forth the nature of Man, (whose Pride and other Passions have compelled him to submit himselfe to Government;) together with the great power of his Governour, whom I compared to *Leviathan*, taking that comparison out of the last two verses of the one and fortieth of *Job*; where God having set forth the great power of *Leviathan*, calleth him King of the Proud. *There is nothing, saith he, on earth, to be compared with him. He is made so as not to be afraid. Hee seeth every high thing below him, and is King of all the children of pride.*¹

Earlier that same year, John Milton's *Defence of the People of England* was published. It was written in reply to Salmasius's *Defensio Regia pro Carole I*, a tract condemning the overthrow of the English monarchy, which culminated in the trial and execution of Charles I. Milton defended the regicide in his reply, invoking divine justification for the deed:

Yet why do I proclaim as done by the people these actions, which themselves almost utter a voice, and witness everywhere the presence of God? Who, as often as it hath seemed good to his infinite wisdom, useth to cast down proud unbridled kings, puffed up above the measure of mankind, and often uprooteth them with their whole house.²

In both passages, Hobbes and Milton emphasised the issue of pride, as it relates to the earthly sovereign and God. Hobbes compared the sovereign to God's creature who has dominion over proud humanity. Milton argued that God strikes down proud kings. How did their conceptions of pride lead the two thinkers to such radically different conclusions? Hobbes suggested that an absolute sovereign is necessary to quell pride, whereas Milton insisted that the sovereign had to be overthrown because he was proud. As I indicate below, certain scholars have noted the significance of pride in Hobbes's thought, but have not fully addressed the problem of religious pride, nor compared Hobbes with Milton on this issue. I shall argue that Hobbes and Milton held opposing views on pride, which influenced their political theories: for Hobbes, pride is one cause of conflict, including religious strife, and hence shows the need for obedience to the sovereign; for Milton, (divinely justified) revolution is an antidote to pride. Nevertheless, both thinkers may be said to be opponents of proud kings, but in radically different ways. The thought of

Hobbes and Milton represent two different—and opposing—strands of modern political thought which departed from absolutist conceptions of kingship.

Kings Like Gods

To appreciate the originality of Hobbes's and Milton's accounts of pride and its relation to sovereignty, a brief discussion of Stuart absolutism is in order. As Hobbes and Milton recognised, the Stuart monarchs were regarded by their opponents as proud kings who assumed too much authority over their subjects. In particular, the notion that monarchs have a divinely-derived right of government was attacked as contrary to divine law. Milton wrote of the "age-old superstition" of divine right which maintained proud kings, while Hobbes criticised the seditious preachers who claimed a "right from God" to govern the people and thus seduced them into disturbing the "peace and happiness of the three kingdoms...as it was left by King James."³ In opposing the Miltonian language of striking down proud kings, was Hobbes a proponent of the divine right of kings? We shall see that Hobbes's absolutism must be distinguished from Stuart absolutism; that despite Hobbes's general (but not unequivocal) support for the royalist cause during the English civil war, his conception of the politics of pride was fundamentally dissimilar. First, however, we shall turn to some of the principles of government under the Stuarts.

In Stuart Britain, a leading theorist of the rights and duties of monarchs was King James I himself. In *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, he drew upon scripture, British law, and natural law to set out the principles of the "Reciproock and mutuall duetie betwixt a free King and his naturall Subjects."⁴ (James consistently used the masculine form.) A monarchy in James's view consists of reciprocal duties under God not only of subjects to their king but also of the king to his subjects. It is in the latter aspect that the king's office consists. James directed the reader's attention to Christian monarchs' oath of coronation, in which they swear to maintain the professed religion of their countries, to maintain the good laws of their predecessors, and to procure the general welfare of the people. Through

this oath, a king becomes “a naturall Father to all his Lieges,” a patriarchal figure who cares for his people.⁵ Thus, although his conception of monarchy was intended to be a benign one, he nevertheless emphasised the clear hierarchy between king and subjects. The king has a duty to his people, but according to an oath sworn by God. His authority consists in a fatherly office assigned to him over the people by God, not by the people.

Consequently, the royal power must be absolute. James argued that in Christian monarchies, laws and commonwealths did not exist prior to kings. Instead, it was kings who “first established the estate and forme of gouernement,” and “so it followes of necessitie, that the kings were the authors and makers of the Lawes, and not the Lawes of the kings.” Earthly government came from God through its establishment by kings, not through the formation of commonwealths among the people themselves. Subjects are thus duty-bound to obey the king as “Gods lieutenant on earth.” A Christian king holds supreme power over his country; he is “ouer-lord ouer the whole lands...so is he Master ouer euery person that inhabiteth the same, hauing power ouer life and death of euery one of them.” James stressed that good kings govern by law and always keep the good of the people in view, but that the absolute authority of the king cannot be mitigated on those or any other grounds.⁶

The king’s right of government is thus a divine right. In *The Trew Law*, James characterised monarchy as the form of government most “resembling the Diunitie” and which “approacheth nearest to perfection.” By 1610, he asserted that “Kings are not onely GODS Lieutenants vpon earth, and sit vpon GODS throne, but even by GOD himselfe they are called Gods.” He compared regal with divine power: monarchs, like God, have power over life and death; they can make and unmake subjects, like God’s power of raising up and casting down; and they are owed obedience in body and soul, at least in terms of bodily service and the sentiment of affection arising from the soul. But what if the king acts contrary to God’s will? James maintained that only God can justly punish earthly monarchs. God is the judge of whether or not a king has broken his oath of coronation.

Given that the king, not the people, is God's lieutenant, they cannot act on God's behalf and remove what they regard as a tyrannical king. Instead, their sole recourse is in "patience, earnest prayers to God, and amendment of their liues." The people can never rebel, but they can take comfort, he thought, in the fact that God "never leaue[s] Kings unpunished." All Kings who are not tyrants "will be glad to bound themselues within the limits of their Lawes; and they that perswade them the contrary, are vipers, and pests, both against them and the Commonwealth."⁷

In this light, we can discern in the thought of King James some notion of pride in relation to monarchical government. James insisted that kings should behave as dutiful fathers towards their subjects, but that the subjects cannot take their rulers to account even if they act as what Milton termed "proud kings." Christian monarchies are divinely sanctioned, and so only the unmediated God can remove this sanction. Indeed, James warned not of proud kings but rather of "those that pryde themselves to be the scourges of Tyrants" who argue that kings were originally chosen from among the people. He was particularly concerned about Catholic and Jesuits who "grewe to that height of pride, in confidence of my mildnesse" and orchestrated the Gunpowder plot against the monarchy in the name of liberty of conscience and equality.⁸ In other words, God himself will strike down proud kings, but those persons who take it upon themselves to carry out God's work are themselves subject to pride. The Christian monarch's divine right of government removes any pretext--particularly of the religious sort--for rebellion.

Satanic Pride

Against the Stuart doctrine of divine right, Milton charged

that to say Kings are accountable to none but God, is the overturning of all Law and government. For if they may refuse to give account, then all cov'nants made with them at Coronation; all Oathes are in vaine, and meer mockeries, all Lawes which they sweare to keep, made to no purpose; for if the King feare not God, as how many of them doe not? we hold then our lives and estates by the tenure of his meer grace and mercy, as from a God, not from a mortal Magistrate, a position that none but court Parasites or men besotted would maintain.⁹

We shall examine Milton's polemics against tyranny in the next chapter. But we may note the justifiable suspicion of Stuart absolutism. From a Miltonian perspective, divine right constitutes a license to oppress the people. Is Hobbesian absolutism subject to the same criticism? We shall begin with some remarks on Milton's account of pride in *Paradise Lost*.

Milton's explicit purpose in writing *Paradise Lost* was to "assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to man."¹⁰ Milton's account of pride, which takes the form of a retelling and interpretation of events in the Bible, is both a theological and political teaching. That is to say, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton began with the Bible and from his retelling drew out implications for politics which, we shall see, ran directly counter to Stuart doctrine.

The contrast may not be apparent at first glance. The very first words of the poem are a call to the Muse to sing "Of man's first disobedience,"¹¹ and the first books depict the actions of Satan and his legions after their expulsion into hell. Given Milton's previous revolutionary activities, it might appear odd that he chose to depict the fall of Satan and of humanity as the consequence of disobeying God their king. One explanation is that by the time *Paradise Lost* was published—seven years after the restoration of the monarchy—Milton repented of his former resistance to the King. Another is that Milton secretly championed Satan the rebel as the true hero of the poem.¹²

It would, however, be a mistake to identify God with earthly kings and the fallen angels with the English revolutionaries. That is to say, Milton opposed the Stuart comparison of regal and divine power. For James I, God's power is manifest in earthly monarchs, not in the people. Milton overturned this conception throughout his works, including *Paradise Lost*. What is sacred to God is not the right of kings, but rather the freedom of God's subjects. Pride is the very antithesis of this freedom. Accordingly, we may briefly indicate the centrality of free will in Milton's poem (a closer examination of the subject of freedom will be made in chapter four).

In *Paradise Lost*, God declares that he has given the angels and his new creation—human beings—the freedom to judge and choose what they will. Among the angels, those who rebelled or remained loyal did so freely. If they were not free to choose, then

...what proof could they have giv'n sincere
Of true allegiance, constant Faith or Love,
Where only what they needs must do, appear'd,
Not what they would? what praise could they receive?

Thus, virtue as obedience to God depends on the free choice of goodness. They can place no blame on God for the evil that they do. Their wills are not subject to predestination: God's omniscience and therefore absolute foreknowledge does not determine choice. Nor can God be blamed for not preventing their evil acts. Freedom, according to Milton, is a "high Decree / Unchangeable, Eternal..."¹³ This God-given, metaphysical liberty is the very essence of angels and human beings qua moral actors. Even God cannot revoke free will from his special creations, for such an act would contradict his precedent decree and drain their obedience of true faith and love. Thus, it is not monarchical power which is divine, but rather the free will of every human being.

Milton's drama of divine providence—the triumph of good over evil—thus centres on the free will to choose good or evil. In what directions did this emphasis on freedom lead Milton in his considerations on pride? Three episodes in *Paradise Lost* are particularly relevant to this discussion. The first is Satan's verbal exchange with Abdiel the Seraph, as recounted by the angel Raphael. To warn them of Satan's future temptation, Raphael tells Adam and Eve about the angels' revolt. His narrative can be seen as a cautionary tale to humans generally—whether our first ancestors or Milton's readers—of the Satanic origins of pride. For it is the angels' revolt that marks the first expression of pride since the beginning of time.

Satan and his legions are moved to rebellion when God anoints his newly begotten son as vicegerent. Satan, himself a powerful archangel, "yet fraught / With envy against the Son of God...could not bear / Through pride that sight, and thought himself impair'd." But how to compete with the Son of God? In a parody of the Son's anointing, Satan

selects a royal seat on a hill “Affecting all equality with God” and addresses a congregation of angels: “who can in reason then or right assume / Monarchy over such as live by right / His equals, if in power and splendour less, / In freedom equal?...”¹⁴ Satan does not imagine himself to be omnipotent like God. But he does esteem his freedom to will what he will to be equal to God’s. The honour given to the Son of God is resented by Satan, who over-estimates his own freedom relative to a God’s-eye valuation (as Abdiel points out). For Milton, God determines one’s place; the proud Satan asserts equal right against God.

Abdiel’s opposition to Satan’s rebellion might lead one to regard Milton as a proponent of absolute monarchy. Abdiel rebukes Satan’s proud assertion of equality with God. God has proclaimed his son to be the king of heaven. By accusing God of injustice –i.e., of forcing equals to rule over equals--Satan himself commits injustice against his rightful sovereign.

Shalt thou give Law to God, shalt thou dispute
With him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and form’d the Pow’rs of Heav’n
Such as he pleas’d, and circumscrib’d their being?¹⁵

God is the creator, chief power, and sole legislator of the universe, his realm. God is radically unequal to his creation, and rules all of nature on the basis of that matchless power.¹⁶

Furthermore, for Milton’s heaven, all titles of honour emanate from the divine power. Satan argues that the ascendance of the Son of God is an affront to the honour of the angels:

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
If these magnific titles yet remain
Not merely titular, since by Decree
Another now hath to himself engross’t
All Power, and us eclips’d under the name
Of King anointed...¹⁷

By setting up an equal over equals, God, in Satan’s view, renders degree meaningless. That is to say, the titles of the free lose their magnificence when they become relatively

unfree. Oppression deprives them of their freedom, hence making their titles of honour worthless.

Abdiel counters that God, as creator, is the source of the Angels' honour. All glory is through him, "all honour to him done / Returns our own..." For Milton's Abdiel, it would be presumptuous to think that one's place of honour comes from within sans God's decree. Milton's Abdiel wants to deflate the overweening pride that prompts imagination of one's inherent superiority (as Satan declares, "Our puissance is our own.")¹⁸

At stake in the confrontation between Satan and Abdiel is the meaning of angelic liberty. Satan considers Abdiel to be servile because of his obedience to God the king,¹⁹ in a way that seems to echo Milton's polemics during the English Revolution of the mid-17th century. That is to say, Satan's argument appears similar to Milton's in his *First Defence of the People of England*, written some 16 years before *Paradise Lost* and justifying the regicide.²⁰ For the Roundheads as for Satan and his minions, the sovereign ruled oppressively over his equals in freedom. After all, if the angels possess free will which God himself will not revoke, then why cannot they be said to be equal in freedom to God? This freedom is even more apparent in the case of human kings. Their powers may be radically unequal, but their liberties to will what they will are not. The faculty of choosing good and evil is entirely independent of the king's determination, much less God's.

For Milton, however, the analogy between God and the English king breaks down because freedom and service to God are one. Abdiel sternly reproves Satan's accusation of servitude. The Son of God has been naturally and divinely ordained as ruler over the world. His authority comes from his inherent worthiness above all things. In reply to Satan, Abdiel says that "Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name / Of Servitude to serve whom God ordains, / Or nature..." The correct meaning of servitude is "To serve th' unwise, or him who hath rebell'd / Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee, / Thyself not free, but to thyself enthrall'd." Liberty in its highest sense consists in obedience to our natural and divine betters, for even if the Angels were "not equal all, yet [they were] free, /

Equally free; for Orders and Degrees / Jar not with liberty, but well consist."²¹ Satan's rebellion is contrary to liberty because it is led by a lesser being than the rightful ruler of the angels. Satanic pride is delusional, causing him to see oppression where there is, in fact, greater glory. The divine truth, for Milton, will set us free. Thus, it would be entirely consistent to hold that the English revolution was justified but that Satan's rebellion was not: both Abdiel the enemy of the Satanic rebellion and the pious revolutionary of the English civil war acted for God's greater glory.²²

Pride Goeth Before the Fall

How does humanity figure in Satan's proud rebellion? As embodied in Adam and Eve, human beings are the instruments of God's punishment and of Satan's revenge. As the expelled Satan observes in Paradise, the creation of this corporeal being is a rebuke to the rebels' pride. In the place of the expelled Angels, God "advance[d] into our room / A Creature form'd of Earth, and him endow, / Exalted from so base original, / With Heav'nly spoils, our spoils..." Satan is indignant because a lower creature is honoured above him. As with the anointing of the Son of God, pride is relational: Satan rebelled because a perceived equal was given unequal status; his pride is further stung by the giving of equal status to an unequal. But humanity is also the means by which Satan takes revenge on God, through "him who next / Provokes my envy, this new Favourite / Of Heav'n, this Man of Clay, Son of Despite, / Whom us the more to spite his Maker rais'd / From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid."²³ Humanity is central to God's providence, for Satan's temptation of Eve and the subsequent Fall begins the divine history of humanity. Thus, humankind is part of Satan's proud revenge and, unbeknownst to the devil, of God's plan to subdue Satanic pride.

The temptation of Eve and the Fall show the connection between Satanic pride and human pride. Satan's proud rebellion against God arose from his imagined equality in freedom with God. Similarly, Satan tempts Eve to eat the forbidden fruit by holding out to

her the promise of becoming a god. Disguising himself as a serpent, Satan claims to have eaten of the Tree of Knowledge and acquired reason and speech. As a beast become man, he is living proof that the fruit brings forth power, not death. Why, says he, would God prohibit humans from eating of the Tree?

Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe,
 Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
 His worshippers; he knows that in the day
 Ye Eat thereof, your Eyes that seem so clear,
 Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then.
 Op'n'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as Gods,
 Knowing both Good and Evil as they know.
 That ye should be as Gods, since I as Man,
 Internal Man, is but proportion meet,
 I of brute human, yee of human Gods.²⁴

Satan wants Eve to feel the indignity of being prevented from enjoying much greater equality with God. Thus, the first seeds of human pride, as planted by Satan, relate to God, not to other human beings who are equal by nature. This account of human pride is pre-social and cosmic. There are, at this point, only two human beings, and Eve does not seek equality with or superiority over her mate. Human pride is Satanic, i.e., it is ultimately pride against God.

It is also worth noting that Eve is above all tempted to attain knowledge of good and evil. Although the human inhabitants of Eden are free to will what they will, they are forbidden to know what they might will. The capacity to choose good or evil in a state of innocence precedes knowledge of good and evil. Their only service to God is "this easy charge,....not to taste that only Tree"; God "left that Command / Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live / Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law."²⁵ Before tasting of the fruit, then, Adam and Eve naturally choose good but are free to do evil, by breaking God's sole law in Eden. Pride drives them to break God's law and attain knowledge of good and evil.²⁶

But was not the original sin the first exercise of our moral freedom, God's "high decree"? On the contrary, as with Satan's revolt, the choice of evil shackled humanity's God-given liberty. Seduced by her feminine charms, Adam eats of the fruit offered to him

by his mate. After tasting of it, Adam and Eve lust after each other, thereupon retreating to a riverbank to sate their carnal desires. After taking their fill of each other, they arise in a different state. Adam rues of having eaten the

Bad Fruit of Knowledge, if this be to know,
Which leaves us naked thus, of Honour void,
Of Innocence, of Faith, of Purity,
Our wonted Ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our Faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store;
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first
Be sure then....²⁷

In attempting to ascend to godhead by eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve descend into carnality. They feel shame because they have engaged in bestial sin. Staining their bodies and souls, they become conscious that they are naked. Just as Satan, as Abdiel observed, lost his liberty by rebelling against God, Adam, Eve, and their descendants lose their freedom in serving not God but their base desires. Conversely, we could say that freedom is regained when the desires are cast off, and reason, the highest part of us (as oriented to God), is served. In other words, the pride that led to our fall may be in some measure combatted by the highest use of our freedom.²⁸

Rebel Kings

The archangel Michael gives the fallen Adam a prospect of the pride of tyrants. After the divine punishment of the Flood, many persons will lead just and upright lives in peaceable society

...till one [Nimrod] shall rise
Of proud ambitious heart, who not content
With fair equality, fraternal state,
Will arrogate Dominion undeserv'd
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
Concord and law of Nature from the Earth...

Nimrod's pride is not sinful simply because he was discontent with equality and fraternity among his fellow human beings. Rather, kingly pride is foremost a sin against God. According to Milton, Nimrod's very name means rebellion. He rebelled against God by

attempting to erect a tower to reach heaven, for which sin God sowed confusion among the builders.²⁹ Thus, rebellion and pride are linked for Milton in the sense it is the proud earthly sovereigns who are truly rebellious against God. Nimrod's oppression of his brethren and the construction of the Tower of Babel are alike acts of rebellion. Milton lifted the meaning of rebellion from the political to the heavenly. James I warned of the pride of the scourge of kings; Milton warned of kings possessed of Satanic pride.³⁰

The implications of rational liberty for rebellion thus become clear. As we saw, rebelling against God is the loss, not the exercise, of our freedom. We are most free when in service of God, for we obey the highest part of us, as opposed to enslavement to the lower parts. Rulers such as Nimrod, then, are fundamentally unfree:

Reason in man obscur'd, or not obey'd,
Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart Passions catch the Government
From Reason, and to servitude reduce
Man till then free....

Like Plato, Milton regarded the rule of tyrants as the political counterpart to the servitude to the passions in the soul. But where he departed from Plato was in valuing above all our rational liberty to serve the Christian God. Tyranny is a disordered regime, but it is evil principally because God is the only true master over human beings. As Adam notes, God gave humankind absolute dominion over nature, "but Man over men / He made not Lord; such title to himself / Reserving, human left from human free." By suppressing the external freedom of others, the proud king "claim[s]...second Sovranty".³¹ Tyranny over the free is tantamount to rebellion against God. Therefore, resistance to proud kings could be regarded as the pursuit of our rational liberty--the highest service to God. Political revolution of the sort that took place in England during Milton's and Hobbes's lifetimes is the very opposite of Satanic rebellion when it is a struggle for freedom. Thus, the story of Nimrod in Milton's narrative poem implies that the pride of kings, a sin above all against God, may be subdued by the divinely sanctioned resistance of the people.

And yet, in *Paradise Lost*, it seems that Milton did not explicitly advocate open

resistance against the monarchy. Although tyrants sin against God in oppressing the people, the latter may serve as instruments of divine punishment. That is to say, it has often been the case that only after human beings have enslaved themselves to their own passions have proud monarchs constrained their external freedom. Tyranny from without may, in some cases, be seen as God's way of punishing tyranny within the soul.

Yet sometimes Nations will decline so low
From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
But justice, and some fatal curse annex
Deprives them of their outward liberty,
Their inward lost...

As Michael tells Adam, "Tyranny must be, / Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse."³²

Milton's conception of justice in *Paradise Lost* is above all providential. Since God created even proud monarchs, they must serve some purpose in the divine scheme. Our free willing does not mean that we alone determine our future: we may will what we will, but God may punish our freely chosen actions. Do Michael's comments suggest that there is no place for resistance against proud monarchs in *Paradise Lost*?

That God's justice is the only true justice--and that God's punishment is the only true subjugation of kingly pride--is reinforced by the emphasis on the otherworldly Messiah. Given that tyranny is punishment of servile peoples, how can they become free? Michael describes the coming of Christ, who will die for humanity, and by "this act / Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength / Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms.." After returning to heaven, he will appear only at certain times to disciples who will teach others about his life and salvation. False religion will displace the true faith except in a few, "till the day / Appear of respiration to the just, / And vengeance to the wicked," when the Saviour will come again "to dissolve / Satan with his perverted World, then raise / From the conflagrant mass, purg'd and refin'd / New Heav'ns, new Earth..." Thus, the decisive victory over Satan and therefore over Satanic pride--rebellion against God--will be carried out not by popular revolution but by the otherworldly saviour, the Son of God. In *Paradise Lost*, therefore, divine providence would seem to render political revolution on

religious grounds unnecessary. Milton did not explicitly call on free Christians to unite in arms against their proud rulers, instead invoking the quiet beliefs and acts of true Christians who patiently await the Second Coming. We are to follow Michael's counsel to Adam to "add Faith" to what he has learned today, to

Add Virtue, Patience Temperance, add Love,
By name to come call'd Charity, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far.

Happiness under God is presented here as something to be attained individually, not through collective activity.³³

Despite this emphasis on inner piety and divine providence, Milton's account of pride has revolutionary implications. It is worth keeping in mind that *Paradise Lost* was written and published after the Restoration—and after the arrest and subsequent release of Milton.³⁴ Cromwell's "free" commonwealth had proven to be unpopular enough for an easy return of the monarchy in England. The project undertaken by Milton (as Cromwell's secretary) to defend the republican Commonwealth in writing was over. Nevertheless, though he did not explicitly defend the English Revolution in *Paradise Lost*, the poem is animated by the same revolutionary fervour as the pamphlets of the 40's and 50's. The ultimate victory over Satan may be executed only at the second coming, but resistance against satanic rulers can only be for the good. Granted, tyranny may be God's way of punishing peoples. Nevertheless, Milton did not regard resistance as sinful. We may have to resign ourselves to evil in this world, but God will still be on our side in the struggle against tyranny, the true rebellion against God. In contrast to the divine right of kings, Milton's clarion call was the divine right of the people.³⁵

Pride in the *Leviathan*

Unlike Milton, Hobbes was an advocate of absolute sovereignty. Nevertheless, despite superficial similarities in their views, Hobbes also departed considerably from the

divine right theory which justified the rule of Stuart monarchs such as King James. One key difference lay in the groundwork of Hobbes's theory in a philosophical account of human nature, in contrast to the sole reliance in James's works on "proofs" from scriptural and historical accounts for patriarchal and divinely sanctioned monarchy. One route to ascertaining the premises of Hobbesian absolutism, and which nicely situates his thought in relation to Milton's, is an examination of his complex account of pride. The theme of pride appears throughout the *Leviathan*. We are concerned with, among other things, how Hobbes's treatment of this theme leads him to the conclusion that a sovereign power is necessary to subdue pride. Part one of *Leviathan* will principally be examined in the following sections of this chapter.

Some authors have alluded to the importance of pride to Hobbes's analysis, including Leo Strauss, C.B. Macpherson, F.S. McNeilly, and more recently, Gabriella Slomp.³⁶ We shall refer to their particular interpretations below as they pertain to our discussion. But it may be noted at the outset that while these writers all usefully emphasise the relationship between glory and the desire for power in the state of nature, they do not fully address the religious elements of pride. Other writers, such as Tom Sorell and especially Joshua Mitchell, have suggested that Hobbes sought to quell the Biblical notion of pride: the vainglory of fallen humanity.³⁷ My analysis, however is devoted to the religious forms of pride which may contribute to conflict, rather than to the supposed religious framework of Hobbes's attack on pride. By focusing on religion as a source of conflict, the views of Sorell and Mitchell will be put into question.

The very title-page of Hobbes's book suggests that the king of the proud is set above a commonwealth embroiled in religious controversy and war.³⁸ At the top of the picture is the line from the Book of Job in which God declares the mighty power of the Leviathan among God's creatures. Hobbes's Leviathan, however, is not a giant sea-creature but a crowned human figure, composed of a multitude of men and women in his arms and chest. In his right hand he wields a sword, which, judging from the pictures

below it, symbolises military power; while in his left hand he holds a crosier, apparently symbolising power over religion. It is striking that the pictures depict strife and controversy as opposed to peace and unanimity. Even if one were to argue that the battle scenes represent external warfare, the pitchforks marked with contentious distinctions and the scene of religious disputation are unquestionably depictions of challenges to a sovereign's power over religion. And if the pictures on either side of the title are meant to correspond to each other, as is likely, then the warfare on the left side is similarly an image of division: either civil war or foreign invasion. What interests us, then, is how one side may give rise to the other--i.e., how religious differences may lead to war--and what role pride plays in this relationship such that the sovereign power must be "King of the children of pride."³⁹

The title-page raises questions over the role of the sovereign; the dedicatory epistle prompts us to consider the predicament of the citizen. Hobbes dedicated *Leviathan* to Francis Godolphin, in honour of his brother Sidney, a poet and Member of Parliament who perished in the English civil war while fighting for the royalist cause. He praised Sidney not for his eminent position or honours received, but rather his virtues in "the service of God...[and in] the service of his Country," as displayed in "Civill Society" and "private Friendship."⁴⁰ According to this account, Mr. Godolphin was not an overly proud man: he put himself in the service of others, both in his public and private lives, rather than above others in society. Nor was he wont to behave arrogantly before God. Nevertheless, he was a victim of the civil war, the outbreak of religious strife in seventeenth century England. Thus, he can be seen as exemplifying the terrible consequences of antisocial passions such as pride for individuals.

These comments are not, however, intended to imply that Hobbes's analysis of pride is a moral drama which distinguishes perpetrators from victims of internal strife. Bloody conflicts which claim the lives of men such as Godolphin are best understood through and perhaps preventable by a sober examination of human nature and the principles

of government. A commonsensical approach to the matter might be a defence of the royalist cause and attack on the motives and designs of one's enemies. Indeed, James's tracts on monarchy partly consisted in refuting the opponents of absolute royal power. Instead, Hobbes offered a "discourse of Common-wealth" in which he examined "(in the Abstract)...the Seat of Power." As for the passions (among which, as we shall see, Hobbes numbered pride), he did not assign virtues to one side and vices to the other, like the "uncharitable censures of one another behind their backs." Hobbes stated that the thoughts and passions of any person are similar to those of other humans, even though the objects of the passions vary among individuals and even in one individual at different times.⁴¹ In the context of our discussion, then, Hobbes examined pride as something that is to varying degrees characteristic of all human beings qua human.

To that end, he began *Leviathan* with a scientific investigation into human nature. In *De Cive*, Hobbes had remarked that a rhetorical discourse "would not suffice by itself" in examining the commonwealth, and opted for an analysis which first examines constituent parts in order to understand the whole.⁴² Likewise, the commonwealth is depicted in *Leviathan* as a product of artifice, a kind of machine of which a proper understanding must begin with a consideration of its "Matter" and "Artificer," human beings.⁴³ Thus, we would best ascertain pride in Hobbes's thought by tracing its origins in human nature.

The political teaching of Hobbes's *Leviathan* thus proceeds in an opposite direction to that of Milton's great poem. Hobbes began not with God's providence as depicted in the Bible but with nature: he deduced from principles of motion to human nature, and from there to the relations between human beings, the need for civil society, and the institution of the commonwealth. Indeed, the first line of the Introduction can be read as a succinct description of his methodology: "NATURE (the Art whereby God hath made and governes the World) is by the *Art* of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal." Human beings can construct the sovereign state on principles

derived from nature. The science of politics reflects God's ways only insofar as God is ruler over nature. Now, Hobbes did examine Biblical teaching at length in his discussion of "the Nature and Rights of a Christian Commonwealth," but only after having derived his political teaching "from the Principles of Nature onely". Nothing in the last two parts of *Leviathan* can contradict the findings of natural reason as Hobbes conceived it.⁴⁴ Hobbes thus interpreted the Bible in light of the natural science of politics, in contrast to Milton, who understood politics in light of his retelling of the Bible.

Lively Imaginings

We should begin our examination of Hobbes's conception of pride with a discussion of thought and imagination. Milton and other religious thinkers attributed the origins of much of human thought to supernatural powers. For example, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton depicted vain and proud thoughts as implanted by the devil, though imperfect human nature is fertile ground for such satanic suggestions. To protect Adam and Eve from Satan's temptations, Gabriel sends two spirits to their bower in Eden, where the emissaries apprehend Satan beside the sleeping Eve:

...him there they found
 Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve;
 Assaying by his devilish art to reach
 The organs of her Fancy, and with them forge
 Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams,
 Or if inspiring venom, he might taint
 Th' animal spirits that from pure blood arise
 Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise
 At least distempered, discontented thoughts,
 Vain hope, vain aims, inordinate desires
 Blown up with high conceits engend'ring pride.⁴⁵

Satan takes advantage of dormant reason to manipulate Eve's imagination and plant the seeds of pride. What were Hobbes's views on the origins of vivid fancies and distempered thoughts? What role do they play in proud delusions of oneself?

All thoughts, Hobbes argued, come from the senses. The motion of external objects against our sensory organs cause an inward resistance in our bodies. There is thus

a difference between external objects and our sensations. That is to say, what we sense is not in the object itself: the light produced by the action of rubbing one's eye is distinct from the finger. Hobbes set up a barrier between inward sensation and outward objects, wherein the world of sensations, though caused by the world of objects, is nevertheless distinct from the latter.⁴⁶

This separation of sense from object leads to the possibility of illusion. The inward sensations of things, known as images or "fancies", continue their inward motion even after the corresponding object is removed, though the images become obscured. Thus, imagination is "decaying sense", and it is weaker with the passage of time since the object was sensed. These obscured images may be combined together. Hobbes gave the example of a man who compounds the image of himself with the image of the actions of another, perhaps even a Hercules or Alexander.⁴⁷ As with the puffed-up Satan and Eve's desire to become a god in *Paradise Lost*, the imagination for Hobbes may therefore give rise to distorted images of one's own abilities, a crucial element of over-confidence in one's powers.

Moreover, the distorted images in dreams may play a role in civil unrest. In sleep, the senses are numbed to the motion of external objects, which makes the decayed fancies in the imagination seem clearer. For this reason, dreams appear in sleep as real as do the objects of waking life. The compound imagination is thereby more active during sleep. Dreams also require, however, that there be some "distemper" in the body. What prompts dreams are physical changes which give rise to various emotional states. For example, cold will lead to dreams of fearful objects, whereas heat on the heart causes imagination of anger, and on "certain other parts," imagination of "naturall kindness." Now, dreams are a problem when they cannot be distinguished from thoughts when awake. Hobbes suggested that Brutus's vision of the murdered Caesar was a result of bad conscience, cold weather, and poor sleep. In contrast to the Miltonian depiction of Satan's temptation of Eve in her sleep and the doctrine of the Schoolmen that "Good thoughts are powred

(infused) into a man, by God, and Evil ones by the Divell," Hobbes maintained that all disturbances of the mind are purely physiological reactions.⁴⁸

In Brutus's case, the apparition may have been, in Hobbes's eyes, a just punishment for his treasonous disloyalty. But the deception of dreams has been more often used for seditious purposes. For the most part, pagan religion was based on worship of such fancies. The problem today is the exploitation of such fear of spirits in religion. Although, Hobbes insisted, the frequency of apparitions "is no point of Christian faith", some have nevertheless swayed the people from civil obedience through superstitions such as fear of spirits, and therefore also prognostications, false prophecies, and the like. Additionally, the universities "nourish" rather than combat such beliefs by their theological doctrines.⁴⁹ Still, the use of religion to enforce obedience may be legitimate—but as we shall see, Hobbes's theory provides a rational basis for obligation. Religion alone cannot be a sufficient basis of obedience, considering its use by Presbyterian preachers and Independents like Milton.⁵⁰

Certain forms of religion, then, arise from compounded images accompanied by the fear of such apparitions in waking life. One might ask, therefore, what the relation is between the ghosts and goblins of religion used for civil purposes and the imagination of oneself beyond one's actual abilities. Religion may provoke fear in the timorous, but it may lead to foolhardiness too. In other words, the belief in spirits prompted by dreams could be combined with false estimations of one's own power.

To explore this possibility, we must understand that Hobbes's account thus far is morally neutral. He did not disapprove of the imagination while preferring thinking that is less subject to error, because imagination is the ground of all thought. Imagination gives rise to dreams and visions, but also to various levels of understanding, from simple recognition to the use of highly developed language. How, then, do the fancies at some times lead to ghosts, and at other times to mental discourse? Hobbes's answer may appear surprising, for he did not distinguish dreams from steady mental discourse on the basis of

the coherence of the one and the incoherence of the other. Instead, a succession or "Trayne" of thoughts is regulated by the passions. When we have a strong desire for or fear of something, we direct our thoughts to the means (and the means to the means) to attain the object of desire or to avert encounter with the object of fear, resulting in our seeking causes of a thing we imagine or seeking effects of an imagined thing.⁵¹ Thinking begins with the desire and proceeds, as it were, backwards or forwards to find ways of fulfilling the desire.

Now, unregulated thoughts are not directed by a passionate design, "In which case the thoughts are said to wander, and seem impertinent one to another, as in a Dream." But they are not for that reason incoherent: though the thoughts may wander, the succession of one thought upon another may be understood. Hobbes gave the example of a discourse in which one thinks of the English civil war, then the "Thought of the delivering of the King to his Enemies," then the thought of the same deliverance of Christ to the Sanhedrin, and finally the thought of the thirty pence paid to Judas, which leads to "that malicious question" of the value of the Roman penny. There is no overall design to asking such a question when considering the civil war, but the direction of one thought to another is coherent enough.⁵²

The example is revealing. For thoughts of the civil war led Hobbes to think of means to the attainment of peace, involving a rich and complex discourse on the grounds of sovereignty and human nature, "occasioned by the disorders of the present time."⁵³ His train of thoughts was guided by the desire for peace. In contrast, an unregulated mental discourse beginning from the thought of the civil war might lead to impertinent questions; and what if discombobulated passions were to cloud one's ability to direct one's thoughts to the attainment of one's objects of desire? Hobbes left open the possibility that human beings themselves are often not capable of calculations with respect to their own interests, despite engaging in mental discourse.⁵⁴

Moreover, regulated trains of thought may be just as unreliable as the unregulated

sort, blurring the distinction between them. Especially illuminating for our purposes are his comments on prudence. Prudence or foresight is conjecture into the future based on things past. One presumes from past actions and similar present actions that the outcomes will also be similar. The problem with this form of discourse is that experience is uncertain, since the things of the future have no being yet. Only the one “by whose will” things are to happen can foresee the future: prophecy is therefore supernatural, since only God can will future events. The best prophets, then, can guess correctly by “Signes” of future consequences, which can only be done with certainty if the signs are certain and correctly interpreted.⁵⁵ This view of prophecy implies that false but believed prophets are no more than good and/or lucky guessers. Thus, though the desire for knowledge of consequences may regulate one’s train of thoughts, the mental discourse might still be fallacious. In particular, superstition and over-estimation of one’s own ability may be brought together in the false prophet who believes, erroneously, that he is divinely inspired with foresight into the future.⁵⁶

Mad Glorifying

This potential for erroneous reasoning entails vainglorious conceptions of oneself. Now, Milton considered glory in relation to God. Outnumbered by an angelic squadron, the unaccompanied Satan is addressed by Gabriel:

Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine,
Neither our own but giv'n; what folly then
To boast what arms can do, since thine no more
Than Heav'n permit, nor mine, though doubled now
To trample thee as mire...⁵⁷

Milton’s point was that Satan’s armed defiance against God is a vain glorying, since his power as well as Gabriel’s come from God. What roles do God and religion play in Hobbes’s account of vainglory?

We have established that regulated and unregulated trains of thought form a continuum rather than constitute distinct categories. To be sure, there are discernible

extremes: at one end, the harmless meandering of thoughts; at the other end, strictly regulated mental discourse, i.e., science, which, as Hobbes explained in chapters four and five, consists in the right ordering of names of things to achieve knowledge of consequences (and thus, science serves the passions).⁵⁸ We have suggested, however, that there are mid-points at which passions seem to direct one's thoughts, and yet the train of thought may be unreliable, clouded by superstition, or even presumptuous. How does pride figure in this discussion, particularly in relation to religion? Pride, said Hobbes, is "great *vaine-Glory*."⁵⁹ Vainglory is defined in chapter six, "Of the Passions." Is it the case that the passion of pride may direct and yet cloud a person's train of thought?

First, we must understand what the passions are, as they pertain to pride. All of our voluntary motions, such as going and speaking, depend on a precedent thought, and thus originate in the imagination (and ultimately in our senses). We noted above that regulated mental discourse begins with desire and thereafter thoughts on the means of attaining the object of desire or on the possible effects, or uses, of an object in possession. Thus, if all voluntary motions are means to some end, then passionate thought precedes such action. Now, since thought itself is inward motion, voluntary motion begins with interior movements: these latter motions are the passions, or "endeavours." Endeavours may be towards something or away from it, thus constituting our appetites and aversions, and thus our loves and hates.⁶⁰

Furthermore, the passions determine what we call good or evil. We say that the objects of our desire are good, and objects of aversion or hate evil. One's appetites and aversions change as one's body changes, so that one's desires and hates are never the same. Hence, there is even less agreement among different individuals as to objects of desire and aversion. The meanings of "good" and "evil", then, vary according to the person, at least where there is no higher authority, such as the commonwealth or some judge.⁶¹ In other words, our passions are taken as the rule of good and evil, unless there is a human authority to determine otherwise. If we enjoy or anticipate pleasure from an object

in a lawless state, then we can judge a thing to be good, and conversely for evil. Pride, then, can only be said to be good or evil according to the standards of the commonwealth; or in its absence, according to our desires. Nothing Hobbes wrote thus far condemns any of the passions, despite their bases in the imagination. The test of the harmful effects of the passion of pride will only become apparent when it is considered in the social setting—a major contrast to the pre- and supra-social sin of pride in *Paradise Lost*.

Having outlined aspects of the passions in general, we may turn to qualities of individual passions. In regard to pride and religious conflict, it is hard to see what connection can be made between vainglory and religion.⁶² After all, vainglory is “Joy, arising from imagination of a mans own power and ability...grounded on the flattery of others, or onely supposed by himself, for delight in the consequences of it...”, whereas religion (and superstition) is “*Fear* of power invisible, feigned by the mind, or imagined from tales”. Hobbes added that vainglory occurs most often in “young men, and [is] nourished by the Histories, or Fictions of Gallant Persons.” Religion arises from displeasure at the thought of invisible powers, and can be felt in isolation from others. Vainglory, in contrast, is a pleasure arising from romantic visions of oneself, and therefore relates to the supposed weaker powers of others. Furthermore, we often think of religion as arising from hope (in a future life), and Hobbes linked glory with confidence and therefore hope (“*Appetite* with an opinion of attaining”);⁶³ but curiously, Hobbes did not link religion with hope. It seems that, for him, religion is prompted principally by ignorance and fear. Thus, on that basis, too, religion and vainglory are opposite. How can they be understood in conjunction with each other?

We should note that they both have a strong imaginary component. Some pleasures and displeasures are wholly sensual, involving immediate reactions from the senses. Others, such as joy, fear, and grief, arise from the expectation of good or evil consequences.⁶⁴ Unlike sensual pleasure, they are not present- but future-oriented. The future, moreover, is only imagined. Indeed, as we noted earlier, compounded fancies of

young men and fearful apparitions have a common basis in the imagination: so, too, are the corresponding passions that cause such thoughts and visions. But is there something more to their imaginary components that connects the two and distinguishes them from other passions of the mind?

It is helpful to distinguish religion and vainglory from what they are not. In particular, they are aligned more with opinion and belief than with reason. For example, curiosity is the desire for knowledge, which governs mental discourse that proceeds syllogistically, namely from definition to consequence. Similarly, admiration is a joy arising from “apprehension of novelty” which “excites the appetite of knowing the cause.” Neither religion (as defined here) nor vainglory has the same potential for giving rise to rational discourse. Inasmuch as vainglorious discourse begins not with definitions but with one’s supposition of oneself, it is opinion; inasmuch as vainglorious discourse begins with others’ flattery, it is belief and faith. The same is true of the fear of invisible powers, which governs successions of thoughts beginning either from one’s imagination of such powers (opinion) or from tales (faith in the teller, belief in the tale and the teller). Even the Christian religion is based not on reason but on belief and faith. Christians believe in God (and sometimes in the doctrine of the creed) and believe that the scriptures are God’s word. Since the scriptures are, for the most part, tales (which does not necessarily entail that they are false), Christians have belief and faith in the church, i.e., in human beings only. Similarly, many persons believe and have faith in prophets true and false.⁶⁵ It is not the case that discourses beginning from opinion and belief are not true, whereas rational discourse is. But it is the case that opinion and belief are liable to deception, whereas rational discourse beginning with sound definitions and proceeding syllogistically is infallible. Therefore, vainglory and religion are subject to error.⁶⁶

It is the possibility of error which links vainglory and religion to pride. Of intellectual virtues or wit, i.e., “abilities of the mind, as men praise, value, and desire should be in themselves,” Hobbes wrote that there are two sorts, natural and acquired.

Natural wit consists of a swift succession of thoughts and “*steddy direction* to some approved end.” It finds either similarities between things, or differences: the first is fancy, the second discretion or judgement. Judgement is valued over fancy because good discretion is necessary to a good fancy, whereas judgement does not require fancy, which merely adorns and illustrates with apt metaphors and similes. Moreover, in the absence of steadiness in one’s discourse, great fancy becomes a kind of madness: i.e., one is lost in a hurly-burly of thoughts. Presumably, Hobbes thought that good judgement is corrective of such unsteadiness, or that one cancels out the other. As for wit acquired from proper method and instruction, “there is none but Reason; which is grounded on the right use of Speech; and produceth the Sciences.” Like opinion and belief on the one hand and reason on the other, the intellectual virtues can be natural and fallible, or artificial (i.e., acquired by training) and infallible.⁶⁷

Vainglory and religion pertain to defects of natural wit. Because acquired wit is attained only after long study in the correct method of reasoning, rational discourse is never unsteady. Natural wit, however, is prone to such intellectual derailment. What gives rise to unsteadiness of thought? As discussed above, mental discourse is regulated by a passionate thought: the succession of thoughts is thus guided. Hobbes used a nice analogy to illustrate this point: “the Thoughts are to the Desires, as Scouts, and Spies, to range abroad and find the way to things Desired; All Stedinesse of the minds motion, and all quicknesse of the same, proceeding from thence.” He added that the principal governing passions are forms of the desire of power, which include desire of riches, knowledge, and honour. The differences and therefore the possible defects of natural wit are attributable to differences in the passions. Dullness results from weak passions; giddiness means having “Passions indifferently for every thing”; and madness means having unusually strong passions for something which includes excessive dejection (“causelesse fears”) and excessive glorying.⁶⁸ In the case of the latter form of madness, an extraordinarily vehement desire of power gives rise to unsteady thoughts. One literally cannot think

straight because the passion is so strong.

Pride is a severe form of vainglory. Pride leads to anger, which in excess is the madness of rage and fury. Now, anger is sudden courage, and courage is hope of avoiding expected hurt by resistance. How, we might ask, can pride cause anger? From the discussion thus far, it appears that if we hold excessive opinions of our own abilities, then we expect to attain much more than is normal for human beings. Our desires are frustrated, but we expect (unreasonably) that our abilities are such that we can resist the displeasure of not having desires met: hence, pride gives rise to sudden courage, which is anger. In this light, we can see that the excessive vainglory which constitutes pride is linked with other passions. In other words, pride is great vainglory but human beings are vainglorious about various things. For example, excessive forms of desire for revenge and of jealous love lead to rage, because one's false expectations of what one can obtain in revenge or love cause sudden and excessive hope of avoiding hurt by resistance. As for "Excessive opinion of a mans own selfe, for divine inspiration, for wisdom, learning, forme, and the like," Hobbes pointed out that such vainglory only becomes rage when combined with envy, the desire to overcome a competitor: that is to say, competition focuses and directs the passion of vainglory such that the governing passion is concentrated, hence vehement. Pride, then, is an eminently social (or rather, antisocial) passion, because it gains its vehemence (as opposed to the idle daydreams of romantic youth) in relation to others.⁶⁹

We have, then, our first glimpse into the potential violence brought about by pride, especially as it pertains to religion. For Hobbes, the madness arising from excess pride or excess of any passion is not the lunacy of a few individuals who can be treated or simply locked away. The madness of rage is a deep social pathology with many sources and is not always discernible. It is, he wrote, as if you were calmly conversing with a man from Bedlam, only to discover as the conversation is ending that he believes himself to be God. But what harm would such a man pose to others? Although the man from Bedlam may not

be enraged, a whole multitude with the opinion of being divinely inspired may conspire to violence. That is to say, an individual with vainglorious delusions of inspiration is easily dealt with as a single lunatic; but many such persons together constitute a dangerous faction. What deeds are the latter incapable of, when God is, in their minds, on their side? As the story of the Milesian women show, the mad may hold even their lives to be of little account, as compared to their honour.⁷⁰ Those persons who fancy themselves to be divinely inspired may, therefore, risk their lives to uphold what they believe to be God's honour. For Milton, glorying is sinful if God's honour is not taken into account. For Hobbes, in contrast, God's honour has been used as a pretext for seditious glorying. He characterised certain harmful effects of pride in terms of religiously based political sedition rather than as an offence against God.⁷¹

Antisocial Pride

We need to examine the social implications of Hobbes's conception of pride. For Milton, Satan's pride, like the erection of the Tower of Babylon, is directed upwards as an affront to heaven. Shortly after the fall of the angels, Pandaemonium is built, and there

Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence; and from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heav'n, and by success untaught
His proud imaginations thus displayed.⁷²

Satanic pride, whether possessed by the prince of darkness or the princes of the world, entails hostility to heaven. Milton conceived of pride primarily as a sin against God, as exemplified *par excellence* by the false king Satan, who chooses to continue his war with heaven despite the futility of such a struggle and his previous humiliating loss. Thus far, we have seen that Hobbes, in contrast, emphasised the antisocial qualities of pride, not its sinfulness. Milton's Satan wars with heaven out of a false estimation of his status—false because his power and honour are derived from God. How, then, is Hobbes's account of antisocial pride rooted in his own conceptions of power and honour?

The first question we may ask is whether or not pride is necessarily antisocial. Cannot pride be channelled into healthier outlets, such as pride in one's country? Surely glorying in my country's greatness—even though my opinion may be exaggerated—is good for the commonwealth, since it directs anger or even rage against the enemies of the state. Hobbes did not neglect the existence of magnanimity and valour, and even wrote of the “relish of Justice,” being “a certain Nobleness or Gallantesse of courage...by which a man scorns to be beholding for the contentment of his life, to fraud, or breach of promise.” But he hastened to add that such a quality is “rarely found.”⁷³ Pride is, for the most part, directed against fellow citizens: there is no healthy outlet for the usual manifestations of pride, only the taming of them. Let us now turn to its antisocial qualities.

“THE POWER of a Man,” wrote Hobbes, “is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good. And is either *Originall*, or *Instrumentall*.” Original or natural power lies in “Faculties of Body, or Mind,” including extraordinary strength, beauty, and eloquence. Instrumental powers are those acquired by natural power to obtain more power, such as wealth, reputation, and friends. From these powers can be derived myriad other forms of power.⁷⁴

Now, each individual will possess original and instrumental powers, but if I am excessively vainglorious, I will over-estimate my present means to future apparent goods. Pride leads me to consider my strength, intelligence, nobility, reputation, support, and so on to be much greater than others', whereas other persons judge my powers to be less than I think. There is a difference between my and their valuations of me:

The *Value*, or WORTH of a man, is as of all other things, his Price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his Power: and therefore is not absolute; but a thing dependent on the need and judgement of another....And as in other things, so in men, not the seller, but the buyer determines the Price. For let a man (as most men do,) rate themselves as the highest Value they can; yet their true Value is no more than it is esteemed by others.⁷⁵

As the tendency of most individuals is to value themselves to some degree higher than others would have, the discrepancy between self-estimation and the value set by others will be particularly great in those suffering from overweening pride. In this respect, Milton's

Satan is an exemplar of this discrepancy, particularly in his reaction to God's pronouncement of his son's ascendance. As with Hobbesian pride, Milton's Satan cannot but compare himself with others and seek to overtake his competitor. Still, this similarity should not overshadow the contrast between, on the one hand, order and rank in the divine scheme, and on the other hand, a kind of economic valuation of merit.

Pride for Hobbes may thus result in great dishonour to oneself. Honour does not stem from inherent nobility, in the way that in common parlance we sometimes call certain persons honourable. Instead, honour "consisteth onely in the opinion of Power." How to measure honour? If there is no absolute standard by which to judge honour, then honour (and dishonour) is relative: "To Value a man at a high rate, is to *Honour* him; at a low rate, is to *Dishonour* him. But high, and low, in this case, is to be understood by comparison to the rate each man setteth on himselfe."⁷⁶ In consequence, the proud are dishonoured by others and dishonour others. By setting my own estimation so high above others', I will suffer greater disappointment at others' valuations of me as a result. Moreover, the value set upon me by the commonwealth--i.e., dignity--will fall short of my expectations. Thus, if pride gives rise to madness, then the proud, dishonoured, and literally "in-dignant" person may be full of rage towards others and the commonwealth.⁷⁷ Like Milton's Satan, the proud individuals in Hobbes's *Leviathan* feel that they are deserving of more recognition than they are given. But unlike Milton, Hobbes considered pride relative to one's equals, in contrast to Satanic pride in relation to God. Hobbes stress natural equality rather than spiritual hierarchy.

How does pride affect peace and unity? Can the madness of rage be contained? Unfortunately, pride may affect the manners (i.e., "those qualities of man-kind, that concern their living together in peace, and Unity") of all in society. Hobbes contended that there is no happiness or greatest good in this life, only felicity. And felicity consists in the ongoing attainment of the objects of one's desires. In our pursuit of felicity, we have "a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power, that ceaseth only in Death." But this

perpetual desire of power does not mean that some human beings would not be content with moderate power. Instead, a person “cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.” In other words, one cannot maintain even a moderate existence unless one constantly strives for power to protect that with which one is satisfied.⁷⁸

This insecurity of one’s moderate livelihood implies that some are not content merely to live well, and hence encroach upon those persons who would be satisfied with what they have. Those who force the moderate to pursue power ceaselessly may be afflicted with pride, among other qualities. The proud over-value their own power relative to others’ opinions: hence, they will expect to acquire more than is considered justifiable by others. But if proud individuals are constantly dishonoured, i.e., the price that another person would give for the use of their power is less than they deem, then their desires will be frustrated. In other words, what one is willing to give them—say, one’s goods or services—will be less than they think they deserve. Therefore, they will only be satisfied—for the moment—by taking from others without their leave.⁷⁹

Pride, then, may be one factor leading to perpetual contention. For the way to attain the objects of one’s desires is, according to Hobbes, “to kill, subdue, supplant, or repel” one’s competitor. The proud individual is thus in contention not only with other proud individuals, but also with those persons forced to acquire more as a result of the threat of invasion. Even the existence of a common power greater than the powers of individuals would fail to engender obedience to itself in the proud. Individuals obey the civil power because of the desire of ease, since ease can be provided by the protection of a common power; because of love of arts, since arts require leisure, which is also possible under such protection; or because of the fear of death, since the chances of violence and violent death are thereby decreased.⁸⁰ Pride, we shall now see, can cause individuals to be unaffected by these motives.

First, the very proud are uneasy, because their contentiousness is unabated by any

honours and dignity that could be granted by other individuals and the commonwealth. As the life of human beings is like a race which has “no other goal, nor no other garland, but being foremost,”⁸¹ the proud are obsessed with capturing the garland, in contrast to those persons who would not be intent on out-racing the person ahead if the way were easy.

Second, it is hard to see how those persons chiefly interested in glory would pursue knowledge and “Arts of Peace.” The gains from attaining even the most certain knowledge --i.e., science--are but “Small Power; because not eminent.” One must already understand science to some degree in order to appreciate it in others.⁸² Thus, science does little for one’s honour, and so those persons whose overriding passion is pride are not likely to be moved by the desire of leisure, from the love of arts.

Third, and most importantly, pride may override the fear of death or wounds. It might be objected that vainglory, of which pride is a form, is a weaker motivation than fear of death. Hobbes writes that rash attempts are made by the vainglorious, but that they retreat as soon as danger presents itself: “they will rather hazard their honour, which may be salved with an excuse; than their lives, for which no salve is sufficient.”⁸³ But the vainglory referred to in this passage is of the ostentatious sort which strikes fanciful young men and is mostly harmless. Pride, however, is made of harder stuff. It is vainglory magnified to the extent that it may give rise to rage and fury. Excess pride is madness, and madness may be resistant to the fear of death. The young women afflicted with a fit of madness--said to be “an act of the Diuel”--hanged themselves. It is true that what cured their madness was their honour, i.e., their shame at seeing the example of the stripped bodies of the hanged. But what if the madness were itself caused by an excess of pride? In particular, the vainglorious conceit of divine inspiration in a single person can, when multiplied, lead to “the Seditious roaring of a troubled Nation.”⁸⁴ In other words, individuals may risk sedition and therefore death or at least wounds if they hold the opinion of divine inspiration. Pride and religion are a particularly lethal combination.

Harmful Cultivation of the Seeds of Religion

Having discussed the various “manners” of human beings in society, including the antisocial component of pride, Hobbes’s comments on curiosity led him to consider the origins of religion in both pagan and Christian forms. On this subject, Milton traced paganism back to the rebellion in Heaven. The fallen angels, once godlike and princely, had their names

...blotted out and razed
 By their rebellion, from the Books of Life.
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
 Got them new names, till wand’ring o’er the earth,...
 By falsities and lies the greatest part
 Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
 God their Creator, and th’ invisible
 Glory of him that made them to transform
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
 And devils to adore for deities:
 Then were they known to men by various names,
 And various idols through the heathen world.¹⁵

According to this account, the pagan gods were rebel angels. False religion, in other words, is the work of Satan’s legions. Where, for Hobbes, are the origins of religion, pagan and Christian, to be found? How did his political concerns shape his account of religion in general compared to the purely critical depiction of heathen religion by Milton? What implications can we thus draw about the differences and similarities between paganism and Christianity for Hobbes?

The peculiar dangers of religion in the proud account at least in part for the fact that the chapter “Of Religion” is sandwiched between the discussion of manners and the depiction of the state of nature. It might appear that it would have been more logical if the difference of “qualities of man-kind that concern their living together in Peace, and Unity” were immediately followed by the chapter “Of the Naturall Condition of Mankind.” That is to say, having seen what manners are conducive to obedience and what lead to contention and quarrel, the next step would be to show the terrible consequences of such contention. Instead, Hobbes inserted a chapter on religion in between these two discussions. In fact,

chapter twelve shows that religion, while a form of great power, causes strife. Thus, if a link between religion and conflict can be established between chapters eleven and twelve, and if chapter thirteen is seen as showing the consequences of contention arising in part from the pride described in chapter eleven, then chapters eleven to thirteen may be read in such a way that we can make a coherent account of the link between pride and conflict rooted especially in religion.

It is possible for religion to be neutral vis-à-vis earthly peace and unity, but it is more likely to be used and abused for political purposes. At the end of chapter eleven, Hobbes contrasted natural religion, stemming from curiosity and science, with religion based on ignorance. It is the first place in the book where he mentioned natural religion. Hitherto, religion is depicted as a realm of fearful imagination. Here, in contrast, curiosity leads one to inquire into the causes of things, and then the causes of those causes, until a first cause is reached: God. We can neither imagine nor conceive of God by this means, but only believe in the one, eternal God.⁸⁶

Why is natural religion not considered before this point in Hobbes's *Leviathan*? It is undoubtedly less common than religion grounded on ignorance, and is thereby of less importance in an examination of human nature. After all, the knowledge of causes and consequences is attainable neither by natural sense and memory nor through experience, but by industry, method, and instruction. Science and therefore natural religion require more discipline of thought than most persons are accustomed to: most persons are "too busie in getting food, and the rest too negligent" to engage in reasoning, much less to understand rational deductions.⁸⁷ So why mention natural religion at all?

One reason might be that it serves as a contrast to the more common sort of religion, which has been exploited for political purposes. As mentioned above, over-active imaginations give rise to fearful dreams of spirits. Hobbes added here that with little or no causal inquiry, the fear arising from ignorance of what does good or harm to human beings will prompt them to imagine invisible powers, which become their gods. This "seed of

Religion” is cultivated by some so as to govern others and use their powers. Hobbes expanded upon these points in chapter twelve; but he wanted to emphasise in chapter eleven that of manners, i.e., “qualities of man-kind that concern their living together in Peace, and Unity,”⁸⁸ religion can be politically neutral or political significant, but that the latter sort is more often than not what human beings adhere to.

The potential for conflict based on religion originates in the very seeds of religion. The seeds of the kind of religion that is not based on proper causal inquiry are irrational. From his analysis in chapter twelve, it must be the case that by his description of religion from ignorance as involving “little, or no enquiry in to the naturall causes of things” he meant little or no *rational* inquiry into causes. Indeed, Hobbes was hardly flattering to human presumption when he wrote that the fruit of religion, and hence its seed, are found in humans alone among all other living creatures. For the seeds of religion originate from the ill-reasoned inquiry into causes and the “priviledge of Absurdity; to which no living creature is subject, but man onely.”⁸⁹

Why do most human beings inquire into causes? Such curiosity is not usually love of knowledge for itself. Rather, we seek to know the causes of the good and ill that befall us. We think that because something happens at a certain time and not another, it must have had some cause. Moreover, unlike other animals, which for Hobbes have little or no foresight and merely pursue satiety of desires from day to day, human beings remember antecedent and consequence, and thereby suppose the causes of things. True causes, however, are often not visible, so we may imagine causes or trust to the authority of others.⁹⁰ Thus, like all regulated trains of thought, such inquiry into causes is governed by the desire to produce like effects from like causes in order to secure objects of desire in the future. Humans are uniquely temporal beings. But such inquiry also leads them into error. After all, subsequence is not the same as consequence, so that the connection between events may be open to fancy; or worse, it may be unclear what event preceded the other, so that a person sees causes in what are really inconsequential events.

This combination of fear, desire, and error generates the seeds of religion. Fear in the form of anxiety over the future arises from the search for causes of one's good and evil fortunes. Ironically, foresight does not alleviate uncertainty over the future but heightens it. A person who seeks to avert future evil and secure future good will be perpetually engaged in efforts to ensure the causes of good fortune. These efforts are accompanied by perpetual fear of what may come, since many causes of future events are unknown. Hobbes compared this condition to that of Prometheus—literally, the “prudent man”—whose liver was devoured by day and repaired by night: “man, which looks too far before him, in the care of future time, hath his heart all the day long, gnawed by feare of death, poverty, or other calamity; and has no repose, nor pause of his anxiety, but in sleep.”⁹¹ The example is illuminating. Prometheus was punished in this way for introducing the secret of fire to humans. Similarly, the foresight which distinguishes humans from all other living beings, enabling them to secure themselves from future evil and to ensure future good, is punished with accompanying anxiety.

But are we truly spared in sleep? The imagination, as discussed above, is even more active in sleep than in waking life. It introduces an object of our perpetual fear. Hobbes suggested that we do not merely fear the future: we fear the unknown causes of evil fortune. Even Prometheus had his hungry eagle. Consequently, since these causes are unknown and often not visible, the imagination contrives invisible powers. Hobbes contrasted the feigning of such gods out of fear with the disinterested contemplation of the causes of natural bodies which leads the reasoner to the one God as eternal cause. The perpetual fear which gives rise to imagined invisible powers also diverts human beings from inquiring into causes other than those connected to their fortunes, thus hindering knowledge of the true religion. For our purposes, this contrast underscores the ignorance and delusion underlying pagan polytheism in particular, as well as any religion rooted in fear. Not surprisingly, then, fear and ignorance lead to other erroneous opinions: the invisible powers are imagined to be ghosts and apparitions of the same substance as what

we imagine our souls to be; they are thought to effect changes through (unconnected) events, e.g., things that bring good and bad luck; they are to be worshipped as are humans; and certain things are taken as prognostics, i.e., as signs of what is to happen in the future. From these four elements of the seed of religion have sprouted different ceremonies according to the different "Fancies, Judgements, and Passions of severall men..."⁹²

What are the political implications? Since such religion is awash in ignorance and absurdity, one might assume that its irrationality and diverse forms directly lead to conflict. But the case is not so simple, for Hobbes credited pagan religion with bolstering the political authority of the founders and legislators of pagan commonwealths. Now, Abraham, Moses, and Christ have cultivated the seed of religion according to God's command and guidance. That is to say, they took this seed of potentially erroneous belief and nevertheless fashioned the true religion out of it. In contrast, certain pagans have fashioned religions "according to their own invention." Despite this difference between truth and falsity, "both sorts have...[cultivated the seed of religion] with a purpose to make those men that relyed on them, the more apt to Obedience, Lawes, Peace, Charity, and civill Society." The respective commonwealths affected are different—the Kingdom of God versus earthly pagan commonwealths—but in both cases, religion bolsters political authority of some sort.⁹³

Thus, Hobbes seems both to have reproved and approved pagan religion. He listed the absurd pagan opinions fashioned from the seed of religion, from the prolific spirits inhabiting the heavens, the earth, and one's own garden; to the attribution of the causes of fortune to the gods; to oblations and false prognostications. At the same time, "the first Founders, and Legislators of Common-wealths amongst the Gentiles" pretended that their laws were received from the gods, that to disobey the laws was to displease the gods, and that ill fortune was attributable to neglect or wrongful performance of religious ceremonies and rituals. Mutiny was averted in times of misfortune by shifting the blame from the state to the gods. As a result, any religion could be tolerated—as with, for example, the

Romans—as long as it did not interfere with civil government.⁹⁴

According to this account, pagan-style civil religion would seem to be ideal for Hobbes's purposes. Such forms of religion engender obedience to the laws and keep a fickle, often unruly populace in line. Besides the absurdities of pagan polytheism, Hobbes could have decried the immoral acts of the gods in the Greek and Roman traditions; but he mentioned these acts without reproof or condemnation. The vices of the gods did not, in his view, constitute an obstacle to the political utility of religion. In fact, the attribution of the "Faculties, and Passions of men and beasts"⁹⁵ to the gods surely contributed to Roman toleration of the sundry religions throughout Europe and Asia, hence preventing the formation of religious schisms. Despite Milton's admiration for certain classical virtues (which will be discussed in chapter three), he regarded pagan religion as false superstitions spread by the enemies of God; whereas Hobbes, who rejected much of classical thought, saw some merit in ancient civil religion from the perspective of peace. If one were to compare Judeo-Christian monotheistic intolerance with Graeco-Roman polytheistic tolerance, it would seem that it is the former and not the latter that creates the conditions for civil wars of religion.

But the seed of religion is also a seed of change. Although "the Religion of the Gentiles was a part of their Policy," religion is an unstable basis for obedience. In the Kingdom of God, "the Policy, and lawes Civill, are a part of Religion," i.e., obedience is owed directly to God the ruler. In earthly commonwealths, however, obedience based on religion always entails faith in human beings. That is to say, in the former case, God is sovereign; whereas in the latter, the sovereign claims to derive its authority from God. Now, when faith is put in human beings, they may be doubted, making way for new cultivators of the seed of religion. Their wisdom, love, sincerity, and claims of divine revelation may be suspected, and consequently their religion suspected. Thus, the religious basis of obedience, unless backed up with "the fear of the Civill Sword," is thereby subject to being rejected.⁹⁶ In other words, cultivating the seed of religion to create doctrines,

rites, and ceremonies conducive to civil obedience is a risky venture, for such cultivators render themselves vulnerable to suspicion, particularly as incited by new cultivators, who are likely not interested in the peace of the commonwealth. If it is the civil religion which comes to be suspect, then its successor thrives (at least initially) on civil disobedience and conflict.

Indeed, this problem is not unique to pagan civil religion, for virtually all of Hobbes's examples of changes in religion were drawn from the Judeo-Christian world. When the miracles of the prophets were absent, the children of Israel lost faith; when the sons of Samuel acted unjustly, the people chose an earthly king over God; and the Catholic Church was abolished in several countries because of the "uncleanness" of priests and ignorance of Schoolmen. Moreover, the obvious self-interest of the clergy is not confined to Catholicism, but is also characteristic even of the most reformed churches.⁹⁷ Thus, not only were pagan civil religion and Jewish theocracy vulnerable to change, but also the fomenters of religious sedition, including the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Whenever human beings pose as God's ministers, there are inevitably others who seek to supplant their position by putting their religion under suspicion. If peace is to be ensured, religion cannot be the sole or principal basis of political obligation, for its seeds carry the potential for change and conflict.⁹⁸

The Pride of Some and the War of All against All

After his chapter on religion, Hobbes turned to the natural condition of humankind. In the state of nature, he argued, there are no effective means of enforcing standards of morality and justice. Milton, in contrast, maintained that human beings before the existence of society were effectively bound by the dictates of divine justice. The archangel Michael gives the fallen Adam a prospect of human history. Near the beginning of his long speech, he explains to Adam what the latter has just seen:

These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
Out of thy loins; th' unjust the just hath slain,

For envy that his brother's offering found
 From Heav'n acceptance; but the bloody fact
 Will be avenged, and th' other's faith approved
 Lose no reward, though here thou see him die,
 Rolling in dust and gore...."⁹⁹

Several points may be highlighted here. The first descendants of Adam are in conflict with each other, because of the piety of Abel and the envy and rage of Cain. Among fallen man, the unjust murder the just. Nevertheless, Cain's sin on earth will be met with divine punishment. Now, Hobbes's hypothetical state of nature is a war of everyone against everyone. In what ways does pride contribute to such conflict, as compared to the envy of Cain? What is the status of justice and divine vengeance in the war of all against all?

In light of chapter twelve, Hobbes's account "Of the *Natural Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery*" shows how a religious form of pride in particular can be a cause of war. His account not only reiterates the general insecurity of human beings because of a few proud individuals (as argued in chapter eleven), but also demonstrates how those possessed of religious pride would be little convinced that peace is desirable.

Both of these points can be seen throughout his account, which takes as its starting point the natural equality of human beings. Although there are differences in physical and mental abilities, the differences are not so great "that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he." In other words, any differences between individuals are insignificant because they are not enough to constitute a natural advantage in one individual over others. There are no naturally superior or inferior human beings. Physical equality is demonstrable by the fact that "the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others that are in the same danger with himselfe." Mental equality is harder to show, but Hobbes argued that superior wisdom is a result of industry, not natural ability, and is something that almost all persons think applies to themselves, and rather betrays their equality: "there is not ordinarily a greater signe of the equall distribution of any thing, then

that every man is contented with his share."¹⁰⁰ Of course, the fact that all persons over-estimate their abilities in relation to those of each other does not prove that they are thereby equal: even if all persons were to esteem themselves as superior to others in wisdom to the same degree, it might still be the case that some persons' over-estimations would be less exaggerated than others'. Nevertheless, the main point of this teaching is that all humans should be considered as naturally equal, for the differences are either insignificant or not ascertainable (since we are almost all prone to over-estimation to varying degrees).¹⁰¹

These arguments were meant to deflate pride; but certain proud individuals would dismiss this critique. Pride, after all, is the very breach of equality.¹⁰² Proud individuals considers themselves unequal to others and, as we saw with the dishonour consequent to this attitude, conflict may ensue. Hobbes countered that the proud individual's assumption of natural superiority is unfounded (because of insignificant differences in ability) or indemonstrable (because worth is relative, not absolute). Moreover, the quality of pride is itself a kind of equality, as we are almost all prone to over-estimation. Of course, this argument may be persuasive to the mildly vainglorious, but those persons possessed of the pride which is a kind of madness are not likely to be swayed. In particular, those persons who suppose themselves to be divinely inspired or to have some special connection to God would be convinced of their privileged positions in relation to others. These persons may grant that humans are generally equal by nature, but would generally see themselves as unequal by standards above nature. Pride as manifested in the conception of supernatural inequality would defy a teaching of natural equality.¹⁰³

In fact, vehement pride such as that of the religious zealots described above can contribute to the persistence of the war of all against all. Hobbes wrote that from the "equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our Ends." Two individuals who desire the same thing out of self-preservation or mere delight, but cannot both enjoy it, will "endeavour to destroy, or subdue one an other." He added that invaders may unite forces to dispossess a single person of his or her goods, life, and liberty, but that each

invader is under an equal threat from others.¹⁰⁴ Thus, the natural equality based on insignificant differences between human beings and the equal hope of conquest based on the propensity to self-overestimation leads, in the absence of an effective common power, to the insecurity of all. But this argument would be unpersuasive to the proud. Such insecurity presupposes that any person can be supplanted by others, either individually or united. Proud individuals who persist in their opinion of natural inequality, however, count themselves among the naturally stronger or smarter. Hence, would the strong not suppress the weak, guaranteeing the secure rule of superiors over inferiors? That is to say, if “there is no way for any man to save himselfe, so reasonable, as Anticipation; that is, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him,”¹⁰⁵ then surely the proponent of natural hierarchy will assert that there are certain persons who will naturally dominate others and secure their own positions by anticipation.

Hobbes, however, was aware that his argument at this point would fall on deaf ears in some cases—for an outbreak of violence in this environment of insecurity may result from the delusions of the proud. The natural condition of humankind is a “warre...of every man, against every man,” consisting not in perpetual battle but “in a tract of time, wherein the Will to contend by Battell is sufficiently known.” A state of war is one in which there is always the potential for battle among persons hostile to each other. Potential hostility exists when individuals must be on the offensive, i.e., invade others, just to secure their own lives and possessions. And such a situation arises partly because of pride: first, there are some who take “pleasure in contemplating their own power in the acts of conquest, which they pursue farther than their security requires”; and second, as we noted above and as Hobbes reiterated, some persons also insist that others value them as highly as they do themselves, and when they are inevitably dishonoured, act violently to “extort a greater value from...[their] contemners.” In other words, the innate desire of glory and pursuit of honour of some can cause everyone to act as a hostile antagonist to each other.¹⁰⁶

Hobbes wrote of the consequences of this state of war:

In such condition, there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently, no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by Sea; no commodious Building; no Instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the Earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.¹⁰⁷

This description corresponds to the manners disposing individuals to civil obedience in chapter eleven: desire of ease and sensual delight, desire of knowledge, and fear of death and wounds. Without industry, the ease and sensual delight of commodious living is unattainable. Nor can there be leisure to pursue knowledge and the arts when self-preservation necessitates constant augmentation of dominion. Finally, death and wounds are an ever-present reality in the war of all against all. As discussed above, however, the proud are not principally moved by desire of ease or by desire of knowledge, since they are interested in acts of glory and the attainment of great power, thus preventing the attainment of ease and knowledge by others who might desire them.

But what about the fear of violent death? Of the incommodities of such a war, death and wounds are the most forceful reminders of the need to obey a common power. And as Hobbes noted in chapter eleven, the vainglorious would rather risk their honour than their lives. Religion, however, can immunise the proud from fear of violent death. As argued above, the madness of pride may lead one to be unaffected by the fear of death: the Milesian women were cured of their suicidal fits only appealing to their honour. Now, can we see such immunity to this primal fear in the natural condition of humankind? Hobbes did not give such examples, one reason being that chapter thirteen is not meant to be an historical account: "I believe it was never generally so, over all the world." Indeed, he stated earlier in the book that all countries "in their beginnings" were like ancient Germany, divided into innumerable families, each headed by a lord and at continual war with each other. The perpetual contention of ancient Germany may resemble the natural state of war, but the family ties and arts of war (such as arms and scutcheons)¹⁰⁸ distinguish these historical conditions from the lack of industry and solitary life of human

beings in chapter thirteen. Rather, the natural condition of humankind can be seen in the “brutish manner” of life in various places of the world, especially in areas ravaged by civil war.¹⁰⁹

Thus, Hobbes’s own account of the English civil war may provide the best clues in our examination of pride, religion, and the fear of death in Hobbes’s state of nature. Hobbes’s views on the civil war will be explored in later chapters. At this point, we may note that religion for Hobbes was a leading cause of the conflict. In his dialogue on the civil war, the interlocutor B asks, “How could he [the king] miscarry, having in every county so many trained soldiers,...and divers magazines of ammunition in places fortified?” His teacher A replies that “the people were corrupted generally,” and that among the corrupters were so-called “ministers of Christ pretending to have a right from God to govern every one his parish and their assembly the whole nation.” Other religious seducers similarly claimed God-given rights against the king.¹¹⁰ The armies of the sovereign were no match for the supposed testimony of God. Milton, for example, quoted Seneca: “There can be slain / No sacrifice to God more acceptable / Than an unjust and wicked king.”¹¹¹ Although Milton also opposed many of these religious seducers, Hobbes lumped religious zealots and ambitious priests together insofar as they were, in his view, proud men willing to risk and even subvert the peace of the country because of what they imagined to be God’s will favouring their actions. In the case of seventeenth century England, a religious form of pride helped bring about and perpetuate a state of war.¹¹²

The passions that incline individuals to obey a common power may be countered by a religious form of pride. Furthermore, in such a case, their disobedience would be reinforced by the conviction that justice does not depend on a common power on earth. Although the passions that drive individuals to quarrel and then war with each other are destructive of life and comfort, Hobbes insisted that they are in themselves not sinful. After all, such passions are part of human nature, and so to make them sins would make being human sinful. Moreover, although actions resulting from them are sinful—since they

are contrary to the laws of nature (discussed below)—the laws of nature cannot be enforced in the absence of a sovereign. In effect, there is in the war of all against all, no right and wrong, or justice and injustice.¹¹³ Thus, to be proud and vainglorious is no sin outside of society, nor can actions taken out of pride be unjust. Of course, Hobbes's audience does live under a common power, so this argument is meant to persuade the reader of the undesirability of living in the state of nature: not only would your lives and possessions be subject to constant invasion, but there would not, strictly speaking, be any authority to judge murder, violence, and rapine as wrong—unless there were a common power not to protect alone but to protect in order to give justice and injustice, right and wrong concrete meaning.

Individuals possessed of religious forms of pride would deny such an account. In their view, it would not be the case that no actions can be unjust in the absence of a common earthly power: rather, there is an eternal, divine, and enforceable justice. That is to say, if one believes one is divinely inspired, and obeys divine commands which proceed from a higher authority than that of earthly sovereigns, then justice will exist as God exists. Similarly, in Milton's presentation of Cain and Abel, there was no human sovereign, but Cain's actions could still be punished as unjust by God. Priests and religious revolutionaries alike would (and did) reject Hobbes's distinction between internal obligation to God's law and external, unlimited right of self-preservation in the state of nature. Outside society, they argue, right and wrong thoughts and actions rest on a divine standard above the exigencies of earthly politics; inside society, then, right and wrong acts still depend on God, not on the sovereign. Self-preservation—which to Hobbes justified "Force, and Fraud" in the natural condition of humankind—would always be secondary to supernatural standards. While Hobbes's account makes it clear that pride in itself is no sin in the natural condition of humankind, religious forms of pride would cause one to deny the existence of a war of all against all in which no acts are unjust. An appeal to divine justice cannot be made independently of the requirements of earthly justice.¹¹⁴

Contractual Equality versus Seditious Pride

Against such seditious forms of pride, Hobbes insisted on the need for the equality of parties to the social contract. We saw that for James I, divine, natural, and human law were all agreed on the point that earthly government came from God via the institution of kings over the people, not from common agreement among the people themselves. This doctrine, he felt, was reflected in the oath of allegiance, in which the people swear to obey the king and the king swears to govern justly. The basis of government consists in reciprocal duties of two unequal parties—the people and their monarch—which they promise to God they will carry out. Milton argued that this conception was faulty: the essential equality between the king and the people, as well as the king's duty to serve the people should be emphasised. After all, Nimrod's chief sin against God lay in exalting himself above his brethren and arrogantly claiming dominion over them, thus removing "Concord and law of Nature from the earth" by his tyrannical rule.¹¹⁵ Given Hobbes's account of natural equality, how did he conceptualise the basis of civil society? In what ways did his views depart from the inequality implied by the Stuart oath of allegiance and from the fundamentally religious content of both the Stuart and Miltonian natural law?

The right of nature and the laws of nature as theorised by Hobbes can be seen as pointed attacks on pride as the breach of equality. Because there is no security and no right and wrong in the natural condition of mankind, one has a natural right to do anything which one judges to be conducive to one's own preservation. Right is a form of liberty from obligation, the absence of external impediments to use one's power to preserve one's life. The right of nature challenges claims arising from pride because it is the right of all to all things. By nature, one has an equal entitlement to everything one can get. But the natural right of all entails the secure possession of nothing, for there can be no property if what I call my own is just as much others', and others can legitimately take it if they can.¹¹⁶ Now, since this right of nature is consequent to the war of all against all, which in turn

arises because of the equality of ability and therefore of hope in attaining one's ends, pride will cause a person to deny natural equality and claim an unequal entitlement. That is to say, if by nature there are some who are superior to others, then they should have dominion, which means that they will have greater rights than the ruled. Those persons who feel superior to others will conclude that they have thereby a right to do and possess more than others. But there is no more expansive right than the right to all things: therefore, the inferior persons qua inferior would be, in the eyes of the proud, entitled to less than the right by nature described by Hobbes.¹¹⁷

Consequently, the first and second laws of nature can serve, among other things, to counter the effects of pride. Where every individual has a natural right to everything, the security of life cannot be assured for long. Therefore, reason dictates that we must seek peace, if possible, but otherwise to "seek, and use, all helps, and advantages of Warre" if there is no hope of obtaining peace. As our ends are governed by the desire to procure our own good, which is most fundamentally our lives, we should conclude that the means of attaining this end is peace, if possible. How is peace attainable, according to Hobbes? A *quid pro quo* is required:

That a man be willing, when others are so too, as farre-forth, as for Peace, and defence of himselfe he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe.

Thus, because the natural right to all things is egalitarian, the means of attaining peace must be on equal terms.¹¹⁸ That is to say, it is unreasonable to divest oneself of the right by nature unless all others do so, leaving the same liberty to all. For no-one would willingly lay down this right if others did not, or if some individuals retained more liberty than others.

If, however, it is not the case that all human beings have a natural right to everything--i.e., that some have a greater right than others--then this means of obtaining peace is unreasonable and unjust. The proud would believe that there would be no reason to lay down their rights, because their peace and defence are assured by nature. And it

would to that person be unjust for every individual's liberty against others to be the same, since they think that some are by nature (or even supernaturally) entitled to do and possess more. In other words, according to this reasoning, if there is no natural right of all to all, then the benefit of laying down one's right--the enjoyment of one's original right inasmuch as one does not hinder the rights of others¹¹⁹--would be an augmentation of the rights of the inferior at the expense of the rights of the superior. In contrast to the obligation not to hinder others--which would be injury--arising from the laying down of one's right, a doctrine of natural inequality would entail that a laying down of right on equal terms is an injury to those individuals deserving of greater rights than others. Consequently, by maintaining that peace depends on an equal laying down of one's right, Hobbes excluded inegalitarian claims which arise from the passion of pride.¹²⁰

Is pride therefore an intractable problem for peace? On the contrary, the possibility of a social contract entails the subjugation of pride. In a contract, the parties mutually transfer their rights. The kind of contract we are concerned with is the covenant, in which one or both parties involved promise to perform their parts hereafter.¹²¹ In the case of the second law of nature, individuals must promise to lay down their right to everything if others do so: performance is always promised for the future, because agreement to lay down this right is conditional on the assurance that the other parties will perform thereafter.

This assurance means that there must be a common power over the contracting parties, to whom the right of nature is transferred. Hobbes wrote that this power must have "right and force sufficient to compell performance," that given individuals' "ambition, avarice, anger, and other Passions," only the "feare of some coerceive Power" will ensure that promises are kept.¹²² Thus, it is reasonable to keep one's promises, because the existence of a coercive power removes the fear that others will break their promises. It is reasonable to seek peace but unreasonable and contrary to self-preservation to keep one's word without guarantee that others will do so, because such an action would render one prey to the designs of others. I can lay down my right to all things and not be a dupe,

making possible a state of peace in which life and possessions are secure, and industry and arts can be cultivated. I can thereby enter society and pursue my various goods.¹²³ We see, then, that unlike James I, the equality of contracting parties is logically prior to the institution of the sovereign, who is set up to enforce their covenant. In contrast to the reciprocal duties sworn to under God, the Hobbesian social contract is depicted in terms of the rationality of keeping promises which ensure self-preservation.

Reason, of course, is only attained by industry. How can a social contract be possible if no-one can be rational prior to the creation of the commonwealth? Again, we must keep in mind that the natural condition of mankind is an hypothetical, not historical, account. Indeed, the historical origins of society likely lie in acquisition rather than institution.¹²⁴ Hobbes endeavoured to convince the reader of the rationality of keeping promises (because it ultimately secures one's goods); but the outcome of keeping promises can only be guaranteed in a state of peace, which necessitates the coercive threat of the state. That is to say, although the law may only be maintained by teaching the grounds of obligation to subjects, not by "terrou of legal punishment",¹²⁵ a coercive power nonetheless makes promise-keeping reasonable because it can effectively compel performance in those persons who are not persuaded by rational argument alone.

How can such a power counter pride, which easily dispenses with reason and can in extreme cases override the fear of death—even by the hand of the sovereign? Hobbes remarked that he "that transferreth any Right, transferreth the Means of enjoying it, as farre as lyeth in his power." If the laying down of natural right depends on a coercive power, then the sovereign must hold the tools of coercion. Soldiers, courts, and the money and persons to maintain and administer them belong by right to the sovereign.¹²⁶ Thus, if pride causes individuals to neglect reason and break their word, resisting the fear of death and wounds from the sovereign, then it follows that there is nothing to be done but to employ the tools of coercion. The soldiers and the courts must force them to keep their word, or they will be banished or destroyed as enemies of the commonwealth. In contrast to Milton,

who depicted the proud Nimrod “Hunting (and men not beasts shall be his game) / With war and hostile snare such as refuse / Subjection to his empire tyrannous”,¹²⁷ Hobbes emphasised the need for coercive power to suppress pride.

One might object that pride could strengthen covenants, rather than make performance less likely. We noted above that pride, for the most part, is socially harmful. But in his discussion of the laws of nature, he again hinted at a beneficial form of pride, suggesting that “a Glory, or Pride in appearing not to need to break” covenants may hold individuals to their promises (and this quality may have belonged to Sidney Godolphin, who Hobbes praised in the Epistle Dedicatory as a man of rare virtue). Nevertheless, he added, this motivation is so rare--“a Generosity too rarely found to be presumed on, especially in the pursuers of Wealth, Command, or sensuall Pleasure; which are the greatest part of Mankind”—that the fear of the consequences of breaking faith is to be relied upon.¹²⁸

The reliance on fear when all other motivations fail and the rarity of social pride give rise to the question of oaths. As Hobbes noted, the general objects of fear are “The Power of Spirits Invisible” and “The Power of those men they shall therein Offend.” Because of the necessity of battle to perceive the latter, only the former might be conceived of as a basis of keeping promises to ensure peace. Thus, even before the institution of society, covenanting parties may swear by the God they fear to keep faith, or else bring down God’s vengeance upon them. But an oath, Hobbes maintained, “addes nothing to the Obligation. For a Covenant, if lawfull, binds in the sight of God without the Oath, as much as with it: if unlawfull, bindeth not at all; though it be confirmed with an oath.”¹²⁹ For James I, political obligation arises from people’s oath to obey the king, and from the king’s oath to rule justly. Milton condemned this doctrine as contrary to the supremacy of God’s people. Hobbes, in contrast, did not deny the rectitude of oaths under the Stuarts, but argued that oaths are no basis for political obligation. The duty to obey arises out of the covenant between equals, and is backed up by rational persuasion, or if necessary, by fear

of the sovereign—not by the fear of God.¹³⁰ By deducing right and law from the postulate of natural equality, Hobbes distanced himself both from the Stuart divine right of kings (the justification for proud kings) and the Miltonian divine right of peoples (the justification for proud revolutionaries).

The Proud Fool

Given this emphasis on contractual equality, in what ways is pride a breach of justice? Milton employed a religious standard. For example, the Seraph Abdiel voices his opposition to Satan in these words:

Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn
The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
That to his only Son by right endued
With regal sceptre, every soul in Heav'n
Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due
Confess him rightful King? unjust thou say'st
Flatly unjust, to bind with law the free,
And equal over equals to let reign,
One over all with unsucceeded power.¹³¹

Abdiel's assertions may appear in agreement with Stuart doctrine rather than Milton's revolutionary doctrine, since Abdiel reminds his opponent of the oath sworn by God to obey his son, while it is Satan who apparently champions the freedom and equality of the ruled. As we argued above, however, pious revolution must be distinguished from Satanic rebellion. The argument put forward in this passage is that God is the only rightful monarch of the world and the source of justice. Divine decree is the standard of justice by which all acts of God's subjects must be judged. Pride is sinful because it is contrary to the radical inequality of God to his creatures. On the basis of the Hobbesian social covenant, in contrast, justice is fundamentally linked to human equality alone. Regarding God as the only just sovereign is subversive of civil peace.

Justice for Hobbes is the third law of nature, which is "That men performe their Covenants made."¹³² As we saw above, keeping promises is essential to peace, but performance of covenants can only be ensured when there is a coercive power set over the

contracting parties. Also, it was argued that the social covenant entails an equal laying down of every one's natural right. What is the relation between the common power--i.e., the sovereign--and pride, which is a breach of equality?

In accordance with justice, there must be both equal coercion and equal rights. That is to say, along with subjects' convictions that obedience is right, there must be a coercive power which can "compell men equally to the performance of their Covenants, by the terrour of some punishment, greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant". Why should the compulsion be applied equally? The benefit of not keeping one's promise may appear to outweigh the consequences if there is an exemption from or mitigation of the threat of punishment. If humans are naturally equal, then an unequal enforcement of the social covenant would lead to an unequal hope of gaining from breach of covenant, as opposed to the conditions for an equal appreciation of the prudence of performance. But even "if Nature have made men unequal; yet because men that think themselves equal, will not enter into conditions of Peace, but Equall termes, such equalitie must be admitted."¹³³ Such equal terms entail that there must be equal compulsion to justice.

But equal terms also mean equal benefits from entering into civil society. Hobbes argued that individuals acquire "recompense" for abandoning their universal right: namely, property. The right to all things in the condition of mere nature means that no-one would securely possess anything, not even their own bodies. Before civil society, nothing is unjust, so that no-one holds an exclusive right over any thing; not even one's own life. Justice is the basis of property. As Hobbes wrote,

As it is necessary for all men that seek peace, to lay down certaine Rights of Nature..., so is it necessarie for mans life, to retaine some; as right to governe their owne bodies; enjoy aire, water, motion, waies to go from place to place; and all things else without which a man cannot live, or not live well.

Thus, the retention of such rights is the same as property, and depends on justice, which in turn is possible only when there is a common power to compel, if necessary, performance of covenants. But individuals will not enter civil society except upon equal terms.

Therefore, the proprietary rights over life and possessions which come into being only in civil society must be equal for all. It is a law of nature, then, "That at the entrance into conditions of Peace, no man require to reserve to himselfe any Right, which he is not content should be reserved to every one of the rest." The civil power must maintain equality of rights in the commonwealth.¹³⁴

Where does this promotion of equality leave the proud? Hobbes showed that the proud and arrogant, i.e., those persons who deny natural equality and equality of rights, thereby violate the laws of nature. In denying equality, one denies justice: individuals will perform on the social covenant only on equal terms. Furthermore, not to allow equal rights is to disobey the civil power. Pride is unjust: therefore, the stance of the proud may be compared to that of the fool that "hath sayd in his heart, there no such thing as Justice." The fool believes that it could not be against reason to make or break covenants, as they are conducive to his benefit. If one's end could be attained by what others call injustice, then such means should be considered good and reasonable, and so not against justice.¹³⁵ Pride will lead one to reason as does the fool: pride, after all, is the breach of equality and therefore of justice, as defined by Hobbes. The proud will think it good for themselves not to keep promises and thereby not to observe equality (of compulsion and rights). The fool's justification of his injustice is also a possible justification of the actions of the proud.

The purpose of linking the fool with the proud is to show that Hobbes's answer to the fool can be regarded as a response to the proud individuals who would justify their breach of equality as good and reasonable. Hobbes argued that it can never be against reason to keep promises where there is a civil power to enforce covenants. To do a thing that would be destructive to oneself is always unreasonable, notwithstanding that an accident may turn the act of breaking one's word to one's benefit. Furthermore, to break the covenant returns one to the condition of mere nature, and thus to the war of all against all. The fool cannot expect help from others because he has excluded himself from society: if others do not recognise that he has made himself an enemy to society, he is relying on

their ignorance and error, which cannot be foreseen or reckoned upon. In other words, even if one can commit injustice without suffering adverse consequences, it is still unreasonable to do so because the act contradicts what one had agreed to previously. It is an inconsistent act and cannot be rationally justified. One cannot undo what one promised to do before or give reasons for unjust action: Hobbes likened injustice to absurdity. One enters into civil society for one's self-preservation: by committing injustice, one excludes oneself from society and acts for one's own destruction.¹³⁶

The proud in society who seek to exempt themselves from equal compellance and equal rights therefore commit an absurdity, of sorts. A proud individual acts, as Hobbes wrote of the fool, "against the reason of his preservation."¹³⁷ Because of the natural equality of individuals, or at least the universal opinion of not being inferior to others, peace is attainable only if equality is acknowledged, through coercion and rights, in civil society: by their disobedience to the common power and their claims of unequal rights, the proud cast themselves out of society and into a state of war against others. Pride is not only one of the causes of war in the condition of mere nature but also amounts to an attitude of war in society. From the standpoint of justice, then, pride, which Hobbes earlier characterised as a form of madness (because it is excess vainglory), is, in relation to others in civil society, an irrational denial of equality and hence a self-destructive passion.

This discussion is particularly relevant to the problem of religious strife. The fool has no fear of God, "for the same Foole hath said in his heart there is no God." But Hobbes alluded to some persons who would act as would the fool, but for different reasons. That is to say, like the fool, they would break covenants, and worse, incite rebellion to attain sovereignty; not, however, because there is no justice in the sense that earthly benefits may be reaped from injustice, but rather because there is a higher justice such that otherworldly benefits are to be reaped from breaking earthly covenants. Such persons "will not have the Law of nature, to be those Rules which conduce to the preservation of mans life on earth; but to the attaining of an eternall felicity after death". On

this basis, they consider a breach of covenant just and reasonable, to the point that they “think it a work of merit to kill, or depose, or rebell against, the Sovereigne Power constituted over them by their own consent”—or, as he put it in the Latin version of *Leviathan*, they think it a work of “piety to pursue, depose, and kill their kings, under the pretext of a war of religion.” When the object of the laws of nature is not self-preservation, but rather service to God which is thought to entail opposition to the civil power—the position of Milton and other revolutionaries in Hobbes’s time—religion becomes a pretext for rebellion.¹³⁸

Hobbes argued that the pious rebels err in their divine justification for earthly obedience. For we cannot have “naturall knowledge” of the afterlife and its rewards. Instead, one can only believe another person who claims to possess supernatural knowledge, or who knows another with such claims. Therefore, breach of covenant cannot be justified by reason or nature. Now, even if they were to grant this point, religious revolutionaries would maintain that supernatural law can be known by scripture. This was certainly the view of Milton. Hobbes countered that scripture “repeatedly prescribes obedience to kings and keeping pacts.”¹³⁹ Hobbes upheld the rationally derived consequences of seeking self-preservation—the laws of nature that prescribe the keeping of covenants—against mere faith in other persons or (what he regarded as) erroneous interpretation of scripture.

Thus, those persons who maintain that breach of covenant is commanded by God are motivated by a religious form of pride. To say that one knows about the afterlife is itself an assertion that one is supernaturally superior in knowledge to others. More importantly, a supernatural justification of breach of covenant is tantamount to claiming that one possesses a supernatural right against the civil power—a pretext for sedition, and therefore contrary to the equal rights of other persons in the commonwealth. In other words, the pious rebel uses (or rather, abuses) religion to violate the tenth law of nature, which follows the ninth precept against pride: that every member of civil society is to retain

the rights to all things necessary to comfortable self-preservation,¹⁴⁰ which cannot be enjoyed in civil war. For Hobbes, the laws of nature must trump the supposed supernatural laws of the proud. A zealous stance akin to that of Milton's Abdiel, servant to God alone—"unmoved, / Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,"¹⁴¹--is a challenge to civil sovereignty.

Consequently, the laws of nature are deduced from nature before they are called God's laws. Since we cannot know by nature what God commands, a deduction of what is good and evil must proceed from the examination of human nature. Hobbes's examination reveals that appetite is the rule of good and evil outside civil society, which leads to "Disputes, Controversies, and at last War." Comfortable self-preservation can only be assured when there is a common rule of good and evil, which comes about with a social contract; and the social contract requires that individuals perform what they have covenanted to do, that they retain equal rights, and they are equally faced with the threat of punishment if they break their promises. Thus, Hobbes's teaching against pride proceeds, as it were, from the ground up: it begins with the nature of human beings, from which is derived natural equality and the laws of nature, which, among other things, entail recognition of such equality in civil society. Only after deriving these "Conclusions, or Theoremes concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of" human beings did he say that they can be considered "as delivered in the word of God."¹⁴² Pride is not evil because it is a sin against God, but because it is contrary to peace. Nature, in Hobbes's science of politics, is prior to God, which means that God's laws must be consistent with earthly peace. Milton's view that divine justice may dictate political revolution was for Hobbes a sanction for injustice. One has no grounds for asserting that God can ever be served through political resistance: such a doctrine is an expression of pride.¹⁴³

“Non est potestas...”

The social contract requires a sovereign authority to enforce performance of covenants made. Hobbes’s account, as we shall see presently, is quite different from that of Stuart theorists. To illustrate this point, the following sonnet encapsulates the instructions of James I to his son Henry, concerning the authority of kings as granted by God:

God giues not Kings the stile of *Gods* in vaine,
For on his Throne his Scepter doe they swey:
And as their subjects ought them to obey,
So Kings should fear and serue their God againe:
If then ye would enjoy a happie raigne,
Obserue the Statutes of your heauenly King,
And from his Law, make all your Lawes to spring:
Since his Lieutenant here ye should remaine,
Reward the iust, be stedfast, true, and plaine,
Represse the proud, maintayning aye the right,
Walke alwayes so, as euer in his sight,
Who guardes the godly, plaguing the prophane:
And so ye shall in Princely vertues shine,
Resembling right your mightie King Diuine.¹⁴⁴

The divine right of kings entails God’s authorisation of sovereign authority and the consequent duty to govern according to God’s law. The king is God’s lieutenant and must accordingly “Represse the proud” who would challenge his God-given authority. Milton clearly rejected these conceptions of authority and pride. Superficially, Hobbes’s teaching seems much closer to Stuart absolutism. Given the apparent resemblance between the Hobbesian king of the proud and Stuart monarchs (the “proud kings” of Milton’s polemics), in what ways did Hobbes depart from Jacobean divine right?

Let us begin with the necessity for sovereign authority in Hobbes’s theory. The laws of nature cannot in themselves subjugate pride and other antisocial passions. It is all very well to demonstrate how actions caused by these passions are contrary to peace and therefore how they can be considered to be against God’s law, but to be effective, the laws of nature must be enforced by a civil power which can subdue the self-destructive passions of humanity:

For the Lawes of Nature (as *Justice, Equity, Modesty, Mercy,* and (in summe) *doing to others, as*

wee would be done to) of themselves, without the terrour of some Power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our Naturall Passions, that carry us to Partiality, Pride, Revenge, and the like. And Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all.

But how is the common power to be chosen? Hobbes wrote that authority comes from others. That is to say, a person who represents another acts by authority of the represented. Each one represented is therefore the author of, i.e., authorises, the actions of the representative person. In the political context, it means that authority to govern comes from the consent of the governed. This idea runs counter to claims that authority is innate. That is to say, proud individuals over-value themselves and hence would declare authority over others by reason of their innate superiority. A common power instituted for the sake of ensuring peace and comfortable living is given authority by the governed, in contrast to those “that thinke themselves wiser, and abler to govern the Publique, better than the rest; and these strive to reforme and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into Distraction and Civile warre.” Because peace requires the acknowledgement of equality, the civil power must be authorised by the people it represents. That is to say, since almost all human beings are equal in holding a “vain conceipt of..[their] owne wisdom,” the claim to authority by virtue of innate superiority to govern could be made by all, leading to war.¹⁴⁵

What about authority from God? To Hobbes’s conception of authority, James I would object that a divine right to govern trumps the authorisation of the ruled. Now, Hobbes allowed that God may authorise the actions of a representative person. He cited three cases where God has been “personated”: by Moses, who ruled the Israelites in God’s name; by Jesus, who brought all the nations into the kingdom of his Father, and thereby acted as a sort of emissary; and by the Holy Ghost, which spoke and acted in the Apostles and came from God. Could it not be the case, then, that the authority to rule over a multitude should come from God, in that the sovereign would, like Moses, rule over God’s people in the name of God? In that case, the sovereign would be duty-bound to act in accordance with God’s law, while God might conceivably authorise another person or

persons to represent him against a disobedient sovereign. Such a conception of sovereign authority could provide a justification for the actions of those who, as Hobbes noted, believe that breach of covenant and rebellion can serve God's purposes, so that the pious rebel attains an "eternall felicity after death."¹⁴⁶ Both James I and Milton were in agreement that sovereign authority comes from God, though only the latter saw in this a legitimate pretext for popular revolution.

Hobbes, as we saw, countered that supernatural law cannot be contrary to the laws of nature, which means that only a "ground up" deduction from human nature can yield knowledge of good and evil and of God's laws. Similarly, God's personation in the sovereign can only be known consequent to the authorisation of a multitude. A commonwealth is generated when each individual agrees to

conferre...[his or her] power and strength upon one Man, or upon Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, unto one Will; which is as much as to say, to appoint one man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person; and every one to owne, and acknowledge himselfe to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Person, shall Act, or cause to be Acted, in those things which concerne the Common peace and Safetie...

Each member of the commonwealth authorises all the actions of the sovereign power thus instituted by giving up his or her right to all things. The multitude achieves unity in one sovereign person, which Hobbes calls not only the commonwealth, but also "that great LEVIATHAN, or rather...that *Mortall God*, to which wee owe under the *Immortall God*, our peace and defence."¹⁴⁷ Thus, it is only after the equal transferral of natural right to the sovereign that the commonwealth is considered as a mortal God under the immortal God. The sovereign represents God to the multitude *because* the multitude have authorised the sovereign, not the other way around.¹⁴⁸

Hobbes thereby reversed the notion that God authorises the sovereign, who is thereby granted authority over the people. By so doing, he both departed from the doctrine of divine right and opposed the Miltonian argument that authority over others—and against a sinful sovereign—is received from God. Indeed, "there is no Covenant with God, but by mediation of some body that representeth Gods Person; which none doth but Gods

Lieutenant, who has the Sovereignty under God.” In this sense, the commonwealth that is also a mortal God is the Leviathan, “the King of all the children of pride.”¹⁴⁹ The Leviathan has the right and force to subdue the religious pride which would drive individuals to deliver what they imagine to be God’s punishment upon the sovereign. Thus, Hobbes’s account of sovereign authorisation differed from that of both James I and Milton. Although, like Milton, he stressed the centrality of popular consent, and like James I, sought to counter the claims of proud rebels, the priority of individual consent and authorisation to divine representation effectively removes God from the derivation of political authority.

The Sovereign, the Revolutionary, and God

Given the sharp contrasts between Hobbes’s political teaching and Milton’s account of pride, sin, and rebellion, we can understand what Hobbes meant in writing that some have thought it a work of “piety to pursue, depose, and kill their kings under the pretext of a war of religion.”¹⁵⁰ Milton’s political doctrine justified the acts of what in Hobbesian terms would be called a pious rebel. Our reading of *Paradise Lost* helped us to discern the justifications for religiously based strife which Hobbes responded to and sought to discredit. But Hobbes’s critique was not a conservative defence of Stuart absolutism. For James I, God sanctions the sovereign’s rule over the people. For Milton, earthly sovereigns are as equally subject to God as the people. For Hobbes, in contrast, sovereigns answer to none but God because of the consent of their subjects. Pride in all of their accounts is the breach of the proper relationship between subject, sovereign, and God.

Hobbes accused pious revolutionaries like Milton of pride, according to his non-religious derivation of the laws of nature. We cannot know God’s supernatural rewards, and scripture commands obedience and promise-keeping. Those persons who maintain the contrary abuse religion to breach covenants, thus violating the law of nature which commands us to acknowledge other members of the commonwealth as equals by nature,

because breaking promises in civil society is an assertion of greater right than those possessed by all others. Pride is the breach of equality, not the resistance to the divine right of government. Milton's response would be that pride is contrary to freedom, not to regal divinity or the equality of contracting parties. The sovereign who serves his baser appetites by oppressing the people is truly proud. Therefore, disobedience to such a king is contrary to pride when done for our greatest freedom, to serve reason and God. The Hobbesian sovereign subdues pride by enforcing covenants made; the Miltonian revolutionary opposes pride by overcoming tyranny.

These opposing views of pride reflect different standards by which to judge political regimes. Recognition of natural equality is, for Hobbes, just because it ensures peace. Human beings who are an equal threat to each other will only give up their natural rights to all things if they retain equal rights to comfortable self-preservation. Pride, the breach of equality, leads to war. Hence, God, who commands peace, must forbid acts motivated by pride. For Milton, in contrast, pride is wrong because it is always and ultimately a sin committed against God. Eve, Nimrod, and the rest of humanity are part of Satan's revolt when they act out of pride. In the case of Nimrod, dominion over his brethren is wrong because God is the only true master over free persons. Hobbes considered pride to be a breach of God's laws (i.e., the laws of nature) because it disturbs earthly peace; Milton considered proud dominion over one's fellows to be sinful because it is an affront to heavenly rule.

Furthermore, earthly sovereigns are authorised on untraditional yet divergent bases for the two thinkers. The acts of the Hobbesian sovereign are authorised not directly by God, but by those individuals the sovereign represents, i.e., each member of the commonwealth. The sovereign thus instituted can only then be considered as God's representative to the multitude. The sovereign is, of course, subject to God, but since no one holds a higher earthly authority (the multitude have authorised the sovereign to unite all their powers in him/her/them), the sovereign alone answers to God. We are not to judge

the sovereign as having sinned against God because we have authorised a mortal god as supreme judge on earth. The sovereign will decide what it means to sin against God; and if in error, the sovereign will suffer for it in the next life. Milton, however, regarded all sovereign authority as coming from God. Even tyrants have authority from God, although their abuse of it is eventually punished by God. Can the people hold the sovereign accountable for his sins against God? In *Paradise Lost*, Milton did maintain that we can judge the sovereign's actions. After all, as Michael tells Adam, it is possible to have an inner paradise,¹⁵¹ an inner realm of faith and conscience which is closer to God than any sovereign power. Good and evil are within us; not, as with Hobbes, determined by the laws of the commonwealth. Thus, true Christians are God's people over and against proud kings. Hobbes's account of pride as the breach of equality discredits all religious pretexts for rebellion. Milton's account is a recipe for political resistance on behalf of liberty, in the service of the higher powers.

Finally, is Hobbes's conception of the sovereign as the king of the proud an advocacy of proud kings, as Milton might maintain? We shall see in the following chapters that Hobbes also opposed proud kings, not by justifying rebellion but through a certain conception of sovereign duty and of civil law. We may restate the point, however, that since authority in Hobbes's conception is based not on religious but on rational grounds, the Hobbesian sovereign cannot be seen as divinely ordained master over the people. The extent of sovereign power necessitated by the threat of anarchy may be considerable, but the sovereign is, *qua* instituted by the people, supposed to ensure equal rights to comfortable self-preservation.¹⁵² James I felt that the sovereigns would rule justly because they had sworn to do so by God—an insufficient check on tyranny, in Milton's view. Hobbes, in contrast, appealed not to divine justice but to political prudence. The Hobbesian sovereign may be accountable to God alone, but denial of such rights, to the point that there is great inequality of subjects, is dangerous and imprudent, as it risks incurring the sedition of the oppressed.¹⁵³ Thus, Hobbes maintained, on the one hand, that

sovereigns have the duty not to oppress—since the role of the sovereign is, after all, to ensure peace—while denying that subjects have the right to resist their sovereigns, which would lead to war. Despite this caveat on proud kings, Hobbes would not allow revolutionaries like Milton to use religion to label their sovereigns as such, and thus lead the commonwealth into the worst condition possible: civil war. A Miltonian could justifiably counter that his critique of pride is still weighted too heavily in favour of excessive authority. We shall examine other aspects of Hobbes's and Milton's political thought to see whether or not the king of the proud is necessarily a proud king.

 Notes to Chapter Two

¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 28, 166-167 (Hobbes's emphasis).

² John Milton, *A Defence of the People of England*, in *Areopagitica and Other Political Writings of John Milton* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999), preface, 100.

³ Milton, *Defence*, 100; and Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 2.

⁴ J.N. Figgis writes that in "the *True Law of Free Monarchies*...is to be found the doctrine of Divine Right complete in every detail." John Neville Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 138.

⁵ King James VI and I, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, in *Political Writings*, ed. by Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 63-65 and 76-77. See also "A Speech to the Lords and Commons of the Parliament at White-Hall, on Wednesday the XXI. of March. Anno 1609," in *Political Writings*, 181. As Paul Christianson points out, not only did the oath fit "into the assumptions of a patriarchal society, [but] the image of father and children [also] resonated with language commonly used to describe the relationship of God with his people." Christianson, "Royal and Parliamentary Voices on the Ancient Constitution c.1604-1621," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 73.

⁶ James I, *Trew Law*, 72-75. Francis Oakley maintains that the king's comments must be viewed in the context of the distinction between "absolute" and "ordinary" powers of God and kings. Just as the omnipotent God condescends to bind himself to the order of the universe, the king bind himself to his promise to govern by law, even though his authority over subjects is absolute. Oakley, *Omnipotence, Covenant, and Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 93-118. Regardless of whether or not James had this parallel in mind, Oakley's interpretation does not challenge the concept of the king's supremacy under God and derived from God.

⁷ James I, *Trew Law*, 63, and 79-81; and "A Speech," 181 and 183-184.

⁸ James I, *Trew Law*, 72; and *Triplici Nodo, Triplex Cunaeus*, in *Political Writings*, 92. As J.P. Sommerville writes: "Kings, James argued, derived their powers immediately from God, and not from the people. His central intellectual concern throughout his career was to protect the rights of kings everywhere against the assaults of Jesuits and Puritans." Sommerville, "James I and the Divine Right of Kings," in *Jacobean Court*, 59.

⁹ Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, in *Political Writings of John Milton*, 61.

¹⁰ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Complete Poems*, ed. by John Leonard (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2000) 1.25-26. As Christopher Hill points out, scholars have questioned whether or not "Milton had intentions other than his professed aim of justifying the ways of God to men." Some have argued that such intentions may not have even been consciously known to Milton himself. Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 354-355 (Hill's emphasis). In my brief remarks on pride in *Paradise Lost*, I shall take Milton at his word and interpret accordingly.

¹¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1.1.

¹² For example, see William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), plate 6.

¹³ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 3.103-106 and 126-127.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.661-665, 763, and 794-797.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.822-825.

¹⁶ Roger Lejosne remarks that Abdiel's argument in the quoted passage resembles that of Salmasius, Milton's royalist opponent, but rightly argues that absolute monarchy in heaven is complementary with republican revolution on earth. Lejosne, "Milton, Satan, Salmasius, and Abdiel," in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. by D. Armitage, A. Himy, and Q. Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 106-117.

¹⁷ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 5.772-777.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.844-845 and 864.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.164-169.

²⁰ "It was a recurrent idea in Milton that vice and effeminacy render a majority of the people unfit for liberty, and that tyrants not only will take advantage of it, but will encourage debauchery in the people." Lejosne, "Milton, Satan," 113.

²¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 6.174-176, 6.179-181, and 5.791-793.

²² As Northrop Frye argues, Satan resembles not a pious revolutionary but an impious rebel: "Satan is a rebel, and into Satan Milton has put all the horror and distress with which he contemplated the egocentric revolutionaries of his time..." Frye, *The Return of Eden* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 28. The contrast between Abdiel and Satan is in some respects akin to that of Milton and the Presbyterians, who in his view ultimately betrayed the cause of liberty in the civil war.

²³ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 9.148-151 and 174-178.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.703-712.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.421-423 and 9.652-654.

²⁶ Hill writes: "What God prohibited was knowledge of good and evil (the knowledge of the gods) but the attempt to attain it by magic, by short cuts. In the end humanity would win it the hard way, and to that extent the Fall was fortunate." Hill, *English Revolution*, 379. It is debatable whether or not Milton was referring to magic when writing of the temptation of Eve, but Hill's remark highlights the fact that the knowledge itself is not sinful, since shunning evil and seeking the good is the path to redemption. Perhaps it is Eve's intention and purpose which are sinful: to become as a god, not to know how to pursue the good (which would have been redundant because of her natural goodness).

²⁷ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 9.1073-1080.

²⁸ As Frye puts it: "After the fall, the hierarchy implanted by God is not merely upset, but reversed. Appetite now moves into the top place in the human soul...When appetite is perverted into passion, the drives of sex and hunger are perverted into lust and greed." Frye, *Return of Eden*, 68-69.

²⁹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 12.24-29 and 36-62.

³⁰ "The appearance of Nimrod...represents the coming into human life of the demonic, of the ability to worship devils, of turning to Satan for one's conception of the kingdom and the power and the glory, instead of to God." Frye, *Return of Eden*, 23.

³¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 12.86-90, 69-71, and 35.

³² *Ibid.*, 12.95-101.

³³ *Ibid.*, 12.429-431, 533-549, and 582-587.

³⁴ Leonard's introduction to Milton, *Paradise Lost*, xxiv.

³⁵ Hill also situates the poem in its historical context: "Milton's revolution had been defeated, and he could see no forces in society capable of reviving it. But that was not a reason for giving up the fight in this world, for postponing hope until the after-life." Hill, *English Revolution*, 412.

³⁶ Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, trans. by Elsa M. Sinclair (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936); Macpherson, *Possessive Individualism*, esp. 35-46; F.S. McNeilly, *The Anatomy of Leviathan* (London: Macmillan, 1968); and Gabriella Slomp, *Thomas Hobbes and the Political Philosophy of Glory* (Houndmills, UK: Macmillan Press, 2000).

³⁷ Tom Sorell, *Hobbes* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), esp. 34-37; and Joshua Mitchell, "Hobbes and the Equality of All Under the One," *Political Theory* 21 (1993), 78-100.

³⁸ See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 71.

³⁹ A.P. Martinich remarks that "I do not detect any skepticism or cynicism toward religion in this frontispiece"; the symbols of power over religion indicate "an episcopal system such as that of the Church of England." Martinich, *Two Gods*, 362-367. Considering that the Anglican clergy were as much embroiled in religious controversy as other sects, this supposed endorsement of Episcopalianism is questionable.

⁴⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ep. ded., 75. Gabriella Slomp suggests that the tribute to Godolphin may indicate the utility of eloquence in persuading readers, but rightly adds that rhetoric in Hobbes can at best only aid his rationally derived teaching. Slomp, *Philosophy of Glory*, 114.

⁴¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ep. ded., 75; and intro., 82-83. For example, as M.M. Goldsmith remarks, "[d]elight in sensual pleasures must tend to exclude to some extent delight in the imagination which would lead to glory, honor riches, or knowledge. Conversely, desire for riches, honor, knowledge, or other power must involve preferring other delights, either future or imagined, to immediate sensual delight." Goldsmith,

Hobbes's Science of Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 70.

⁴² Hobbes, *De Cive*, trans. and ed. by Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), preface, 10.

⁴³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, introduction, 82.

⁴⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, introduction, 81; and chap. 32, 409-410 (Hobbes's emphasis).

⁴⁵ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 4.799-809.

⁴⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 1, 86. Richard Tuck persuasively links Hobbes and Descartes with respect to the view that the external world, which cannot be truly known, is distinct from internal phenomena, which can be understood. The stress on certain internal knowledge and fallible representation was both a departure from the old sceptical view that we can know nothing and the seed of a new form of scepticism about the external world with which both thinkers had to grapple. Tuck, *Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 15-16.

⁴⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 2, 88-89. As David Johnston notes, "[t]hroughout the first chapters of *Leviathan* on human nature, Hobbes is fascinated - almost obsessed - with all of the ways in which human imagination, speech, and reason can go wrong." Johnston, *Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 102-103.

⁴⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 2, 90-93.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 92-93. Stephen Holmes points out that the contribution of the universities to such sedition is also a running theme throughout *Behemoth*. See Holmes, "Political Psychology," 130-132.

⁵⁰ This formulation reverses that of Charles D. Tarlton's "The Creation and Maintenance of Government: A Neglected Dimension of Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Political Studies* 26 (1978), 307-327, and Eldon J. Eisenach's "Hobbes on Church, State, and Religion," *History of Political Thought* 3 (1982), 216-243. It is the emphasis on reasons for obedience that marks Hobbes's departure from traditional conceptions of sovereignty, which relied on religion as the primary or even sole basis of authority. See chapter four for a discussion of Hobbes's treatment of revealed religion.

⁵¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chaps. 2-3, 93-96.

⁵² *Ibid.*, chap. 3, 95. Thus, the distinction between ordered and disordered thought which Tuck highlights (*Hobbes*, 46-47) depends on passionate design rather than simply coherence. Disordered thought need not be characteristic only of sleepers or residents of Bedlam.

⁵³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, conclusion, 728.

⁵⁴ "Hobbes's preoccupation with the sources of human irrationality clashes rudely with the rational-actor approach that many commentators project into his works." Holmes, "Political Psychology," 125.

⁵⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 3, 97-98.

⁵⁶ Cf. Holmes, "Political Psychology," 122: "The struggle for sovereignty is fought on a battlefield of wholly unreal imaginings or rationally unjustifiable assumptions about the future." Holmes's statement is as true of *Leviathan* as it is of *Behemoth*.

⁵⁷ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 4.1006-1010.

⁵⁸ See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 5, 115-116.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, 140 (Hobbes's emphasis).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, 118-119.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 120-121. The relativity of good and evil outside society is, as Tuck points out, due to the absence of a "common moral language." The "cause of discord" is conflict over names rather than "simple conflict over wants." Tuck, *Hobbes*, 55-56.

⁶² One might question if such a link ought to be sought at all. Strauss, for example, does not really consider the question of religion in his remarks on vainglory in Hobbes (*Philosophy of Hobbes*, 8-29). Yet, even according to his own analysis - which pits vanity or pride against the fear of death - the possibility of a fear of spirits and eternal punishment greater than the fear of death should not be neglected.

⁶³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 6, 123-125 (Hobbes's emphasis).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 121-123.

⁶⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 6, 124; and chap. 7, 131-134. Rational discourse cannot be governed by religion according to the definition in chapter six. In chapter eleven, Hobbes suggested that rational discourse can end in the thought of a divine cause, God; but for our purposes, it is the non-rational basis for religion that pertains to the problem of pride. This issue is discussed below.

⁶⁶ According to Strauss, "[v]anity is therefore the final reason of incapacity to learn, of prejudice and superstition, as well as of injustice." Strauss, *Philosophy of Hobbes*, 26. My contention is that vainglory is one source of error, but not the only source. Strauss's over-emphasis on vanity is accompanied by an over-emphasis on fear of death as the sole contrary passion to vanity. Thus, he maintains that while vanity is the only source of error, fear of death is the only source of science (27). But curiosity, the desire "to know why, and how" is a "Lust of the mind," not necessarily rooted in fear. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 6, 124.

⁶⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 8, 134-136 and 138 (Hobbes's emphasis). David Johnston argues that Hobbes emphasises the "contrast between ignorance, superstition, and magic on the one hand and knowledge, reason, and science on the other." Johnston, *Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 104. But Johnston's point is arguably too schematic; that superstition and science are on the extreme ends of intellectual vice and virtue, between which lie fallible but not necessarily erroneous forms of opinion and belief. Furthermore, Hobbes preferred simple ignorance to complex error, and distinguished science from less rational forms of knowledge, such as history.

⁶⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 8, 139-140. Slomp writes: "We may presume that between these two extremes [of mad glory and melancholy] lies the entire range of human character." Slomp, *Philosophy of Glory*, 86. But one might just as easily view madness and dullness as the extremes of character for Hobbes.

⁶⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 6, 123; and chap. 8, 139-140. Goldsmith persuasively argues, contra Strauss, that vanity alone is not a sufficient cause of contention. Goldsmith, *Science of Politics*, 74. But Goldsmith does not distinguish mere vanity from antisocial pride, which can be a cause of contention.

⁷⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 8, 140-143.

⁷¹ Hobbes's emphasis on the dangers of religion reflected his view that "[m]ind-mastery and custom are sources of power sharply distinct from the capacity to employ force." Holmes, "Political Psychology," 139.

⁷² Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 2.5-10.

⁷³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 6, 123; and chap. 15, 207. It might be the case that such an individual would be the first to perform on the social contract. But he or she would be a fool for doing so, because the "Cardinall Vertues" of the state of nature are "Force, and Fraud" (chap. 13, 188). See Goldsmith, *Science of Politics*, 79-82.

⁷⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 10, 150-151 (Hobbes's emphasis).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 151-152 (Hobbes's emphasis).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 152 and 156 (Hobbes's emphasis).

⁷⁷ C.B. Macpherson describes the valuation set by others as a "market in power." See Macpherson, *Possessive Individualism*, 37-39. The proud, in these terms, reject the market valuations of themselves as dishonourable.

⁷⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 11, 160-161.

⁷⁹ Macpherson persuasively argues against the view of Strauss that "Hobbes (inconsistently) conceived the striving of limitless power to be a natural, innate appetite of man as man." Instead, the ceaseless desire of power is "an innate striving in some men and an acquired behaviour in others." See Macpherson, *Possessive Individualism*, 42-45.

⁸⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 11, 161-162.

⁸¹ Hobbes, *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. by J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), chap. 9, 59. Goldsmith argues that "the similarity of life to a race should not be pressed too far. A race is a simplified model of human activity; one of the simplifications it imposes is the restriction of all activity to continuous movement in a single, desired direction, viz., toward the finish line." Goldsmith, *Science of Politics*, 76. But in Hobbes's race of life, there is no finish line. The point of the metaphor is arguably not direction and destination, but rather continual motion and contention: getting ahead of others is more important than actually going anywhere.

⁸² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 10, 151.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, 163-164.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 8, 141-143.

⁸⁵ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1.362-375.

⁸⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 11, 167. Tuck writes: "We can deduce from the existence of...[mental images] something of the general character of the world...but we can know with certainty nothing else. Hobbes's fundamental claim about God was that it is absolutely impossible to form such a mental image of him." Tuck, *Hobbes*, 77.

⁸⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 5, 115-116; chap. 8, 138; and chap. 15, 214.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 11, 160 and 167-168.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 5, 113; and chaps. 11-12, 168. Absurdity, for Hobbes, is "senseless Speech."

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 12, 168-171. According to Goldsmith, the "differences between men and other animals are minor, unless speech be considered. The effect of the addition of words, sensible marks, to man's natural powers, is immense." Goldsmith, *Science of Politics*, 61. Finding causes and being prone to absurdity are not possible without words.

⁹¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 12, 169. Tom Sorell locates the origin of anxiety in the uncooperative environment brought about by the original sin. Sorell, *Hobbes*, 54. But Hobbes does not cite the original sin until his discussion of the rights of sovereignty as proved in scripture (*Leviathan*, chap. 20, 259-260). Not only is the Fall not central to Hobbes's account of human nature, but he arguably disposed of sin in his moral philosophy.

⁹² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 12, 169-173.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 172-173. Even if we ultimately agree with David Gauthier that "God plays only a secondary part in...[Hobbes's moral and political] system" (*Logic of Leviathan*, 178), there is no question that the use of religion in commonwealths past and present was of primary concern to Hobbes.

⁹⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 12, 173-178.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 179-181. As Ronald Beiner points out, Hobbes agreed with Machiavelli that "new religions are 'due to men' rather than 'due to Heaven.'" Beiner, "Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau on Civil Religion," *The Review of Politics* 55 (1993), 630. As for whether or not Hobbes might have sought to employ religion for political purposes, see chapter four below.

⁹⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 12, 181-183.

⁹⁸ F.C. Hood thinks that chapter twelve is a warning to readers "that there is an indispensable factor in the construction of the commonwealth which cannot enter directly into his own construction." Hood, *Divine Politics*, 72-73. The lesson of this chapter, in my view, is that religion is deeply problematic for Hobbes, rather than being indispensable to his political thought.

⁹⁹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 11.454-460.

¹⁰⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 13, 183-184.

¹⁰¹ The shift from the fact of equality to the principle that human beings should consider themselves as naturally equal has been noted by Macpherson. He argues that "[i]nstead of finding rights and obligations only in some outside force, he assumed that they were entailed in the need of each human mechanism to maintain its motion." Macpherson, *Possessive Individualism*, 77. Against the notion of inherent or supernatural hierarchy, Hobbes asserted the equality of nature conceived of in terms of matter in motion.

¹⁰² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 211.

¹⁰³ G.B. Herbert maintains that "Hobbes's arguments are intended to neutralize certain tendencies of human nature which promote civil war, notably, the tendency to base all one's actions on the desirability of glory and honor," and that his "addressees, in other words, are primarily rulers and pretenders to rule, men who are most tempted by the seductive character of glory." He adds that Hobbes was unwilling "to make publicly evident his belief that it is only the brutality of the state of nature that makes men equal, and that the civilizing consequences of the social contract, while perpetuating the idea of the mutual equality of all, liberates the efficacy of the natural inequalities of that rational capacity found in only a few." Herbert, "Thomas Hobbes's Counterfeit Equality," in *Thomas Hobbes: Critical Assessments*, ed. by Preston King (London: Routledge, 1993), vol. 3, 215 and 218. Although Herbert's argument, like mine, also stresses the critique of pride, his speculations are based on the dubious assumption that Hobbes thought only a few capable of ruling. That is to say, Herbert believes that Hobbes did not mean what he wrote about equality.

¹⁰⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 13, 184.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 184-186. "All men desire precedence, honour, and glory, just as all men desire more power. But

in both cases, some are born with the desire, some have it thrust upon them." Macpherson, *Possessive Individualism*, 44. The pride of some provokes the restless desire for power in everyone.

¹⁰⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 13, 186.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 13, 187; and chap. 10, 157-158.

¹⁰⁹ Indeed, a case could be made that aspects of humanity's natural condition can be witnessed within society. As Macpherson says of chapter thirteen, Hobbes's "picture of the way men would necessarily behave in such a condition is so graphic that readers often fail to see that he had really made his whole case already... in the first eleven chapters of *Leviathan*." Macpherson's introduction to *Leviathan*, 37-38. Although he is right to suggest that there is no transformation in human nature as a result of the social contract, Macpherson arguably overlooks the modifications in the conditions of life because of civil society. The fear of violent death, for example, is less present in civil society than in civil war.

¹¹⁰ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 2-3.

¹¹¹ Qtd. in Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. See *Complete Poems*, 118.

¹¹² In his assessment of Hobbes's *Behemoth*, Holmes remarks that "[e]cclesiastics successfully present themselves as gatekeepers to heaven, as intermediaries between man and God." Holmes, "Political Psychology," 141.

¹¹³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 27, 336; and chap. 13, 187-188.

¹¹⁴ Quoting St. Ambrose's remarks to the Emperor Theodosius that he preferred God to his sovereign, Holmes writes that the "anarchical strain in Christianity thus long predated the Reformation." Holmes, "Political Psychology," 136. Indeed, I would argue that for Hobbes, the anarchic seeds of religion have had its proud cultivators since the time of the first societies.

¹¹⁵ See note [28].

¹¹⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chaps. 13-14, 188-190. J.R. Pennock thinks there is a discrepancy on this point between *De Cive* and *Leviathan* in that only in the former does Hobbes maintain that one should not claim that something is necessary for one's preservation and yet not really believe so. Pennock, "Hobbes's Confusing 'Clarity' - The Case of 'Liberty,'" in *Hobbes Studies*, ed. by K.C. Brown (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 110. But as McNeilly points out, although there is in *Leviathan* nothing that cannot be legitimately claimed as necessary to one's preservation, the right of nature is not an unqualified right to do anything one pleases. It is effectively unrestricted but not theoretically unqualified: in effect, it has the same scope as the right to do anything for whatever reason, but it is theoretically grounded in the normative standard of self-preservation. McNeilly, *Anatomy of Leviathan*, 176-177. Even if one were to do something that one did not believe necessary for one's preservation, there could be no effective restraint on one's actions by the right of nature. Besides, one's beliefs are a matter between oneself and God alone.

¹¹⁷ As Goldsmith puts it, "since no man has any special privileges over other men in the state of nature, both men may act within their rights." Goldsmith, *Science of Politics*, 87. Pride, as the breach of equality, is precisely this claim to "special privileges."

¹¹⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 190.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 190-191.

¹²⁰ Macpherson argues that it was "from his postulate of equality that he argued that there was no reason why anyone should have more rights than others, and form this to the possibility and necessity of obligation." He adds that the equality of insecurity in the hypothetical state of nature "is not, however, a sufficient basis for political obligation of men *in society*", and that this basis must be found in the "equal subordination of every individual to the laws of the market", which occurs only in a "possessive market society." Macpherson, *Possessive Individualism*, 83-86 (Macpherson's emphasis). But doubt has been cast on whether or not *Leviathan* does indeed describe a possessive market society: see D.J.C. Carmichael, "C.B. Macpherson's 'Hobbes': A Critique"; Macpherson, "Leviathan Restored: A Reply to Carmichael"; and Carmichael, "Reply: Macpherson Versus the Text of *Leviathan*", all reprinted in *Critical Assessments*, vol. 1, 359-392. Hobbes not only asserted that there is an equality of insecurity, but also that members of society ought to be equal, at least under the law - because natural equality is more than just equality of insecurity in the state of nature. In this respect, the standard of legal equality, not market equality, would principally counter claims to unequal rights.

¹²¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 193.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 196.

¹²³ For Hobbes and classical liberals in general, writes Tuck, the "primary responsibility of both citizens and sovereign is to ensure the physical survival of themselves and their fellow citizens." This "minimal requirement," he adds, "in fact implies a considerable degree of state power... for seventeenth-century liberals, both public order and a minimum level of subsistence were hard-won prizes." Tuck, *Hobbes*, 73.

¹²⁴ See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 20.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 30, 377.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, 197.

¹²⁷ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 12.30-32.

¹²⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 200. In *Shylock's Rights* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), E. Andrew argues that ultimately, Hobbes provided a moral justification for keeping promises, in terms of a merchant's honour, i.e., contractual fidelity. This view is correct as it provides a convincing portrait of the rational promise-keeper. But Andrew's argument is, I think, unrelated to the rare form of "social pride" mentioned above.

¹²⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 200-201.

¹³⁰ A.P. Martinich argues, in contrast, that "because nothing other than God has the unfailing strength to enforce a covenant made in the state of nature, God's support is always implied by the words of the covenant. This is why it is not necessary to turn a covenant into an explicit oath by calling on God by name." Martinich, *Two Gods*, 80-81. But the only divine supports one can reasonably adduce in Hobbes are the laws of nature which are also God's commands - and disobedience to these laws, which can only be effectively punished by the civil sovereign, is conceptually distinct from renouncing God's mercy for breaking an oath.

¹³¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 5.813-821.

¹³² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 201.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 202 and 211.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 202-203 and 211-212. Hobbes used the term "propriety", but in the sense of ownership. Thus, to avoid confusion with the contemporary usage of "propriety", I use the equivalent term "property" instead. On equal rights in society, cf. D.J.C. Carmichael, "Hobbes on Natural Right in Society," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 23 (1990), 14.

¹³⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 203.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 15, 204-205; and chap. 14, p. 65. A. Zaitchik argues that Hobbes's reply to the fool is deeply problematic, since the fool's objection that one might sometimes be able to get away with injustice is not sufficiently answered by Hobbes's appeal to self-interest and prudence. Zaitchik suggests that Hobbes could have used the help of John Rawls to formulate a better response in the "realm of general policy choices for men in general," but acknowledges that this solution "does violence, of course, to many of Hobbes's own words". Zaitchik, "Hobbes's Reply to the Fool: The Problem of Consent and Obligation," in *Critical Assessments*, vol. 2, 400-418. But Hobbes could do without the help of a Rawls, if we consider more carefully the importance of language. That is to say, the fool is unreasonable in the sense that he cannot justify his acts in consistent speech, because breaking a promise one has already agreed to is to act as if one were in the state of nature (in a war of all against all) and in civil society (as party to the social contract) at the same time. Zaitchik notes that "contracting is itself a linguistic institution" (414), but does not pick up on the fool's unreasonableness, preferring rather to resort to a Rawlsian approach which "tallies nicely" (415) with A.E. Taylor's emphasis on internal obligation to obey natural law.

¹³⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 205.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 203, 205-206; and Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. and trans. by Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett Press, 1994), chap. 15, 93n9. Martinich thinks that Hobbes's reply to the religious fool was merely a "new foundation or theory for the content of the old morality, a theory that is consistent with orthodox Christianity" because the meaning of this reply is that "[t]o say that God's commands must be different from human self-interest is to slander him." Martinich, *Two Gods*, 119. My view is that Hobbes's emphasis was clearly on otherworldly religion as harmful to worldly peace; that he was more interested in weakening the power of religion than in upholding God's honour.

¹³⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. and trans. by Curley, chap. 15, 93n9.

¹⁴⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 212.

¹⁴¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 5.898-899.

¹⁴² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 216-217.

¹⁴³ In this respect, God does indeed play a secondary role in Hobbes's system - the view of Gauthier (*Logic of Leviathan*, 178) - but partly because he sought to counteract the claims of religious pride. God is not irrelevant, but Hobbes was irreverent.

¹⁴⁴ James I, *Basilicon Doron*, in *Political Writings*, 1-2 (James's emphasis).

¹⁴⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 13, 183; chap. 16, 218; and chap. 17, 223 and 226 (Hobbes's emphasis).

Joshua Mitchell thinks that the seemingly mysterious "notion of *the equality of all under the one*" cannot be explained in purely political terms, because it is "a worldly application of a theological pattern." That is to say, the Leviathan is a God-like and Christ-like figure who suppresses the irreligious pride of all and redeems humanity. Mitchell, "Equality of All," 78-79 (Mitchell's emphasis). But this notion is not mysterious at all in light of the concept of representation: the sovereign is the representative person of the commonwealth who must ensure the equal rights of the represented. This conception is political rather than theological. Furthermore, a representative is one person but not necessarily one man—contra Mitchell's identification of the Hobbesian sovereign with the divine monarch God.

¹⁴⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 16, 220; and chap. 15, 205.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 17, 227.

¹⁴⁸ Clifford Orwin argues that "Hobbes succeeds where his predecessors had failed by grounding his despotism upon an earthly rather than heavenly foundation": unlike divinely-appointed kings, the Hobbesian sovereign is not bounded by God's law. "Instead of responsibilities toward God for which man can call him to account, he has at most duties toward men for which God can call him into account." Orwin, "On Sovereign Authorization," *Political Theory* 3 (1975), 39-40. While Orwin persuasively links the earthly foundation of sovereign authority with the removal of any religious pretexts for limiting the sovereign power, his characterisation of Hobbes's political theory as despotic does not sufficiently take into account the latter's emphasis on representative government and especially the rule of law in Hobbes (see following chapters). The absence of institutional checks on absolute sovereignty—which is the case, for example, in countries where parliaments are supreme—does not necessarily entail despotism.

¹⁴⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 18, 230; and chap. 28, 167.

¹⁵⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. and trans. by Curley, chap. 15, 93n9.

¹⁵¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 12.586-587.

¹⁵² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 192; and chap. 30, 376.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, chap. 30, 385-386.

Chapter Three: The Devil's Work and the Mighty Leviathan

In the previous chapter, we established that the Hobbesian sovereign is the king over proud individuals, whereas Milton associated pride with kings. How would Hobbes defend himself against the Miltonian charge that his justification of absolute sovereign authority is an apology for proud kings? In this chapter, we shall examine Milton's conceptions of kingship, tyranny, and the best regime in his political writings from about 1649 to 1660, and compare Hobbes's views on the issues raised in these works. These sections will be followed by analyses of Milton's religious republicanism and Hobbes's thought on the rights and duties of sovereigns, especially in the context of the English civil war. We shall see that Hobbes's theory of sovereignty, though radically opposed to Miltonian-style republicanism, was not thereby an endorsement of tyranny. Hobbes advocated a particularly this-worldly conception of representative government.

Milton's views on kingship, tyranny, and the best regime are relevant to a discussion of religious conflict. As with his account of pride in *Paradise Lost*, Milton situated his defence of popular freedom against tyranny within a theological and historical framework. He drew upon important examples of kingship and tyranny in pagan and Judeo-Christian accounts in support of the revolution against the English monarchy and later Parliament itself. As we shall see, Milton's account encompassed what he regarded as the holy struggles to achieve popular freedom against oppressive rulers. The English revolution was for him the latest manifestation of this struggle. Finally, he urged that the English people establish a "free commonwealth", the best earthly state that human beings can attain until the end of time. In the meantime, therefore, God wills that we overthrow our earthly tyrants.

Protection of the People

To understand why the tyrant's power is illegitimate, we need to understand what legitimate power was for Milton. All legitimate political power comes from the people. Unlike Hobbes, who derived the contractual basis of society from a systematic, ahistorical investigation into human nature, Milton focused on the origins of political authority and legitimacy in human history. In *Paradise Lost*, he wrote of the origins of pride in Satan, Adam and Eve, and Nimrod, among others, depicting the sinful motivations of the first humans and kings. In the works we are examining in this chapter, Milton focused on the effects of pride on the people and especially their attempts to deal with human and kingly pride.

Adam's original sin is what made human society necessary. Humanity was made in the image of God and given dominion over the earth and all of its creatures. Once this paradise was lost, however, human beings became a threat to each other. That is to say, once we became sinful by violating God's sole law not to eat the forbidden fruit, our newly enhanced capacities for wrongdoing were directed towards each other. For this reason, human beings "agreed by common league to bind each other from mutual injury, and jointly to defend themselves against any that gave disturbance or opposition to such agreement." The initial end of society was mutual protection. But the members of it had to bestow power and authority upon one or more than one person to judge what was necessary for the "peace and common right" of all and to "restrain by force and punishment" the violators of their self-preservation. Hence, they chose one or a few persons who appeared eminent in wisdom and integrity among all others, and named them king and magistrates.¹

Much of the account thus far appears similar to elements of Hobbes's depiction of the state of nature and sovereign authorisation, although Milton's argument was far less developed than was Hobbes's. Original sin was not part of Hobbes's account, but the continual threat of invasions from others in the state of nature which necessitate civil

society is akin to the problem of “mutual injury” in Milton’s first societies. Now, Hobbes did not regard the state of nature as he presented it as an actual time in history, but the reason for civil government was in this respect the same for Milton and Hobbes: to protect all against all. Moreover, Hobbes argued, too, that political authority rightly comes from the consent of the governed (though one may legitimately consent from fear of the governor). As a member of the commonwealth, one gives up one’s right to do whatever one judges to be conducive to one’s self-preservation, which includes the right “even to one another’s body,” and authorises the actions of a sovereign power.² Milton and Hobbes agreed at least that the power to judge what is necessary for peace and security must be possessed by a recognised authority that has the coercive power to enforce obedience, if need be.

The resemblance ends, however, with Milton’s treatment of the problem of arbitrary rule. He insisted that kings and magistrates are “Deputies and Commissioners,” not “Lords and Maisters.” After a period of good government, the first kings and magistrates were tempted by the “power left absolute in their hands” and began to rule unjustly and partially. To rein in such arbitrary use of power, the people framed laws to place limitations on kings’ and magistrates’ power: “While as the Magistrate was set above the people, so the Law was set above the Magistrate.” As the law was not recognised or misapplied, recourse was then made to oaths of allegiance. Such oaths were bonds or covenants, in which the people gave their allegiance to kings and magistrates upon condition that the latter execute the laws made or assented to by the people. Thus, if the king or magistrate did not so execute the law, the people were freed of their obligations. As an additional check, there were “Counselors and Parlements” who not only assisted the king and magistrates but could also ensure public safety if it were threatened by the rulers themselves.³ From the experience of arbitrary government, the people learned that they should bind their governors to the rule of law, reinforced by a parliamentary check. Although the historical origins of society lay in protection of all against the aggression of

each other, Milton's emphasis shifted to protecting the people from their rulers.⁴

For Hobbes, in contrast, the sovereign is not party to the social contract, thus giving rise to the criticism that he provided for unchecked arbitrary power.⁵ This criticism will be assessed later in this chapter. For now, we should recognise that it is subjects only who are bound by the social covenant. In a legitimate political society, subjects transfer their unlimited natural rights to the sovereign and oblige themselves "not to make voyd that voluntary act." In return, they enjoy peace and security, as the sovereign protects each member of the commonwealth from the threat of invasion from other members and from foreign enemies. The social covenant made by the subjects is between themselves, not between the people and its rulers. Hobbes was clear about this point. First, there is no unity of the people that can be called "the people" before the social covenant: the sovereign is the unity of the people in one person. Second, if there were such a covenant, there could be no higher authority to judge whether or not a breach of covenant is justified. That is to say, if the people were to claim that they are released from their bonds because of government oppression, there would be no judge to decide whether or not this were justified. Similarly, the people cannot claim that the sovereign is subject to the rule of laws made or assented to by them: the sovereign, not the "people" as distinct from the sovereign, is legislator as well as the executive.⁶ All such claims lead to anarchy, according to Hobbes.

In this context, Milton's overriding political concern was not peace but freedom of the people from the arbitrary power of their rulers. He developed this view through historical argument rather than through theoretical science or an examination of his country's constitution. As he explained to his readers in his *History of England*,

...as wine and oyle are imported to us from abroad, so must ripe understanding and many civil virtues bee imported into our minds from forren writings & examples of best ages: wee shall else miscarry still and com short in the attempt of any great enterprise.⁷

Milton placed his discussion within a wide historical and geographical context, implying that the struggle for popular freedom is common to many societies at different times.

Wine and Oil from Abroad

In praise of Cromwell's army and its supporters, Milton wrote that

the expressions both of armie and people, whether in thir publick declarations or severall writings [were none] other then such as testifi'd a spirit in this nation no less noble and well fitted to the liberty of a Commonwealth, then in the ancient *Greeks* or *Romans*.⁸

For the noblest examples of republican liberty, Milton looked to Greek and Roman history.

What lessons did he draw from classical writers?

Milton's discussion of the ancients focused on Aristotle's typology of regimes. He referred to Aristotle as a thinker "we commonly allow for one of the best interpreters of nature and morality" because he distinguished kingship (Milton referred only to the masculine form) from tyranny. A true king governs for the good of his people, but a tyrant rules for his own ends. The worst tyranny is thus "Monarchy unaccountable" to the people.⁹ Indeed, although kingship may not be the best form of government, it was classed among correct regimes in Aristotle's *Politics*, while tyranny is the name for deviant forms of kingship. The aspect of Aristotle's account which Milton had in mind is the judging of tyranny by reference to the standard of virtue. For Aristotle, a correct regime is ruled by those persons who possess virtue. It is unjust, therefore, for one to rule many unless the one is pre-eminent in virtue to the many. When many are similar in virtue, then, they should rule and be ruled in turn. A tyranny in its extreme form is a regime ruled by one with a view to his own advantage: by reason of this lack of kingly virtue, the ruled will be the tyrant's equals or betters in virtue.¹⁰

For Milton, Aristotle was one of the first writers to recognise that monarchy easily descends into tyranny. After all, in an absolute monarchy, it only takes one man to change the regime from kingship to tyranny by turning from virtue to vice. Milton cited Aristotle when he declared that the first kings were distinguished in virtue or benefits, and unequal to the people at large, but as "they abus'd thir power and governments grew larger, and the number of prudent men increased, that then the people soon deposing thir tyrants, betook them, in all civilest places to the form of a free Commonwealth."¹¹ In the *Politics*, Aristotle

did speculate that the first kings may have been elected for their distinction, but his account of the change in regime differed from Milton's: there is no mention of these kings abusing or augmenting their power. Instead, "many arose who were similar with respect to virtue" and sought to establish a polity. The many then became worse, the regime changed to oligarchy, and oligarchy in turn later changed to tyranny and later to democracy.¹² Thus, contrary to Milton's supposed paraphrase of Aristotle, kings did not for Aristotle become tyrants, who were then deposed by the people. Milton's account of kingship was more negative than Aristotle's: political virtue in Milton's understanding of the ancients was republican.¹³

The "law of nature" Milton derived from this reading thus elevates the people above their kings. In his polemic against Claude Salmasius, who criticised the trial and execution of Charles I, Milton accused Salmasius of earlier plagiarising the third book of Aristotle's *Politics* and then contradicting himself in defending the king:

For search all you will into the law of nature, as just now exhibited by you, you will not find a place in nature for the royal right as you expound it--no, not so much as a trace of it. "The law of nature," you say, "in ordering who should govern others, regarded the good of all mankind." Not then of any one person--of a monarch.

Kings are instituted for the sake of the people's good. From the Aristotelian notion that the virtuous ruler governs for the good of the ruled, Milton drew the un-Aristotelian conclusion that the rights of the people are therefore superior to the rights of kings. Kings have no right to do wrong, to oppress the people, while the people may punish their rulers for wrongdoing. By nature, then, virtue always rests in the people, and consequently the people have a greater liberty than their rulers. But how can a right against tyrants secure the good of the people, if the result is internal strife? Milton countered that tyranny is contrary to the safety of the people, and thus to the law of nature. Bearing tyranny leads to the destruction, not the preservation, of the people. Even if accepting tyranny were the lesser of two evils, there is not thereby a natural right of tyrants to secure themselves at the expense of the people's safety.¹⁴ The law of nature tends to the preservation of the people, if necessary by revolutionary action, rather than to peace at all costs.¹⁵

Consequent to the law of nature is the natural duty to punish tyrants. Milton adduced counter-examples to Salmasius's to show that "all nations, taught by nature herself, have punished" tyrants. He argued that the rights of kings are by nature always subordinate to the laws protecting the people, who have often resisted tyrants accordingly. The Egyptians hated Chemmis and Chephren to such an extent that they wished to tear the tyrants' bodies apart even after death. The Medean and Persian kings were bound to the law of the people, not to the royal law: the Persian king Cambyses, for example, consulted judges to interpret existing laws. Furthermore, their kingdoms were "destroyed for the most part by *subjects*, and not by *foreigners*." Milton surveyed Greek philosophers and dramatists who (according to him) agreed that not kings, but law, should rule. He focused particularly on Aeschylus's *Suppliants*. He contrasted the suppliant daughters of Danaus with the king of the Argives. The former sued for protection and asserted that the latter need not consult his people, as the ruler is supreme in the city. But the king insisted on the people's consent. Salmasius aligned himself with the suppliants, Milton with the Argive king. To defend royal right against popular consent is to side with interests foreign to that of the people. Hence, deposing tyrants is all to the good of the commonwealth. In the case of the Romans, Milton remarked that "it is evident that the most excellent of the Romans did not only kill tyrants and whenever they could, but like the Greeks before them thought the deed most praiseworthy." Indeed, the right of the Caesars was founded in fraud: Mark Antony recorded the people's "groans and lamentations" as their consent to seeing Caesar crowned.¹⁶ Through such examples, Milton showed that regal authority always depends on popular consent. Once that ground of authority is taken away, it is just that tyrants be forcibly prevented from further harm to the people.¹⁷

For what purpose did Milton cite these ancient examples of the law of nature and its consequences? In opposing the king, he argued, the Parliament of England acted as did the ancient peoples listed above. In particular, Milton drew a comparison between the English Parliament and the Roman Senate in the time of Nero: "it was faction and violence, and to

speaking plainer, the madness of Antony, and not any law or right, that originally made the emperors themselves take the start in rebelling against the Senate and the people of Rome.” Accordingly, Milton compared Nero’s matricide with Charles’s patricide/regicide of James I (alleged by Milton), as well as the thousands of Christians slain by Nero with the tens of thousands by Charles.¹⁸ Parliament and the people of England were engaged in a struggle against tyranny similar to that of the Romans. On the side of Nero and Charles were force and rebellion (against the popular will); on the side of the people are law and justice.

In other words, the English kings were, like the Roman emperors and other ancient monarchs, subject to the law of nature. Parliament, Milton said,

knew the people of *England* to be a free people, themselves the representers of that freedom;...not bound by any statute of preceding Parliaments, but by the law of nature only, which is the only law of laws truly and properly to all mankind fundamental; the beginning and end of all Government...¹⁹

Above any law that a tyrant may pass is the law of nature. Parliament’s acts—considered “unlawful” from the perspective of the Crown—obeyed a universal law of nature that belongs to free human beings. Who is to judge when a monarch has violated natural law and thereby deserves punishment? It seems that for Milton, the “free people” decide. As we shall see later, the representatives of a free people may know better than the people themselves; but the standard is always the popular judgement, represented or not.

In Hobbes’s view, such praise of ancient liberty as expressions of the natural law against tyrants was a leading cause of sedition. Milton’s republican understanding of ancient history is a useful backdrop to Hobbes’s critique of the seditious appropriation of classical writers. It confirmed Hobbes’s claim that among the “seducers” who corrupted the people and incited civil war were men

that had been so educated, as that in their youth having read the books written by famous men of the ancient Grecian and Roman commonwealths concerning their polity and great actions; in which books the popular government was extolled by the glorious name of liberty; and monarchy was disgraced by the name of tyranny; they became thereby in love with their forms of government. And out of these men were chosen the greatest part of the House of Commons...²⁰

Although Milton was not a Member of Parliament, his enthusiasm for ancient liberty was in some ways similar to the views of these Parliamentary seducers. As Aubrey reported, "Milton's being so conversant in Livy and the Roman authors...induc't him to" write against monarchy.²¹ Still, we must keep in mind that Milton came to criticise Parliament later for betraying the revolution, on the basis of his greater knowledge of and commitment to ancient liberty. Thus, according to Hobbes's reasoning, in extolling ancient liberty, Milton was an even greater proponent of sedition than them.²² For Hobbes, the distinction here between monarchy and tyranny was rhetorical. Parliamentarians used the term tyranny to "disgrace" monarchy and associated popular government with liberty. What, then, did he make of the Aristotelian criterion of ruling for the good of the whole, as opposed to solely for one's own ends?

Hobbes maintained that there are but three kinds of commonwealths: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The difference between them consists only in the number of individuals who constitute the one sovereign person—one, a few, or all of the people. The sovereign power is the same in all three kinds. He mentioned the so-called deviant regimes—tyranny as deviant monarchy, oligarchy as deviant aristocracy, and anarchy as deviant democracy—but dismissed these kinds as "not the names of other Formes of Government, but of the same Formes misliked." If people feel themselves oppressed by the government, they slander it as one of the these latter kinds.²³ As with his characterisation of the Parliamentarians who adopted classical views of politics, Hobbes argued that the Aristotelian typology of regimes as understood by Milton and others is rhetoric, not reason. Properly understood, the kinds of government differ in number only, not in virtue.

Ironically, his scepticism of natural reason led him to regard the Aristotelian typology (as interpreted by Milton et al.) as unreasonable. While Hobbes sought to establish a science of politics based on the "infallibility of reason," he was sceptical of the natural reason of individuals: "no one mans Reason, nor the Reason of any one number of men, makes the certaintie." When left to individuals, disputes over the objects of political

reasoning—such as duties to sovereigns, or justice and injustice—“must either come to blowes, or be undecided,” unless a human authority is set up as judge or arbitrator of the controversy. There is no “right Reason” by nature, but only by convention. By nature, individuals are swayed by their passions in their deliberations, such that their claims of right reason always favour their own interests: “it is as intolerable in the society of men, as it is in play after trump is turned, to use for trump on every occasion, that suite whereof they have most in their hand.” In Hobbes’s view, then, the distinction between correct and deviant forms of government rested on faulty reasoning, in that monarch is called tyranny merely when it is disliked. Milton’s claim that this distinction is natural—i.e., that since the law of nature furthers the good of the people, a true king by nature rules in their interests, not his own, so that the people rest supreme—would, for Hobbes, merely betray his own preference. Milton was like those men who judged commonwealths “by their own Passions.”²⁴ We shall later see some problems with Hobbes’s apparent dismissal of the distinction between monarchy and tyranny.

How was this objection to natural reason consistent with Hobbes’s own use of the term “law of nature”? Hobbes’s view that the reason of an arbitrator—not right reason by nature—can resolve controversies points to the need for a sovereign authority. For Milton, the law of nature binds sovereigns to virtuous rule for the maintenance of popular liberty, whereas for Hobbes, the laws of nature command subjects’ obedience to sovereigns for the sake of self-preservation. In fact, the laws of nature for Hobbes limit natural liberty.²⁵ The natural condition of human beings is one of absolute liberty, but this unfettered freedom is destructive of life, for everyone in such a state would have a right even to each other’s bodies. The opposite of the natural state of war of all against all is peace, and hence the first law of nature commands the pursuit of peace, if possible.²⁶ But peace can be obtained only by the mutual renunciation of natural right to a sovereign authority. That is to say, peace is attained when individuals give up their unlimited right to do whatever they judge to be necessary for their self-preservation—a right linked to their individual passions—and set

up a sovereign authority, whose reason is final judge. Milton's interpretation of the laws of nature viewed the people as superior to their rulers, because the good of the people is paramount. Hobbes, however, did not oppose the one to the other: the sovereign exists for the sake of furthering the good of the people, i.e., their peace and safety, and cannot be regarded as sovereign if it cannot ensure this good.

Hobbes's reasoning in contradistinction to Milton's can be more clearly understood when one compares popular rights with sovereign rights. For Milton, the law of nature may uphold the safety of the people against the acts of their rulers. The natural right of the people is above that of kings. The people have the right to resist oppressive rule; rulers have no right to oppress the people.²⁷ Milton would regard the renunciation of individuals' absolute right to everything to the sovereign as sanctioning tyranny, the elevation of royal over popular right. Hobbes resisted such a charge. It is absurd to speak of popular right as something separate from sovereign right. There can be no rights of the people as a collective body, because the unity of the people only exists in the sovereign. This point is, according to Hobbes, apparent in democracy: no-one would claim that the people were separate from a sovereign assembly of all; and yet, some do not see this identity of sovereign and people in monarchy, even though the power of a monarch is of equal extent to that of a sovereign assembly.²⁸

Moreover, Hobbes argued that certain fundamental individual rights are inalienable. The transferral of right in the social contract is performed in order to procure some good for the contracting party. There would be no motivation to lay down one's right if life in civil society were worse than life in a state of nature. One cannot lay down the right to defend oneself to preserve one's life, because self-preservation is the very purpose of being party to the social contract. Hobbes went even further: "the motive, and end for which this renouncing, and transferring of Right is introduced, is nothing else but the security of a mans person in his life, *and in the means of so preserving life, as not to be weary of it..*" Hobbes did not see himself as an advocate of what Milton regarded as tyranny. It is not

only the right to bare survival that is inalienable. Individuals must retain rights to things “without which a man cannot live, or not live well.” Hobbes insisted that a legitimate social contract does not include the renunciation of the right to means to live well (which is, of course, not the same as the right to live well). He did not intend to grant license to oppression of the people through the laws of nature.²⁹

But who is to define what the right to means to live well entails? A Miltonian might well object to Hobbes that rights that cannot be asserted against the sovereign power are a license to tyranny. What if I feel that a certain level of taxation obstructs my right to means to live well, but the sovereign thinks otherwise? Hobbes unquestionably came down on the side of the sovereign: for example, the people of England regarded (at the incitement of Parliament, in Hobbes’s view) the exacting of ship-money by the king as tyrannical, but Hobbes countered that this power belonged to the sovereign and was in accordance with the law of the land. Nevertheless, the right to means to live well is not rendered subject to sovereign oppression. After all, the ship-money was necessary for the defence of the land and hence consistent with subjects’ rights to comfortable self-preservation. The sovereign may of course err, but it must always have in view the safety of the people and the conditions of commodious living. That is to say, civil society is established principally to ensure that subjects have the means to live, and to live well, defined in terms of private industry--thus agriculture, trade, construction, arts and letters, and so forth: all the conditions of a prosperous society that are absent in the state of nature.³⁰ (As we shall see, this conception plays a key role in Hobbes’s identification of the good of the people with that of the sovereign.) In sum, Hobbes was against oppression in terms of failing to provide the conditions necessary for commodious living, but nevertheless denied the right of revolution. From Milton’s perspective, of course, this would still be an insufficient guarantee of popular liberty.

Hobbes’s conception of rights and of the laws of nature was thus meant to ensure the peace and welfare of society, without making a republican appeal to popular as opposed

to monarchical government. But on what grounds did he oppose classical republicanism, besides the connection between such doctrine and the parliamentary rebellion? Hobbes's emphasis on obedience to legitimate sovereigns—rather than resistance to tyrants—was a critique of the antinomian ethics of the ancients as practised in his time. As we noted, the difference for Milton between tyranny and kingship depends on the ruler's virtue. Hobbes characterised this definition of tyranny as monarchy disliked. His criticism was based not only on his scepticism of natural reason, but also his objection to the use of the term "virtue" to praise and blame different forms of government. In his view, good and evil for "Aristotle and other Heathen Philosophers" were merely individual appetites. Hobbes agreed with this conception of ethics, but only as it pertains to a non-political state, where the only law individuals would obey is that of their appetites. In a commonwealth, however, we are bound to obey the law which is the will of the sovereign. But there are some who desire to judge their actions only by the rule of their private appetites and not by the laws of the sovereign. Such a doctrine is "not onely Vain, but also Pernicious to the Publique State."³¹

This view of classical ethics is an odd one. Aristotle and Milton certainly did not mean private appetite when they spoke of virtue. In fact, the distinctive feature of tyranny is that the tyrant pursues private appetite at the expense of the good of the people who are ruled. I would argue that Hobbes regarded classical ethics as private appetite from the standpoint of the public realm—the state. That is to say, virtue largely consists in observance of civil law, hence his statement in *Behemoth* that the "virtue of a subject is comprehended wholly in obedience to the laws of the commonwealth."³² Appeals to ethical standards other than what is necessary for peace in the commonwealth can only be based on private appetite—leading to a state of nature—since common rules of good and evil acts pertain only through the social contract. Does this politicisation of ethics sanction tyranny? This account of virtue is compatible with certain inalienable rights discussed above: such rights are retained in civil society under the protection of the sovereign, not asserted against

rulers when we feel we are being oppressed. Indeed, threats to peace are not likely to come from the sovereign, but from individuals and factions which obey their private appetites rather than the civil laws.

“Against Thee, Thee Only,…”

Milton’s embrace of classical virtues cannot, however, be fully understood without dealing with the religious grounds of his polemics against tyranny. Hobbes, too, was keenly aware of what he regarded as the seditious interpretation of the law of God in addition to that of the law of nature.

Milton explicitly linked classical republicanism with the Old Testament. He sought to counter what he regarded as an abhorrent opinion. He criticised Salmasius and others for arguing that a king is “answerable to God alone.” Such a doctrine “is the overturning of all Law and government.” It invalidates the social covenant, oaths, and laws. Milton cited Aristotle’s view that a monarch accountable only to God is the worst tyrant, and adduced the examples of the Caesars, for whom the Roman people existed solely to serve their base pleasures. But the most dangerous argument put forward to defend unaccountable monarchy was contained in scripture. In Psalm 51, for example, King David cried out to God, “Against thee onely have I sinn’d.”³³ Throughout his political works, Milton grappled with this and other scriptural passages that seem to endorse the view that earthly kings are accountable only to God.

A prominent example early in the Bible is that of Moses. Salmasius viewed Moses as a “king with supreme power,” based on his unique relationship with God. Salmasius had in mind Moses’s role to “bring the causes [i.e., appeals to the law] unto God,” i.e., to act as his special representative and therefore supreme over the people. Milton did not deny that Moses was “so to speak, God’s confidant” and a true king, but pointed out that his monarchy did not constitute a license over the people. Moses may bring the causes to God, but only by being “for the people to Godward” and one who “shalt teach them God’s

ordinances and laws.” That is to say, Moses’ rule was always subordinate to God’s laws. He merely taught and executed God’s own commands, remaining himself a faithful servant of God. Thus, Milton’s strategy in assessing Moses was to deny that he was an absolute lord answerable only to God or that he was not lord of the people and therefore not king. Moses was a king--“as certainly he was, and the best of kings”--and yet not absolute lord because he could not violate God’s commands: “Moses, though of God / Highly below’d, being but the minister / Of law...”³⁴ A true monarch is always subordinate to a higher law.

This teaching has certain implications with respect to how we should view popular will in the Old Testament. Since Moses spoke directly to God, and his authority was expressly approved by God before Aaron and Miriam,³⁵ there is no question that his rule was divinely sanctioned.³⁶ In other examples of kingship, however, the people have rightly questioned monarchical authority in God’s kingdom. The teaching that all political authority comes from the people is confirmed, in Milton’s view, in Deuteronomy (17: 14): “When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt say I will set a king over mee, like as all the Nations about mee.” That is to say, God has granted to the people the “right of choosing, yea of changing thir own Government.” Milton held that God preferred commonwealth (popular government) to monarchy--a point we shall deal with later--but persuasively argued that since the people nevertheless chose a king, God prescribed laws to restrict the king’s dominion. In the same chapter of Deuteronomy (17: 16-17), God said that their king shall not obtain horses, wives, silver, and gold to the extent that the people would be oppressed and impoverished. For Milton, this law, not the king, is supreme: “outside the law no power over others was his.”³⁷ Royal authority is delegated by God through the people. In the case of the true king Moses, his piety was evidence of God’s supremacy. In the case of later kings as prophesied in Deuteronomy 17, their powers were explicitly circumscribed by God.

This supremacy of God and the people entails the right of popular resistance. Milton showed that tyrant-killing was defended in Old Testament scripture. An important

example was that of Ehud and Eglon, king of the Moabites. The Israelites were oppressed by Eglon for 18 years. God responded to their cries by giving them the deliverer Ehud. They then sent a present to Eglon, to be delivered by Ehud. Ehud plunged the gift—a dagger—into Eglon’s vast belly, and the Israelites subsequently subdued the Moabites.³⁸ Now, Milton anticipated that the divine sanction for the tyrannicide might be regarded as subject to very specific conditions: Eglon was a foreign oppressor, not a domestic ruler; and Ehud was directly commanded by God. Milton refuted these claims and justified a divine right of resistance. First, Eglon was treated as their own king, hence the presentation of a gift. That is to say, Scripture does not distinguish a foreign enemy from a home-grown tyrant. It is not, he wrote,

distance of place that makes enmitie, but enmity that makes distance. He therefore that keeps peace with me, neer or remote, of whatsoever Nation, is to mee as farr as all civil and human offices an Englishman and a neighbour: but if an Englishman forgetting all Laws, human, civil and religious, offend against life and liberty, to him offended and to the Law on his behalf, though born in the same womb, he is no better then a Turk, a Sarasin, a Heathen.³⁹

In this light, Milton compared Eglon and Charles I, and concluded that “whether or not Eglon was a foreigner, and Charles a countryman of ours, makes no difference, since each was an enemy and a tyrant. If Ehud killed him justly, we too have done justly in putting Charles to death.”⁴⁰ Tyranny and foreign oppression are equivalent. Charles was as bad as Eglon because they were equally harmful to the people in infringing upon life and liberty. The office of a monarch is not in the least sacrosanct: that Charles was recognised as the *English king* by members of the nobility and clergy, according to a centuries-old line of succession, did not give him any special defence against punishment for perceived injustice against the people.

Second, Ehud did not receive a direct command from God. It is true that after the Israelites cried out to God, “the *Lord* raised them up a deliverer,”⁴¹ but Milton maintained that Ehud had no “special warrant from God.” Milton interpreted Ehud’s “deliverance” as based on “just principles” in dealing with tyranny.⁴² Neither Ehud nor the English people needed God’s express command to justify tyrannicide. The appeal to heaven did not

require special prophecy. Thus, the right of resistance need not proceed from divine revelation. The people may exercise this God-given right when they judge their lives and liberties to be threatened.

It is worth noting that Milton made no note of an important detail in the story of Ehud and Eglon. The Israelites were ruled by Eglon for so long because God was punishing them: “the *Lord* strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the *Lord*.” Furthermore, after the death of Ehud, the Israelites again sinned before God and incurred his punishment.⁴³ Milton did not consider these points in his writing, and thus did not draw the possible parallel between Eglon and Charles. If Charles was a tyrant, could he not have been God’s punishment for the sins of the English people?⁴⁴ In addition, were the English deserving of further punishment through a restoration of the monarchy? These inferences would, however, run counter to Milton’s purposes. They suggest that the English, like the Israelites, should have borne the evils of tyranny as God-given punishment, until such time that God raised a deliverer among them. For Milton, tyranny was not worth bearing at any moment. That is to say, the people may act against tyrants themselves, rather than wait for a heaven-sent deliverer. The people should take the initiative; their deliverers are divinely sanctioned because they free them from tyranny. Milton favoured resistance over resignation, freely willed action over divine providence—in the sense of a providence that does not achieve its purposes through free action.

Despite Milton’s view that the killing of Eglon demonstrated the divine justice of punishing tyrants, it is nevertheless the case that the people of Israel did not, through Ehud, execute a king they had themselves desired. Did their demand for a sovereign monarch make any difference, according to the teachings of the Old Testament? Milton argued, on the basis of the book of Samuel, that such kingships were displeasing to God in the first place. When the prophet Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over the Israelites. But they were corrupt and partial, so the people cried out to Samuel to give them a king as in

other nations. Samuel, displeased, prayed to God, who told him that the people had not rejected Samuel, but God himself. God instructed Samuel to tell them of “the manner of the king that shall reign over them”: the king would take their sons, daughters, servants, lands, and goods for his purposes. But the people persisted in their demand, which was consequently acceded to by Samuel and God.⁴⁵

Now, Salmasius had struggled with the antimonarchical tone of this passage of scripture. Samuel was displeased by the demand of the people, and God himself seemed to declare that kings are not good for them. Salmasius emphasised that Samuel did not like the people’s rejection of his sons as judges, and God wished to “gratify his prophet” by showing them his displeasure. According to Milton, Salmasius’s view was that Samuel acted out of preference for his sons’ ambitions over the good of the people, while God spoke thus about royal right to do his prophet a favour.⁴⁶ This reading suggests that God was less than truthful in his depiction of earthly monarchy and that the choice of a king is criticised on a basis other than what is right and holy. In drawing out these conclusions, Milton dismissed a monarchist reading of 1 Samuel 8. On what grounds, then, was the people’s demand displeasing to the divine?

Milton argued that according to 1 Samuel 8, kingship is a form of idolatry. God told Samuel that their demand for a king was a rejection of God’s reign, and added that “According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken men, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.”⁴⁷ Despite all that Samuel had done for them, they spurned his sons as they spurned God. But Milton emphasised God rather than Samuel:

“They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done...wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods.” As if it were considered a kind of idolatry to ask for a king, who requires adoration and worship almost divine.

For Milton, the point is not that the spurning of Samuel’s sons was like the spurning of God since the exodus, but that the demand for a king was, in the sense that setting up a king requires “adoration and worship” which ought to be directed to the one God only.⁴⁸

After all, God himself described the demand as a rejection of his reign, not of Samuel's; and this reading emphasises the rejection of God rather than that of Samuel's sons, who were corrupt. One could argue that the people reasonably demanded a king, because of the injustice perpetrated by the sons of the prophet himself. But Milton took this passage to mean that the institution of a king is always wrong—from a religious point of view—regardless of the justice of their discontent.

Samuel was consequently sent by God to anoint Saul, who would lead God's people. Is the Lord's anointed a special case of a king divinely sanctioned by God? The story of Saul and his successor David was problematic for Milton, because God's anointed king was, in this case, a tyrant. Despite his displeasure at the people's demand, and his words (as reported by Samuel) on what kings are wont to do to the ruled, God chose Saul, who was greatest in goodness among the Israelites. Nevertheless, God's own words to Samuel turned out to be true, and God came to repent(!) his own choice of king. God did not, however, punish Saul for turning against him, but rather raised another man to be anointed by Samuel. Saul grew jealous of David and sought to destroy him.⁴⁹ One might expect that, having become an evil king, perhaps a tyrant, Saul was no longer the Lord's anointed; and that David was now God's instrument to punish Saul for his sins.

But David maintained that Saul continued to be God's anointed king, even when his life was threatened by the latter. When Saul was hunting David, he and his men stopped to rest in a cave where, unknown to them, David and his men were awaiting them. But after cutting off Saul's skirt, David repented of his intended act: "The *Lord* forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the *Lord's* anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the *Lord*." When Saul realised David's restraint, he called him "more righteous than I" and proclaimed David's fitness to be king. Afterward, Saul had David swear not to "cut off his seed" or damage his reputation for posterity. Again, when Saul sought out David with evil intentions, David and Abishai came upon the sleeping Saul, but David prevented Abishai from using his spear against Saul: "for who can stretch

forth his hand against the *Lord's* anointed, and be guiltless?...the *Lord* shall smite him; or his day shall come to die." He even chastised Saul's man Abner for not protecting his master in battle. Upon discovery of what had happened, Saul repented and blessed David as one who will "do great *things*, and also...still prevail."⁵⁰

How did Milton account for David's repeated refusal to kill the *Lord's* anointed? As Salmasius pointed out, Saul acted as a tyrant but seemed to be protected by God from his rightful punishment at the hands of men.⁵¹ It appears, then, that kings are answerable to God, not human beings. As David cried out to God after his acts of murder and adultery, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."⁵² Even David, himself the *Lord's* anointed by Samuel, did not take it upon himself to deliver God's punishment on King Saul. But Milton countered that David was not yet king, and that Saul was his private enemy. We are not, he insisted, bound to regard our monarchs as the *Lord's* anointed and thus immune from earthly punishment. Saul was clearly anointed by God, and David would not kill his private enemy. This situation is different from that of a public enemy punishable according to law by a Senate, Parliament, or Council of State. In other words, the divinely anointed David was bound by law not to kill a private enemy, which is different from resisting a public enemy. As such, anointment is subject to just laws.⁵³

Nevertheless, it appears that God did indeed anoint a king who later intended to kill David, another of the *Lord's* anointed. How can God sanction bad kings? David's punishment of the Amalekite demonstrates the problems this question posed for Milton. After the death of Saul, an Amalekite pretended to have slain Saul. David ordered a man with him to put the Amalekite to death, saying to the latter that "Thy blood *be* upon they head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the *Lord's* anointed."⁵⁴ Not only did David continue to recognise Saul as anointed by God, but he severely punished a man for merely pretending to have slain Saul. Was Saul deserving of such reverence even after death, and the Amalekite deserving of execution? Milton was at pains to counter Salmasius's argument that this passage teaches the sanctity of kings. He

maintained that David sought to appear above suspicion of joining the Philistines by acting in such a way that no-one would think him guilty of conspiracy against the king. Was this motive sufficient justification for such an act? Milton must have thought so, but he did not elaborate. Milton refused to allow that God's anointing can be so powerful as to override justice. The need to clear himself of suspicion must have been important enough to the good of the people that he could justly put the Amalekite to death. Thus, the rule of certain monarchs is not good because God anoints them. Rather, he anoints rulers when their rule is or will be good. As for Saul, who could not be in the right when seeking David's death, Milton was content to show that the rulers of his time were in no way similarly anointed.⁵⁵ The matter of whether or not Saul was an anointed tyrant was put aside by Milton as irrelevant to his purposes, arguably because he realised that his account of anointment was not entirely satisfactory.

In any case, far from providing divine justification for kingly pride, scripture (according to Milton) undermines such claims. The example of Rehoboam was particularly demonstrative of this republican position. Despite Rehoboam's descent from Solomon, the son of David, God decreed that he would lose Israel to Jeroboam. After Solomon died, Jeroboam and the congregation of Israel approached Rehoboam to ask that he lift the yoke upon the people which had been put upon them by Solomon. Rehoboam first consulted the old men who had lived under Solomon, who counselled that if he were servant to the people that day, they would be his servants forever. He then consulted the young men of his own acquaintance, who counselled him to make the yoke heavier. He heeded the counsel of the latter, and told the people that he would add to their yoke by chastising them with scorpions as well as whips. The people answered, "What portion have we in David? neither *have* we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." The people thus rebelled against Rehoboam and made Jeroboam their king. Rehoboam attempted to reclaim dominion, but God (speaking through the prophet Shemaiah) said to him and his allies, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren

the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me."⁵⁶

For Milton, this was the strongest Old Testament evidence of the people's right of resistance. I suggested above that Milton emphasised resistance over resignation in the case of Eglon, as it could be argued that the rule of Eglon was just punishment of the Israelites—that tyranny might be an act of providence. Milton's treatment of Rehoboam is clear evidence of his opposition to this position. God declared that "this thing is from me," but by way of approbation rather than providence. In other words, he did not in this passage tell the Israelites to resist, but instead approved the act once it was done as fulfilling what had been decreed. He intervened only to forbid Rehoboam from making war upon Israel. Moreover, this command was an assertion of the God-given right of the people against that of kings. Even though God was displeased for desiring a king over them, he acceded to their request: their having spurned Rehoboam, God forbade him from warring on them. The people of Israel were not, Milton emphasised, to be called "rebels, but [were] none the less brethren."⁵⁷ If Saul and David were problematic for Milton, Rehoboam rectified the possible incongruency with Old Testament teaching. David and Saul may have been answerable only to God, but the divine sanction for popular resistance to Rehoboam set a new precedent: no more were kings divinely anointed solely by holy lineage. Indeed, the people's revolt against the king was in accordance with God's decree. Sacred history proceeded, in this case, through the free acts of the people of Israel.

It is the acts of the people of Israel that linked the Old Testament to Milton's time. Salmasius contended that the great kings of Israel—Saul and David—were not extraordinary and yet the Lord's anointed. Milton replied with a question: "What was there in Samuel extraordinary? He was a prophet, you will say. So are they today that follow his example, for they act according to the will of God."⁵⁸ What Milton drew from the Old Testament were not examples of the divinity of kingship, but instead the special conditions under which God sanctions monarchical rule. All mortal kings are subject to the people, who are truly God's prophets when acting for their greater good, including freedom from tyranny.

If we compare Hobbes's interpretations of the scriptural passages cited above by Milton, we find that he took neither a royalist nor a republican position on Old Testament kingship. In his reading of the Old Testament, Hobbes sought to avoid a Scylla and Charybdis of interpretations "that contend on one side for too great Liberty," and those "on the other side for too much Authority," as he wrote of his political thought generally.⁵⁹

Not surprisingly, Hobbes regarded Moses' government as an exemplar of absolute sovereignty; but for Hobbes, the divinity of his authority depended on popular consent. Hobbes cited Exodus 20:19 as proof of absolute obedience: "And they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." They took what Moses said to be God's commands: therefore, Moses was an absolute monarch. Now, Salmasius pointed to this unique relationship with God as evidence that he was "king with supreme power."⁶⁰ Hobbes appears to have endorsed this view, but in fact qualified Moses's sovereign authority. The obligation to obey Moses could not come directly from God's command, because God spoke directly to Moses only. Their obligation, then, was based on their belief that Moses was God's lieutenant. Moses' authority was thus grounded in popular consent and "their promise to obey him."⁶¹ Hobbes inferred the promise to obey from the fact of Moses' mediation: "speak thou with us, and we will hear." It follows that if the people did not desire Moses to deliver God's law, the basis of his authority would be taken away.

Despite this qualification, Hobbes's view of Mosaic authority was contrary to Milton's. For Milton, being God's lieutenant meant that Moses was merely God's servant, not absolute lord over the people. His governance was subject to God's commands. In Hobbes's interpretation, however, Moses was no less sovereign in being God's lieutenant and instituted by popular consent. As Hobbes pointed out, Moses alone was allowed to "come neer to God." In other words, he alone "represented to the Israelites the Person of God, that is to say, was their sole Sovereign under God." Later, others—including Aaron

and the Elders—were allowed to see God and to live; but they did not receive the laws to give to the people, as did Moses. Moses was the sole lawgiver, both in the eyes of God and the people who promised to obey him.⁶²

Moreover, in controversies over authority, God maintained Moses as his special representative. We mentioned the case of Aaron and Miriam. Hobbes also examined the rebellion of Korah. Korah the Levite took his men and 250 princes of the assembly of Israel with him to question Moses' and Aaron's status above the people: "why lift up your selves above the congregation of the Lord?" For their disobedience, Korah, those accompanying him, and their families were all destroyed by God.⁶³ Hobbes argued that these two passages prove that "neither Aaron, nor the People, nor any Aristocracy of the Chief Princes of the People, but Moses alone had next under God the Sovereignty over the Israelites."⁶⁴ Paradoxically, God's deed may have confirmed the sovereignty of Moses, but it was the consent of the people that set up Moses', rather than the people's, supremacy over themselves. They consented to God's representation in Moses. Thus, divinely sanctioned monarchy was democratically instituted.

And yet, was not Moses ultimately subordinate to God? As Milton argued, Moses was surely delivering God's law, not his own. But Hobbes placed supreme importance on representation and interpretation. Subjects' interpretation of God's word may take them outside the boundaries permitted by the law set down by their sovereigns. Korah and the others took God's characterisation of the Israelites as his chosen people to mean that Moses and Aaron had no authority over the people. Consequently, God clearly defended Moses' authority against their seditious claims. In terms of the law that they had to obey, Moses was sole representative of God and chief interpreter of his commands. For the people, Moses's law was God's law. This view was demonstrated in Moses' power to approve and authorise prophets. In Numbers 11, God gave the prophetic spirit that was in Moses to seventy Elders of Israel gathered by Moses. Hobbes interpreted "spirit" here as "mind," in that these newly appointed ministers were to have a "mind conformable, and subordinate

to that of Moses.⁶⁵ What is important to note is that for Hobbes, there could be no special revelation beyond Moses' doctrine. That is to say, there can be no knowledge of God's commands without the mediation of a human authority. That was the basis of Moses' sovereignty: "next under God", but supreme in relation to his subjects.

One implication of this teaching is that Moses' authority was, with respect to subjects' obedience, no different from that of other sovereigns. If, as Hobbes argued, the sovereign must not only personate the people but God also—and thus should be the chief interpreter of God's word—then in some respects, the people of Israel regarded Moses in the same way that any people should regard their sovereign, whether monarch, aristocratic body, or assembly of the whole people. Moses' rule was not exceptional in terms of the obedience owed to all sovereigns, from an Hobbesian point of view. As Hobbes remarked, "Moses, and Aaron, and the succeeding High Priests were the Civill Sovereigns."⁶⁶

Hobbes made no direct reference to Deuteronomy 17 or to Ehud and Eglon. With respect to the former, we can conjecture that he would have agreed with Grotius's interpretation of it as being in accordance with 1 Samuel (see below). But what, then, would he have made of Milton's association of domestic tyranny with foreign oppression in his treatment of Ehud and Eglon? Some remarks on Hobbes's account of despotic dominion are pertinent. Milton compared tyranny with foreign rule because both involve the use of illegitimate force against the populace. For Hobbes, however, sovereignty by conquest can be legitimate. Foreign rule can be as binding as that of any English sovereign. The only difference, in his view, between acquired and instituted commonwealths is that the sovereign is chosen by individuals out of fear of the conqueror, not out of fear of each other. Otherwise, the sovereign power is equally legitimate in both.⁶⁷

It is not the conquest itself which creates political obligation but the submission of the vanquished to the will of the victor. In the commonwealth instituted by the people,

each person covenants to authorise and give up his or her right of self-government to a common power on condition that all others do so. In the acquired commonwealth, the relation is not of equal covenanting individuals, but of victor and vanquished. The vanquished covenants to obey the victor and give the victor use of the life and body of the vanquished, as long as the victor preserves the life and bodily liberty of the latter. This contract is distinct from captive slavery, in which one has no bodily liberty and therefore may escape from one's master if one can. In despotic dominion, then, the servant is obligated to obey the master, who may make use of whatsoever the servant possesses as the master sees fit. As with the instituted sovereign, the servant authorises all the actions of the master, even death or other punishment for disobedience.⁶⁸

Despotic dominion may seem unduly harsh to the vanquished. The vanquished seems to enjoy only life and minimal liberty at the mercy of the victor. In fact, however, the limits as well as extent of sovereign power are the same in acquired and instituted commonwealths. If the "Rights and Consequences of both *Paternal* and *Despotical* Dominion, are the very same with those of a Sovereign by Institution", then the rights of subjects are the same too. A sovereign cannot legitimately demand more from a conquered people than from the people who instituted it: "For the Sovereign is absolute over both alike, or else there is no Sovereignty at all; and so every man may Lawfully protect himselfe, if he can, with his own sword, which is the condition of war." The Leviathan is as mighty over the commonwealth in which it was instituted as it is over the commonwealth it has acquired. The converse must then be true: the inalienable rights of parties to the social contract—the right of resisting harm, the right to life and to the means of "preserving life, as not to be weary of it"—belong to the subjects of acquired commonwealths.⁶⁹

This view can be regarded as intended to extinguish Milton's incendiary comparison of tyrant with foreign oppressor, and thus his interpretation of Ehud and Eglon. From a Miltonian perspective, the Hobbesian rights of sovereignty would be oppressive, but such "oppression" would be, for Hobbes, the same for all regimes,

conquered and instituted. The association of tyranny with foreign rule would for Hobbes be a meaningless one, since such terms do not distinguish commonwealths. They only elucidate the preferences of the rhetorician—in this case, Milton. The story of Ehud and Eglon was therefore not an example of divinely sanctioned tyrannicide. Hobbes would agree neither with Milton's argument nor with the opposing view that the killing of Eglon was subject to special conditions (i.e., Eglon was a stranger to Israel, and Ehud had special warrant from God). The issue would simply be that of the legitimate exercise of sovereignty. If Eglon—foreigner or not—was sovereign, then Ehud and the Israelites had no right to resist him. No “special warrant” or “just principle” could serve as a religious pretext for resistance. But if Eglon infringed upon their inalienable rights, then he broke the social covenant and was not sovereign over them. No longer subject to him, one would be in a state of nature and have the right to make war on Eglon or anyone else for one's own defence (as one judges). And so with England's sovereign king, Charles I.

What, then, of God's providence in the case of Eglon? As we noted, Milton did not consider Eglon to be God's punishment of Israel—which is suggested in scripture—likely because his emphasis was on resistance as opposed to resignation. For Hobbes, too, sovereigns could not be seen as unconscious agents of God's punishments, since the sovereign should be supreme interpreter of religious doctrine. Nor did he oppose action to providence. In fact, Hobbes considered divine providence in a way that supported his doctrine of sovereignty. The providential view of Eglon in scripture is that he was the punishment for the sins of the people of Israel. But Hobbes maintained that sin is not the cause of all the suffering in the world. He cited the example of Job, a man who was “perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil,” but who nevertheless was afflicted with great misfortunes: the loss of servants, property, and family, and finally boils from head to toe.⁷⁰ Job's friends tried to explain his suffering as punishment for his sins, but “God himselfe taketh up the matter, and...justified the Affliction by arguments drawn by his Power.” Hobbes went on to argue that the blind man healed by Christ and

even Adam could have justly been afflicted regardless of whether or not they sinned hitherto.⁷¹ In other words, God's justice is based on his omnipotence, not the punishment of sins and rewards for virtue. If natural adversity is simply God's power, then the perceived "tyranny" of Eglon could not possibly be God's punishment. More importantly, this understanding of divine providence ran counter to conceptions of the divine justice of tyrants or punishing tyrants. That is to say, Hobbes's argument that we should not judge our earthly sovereigns by a heavenly standard of justice was supported by his view of God's sovereignty as based simply on his omnipotence. We cannot know God's ways; we can only recognise his infinite power. We are then left with the only human authority between ourselves and God: our lawful sovereigns.

Hobbes had further to account for the "idolatrous" demand (as Milton termed it) of the people of Israel for a king. What Milton regarded as God's warning of the "manner of the king that shall rule over you" was interpreted by Hobbes to be God's description of the rights of kings. God decreed that the king be entitled to absolute power, and that his subjects "shall be his servants." Above all, the king is commander of the militia, supreme judge, and chief prophet. The supremacy over religion was reflected in his power to deprive even the high priests of their ecclesiastical offices.⁷² Thus, there was a clear difference between Hobbes's and others' translations of 1 Samuel 8:11: for Hobbes (and Calvin, for that matter), "the Right of the king"; for Milton (and the King James Version of the Bible, among others), "the manner of the king." The translation depends on whether or not God was discouraging the people from choosing a king. But Hobbes's reading was more nuanced if we consider his concept of rights, which are in themselves distinct from what is morally right. Rights are liberties which are restricted by the laws, civil and natural.⁷³ In this case, God was prescribing the sovereign's rights without asserting their goodness.

Indeed, Hobbes's interpretation of this passage was a complex one. Putting aside a more complex analysis of the issue of ecclesiastical authority for the next chapter, we can

nevertheless address Hobbes's view of the implications of the demand for a king. For Milton, Salmasius held the confused view that God was displeased mainly because Samuel's sons had been rejected, so that he instructed Samuel to tell the people what a king would or was entitled to do. Milton's view was that the rejection of God constituted a form of idolatry. Hobbes criticised the people of Israel as well, but not for choosing a king other than God. As Beiner argues, the Hebrews were justified in overthrowing priestly rule, which in *De Cive* Hobbes regarded as inherently unstable.⁷⁴ But in *Leviathan*, Hobbes did question their purposes in demanding a king. The Israelites rejected God's reign but not the religion handed down to them through Moses. They wanted a civil sovereign who could not change their religion and thus would not have supremacy over religious matters—a power which, Hobbes said, God prescribed to all sovereigns in the Book of Samuel. In consequence, “they alwaies kept in store a pretext, either of Justice, or Religion, to discharge them selves of their obedience, whensoever they had hope to prevaile.” They clung to the religion of Moses as a pretext for disobedience, if they came to be displeased with their kings. Thus, 1 Samuel 8 was demonstrative of the imperfect sovereignty of the Jewish kingdoms, which led to the “civill troubles, divisions, and calamities of the Nation.”⁷⁵ Hobbes took this passage to mean that the Jewish people's demand was questionable because they would not accept the absolute sovereignty of any king. Indeed, Hobbes's views on the Book of Samuel were critical of persons such as Milton who used religion for seditious purposes.

Hobbes's treatment of God's anointing of Saul and David reveals further contrasts with Milton on the depiction of kingship in the Old Testament. We saw that on several occasions, David—anointed by God to be future king—refused to kill Saul, despite the latter's sinful ways and desire to murder David, because Saul was also the Lord's anointed. Milton maintained that the “public enemies” of the present—tyrants such as Charles I—cannot be compared with David's private enemy who was seeking his death. More forceful but also more problematic was Milton's insistence that the kings of modern times cannot be

compared with the ancient Jewish kings; and that even if they were God's anointed, modern kings would still be answerable to the people and laws, not just directly to God. Hobbes argued, however, that all sovereigns, past and present, should be considered God's anointed. It is as true of modern sovereigns as it was of David, who cried out to God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."⁷⁶ In killing an innocent subject, David acted against equity, the law of nature, but not against justice. That is to say, by reason of the social contract, justice—the keeping of covenants made—can never be violated by the sovereign. But the sovereign may act inequitably, i.e., it may deal unequally between its subjects (in this case, punishing a man with death even though he was as law-abiding as other men in the commonwealth). In sum, injustice cannot be committed by the sovereign against a subject, but inequity may be committed before God. David's sinful act "was not an Injurie to *Uriah* [the subject]; but to *God*."⁷⁷ David was interpreted as uttering what would be a central distinction in Hobbes's theory of sovereignty thousands of years later.

In this interpretation, the divine anointing of kings loses a transcendent meaning. Milton explained David's execution of the Amalekite for merely pretending to have killed Saul as an act proceeding from just motives. He could not accept that an unjust act of a ruler could become just because the ruler is God's anointed. Hobbes, in contrast, had quite a different conception of what such anointing entails. As we saw, in putting an innocent subject to death, David injured God, not the subject. Even if the execution of the Amalekite was unduly harsh, the injury would be against God only. Justice entails obedience to the laws of the sovereign, which applies to God's kingdom as much as it did to the English monarchy or as it does to modern sovereign states. Hobbes agreed neither with Milton's position that kings are anointed by God if and only if they are just, nor with the position that kings are just simply because they are the Lord's anointed. Instead, they are God's anointed and their acts are just because they possess sovereign power (by right). Milton argued that one must be specially qualified to be anointed of God, thus distinguishing between the holy kings of old and the kings of the present. Hobbes, in contrast, regarded

divine anointing as consequent to sovereignty, so that all sovereigns must be God's anointed. Hobbes brought Saul and David down to earth with Charles I and the modern state.

How, then, did Hobbes explain the story of Rehoboam, in which God seemed to approve the rebellion of the people? Hobbes cited Rehoboam as an example of the sovereign's duty not to oppress or permit the oppression by the "great" of ordinary citizens. Rehoboam followed the counsel of the young men who were now great because of his accession to the throne. The rebellion of Israel was the outcome of Rehoboam's haughtiness and pride against what Hobbes called "the strongest element of the commonwealth," i.e., the common people. It is at the sovereign's peril to provoke the common people into hostility merely because of their inferior social status. Such actions, whether of sovereigns or nobility, is "both inequitable and dangerous to the commonwealth." Hobbes cited the Beggars' Revolt as a modern warning.⁷⁸ This interpretation of Rehoboam's loss of Israel shows another important aspect of Hobbes's view of sovereignty. 1 Samuel 8 was taken to confirm the sovereign's supremacy over war and peace, law, and religion. Without denying the absolute nature of sovereign power, Hobbes here stated that the sovereign has a duty not to commit inequity against the people. The people do not have a right not to be oppressed, but the sovereign still has the duty not to oppress, by reason not of injustice but of inequity and imprudent policy. The reaction of Israel to Rehoboam's intent to oppress was understandable and demonstrative of this particular duty of the sovereign.

Nevertheless, the violation of the sovereign's duty not to oppress is not a legitimate pretext for disobedience. Hobbes was careful to seek to curb oppression without granting a right of rebellion. God commanded Rehoboam not to wage war against the people of Israel. Milton interpreted this command as divine sanction of popular resistance to tyrants: God's punishment through popular revolt. Hobbes, however, pointed out that Israel sought Jeroboam to rule over it. "Rehoboam was no Idolater; but when the people thought

him an Oppressor; that Civil pretence carried from him ten Tribes to Jeroboam an Idolater.”⁷⁹ The incident was ambiguous: God would not permit Rehoboam to fight Israel, but Israel turned to an idolater and thus away from God. Hobbes seems to have thought that Rehoboam was wrong, but that so were the people of Israel. Rehoboam’s act of war was inequitable, but Israel’s rebellion was unjust. A sovereign’s perceived oppression—whether real or not—is no pretext for rebellion. Thus, Hobbes upheld the principle that sovereigns may only commit injuries against God. Nevertheless, their inequitable acts against the people carry certain consequences. Good government involves the duty not to oppress, but this duty does not engender a correlative right of rebellion.⁸⁰

Hobbes’s treatment of kingship in the Old Testament—with respect to those passages particularly significant to Milton—was as novel as Milton’s. While Milton drew from those examples divine approbation of resisting tyranny, Hobbes assimilated the examples to very earthbound principles of sovereignty. If Milton’s innovation was to interpret the Bible to justify popular revolution, Hobbes’s was to show that history—sacred as well as profane—demonstrated his political science.⁸¹ It is clear, moreover, that Hobbes’s readings were opposite to those of Milton. The overriding lesson throughout the examples of Moses, Eglon, Samuel, Saul, David, and Rehoboam was that religious pretexts for resisting lawful sovereigns as tyrants were detrimental to peace.

The King of Kings

The New Testament raised further complications for both Milton and Hobbes. In the previous section, we saw their views on the justice and divinity of various Old Testament kings. With respect to Jesus Christ, however, his justice and divinity were not causes for controversy in the same way between the two thinkers. The central question we shall address here was how to understand the teachings of Christ—who rules over a kingdom of which “there shall be no end,”⁸² and yet who did not take on earthly rule in the time covered by the Gospels and early Christian texts—as they pertain to Milton’s and

Hobbes's political teachings. As in the previous section, I shall examine Milton's interpretations of passages in the New Testament of significance to his political thought, and then contrast them with Hobbes's interpretations. I shall begin with Milton's interpretation of Christian teachings concerning earthly sovereigns, whereupon I shall proceed to his treatment of passages dealing with the limits of earthly rule and the kingdom of heaven.

Milton acknowledged that certain scriptural passages—particularly the writings of the Apostles—appeared to preach quiet obedience to the powers that be. St. Paul wrote to the Romans, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained by God.” What is problematic, from a Miltonian point of view, is that Paul's counsel made all earthly rulers out to be the Lord's anointed. As we saw above, Milton argued that the kings of his time—and most rulers throughout history, for that matter—could not be compared to Old Testament kings such as David. Here, it appears that obedience to all political authorities was commanded by God: “ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” Paul invoked Christ's commands to render what is due to the powers that be as “God's ministers,” and to love one another.⁸³ Thus, the faithful observance of God's law was consistent with political obedience, not resistance.

In the first *Defence*, Milton countered that what constitutes the “powers that be” is open to interpretation. Salmasius maintained that it is the powers “that *now* be” which were meant, i.e., the present rulers of one's country. For the Roman Christians whom Paul was addressing, this passage referred to Nero. The early Christians owed obedience to the tyrant Nero, who was active in their persecution. The implication is that obedience was owed to Charles, notwithstanding the accusations of tyranny levelled against his reign. Milton, however, claimed to turn Salmasius's argument against himself. At the time of writing, the republican Commonwealth was in power. By Salmasius's reasoning, obedience was owed to this regime, not to the monarchy. This objection seems principally

rhetorical: Milton sought to expose contradictions in Salmasius's argument. But his point may have been more substantial than it appears. Anticipating that his opponent's contention was that the deposing of Charles was illegitimate, Milton was arguing that Romans 13 cannot be used simply to preach obedience to powers that now be, unless one is willing to endure republics and monarchies alike. To be a political teaching about what is owed to what forms of government, Paul's letter to the Romans must be interpreted as having explicated God's preferences with respect to earthly rule. In other words, Romans 13 either commands obedience to Nero, Charles, and the Commonwealth (depending on who is in power), or it is a specific teaching on political legitimacy and illegitimacy. For Milton, even if the powers that be referred to current rulers, Paul's reference must have been to Claudius, Nero's predecessor, or to Nero in the first years of his reign.⁸⁴ That is to say, these rulers were to be obeyed because they were just, not because they ruled.

Thus, Milton read Romans 13 as a condemnation of tyranny, not as a teaching of acquiescence. Saying that "there is no power but of God" may have meant that rulers do God's work, but it also means that all government comes ultimately from God. Milton pointed out that every soul is subject to the higher powers: not only the souls of the people, but the souls of kings too. And if God's law is supreme, then every king is subject to it, and therefore to the people, who are truly God's anointed. Milton's interpretation here is similar to his reading of Moses' kingship. Moses was the greatest of kings, but even he was subordinate to God's law.⁸⁵

Furthermore, if rulers are subject to the higher powers, then tyrants are disqualified from being ordained by God. Paul wrote that "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."⁸⁶ Rather than prescribing obedience to tyrants, this pronouncement stripped tyrants of legitimate authority. By breaking God's law in doing evil works against the people, tyrants resist the higher power and thus God's ordinance. The people do not owe obedience to tyrants and are not forbidden from resisting them because they have ceased to be lawful magistrates ordained by God. We would "be

resisting...a robber,...a public enemy.” If possessing power were the sole requisite to divine ordinance, then, Milton wrote, the devil would by this reasoning be a lawful magistrate.⁸⁷ Milton turned what Salmasius regarded as a doctrine of quiet obedience into a subtle criticism of tyranny. For him, it was inconceivable that obedience to tyrants could be a part of Christian duty. Milton’s Christianity was of an active, this-worldly sort, in which all earthly powers obey God’s will.

Milton encountered more difficulty with St. Peter’s epistle to the persecuted Christians of Asia Minor, in which Peter was explicit about obedience owed to earthly rulers. There was no ambiguity in his choice of words: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the kings, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well...For so is the will of God.”⁸⁸ As with Claudius in Romans 13, Milton focused on the particular context in which this epistle was written. The persons to whom his letter was addressed were scattered strangers in various countries. They had, he wrote, “no other right than what the laws of hospitality entitled them to.” If they had been “natural-born subjects...[or] the very Senate of Rome,” their submission would be of a different character. That is to say, subjects’ obedience must be regarded in its specific legal context. Foreigners cannot question the laws of the lands where they find themselves, but citizens, parliaments, and officials—upon whom kings depend—cannot be bound to laws “beyond the extent of [the] reason” for which the law was made. Kings and governors are “appointed by God,” but for a reason: to punish evildoers and praise those who do well, as in the quotation above. Our submission is by the will of God, but “as free” (verse 16), not as slaves.⁸⁹ The relations between popular assembly and king are of a different kind from an early Christian diaspora in foreign lands. The political teachings of Christianity referred, in Milton’s view, directly to subject and ruler. Milton interpreted the passivity of 1 Peter 2:13 as inapplicable to duties of free citizens.

The third major passage which Milton grappled with was St. Paul’s first epistle to

Timothy. Paul instructed Timothy to offer prayers “for all men; For Kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”⁹⁰ Again, Milton asserted that the king at the time of the writing of this letter was Claudius, not Nero. Moreover, he interpreted “all men” as the people, and distinguished the kings one should pray for—so that our lives may be lived in “goodliness and honesty”—from beasts. He referred to the Second Epistle to Timothy, written by Paul while imprisoned in Rome. Paul remarked that “the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me...and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion,”⁹¹ which Milton regarded as a characterisation of Nero: not as king but as “savage beast.” Given that “a quiet and peaceable life” is to be attained “in goodliness and honesty,” Milton concluded that the latter condition may demand resistance rather than submission. Citing Livy, Milton adduced the example of the Samnites, “who had tried both conditions...[and] had gone to war again because war, with freedom, was less intolerable than peace with slavery.”⁹²

It was in this interpretation of 1 and 2 Timothy that Milton was more forthright in countering the supposed political quietism of Christianity. Romans 13 taught that tyrants disobey God and that the people were not forbidden from resisting them. 2 Peter 13 implied that unconditional submission applies only to foreigners. Thus far, Christian teaching was presented as passively republican, i.e., as critical of tyranny without advocating active resistance. Here, however, Milton argued for an actively republican understanding of scripture. The people are to be prayed for, and tyrants are beasts, not properly kings (or even human). Accordingly, Milton interpreted “godliness and honesty” as a crucial qualification of peace and tranquillity. Peace under a tyrant is not a free peace. Considering the Roman examples of popular freedom through war, war in such a case was, for Milton, preferable to peace. In other words, Milton’s Christianity included a divine sanction for war against tyranny. Thus, we have Milton’s own version of a “paganised” Christianity.⁹³

Milton attempted to square a republican Christianity with an otherworldly messiah

by arguing that the teachings of Christ were in opposition to tyranny. He tackled a passage often cited as evidence of Christ's quietism. Seeking to trick Jesus into speaking against the Roman emperor, the Pharisees sent followers to ask him whether "it is lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not..." Realising their intent, Jesus called them hypocrites and asked them to show him a penny. He then posed the question of whose image and superscription were upon the penny. After replying that they were of Caesar, he said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."⁹⁴ Did Christ preach the separation of worldly duties (paying taxes) from otherworldly duties (e.g., prayer)? Do the two jurisdictions overlap or not?

Milton interpreted Christ's response as indicative of his hostility to Caesar and kings generally who are in power. Milton argued that Christ's anger confirmed the Pharisees' view that his teachings "upon the right of kings were *not* agreeable to kings." Milton acknowledged the ambiguity of the response, considering the situation that Jesus was put in: not that of disciples seeking to know God's teaching, but of men instructed to provoke Jesus into seditious speech. Still, his brief response was revealing for Milton. Its importance lay not in granting Caesar dominion over material things, but in its assertion that not all things are due to Caesar. Among them are what is due to the people, and our liberty. If, as a free people, we are owned only by God, not by the king, then we are *a fortiori* not the property of a wicked and unjust tyrant.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, did not rendering the penny to Caesar give kings some right over the people's property? Perhaps our lives and liberty should be rendered to none but God, but one could regard material possessions as belonging by right to the ruler, considering Jesus' response in Matthew 22 and the futility of possession expressed in other teachings: for example, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures up on earth...[but] in heaven"; or "If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come *and* follow me."⁹⁶ If material possessions are a hindrance to godliness, then the Christian should regard paying tribute or having property seized with

indifference, with respect to getting into the kingdom of heaven. But Milton denied that Matthew 22 was a doctrine of kingship, particularly the royal right of property. He argued that if the imprinting of face or name were what denoted ownership, then rulers could appropriate property merely by writing their names on it. But if the property already belonged to Caesar—Salmasius's view—then the right of property was pre-existent to inscribed name or image. Since neither explanation made much sense, Milton concluded that this passage was not about property rights at all. Instead, Jesus meant to “expose the malice and wickedness of the hypocritical Pharisees.”⁹⁷ In sum, Jesus' answer was obscure. As for the reading of this passage as expressing the relative unimportance of paying tribute, Milton's interpretation of other parts of Gospel sought to establish that the kingdom of heaven could be approached through political revolution.

Indeed, Milton maintained that Christ's attitude towards earthly kings was not one of humble submission. When certain Pharisees told Jesus that Herod planned to kill him, he replied, “Go ye, and tell that fox” of his healing and exorcising powers “for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.”⁹⁸ He appeared on earth as a meek carpenter, but was forthright in his characterisation of a king's plot to kill his subject as a “right not kingly but foxy.”⁹⁹ Moreover, tyrannical government may be understood as instituted by the devil. As we saw in the previous chapter, the tyrant Nimrod was linked to Satan's rebellion in *Paradise Lost*. Similarly, Milton emphasised the connection between worldly kingdoms and the devil. Before his ministry, Jesus wandered in the wilderness. The devil tried to tempt him to use his powers, and taking him atop a mountain, showed him all the world's kingdoms. “All this power,” said the devil, “will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it. If thou wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” The chief antagonist of the king of kings is the prince of the world. Thus, Milton turned Christ's otherworldliness to his advantage. Christ's enemies are the devil and the kings who derive their power from the devil: kings like “the fox” Herod, and even the beast who is given power by the dragon, as prophesied in the Book of

Revelations.¹⁰⁰ The battle between good and evil in Milton's reading pits Christ and his disciples against worldly tyrants led by the devil.

The life and teachings of Jesus were in opposition to proud kings. For Milton, the person of the Christ—the Messiah and Saviour—was a symbol of revolution. The key scriptural passage is Mary's prophetic speech when she learned that she would be the mother of God: "He hath shown strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from *their seats*, and exalted them of low degree."¹⁰¹ In Milton's view, Mary spoke of the saviour's appearance as a promise of divine justice to be fulfilled upon the heads of tyrants. It is a call to arms addressed to Christian revolutionaries:

And wherefore did his Mother the Virgin *Mary* give such praise to God in her profetic song, that he had now by the coming of Christ *Cutt down Dynasta's or proud Monarchs from the throne*, if the Church, when God manifests his power in them to doe so, should rather choose all miserie and vassalage to serve them...Surely it is not for nothing that tyrants by a kind of natural instinct both hate and feare none more than the true Church and Saints of God, as the most dangerous enemies and subverters of Monarchy, though indeed of tyranny...

This passage is notable not only for its Independentist conception of "church" (which will be examined in the next chapter), but also for its assertion that Christ came to earth to free us, in a political as well as spiritual sense. The church of true believers has a political mission initiated by Jesus Christ: "the dissolution of all tyranny." Milton argued that the inward spiritual freedom given by God through Christ was accompanied with civil liberty. The prophecy of Mary could not be understood to have only an otherworldly meaning. The promise of Christ must include a pulling-down of tyrants in this life as well as the next.¹⁰² In this way, Christ was the only true king of the proud.

Of course, Christ did not, while on earth, abolish tyranny for all time. Rather, he became a teacher and living example of civil liberty against tyrants. For Milton, this view was expressed in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather. For he that is called in the Lord, *being* free, is Christ's servant. Ye are brought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."¹⁰³ The distinction here between human and divine servitude is key to understanding

Jesus Christ. Jesus was born and lived in this world in a humble station, a servant to other men. But as the son of God, all human beings are servants to him, including kings and tyrants. Moreover, he taught Christians to be free from being servants to men.¹⁰⁴ For Milton, not only were Christians, as God's servants, already free from servitude to men (inward liberty), but they were also commanded to serve God by resisting human servitude (civil liberty). Christ taught that we should not be servants to men, but only to God. Therefore, inward liberty was to be accompanied with the outward liberty owed to God's people.¹⁰⁵

This doctrine of political resistance was shown, for example, in Christ's teaching against excessive taxation and oppression generally. When Jesus and his disciples came into Capernaum, the collectors of tribute asked Simon Peter if his master paid tribute. Replying that he did, Peter went into the house but was stopped by Jesus, who asked, "What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free." Nevertheless, to avoid giving offence, he instructed Peter to give them a piece of money fished up from the sea.¹⁰⁶ Milton thought that the tribute was paid to Herod, who was imposing excessive tribute on his own subjects. Nonetheless, whether "children" meant a king's subjects or children of God generally, the argument is that as citizens and Christians, the king has no right to draw excessive tribute. Jesus gave the collectors money only to avoid obstacles to his ministry. His words applied not only to the subject of taxation. If he denied kings the right of excessive tribute, then *a fortiori* he denied them the right to "spoil and plunder, to massacre and torture their own citizens, especially Christians."¹⁰⁷

We may recall that the English Parliament opposed King Charles's right to exact ship-money, a tax laid upon the English counties to finance ship-building. Even when the tax was not imposed, Parliament resisted the king's right to it as oppressive. We can infer from Hobbes's account that Parliament resisted not only royal taxation *per se*, but also any

funds that would strengthen the king's hand in armed conflict.¹⁰⁸ In a similar vein to Parliament's demand, Milton inveighed against the king's right to exact excessive tribute. How does one judge what is excessive? It seems that, for Parliament as well as for Milton, the people will decide. Moreover, in light of Matthew 17, the people as God's children have Christ's own testament of their entitled freedom against oppression.

Indeed, Christ was even depicted as laying out the principles of a free commonwealth, the type of regime advocated by Milton especially on the eve of the Restoration. The key passages referred to the same incident. The mother of Zebedee's sons approached Jesus, and asked that he let them sit, one to his right and one to his left, in his kingdom. He baptised the sons, and proclaimed that their places would be given to them by his father. The ten remaining disciples were indignant when they heard this, but Jesus said to them,

Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.¹⁰⁹

One possible interpretation of this passage is that humility and service to others is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven. Milton went further, pointing out that Christ made a direct reference to Gentile kingship. He linked Christ's declaration that Gentile dominion shall not be the way of his kingdom with the people's request of Samuel that he "make us a king to judge us like all the nations."¹¹⁰ In both cases, God condemned the desire for dominion. Just as God instructed Samuel to tell the people of what oppression they would suffer under a king, the son of God told his disciples that lordship is not God's way. Contrary to the practice of Gentile kings, the greatest in God's kingdom must be the servant and minister of the others. Thus, a Christian king must be "the people's servant...if he would be lord and master out and out, he cannot at the same time be Christian."¹¹¹

Christ's words were more than a lesson for kings to act as the people's servants. He sketched out the key principle of a free commonwealth. Milton supposed that

Zebedee's sons thought that the kingdom of God would soon appear on earth. By 1660, he concluded that it is a free commonwealth which would come closest among all earthly governments to Christ's precepts,

wherin they who are greatest, are perpetual servants and drudges to the public at thir own cost and charges, neglect thir own affairs; yet are not elevated above thir brethren; live soberly in thir families, walk the streets as other men, may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration.

After this picturesque description of the free commonwealth's public servants, Milton compared proud monarchies with the best regime:

...it is well and happy for the people if thir King be but a cypher, being oft times a mischief, a pest, a scourge of the nation, and which is worse, not to be remov'd, not to be controul'd, much less accus'd or brought to punishment, without a common ruin, without the shaking and almost subversion of the whole land. Whereas in a free Commonwealth, any governor or chief counselor offending, may be remov'd and punishd without the least commotion.¹¹²

Thus, if this sense of liberty from oppression is what was meant by Christ's teaching that the greatest in his kingdom will be servant, then the free commonwealth advocated by Milton would almost be the kingdom of God on earth. The rule of Christ, the king of kings, would be manifest in a free commonwealth where kings and magistrates could be easily pulled down when the people judge that they are being oppressed.

It should come as no surprise that scriptural passages preaching obedience to earthly rulers did not pose a problem for Hobbes. Moreover, Hobbes was critical of republican interpretations of the New Testament. Now, Milton interpreted Romans 13 in order to contradict the view that all sovereigns are like David, whereas Hobbes interpreted this passage to support his view that Moses and David were like all earthly sovereigns. Quoting Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:13, Hobbes pointed out that St. Paul and Peter preached to "infidels," who were ruling at the time of their writing. If infidel "Princes, and Powers" were to be obeyed, "much more therefore we are to obey these Christians, whom God hath ordained to have Sovereign Power over us." Moreover, Hobbes quoted the passage in Romans where it is written that all power is ordained of God.¹¹³ In effect, Christian rulers do not, relative to other sovereign powers, enjoy any special privileges. In terms of

political obedience, all sovereigns are equally “ordained of God” and “God’s ministers.” Since God commands the laws of nature which prescribe peace, even the non-Christian sovereign ministers to God’s purpose. Milton thought that the unconditional submission to the sovereign’s commands applied only to foreigners, not subjects, whereas Hobbes interpreted these passages to mean that Christian subjects owe obedience even to infidel kings.¹¹⁴

Hobbes’s reading of the reasons for obedience in Romans 13 was in striking contrast to Milton’s characterisation of tyrants as savage beasts, and not deserving of prayer. Hobbes emphasised Paul’s teaching to obey the higher powers not out of fear but out of conscience’ sake. “Christians are to tolerate their Heathen princes,” for example, not because they are forced to but because they ought to. Accordingly, Hobbes argued, Jesus did not depose Caesar or Pontius Pilate, even though as the son of God, he had legions of angels at his command.¹¹⁵ Now, according to his reading of 1 Timothy 2, Milton argued that “goodliness and honesty” may require that we oppose tyrants as savage beasts. Hobbes’s view would run counter to this line of argument. If obedience is owed to all sovereigns for conscience’ sake, then “goodliness and honesty” entail submission rather than resistance. The quiet and peaceable life mentioned in Timothy would in all respects be preferred to the war with freedom of the Samnites, as cited by Milton.

Hobbes was thus an opponent of a Miltonian-style paganisation of Christianity. If God commands earthly obedience for our own good, Hobbes asked, then how can the Christian religion be a pretext for civil war? He concluded that modern incitors of such conflicts were followers of Aristotle and Roman writers after Aristotle. As we saw in a previous section, Hobbes’s interest was in how Aristotle has been interpreted. Here, he particularly referred to the (neo-)Aristotelian view that virtue and vice is measured not by law but by “praise and blame among the citizens.” The seditious readers and scholars of Greek and Roman thought accordingly decried the monarchy as tyranny.¹¹⁶ From an Hobbesian perspective, then, the reading of 1 Timothy and Revelations that purported that

the present king was more properly called a beast was itself an abuse of scripture. It was contrary to the true teaching of the Bible, which was for Hobbes that earthly obedience is good for us. He opposed the notion that subjection to the higher powers entails that the people can judge if the king has violated God's law, or that kings who oppress the people also resist God and thus are no longer sovereign. These views were not, in his view, grounded in scripture. Instead, they were neo-classical republican abuses of scripture for seditious ends, and with disastrous consequences for peace.¹¹⁷

If the obedience to the powers that be is good, then was not obedience owed to Cromwell's commonwealth when he was in power? Since Hobbes's overriding concern was peace, he read Romans 13 and other passages differently than did Milton and Salmasius. The three forms of government are all valid, as long as sovereign power is absolute, so that the "powers that be" could be the English people if the government were a democracy. What Hobbes would not allow was a republican reading of scripture which exalts the people as subjects above their sovereigns. From this perspective, the religiously based revolution culminating in Cromwell's rule was illegitimate.¹¹⁸

The differences between Hobbes's readings of the New Testament and those of Milton can also be seen in his interpretations of Christ's own teachings as recorded in the Gospels. We examined Milton's attempt to show that Christ's command to render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's did not establish the king's unlimited right to their subjects' property. Hobbes, however, regarded this passage as evidence of our obligation to pay taxes imposed by the sovereign. Moreover, that the sovereign's word is sufficient reason for giving up property, when needed, was shown by the fact that the recommendation came from Jesus himself, as "King of the Jewes." After all, the property rights of subjects are not inviolable by the sovereign: "the Property which a subject hath in his lands, consisteth in a right to exclude all other subjects from the use of them; and not to exclude their Sovereign, be it an Assembly, or a Monarch."¹¹⁹ Thus, the sovereign's right of property is not a result of an image or superscription, which merely *signifies* the right.

Nor does it render subjects' property rights meaningless, since the reason that subjects may have to give up property has to do with the sovereign's assurance of peace and equity, and its protection of property right from the invasion of others. The exaction of taxes does not constitute invasion.¹²⁰

What of Milton's view that rendering to God means that some things are not due to Caesar? Hobbes did not limit sovereign right on the grounds that some things are due only to God. In his reference to this scriptural passage, Hobbes mentioned only the rendering to Caesar and omitted the rendering to God. From an Hobbesian perspective, with respect to political obedience, it would not be pertinent to assert that some things are owed to God and not to Caesar. Since God commands that we obey the laws of nature, which include obedience to the sovereign's laws, rendering to Caesar what is his is equivalent to rendering to God what is owed to God. There may be some things which are due uniquely to God--such as the obligation (in conscience only) to obey the laws even if there is no sovereign power --but such duties should not contradict the obedience owed to one's sovereign.¹²¹

This last point was part of Hobbes's argument that the life and ministry of Jesus were not in opposition to worldly governments. Like Milton, Hobbes recognised that Jesus did not assume the reins of power in his lifetime, however much he was entitled to them. But Hobbes did not regard the earthly kingdoms of Christ's or our day as the devil's work. Indeed, Hobbes's only reference to the devil's mountain was as a metaphor for his *Behemoth* dialogues, in which one interlocutor shows the other a prospect of injustice and folly: not those in power, but the fomenters of sedition.¹²² Hobbes did not oppose the king of kings to the princes of the world, because his kingdom is yet to be. When questioned by Pontius Pilate, Christ answered that "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."¹²³ In his time on earth, he acted not as king but as redeemer and saviour: "he that *redeemeth*, hath no title to the *thing redeemed*,

before *the Redemption*, and Ransome paid; and this Ransome was the Death of the Redeemer." In other words, Jesus had no right to the hostage (sinful humanity) until the ransom was paid (his death). Since covenants extorted by fear are valid, Christ was bound to perform his part before he could claim right over the people. After his death and resurrection, however, Christ returned to heaven. Thus, the kingdom of Christ, in which he is to rule as king present in body, will come about at his return to earth. Only at the time of the general resurrection and final judgement will Christ be our sovereign, properly speaking.¹²⁴

In the meantime, we are subject to our earthly sovereigns. Hobbes drew the reader's attention to Matthew 23:2-3, where Jesus told the multitude, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not." Hobbes quoted a major part of this passage, which commanded obedience to the Jewish authorities. He omitted the remaining part perhaps because Christ's denunciation of their hypocrisy was irrelevant to Hobbes's purposes. What is important to note is that they were ascribed "kingly power" by Christ when he was on earth. Likewise, as we have noted, Hobbes interpreted Jesus as commanding obedience to Caesar in the matter of taxation. Whatever the complications of obeying the Jewish authorities and Caesar—since his comments on despotal dominion would suggest that the Romans were sovereign over the Jews—the central point here was that Christ's teaching should not be interpreted as countenancing resistance to the powers that be.¹²⁵

Even though Jesus preached earthly obedience while he lived, will he not return to judge peoples and monarchs? For Milton, the Messiah was a revolutionary figure: Christ the lord and punisher of proud monarchs and dynasties, as announced by Mary. He was the only true king of the proud, representing in his life, death, and resurrection the promise of civil as well as spiritual liberty. Hobbes, however, interpreted Christ's mission on earth and the character of his kingship in a very different light. The purpose of his first coming

was not to set us free in a political sense, but to prepare humanity for the kingdom of heaven. He came to renew the covenant of this kingdom, since the old covenant with Moses expired when the Israelites were given a king by Samuel and God. Since the old covenant ended, Israel was subject to earthly sovereigns. But with the new covenant, the people of Israel--and of the world generally--were not thereby freed from submission to their respective sovereigns. Christ announced a new kingdom of heaven which would include Jew and Gentiles, and taught humanity how it must live to enjoy immortality when this kingdom is established. This kingdom will not, however, be established until the second coming.¹²⁶ A king--even the son of God--must be present in body for his kingdom to exist. In the meantime, notwithstanding the new covenant made by Christ in his lifetime, we are not bound to the new covenant until the divine sovereign takes his throne. The interregnum of earthly sovereigns, monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic, applies until the day of final judgement.¹²⁷

The condition for the new covenant to be binding may seem restrictive, especially of the son of God. Why is it that Christ's kingdom cannot be present through intermediaries and representatives? For Hobbes, Christ's sovereignty will not be radically different from that of sovereigns generally. He brought even the son of God down to the human level. As king, Christ will be "subordinate, or Vicegerent of God the Father, as Moses was in the wilderness." Hobbes compared Christ and Moses in several ways: Christ's office with Moses as prophet of God; Christ's choice of twelve apostles to sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes in his kingdom, with Moses' choice of twelve princes to govern the tribes of Israel; Christ's ordination of seventy disciples to preach his kingdom and salvation, with Moses' authorisation of seventy elders to act as prophets; and so on. He concluded that Christ's authority "as man," i.e., in his kingdom at the second coming, is to be like that of Moses: as the lieutenant of God, the highest authority. Moreover, like Moses, Christ can be regarded as God's representative. The one God, maintained Hobbes, was represented by different persons.¹²⁸ Christ is above all similar to

Moses in this key respect: he will be God's representative to the people.

Christ's personation of God and the other similarities to Moses' authority are contrary to an otherworldly conception of his kingdom properly conceived. We saw with Hobbes's treatment of Moses that even as God's sole representative and chief interpreter of his commands, Moses' authority was no different from that of all other sovereigns. That is to say, it is part of sovereign authority to represent God to the people (even if the sovereign is an assembly of the people), not because the sovereign is divine, but because of the seditious consequences of allowing that God's representative may be other than the sovereign. It follows that for Hobbes, Christ's authority at the establishment of his kingdom will in some ways be the same as that of human sovereigns. Hobbes did not deny Christ's divinity. Instead, by making Christ's sovereignty substantially similar to that of all other sovereign powers, he countered the view that the kingdom of heaven is a standard by which to evaluate the sovereign states on earth. Far from favouring a certain kind of government as closest to itself (as did Milton), Christ's kingdom underscores the legitimacy of the earthly powers that be.¹²⁹

The Double Edge of Civil Freedom

We have seen that for Milton, the crucial political teaching of the Bible is that Christ recommended the free commonwealth as best for his people. What are the implications for Milton's views on the English civil war? How is this religious underpinning of a certain form of republicanism reflected in or derived from Milton's understanding of his own time?

His interpretation of the law of nature and the law of God would appear to have favoured a democratic, or at least an anti-absolutist, politics. He criticised Salmasius, who condemned the regicide, of being dazzled by the supposed majesty of kings, particularly that of Charles. For Milton, just as, according to Genesis, there was light before the sun, so the people were prior to their kings. Royal defenders like Salmasius had turned away from what Milton termed "the heaven of Moses and the heaven of Aristotle."¹³⁰ Moses and

Aristotle taught the supremacy of the people to their king. Thus, Milton's Christian republicanism would seem to have entailed popular sovereignty.¹³¹ The case is not so simple, however, as I shall argue.

Certainly, Charles for Milton exemplified tyranny, thus meriting divine punishment upon himself. Milton employed the classical definition of tyranny, and condemned Charles's crimes on that basis. "A tyrant," he wrote, "is one who regards his own welfare and profit only, and not that of the people." Milton quickly surveyed the extravagances and excesses of Charles's private life and turned his attention to the crimes of his public life. Inevitably, public revenue had to be increased to finance his expenses, so that heavy taxes were laid upon the people for his, not their, sake. He then threatened to abolish Parliament and had foreign troops stationed in the towns. These acts were compared to the tyranny of Nero against the Senate and Roman people. Milton maintained, moreover, that the king had secret designs against Parliament, and blamed him for the war between England and Ireland, thus accusing him of the slaughter of five hundred thousand of his own subjects. At the same time, he imposed Popish ceremonies and doctrines on the people. The king committed treason against "Parliament and the realm." Milton depicted Charles's tyranny in private life and the court against Parliament on the one hand, and against the good consciences of the people on the other. His critique thus corresponded to the "three species of liberty, without which it is scarcely possible to pass any life with comfort, namely, ecclesiastical, domestic or private, and civil."¹³² Milton's condemnation was total. Charles's reign was stifling of those forms of liberty essential to the Englishman who was at one and the same time citizen, Christian, and human being.

The English people had recourse against the tyrannical king. Milton maintained that the oppressed may always appeal to heaven. He wrote of the law "which God himself and nature hath appointed, that all things for the safety of the commonwealth should be deemed lawful and righteous." If earthly kings are all subject to a higher law, then rebellious kings must learn that "Justice is the onely true sovran and supreme Majesty upon earth." For

Milton, true justice was divine justice. Consequently, he characterised the acts of the people in bringing the tyrant Charles to account as God's work. The people were spurred by a "divine impulse":

Yet why do I proclaim as done by the people these actions, which themselves almost utter a voice, and witness everywhere the presence of God?...As for us, it was by His clear command we were on a sudden resolved upon the safety and liberty that we had almost lost; it was He we followed as our Leader, and revered His divine footsteps imprinted everywhere; and thus we entered upon a path not dark but bright, and by His guidance shown and opened to us.¹³³

Let us examine the grounds for these assertions more precisely. In what ways did Charles exercise his powers illegitimately? Milton denied that kings have supreme power which would place them above the law and answerable to God alone. He distinguished the rights of kings from what he called "the enormities of tyrants." He thus emphasised the boundaries of the king's rights with respect to the rights of the people: that the enlargement of the former was oppressive of the latter. Thus, in delineating the king's rights, Milton showed how they should be subordinate to the spheres of Parliament and the people. The king's "Rights...should give place to the general good, for which end all his Rights were giv'n him." For example, he maintained that the courts of justice of England were under Parliament's jurisdiction, not the king's. Judges were bound to give judgement against the king if he violated the laws. Also, the king's power of arms could only be employed for the good of the people. Taxation in any form was subject to popular consent of Acts of Parliament. In brief, the House of Commons had the highest authority in the land. The king should merely have executed policy in accordance with their deliberations. He was depicted here as nothing more than the people's servant, as less than supreme and thus whose delegated powers were subject to recall by the people if he violated their trust. Milton even went so far as to suggest that popular recall should be common to both democracies and monarchies.¹³⁴ It was clearly the people for Milton who should be sovereign, not the king, and as such the central problem of political authority was the abuse of royal rights.

The question of what can be done about these abuses raised the thorny issue of

subjects' oaths and covenants to obey their kings. Since Milton regarded the civil war as God's work, it is not surprising that the issue was a contentious one for him. Unlike Hobbes, for whom covenants are nothing but contracts in which the parties promise to perform later, and for whom oaths add nothing to the obligation to perform covenants,¹³⁵ Milton considered oaths and covenants as binding because of their religious content. How could we justify the deposing of the king, if we had already covenanted under God to obey him? Milton argued that covenants tacitly include the laws of God and of nature within them, so that they cannot be binding when injury would result from keeping them. His reasoning is reminiscent of the Socratic counterargument to the notion that justice consists in giving back to a person what one has taken. If I borrow my friend's sword, and he goes mad, it would be unjust to return it to him.¹³⁶ Justice relates to what is good on a deeper level than that of economic transactions or unconditional promise-keeping. Similarly, Milton argued that it cannot be just to keep the covenant to do good to a man and receive only evil in return. The people may have sworn allegiance to King Charles, but their covenant to obey had to be consistent with "the safety of their religion and their liberty."¹³⁷

Indeed, it was Charles who violated these holy oaths and covenants. Milton turned the tables on critics of the revolutionaries who accused them of being oath-breakers. He condemned the king's alteration of his coronation oath, in which the monarch swore "fealty, service, and obedience" to the people. This act betrayed a contempt for the sanctity of oaths. By seeking subtle changes in its wording, he showed that he would rather turn the "oath into a perjury" than openly violate it. If, as Salmasius maintained, the oath was only ceremonial, Milton stressed the need to revive it. Without a genuine oath to uphold the laws, religion, and liberties of his subjects, the king's license was unchecked.¹³⁸

The principal target of this discussion of oaths was not the king, however, but the Presbyterians seeking reinstatement of the monarchy. Milton maintained that the oaths of supremacy over church and state and of allegiance were void when the people and Parliament rose up against the king. If oaths and covenants of obedience were broken,

then the appeal to a persisting regal authority as an object of allegiance was groundless. Rather, the Presbyterians had taken new oaths and covenants to obey the king, despite being principal instigators of the revolution. Such backsliding signified, in Milton's view, little regard for the sanctity of oaths and covenants. The Presbyterians merely made or broke them as it served their turn.¹³⁹

Milton was arguing that the Presbyterians had offended most against God in backsliding from their initial efforts, which were clearly directed at destroying the king. The claim that it was not their intention to depose him was false. By imprisoning him and promising to restore him only if he acceded to demands which they knew he would not grant, they took away "his office and his dignity...[and] in the truest sense may be said to have killd the King...by depressing him thir King farr below the rank of a subject to the condition of a Captive." He was deprived of legal personhood as king and of all the rights accruing to that office. Thus, seeking to acquit him and anoint him anew as sovereign showed their gross dishonesty. They betrayed the cause of liberty and "thir best friends and associats" by consorting with their previous enemies.¹⁴⁰ Milton suggested that they could not have it both ways. Either the deposing of Charles was done out of a holy cause, so that their later acts offended against God, or the initial uprising was unjust, in which case they should have conceded their role as central perpetrators of that sinful rebellion.

What motivated their ungodly hypocrisy? Their actions demonstrated their worldly ambitions. They conspired with the defeated royalists to restore the king in order to attain civil as well as ecclesiastical authority over the people. The Presbyterians had thought that they could govern the bodies of the people through Parliament and their souls through a monopoly over religion. But the army and so-called Independents were also involved in the deposing of Charles and the institution of the republican Commonwealth, and they were "most valiant and faithful citizens" who would not sell out their cause to a tyrant. The Presbyterians incited rebellion for the sake of gaining power, disregarding what ills were thus brought upon the people. Milton called them "Ministers of sedition, not of the

Gospel.” Even if the bloodshed in the civil war was justified, the new turmoil they were breeding could not be, since the restoration of the monarchy would deprive the people—including themselves—of the liberty so dearly bought.¹⁴¹ Milton, like Hobbes, was critical of the hypocrisy and unprincipled recklessness of ambitious priests.

For our purposes, the most significant aspect of Milton’s indictment of the Presbyterians was the effect of their backsliding on the people. Although the ministers had effectively incited the people against the king from the pulpits, their worldly ambitions—to “set up a spiritual tyrannie by a secular power to the advancing of thir owne authoritie above the magistrate”—were manifested in their impious behaviour. Seeing them preach “thir own bellies, rather than the gospel,” the people lost their faith and turned to “lewdness” or even atheism. This degeneration of morals “unfitted...the people, now growne worse & more disordinate, to receive or to digest any libertie at all.” In other words, having been corrupted by the Presbyterians’ ungodly ambitions, they became licentious and so lost their capacity for freedom:

For libertie hath a sharp and double edge fitt onelie to be handl’d by just and vertuous men, to bad and dissolute it becomes a mischief unwieldie in their own hands. Neither is it compleattie giv’n, but by them who have the happie skill to know what is grievance and unjust to a people; and how to remove it wiselie; that good men may enjoy the freedom which they merit and the bad the curb which they need.¹⁴²

The problem of doubled-edged freedom is a prominent theme throughout the political writings of Milton which we have been examining. Only a few were “either desirous of liberty or capable of using it” because freedom could be realised only by the virtuous. Surveying the world’s people, Milton found that most preferred obeying benevolent masters to ruling themselves. In regard to the English people, whom he praised for resisting tyranny, Milton came to the conclusion that the British, though courageous in war, were lacking in justice and prudence in times of peace. Thus, the weeds sown by the Presbyterians’ example found fertile ground in English soil. Milton warned his countrymen that the virtues of peace—piety, justice, and temperance—had to be cultivated in order not to succumb to the evils of tyranny and superstition. The former evil manifested

itself in the tyrant within—the growth of “avarice, ambition, luxury” in the hearts of the people—and the latter evil in ignorance of true religion, rendering the people subject to the spiritual tyranny of ambitious priests. Milton even remarked that it is by the “just retribution of God” that a morally degenerate nation is delivered into the hands of new masters.¹⁴³ In short, the neglect of virtue in the English rendered them slaves to their lust and fodder for new tyrants, civil and spiritual.

Milton concluded that for the good of the people, the majority should obey the virtuous few, even within Parliament. It was not enough for Milton that government was in the hands of members of Parliament, who claimed to represent the people. For the greater part of Parliament was driven by wealth and ambition rather than concern for the public good. After the “superficial zeale and popular fumes” which drove the Long Parliament’s actions against the king had subsided, most parliamentarians tended to their private ends. One might argue that, even if most politicians were corrupt, it would not necessarily follow that the people were not virtuous. Indeed, populist politicians in Canada and elsewhere often emphasise the wisdom and virtue of the people as opposed to the moral degeneracy of Parliament (themselves excluded). But Milton linked the injustice of the majority in Parliament with the general servility of “a great part of the people.” He recounted the ungrateful desertion by masses of men of the faithful few committed to preserving the state against slavery.¹⁴⁴ Hence, there was the need to purge Parliament of the faithless. The parliamentary majority was incapable of wielding the double-edged sword of freedom.

Milton thus opposed virtue to number as the best governing principle. As he wrote, there is greater weight in virtue than in mere number. The determination of what is good is not more certain as the number of votes add up. He justified the forcible subordination of the majority to the wisest decision. It would be unjust for the majority to force into slavery the few who would be free. Conversely, no harm is done to the many when compelled to retain their liberty, even though in their baseness, they would rather choose servitude.¹⁴⁵

The standard of virtue—which is, ultimately, linked to godliness—overrides the democratic principle. If we consider that this virtuous freedom is commanded by God, in scripture and our hearts, then there is, for Milton, divine sanction for aristocratic government.

Yet, how is this advocacy of aristocratic rule to be squared with his repeated insistence throughout his pamphlets that the people are sovereign? In his political pamphlets, Milton argued that the virtuous few represent the people better than does the majority. He distinguished the people, i.e., the sound part of Parliament and the army, from the ignorant multitude, and emphasised the futility and foolishness of having the “people” refer to the rabble on every matter, particularly if the multitude desired the restoration of the king (which turned out to be the case). Instead, “the better, that is, the sounder, part of the legislature” could more legitimately be considered the true power of the people. For Milton, a multitude becomes a people only with respect to realising their true liberty. “The people” is an idea to which the majority of citizens may or may not correspond. To carry Milton’s reasoning to its logical conclusion, even one man may represent the people. Unlike Hobbes, however, Milton did not expound a full-blown theory of representation or personation, in which the multitude authorise one sovereign person. There is little or no element of popular institution in Milton’s conception. Instead, he merely argued that the best part of the people should be thought of as the people itself. Accordingly, he praised Oliver Cromwell’s piety as well as courage. He also maintained that since the worthy should be sovereign, such authority rightly fell to Cromwell. Finally, he characterised the Lord Protector Oliver as the patron of the people’s liberty.¹⁴⁶ Did Milton’s aristocratic republicanism therefore culminate in Cromwellian dictatorship?

On the contrary, Milton’s vision went beyond the exigency of Cromwell’s army to free the polity from a degenerate Parliament and multitude. Courageously, he stayed true to his principles in his pamphlet published on the eve of the Restoration. Instead of proposing a modified republicanism to placate a populace weary of Cromwellianism, he envisioned a free commonwealth unlike even that of the Commonwealth in the

interregnum. In its constitution, there would be a freely elected Parliament, but presided over by an aristocratic General Council. Milton described this body as “the ground and basis of every just and free government.” He maintained that it would enjoy only a delegated sovereignty, being a council of able men “chosen by the people to consult of public affairs from time to time for the common good.” Members of the Grand Council would be appointed in perpetuity, but only because the safety of the commonwealth would be thus ensured by the existence of a permanent body.¹⁴⁷ As Milton presented it, then, the constitution of the free commonwealth would include an aristocratic form of government consistent with sovereignty of the people.

The proposal was indicative, however, of the essentially aristocratic character of Milton’s political project. First, the need for a relatively permanent body of state could be met by partial rotation just as well as fixed members. Milton remarked that some had proposed a rotation of one-third of the senators, in order that the Council not enjoy too absolute a power. But Milton advised against it as resembling a wheel of fortune. The new elections, he wrote, might bring in members who are “raw, unexperient’d and otherwise affected,” to the detriment of the state.¹⁴⁸ In other words, Milton would rather have risked the undermining of popular sovereignty than the corruption of aristocratic government.

Second, and more fundamentally, we should keep in mind Milton’s idiosyncratic notion of “the people.” As we saw, the people who should be sovereign may not be constituted of the majority of the citizens or even of a majority in Parliament. This aristocratic conception of the people was reflected in Milton’s proposals for the elections of the General Council. The elections would be most efficacious if “the noise and shouting of a rude multitude” were avoided by permitting only the

rightly qualifi’d, to nominat as many as they will; and out of that number others of a better breeding, to chuse a less number more judiciously, till after a third or fourth sifting and refining of exactest choice, they only be left chosen who are the due number, and seem by most voices the worthiest. To make the people fittest to chuse, and the chosen fittest to govern...

Later, Milton maintained that the Council would handle mostly foreign affairs, even though

he wrote several pages before that they would have power over the armed forces, public revenues, and civil laws.¹⁴⁹ Whatever its scope, Milton was unequivocally committed to this aristocratic body as the key element of a free commonwealth.

To place this discussion in context of what has been examined in this chapter, we can consider Milton's bold assertion of the religious significance of his political proposals:

The Grand Council, being thus firmly constituted to perpetuities,....ther can be no cause alleag'd why peace, justice, plentifull trade, and all prosperitie should not thereupon ensue throughout the whole land; with as much assurance as can be of human things, that they shall so continue (if God favour us, and our wilfull sins provoke him not) even to the coming of our true and rightfull and only to be expected King, only worthie as he is our only Saviour, the Messiah, the Christ, the only heir of his eternal father, the only by him anointed and ordaind since the work of our redemption finishd, Universal Lord of all mankinde.¹⁵⁰

The free commonwealth would be a divine work by human hands to last us until the second coming. As we saw in previous sections, Milton interpreted certain classical thinkers, principally Aristotle, and the Bible as agreed on the evils of tyranny and the need to resist them. The laws of nature and God were the same, with respect to the justice of deposing tyrants. The Biblical teaching reached its summit for Milton in the ministry of Christ, the only true sovereign king, who taught not only that all rulers are subject to God, but also that the free commonwealth would be best for humanity until the Day of Judgement. Milton's writings on the English civil war were not only intended to show that the revolutionaries followed Christ's own commands and that his proposed commonwealth would be best for human beings under God, but also emphasised the centrality of piety and virtue to political freedom. God commands that we free ourselves from tyranny and that those who should rule should be capable of freedom. The backsliding of the Presbyterians and fickleness of the multitude reflected the danger of tyranny within, thereby inviting tyranny from without. The antidote to moral degeneracy, which merits divine punishment through unjust masters, is a regime of which the Grand Council is the foundation. In short, Milton's religious republicanism was fundamentally aristocratic.

The Representative Leviathan

The most fundamental differences between Hobbes's thought and religious republicanism are not contained within his accounts of scripture or Aristotle. His conception of the rights and duties of sovereignty, read in conjunction with his commentary on the English civil war, reveals his critical stance towards religious justifications of rebellion.

Hobbes's sole reference to Milton in the context of the civil war was brief but encapsulated his anti-republican stance and position on ecclesiastical authority. In *Behemoth*, the character A remarks that after the regicide of Charles I, there

came out two books, one written by Salmasius, a Presbyterian, against the murder of the King; another written by Milton, an English Independent, in answer to it.

B. I have seen them both. They are very good Latin both, and hardly to be judged which is better; and both very ill reasoning, hardly to be judged which is worse; like two declamations, *pro* and *con*, made for exercise only in a rhetoric school by one and the same man. So like is a Presbyterian to an Independent.¹⁵¹

Besides the differences between the doctrines of the Presbyterians and Independents, it seems strange that he regarded the two thinkers' positions as two sides of the same coin, with respect to the civil war and its aftermath.

The enemies of the king saw his loss of power, trial, and execution as richly deserved and as divine punishment. Hobbes, however, accounted for the initial uprising as motivated by a misunderstanding of forms of government. From the outset of his dialogues on the civil war, he emphasised the English kings' sovereignty "by right of a descent above six hundred years" and characterised Charles I as "a man who wanted no virtue" with respect to his private life and government. Nevertheless, the people were corrupted, adversely affecting the militia required to defend the crown.¹⁵² He named several sources of corruption, among them men who levelled accusations of tyranny against the king. As we saw above, Milton in particular depicted Charles's tyranny as a total one, stifling of all forms of liberty of the people.

Hobbes regarded this opposition to monarchy as part of the ignorance and corruption on all sides of the conflict. We have already addressed Hobbes's critique of

Parliamentarians' miseducation in Greek and Roman writings which favoured popular government over monarchy (called tyranny). But even the king's own party was influenced by this line of thinking. Parliament had attributed the civil war and its deleterious effects on land and people to Charles's tyrannical designs over and above "the encroachments of his predecessors upon the freedom of the people." That is to say, the troubles were thought to be rooted in monarchical rule itself, now taken to an extreme by Charles I. The king's advisors tended to agree. Although they were obviously not supportive of the idea of Parliament ruling alone, they were "averse to absolute monarchy, as also to absolute democracy or aristocracy, all which governments they esteemed tyranny." Instead, they favoured "mixarchy," praised as mixed monarchy, though in Hobbes's view, it would be "nothing else but pure anarchy." In such a regime, sovereign power would be divided between the king and two Houses of Parliament.¹⁵³ Thus, much of Parliament, full-blown republicans such as Milton, and many members of the king's party were all in agreement that Charles had, to some degree, behaved tyrannically, and that monarchy is prone to such abuse of power.

Hobbes countered that a widespread fear of tyranny was corrosive of political obedience and civil peace. In defending Charles's sovereignty against the charges of tyranny, did Hobbes think that monarchy is the best form of government? It was argued above that Hobbes saw monarchy, democracy and aristocracy as equally valid forms of government, because the sovereign is always one representative person, whether monarch, aristocratic assembly, or assembly of the people. But the apparent royalism of *Behemoth* — defending the king's interests better, he would say, than did the king's own counsellors— seems indicative of an essential preference for monarchy. This argument seems to be supported by his discussion (in chapter 19 of *Leviathan*) of the essential advantages of monarchy over the other forms, a view taken by many Hobbes scholars.¹⁵⁴

While it is true that Hobbes regarded monarchy as enjoying certain advantages or conveniences as a form of government, his comparison of the three kinds of

commonwealths should be read as having established the validity of all forms of sovereign power, as long as they are undivided. As Andrew points out, Hobbes's conception of the sovereign as representative (and therefore artificial, not natural, person) showed conclusively that this preference was not an essential one in his political thought.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, his discussion of this preference in the context of the civil war also indicates that he was trying to argue that a sovereign monarch is as representative of the multitude as a sovereign assembly. Now, after his characterisation of the name "tyranny" as monarchy disliked, Hobbes discussed who should be considered representative in the commonwealth. The representative can ultimately be no other than the individual or group that possesses sovereign power. There may be subordinate representatives for certain purposes, but the sovereign remains the sole representative proper. To have more than one representative would mean having more than one sovereign. And once the sovereign power is divided, each representative person needs must oppose the other to gain undivided power. The result will be civil war, precisely the case with the English monarch, who could trace back his right to sovereignty 600 years, and yet was not considered representative by a large part of the people.¹⁵⁶

This discussion preceded his comparison of the three kinds of commonwealth. In a state governed by a democratic assembly, it is easy to see that the members of the assembly, not deputies sent by the people to make their wishes known to the assembly, are the people's representatives. The same reasoning applies to monarchy. Nevertheless, Parliament rather than the king was considered representative, despite the obedience owed to Charles as sovereign.¹⁵⁷ In this context, the purpose of the subsequent comparison can be seen as that of defending monarchy as a valid form of sovereign representation and a preferred form of government, which may be superior in most or almost all respects, but not because aristocratic or democratic government are flawed to the extent that they cannot be considered valid forms of government. His points of comparison were consistent with his treatment of representation.

First, he argued that both a monarch and a member of a sovereign assembly can be considered with respect to their natural persons or to their public persons. In monarchy, however, the private and public persons are most united, which most advances the public interest. For the “riches, power and honour of a Monarch arise only from the riches, strength and reputation of his Subjects.” A poor and enfeebled populace weakens its king or queen, whereas assembly members may pursue their private fortune at the expense of the “publique prosperity.” Of course, Milton and other revolutionaries argued the opposite: that Charles in particular and monarchs in general accumulated private wealth and honour at the expense of the people. In the context of the civil war, then, Hobbes’s argument can be seen as an inversion of the view of the self-styled opponent of tyranny. Contrary to the republican commitment to popular or aristocratic assemblies as institutions in which members are more likely to be publicly spirited, Hobbes argued that public and private interests could be seen as better harmonised in monarchical rule. On the other hand, Hobbes was not ignorant that monarchs can, like any sovereign power, do violence to the governed. A democratic assembly that obeys the laws of nature rules better than a monarch who does not. Therefore, the harmonising of public and private interest may be more easily achieved in monarchy, but it is not exclusive to monarchy. In other words, *democracies and aristocracies can be effective forms of government insofar as they are instituted in accordance with the same principles of indivisibility.*¹⁵⁸

Hobbes also compared an assembly of rhetoricians with knowledgeable counsellors chosen by a monarch; the fluctuating resolution from variable voting patterns with the inconstancy of one individual; and the potentially seditious disagreement of an assembly with the fact that “a Monarch cannot disagree with himselfe, out of envy, or interest.” These remarks certainly revealed a preference for monarchy. But this preference does not entail that sovereign assemblies necessarily suffer from defects in comparison with monarchs. That is to say, Hobbes’s preference for monarchy is not an essential element in the logic of his argument. It would not be inconsistent with his conception of

representative government to argue that poorly chosen counsellors would be inferior to a learned assembly, and that a strong democratically elected assembly—such as one finds in most cabinet-parliamentary systems of Commonwealth countries today—may be less inconstant and less prone to factionalism than one irresolute monarch, who may also incur the sedition of a dissatisfied populace. After all, Hobbes did not take it for granted that a queen's or king's counsellors will have the right expertise, or that monarchs will be decisive enough. Thus, he set out the distinctions between command, counsel, and exhortation in chapter 25 of *Leviathan*. There is a danger, for example, that a sovereign monarch may be ruled by a counsellor, who thereby commands and exhorts rather than counsels. Given that King Charles's closest advisors gave bad counsel—or worse, advised for their own benefit, not for the king's—it is clear that in the areas of counsel and resolution, his reign was lacking. Thus, Hobbes's reflections on the civil war again provided a concrete example of why monarchy is not an essentially superior form of government. Although he argued that an assembly is subject to factionalism, he also demonstrated that the king did not rule himself sufficiently, for which he or his advisors were to blame.¹⁵⁹ Hobbes showed, therefore, that monarchical governments are not always more effective than aristocratic or democratic governments—i.e., the general superiority of the one form to others does not entail that particular instances of monarchical rule always reflect this superiority—contrary to some standard interpretations of Hobbes on the one hand and to the claims of Milton and other anti-Hobbesians on the other.

This line of argument was more explicit in his treatment of the “inconveniences” of monarchy, including the problem of succession. Hobbes conceded that monarchy is subject to certain difficulties: possible dispossession of a subject's estate to benefit a favourite at court; infant monarchs, and their potentially unscrupulous protectors; and the contentious question of who should succeed to the throne. While he acknowledged the seriousness of the first inconvenience, he added that the evil effect of flattery can be magnified in an assembly, where each member may have favourites to please, not just one

individual. Second, he pointed out that to call the government of a child-monarch's protector an inconvenience was to betray a preference for civil war over government. Instead, if the protector is chosen wisely by the preceding monarch, difficulties attendant on a protectorate may be lessened. Moreover, a sovereign assembly may resemble a child, in that it must follow the counsel given to it by the major part, and may be in need of a protector or dictator—a temporary monarch—in times of trouble. These protectors in turn seize power for themselves more often than in the case of infant monarchies. These two difficulties both have historical precedents in the English civil war: Parliament, which fell under the sway of ambitious preachers; and the Lord Protector Cromwell, who reduced the number in Parliament to that of his supporters, and who became king in all respects but in name and right. As for succession, Hobbes set out certain rules to determine who should rule after the monarch's death. The will of the monarch as expressed in words should determine her heir. Failing that, the recognised custom should be the rule. And the last resort is the order of "natural affection" (i.e., relation) to the late monarch.¹⁶⁰ Hobbes's point, then, is that monarchy may, in particular circumstances, be actually worse than other forms of government. Each form of government is subject to weakness and abuse.

Hobbes and Milton were not merely arguing *pro* and *con* in a debate over monarchy and tyranny. That is to say, unlike Milton and other revolutionaries, Hobbes's principal target was not the form of government, but the division of sovereign power. Each kind of sovereign may be both effective and representative of the multitude. But they cannot be mixed. In regimes where the constitution appears mixed, such as elective monarchies or provinces conquered by democracies but governed through a single individual, there can in fact be only one sovereign. If the people retain the power to elect kings, then they are the sovereign person. A province governed by another regime is ruled monarchically, because the inhabitants of that province are not part of a sovereign assembly. The Roman people ruled over Judea as a single monarch.¹⁶¹ We have seen that the king's advisors agreed with the Roundheads in their opposition to absolute monarchy

(since the advisors were opposed to all forms of absolute government), and that they sought a mixed regime. Hobbes countered that a commonwealth is one of three kinds, or it is divided and will fall into civil dissension. Thus, while Hobbes's comparison of the three kinds of commonwealths contradicted the view of both the rebels and much of the royalist party that it makes any sense to single out monarchy as tyrannical, his further insistence that there can be no stable mixed regime was particularly directed at the adherents to "mixarchy." All forms of government are valid, but only when the sovereign power is absolutely in one person--man, woman, or assembly.¹⁶²

Moreover, Hobbes anticipated the objection that absolute sovereignty is tantamount to tyranny.

...it appeareth plainly, to my understanding, both from Reason, and Scripture, that the Sovereign Power, whether placed in One Man, as in Monarchy, or in one Assembly of men, as in Popular, and Aristocraticall Common-wealths, is as great, as possibly men can be imagined to make it. And though of so unlimited a Power, men may fancy many evill consequences, yet the consequences of the want of it, which is perpetuall warre of every man against his neighbour, are much worse.¹⁶³

The regime must not only be unmixed, but the sovereign person must have almost unlimited power with respect to the government, because anything less may lead to a war of all against all. Milton's view, however, was that such apologies for absolute sovereignty were justifications for tyranny, that the limited rights of sovereignty must be recognised. We shall argue, however, that Hobbes's conception of sovereign rights upheld the power of the mighty Leviathan without sanctioning the evils associated with tyranny. Hobbes links absolute sovereign rights with representative government.¹⁶⁴

Let us first examine the "absolutism" of sovereign rights which strikes fear in the hearts of Hobbes's detractors. Milton argued that the king or other representative should be subject to popular recall, because the people are always sovereign, whether it be in a democracy, aristocracy, or monarchy. For Hobbes, however, the forms of government signify commonwealths in which the number of individuals constituting the sovereign person is different. Popular consent does not entail popular recall, because the multitude have covenanted to obey the sovereign power which they have authorised. Thus, the

sovereign's right to represent the multitude cannot be taken away by the latter without its permission. Likewise, no subject can be freed from obedience "by any pretence of forfeiture," i.e., the notion that sovereigns covenant with the governed and may thereby forfeit their right to govern. Who can enforce performance of covenants if not the sovereign itself? Therefore, the "publique sword" cannot itself be subject to covenant. Hobbes added that breaking the covenant to obey cannot be justified by appeal to a new covenant with God, because the sovereign itself represents God's person. Such a covenant with God is at best a mere pretence. Hobbes's theory of authorisation entailed that there can be no legitimate grounds, particularly religious ones, to deny the sovereign's right of government.¹⁶⁵

In a similar vein, Hobbes argued that it can never be just to break the social covenant. Milton's view was that covenants cannot be binding if they result in injury, and that the standard by which to judge what is unjust consists ultimately in God's law. Divine justice may override contractual fidelity. For Hobbes, however, justice is the keeping of covenants. And since the right of government is through the covenant transferred to the sovereign, justice consists in obeying the laws of the sovereign. Accordingly, the sovereign once instituted cannot justly be disobeyed or accused of injustice against its subjects. The subjects have covenanted to obey the laws of the sovereign whose actions they have authorised for the purpose of civil government.¹⁶⁶ Justice as contractual fidelity is the basis of political obedience. There is no higher justice which can justify political disobedience.

Through his conception of covenants and justice, then, Hobbes showed that the sovereign has the unconditional right of government. As for what particular rights belong to the sovereign, Hobbes derived them from the need for a sovereign power. Fundamentally, the sovereign state ensures the peace and defence of the people, i.e., the protection of its subjects against the invasions of each other and against foreign invasion. Consequently, because the sovereign has "right to the End" of sovereignty, it "has right to

the means.” Milton maintained that the rights of the English monarch were subordinate to the spheres of Parliament and the people. Thus, the court system, judges, militia, and taxation ought to have been subject to popular or Parliamentary consent. For Hobbes, in contrast, if the English king was sovereign, then he had supremacy over these areas; or if he was not sovereign, then he was not king. Since Hobbes did maintain that England was a monarchy—that Charles I had right of sovereignty in England¹⁶⁷--the king’s right as sovereign could not be subordinate to Parliament or the people. Only the sovereign has supreme right over the means of ensuring the safety of the people.

From this basis were derived all the other sovereign rights, which we shall analyse in the context of the civil war. The sovereign has right to judge what the means to the people’s safety are, for if the means could only be determined by another body, then the determiner would be sovereign. Thus, the sovereign is judge of which opinions and doctrines are conducive or harmful to peace, and who should teach them, since the teaching of harmful (and thus untrue) doctrines results in civil discord. The sovereign has the power to determine the rules of property and propriety, since the lawless state of unlimited right to all things is a state of war. Likewise, the sovereign has the right to decide all judicial controversies, since a recognised judge is necessary to ensure that subjects do not inflict injury upon each other. The sovereign must also have rights over the various aspects of foreign and domestic policy, particularly concerning war and crime: thus over the militia, the appointment of ministers of war and peace, rewards and punishments of subjects, and laws of honour.¹⁶⁸

Accordingly, Hobbes’s remarks on the essential rights of sovereignty in *Behemoth* can be seen as a direct application of the reasoning in *Leviathan* to his account of the civil war. Hobbes argued that these rights were chipped away rather than rejected tout à coup. Even before the nineteen propositions sent during the war, the king had granted the Petition of Right drawn up by Parliament in a previous sitting. He gave up his rights to levy money in special circumstances without parliamentary consent, to obtain ordinary revenue by

means of tonnage and poundage, and to detain individuals thought to be potentially seditious.¹⁶⁹ Thus, even King Charles himself failed to observe the necessity of keeping these rights indivisible, since taxation, exaction, and the power of punishment are essential means of ensuring the end of sovereign power. Hobbes implicitly criticised the English king for not living up to the requirements of sovereign power in any commonwealth.

In his epitome of the war, Hobbes emphasised the challenge posed to the sovereign's rights. In May 1641, Parliament sent a paper containing nineteen propositions, outlining further concessions to be made by the king. Several of the propositions touched on specific powers of the sovereign, such as the power to appoint ministers and control of the militia, stipulating that Parliamentary approbation is always required. Others addressed particular points of policy, domestic and foreign, such as the laws against the Jesuits and relations with the Netherlands. The second proposition was most blunt: "That the great affairs of the kingdom be debated, resolved, and transacted only in Parliament; and such as shall presume to do anything to the contrary, be reserved to the censure of the Parliament..." The interlocutor B remarks that "Methinks these very propositions sent to the King are an actual rebellion." Parliament did not understand the need for indivisible sovereign right. "[T]he legislative power," Hobbes wrote, "(and indeed all power possible) is contained in the power of the *militia*." Nevertheless, Parliament continued to address the king as "Most gracious Sovereign": so stupid they were as not to know, that he that is master of the *militia*, is master of the kingdom, and consequently is in possession of a most absolute sovereignty." They sought sovereign power without knowing it, because for Hobbes, it is not the title that makes the sovereign, but the powers and rights of government that do so.¹⁷⁰

If they did not explicitly seek sovereignty, on what basis did they think they could nonetheless gain rights to what belonged properly to the king? Parliament maintained that they were the true representatives of the people. Sir John Hotham was the Parliament-appointed governor of Hull, who refused to let the king enter Kingston. Parliament

claimed that they owned the town, as they were the English people's representatives. Hobbes countered that they were at best limited representatives, and so had no property in the people's land. Similarly, at the king's trial, Parliament declared the king to be guilty of treason and thus no longer king, and also voted to decree that "the people, under God, are the original of all just power; and that the House of Commons have the supreme power of the nation..."¹⁷¹ Although the political dynamics had changed—notably the opposition of the Commons to the House of Lords—its justification for the sedition remained the same: that the House of Commons represented the people. But its willingness to deny the king's sovereignty in favour of its right to government was now more clear-sighted and less hypocritical, from an Hobbesian perspective.

Nevertheless, Hobbes still maintained that the English Parliament's representative function was subordinate to the king's right of representation. The people may put up petitions through Parliament to the king, but they may not show grievance against the king's sovereignty *per se*. The reason for this subordination is not that monarchs are essentially superior to the people's representatives, but rather that the sovereign—be it monarch or assembly—is the supreme representative of the people. The English Parliament of the 1640's was wrong to conclude that because its members were representatives, they must be sovereign (or at least share sovereign rights). Instead, because he was sovereign, the king must have been supreme representative, and thus Parliament's right of representation was limited and subordinate.

Still, that Hobbes seemed to envision a limited representative role for Parliament demonstrates that the English king's sovereignty, though absolute, should not display the characteristics other thinkers associated with tyranny. In other words, the sovereign's right of supreme representation is the key to understanding that for Hobbes, absolute sovereign rights are accompanied by certain duties of the representative. The very institution of the sovereign consists in the multitude's agreement and covenant with each other that some woman, man, or assembly shall be given the right to be the representative of them all, thus

authorising all of the sovereign's actions and judgements for the sake of peace. It follows that as the supreme representative of the people, the sovereign not only enjoys certain rights but is also obliged (by the law of nature) to carry out certain duties. That is to say, it is entrusted with sovereign power in order to procure the good of the people, not just "a bare Preservation, but also all other Contentments of life, which every man by lawfull Industry, without danger, or hurt to the Commonwealth, shall acquire to himselfe." Such procurement is done by instruction of the people and "executing of good Lawes, to which individuall persons may apply their own cases."¹⁷² The sovereign must ensure the conditions for a lawful, commodious society.

One might object that sovereign duty is no check on sovereign right; that sovereigns for Hobbes are only accountable to God, not their subjects, if they do not carry out their duty. Indeed, Hobbes would not allow that subjects could use failure of duty as a justification for opposing sovereign right, and we should recognise that the duties of the representative are not in themselves sufficient to guarantee that the sovereign will not be "tyrannical," according to Milton's definition. In chapter four, we shall consider whether or not Hobbes's conceptions of liberty and law entail limits to the scope of sovereign power. Nevertheless, we can at this point say that Hobbes at least thought the concept of representative duty an important part of understanding sovereignty. The Leviathan as sovereign power is matchless; but the Leviathan as representative is authorised for certain purposes and accordingly has certain duties towards the people.

Let us examine these duties of authority in light of absolute sovereign right. The requirement that the sovereign provide good laws is compatible with unlimited sovereignty. Hobbes acknowledged that the use of the term "good law" might seem ambiguous, considering other definitions throughout *Leviathan*. In other words, he did not mean a just law, since every law is just, according to his definition of justice as the keeping of covenants and therefore as unconditional obedience to the laws of the sovereign. Nevertheless, the sovereign is bound by the law of nature to make laws which are

“Needfull, for the Good of the People, and withall Perspicuous.” The first two qualities are particularly relevant to our discussion. The laws should not be restrictive of all private activities, but rather regulative of them so that subjects do not harm themselves and each other. They are meant to facilitate motion, not to hinder it. A law is also good when it is good for the people. It cannot be to the sovereign’s benefit and yet not beneficial to the people, *“For the good of the Sovereign and People, cannot be separated.”*¹⁷³

What might this mean? We may recall that in making the social contract, subjects retain certain inalienable rights, including the right to the means to live well. As Hobbes wrote, *“the motive, and end for which this renouncing, and transferring of Right is introduced, is nothing else but the security of a mans person, in his life, and in the means of so preserving life, as not to be weary of it.”*¹⁷⁴ The benefits of ensuring commodious living among the people accrue to the sovereign’s benefit, in terms of filling the public coffers (and in this way strengthening public support and obedience without the use of coercion). Thus, in regard to needful laws, Hobbes was arguing that the sovereign is instituted to pass laws which regulate and facilitate the operation of a society in which material comforts and industry are emphasised. The multitude does not authorise the sovereign to be its representative so that the latter will hinder private activity that is not socially harmful. Hobbes’s insistence that the good of the sovereign and of the people are one further underscored the connection between representation and good government (in a purely material sense). As supreme representative, the interests of sovereign and subject must be inseparable. We see, therefore, that the institution of the sovereign with its accompanying rights should not be a license for oppression of the subjects. Nothing can hinder the sovereign from enriching itself at the expense of the people, but it does have the obligation under God to provide for the good of the people. The Leviathan is a mighty creature, but as the representative of the people, it must secure society’s needs.¹⁷⁵

The other major duty of the sovereign—viz., public instruction—is pertinent to a comparison of Hobbes’s and Milton’s views of the “corruption” of the common people.

For Milton, the teachings and examples of the Presbyterian ministers had a deleterious effect on the morals of the people, such that they were given to licentious behaviour and thus showed their incapacity for wielding the “double-edged sword” of freedom. Hobbes, too, remarked that the people were corrupted, though not only by the Presbyterians, but also by the Catholics, Independents, Fifth Monarchists, Parliamentarians, lawyers, and others. Hobbes did not, of course, associate such corruption with a predisposition to tyranny, but rather with a weakening of the king’s sovereignty. Without the people’s contributions in money and number, the king’s party could not maintain a competent army against the rebels.¹⁷⁶ More importantly for our purposes, Hobbes differed with Milton in another vital respect. While Milton was led to dismiss the people’s capacity for governance, Hobbes argued that the corruption of the people’s opinions can be easily rectified by public instruction from the sovereign. Since the seduction of the masses by various seditious elements was a major cause of the civil war, it was obvious to him that proper public instruction, if effective, could help to ensure peace.

We argued above that the sovereign’s duty to make good laws reveals the link made between absolute sovereign rights and a form of good government. With respect to public instruction, too, we can argue that the Hobbesian sovereign should not govern capriciously. Although the mighty Leviathan must possess the supreme rights of government, it must also teach the grounds of these rights to its subjects. Sovereign rights, Hobbes argued, “cannot be maintained by any Civill Law, or terrour of legal punishment.” Punishment without such instruction will be taken merely as an act of hostility. The threat of incarceration or worse does not, in itself, prevent law-breaking. In such a case, if I can commit treason for my own profit without facing the consequences, then I will do so. Moreover, the mere existence of a law forbidding resistance to the sovereign cannot ensure obedience. Rather, I must want to obey the law and respect the rights of the sovereign. This disposition to abide by the laws can only be instilled in the general populace by teaching them why the sovereign must possess such rights. As Hobbes wrote, a

Civill Law, that shall forbid Rebellion, (and such is all Resistance to the essential Rights of Sovereignty,) is not (as a Civill Law) any obligation, but by vertue onely of the Law of Nature, that forbiddeth the violation of Faith; which naturall obligation if men know not, they cannot know the Right of any Law the Sovereign maketh. ¹⁷⁷

In other words, subjects must know why they must keep their promises, i.e., perform their part of the social contract by obeying the laws of the sovereign. The reason is that the obedience of subjects to an absolute sovereign is essential for a peaceful and commodious society. Accordingly, an imputed sovereign right that cannot be rationally justified on such grounds—say, a right to compel subjects to kill themselves or their families—cannot be taught to the people. That is to say, they cannot be persuaded to grant the sovereign such a right, because the content of the sovereign's public instruction is that promises should be kept for the sake of subjects' comfortable self-preservation.

Milton's argument that the many should be ruled by a capable few might appear more plausible than teaching Hobbes's political science to the masses. But Hobbes maintained that the essential rights of sovereignty could easily be taught to the common people. Such education need not have consisted in the fine points of the treatise *Leviathan*. Instead, the content of public instruction is reducible to a few simple "Principles of Reason": not to change the government, not to be led by persons other than the sovereign, not to bring the sovereign representative into contempt, not to injure others, and so forth. Hobbes contrasted this simplified doctrine of political obedience with "the great Mysteries of Christian Religion, which are above Reason." If millions of men and women could be brought to believe in an omnipresent God and the Trinity, then surely, Hobbes argued, they can learn the rationally derived rights of sovereignty. The learned, the rich, and the potent may resist such doctrine, but the common people have minds "like clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever by Publique Authority shall be imprinted on them," unless tainted with other doctrines from the powerful or learned.¹⁷⁸ Although some writers have viewed Hobbes as having advocated a narrow indoctrination,¹⁷⁹ Hobbes regarded public instruction as an essential duty of sovereignty. It is, he would argue, a minimal teaching to prevent sedition and civil war. Without it, subjects could not be persuaded to abide by the

laws.

It follows that despite their superficial agreement over the general corruption of the English people during the civil war, Hobbes was more optimistic than Milton about the capacity of the common people to become just and prudent members of society. While Milton's double edge of freedom precluded rule by the many, Hobbesian sovereign may be the assembly of all the people. A democratic sovereign can in principle represent the multitude.¹⁸⁰ Monarchy may be preferable, but it is not the only effective form of representative government. If Hobbes agreed with Milton that the many are incapable of governing themselves and always require the guidance of the virtuous few, he would not have allowed that democracy is a valid form of government.

In the context of the civil war, however, Hobbes's acceptance of democracy was presented more as a critique of the powerful and learned than as a populist endorsement. It is not so much that the common people are as wise or just as nobles and ministers, but that the latter are as ignorant and corrupt as the former. A good example can be found in the policies of the Rump parliament. Under the Rump, soldiers raised taxes and had free quarter, among other things. If the king had carried out such actions, they would have been criticised as oppressive of the people's liberty and property. The common people were thus easily duped; but as Hobbes adds,

What sort of people, as to this matter, are not of the common sort? The craftiest knaves of all the Rump were no wiser than the rest whom they cozened. For the most of them did believe that the same things which they imposed upon the generality, were just and reasonable; and especially the great haranguers, and such as pretended to learning.¹⁸¹

Milton tied freedom to virtue, and consequently, the virtuous few should rule. According to Hobbes's account, however, virtue is not something in the soul which is attainable only by morally superior and pious individuals. Hobbes politicised the virtues, and equated them with civil duties. An action should be judged virtuous according to its conformity to the law to which the doer is subject. The virtue of subjects, then, "is comprehended wholly in obedience to the laws of the commonwealth." Of course, all persons must obey the laws of nature, but those laws in turn command obedience to the

civil laws. Since the sovereign is not subject to civil law, its virtue consists in observing equity, the law of nature. Those acts which secure the good of the people—the sovereign's chief duty—should be accounted as virtues. Hobbes listed fortitude, frugality, and liberality as examples, since they each serve to maintain domestic peace and defence against invasion.¹⁸²

For both subjects and sovereigns, virtue requires knowledge of their respective duties, hence the need for public instruction. Thus, by rebelling against the lawful sovereign and even failing to secure domestic peace when in power, the various factions in the English civil war showed their lack of virtue and wisdom, as Hobbes defined them. Of course, the rebellion would not have been successful if the common people had not been so gullible. But their gullibility and corruption were shared by the corrupters themselves. Even the king, in failing to check misguided counsellors and granting away some of his essential rights, showed his lack of virtue as a sovereign. Although the knowledge of such duties is easy to attain, it is a science that can only be acquired through study and instruction.¹⁸³ The lack even of basic instruction in civil duty explains the ignorance common to king, nobleman, minister, doctor, parliamentarian, and commoner.

Therefore, Hobbes did not regard Cromwell and the army as better representatives of the people than the people themselves. Milton argued that the eventual desire of the majority of the people for restoration of the monarchy demonstrated that the multitude was ignorant of its own best interests. The "sounder part" of the legislature allied with Cromwell and the army was said to be the people proper, while Cromwell was the true protector of the people's liberty. Hobbes countered that Cromwell had designs to restore the king himself, if it served his interests, thus implying that if, as Milton and the rebels thought, the rule of the Stuarts was oppressive, then Cromwell was quite willing to have the people oppressed again as it would serve his turn. Cromwell noted that many within Parliament and without became sympathetic to the tribulations of the king, and grew indignant at the chief inciters of rebellion within Parliament. He intended at one point to

gain the support of the king's party as well, eventually setting himself up as "second man" to the king, unless he could become first man himself. When, however, he attained sufficient power to restore the king, he did not do so, as he now controlled Parliament, and the king's presence would be an obstacle to his own pursuit of power. Far from representing the people's interests, the rule of his actions—seeking to restore the king and then not restoring him—was that of gaining the upper hand in the shifting power relations of civil war England.¹⁸⁴

Furthermore, Cromwell's ambitions indicate the dangers posed by the army when not subordinated to the sovereign power. Hobbes stated that the sovereign has the duty to appoint army commanders who are capable generals, loved by their soldiers, and loyal to the sovereign. The love of the soldiers without due fidelity to the sovereign is a threat to peace. But a popular sovereign, he maintained, need not fear a popular commander, because the sovereign is loved for its cause as well as its person. Cromwell, however, had his command under Parliament, which had unlawfully seized sovereign power from the king. As such, the members of Parliament depended solely on force—the army—to achieve their ends; and so their victory was attributable to the "valour, good conduct, or felicity of those to whom they give the command of their armies," engendering in the soldiers love and admiration of their general. In other words, without the right to govern and a loveable cause, Parliament was vulnerable to Cromwell's power-grab. Sedition begot further sedition. As Hobbes wrote, there was "the perfidy of the Parliament against the King, and then the perfidy of the army against the Parliament."¹⁸⁵ The army distinguished itself from Parliament not by its greater virtue but by its greater success in seizing power.

Contrary to Milton's characterisation of Cromwell, Hobbes depicted a man governed only by his own ambition—a proud rebel. Hobbes named among the causes of the dissolution of commonwealths the popularity of an ambitious subject, because the people may be led from obedience to the laws by such an individual. He added that such a person is more of a threat to popular government than monarchy, "because an Army is of

so great force, and multitude, as it may easily be made believe, they are the People.”

Hobbes adduced the example of Julius Caesar, “who was set up by the People against the Senate, having won to himselfe the affections of his Army, made himselfe Master, both of Senate and People.”¹⁸⁶ The parallel with Cromwell was exact. Republican Rome was as oligarchic as England under the Long Parliament—i.e., only nominally democratic—and Cromwell, like Caesar, achieved mastery over the commonwealth by taking command over and gaining the love of his soldiers, thereby acquiring the support of much of the people. *Through force and flattery, the popular commander of an army may successfully rebel against an assembly in power in the name of the people.*

How substantial was Cromwell’s claim to represent the people? His claim was the same as the Long Parliament’s pretext for rebellion. Parliament had justified its resistance on the basis of “*salus populi*, the safety of the nation against a dangerous conspiracy of Papists and a malignant party at home...” But Cromwell had as much claim to rule as Protector of the people’s safety, since it was the army more than Parliament which ensured *salus populi*. Moreover, he could legitimately argue that Parliament had neglected the safety of the nation, so that the army under General Cromwell was duty-bound to govern. Their competing claims were in accord, nominally, with Hobbes’s assertion that the office of the sovereign power is to procure the safety of the people. But Hobbes insisted that sovereign power belongs by right to the people’s representative, and that who the representative is cannot change merely on the basis of the seizure of power. Where there is already an existing sovereign representative, another individual or group cannot rightfully become sovereign unless the existent representative divests itself of the sovereign power.¹⁸⁷ For Hobbes, might does not automatically make right. Thus, Cromwell’s title of Protector was as good as Parliament’s claim to rule, which is to say that it was just as bad. For since Parliament’s rebellion was unjust, Cromwell’s usurpation merely ousted rebels who themselves possessed no right of sovereignty. Contrary to Milton, for whom Cromwell’s right to rule was justified on the grounds that he was the protector of public liberty, Hobbes

viewed this claim as an antinomian interpretation of liberty. In any case, notwithstanding Cromwell's pretence to *salus populi*, he was merely another unlawful usurper, no better (and no worse) than the Long Parliament.

Indeed, Hobbes argued that Cromwell was not serious about the title of "Protector," and in fact aimed for absolute monarchy. After three years of Cromwell's Protectorate, the Parliament drew up a petition to him to take on the title of king. Cromwell equivocated, needing "some time to seek God," and finally refused their offer. But his refusal was, according to Hobbes, based not on meditation on what was best for the country but on calculation of what would best serve his own purposes. As Hobbes wrote, "he durst not take it at that time; the army being addicted to their great officers, and amongst their great officers many hoping to succeed them." Nevertheless, he did manage to secure absolute monarchy in all but name, most tellingly by now holding the right of succession in himself. It was he who determined that his son would succeed him as Protector. Far from being an enemy of tyranny, Cromwell was depicted as worse than any sovereign representative. For he sought absolute kingship, which in itself is not more oppressive than any other regime, but did not possess the right of sovereign representation in addition to supreme power. In Hobbes's view, political authority includes not only power but also explicit right to such power: Cromwell's unwillingness to lay claim to such right reflected his recognition of the uncertainty and instability of sovereign authority in republican England. Furthermore, by acting as much the rebel and usurper as did the Long Parliament, Cromwell was certainly not representative, and his Protectorate involved the procurement of the objects of his ambition, not the people's peace and comfortable security. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Protectorate was "taken for great tyranny" because of its close supervision of the nobility's behaviour and estates and its rigging of elections to Parliament. Cromwell and his major-generals acted out of their own interests rather than the common good.¹⁸⁸ Thus, Cromwell and his successors could not escape the logic of usurpation: Oliver could not, in the face of the generals' jealousy, become king; Richard

was ousted by certain soldiers in the army; and the Long Parliament was finally defeated through the actions of General Monk and his army.¹⁸⁹ Hobbes's Cromwell was little more than a tinpot dictator whose government bred further strife. His treatment of Cromwell demonstrated his emphasis on peace and equity.

Nevertheless, the use of the word "tyranny" to describe the Protectorate is inconsistent with Hobbes's critique of the abuse of this word. How could the rule of Parliament and Cromwell be more "tyrannical" than that of the Stuarts, if tyranny is merely monarchy disliked? Hobbes would have been more persuasive if he had consistently discarded the term and criticised Cromwell and the Long Parliament for the instability of their rule. That they gained power did not excuse their actions—which nonetheless could not be punished after they attained supreme power. But they set a dangerous precedent by engendering strife to further their ambitions, and should not have been surprised when they were unseated or their successors opposed. Hobbes's *Leviathan* and *Behemoth* are not tyrants' or rebels' catechisms, because neither sedition nor oppression of the people—i.e., obstructing the means to individual material prosperity in the commonwealth—are prudent paths for the sovereign. In this sense, the government of both the proud rebels of the English civil war and an incompetent king's party (possibly the king himself) fell short of the authoritarian state Hobbes had in mind.

Finally, Hobbes was dismissive of the free commonwealth. The Rump declared in 1651 that England be made a "Free-state." Hobbes wrote that the declaration only meant that they, not the king or any other single person such as Cromwell, "would be the people's masters." More generally, Hobbes questioned the notion of how the commonwealth can be free. Being free from invasion does not pertain only to oligarchic regimes. Nor could it mean that the people were to be free from the laws, since the people continued to be governed by (bad) laws of the Long Parliament and later the Protector.¹⁹⁰ The term "free commonwealth" was insignificant speech. But to examine fully Hobbes's opposition to the Miltonian usage of the term—in terms of religious as well as civil liberty—a

discussion of his conception of freedom and the abuse of the word is necessary, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

Nevertheless, we can conclude from the analysis thus far that Hobbes's views on sovereignty were opposite to Milton's. He did not envision an aristocratically governed commonwealth which would be best for humanity. In regard to aristocracy, Hobbes did not consider one type of regime as unequivocally best. Instead, what is essential for peace and equity is that the sovereign be representative. Indeed, Hobbes's thought was more accepting of democracy than was Milton's, since the possession of absolute sovereign rights and the fulfilment of sovereign duties—both possible in a democratically governed state—are essential to good government, not aristocratic virtue which belongs only to a few.¹⁹¹

Moreover, although Hobbes, like Milton, wrote of an everlasting commonwealth, his conception was devoid of divine significance. Milton regarded his free commonwealth as God's ordained regime, the best for humanity until the second coming of Christ.

Hobbes made assertions which appear similarly ambitious:

...long time after men have begun to constitute Common-wealths, imperfect, and apt to relapse into disorder, there may, Principles of Reason be found out, by industrious meditation, to make their constitution (excepting by external violence) everlasting.

But this passage should be considered in light of his remark that the mighty Leviathan "is mortall, and subject to decay, as all other Earthly creatures are."¹⁹² Even if the commonwealth could be secured from internal decay, which is possible, the ever-present danger of relapsing into civil war is indicative of its wholly mundane origins. The Leviathan is an artificial animal. It is a work of human hands, for solely earthly ends—peace and comfortable self-preservation—not for the purpose of ennobling men and women to pursue Christian virtues. Accordingly, the keys to a durable commonwealth are the recognition of absolute sovereign rights and the fulfilment of sovereign duties, including public instruction in those rights and the making of good laws. In emphasising neither civil freedom nor God, Hobbes's theory of sovereignty was antithetical to religious

republicanism.

Notes to Chapter Three

¹ Milton, *Tenure*, 58-59.

² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 13, 187; and chap. 14, 190.

³ Milton, *Tenure*, 59-60.

⁴ Victoria Kahn argues that Milton's account is an "Aristotelian narrative." Kahn, "The Metaphorical Contract in Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*," in *Milton and Republicanism*, 95. The account is certainly consistent with his interpretation of Aristotle, but his interpretation is open to question (see below).

⁵ See, for example, Goldsmith, *Science of Politics*, 163-164; Orwin, "On Sovereign Authorization," 39-40; and Slomp, *Philosophy of Glory*, 163-164.

⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 191; chap. 17, 227-228; chap. 18, 230; and chap. 26, 312-313.

⁷ Milton, "Mr. John Milton's Character of the Long Parliament" (1648), in *Political Writings*, 454. Zera S. Fink makes an interesting connection between Aristotle's view that northern climates have deleterious effects on political capacity and Milton's classical republicanism. Fink, *The Classical Republicans*, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1963), 91-92.

⁸ Milton, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660), in *Political Writings*, 419 (Milton's emphasis).

⁹ Milton, *Tenure*, 60-61. See Fink, *Classical Republicans*, 103. Although Fink acknowledges the influence of Aristotle on Milton's thought, Martin Dzelzainis convincingly argues that Fink places too much importance on the influence of Polybius. The notion that Milton would endorse the Polybian mixed state obscures his antagonism towards monarchy. See Dzelzainis, "Milton's Classical Republicanism," in *Milton and Republicanism*, 7-8.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. by Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1279a33-1279b5, 1288a32-1288b2, and 1295a7-1295a24.

¹¹ Milton, *Readie and Easie Way*, 435.

¹² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1286b7-1286b19.

¹³ As Blair Worden argues, Milton accepted the Aristotelian principle that an exceptionally wise person should be king, but invoked it "to make an opposite point: to illustrate the folly of subordinating wise and virtuous men to the rule of kings, who are normally far less wise and virtuous." Worden, "Milton and Marchamont Nedham," in *Milton and Republicanism*, 166.

¹⁴ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 5, 203 and 207.

¹⁵ As Elizabeth Tuttle notes, this elevation of popular right over kingly authority led Milton to regard the ancient governments as superior, i.e., more consistent with natural law than the governments of his day. Tuttle, "Biblical Reference in the Political Pamphlets," in *Milton and Republicanism*, 79.

¹⁶ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 5, 210-218, 222, and 225 (Milton's emphasis).

¹⁷ The examples serve a rhetorical purpose as well. As Diane Speer has pointed out, Milton's association of the English and Roman peoples was effective counter-rhetoric to Salmasius's comparison of the royalists with "good Romans" like Cicero and Cato. Speer, "Milton's *Defensia Prima: Ethos and Vituperation* in a Polemic Engagement," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (1976), 280.

¹⁸ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 5, 230. Speer argues that the condemnation of Antony in particular was meant to echo Cicero's *Philippics*. Speer, "Ethos and Vituperation," 280.

¹⁹ Milton, *Readie and Easie Way*, 417 (Milton's emphasis).

²⁰ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 3.

²¹ Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, vol. 2, 69.

²² See Dzelzainis, "Classical Republicanism," 5-7, on the connection Hobbes made between the rediscovery of ancient texts and the sedition incited by proponents of classical republicanism.

²³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 19, 239-240. In *Behemoth*, a more polemical work than his principal political treatises, Hobbes occasionally slipped into using the term "oligarchy" to refer to an aristocratic government that governs badly. But Hobbes was not opposed to recognising that certain governments may rule poorly,

such as the Long Parliament and perhaps even Charles I. What he was criticising in *Leviathan* is the usage of such terms to slander the form of government.

²⁴ Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, 19; *Leviathan*, chap. 5, 111-112; and chap. 46, 697. Sheldon S. Wolin rightly argues that Hobbes opposed artificial to natural reason as the correct basis for classifying regimes, but his characterisation of Hobbes as promoting a despotic morality exaggerates the degree of abstraction in Hobbes's political thought. Wolin, "Hobbes and the Culture of Despotism," in *Hobbes and Political Theory*, 24-26.

²⁵ The precise relation of law to liberty will be more fully examined in the next chapter.

²⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 190.

²⁷ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 5, 207.

²⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 18, 237. Cf. Deborah Baumgold, "Hobbes's Political Sensibility," in *Hobbes and Political Theory*, 83-84.

²⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 192; and chap. 15, 212 (my emphasis). It might be countered that the sovereign's right to put the subject to death, for example, is not actually limited. For example, see Gordon J. Schochet, "Intending (Political) Obligation: Hobbes and the Voluntary Basis of Society," in *Hobbes and Political Theory*, 62-63. The right itself cannot be limited; but the sovereign is obligated by duty as a representative person, as I shall argue below. Also, see the discussion in chapter four on punishment: the sovereign's unlimited right of punishment should be used only with respect to deterrence.

³⁰ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 36-37, 60; and *Leviathan*, chap. 13, 186.

³¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 46, 697. Of course, we are always bound *in foro interno* to obey the laws of nature (chap. 15, 215). But A.E. Taylor thinks that this internal moral obligation is more binding than civil law. Taylor, "The Ethical Doctrine of Hobbes," in *Hobbes Studies*, 41. In light of the threat that the revival of classical republicanism posed to peace in Hobbes's time, it is hardly plausible that moral obligation could override political obedience in Hobbes's thought. He sought to show that the two are distinct with respect to subjects' actions.

³² Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 44. As Mary Dietz points out, Hobbes's emphasis is on political duty rather than private virtue. But to characterise Hobbes as a theorist of "civil virtue" is misleading, as Dietz acknowledges, with respect to the term's republican connotations. Dietz, "Hobbes's Subject as Citizen," in *Hobbes and Political Theory*, 103 and 113. Indeed, Hobbes was chiefly interested in commodious self-preservation rather than the inculcation of higher ideals of citizenship.

³³ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 2, 125; and *Tenure*, 61-62.

³⁴ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 2, 148-149; and *Paradise Lost*, 12.307-309.

³⁵ Numbers 12:8. All Biblical references are to the King James Version.

³⁶ Kahn thinks that Milton linked the Mosaic covenant with the contract between subject and sovereign. Kahn, "The metaphorical contract," 96. While she persuasively draws out the parallel of conditionality - contract as trust from the people to God - the Mosaic covenant can hardly be said to "demystify" Hobbesian-style contracts, since God's law is involved.

³⁷ Milton, *Tenure*, 63 and 128. But see Merritt Y. Hughes' footnote to Milton, *Complete Prose Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), vol. 3, 206n68, for the controversy over Deuteronomy 17, particularly Grotius's opposite interpretation to Milton's.

³⁸ Judges 3:14-30.

³⁹ Hughes suggests a possible reference here to Cicero's doctrine (*Prose Works*, vol. 3, 214n87).

⁴⁰ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 4, 182-183; and *Tenure*, 67-68. It is possible that Milton was implying the "foreignness" of the Stuarts because they came from Scotland, but there is no conclusive evidence to prove this.

⁴¹ Judges 3:15. Emphasis in this and other scriptural passages is in the Bible.

⁴² Milton, *Tenure*, 67-69.

⁴³ Judges 3:12 and 4:10.

⁴⁴ This inference was drawn, for example, in the works of the early 19th century Catholic thinker Joseph de Maistre. See his *Considerations on France*, trans. by Richard Lebrun (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11-13; and my article "Maistre and Hobbes on Providential History and the English Civil War," *Clio* 30 (Spring 2001).

⁴⁵ 1 Samuel 8.

⁴⁶ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 2, 150.

⁴⁷ 1 Samuel 8:8.

⁴⁸ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 2, 150. Cf. Milton's polemic against *Eikon Basilike*, a book ascribed to Charles I, especially his remarks on the people's "civil kind of Idolatry in idolizing thir Kings." Milton, *Eikonoklastes*, in *Prose Works*, vol. 3, 343.

⁴⁹ 1 Samuel 9:2, 10:1, 15:11, 15:35, and 16ff. Obviously, the meaning of these apparently contradictory passages - which attribute error to an omniscient God - is open to interpretation.

⁵⁰ 1 Samuel 14 and 26.

⁵¹ See Milton, *Defence*, chap. 4, 184.

⁵² Psalm 51:4.

⁵³ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 4, 183; and *Eikonoklastes*, 586-587.

⁵⁴ 2 Samuel 1.

⁵⁵ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 4, 185. See Milton, *Brief Notes upon a Late Sermon*, in *Prose Works*, ed. by W. Ayers, vol. 7, 475: "but who is his Anointed? not every King, but they only who were anointed or made Kings by his special command, as Saul, David, and his race, which ended in the Messiah" (Milton's emphasis).

⁵⁶ 1 Kings 12.

⁵⁷ Milton, *Tenure*, 64; and *Defence*, chap. 4, 186-187.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 2, 130.

⁵⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ep. ded., 75.

⁶⁰ Qtd. in Milton, *Defence*, chap. 2, 148.

⁶¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 20, 258; and chap. 40, 502. Cf. Johnston, *Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 167-168.

⁶² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 40, 503. Cf. Johnston, *Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 168.

⁶³ Numbers 16.

⁶⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 40, 504.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 505. Cf. Martinich, *Two Gods*, 250. The point of such an interpretation is not its consistency with modern science, i.e., the rationalisation of religion, the view of Martinich. Instead, the political implications of Hobbes's Biblical interpretations are paramount.

⁶⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 42, 547. Cf. Johnston, *Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 168. Johnston's formulation is inverted: Moses' kingship was not for Hobbes the model for all sovereigns (which Johnston acknowledges to be a textually unsubstantiated point), but rather was made consistent with his doctrine of sovereignty in earlier parts of the book.

⁶⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 20, 252.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 255-256.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, 92; and chap. 20, 257 (Hobbes's emphasis). Cf. Schochet, "Voluntary Basis," 61-64.

While Schochet's argument that there is conditional obligation between the sovereign by acquisition and its subjects is plausible, he neglects the retained rights of subjects in all commonwealths, and thus erroneously characterises political obligation in instituted commonwealths as unconditional.

⁷⁰ Job 1-2. See Kow, "Maistre and Hobbes."

⁷¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 31, 398-399. A.P. Martinich claims to show the Calvinism of Hobbes's conception of providence. Martinich, *Two Gods*, 94.. Given that providence is presented here as independent of sin, even original sin, Hobbes was far from embracing Calvinist doctrine. His focus was on deflating the standard of divine justice.

⁷² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 20, 252; and chap. 36, 464.

⁷³ See Andrew, *Shylock's Rights*, 7.

⁷⁴ Ronald Beiner, "Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Rousseau on Civil Religion," *The Review of Politics* 55 (1993), 629; and see Hobbes, *De Cive*, chap. 16, 197-198. Beiner's argument that Hobbes's interpretation of this episode was part of his project to "judaicise Christianity" will be examined in the next chapter.

⁷⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 40, 510.

⁷⁶ Psalm 51:4.

⁷⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 21, 265 (Hobbes's emphasis). Cf. F.C. Hood, *Divine Politics*, 107-108.

Hood neglects the political importance of this distinction, which is to counter the seditious doctrine that

subjects can hold the sovereign to account for breaches of divine justice. The injury to God from killing Uriah was a matter between the sovereign and God. The distinction is a substantial one.

⁷⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. and trans. by Curley, chap. 30, 227n9. Did this distinction between justice and equity provide for unchecked arbitrary power? See the section on liberty and law in chapter four, below.

⁷⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 40, 510-511; and see 1 Kings 12:28 for Jeroboam's idolatry.

⁸⁰ Deborah Baumgold regards sovereign duty as part of Hobbes's theory of the "art of government." Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 113-114. In her insistence on Hobbes's "elitism," she neglects the significance of sovereign duty for individual rights: in this case, the denial of the right of rebellion. The elitist interpretation also leads her to the erroneous conclusion that monarchy for Hobbes was more likely to be "rational" (105). See my analysis below.

⁸¹ Hobbes's treatment of sacred history is not, I argue, separable from his political science, contrary to the thesis of Pocock in "Time, History, and Eschatology," 148-201.

⁸² Luke 1:33.

⁸³ Romans 13:1 and 13:5-8. Romans 13:1 and 1 Peter 2:13 "were regularly cited by royalists." Kahn, "Metaphorical Contract," 97.

⁸⁴ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 165-166; and chap. 5, 230 (Milton's emphasis). As Kahn writes, "his interpretation of this passage is that it is open to interpretation." Kahn, "Metaphorical Contract," 97.

⁸⁵ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 2, 149; chap. 3, 163; and chap. 4, 184-184. See Perez Zagorin, *Milton: Aristocrat and Rebel* (New York: D.S. Brewer, 1992), 82.

⁸⁶ Romans 13:2.

⁸⁷ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 166-167.

⁸⁸ 1 Peter 2:13-15.

⁸⁹ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 161.

⁹⁰ 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

⁹¹ 2 Timothy 4:17.

⁹² Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 171-172.

⁹³ The term is borrowed from Beiner, "Civil Religion," esp. 621-624. Beiner argues that Machiavelli both attacked Christianity and re-interpreted it to ennoble humanity according to Roman virtues. Milton, in contrast, linked republican virtue with otherworldly theodicy, not worldly glory. Milton was more like the seraph Abdiel than the satanic Machiavelli.

⁹⁴ Matthew 22:15-21.

⁹⁵ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 156-157 (Milton's emphasis). The early Rump held that kingship constituted a threat to the rights of property. See Thomas S. Corns, "Milton and the Characteristics of a Free Commonwealth," in *Milton and Republicanism*, 28.

⁹⁶ Matthew 6:19-20 and 19:21.

⁹⁷ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 157-158.

⁹⁸ Luke 13:31-33.

⁹⁹ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 158. See also *Tenure*, 70.

¹⁰⁰ Luke 4:1-7; John 12:31; and Revelations 13:4. For Milton, the offer had to be genuine, because Satan is the source of tyrants' power over their subjects (*Defence*, chap. 3, 164). See also Kahn, "Metaphorical Contract," 97.

¹⁰¹ Luke 1:51-52.

¹⁰² Milton, *Tenure*, 70 (Milton's emphasis); and see *Defence*, chap. 3, 154.

¹⁰³ 1 Corinthians 7:21-23.

¹⁰⁴ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 155.

¹⁰⁵ Various writers have, moreover, tried to draw a connection between Christian liberty and republicanism in Milton. The figure of Christ the enemy of tyrants is this link. Also, Milton thought that a republican commonwealth was the optimal regime to effect a separation of church and state (necessary for Christian liberty). See A.S.P. Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 93; and Armand Himy, "Paradise Lost as a 'tractatus theologico-politicus,'" in *Milton and Republicanism*, 134.

¹⁰⁶ Matthew 17:24-27.

¹⁰⁷ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 156. The ambiguity of the word "children" refers to St. Augustine's *City of God*.

¹⁰⁸ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 36-37.

¹⁰⁹ Matthew 20:25-28.

¹¹⁰ 1 Samuel 8:5.

¹¹¹ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 3, 158-159.

¹¹² Milton, *Readie and Easie Way*, 422-423. Thomas N. Corns notes the shift from allowing that a subordinated monarchy might be as viable as a republic to an advocacy of the free commonwealth as best. Corns, "Characteristics of a free commonwealth," 33-39 and 41. My argument is that Milton's Christ was a consistent figure throughout the works examined here, with a full-blown republican Christ by 1660.

¹¹³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 42, 527.

¹¹⁴ Quentin Skinner argues that this passage of Romans was "the most quoted of all texts on the question of political obligation throughout the seventeenth century," as part of his thesis that Hobbes's political beliefs were hardly novel or original. Skinner, "Conquest and Consent: Thomas Hobbes and the Engagement Controversy," in *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660*, ed. by G.E. Aylmer (London: Macmillan Press, 1972), 83 and 97-98. But Skinner supposes that Hobbes's "political beliefs" were separable from the rational justification of those beliefs, which he thinks are original. My argument throughout this chapter is that the two were in many ways inseparable. When Hobbes cited Romans 13, he had in mind a radically different conception of sovereign authority in relation to God from that of contemporaries who merely upheld the notion of divine right. The earthly right of sovereignty in Hobbes's teaching entailed a different notion of who the sovereign should be. That is to say, he did not hold that commonwealths should be governed only by hereditary monarchs sanctioned by God.

¹¹⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 42, 606.

¹¹⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. and trans. by Curley, chap. 46, 476.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Stephen Holmes, "Political Psychology in Hobbes's *Behemoth*," in *Thomas Hobbes and Political Theory*, 130-131. Holmes and others have picked up on the concurrence of seditious appropriations of Aristotle and abuse of Scripture, but have not connected the two further than in the meaningless squabbles of the Schoolmen. But Milton combined scriptural interpretation with classical republicanism. Thus, Hobbes arguably linked the two in Milton's case. Cf. Hobbes on Milton and Salmasius in *Behemoth*, 163-164: "they are good Latin both," a backhanded compliment.

¹¹⁸ See below for Hobbes's critique of Cromwell as sovereign by might but not by right.

¹¹⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 20, 259; and chap. 24, 297.

¹²⁰ Does rendering to Caesar entail arbitrary seizure of property by the sovereign? The case of taxation demonstrates the need for the non-exclusion of property from the sovereign.

¹²¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 215; and chap. 20, 259. In other words, divine obligation (rendering to God) is, with respect to outward action, wholly contained within political obligation (rendering to Caesar). See C.B. Macpherson's note on Warrender, in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 294nD. God adds nothing to obligation. Indeed, my overall argument is that Hobbes's treatment of religion was largely negative: to combat the religious enemies of peace.

¹²² Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 1.

¹²³ John 18:36.

¹²⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 198; and chap. 41, 514 (Hobbes's emphasis). See Beiner, "Civil Religion," 629-630.

¹²⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 19, 247; and chap. 41, 515.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 41, 515-516.

¹²⁷ Even A.P. Martinich concedes that Hobbes's interpretation here was intended to counter the use of Christianity to destabilise governments. But he adds that there is no evidence that Hobbes was insincere "independently of his own immediate political motivations." Martinich, *Two Gods*, 295-296. Again, it is hard to see how Hobbes's treatment can be considered independently of political motivations (see, for example, Beiner, "Civil Religion," 628-629). Martinich's argument that Hobbes wanted to make religion consistent with science (page 5) fails to consider that Hobbes's overriding interest in *Leviathan* was political, as distinct from his investigations into natural philosophy: "I return to my interrupted Speculation of Bodies Naturall..." (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, concl., 396).

¹²⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 41, 520-521.

¹²⁹ My interpretation here also casts a different light on Hobbes's treatment of the Holy Trinity, which he regarded as three persons representing God. Martinich argues that Hobbes was applying his theory of personation to show that it could be applied not only to sovereignty but also to theological matters. Martinich, "On the Proper Interpretation of Hobbes's Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996), 279. Edwin Curley, however, thinks that Hobbes's unorthodox treatment of the Trinity was ironic, casting doubt on Christianity and the existence of God itself. Curley, "Calvin and Hobbes, or, Hobbes as an Orthodox Christian," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34 (1996), 265-270. A more plausible interpretation that avoids the thorny question of Hobbes's sincerity is that a personation theory of the Trinity justified the right to represent God possessed by all sovereigns.

¹³⁰ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 9, 284.

¹³¹ For example, Don M. Wolfe concedes that Milton was "no democrat at heart," but nevertheless maintains that he "argued better than he knew for...principles of popular rule." Wolfe, "Hobbes and Milton," 418-419.

¹³² Milton, *Defence*, chap. 12, 297-302; and *Second Defence of the People of England*, in *Political Writings*, 365. Cf. Milton, *Eikonoklastes*, passim; and Zagorin, *Aristocrat and Rebel*, 70.

¹³³ Milton, *Tenure*, 83; *Defence*, preface, 100, 110; and chap. 1, 118. Milton's references to the Bible in his polemics against Charles's tyranny demonstrated this "divine impulse" in the people. Tuttle, "Biblical Reference," 72-74.

¹³⁴ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 2, 125-126; chap. 6, 237-239; chap. 9, 275-282; chap. 11, 294; *Eikonoklastes*, 411, 448, and see 458 and 524-525.

¹³⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 14, 193 and 201.

¹³⁶ Plato, *Republic*, trans. by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 331c.

¹³⁷ Milton, *Tenure*, 79; and *Defence*, chap. 10, 290. See also *Eikonoklastes*, 592-597. By this reasoning, one could make a new covenant against the king, as Parliament and the Scots had done in 1644. See William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 103.

¹³⁸ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 12, 304-307.

¹³⁹ Milton, *Tenure*, 76-77. See Kahn, "Metaphorical Contract," 83-84; and Zagorin, *Aristocrat and Rebel*, 67.

¹⁴⁰ Milton, *Tenure*, 80-81 and 84.

¹⁴¹ Milton, *Tenure*, 82; *Defence*, chap. 10, 288-289; and "Long Parliament," 450-451. See Worden, "Milton and Nedham," 165.

¹⁴² Milton, "Long Parliament," 452-453. See Cedric C. Brown, "Great senates and godly education: politics and cultural renewal in some pre- and post-revolutionary texts of Milton," in *Milton and Republicanism*, 56-57, on the link between liberty and virtue in Milton's earlier poems. Brown's term "cultural renewal" is perhaps too benign, considering Milton's strident attack on popular judgement.

¹⁴³ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 2, 127; *Second Defence*, 408-409, 412; and "Long Parliament," 453-454.

¹⁴⁴ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 11, 295; and "Long Parliament," 449. Dzelzainis argues that Milton's view of wealth as corrupting of the virtues - his "verdict on the English experiment with classical republicanism" - could be seen in the "fatally flawed" republicanism of Mammon in Book 2 of *Paradise Lost*. Dzelzainis, "Classical Republicanism," 24. One might question whether, in this context, Mammonism was republican at all, since the petty greed of the people led them to support restoration of the monarchy.

¹⁴⁵ Milton, *Readie and Easie Way*, 418 and 438.

¹⁴⁶ Milton, *Defence*, chap. 6, 236; and *Second Defence*, 373 and 398-403. Sir Robert Filmer expressed his frustration with Milton's conception: "If the 'sounder, the better, and the uprighter' part have the power of the people, how shall we know, or who shall judge who they be?" Filmer, *Observations Concerning the Originall of Government* (1652), in *Patriarcha and Other Writings*, ed. by Johann P. Somerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 198-199. Indeed, Milton was not clear or systematic on this point.

¹⁴⁷ Milton, *Readie and Easie Way*, 427-429. On the controversy over Milton's view of Cromwell, compare, for example, Corns, "Free Commonwealth," 35-36, with opposite arguments in the following: Worden, "Milton and Nedham," 174-176; Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London:

Faber and Faber, 1997), 193; and Zagorin, *Aristocrat and Rebel*, 96. As Hill and Zagorin note, Milton both praised and advised Cromwell. His republican principles arguably had priority over support for the Lord Protector. Certainly, after Cromwell's death and the onset of the Restoration, his republican vision predominated his political views.

¹⁴⁸ Milton, *Readie and Easie Way*, 428. Brown describes this Council as a sort of new and improved Rump. Brown, "Great senates and godly education," 54. It would be more accurate to say that the Rump may have exemplified to some degree the institution Milton had in mind, since the Rump was dissolved by the time he wrote of the Grand Council.

¹⁴⁹ Milton, *Readie and Easie Way*, 427 and 431.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 432-433. Cf. Corn, "Free Commonwealth," 41-42. While Corn is correct in his remark that the free commonwealth is meant to displace the mystique of kingship, the merit of the new regime is not that of "a rational and unmystical state." Milton infused his classical republicanism with a deeply religious content. The aristocratic aspects of his free commonwealth can only be understood in the context of Protestant Christianity.

¹⁵¹ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 163-164 (Hobbes's emphasis).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 1-2. Hobbes was in the *Behemoth* not always consistent on the point that the sovereign right by descent was binding even without the possession of sovereign power: see Holmes, "Political Psychology," 129. But the distinction of right from might was nevertheless generally held throughout in *Behemoth*, and was consistent with the teaching in *Leviathan*, as I argue below.

¹⁵³ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 116-117, 125, and 153. See Holmes, "Political Psychology," 130.

¹⁵⁴ For example, Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*, 75-79; Joshua Mitchell, "Hobbes and the Equality of All under the One," *Political Theory* 21 (1993), 85-86; and many others since 1651. As Mitchell writes, "The reading I have given of Hobbes's defence of monarchy...is a more or less standard one, I recognize."

¹⁵⁵ Andrew, *Shylock's Rights*, 86-87.

¹⁵⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 19, 240-241.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 241-242; and chap. 30, 385. S.M. Okin argues that the "identity of [public and private] interests" was, in Hobbes's earlier works, a justification of absolute sovereignty, but was later associated more with monarchy. Okin, "'The Sovereign and His Counsellors': Hobbes's Reevaluation of Parliament," in *Critical Assessments*, vol. 3, 790. I would argue, in contrast, that Hobbes felt the harmonisation of interests most achievable in monarchy throughout his works, and also consistently maintained that such identity of interests is possible in other forms of government.

¹⁵⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 19, 242-243; and chap. 25, 303-305. It would be mistaken to characterise Hobbes as a royalist, much less to argue, as does Goldsmith, that Hobbes was a royalist "who turned out to be *plus royalist que le roi*." M.M. Goldsmith, "Hobbes's 'Mortall God': Is there a Fallacy in Hobbes's Theory of Sovereignty?" in *Critical Assessments*, vol. 3, 781 (Goldsmith's emphasis). Given that for Hobbes, Charles's monarchy was not blameless in its own downfall (as indicated by his criticism of the king's party), Hobbes's theory of sovereignty is perhaps more accurately characterised as absolutist than as essentially royalist or monarchist.

¹⁶⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 19, 243-245 and 248-250.

¹⁶¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 19, 246-247.

¹⁶² Cf. Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*, 76, and 169n95. The argument of Baumgold and others that indivisible sovereignty was, for Hobbes, best achieved in monarchy must be viewed in light of his concept of an "artificial person." Hobbesian absolutism is compatible with parliamentary supremacy as well as monarchy.

¹⁶³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 20, 260.

¹⁶⁴ One of the more recent works which detects tyrannical tendencies in Hobbes is Slomp's *Political Philosophy of Glory*, 166, in which she even compares the Leviathan to Big Brother in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In contrast, the association of Hobbes's thought with "good government" is rarely made, with the exception of, for example, Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*, 101ff. But she denies that good government is an "integral and significant part of the larger theory," and characterises his treatment of it as recommendations in the "art of government."

¹⁶⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 18, 229-231.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 228-230.

¹⁶⁷ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 1-2.

¹⁶⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 18, 231-236. Slomp characterises these rights as constituting "virulently antiliberal elements" in his thought. Slomp, *Political Philosophy of Glory*, 163-164. That they may have been illiberal is not to say that they were undemocratic, since such sovereign rights could also pertain to states in which a parliament is supreme.

¹⁶⁹ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 27.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 98, 102, and 105-107 (Hobbes's emphasis). Cf. Holmes, "Political Psychology," 128-129. Did Parliament think that the name of king conferred right without might? Or did they want the rights and power of sovereignty while thinking that the title could be left to the king? In either case, they failed to comprehend what sovereignty must entail. Admittedly, Hobbes is not always consistent on the issue of might and right.

¹⁷¹ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 120-121 and 152. Although there is some evidence that Hobbes saw more of a role for Parliament in his *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, I am not persuaded that the *Dialogue* should be taken as constituting a significant departure from Hobbes's teaching in *Leviathan*. See Hobbes, *A Dialogue Between a Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England*, ed. by Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 76-77, on the need for Parliament's assent to the Act of Oblivion; and pages 13-14 of Cropsey's introduction on the alleged shift in Hobbes's thinking. Even Okin, who contests Cropsey's thesis, contrasts the *Dialogue* with *Behemoth*, a "generally ultraroyalist history" ("Reevaluation of Parliament," 787). But Hobbes was critical of the king's rule. Hobbes's provisions against unmitigated arbitrary rule which Okin imputes to the *Dialogue* alone are found throughout his political works, including *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*.

¹⁷² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 18, 228-229; and chap. 30, 376.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, chap. 30, 387-388 (Hobbes's emphasis).

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 14, 192.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. C.B. Macpherson, "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man," in *Hobbes Studies*, 182-183: "a stronger state is necessary to maintain a capitalist society..." To what extent Hobbes's thought can be characterised as bourgeois or capitalist is open to question. But Macpherson is right, I think, to point out that absolute sovereignty is not contrary to a commodious society: it is a consequence of the needs of the latter.

¹⁷⁶ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 2-4.

¹⁷⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 30, 377.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 30, 378-383.

¹⁷⁹ For example, Robert Kraynak, *History and Modernity in the Thought of Thomas Hobbes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) 6; and Royce MacGillivray, "Thomas Hobbes's History of the English Civil War: A Study of *Behemoth*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 31 (1970), 197.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Hobbes, *English Works*, ed. by Sir William Molesworth, vol. 8, viii and xvi: Thucydides was "the most politic historiographer that ever writ," and "least of all liked democracy." Hobbes may also have liked democracy least, but his objections to it and his recognition of its potential abuses did not prevent him from accepting its validity in *Leviathan*.

¹⁸¹ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 158. See Holmes, "Political Psychology," 120.

¹⁸² Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 44-45.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 138-139 and 143. Cf. MacGillivray, "Study of *Behemoth*," 196-197. Contra MacGillivray, Hobbes's references to Cromwell always emphasise the latter's ambition.

¹⁸⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 30, 393-394; *Behemoth*, 109 and 138. Cf. Holmes, "Political Psychology," 138-139. Holmes's argument that the king can govern the army by "psychological manipulation of his soldiers' beliefs" is not substantiated in the text: the example of the Ethiopian priests was, I would argue, a negative one (i.e., concerning corrupting priests), and separate from the problem of controlling the military.

¹⁸⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 29, 374.

¹⁸⁷ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 180 (Hobbes's emphasis); *Leviathan*, chap. 30, 376.

¹⁸⁸ Kraynak detects a difficulty here: that by rejecting conquest alone as a basis for sovereign right and emphasising the common good, he "comes close to elaborating the classical doctrine of the just regime" which he had intended to reject as seditious. Kraynak, *History and Modernity*, 67. But there is no difficulty

if we consider that the common good meant by Hobbes - peaceful, commodious existence of individuals - is quite different from more elevated or organic conceptions of justice.

¹⁸⁹ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 186-190, 194, and 201-204. Cf. Herbert Schneider thinks that the second last sentence in *Behemoth* - "May the King have as often as there shall be need such a general" - was Hobbes's praise for Cromwell. Schneider, "The Piety of Hobbes," in *Thomas Hobbes in His Time* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974, 95. He neglects the fact that the next line - "the bringing of his [the general's] little army out of Scotland up to London" - was clearly a reference to Monk, not Cromwell.

¹⁹⁰ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 164.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Keith Thomas, "The Social Origins of Hobbes's Political Thought," in *Hobbes Studies*, 185-236. Considering the centrality and purpose of sovereign representation, Thomas's argument that Hobbes had aristocratic sympathies, even if correct biographically, is rather external to his political teaching, which focused on the institutions necessary to regulate a society chiefly devoted to commodious living.

¹⁹² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chaps. 28-29, 362-363; and chap. 30, 378.

Chapter Four: The Two Heads of the Eagle

In the previous chapter, we compared the religious content of Milton's republican politics with the this-worldly orientation of Hobbes's theory of representative government. A key contrast between Milton and Hobbes, in regard to the problem of religious conflict, lies in their opposing accounts of freedom. The question of freedom was briefly addressed in earlier chapters. In this chapter, we shall examine their views on free will, on liberty in relation to law—both human and divine—and finally on ecclesiastical authority, i.e., the proper relation between church and state.

Justifying the Ways of God to Men

Hobbes argued that there are only two things necessary for salvation: obedience to the laws of God and the commonwealth; and belief that "Jesus is the Christ," from which follows all other essential articles of faith.¹ The significance of this teaching in light of the relation between church and state will be discussed later. But we may note that the content of these requirements of salvation is relatively simple. Hobbes did not maintain that Christians must undergo a long and complex process of redemption. Indeed, the stress is on lawful behaviour, before both the sovereign and God, rather than repentance for one's sins. Noticeably absent in his remarks is any mention of the freedom of the will as an element in the drama of sin, punishment, and salvation from the fall of humanity to redemption through Christ. Hobbes's considerations on theology focus on obedience to law rather than on the free will.

In contrast, the problem of the original sin and the tortuous path by which the will is redeemed are central themes of Milton's theology. This fact is apparent from important theological works of Milton, including *Paradise Lost* and *On Christian Doctrine*. Now, William B. Hunter has argued that *On Christian Doctrine* may not be his work at all.² I shall assume, however, that it is at least theoretically consistent with the theology of

Paradise Lost in regard to Milton's conception of free will. Indeed, it arguably formulates in a systematic manner various doctrinal points which are only briefly stated or alluded to in the narrative of the great poem.

In these writings, the free will is a lynchpin of Milton's theodicy. To put it simply, the question of free will concerns the faculty of action in relation to divine (or natural) causation. If God is the cause of all things, then how can we be free to do what we will? But if we do not possess such freedom from God's determination (or "necessity", the more general term), then how can we be held responsible for our actions? For Milton, these considerations were of particular importance, since he derived his conception of Christian freedom from an account of the Fall and the possibility of spiritual redemption.

Milton's basic premise was that free will is consistent with divine providence. He argued that God governs the world generally, but reserves to humans and angels freedom of action. God decreed the creation of the world and has foreknowledge of everything that will happen. Nevertheless, Milton maintained, God's absolute decree and foreknowledge are consistent with free will. God has expressly decreed that man (as well as the angels) is "his own master" to do or not to do what he will. In other words, our very capacity for action—the will—is by God's own command free from divine or natural determination. Furthermore, that God knows the outcomes of freely willed action does not entail that such action is thus inevitable. On the contrary, determining free action would contradict the divine decree. God merely knows what we will freely choose to do: he in no way causes the act or its outcome.³

The contention that there is not a tincture of necessity in the acts of the freely willing subject was crucial to Milton's justification of "the ways of God to men." The subject of *Paradise Lost* is the origin of humanity's fallen state. Since the original sin arising from Satan's temptation of Eve and Eve's temptation of Adam, humanity has struggled to overcome its natural sinfulness through the worship of God and the doing of good works. Before the Fall, human beings were not naturally sinful. "For man," Milton wrote, "was

by nature good and holy, and was naturally disposed to do right"; or as he described them in *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve "worthy seemed, for in their looks divine, / The image of their glorious Maker shone, / Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure". As God's creation, they were naturally good. Now, Adam and Eve lived contentedly in Eden, with all of their needs and wants met, so that there was no source of discontent and vice. In order for them to show their obedience, however, God commanded them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith". Sin in the prelapsarian state consisted solely in violating this single law.⁴

Breaking this law of their own free wills entailed moral responsibility. God is not the cause of sin, and thus, God's foreknowledge of humanity's original sin did not influence whether the sin would be committed or not. As Milton put it in *Paradise Lost*, "they themselves ordained their Fall." In a less elegant but more precise formulation, he remarked that "it was certain that he [man] would fall, but it was not necessary, because he fell of his own accord and that is irreconcilable with necessity." Milton regarded the will as absolutely free from necessity. In this way, "true allegiance, constant faith or love" towards God were tested. Furthermore, in granting humanity a capacity for such mastery of will—free even from his determination—Milton's God also assigned to us absolute responsibility for our sins. Milton's views on free will and responsibility were thus utterly divergent from classical conceptions of Fate. Significantly, even though *Samson Agonistes* is based on the Greek model of tragedy, the drama is consistent rather with his own views on free will and divine providence. For example, the protagonist remarks that "Nothing of these evils hath befall'n me / But justly; I myself have brought them on, / Sole author I, sole cause".⁵

The question arises as to how humanity's natural goodness before the Fall is consistent with the freely willed sin against God. How could God's creation be both naturally disposed to do good and free to do evil? Milton distinguished natural goodness from the necessity to do good. God possesses "a certain immutable internal necessity to do

good,” but human beings, though created good, are not immutable.⁶ Does this make the latter freer than the former? Milton believed that both were free, the difference being the immutable free will of the one and the mutable free will of the other.

The “necessity” of God’s goodness should be examined more closely. Is what God wills necessarily good because he wills it, or does he necessarily will it because it is good? Is the standard of goodness determined by God’s will alone, or is it rather the case that God’s will always conforms to the standard of goodness? The former position was taken by John Calvin, the latter by Thomas Aquinas and other Catholic theologians. Calvin insisted that God’s “will is the only principle of all justice”, so that “we receive all benefits from God...by His clemency and pity, without any consideration of our worthiness or the merit of our works.”⁷ That is to say, human beings cannot be certain about the goodness of their intentions and actions because goodness flows from God’s will alone. Aquinas, in contrast, maintained that goodness can at least be partially known by human beings independently of God’s revealed will. Pre- and non-Christian philosophers such as Aristotle were capable of apprehending in part what is good, although they were ultimately deprived of complete knowledge of goodness. Consequently, goodness is not something dictated by what God wills; rather, God’s will perfectly conforms to goodness—i.e., goodness is essential and supreme in God—and thus divine revelation is the highest (but not the only) means to knowledge of the good.⁸

In some respects, Hobbes’s teaching resembled Calvin’s. We noted that for Hobbes, obedience to God and the sovereign are necessary for salvation. The emphasis on obedience can be seen in Hobbes’s interpretation of the Book of Job. Job questioned God’s justice because God apparently afflicted him even though he had not sinned. But, according to Hobbes, God’s acts are justified because of his irresistible power, not because they conform to a higher standard of goodness.⁹ In other words, like Calvin, Hobbes argued that God’s will determines goodness. Calvin’s God and Hobbes’s God are in this respect quite similar. The difference between the two thinkers lay in how they understood

the relation of the earthly sovereign to God.¹⁰

On the question of God's goodness, Milton's (Protestant) theology was, ironically, closer to the view of Aquinas than that of Calvin. In speaking of God's immutable internal necessity to do good, Milton was arguing that God necessarily wills the good because it is good. Goodness is not something determined simply by God's act of willing, but is rather a standard to which God's will necessarily conforms. This agreement with Aquinas was perhaps reflective of their qualified approval of the moral writings of classical thinkers such as Aristotle. But such determination of divine will led Milton to lay greater stress than previous thinkers on the absolute freedom of the will. God's will is in Milton's conception a mysterious blend of internal necessity and freedom, but human will is absolutely free of divine determination. God decreed that his creation would have good qualities, but that human beings and angels in particular would be endowed with a free will that could deviate from goodness. That is to say, the part of humanity that gives it stature above all other beings except God and the angels could be corrupted, bringing about its degradation: "...good he made thee, but to persevere / He left it in thy power, ordained thy will / By nature free". To express this opposition between stature and degradation, Milton wrote that Adam and Eve could stay "erect" by freely willing obedience to God, or they could decree their downfall if something were to "misinform the will / To do what God expressly hath forbid." They had the choice between following "reason," in the sense of what is right-- i.e., obeying God's sole law which must be good because of God's necessary goodness-- and pursuing some object of their appetites which was sinful.¹¹ Human free will in Milton's conception is thus less constrained than God's, but therefore liable to abuse.

Milton's treatment of Satan, the agent of humanity's deception, shows further moral implications of free will. Satan and his retinue are fallen angels, and angels, like God and human beings, possess freedom of the will. That they are free is not only indicative of their noble status among God's creatures; as is the case with humanity, it also means that their love of and obedience to God must be freely given. The angels are free to

serve God or not: like humanity, they are free to fall. In this aspect of freedom, then, the angels are the same as Adam and Eve: “our happy states,” Raphael tells Adam,

Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
 On other surety none; freely we serve,
 Because we freely love, as in our will
 To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
 And some are fall'n to disobedience fall'n,
 And so from Heav'n to deepest Hell: O fall
 From what high state of bliss into what woe!¹²

The fallen angels and our first ancestors are freely willing subjects who chose to disobey God and were consequently cast out from their respective paradises.

The crucial respect in which they are different, however, is the greater evil of Satan and his legion, who fell from the higher paradise of heaven. Angels are higher beings than humans: for example, Raphael can only communicate the story of Satan's rebellion to Adam “By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms, / As may express them best, though what if earth / Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein / Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?” Besides their ethereal nature, angels are also endowed with the knowledge forbidden to humanity. After the fall of man, God declares to the angels that “like one of us man is become / To know both good and evil.”¹³ As we shall see, Satan's rebellion and his temptation of Eve were thus graver sins than humanity's transgression, for the former acts were committed in full knowledge, whereas Adam and Eve were deceived.

This deeper evil is reflected in the fallen angels' defiance. *Paradise Lost* opens with Satan and his angels newly arrived in hell, after their expulsion from heaven by the Son of God and his armies. “What though the field be lost?” Satan asks Beelzebub,

All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield:
 And what is else not to be overcome?
 That glory never shall his wrath or might
 Extort from me.¹⁴

The chief “virtues” of hell's angels centre on this stubborn pride in their unconquerable wills: God may punish them, but he can never cause them to obey. Even at this stage of

the drama, of course, we can detect the delusions of Satan's defiance. How can he hope to gain victory over his omnipotent creator? Nevertheless, God does not prevent the attempt, which gives Satan a kind of misguided dignity.¹⁵ Moreover, this passage tells the reader that Satan's revolt is the origin of events leading to the fall of man. The exercise of freedom seems, therefore, to have disastrous consequences for God's creation. Was Milton suggesting that freedom is at the root of all evil?

Such a conclusion would be premature. We need to examine Satanic freedom more closely. Although hell is, as its name suggests, a hellish place compared to heaven, Satan and his followers express a preference for liberty in hell to servitude in heaven. Nevertheless, they cannot be content with ruling in hell. At the great council of hell's angels, Mammon suggests peace with heaven rather than the wearisome struggle to conquer it. They would be better off, he opines, to turn hell into a sort of heaven for themselves:

...Our greatness will appear
 Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
 Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
 We can create, and in what place soe'er
 Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
 Through labour and endurance.

Mammon's advice to focus on easing their burdens in hell sounds like Hobbes's emphasis on peace and commodious living. The peaceful pursuit of industry, for both Mammon and Hobbes, is preferable to the state of war. Better to preserve oneself and accumulate riches in this world than to risk one's life for intangible rewards which may or may not be reaped in the next. For Milton, however, deluded warriors have at least more manhood than cowardly pacifists. Beelzebub, speaking for Satan, spurns the counsel of the luxury-loving Mammon, pointing out that remaining in hell entails subjection to and likely punishment from the ruler of heaven. Hell is "our dungeon, not our safe retreat / Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt / From Heav'n's high jurisdiction." The inhabitants of hell must, according to this argument, war with heaven.¹⁶ We might add that from the perspective of divine providence, the converse must be true as well.

Hellish freedom is in opposition to the “tyranny of Heaven.” The event precipitating Satan’s revolt is God’s decree that his son shall be appointed head over the heavenly inhabitants. We have addressed the affront to Satan’s pride; here we note the opposition of liberty to God’s laws. God’s tyranny is manifested in the imposition of new laws subjecting them to a new authority and thus—in Satan’s view—constraining their freedom. Satan persuades his followers with the argument that they are equal in freedom with God and his son. God’s monarchy over his equals is unjust. Angels like the seraph Abdiel, who sternly opposes Satan’s revolt, are content with servitude.¹⁷ Satan’s argument is that the resistance to heaven’s decree is an expression of freedom.

Milton revealed the delusion underlying this perversion of liberty. Abdiel counters to Satan that God’s decree can never be justly disobeyed. Given that he is our creator and seeks only our good, his commands serve to exalt rather than oppress. Moreover, at the battle of heaven, Abdiel undermines Satan’s notion of freedom. Service to God’s ordained is the very opposite of servitude: it is just for the worthiest to govern. “This is servitude,” he continues, “To serve th’unwise, or him that hath rebell’d / Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee, / Thyself not free, but to thyself enthrall’d.”¹⁸ The depravity of the angels’ revolt is graphically symbolised in their punishment: first, the fall from heaven into hell, and later, their transformation into serpents. Satan’s sinful revolt against God’s rule is a form of debasement. Satan may be nobler and freer than Mammon (or Hobbes, for that matter), but he is more servile than Abdiel. Satan freely chose to disobey God, but such an act was an abuse of his freedom. Milton distinguished liberty, the obedience to God’s law, from license, which is properly constrained by God’s law.

This fundamentally moral and religious conception of freedom pertains above all to human freedom. Although they were with “strength entire, and free will armed,” the first man and woman succumbed to the temptation to break God’s law, thereby fulfilling Satan’s designs. We have seen that like Satan, they were fully responsible for their fall because their sin was freely willed; and in addition, Satan’s deception extenuated the blame

for their sin but did not absolve them of responsibility. They, like Satan, abused their God-given freedom. As God declares, "I formed them free, and free they must remain, / Till they enthrall themselves." Humanity follows the fallen angels in depravity by acting contrary to its natural goodness: "my will concurred not to my being."¹⁹

Instead of obeying God and their right reason, they followed their passions. As we noted in chapter two, Eve is deceived into thinking that the forbidden fruit would turn humans into gods. Adam's sin, however is in being "fondly overcome with female charm," i.e., joining Eve in sin so as never to be parted from her. In this respect, the subjection of human freedom was represented by Milton as the unnatural subjection of man to woman: the government of sexual appetite. Milton drew a connection here with Samson and Delilah. Adam awakes after sinful intercourse with Eve:

...So rose the Danite strong
Herculean Samson from the harlot-lap
Of Philistean Dulila, and waked
Shorn of his strength, they destitute and bare
Of all their virtue...

Adam complains: "Thus it shall befall / Him who to worth in women overtrusting / Lets her will rule". Likewise, Samson exclaims that "foul effeminacy held me yoked / Her bond-slave;...servile mind / Rewarded well with servile punishment!" In Milton's scheme, then, the yielding of man to woman—for him the naturally inferior partner—is the subjection of free will to the passions. Eve was blinded by pride, but Adam was blinded by his love for Eve. In this way, Milton situated the delusional nature of sin in the human context.²⁰

Consequent to the original servitude of the human will has been what Milton called "spiritual death." He defined it as "the loss of that divine grace and innate righteousness by which, in the beginning, man lived with God." Among its characteristics are the following: the "darkening of that right reason" which chooses the good (i.e., obedience, faith, and love for God); the "extinction of righteousness and of the liberty to do good"; and the "slavish subjection to sin and the devil which is, as it were, the death of the will." There is a substantial loss of freedom, which in turn has enslaved Adam's posterity. Sharing the

guilt of our first parents may seem unjust, "But from me," Adam rues, "what can proceed, / But all corrupt, both mind and will depraved, / Not to do only, but to will the same / With me?"²¹ The original sin in Milton's theodicy established the subjection of human will and spiritual death throughout the ages. True freedom, the ability not to sin, was lost when the first human beings broke God's law.

There is a hope of redemption, however. Human beings were created in their maker's image, but their sin debased their souls:

Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own,
Or if his likeness, by themselves defaced
While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness, worthily, since they
God's image did not reverence in themselves.

As we noted earlier, God possesses absolute freedom of will combined with an internal necessity to do good. The fall of Satan and of humanity express the antithesis of true freedom and goodness. Therefore, humanity as deformed image of God has only a deluded freedom. But "traces of the divine image still remain in us": free will has not been totally extinguished in original sin. The existence of free will in fallen humanity is not a source of pride or dignity--Milton emphasised its near-insignificance compared to our prelapsarian freedom--but is rather "a vindication of God's justice."²² It is a measure of God's grace, not of human dignity, that we retain the capacity for freely willed action despite the cloud of passions to which we subject ourselves.

Similarly, it is because of God's grace that there is predestination. Predestination is the doctrine that certain believers have been chosen for salvation. Milton believed that predestined salvation is promised to all "those who would in the future believe and continue in the faith." Like the portion of free will left to humanity, predestination manifests God's grace to fallen man. It does not apply to humans simply taken as God's creation, but to "man who was going to fall of his own free will." It is thus an act of mercy towards humanity, in which salvation will be given to (not earned by) true believers, i.e., those who believe in God and act accordingly. God tells his son, "Man shall not quite be lost,

but saved who will, / Yet not of will in him, but grace in me / Freely vouchsafed; ...that he may know how frail / His fall'n condition is, and to me owe / All his deliverance, and none but me." Milton carefully emphasised that salvation is not a necessary reward for good deeds but a free gift of God's grace.²³

Because of the depravity of the human will, there must be a process by which one can redeem oneself from one's fallen state sufficiently to merit salvation. We are freely willing agents responsible for our sins, but we cannot redeem ourselves without a form of spiritual regeneration which requires the mediation of Christ. Now, Milton described this regeneration as a "renovation of the will...whereby the mind and will of the natural man are partially renewed and are divinely moved towards knowledge of God, and undergo a change for the better". Renovation has two parts: penitence and faith. To avoid punishment and gain salvation, a penitent individual ceases to sin and turns to God. Corresponding to penitence is a kind of faith which "is a submission...to the divine call." Having undergone penitence and committed oneself to faith, one enters into a state of grace, fit for salvation. An evocation of renovation may be found in the depiction of Adam and Eve's regeneration: "Thus they in lowliest plight repentant stood / Praying, for from the mercy-seat above / Preventive grace descending had removed / The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh / Regenerate grow instead..." Their prayers are answered, but they are still expelled from paradise. Nevertheless, Milton was hinting at the possibility of grace; and portrayed the rest of human history as a drama of sin and renovation, "supernal grace contending / With sinfulness of men..." In other words, history is the struggle of individuals to restore their freedom by grace of God, against the natural depravity of humankind.²⁴

Humanity lost paradise through its own sinful acts; but paradise can only be regained through Jesus Christ. The mediation of Christ is the keystone of the providence of a good and merciful God. Having fallen from God, humanity deserves severe punishment. But as the son of God points out in *Paradise Lost*, if God were simply to

destroy or “unmake” his creation—so richly deserved by humankind—God’s goodness and greatness would be put into question. That is to say, it would be a victory for Satan, who has corrupted “the whole race of mankind” and could thus claim to have stolen God’s creatures away from their maker: a flawed creation by a supposedly perfect creator.²⁵ A way must be found to reconcile divine justice with divine mercy.

The solution lay in finding a ransom for humanity’s salvation. God had decreed that breaking his sole law—not to eat the forbidden fruit—was punishable by eternal death. Divine decree is of course inviolable; but the law may be fulfilled without blemish to God’s mercy and grace. God declares that another must die in humanity’s place to satisfy the punishment of the law. No one in Heaven volunteers, until the son of God offers himself as “intercessor.” Out of his “immortal love / To mortal men” and filial obedience, the son of God is willing to pay the penalty for Adam’s sin himself, so that God’s creatures need not be condemned to eternal death:

Behold me then, me for him, life for life
I offer, on me let thine anger fall;
Account me man; I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well pleased, on me let Death wreck all his rage...

The substitution of the son of God for humanity on the cross thus reverses the work of Satan, who in a sense substituted humanity for God in committing “revenge / On you who wrong me not for him who wronged.”²⁶

The ransom required that the son of God become a mortal man. To redeem humanity, Christ the saviour must endure the suffering attendant on mortal flesh until his death. In this way, Christ became the new Adam, a “second root” from which a redeemed humanity may spring. The original Adam was created good but fell into evil; his sinful act resulted in moral degradation and physical ills of the whole race of humankind. The new Adam, who is God become man, committed the redemptive act of dying for our sins, thus giving rise to the hope of moral elevation and eternal life in God. A single act by Adam

condemned humanity to eternal death; a single act by Christ redeems those who repent of their sins.²⁷ There is a certain symmetry between the old and new Adam's, which can also be expressed as the symmetry between the original sin and Christ's redemption, or between paradise lost and paradise regained. The suffering and labours that Jesus had to undergo and the redemption of a few are counterpoints to the ease with which Adam broke God's law and the consequent corruption of the entire human race. These mirror-image characteristics--the easiness of sin and its universal transmission on the one hand, and the struggle for redemption and its acceptance by only a few on the other--all reflect humanity's natural predisposition to evil since the original sin.²⁸

Christ is not only the new Adam; he is also the polar opposite to Satan, the great tempter. It may not be obvious what connection there might be between *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. The one poem is an epic narrative detailing the fall of Satan and of man, and relates episodes of divine and human history from the Creation to the Second Coming. The other poem deals with the encounters between Jesus and Satan over the forty days spent in the wilderness prior to the ministry of Christ. If paradise is regained by Christ's redemptive act--the crucifixion--why focus on such a brief episode many years before he died on the cross? The central theme linking the two poems is the temptation to sin. As Milton proclaimed:

I who erewhile the happy garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,
And Eden raised in the waste wilderness.

Eve was easily tempted by Satan's promise of becoming a god; Adam easily gave into Eve's succours when he contemplated life without his mate. Jesus, in contrast, resisted the multiple "wiles" and deceptions of Satan, who offered him riches, power, universal glory, and knowledge. As Satan acknowledges of Jesus, Adam was "to this man inferior far."²⁹

But how could paradise be regained some three years prior to crucifixion? The episode in the wilderness between Jesus and Satan marked the beginning of Christ's ministry. I would argue that it was, in Milton's conception, the decisive moment at which Jesus defined his mission of love in contrast to the vainglory (indeed, the pride) of Satan. Christ and Satan are the central antagonists of Milton's theodicy: one acts out of love to save the souls of humankind; the other acts out of hatred (towards God) to tempt humanity to sin. Furthermore, Christ's repudiation of worldly glory in *Paradise Regained* arguably set the tone of his ministry: to regain the inner paradise accessible to those who would be saved, not to establish a worldly kingdom. We saw previously that Milton regarded earthly tyranny as a manifestation in human history of Satan's rebellion. Christ, in his teaching, advocated the free commonwealth as the best political regime. But civil liberty, though important, is secondary to the inward liberty necessary for salvation. Satan tries to tempt Christ to rule the Roman empire and free that glorious people, but Jesus replies, "What wise and valiant man would seek to free / These thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved, / Or could of inward slaves make outward free?" The angelic choir sings of Christ as otherworldly saviour, not this-worldly ruler: "Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work / Now enter, and begin to save mankind."³⁰ By resisting Satan's temptation, Christ's ministry of salvation—culminating in his death and resurrection—has begun. In sum, the encounter between Christ and Satan represents the principal antitheses of Milton's theology: love versus hate; inward piety versus outward glory; and most strikingly, Christian liberation from the tyranny of sin versus the sinfulness of tyranny.³¹

Thus, the victory over Satan and humanity's death sentence is achieved through the grace of God, not by the effort of a sinful humanity without the mediation of Christ. It is Christ who offers himself up as our ransom, who is the second root of humankind, and who subdues Satan. It was prophesied that the "seed of mankind" would bruise the head of Satan; but this son of Man is also the son of God. That is to say, God, not man, defeats Satan. Humanity itself is not worthy of its saviour, and consequently, salvation can only

be given to those who recognise the frailty of fallen man, repent of their sins, and follow Christ. Naturally, most human beings are too proud to acknowledge the grace of God. As Michael tells Adam in regard to the ministry of Jesus and his crucifixion:

...thy punishment
 He shall endure by coming in the flesh
 To a reproachful and cursed death,
 Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
 In his redemption, and that his obedience
 Imputed becomes theirs by faith, his merits
 To save them, not their own, though legal works.
 For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
 Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemned,
 A shameful and accurst, nailed to the cross
 By his own nation, slain for bringing life;
 But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
 The law that is against thee, and the sins
 Of all mankind, with him there crucified,
 Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
 In this his satisfaction...³²

Christ's mediation—the belief in his teachings and the truth of the crucifixion—are necessary for human salvation because of the radical disjunction between his ultimate sacrifice of love and humankind's sinful pride apparent in the hatred directed towards Jesus' acts and which thus turns men and women away from God's grace.

The beacon of hope is therefore surrounded by the darkness of human pride. As the son of God, Christ could not be defeated by death, and so he rose from the dead three days after and later reascended to heaven to join his father. In turn, human beings may hope for eternal life by attempting to follow his example, i.e., by showing their love for God and their fellow human beings as did Christ the saviour. But as shown by the sins of Adam and Eve, the majority of human beings sooner turn to Satanic pride than to love and charity; and as shown by the resentment of Christ's enemies in his lifetime, the faithful few will be subject to scorn until the second coming. As Adam asks Michael (rhetorically),

...what will betide the few
 His faithful, left among th' unfaithful herd,
 The enemies of truth; who then shall guide
 His people, who defend? will they not deal
 Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?

Michael agrees, but adds that God

...to his own a Comforter will send,
 The promise of his Father, who shall dwell
 His Spirit within them, and the law of faith
 Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
 To guide them all in truth, and also arm
 With spiritual armour, and quench his fiery darts,
 What man can do against them, not afraid,
 Though to the death, against such cruelties
 With inward consolations recompensed,
 And oft supported so as shall amaze
 Their proudest persecutors...³³

In other words, only the holy spirit within the souls of the faithful few can protect them against sin. The death and resurrection of Christ is not the end of the story in regaining paradise. God has made the ultimate sacrifice and gift of love; but if we want to be saved, it is beholden on us to follow Christ through this Heaven-sent guide. In the midst of sinful tyranny and the tyranny of sin, true Christians must, Milton urged, follow their consciences.

The conscience is thus humanity's guide in the renovation of the will. We saw that the "spiritual death" incurred by Adam and Eve consisted in a "darkening of right reason." Right reason for Milton is also known as the conscience, the internal faculty which tells each of us alone what is right and wrong. It guides the free will to what is good. But Milton also represented the consciences of fallen humanity as revealing to it the terrible consequences of its action: "O conscience, into what abyss of fears / And horrors hast thou driv'n me...." The night is no longer "Wholesome and cool, and mild, but with black air / Accompanied, with damp and dreadful gloom, / Which to his evil conscience represented / All things with double terror..."³⁴ I take Milton to mean that conscience is a guide in a dual sense: directing the will towards what is good; and showing the path the sinning will has taken (guilty conscience).³⁵ Just as the free will was not entirely extinguished in the original sin, so the conscience remains, however obscured by humanity's neglect of right reason in choosing the government of the passions.

Conscience, like the free will to which it is linked, is implanted in us by God. For

Milton, the conscience is evidence for the existence of God. In the heart of all human beings, the “voice of conscience” reminds them of God’s existence and his government over all things. Even Satan feels the sting of conscience, though he is the perpetrator of the first evils and a fallen angel: “now conscience wakes despair / That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory / Of what he was, what is, and what must be / Worse; of worse deeds worse suffering must ensue.” The voice of conscience within reminds him of past and future evils for which he will suffer. As a result, Milton argued, one cannot claim that one is so depraved as not to be able to will the good: in the most evil of created beings, there is still the conscience as guide to morality.³⁶

The conscience not only stings, rebukes, reminds, and recommends; it is also indispensable to redemption of the will, both in this life and the next. Michael tells Adam that if he and Eve follow their consciences in thought and action, “then wilt thou not be loath / To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess / A paradise within thee, happier far.” The hope of renovation of the human will through Christ depends on listening to the voice of conscience. Milton often used the metaphor of illumination to describe conscience, especially after the onset of his own blindness: “But he,” the semichorus declares of Samson, “though blind of sight, / Despised and thought extinguished quite, / With inward eyes illuminated, / His fiery virtue roused...” The inward illumination implanted by God enables us to “see” the path of virtue and piety in this life as taught by Christ. If we have attained this inner paradise by following this path, we are fit for grace, and ultimately redemption at the second coming: “The standard of judgement will be the individual conscience itself, and so each man will be judged according to the light which he has received.” “Received” is the keyword in this passage. Every person has his or her inner voice of conscience, but only the saved have obeyed it: “And I will place within them as a guide / My umpire conscience, whom if they will hear, / Light after light well-used they shall listen, / And to the end persisting, safe arrive.”³⁷ One must heed the umpire to stay in the game. Later, we shall discuss the implications for church and state of the notion that

individual conscience is to be followed to redeem the will from its degenerate condition.

The Tyrant's Plea?

Satan regards Adam and Eve in Eden just as he is about to embark on his evil work of temptation. He hesitates a moment while observing their innocence and natural goodness, but tells himself that he can do no other than to use them as instruments of his revenge against God. "So spake the Fiend," Milton wrote, "and with necessity, / The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds." Milton railed against the plea of "the necessity of the times" used by royalists to justify the king's oppressive acts.³⁸ But this critique of necessity may also be seen as directed against deterministic conceptions of the will. To deny the existence of the free will, as did Hobbes and others, is to deny not only the capacity for freedom but also the existence of sin and moral responsibility. If every act of the will is determined, then, clever tyrants and criminals might say, I cannot but act the way that I do.

This may explain the particular vehemence with which the views of Hobbes engaged were attacked by Bishop John Bramhall. The controversy between the two concerning liberty and necessity is revealing not only of Hobbes's critique of Bramhall's views on free will, but also of the difference between his position and Milton's. We shall see that in some respects, Milton's conception of the free will is similar to Bramhall's, but that there are crucial differences as well.³⁹ Hobbes, however, was an intellectual antagonist of both thinkers, critical of both the Scholasticism of Bramhall and the radical Protestant individualism of Milton. His denial of free will was in effect a denial of sin, a novel but problematic position to hold in light of the issue of punishment.

Like Milton, Bramhall was preoccupied with the problem of free will in relation to divine providence, but his proposed solutions were rather less elegant than Milton's. Milton sharply distinguished God's foreknowledge from free action. God knows what will be freely chosen but does not cause it. Indeed, he has expressly decreed that his

created beings have absolute freedom of will. Bramhall did not go that far. His first reaction to the matter under question was evasive: "First, we ought not to desert a certain truth"—that the will is free from necessity—"because we are not able to comprehend the certain manner." But his suggested reconciliation of liberty and divine decree served to obscure the issue. We must, he wrote,

subject future contingents to the aspect of God, according to that presentiality which they have in eternity....the infinite knowledge of God, incircling all times in the point of eternity, does attain to their future being, from whence proceeds their objective and intelligible being.

In other words, God's omnipotence is not entirely separable from the occurrences of all things. God exists in eternity, which is outside of time--i.e., it is not the infinite succession of times--so that everything that happens in time, being known by God, has a kind of present reality in the eternal God. God's knowledge does not mean that a future thing is absolutely determined for us now; but though it is not necessary for us, it is for God, since its non-existence for us at the moment is consistent with its "presentiality" (a kind of present existence) in God.⁴⁰ Bramhall sought to explain the will as free from divine determination because there can be no limitation on God's power, and so did not, unlike Milton, consider the free will to be an inviolable decree. Instead, he insisted that the acts of the free will could be both free from determination in one sense and still divinely determined in another. Bramhall was less of a champion of free will than was Milton.⁴¹

Like Milton, however, Bramhall maintained that divine justice depends on the human will being free from necessity. Bramhall declared that "God's chiding proves man's liberty," i.e., that God can only reproach wrongful acts that are freely willed. Milton had in mind, above all, the fall of the rebel angels and the fall of man; Bramhall, too, referred to God's chiding for breaking his sole law in Eden. God, he wrote, could not blame Adam and Eve if they sinned out of necessity or divine decree. Adam had to have true liberty before the Fall.⁴²

Hobbes's conception of divine justice, in contrast, obviates the need for free will as Bramhall and also as Milton defined it. He acknowledged the view that the necessity of all

acts seems to render God's reward and punishment unjust. He countered that "the power of God alone without other help is sufficient justification of any action he does." The created being cannot question the ways and justice of its omnipotent maker. Bramhall had argued against conceiving of God as having a two-fold will which applies to the same person: God's secret will ("what he will do himself") cannot be opposite to his revealed will ("what he would have us do"). Hobbes did not hold the doctrine of the two-fold will, a rather obscure notion, but nevertheless argued that to command something and will its hindrance, though unjust in human beings, could be just simply by God's doing them. In his view, Bramhall was mistaken in equating divine and human justice in regard to necessity and command. The same criticism could be applied to Milton, for whom the same relation between freely chosen crime and earthly punishment pertains to freely chosen sin and divine punishment. As we noted above, Hobbes held that God could have justly punished Adam even if he had not sinned. God's justice does not, contra Bramhall (and Milton), depend on the notion of human free will.⁴³ But this conception has serious implications for justice, particularly the question of punishment. How can human justice operate without the concept of free will? We shall further address the philosophical controversy over free will between Bramhall and Hobbes before turning to this problem.

Did Hobbes dispense altogether with the concept of free will? We must first examine free will as conceptualised by Bramhall and compare Milton's perspective. Bramhall understood liberty to be the election of the rational will to do or not to do a certain thing. The will is free when it wills what it would will, and when this willing is in accordance with the rational part of the soul. He distinguished it from necessity and spontaneity: necessity is an external determination to do or not to do; spontaneity is "a conformity of appetite...to the object." An act is free because it is neither something determined external to the will nor merely a voluntary movement caused by appetite.⁴⁴ Similarly, not only did Milton consider Adam and Eve to be unbound by necessity or natural disposition, but he insisted that they in fact were able to act against their natural

goodness (and thus against their consciences). God gave them such freedom to will what they would will that they could override nature itself.

Within the soul, Bramhall believed, the will is the commanding faculty. The will moves the other parts of the soul towards a particular object. Just as the body is subordinate to the head, so the "inferior faculties" of the soul are subject to the rational will. The will needs the understanding, but in the capacity of counsellor, whereas the will is final executor. The election of the rational will to do or not to do a thing is thus the command of the will over the appetites, understanding, and other parts of the soul to carry out a certain act.⁴⁵ Milton's conception, while in accordance with the notion of will as commander, includes another dimension. True liberty is the subordination of appetite to the will guided by conscience, but there can be a perversion of liberty wherein the will obeys the appetites, as was the case with the original sin. This perversion of freedom--also known as license or lust--is not the same as spontaneity, which is simply action caused by appetite, but rather the undermining of true liberty. That is to say, license is different from spontaneity because it involves deliberation: one deliberately chooses to ignore one's conscience and do evil. License is not merely absence of good but the mirror image of it. For both thinkers, then, the truly free will entails the proper government of the soul, though Milton's language is much less Aristotelian than Bramhall's, as he was more concerned with the problem of evil.⁴⁶

Hobbes, however, asserted that it would be absurd to attribute freedom to the will. His very premises were radically dissimilar to those of Bramhall or Milton. He defined the will as the last appetite of deliberation. That is to say, in the succession of desires and aversions preceding an action, the last appetite--which determines whether one will do or forbear to do something in relation to the object of desire or aversion--is the will. Since it is based on desire or aversion, the will is not rational. There is, therefore, no distinction in Hobbes's thought between freely willed and voluntary acts. What Bramhall called "spontaneous" acts were for Hobbes the same as willed acts. Consequently, freedom is

not a property of the will. Hobbes defined liberty as the absence of external impediments to motion. Since bodies, not the will (an appetite), move—i.e., appetites are names for motion, not bodies that move—only bodies can be said to be free. One is free when not hindered to do what one desires to do. Liberty consists in doing what one will, not willing what one will. There is nothing free about having an appetite to do something; the freedom lies in doing the thing. Contrary to Bramhall and Milton, Hobbes maintained that freedom was not exclusive to humans and angels. Physical objects may be said to be free, at least in the basic sense of liberty as unhindered motion. As for Adam and Eve, then, they were free merely because they could do what they willed. Indeed, one might argue that for Hobbes, the main feature distinguishing Adam from the rest of creation was not his freedom but his use of speech.⁴⁷

Hobbes in a sense “downgraded” the status of the will. Bramhall and Milton argued that God and the angels are freer than human beings, at least in the sense that their wills are more divine. For this reason, Satan and his legion are less free even than fallen humanity, because of the lower depths of their depravity and hence their greater servitude to the passions. For Hobbes, on the contrary, it is nonsensical to speak of greater freedom as long as one is able to do what one will. As he wrote, “I suspend my sentence in that point” as to the freedom of God and the angels, perhaps because according to his definitions, God and the angels would have to be characterised as appetitive beings in order to be free. The standard of being absolutely free is minimal compared to Bramhall or Milton: to be able to do whatever one wills. Indeed, Hobbes did not “distinguish... between a rational will and a sensitive appetite in the same man.” If the will is simply appetite, then it cannot be more or less free because of its imputed divinity.⁴⁸ That is to say, freedom pertains to willing beings qua passionate.

The differences between free will and Hobbesian natural freedom are clearer when viewed against the backdrop of necessity. Hobbes stressed that he and Bramhall differed not on the point that humans may be free to do or not to do what they will, but on the

notion that the will is free to choose what it will. Given that the will is the last appetite before an action and that freedom is the absence of external impediments, there can be no will which is itself not caused. The doctrine of free will stipulates that the will chooses independently of external necessity; Hobbes countered that as an appetite in deliberation, it cannot but be caused by something outside of itself.⁴⁹ For example, if I have a will to obtain water while in a desert, the causes of my thirst are rooted in the external surroundings, not my will. My act is nonetheless free as long as I am not hindered from obtaining the object of my appetite. For Bramhall and Milton, natural causation and free-will are absolutely separate; for Hobbes, necessity is consistent with liberty of action. Hobbes stripped liberty of metaphysical connotations and integrated it into the natural system of cause-and-effect. As Graeme Hunter writes, "Hobbes affirms what Bramhall denies, the captivity of the will within the closed mechanical network of imparted motions."⁵⁰

Given this insistence that all acts are necessary and that freedom is a property of motion, not will, what is the status of the Miltonian conception of sin in Hobbes's thought? Is his denial of freedom of the will indicative of a hostility to Christian theology? Scholars such as A.P. Martinich and Joshua Mitchell have, as we noted, maintained that Hobbes merely reconceptualised Christian theology; he did not reject it. Mitchell, in particular, regards Hobbes's teaching as a "worldly application of a theological pattern."⁵¹ In the context of our comparison of Milton and Hobbes on free will, sin, and redemption, a similar argument could be made with respect to the following teachings. According to Milton and earlier thinkers such as Augustine, humanity fell into a sinful state after breaking God's law. The punishment for its sinfulness is death--that is to say, physical ills culminating in death of the body, and worse, the irredeemable degradation of the human soul preventing its entry into heaven, a form of spiritual death. But God's infinite mercy is shown in the supreme sacrifice of his son, who ransomed his life to satisfy this penalty. If

we obey the teachings of Christ and understand the truth of his death and resurrection, we have, by God's grace, the hope of saving our souls and achieving eternal life in the hereafter and at the second coming. The mediation of Christ is therefore the key to redeeming ourselves from sin.

In certain respects, Hobbes's thought could be regarded as Augustinian, and thus in some agreement with Milton's theology (minus the doctrine of free will). The argument would be as follows. Hobbes's depiction of humankind in its natural condition is that of fallen man: naturally rapacious, seeking glory, riches, and other forms of power. The war of all against all is the result of interaction between naturally sinful human beings. But redemption of a sort comes in the form of the Leviathan, which is a political, this-worldly counterpart to Christ. For it is only through the sovereign state that human beings can learn to live justly and peaceably. Just as Christians can redeem their souls from sin through the mediation of Christ as taught in the Gospels, so subjects can protect their bodies from the disastrous consequences of human sinfulness through the institution of the sovereign as taught in *Leviathan*.⁵² According to this argument, although Hobbes rejected the antinomian interpretation of liberty espoused by Milton and others, he advanced his own political theology based on essentially Augustinian premises.

Despite the similarities between Hobbes's account of human nature and that of Augustine, the theological implications of his denial of free will and his determinism, as well as the persistent use of scripture to justify his political teaching, prevent us from regarding Hobbes as a Christian thinker. We may begin with his account of the Fall. Hobbes depicted the breaking of God's law not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge not as a perversion of freedom--i.e., an abuse of God-given free will in choosing evil rather than good--but as a challenge to the sovereign rights of God. The knowledge of good and evil forbidden to Adam and Eve was, for Hobbes, the right of judging good and evil. Having eaten of the fruit, "they did indeed take upon them Gods office, which Judicature of Good and Evill; but acquired no new ability to distinguish between them

aright." Their subsequent shame at their nakedness reflected this usurped right of judgement, and was a tacit censure of God himself: "Whereby it is cleerly, (though Allegorically,) signified, that the Commands of them that have the right to command, are not by their Subjects to be censured, nor disputed."⁵³ Whatever sin there was in breaking God's law lay not in abuse of free will but in the affront to God's supremacy. That is to say, their crime against God was not essentially different from that of any subjects who resist their sovereigns. Hobbes's politicised interpretation of Genesis is a critique of those who take judgement of good and evil upon themselves: the Miltons of the world who follow their consciences rather than the laws of the sovereign. The original sin was not an episode in the drama of free will; it is an allegorical teaching against political rebellion.⁵⁴

Furthermore, Hobbes's account of the consequences of the fall is consistent with his materialist conception of nature and his political teaching. God's punishment for breaking his law was death. Adam and his descendants have been condemned to mortality for his sin. Now, according to Milton, we have inherited this death sentence because we perpetuate the original sin in choosing evil. Our degraded wills continue to merit death, but we can, through Christ's mediation, hope to save our souls and live with him forever in heaven. Hobbes, in contrast, emphasised body over soul. If Adam had not sinned, he would have enjoyed eternal life on earth. Hobbes concluded that salvation is merely the recovery of this eternal life. Christ made satisfaction for our sins, and if we follow his life and teachings, we too may be saved—but only, Hobbes insisted, from bodily death. At the second coming of Christ, the saved will enjoy bodily immortality on earth, which was originally lost by Adam.⁵⁵ Although Hobbes, like Christian thinkers such as Augustine and Milton, looked upon Christ as saviour who would come again to rule the world, there is no element of spiritual regeneration in his thought. His materialism and denial of the doctrine of free will was reflected in this view that salvation entails eventual bodily regeneration, not renovation of the will. He would not allow that there could be an otherworldly redemption for human beings, and thereby denied any special role for priests

as arbiters of the soul. The worst evil for human beings is death of the body (the jurisdiction of the state), not damnation of the soul (the jurisdiction of priests). Hobbes simplified redemption and put it in corporeal terms: if we have lived according to God's law—which for Hobbes includes political obedience—then we can hope for bodily resurrection in the future. Christ's mediation did not grant license to priests: it served only to give hope to just and peaceable individuals that death is not permanent.

In light of his account of the Fall and redemption, it is not surprising that he conceived of sin in this-worldly terms. Certain scholars have argued that Hobbes's laws of nature are consistent with Christian morality, at least in a simplified form, and Hobbes himself encouraged this view.⁵⁶ Although there is a great deal of resemblance between aspects of Hobbesian morality and Christian teaching, his conception of sin contrasts sharply with the latter. Hobbes defined sin as a transgression of law and "Contempt of the Legislator", which not only includes committing a forbidden act or failing to act as commanded by the legislator, but also the intention to transgress the law. Consequently, even the intention to breach the laws of nature is always sinful, because we are always obliged to obey them as subjects of God. Thus far, his account of sin seems consistent with that of Augustine and Milton. But his view of its relation to crime and punishment marked a significant divergence from other teachings. He defined crime as the transgression of the law in deed. Sin, then, is solely the intention to commit crime. The mere imagination of breaking the law—for example, daydreaming about seizing my neighbour's goods or spouse—is no sin because I have not resolved to commit the criminal act: "For to be pleased in the fiction of that, which would please a man if it were reall, is a Passion so adhaerent to the Nature both of a man, and every other living creature, as to make it a Sinne, were to make Sinne of being a man." Hobbes allowed that it would be better not to have such desires; but by themselves, they are not sinful.⁵⁷ Milton, as we have seen, would beg to differ. The nature of sin is to enslave oneself to the lower part of the soul—the passions—as opposed to the free choice to pursue the good. Unlawful and

impious desires are themselves sinful because they constitute license rather than liberty. Christians must be vigilant in purging themselves of such tendencies. Hobbes, in contrast, defined sin in terms of criminal acts rather than internal desires. The just man must restrain his intentions and actions, not his will. Hobbes did not have much patience for internal struggles of the will between following sinful desires and obeying the conscience; he believed that it would be unnatural to condemn ourselves and others for the movement of our passions, which are constituent of the very act of living.⁵⁸

Moreover, the role of punishing sin belongs to the civil sovereign alone. It is always a sin to intend to break the law, but such intentions cannot be known but by speech or deed that declares the purpose of transgression. “[H]umane accusation” and subsequent punishment of sin requires outward action expressing intention. In other words, sin is punishable only as criminal intention, and thus where there is a civil law to be broken. While intending to breach the laws of nature is always sinful, such intention is subject to punishment only where such laws are established as commands of the sovereign. Outside society, there is no punishable sin because there is no sin in relation to civil law. Now, it is true that God can see our intentions even when not expressed in speech or deed, and that he has the right to punish sin even if not committed in society. But such is the jurisdiction of God alone. Within society, the sovereign is the only human authority with the right to punish sin as criminal intention.⁵⁹ This teaching may be regarded as undermining the view of Milton and others that political resistance is justifiable as punishment of sin. By the law of God, they argued, the people have the right to punish the sins of tyrants. Hobbes, however, narrowed down the meaning of sin to that of criminal intention, subject to human punishment only in relation to civil law (the commands of the sovereign).⁶⁰ On this basis, Milton could characterise Hobbes’s conception of sin as a defence of tyrants’ immunity from punishment, whereas Hobbes felt that linking sin to crime was necessary for civil peace.

Let us examine his conception of punishment more closely to see how Hobbes

might have answered Milton's charge. Hobbes justified the sovereign's right of punishment on the grounds that by virtue of the social contract, the sovereign alone retains the natural right to do anything it judges to be necessary for its self-preservation. Subjects do not give up the right to defend themselves from harm; but they do give up their absolute right to everything. Thus, because transgressions of the law disturb the peace of the commonwealth, the sovereign as representative person of the state has the right to punish lawbreakers, even though subjects have the right to resist such punishment (not, we should hasten to add, the right not to be punished).⁶¹ The right of punishment is not derived from human sinfulness, but rather from the natural right to self-preservation. In his view, the preservation of the commonwealth itself is a sufficient justification for punishment.⁶²

Does such an account grant the tyrant license to arbitrary and excessive punishment? Hobbes wrote that the sovereign's right of punishment is "left to him, and to him onely; and (excepting the limits set him by naturall Law) as entire, as in the condition of meer Nature, and of warre of every one against his neighbour." The qualification is an important one. There may be no power on earth that can hold the sovereign accountable for the inequitable punishment it may inflict; but properly understood, the punishment of a subject should never exceed what is required for the preservation of the commonwealth. For punishment has as its end "that the will of men may thereby the better be disposed to obedience." Consequently, it must proceed from the sovereign acting in its public capacity; the subject's case "ought first to be Judged by publique Authority, to be a transgression of the Law"; innocent subjects should never be punished; and the punishment must be inflicted with respect to the future good--i.e., the correction of the offender or deterrent effect on others--not to past evils. These limits to the right of punishment set down by natural law follow from the very grounds of this sovereign right: the preservation of the commonwealth. Thus, Hobbes spoke of private revenges, pain inflicted by public authority without precedent public judgement, harm done to innocent subjects, and retribution of past evil as "acts of hostility" rather than as punishment proper.⁶³ In other

words, arbitrary and excessive punishments are acts of war rather than acts of peace. The sovereign is instituted for the sake of securing peace and commodious living in the commonwealth. If it does not observe the limits to its right of punishment as set down by natural law, then it fails to fulfil the very purpose for which it was instituted.

We have seen, then, that punishment relates solely to the good of the commonwealth, not to free will or sinfulness. An important question remains, however, as to the utility of punishments. Hobbes showed that the sovereign's right of punishment does not rest on the doctrine of free will: the controversy over free will and necessity is irrelevant to the sovereign's right to protect the commonwealth from lawbreakers. But apart from this sovereign right, what is the point of punishment if, as Hobbes maintained, all acts are determined by external causes? Milton charged that necessity is the "tyrant's plea", a sharp criticism of Hobbesian determinism, since it follows from his denial of free will that evil as well as good acts are necessarily caused. Nevertheless, Hobbes argued that we may be punished for our transgressions of the law not because we are, in the Augustinian or Miltonian sense, morally responsible for our actions, but because the acts in question are socially harmful. But, Milton might counter, what good does punishment do if the lawbreaker cannot help committing evil acts? Is it not pointless to inflict pain on mechanistic beings devoid of free will? The only possible reply consistent with Hobbes's determinism is that human machines *can* be corrected. Punishment by the public authority can override the unstable passions which give rise to criminal activity: it can forcefully enter into the myriad of external causes of criminal acts and deter such behaviour. This is admittedly not a pretty picture of public law and order--aspects of Foucault's "disciplinary society" may come to mind--but the prevalence of social control is perhaps the price we pay for the more humane implications (such as the abolition of torture and capital punishment) of abandoning free will and moral responsibility as bases of punishment.

In effect, Hobbes departed from the Christian connotations of sin, redemption, moral responsibility, and punishment by defining sin as criminal intent, interpreting

redemption in purely corporeal terms, and justifying punishment on the sole basis of what is necessary to secure civil peace. Milton emphasised the mediation of Christ in order to regenerate the will towards godliness, whereas Hobbes focused upon the institution of the civil sovereign in order to regulate social behaviour. These central differences between the two thinkers prevent us from regarding the Hobbesian sovereign as a kind of earthly Christ: little remains of Christian theology, both Catholic and Protestant, in Hobbes's account of these themes.

In regard to the overall theme of this section, then, Hobbes's materialist, politicised treatment of sin and punishment was consistent with his contention that freedom pertains to bodies, not the will, and so necessity governs the world. Hobbes regarded the doctrine of freedom of the will as not only erroneous but also potentially harmful. In several of his writings, he described free will as an invention of the Roman Catholic Church. That is to say, it is a concept inspired by Aristotle's first cause rather than based on anything found in scripture, including the theology of St. Paul (though, of course, Hobbes's own understanding of natural liberty is arguably grounded more on his materialist account of nature than on scripture). Free will is a perversion of true religion, he argued, because the church's duty is to preach obedience to God and the sovereign, not to dwell on the "mysteries of religion." It has been an instrument of power, in that the common people are dazzled by such mysterious doctrines and thus adhere to their priests. He added that the doctrine was to some degree banished by the Protestant reformers, but that it has crept back into the Christian church and the writings of its doctors, including those of Bishop Bramhall. The controversies over such abstruse theology have, he argued, been a major cause of "our late mischief," i.e., the English civil war.⁶⁴ Interestingly, Milton's emphasis on free will would appear to class him (in Hobbes's view) among these priestly manipulators and upstarts. And yet he was a strident critic of Catholicism and Scholasticism, and a proponent of a new and radical form of Protestantism. How did Milton's notion of the absolutely free will, with conscience as its guide, figure in Hobbes's

analysis of religious conflict? We have examined their profound disagreement over free will as a philosophical and theological doctrine; we must turn to the political and then ecclesiastical implications of their divergent conceptions of freedom.

Testing the Artificial Chains of the Law

In the last chapter, we examined Milton's polemics against tyranny, which he characterised as a regime where the sovereign disregards divine justice by oppressing the people. In such regimes, human law is illegitimate because it is not derived from God's laws concerning worldly affairs. The opposite of tyranny is what Milton called "free commonwealth," an aristocratic regime in accordance with Christ's own teachings. It would be a form of government embodying a true political freedom in which the pious and virtuous among the whole populace would govern the rest (who principally follow their appetites). The free commonwealth would last until the day of final judgement.

Hobbes, we argued, considered the very words "free commonwealth" to be nonsensical. What, then, did civil freedom mean to Hobbes? The natural liberty which he defined over and against the doctrine of free will applies to humans as appetitive beings. But human beings are also members of civil society, subject to the laws of the sovereign. There is a particular kind of freedom they possess in that capacity.

One might wonder how Hobbes can consistently hold that there is a civil as well as natural liberty. If freedom, properly speaking, is natural, then what difference does living in society make? Indeed, Hobbes did not dispose of the doctrine of free will and make a case for the necessity of all free actions only to undermine his insistence that liberty in its proper sense is natural. For the "Liberty of subjects," as he defined it, is not natural or supernatural but artificial. It is not God-given and implanted in the soul, but a way of speaking about liberty arising from the artificial construction of commonwealths. Generally, one is free when one is not hindered to do what one will. In the commonwealth, such hindrances include "artificial chains" as well as real ones. Those

chains are called "civil laws" which those persons who have come together by mutual covenant in society "have fastned at one end, to the lips of that Man, or Assembly, to whom they have given the Sovereigne Power; and at the other end to their own Ears." Unlike real chains, the difficulty lies not in breaking laws but in getting away with it. Therefore, just as a prisoner or captive is free when unchained, so a member of society may be said to be free when unhindered by the laws.⁶⁵ It is a conception of liberty constructed by the speech act of the social contract. The mutual covenant to obey a sovereign power not only generates political obligation but also gives rise to civil liberty. In other words, the creation of artificial obligation entails the idea of its opposite: artificial liberty.⁶⁶ But as it is an artificial counterpart to natural liberty, it is not inconsistent with the latter, nor does it depend on the notion of free will.

The question then arises as to what degree of liberty, in a natural and artificial sense, we may enjoy in society. As corporal beings, most non-imprisoned individuals are relatively free to move as they wish without chains or other physical hindrances. But we are not permitted to do anything whatsoever that we will. We do not have the right to do what the law forbids. Is the commonwealth therefore restrictive of liberty? We must distinguish between liberty in its natural sense and right, which is a metaphorical form of liberty. Freedom from physical obstacles to one's movement and freedom from the law are not the same: indeed, the restriction of one may increase the other. As we saw in chapter two, the unfettered right to do anything we judge to be conducive to self-preservation is anathema to peace; the establishment of civil society depends on the mutual renunciation of the natural right to do all things. Absolute right is destructive of society. By restricting natural right, then, peace is attainable and therefore so is the pursuit of those things which are only possible in society, such as buying and selling, or lawful contracts with others. That is to say, the restriction of natural right facilitates natural liberty. Thus, the "liberty of a Subject, lyeth therefore only in those things, which in regulating their actions the Sovereign hath prætermitted." In society, we are not free to do anything that we will

contrary to the laws, but we are free to do what the laws do not forbid: civil liberty
 “dependeth on the silence of the Law.” We give up our natural right to all things, but gain
 civil rights to do what the laws prætermit, and thus our freedom of movement is enlarged:

For the use of Lawes, (which are but Rules Authorised), is not to bind the People from all
 Voluntary actions; but to direct and keep them in such a motion, as not to hurt themselves by
 their own impetuous desires, rashnesse, or indiscretion, as Hedges are set, not to stop Travellers,
 but to keep them in the way.

In this broad sense, Hobbes might be considered a “liberal” thinker, a theorist of individual
 freedom, but his liberalism includes the rule of law limiting right and also facilitating
 natural liberty.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, his opponents charged that a conception of civil liberty not based on
 the doctrine of free will renders the law unjust. Bramhall, in particular, argued that
 necessitated actions cannot be justly punished. The denial of freedom of the will “is able to
 overthrow all societies and commonwealths in the world.”⁶⁸ In Bramhall’s view, the scope
 of law is freely willed actions. We saw that necessity does negate moral responsibility in
 Hobbes’s thought, but that socially correct behaviour must nevertheless be inculcated (most
 effectively by education backed up by the fear of punishment). Accordingly, his concept of
 law does not depend on free will. Leaving aside, he wrote, the erroneous assertion that
 laws can be unjust—because we have covenanted to obey the laws as just—one who breaks
 the law is justly punished not because one freely willed one’s illegal act but because the act
 itself was “noxious and contrary to man’s preservation.”⁶⁹ In other words, the law does
 not forbid an act qua freely willed sin but rather forbids it because of its detrimental effect
 on society. The standard by which laws forbid and liberties are permitted is self-
 preservation, in contrast to the divine decree of free will.

If self-preservation is the “bottom-line,” however, then it could be argued that the
 rule of law in Hobbes is no effective safeguard against the sovereign’s power to infringe
 upon almost any individual liberties apart from inalienable natural rights. Since there is no
 sacrosanct free will in the Hobbesian commonwealth, the liberty of subjects is restricted to

what the laws do not (or cannot) forbid. We saw in the last chapter that the sovereign has a duty to provide good laws. Nevertheless, Hobbes insisted that subjects' liberty cannot limit the sovereign power. The sovereign can never act unjustly or pass unjust laws, because justice consists in obedience to the sovereign's commands. Subjects are never free to disobey unless their self-preservation is at stake. Therefore, no one commonwealth is freer than another: the sovereign (if rightly instituted) is always absolute, and the liberty of commonwealths is unfettered in relation to other states. Hobbes even went so far as to declare that a liberty granted by the sovereign but inconsistent with sovereign command—for example, the freedom of the English Parliament in the 17th century to raise taxes to outfit an army—ought not to be allowed. Because the peace and security of the commonwealth requires an absolute sovereign power, no liberty is inviolable except the handful of natural rights we retain in society.⁷⁰ We may regard even comfortable self-preservation as minimal liberty compared, for example, to the expansive rights and freedom guaranteed in the *Canadian Charter* of 1982. It would appear that the Hobbesian sovereign can justly stifle subjects' freedom in the interests of peace.⁷¹ Is the flourishing of liberty only conceptually possible with respect to Miltonian "sanctity" of the individual, as opposed to mere self-preservation?

Although subjects' civil freedom can never include exemption from the laws (and thus disobedience to the sovereign), it has been argued that the Hobbesian rule of law can be seen as protecting the liberty of subjects. "If," Hobbes wrote,

a Subject have a controversie with his Sovereigne, of Debt, or of right of possession of lands or goods, or concerning any penalty corporall, or pecuniary, grounded on a precedent Law; He hath the same Liberty to sue for his right, as if it were against a Subject; and before such Judges, as are appointed by the Sovereigne.

In other words, if one thinks that the sovereign is acting against its own law in infringing upon one's freedoms, one's case can be decided before a court of law. Given that judges, according to the laws of nature, must be impartial, the liberty of subjects as prescribed by law can be guaranteed. The condition is that the sovereign has acted by law, not "by vertue of his Power." The sovereign is free to act outside of law.⁷² But we might recall Hobbes's

remarks against “acts of hostility” as compared with legal punishment. Andrew has argued, for example, that acts of sovereignty on the basis of power, not law, establish a state of nature with the party suing for right. In such cases, the latter can justly war against the sovereign.⁷³ According to this argument, the sovereign is ill-advised to act outside of law—since peace is always preferable to war—even though it is not bound by the rule of law. Now, one might counter that a rapacious sovereign could simply repeal precedent laws and make new ones that grant itself sufficiently sweeping powers to undermine such suing for right. Is the Hobbesian rule of laws of the sovereign insufficient to protect individual freedom?

We need to examine the sovereign power over the law more closely. For Hobbes, civil law

Is to every Subject, those Rules, which the Common-wealth hath Commanded him, by Word, Writing, or other sufficient Sign of the Will, to make use of, for the Distinction of Right, and Wrong; that is to say, of what is contrary, and what is not contrary to the Rule.

As this definition reveals, the law has a particular relation to the sovereign. The commonwealth sets down what is right and wrong through law. The commonwealth therefore makes the laws, and since the representative person of the commonwealth—in which all the members are united—is the sovereign, the sovereign should have legislative power. Hobbes emphasised that the sovereign should be the sole legislator: none can make or abrogate laws except by its authority. Moreover, because of its legislative supremacy, the sovereign is not subject to civil law. The sovereign’s power to make and repeal laws when it will entails freedom from subjection to them. If the laws were above the sovereign power, then the judge of those laws binding the sovereign would be a new sovereign; but if this judge were in turn bound by the laws, he or she would be superseded by a new sovereign, and so on. The result, Hobbes wrote, would be “the Confusion, and Dissolution of the Commonwealth.”⁷⁴ Thus we see why the subject’s right to sue the sovereign may be limited by the sovereign’s liberty to change the law as it sees fit. Hobbes did not allow for a check on the sovereign’s legislative power—as has arguably been the

case with respect to the Supreme Court of Canada since 1982 (especially as the notwithstanding clause, which is supposed to preserve parliamentary supremacy, is almost never used outside Quebec)—arguing that the supremacy of law as something distinct from the sovereign fatally weakens the governing authority.⁷⁵

Now, Canada before 1982 was not governed by an authority acting outside law: before the *Charter*, common law was a main guarantor of citizens' rights. This gives rise to the question: if the Hobbesian sovereign is not to be subject to the civil law and thus the quasi-sovereignty of the judiciary, then can it be limited by something akin to English common law? Hobbes interpreted "common law" in such a fashion that the sovereign's supremacy over law is unhindered. He denied that custom or precedent alone could be the basis of law, contrary to the opinion of many English lawyers of the seventeenth century. The custom may be reasonable or unreasonable, he argued: if unreasonable, the law should be abolished; if reasonable, then the law is rational because it conforms to the law of nature, not because it has been customary. The judgement of its reasonableness belongs to the sovereign alone, who can choose to repeal or modify the law as it wishes. If the law is not repealed for a long time, "it is not the Length of Time that maketh the Authority, but the Will of the Sovereign signified by his silence, (for Silence is sometimes an argument of Consent)". Common law depends on the will of the sovereign.⁷⁶ Hobbes did not adhere to the Burkean view that the law—or any other aspect of political life—can be proved to be reasonable by its durability. What lawyers chose to call "common law" was for Hobbes only law by the sovereign's authority, and thus has no privileged place among the laws of the commonwealth. Indeed, in departing from the traditional definition of English common law as custom and precedent, Hobbes placed common law and statute law on the same basis, making them virtually indistinguishable.

Furthermore, Hobbes's insistence that the sovereign is judge of the law's reasonableness was contrary to the view held by, among others, the eminent jurist Sir Edward Coke. Coke had argued that legal reasoning is an "Artificiall perfection of Reason,

gotten by long study, observation, and experience, and not of every man's naturall reason."⁷⁷ Now, Hobbes did argue that reason is "*acquired Wit*, (I mean acquired by method and instruction,)...which is grounded on the right use of Speech; and produceth the Sciences." Coke and Hobbes might be regarded as having disagreed on the method, but appeared in accord on the importance of industry in the use of reason. Moreover, if the commonwealth is a product of art, then the will of the "Artificiall Man"—the laws—is likewise artificial. Nevertheless, while the laws for Hobbes may be a kind of artificial will, he was wary of characterising the reasoning of the law as "artificial." In his view, the study of law may be an art, but it is attained by natural, human reason, not by an "Artificiall perfection of Reason." After all, given the defects of human reasoning, the study of law is often defective, "For it is possible long study may encrease, and confirm erroneous Sentences." Hobbes's target was the lawyers themselves: he argued that the artificial perfection of reason exalted by jurists such as Coke were pretexts for advancing their own interests. For who but Coke and other lawyers had in their minds attained this deep knowledge of the law? Given that reasoning is always human reasoning, Hobbes concluded that in the interests of peace—which depends on a strong central authority—the reason of the law could be none other than the reason of the legislator: the sovereign. Coke believed that common law is the product of centuries of legal reasoning. In Hobbes's conception, the common law (in England) is the king's reason.⁷⁸

Thus far, we have seen no institutional check in Hobbes's thought on an illiberal rule of law, in which the sovereign may make or repeal laws arbitrarily. Even if the sovereign intended to carry out its duty of providing good laws, how can one ensure that what the sovereign considers a reasonable law will not be regarded by subjects as oppressive of their rightful liberties, since the sovereign's authorisation is sufficient justification of the laws? A key aspect of the Hobbesian rule of law is that the civil laws must be made known to the subjects. Since the laws of the commonwealth are the commands of the sovereign, the subjects who are obliged to obey them should know what

they are. Such publication will be made “by word, or writing, or some other act, known to proceed from the Sovereign Authority. For the will of another, cannot be understood, but by his own word, or act, or by conjecture taken from his scope and purpose.” The point here is that law should be codified not for lawyers to wrangle over—Hobbes adduced examples of laws put into verse for the common people to sing or recite—because subjection to laws entails that the laws are known. If the people cannot know a law, they cannot be subject to it, as is always the case with “naturall fooles, children,...mad-men,...[and] brute beasts.” Parties to the social contract are entitled to know the commands of the sovereign whom they have authorised.⁷⁹ The state cannot be a shadowy authority governing by laws made known only to a few.

One could argue that publication of the laws is not in itself a sufficient guarantee that the laws will not be oppressive, particularly in a monarchy. After all, if the people knew that their property could by law be seized under certain circumstances, they would be subject to this legally explicit power of the sovereign. But Hobbes suggested that the publication of the laws is a corollary of the need for the sovereign to consult the subjects in making laws. In his *Dialogue of the Common Laws of England*, Hobbes had the Philosopher agree with the Student of the Common Laws on certain aspects of the role of Parliament in the monarchical England of his day. The Philosopher denies the Student’s assertion that Acts of Parliament can only be passed with popular consent. He adds, however, that such Acts should be printed for distribution among the people, but in any case, they cannot be passed without the knowledge of the Members of the Houses of Parliament.⁸⁰ Since such Acts can only be laws by the sovereign’s authority—Hobbes often referred to the concept of “King in Parliament”—it is significant that for Hobbes, Members of Parliament must be made known of them before they can be passed.

In other parts of the dialogue, the Philosopher is more explicit about the consultative role of Parliament. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes had argued that the sovereign has a duty to make laws conducive to the good of the people, because the good of the sovereign

and the good of its subjects are one. In the *Dialogue*, a work of more particular scope, the Philosopher reiterates the view that it is in monarchs' "own interest to make such Laws as the people can endure, and may keep them without impatience, and live in strength and courage to defend their King and Countrey, against their potent neighbours." A content populace helps to ensure a stronger commonwealth. The Philosopher speaks here in response to the Student's citation of the Saxon Kings' practice of "call[ing] together the Bishops, and a great part of the wisest and discreetest Men of the Realm, and made Laws by their advice." The Student is speaking of the king's counsellors but the Philosopher concedes that the reference may be to Parliaments.⁸¹

This conception of the English Parliament is not only defended in an appeal to the sovereign's self-interest but also in the context of natural law:

La. I Grant you that the King is sole Legislator, but with this Restriction, that if he will not Consult with the Lords of Parliament and hear the Complaints, and Informations of the Commons, that are best acquainted with their own wants, he sinneth against God, though he cannot be Compell'd to any thing by his Subjects by Arms, and Force.

Ph. We are Agreed upon that already.⁸²

In other words, it is contrary to equity, the law of nature, for the sovereign monarch of England not to consult Members of Parliament in framing and repealing laws, although the sovereign cannot be held to account by his or her subjects for breaching this rule. The sovereign who ignores Parliament sins against God, not against the people. Granted, Hobbes did not speak in his own voice, rather choosing to advance this doctrine through the mouths of characters whose views he may not have been entirely in agreement with. Furthermore, he does not advance this view in his other works. Nevertheless, he did at least come to believe that the king's obligation under God to consult with Parliament when making laws is a reasonable part of a theory of absolute sovereignty.

Now, it might be objected that legislating without the Houses of Parliament is a sin, not a crime, since the sovereign is not subject to the laws. Hobbes was doubtless careful not to grant the Houses of Parliament or the people an institutional check on the sovereign's legislative power. But we should keep in mind that the *Leviathan* may have been intended

to persuade the common reader to obey the laws not only from prudence but also from the moral conviction that keeping promises is right. Likewise, Hobbes's discussion of natural law may have been intended to persuade sovereigns to observe equity as well as justice. Consequently, although sovereign monarchs cannot be resisted on the pretext that they have failed to consult the Houses of Parliament in making what are regarded as oppressive laws, it is not only prudent but also right to consult the Lords and Commons. Thus, Hobbes's "hope, that one time or other, this writing of mine, may fall into the hands of a Sovereign, who will...convert this Truth of Speculation, into the Utility of Practice"⁸³ may be applicable to doctrines justified by the law of nature. The rule of laws made by the sovereign in consultation with the people in some form or other--in England, as represented in part by the Lords and Commons--is a morally defensible regime.⁸⁴

The law of equity is applicable not only to law-making but also to the interpretation of law. Given that the sovereign is legislator, the laws may be said to be the reason of the sovereign. Thus, the justification and intention of the laws are the sovereign's. Now, Hobbes warned that "by the craft of an Interpreter, the Law may be made to beare a sense, contrary to that of the Sovereign; by which means the Interpreter becomes the Legislator." The laws may be interpreted in a way contrary to the sovereign's intention, which for Hobbes is tantamount to making new laws. Interpretation must be consonant with the reason of the sovereign, and thus falls within the scope of the sovereign authority.⁸⁵

One might argue that if the laws are to be placed on a rational basis, then the intention of a human authority would not be sufficient. Philosophical or legal Reason must surely be the governing principle of law. Because of his scepticism about reason, however, Hobbes argued that there cannot be a higher interpreter than the sovereign. Philosophical and legal principles are the principles of philosophers and lawyers. Thus, he insisted that the interpretation of laws natural and written does not depend on "books of Morall Philosophy" or legal commentaries: "The Authority of writers, without the

Authority of the Common-wealth, maketh not their opinions Law, be they never so true.” He did not except even himself from this view. Although he did not doubt the veracity of his own ideas, he recognised that his philosophy cannot be law unless by the sovereign power. That is to say, he believed that he arrived at the correct understanding of the laws of nature, but they are made civil laws and interpreted only by the sovereign authority. To place interpretation in the hands of philosophers would give rise to disagreements with no authority to decide between quibbling writers. Likewise, legal commentaries cannot be the authority for understanding written laws. Hobbes added that commentaries are often written in such a manner as to require interpretation themselves.⁶⁶ In law as in religion, only a human authority can settle disputes.

Does the sovereign power over interpretation entail arbitrary and unaccountable interpretation? It does in the sense that the sovereign is an arbitrary authority which cannot be held to account by its subjects, much less by scholars. But equity, Hobbes insisted, is nevertheless the governing principle of legal interpretation. Interpretation of law is by the sovereign’s authority, but the sovereign itself cannot feasibly interpret every law, given the number of disputes over the law in civil society. For this reason, judges must be appointed by the sovereign to decide on controversies of law. In England, for example, judges include members of the House of Lords and jury-members in “ordinary trials of Right, Twelve men of the common People.” The various judges appointed by the sovereign are not political stooges who merely interpret the law as the sovereign tells them. Rather, they must interpret the law not only in light of its intention and purpose—as set out by the sovereign as legislator—but also in accordance with equity, i.e., equal application of the law. That is to say, the Hobbesian sovereign is understood as intending the equitable application of law to its subjects, and so the judges constituted by the sovereign must decide controversies equitably. Thus, Hobbes wrote that “a good Judge, or good Interpreter of the Lawes” has “A *right understanding* of that principall Law of Nature called *Equity*” and is also impartial—not to be swayed by bribes, favours, or emotions—as well as

diligent and thoughtful. A society whose laws are interpreted by such sovereign-appointed judges is one in which “Justice fulfils the Law, and Equity interprets the Law.”⁸⁷ Hobbes regarded sovereign authority with respect to the interpretation of laws as consonant with equity.

For Hobbes, therefore, that the laws are made and interpreted by the authority of an absolute sovereign does not entail iniquitous government. Civil law and natural law should be consistent. But in what way are they related? If the sovereign makes an iniquitous law or interprets law inequitably, what freedom does the subject enjoy by natural law that is restricted by civil law? As we have seen in previous chapters, the laws of nature or of God do not provide a pretext for disobeying civil law. Let us examine how this works with respect to Hobbes’s understanding of civil law and the liberty of subjects.

The laws of nature command obedience to the civil laws of one’s country. What if the civil laws violate natural law? The subjects, Hobbes insisted, cannot themselves judge the laws of the sovereign to be contrary to the laws of nature, since the sovereign is chief interpreter of all law, written and natural. The obligation to obey the laws of the sovereign is in such cases intact. Hobbes stated that the laws of nature and civil law “contain each other, and are of equall extent.” Furthermore, the laws of nature “are not properly Lawes, but qualities that dispose men to peace, and to obedience.” They are laws only when made into civil laws by the sovereign. And since peace and obedience are attained when civil laws are obeyed, it is the law of nature to observe the civil laws of one’s country. Indeed, the moral virtue of a subject “is comprehended wholly in obedience to the laws of the commonwealth.” The moral precepts of nature cannot contradict civil law. Thus, Hobbes warned that one of the sources of crime is the doctrine of false teachers who misinterpret natural law to be contrary to civil law.⁸⁸ From this severe perspective, the teaching of a Milton or any advocate of revolution is criminal.

It would appear that civil law restricts a subject’s rights in ways that natural law does not. Civil and natural law are different parts of law—one written and the other

unwritten—but only civil law effectively restricts natural right. We noted in previous chapters that rights are artificial liberties and thus subject to restriction by law. In particular, the natural right to do anything one judges to be conducive to one's self-preservation is restricted by the laws of the commonwealth. In contrast, natural law always obliges *in foro interno*—in conscience—but in effect (i.e., on one's action) only in times of peace and security, and are in such times observed through obedience to the civil laws.⁸⁹ Therefore, in the state of nature, the laws of nature are only moral precepts and not binding on natural right. So it would seem that from the perspective of the subject, civil rather than natural law is restrictive of one's rights.

While the effective restriction of civil liberty belongs to the form of civil law, we can discern the limitation of civil law in contrast to the internal obligation of natural law. Civil laws are made only by the sovereign authority. When or where there is no sovereign, there can be no civil law and therefore no crime. As Hobbes wrote,

where Law ceaseth, Sinne ceaseth. But because the Law of Nature is eternall, Violation of Covenants, Ingratitude, Arrogance, and all Facts contrary to any Morall vertue, can never cease to be Sinne. Secondly, that the Civill Law ceasing, Crimes cease: for there being no other Law remaining, but that of Nature, there is no place for Accusation...

In other words, natural law is always binding, but outside society, in conscience only; whereas civil law binds actions, but only where there is civil society. These distinctions are reflected in an example in the *Dialogue of the Common Laws*. The Philosopher states that the Act of Oblivion, in which offences committed during the time of civil war were pardoned, is justifiable because “all Crimes may be alledged, as proceeding from the Licentiousness of the time, and from the silence of the Law occasion'd by the Civil War...” In times of civil war, the civil law falls silent and therefore what would in civil society be prohibited is no crime.⁹⁰

We can thus conclude that civil law, properly speaking, can apply only to acts, not wills. We may will what is sinful, i.e., contrary to the law of nature, but our freedom is only restricted when we commit a criminal act in times of civil peace. Civil law binds freedom—the capacity to do what we will—not willing or intending itself. Natural law

obligates in conscience--willing or intending right or wrong--but is only effective in the form of civil law, and thus our wills and intentions remain untouched. A law-abiding subject must act morally, but her thoughts are her own business. For example, if the natural law against retribution out of vengeance rather than deterrence is embodied in the form of a civil law forbidding acts of revenge, then subjects are prohibited from carrying out revenge but not from idly wishing vengeance in their hearts (though Hobbes sought to persuade readers of the vain-glory of revenge).⁹¹ Indeed, as we saw, denying the doctrine of free will entails that the scope of law and punishment is actions alone, since we are not morally responsible beings. Civil law cannot interfere with the integrity of individual belief (in private) because the will is subject to external causes. Socially correct behaviour, not moral improvement, is the purpose of the law.

This divide between civil law and inward virtue (or vice) raises important questions concerning church and state. In *Behemoth*, Hobbes's character A speaks of the virtue of a subject, which is to obey the laws of the commonwealth, and the virtue of sovereigns, which is the maintenance of peace and the well-being of their subjects. The interlocutor B interjects: "Methinks you should have placed among the virtues that, which, in my opinion, is the greatest of all virtues, religion." A replies: "So I have; though, it seems, you did not observe it."⁹² The point here seems to be that religion wholly consists in political obedience. But one might object that there are many aspects of religion which are not concerned with questions of peace. Given that the standard of virtue of subjects and sovereign is civil peace, to what extent can and should these other aspects of religion be regulated? If law can only regulate action, not willing, then what sort of freedom of religion (if any) does the Hobbesian subject enjoy, considering that religious individuals' actions are often determined by their beliefs? We shall consider these questions in contrast to the radically different conception of religious freedom in the thought of Milton.

Old Priests, New Presbyters, and even Newer Independents

Milton's view that human free will must be redeemed from its degenerate state gives rise to the following question: what role does the church have in human salvation? Indeed, what form of the church did Milton advocate? We shall begin with his understanding of how to arrive at the truths of religion.

Milton presented himself as the exemplar of the seeker of religious truth. In the introductory epistle to his treatise on Christian doctrine, he explained how he had sought answers to religious questions by relying on his own examination of God's word. In effect, he advanced a hermeneutical teaching as well as a teaching on the content of scripture. Arguably, the central teaching of his treatise on Christian doctrine, and perhaps of *Paradise Lost*, is that the Christian should not be beholden to others in the interpretation of God's word. Indeed, he did not insist that the reader agree with his views on subjects such as the Trinity, angels, or the Sabbath. On the contrary, he wrote, "I advise every reader, and set him an example by doing the same myself, to withhold his consent from those opinions about which he does not feel fully convinced, until the evidence of the Bible convinces him and induces his reason to assent and believe." As this statement indicates, he believed that one who carefully arrives at one's own understanding of the Bible will come to agree with his interpretation; but the method of interpretation must be examination for oneself, as he had done.⁹³

This form of self-teaching is linked to individual salvation. Since it was for Milton the principal route to religious truth, the inward "illumination of the Holy Spirit"--what Milton also called "conscience"--is both guide to interpreting scripture and key to salvation. We saw that conscience is the guide to the free will, informing it of right and wrong. Likewise, with respect to what one should believe, "God has revealed the way of eternal salvation only to the individual faith of each man, and demands of us that any man who wishes to be saved should work out his beliefs for himself." Milton's Christianity was radically individualistic, placing the burden of religious doctrine on everyone's conscience.

One may consult the advice of others in interpreting scripture, but the settling of one's own religious beliefs depends on direct, unmediated revelation and persuasion.⁹⁴

As Milton acknowledged, some would object that scripture itself upholds doctrinal authority—for example, in St. Paul's first letter to Timothy, I Tim. 3:15: "the church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth" (Milton's translation). Milton countered that the church spoken of is not necessarily the visible church; that any assembly of believers may be the house of God, and established churches may not correspond to the house of God. In other word, not all churches are God's churches, and so are sometimes not "the pillar and ground of the truth." Scripture is truth, but has often been misinterpreted throughout the centuries after Christ. As the archangel Michael declares in his overview of human history after the time of the Apostles,

...in their room, as they forewarn,
Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n
To their own vile advantages shall turn
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
With superstitions and traditions taint,
Left only in those written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.

Religious truth has been tainted by the established churches since the time of early Christianity.⁹⁵ We saw examples of Milton's desire to free scripture from its late corruption by the church, which for example had misinterpreted Biblical teaching to uphold the power of earthly tyrants. Milton shared with other Protestant writers the conviction that religion has been corrupted by influences outside Christianity and alien to the teaching contained in scripture, although he went further than others in criticising even reformed churches for their interpretations of scripture.⁹⁶

Accordingly, Milton also spoke of the "double scripture," a notion which challenges the supreme authority even of the written word in its literal sense. The Gospels teach that "There is the external scripture of the written word and the internal scripture of the Holy Spirit which he, according to God's promise, has engraved upon the hearts of

believers, and which is certainly not to be neglected.” In fact, the internal authority of the Spirit may in some cases be superior to the “external” authority of scripture even as it is written in the Bible. Milton placed such faith in the individual conscience that he believed it could revise and amend written scripture if necessary. He quite reasonably cited the corruption of Biblical scripture throughout the ages. After all, the books of the Bible were written at such different times and in such different places that the texts were liable to corruption. Moreover, given the Miltonian critique of established clergy, the handling of the texts by various priests has added to the likelihood of the written scripture’s occasional unreliability. Milton drew this striking conclusion:

I do not know why God’s providence should have committed the contents of the New Testament to such wayward and uncertain guardians, unless it was so that this very fact might convince us that the Spirit which is given to us is a more certain guide than scripture, and that we ought to follow it.

Milton contrasted the possible corruption of written scripture with the incorruptibility of inward spirit as a guide to the interpretation of the former. He exalted individual conscience not only over church dogma, but even over literal scripture in those cases when it cannot be regarded as the word of God.⁹⁷

Despite this individualistic approach to scriptural interpretation and salvation, Milton did not abandon the idea of the church altogether. He accepted the importance of collective worship and instruction. A church, he wrote, should be “chiefly organised for the purpose of promoting mutual edification and the communion of the saints.” What Milton opposed was not churches per se but rather how they have been organised. Now, it is true of all forms of Christianity that Christ is considered the spiritual head of the church. Milton went further, asserting that Christ is also the head of the visible church. In Catholicism, for example, the head of the visible church is the representative of Christ. But given that for Milton, religious faith is a matter between the individual alone and God, no human being can set him or herself up as head or even superior officer of the church. God may commission “extraordinary ministers”—prophets, apostles, and evangelists—to “set up

or to reform the church,” but any believer can be an “ordinary minister,” if possessing certain gifts. Milton did not elaborate on what precisely these gifts are, but he did cite scriptural passages referring to gifts of speech by the grace of God. The point is that the traditional clergy should not have a monopoly over religious instruction. But how will an assembly of believers know who among them is gifted to act as ordinary minister? Milton declared that ministers should be elected by the people. This assertion is consistent with his emphasis on individual conscience and his view that a minister must possess certain gifts by God’s grace. For if one is a true believer and thus moved by the Holy Spirit within oneself, then an assembly of true believers is fit to judge who by God should be elected their ministers. Thus we see that Milton took an Independentist position, i.e., the view that scriptural interpretation and salvation are individual affairs and that churches should be organised on that basis. Thus, a group of believers should assemble with the sole purpose of facilitating their individual pursuits of salvation. Such churches may cooperate and consult with each other, but they would be “self contained and complete.”⁹⁸

Milton’s vision of particular, independent churches seriously challenged the authority of the established churches in England and Europe generally. Not surprisingly, his view of heresy was very different from conventional opinion. Heresy, as Milton noted, has been taken to mean a slander or blasphemy against God and the church, and the word has been applied to dissenting opinions in religion, including those of Presbyterians and Independents. Milton (like Hobbes, as we shall see) countered that the word “heresy” may mean any opinion, good or bad, in religion. He distinguished heresy from “schism,” which means division and discord within religion. Thus, Milton was a defender of heresy, insofar as the true Christian ought to consult his or her conscience in following scripture. Since no Christian should have authority over the beliefs of another, and no church should impose doctrine upon its members, it is against true religion to condemn or punish a Christian sect for heresy. If heresy is taken to mean an evil opinion in religion, Milton argued, then the only heretics are those who do not follow scripture—and here Milton

included Catholics—or who consider all to be heretics other than themselves.⁹⁹ Thus, with respect to ecclesiastical authority, the hero of *Paradise Lost* is perhaps Abdiel, the lone dissenter from the rebellious angels following Satan's lead. Abdiel declares to the prince of darkness:

...thou seest
 All are not of thy train; there be who faith
 Prefer, and piety to god, though then
 To thee not visible, when I alone
 Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent
 From all: my sect thou seest, now learn too late
 How few sometimes may know, when thousands err.¹⁰⁰

Milton himself, in opposing the imposition of church doctrines as well as the Presbyterian-controlled parliament and the restoration of the monarchy, took an Abdiel-like stance against the powers that be.

How did Milton reconcile the centrality of individual conscience in religion with the emphasis on law in holy scripture, particularly the Old Testament? Milton regarded Christianity as a universal religion of faith displacing the old Jewish religion of law. The "new covenant through faith in Christ" abolished the old covenant, i.e., Mosaic law. In other words, the old law enforced obedience to God through the fear of divine retribution for transgressing God's laws. This was a servile discipline, fit for childish creatures who could only obey God out of the fear of punishment. In contrast, the religion of the Gospels is that of a manly freedom, in which Christians choose Christ and the promise of eternal life because of their faith. Milton pointed to the difference between circumcision and baptism as the sacred rites of the old and new religions: circumcision was a seal of righteousness, an obscure sign in the flesh that bound believers to service; whereas baptism is an initiation into the Gospel, a remission of sins and the birth of a manly freedom of service to God. Under the old religion, we were cursed, in that we had to obey the law which carried no promise, in contrast to the hope of eternal life under the new covenant. As Michael remarks:

So law appears imperfect, and but giv'n
 With purpose to resign them in full time
 Up to a better cov'nant, disciplined
 From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit,
 From imposition of strict laws, to free
 Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear
 To filial, works of law to works of faith.¹⁰¹

The precise transition from Mosaic law to the Gospel was the internalisation of the law, from external obedience to internal faith. The death and resurrection of Christ announced the possibility of salvation. Humanity now had a saviour to believe in, God's own son who clearly justified freely chosen service to God. In him, Mosaic law was abolished but not broken: its purpose was now fulfilled in faith rather than in servile obedience. "We must realise," Milton argued, "that only the written surface has been changed, and that the law is now inscribed on believers' hearts by the spirit." What was the purview of prophets and high priests is now the inner realm of faith and conscience—beyond the scope of the present ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁰²

The manly freedom Milton spoke of as the result of the new inward religion of faith and conscience was the foundation of his conception of "Christian liberty." Like Hobbes, Milton regarded law as a constraint on liberty. He applied this conceptual relationship, in a radicalised form, to the old and new religions. Hobbes considered civil law—of human commonwealths—as a legitimate constraint on natural right, whereas Milton described the old law—of God—as a law of slavery. In other words, Milton embraced Christian liberty to the extent that he regarded the old divine law as fit only for the infantile state of humanity in the time of the Old Testament. With the law of God inscribed on human hearts, however, Christian liberty can be attained by obeying our consciences and following the true faith. Religious liberty may certainly have been present before Christ, but its full manifestation—the religious truth in our hearts that will set us free—came about with the "advent of Christ, our liberator."¹⁰³

The attainment of Christian liberty has had significant political implications. We

have not, Milton warned, freed ourselves from God's external law only to fall into the hands of unjust human law. As we noted, the religion of the Gospel is an internalisation of God's law, the acquisition of new freedom to serve God guided by inner conscience. The old law was abolished but not broken. The subservience of Christian liberty to human law would thus be the lowest depth into which a Christian may plunge. The obedience to Mosaic law may have been a servile discipline, but a necessary one for infant humanity until the latter was fit for manly freedom. The maturity to Christian liberty is thus hardly a victory "if our fear which was then servile to God only, must be now servile in religion towards men."¹⁰⁴

To ascertain what sort of human law over religion Milton criticised, we must determine what the role of the state should be in relation to religion. We saw in the last chapter that political liberty would for Milton be attained in a republican regime guided by an aristocratic body. Indeed, Christ recommended this free commonwealth as best for humanity until the Second Coming. Despite the divine sanction for the free commonwealth, however, Milton insisted that the civil and ecclesiastical powers should be distinguished. On this point, he again emphasised the disjunction between the old and new religions. In the old Jewish kingdoms, political and religious authority was united in the theocratic rule of a high priest. But the same government is not applicable to the Christian era: "If church and state shall be made one flesh again as under the law, let it be withall considerd, that God who then joind them hath now severd them." Milton thought that these two spheres must be kept separate; that everyone is subject to the civil authority in civil matters, but only members of a church are subject to ecclesiastical powers, and solely in religious matters. It should be emphasised that Milton believed the two domains to be separable: political liberty and Christian liberty, and likewise civil authority and religious authority, are different spheres. He contrasted the outward force of the one with the inward persuasion of the other.¹⁰⁵ They are not, therefore, exact counterparts. Although Milton was concerned to curb excessive constraints on outward political liberty, he

accepted that just civil laws should be obeyed. In religion, however, the true Christian should be free from external law; and so the scope of ecclesiastical authority is severely restricted because the subject matter of religion is individual faith and conscience, not law.¹⁰⁶

In his argument for the separation of church and state on the grounds that Christian liberty must not be constrained, Milton was suggesting that the worst evil in ecclesiastical affairs is the use of outward force in an essentially inward religion. In civil matters, it is sufficient for political liberty if force and coercion are used wisely and judiciously. In ecclesiastical matters, however, any use of force is contrary to Christian liberty. Because the realm of religion is belief and conscience, "external force should never be used in Christ's kingdom, the church." Civil magistrates have a duty to protect and foster religion, but not to impose belief or enforce public profession. They carry out this duty by not supervising the particular churches, which Milton regarded as largely voluntary organisations. Furthermore, the use of force in religion—by magistrates and priests alike—is contrary to God's glory, which upholds Christian liberty, and ineffective, since conscience is the inner voice of God and untouchable by outward force. That is to say, compulsion in ecclesiastical affairs is outward violence against true believers. Such interference offends Christian liberty, but it can never defeat it in the faithful. Thus, the proper purview of the state is non-interference in religious matters, while the instruments of church discipline should only be persuasion, demonstration, and other spiritual means—never compulsion to belief—because one's faith is paramount, and thus one's participation in church for the sake of following one's own conscience must be protected. We can see why Milton did not extend the same Christian liberty to Catholics, for whom (in Milton's view) imposition of church doctrine is part of their very beliefs.¹⁰⁷

Milton declared that he wrote "heretofore against *Salmasius* and regal tyrannie over the state; now against *Erastus* and state-tyrannie over the church." But considering his concern that the civil power was itself controlled by certain churches (particularly the

Catholic and Presbyterian), we might rather say that he wrote against the church's use of the state's tyranny over the churches. One may oppose the mingling of religion and politics on the grounds that there should be no religious interference in the political realm. Milton shared this view, but only insofar as he feared the use of the civil power by certain churches, to the detriment of the true religion. As we argued in the last chapter, the Presbyterian backsliding was a betrayal of the Revolution; here we may note what Milton regarded as the degeneracy of Presbyterianism into a quasi-Catholic abuse of political power to enforce their particular doctrine. "Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force / On every conscience," Milton warned in *Paradise Lost*. Or as he wrote to General Cromwell upon the establishment of the Commonwealth:

...yet more remains
 To conquer still; peace hath her victories
 No less renowned than war, new foes arise
 Threat'ning to bind our souls with secular chains:
 Help us to save free conscience from the paw
 Of hireling wolves whose Gospel is their maw.

The struggle of the free will against religious oppression did not end with the execution of the king. In the divine theodicy, the ultimate task of humanity is the full attainment of our manly freedom under God. Thus we are presented with the religious policy of Milton's best regime: "This liberty of conscience which above all other things ought to be to all men dearest and most precious, no government more inclinable not to favor only but to protect, then a free Commonwealth".¹⁰⁸ In other words, while civil liberty is guaranteed by aristocratic republicanism, Christian liberty is fostered by the strict separation of church and state. The failure to achieve either in Restoration England was doubtless a bitter disappointment for Milton, who may have cared more about such principles than the personal glory he ultimately achieved as a poet.

The Two Rocks of the Christian Commonwealth

In his examination of ecclesiastical power, Hobbes wrote that he tried to avoid the “rocks” of obeying the civil power contrary to the Law of God on the one hand and breaking the laws of the commonwealth out of the fear of offending God on the other.¹⁰⁹ But his solution is arguably not a middle way, a compromise between civil and divine obedience. Instead, it might be said that he was at pains to show that human and divine law, for the sake of civil peace, should be regarded as consistent with each other. How this is possible requires a certain relation between what Rousseau called the “two heads of the eagle”: church and state. Was the “dominating spirit of Christianity...incompatible with his system,” as Rousseau charged?¹¹⁰

It was argued in the previous section that a teaching on the role of the church in political life begins with a particular conception of how religious truth may be known. The primary source for Hobbes is, not surprisingly, holy scripture. Like Milton, Hobbes recognised that scripture is in need of interpretation. Milton argued that individual conscience should be the guide to interpretation. The true Christian has a duty to examine scripture for him or herself and to sift and winnow the various interpretations of others: no conscientious person is beholden to the opinion of another, not even Milton himself. Hobbes also emphasised the need for careful examination of the word of God. But the Hobbesian guide to interpretation is “our naturall Reason,” not the conscience. Such an assertion seems puzzling, given that religion is a matter above all of faith. Hobbes, however, insisted that “by wise and learned interpretation, and carefull ratiocination, all rules and precepts necessary to the knowledge of our duty both to God and man, without Enthusiasme, or supernatural Inspiration, may easily be deduced.” With respect to the religious duty of humanity, one need not resort to Miltonian “inward illumination of the Holy Spirit.” Even those mysteries of religion “above Reason,” though not rationally comprehensible, cannot be contrary to natural reason.¹¹¹ That is to say, reason within limits is sufficient to understand the morally and politically relevant teachings contained in scripture. Of course, one may and does err in one’s reasoning; we shall see later how

Hobbes dealt with misinterpretation.

Indeed, it might be said that Hobbes's insistence on careful reasoning was a rejection not only of blind faith and conscience but also over-rationalisation of scripture. He wrote that "it is with the mysteries of our Religion, as with wholesome pills for the sick, which swallowed whole, have the vertue to cure; but chewed, are for the most part cast up again without effect."¹¹² This statement may appear rather ironic, considering that the second half of *Leviathan* is largely taken up with careful consideration of scripture. But Hobbes may have intended to induce regurgitation; that is to say, to show that abstruse theological disputes over the mysteries of religion are not fit subjects for human reasoning. If Hobbes's reading of scripture merely confirms what he wrote in the first half of *Leviathan*, then dwelling on theological matters may be a distraction from political obedience. As we noted above, Hobbes concluded that only two things are essential for salvation: belief in Christ, and obedience to the laws of the sovereign. His careful exegesis of scripture is an elaborate effort to prove to Christian subjects that these simple tenets of salvation are all they need to know from the Bible. In this way, he sought to counteract both the misappropriation of scripture by ambitious priests and the dangers of individual interpretation.

Although Hobbes opposed Miltonian conscience as a standard of interpretation, he gave a similar account of heresy. Hobbes stated that the original meaning of the word "heresy" was that of the doctrine of a sect in philosophy and religion. Hobbes depicted the growth of these sects, which consisted of followers of certain men esteemed for wisdom, and the ensuing doctrinal conflict between them. Although his account is critical of sectarians who accept the doctrines of books on faith, he noted that the term heresy was never used as a reproach: "they were," he wrote, "all equally Hereticks." Once Christianity spread throughout Europe, some of these sects adopted the faith but continued their former disputations. It was they who, coming to dominate the church, called themselves Catholic and all others heretics.¹¹³ Like Milton, Hobbes thought that the Catholic church, with its

condemnation of the beliefs of other Christian sects as heretical, deviated from the original faith of Christ and the Apostles. Its doctrine and practice have, Hobbes and Milton believed, been corrupted with pagan traditions alien to the Christian spirit.

Milton and Hobbes diverged on the conclusions they drew from the non-Christian origins of heresy. Milton concluded that no sect should be considered heretical, and no doctrine be suppressed. Accordingly, we might regard the heroes of *Paradise Lost* and the English civil war--Abdiel and Milton--as sects of one. Hobbes also regarded heresy as a slander promoting Catholic interests. He pointed out that since the Reformation in England, there has been no justifiable basis in law for punishing heresy. But, he added, the abolition of heresy as a slander does not entail that the people may profess whatever doctrines they please. There is "neither Statute, nor any Law to Punish Doctrine, but the ordinary Power Ecclesiastical, and that according to the Canons of the Church of *England*, only Authorised by the King."¹⁴ Although he opposed the Catholic intolerance of other doctrines, Hobbes nevertheless maintained that the sovereign has power over the tongues, if not the minds, of religious believers.

This is the case with religious truth and scriptural interpretation. Hobbes regarded natural reason as the best guide to ascertain the meaning of scripture, but the prevalence of erroneous reasoning and of disputes over what is rational entails that God's word cannot simply be left, as Milton would have it, to private interpreters, not even a select group of "true Christians." Hobbes cited the example of the errors committed by Schoolmen like Bramhall who sought "a Philosophicall truth by Logick, of such mysteries as are not comprehensible, nor fall under any rule of naturall science." That is to say, there are disagreements over what is and is not above reason in scripture. The problem, however, was more widespread than that of quibbling scholars. In Hobbes's *Behemoth*, A mentions various rebellious sects such as the Fifth Monarchists, Anabaptists, Quakers, and Independents--Milton's "sect." He added that "these were the enemies which arose against his Majesty from the private interpretation of the Scripture, exposed to every man's

scanning in his mother-tongue."¹¹⁵ Much of scripture may be rationally comprehensible but human beings are generally too distracted by their passions to arrive at reasonable interpretations.

The antidote to private interpretation of scripture is in principle similar to that of controversies generally in the state of nature: "the parties must by their own accord, set up for right Reason, the Reason of some Arbitrator, or Judge, to whose sentence they will both stand, or their controversie must either come to blowes, or be undecided." Of course, each religious sect will claim that its interpretation should be regarded as the most reasonable and correct. But though the parties in a religious controversy may not agree to set up an impartial judge, there is in civil society a supreme authority already instituted to arbitrate in such matters. Therefore, Hobbes concluded, just as the sovereign is chief interpreter of civil law, so it must be chief interpreter of scripture, God's law.¹¹⁶ One might object that the church, not the state, has the interpretation of God's word as its particular domain; and that the sovereign's authority over interpretation is not a guarantee that scripture will be most reasonably, much less faithfully, interpreted. Furthermore, in Milton's perspective, Christianity is properly a religion of inward faith, not external law, and the law inscribed on our hearts is of God, not of the state; so the Hobbesian sovereign's authority over civil law should prove nothing. We must draw from Hobbes's interpretation of scriptural history to determine how he would have dealt with such objections.

For Hobbes, the religious duty of humanity with respect to one's actions is primarily a matter of external law. Like Milton, he considered the Jews of the Old Testament as a particular people subject to God's law. Furthermore, Hobbes argued that the kingdom of God spoken of in Old Testament scripture was a "*Kingdome properly so named,*" consistent with the origins of sovereignty described in the first part of *Leviathan*. That is to say, the people of Israel covenanted with God to have him as their king. The kingdom of God was not a metaphor but a political reality for the Jews. The initial

covenant took place between God and Abraham, in which Abraham and his seed covenanted to obey God as sovereign, who in turn promised them the land of Canaan. This covenant was renewed by Moses, who ruled the people of Israel as God's lieutenant.¹¹⁷ The kingdom of God was a civil kingdom, in which the sovereign was instituted by a social covenant. Thus, the nature of subjects' obedience to God's commands in such a kingdom is the same as that of political obedience generally: acts, not wills, were subject to the laws of God. Hobbesian and Miltonian accounts of the Old Testament were in general agreement over the point that the Jewish religion was a religion of law, i.e., one which required external obedience to God's law, not internal belief.

Hobbes sharply differed with Milton on the relation between the old kingdom of God and the religion of the Gospel. For Hobbes, the kingdom of God did not lose its original meaning—that of the sovereignty of God. The new covenant brought about by Christ was not a change from the religion of law to the religion of faith. As we noted in the last chapter, Hobbes depicted the period between Moses and the New Testament as various changes in political authority, from high priests to kings, until subjection to the Babylonian, Macedonian, and finally Roman empires. Likewise, the new covenant of Christ marked a change in God's political kingdom. Hobbes noted Christ's office as redeemer for our sins. But Milton regarded Christ as a symbol of faith as opposed to law—that salvation is obtained through faith in Christ who died for our sins, not obedience to God's law as set down by external authorities—whereas Hobbes separated the redemptive act of Christ from the new covenant. It is true that Christ did not come to earth in order to assume earthly power, but this does not mean that religion ceased to be a religion of law. Instead, he announced the kingdom of God to come, an earthly commonwealth of the future with Christ as God's lieutenant. His mission was “to prepare men to live so, as to be worthy of the Immortality Beleevers were to enjoy, at such time as he should come in majesty, to take possession of his Fathers Kingdome.” Thus, the law of God was not abolished in the new covenant, but rather renewed. Whereas Milton understood the new

covenant in moral and metaphysical terms, as a transformation of religion from law to faith, conscience, and love—the inscribing of God’s law on our hearts, such that all laws are reduced to the simple command to love God and fellow men—Hobbes saw it in political terms: the promise of a future kingdom of God of similar character to the old kingdom of God. Indeed, Hobbes declared that Christ “is to be King...like (in office) to Moses.”¹¹⁸ Christ will be the sovereign authority, not the Truth that shall set you free. Hobbes saw no maturing of humanity from the servile discipline of Jewish law to the manly freedom of Christian faith. Religious duty for him has consisted and always will consist essentially in obedience to God’s law. It is reflective of Milton’s republican views and Hobbes’s political teaching that the one considered the external imposition of God’s law to be fit only for the servile, while the other regarded the religion of law as consonant with the kingdom of God in both the Old and New Testaments.

If Christianity is as much a religion of law as the religion of the Jews, then what laws did Christ bid us obey? Hobbes, as we have seen, maintained that God’s law throughout scripture is compatible with civil law. Christ did not give new laws to humanity, but rather gave “Counsell to observe those wee are subject to; that is to say, the Laws of Nature, and the Laws of our severall Sovereigns.” The laws of nature, which come from God, command us to obey the laws of the sovereign; and Christ himself, when referring to the Pharisees “that sate in Moses seat” and to the tribute owed to Caesar, taught the same (though by misinterpreting Christ to have preached obedience to the Pharisees, Hobbes inadvertently compared Jesus to his religious enemies!). Thus, in between the old kingdom of God and Christ’s kingdom to come is for the faithful a period of observance of God’s laws which command obedience to civil law, a quiet waiting for the coming of the saviour.¹¹⁹ Although we are obviously not under God’s direct rule at the moment, part of our present duty to God nevertheless consists in obedience to the civil laws.

Milton would have rightly objected: what if (as has happened) the civil law infringes upon individual conscience? In other words, how can it be consonant with

religious duty to obey laws which may violate one's beliefs? Hobbes, however, was concerned about the doctrine that it is a sin to act against one's conscience, as it presumes that every individual is judge of right and wrong. According to our analysis of Hobbes in chapter two, this idea stems from religious pride. But in Milton's view, the rule of conscience should not lead to anarchy, because God's law is inscribed on the human heart as a guide for the thoughtful and faithful Christian. If an individual is in error, others may only attempt to persuade. It is a matter independent of the jurisdiction of the civil power. Hobbes argued, in contrast, that in civil society the law is "the publique Conscience": the civil law, not private opinion (every individual's belief), is the rule of good and evil actions for members of the commonwealth.¹²⁰ They must guide their actions according to public rules, not private beliefs. This view was no doubt prompted by the presence of so many rebellious sects in England in his time.¹²¹

Nevertheless, even according to his own conception of religion, should not God's law—if specially revealed—take precedence over civil law? Hobbes went to great lengths to show that genuine special revelation does not occur nowadays, so that the laws of the sovereign should be obeyed. In the old covenant, for example, the people were bound to obey Abraham's and Moses' laws as God's laws on the assumption that Abraham and Moses were sent from God. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the law of nature is God's law, and that Christ commanded civil obedience: as long as civil laws which even govern religious matters do not contradict natural law, subjects are bound under God to obey them.¹²² And unless a civil law threatens self-preservation, it is in accordance with the natural law to obey the sovereign's commands. Thus, the Bible itself, according to Hobbes, upholds his view that public obedience should not be weakened on the basis of something as unreliable as individual belief.

Moreover, as we have argued, human law applies to acts, not wills. The law restricts freedom in the sense of doing what one will. This principle is true of civil law in ecclesiastical affairs as well. In the interests of peace, subjects are not absolutely free to act

as their consciences may direct them. Hobbes, we noted, was sceptical of the claim that individual conscience is a reliable guide to right and wrong. But the notion that the law is the public conscience does not entail that one is bound to believe in private what the law dictates. The law commands obedience, not belief. That is to say, Hobbesian law restricts and regulates Hobbesian freedom; but individual belief is separable from free action. "For internall Faith," Hobbes wrote, "is in its own nature invisible, and consequently exempted from all humane jurisdiction; whereas the words, and actions that proceed from it, as breaches of our Civill obedience, are injustice both before God and Man." All that a sovereign can possibly (and legitimately) command is external obedience, not inward faith. Hobbes acknowledged that some would regard it abhorrent that a sovereign could, for example, order one to deny one's faith in public. But in the interests of peace, he argued, purely inward belief must suffice for individuals where civil law commands public profession. It is, after all, a two-way street: words and actions in public must suffice for the sovereign.¹²³ In contemporary terms, Hobbes would be regarded as endorsing freedom of (inward) thought but not of speech and expression. Two decades after the publication of *Leviathan*, Spinoza would argue that despite the necessity for outward religion to be consistent with public peace, freedom of speech is not separable from freedom of thought.¹²⁴ With respect to the view that acts may be restrained in accordance with peace but that free speech and thought must be tolerated, Spinoza's liberalism was between the positions of Hobbes and Milton. Today's liberals tend to side with Milton or Spinoza, and find Hobbes's account unsatisfactory for a free society; but the Hobbesian view that the sovereign can only legislate speech and action is perhaps a clearer (though more authoritarian) conception of law than later perspectives which continue to be caught in the lime-twigs of the question of what constitutes acceptable boundaries to free speech and expression.

Thus, Hobbesian society protects inward belief, and within the regulatory framework of law. But why are words not similarly exempt from jurisdiction? Spinoza,

for example, argued that freedom of speech is essential to freedom of thought. Milton held the more radical position that as a Christian, one must be free not only to work out religious doctrine for oneself but also to worship according to one's beliefs: he thus envisioned a plurality of particular churches which would be voluntary assemblies of believers.

Hobbes, however, linked seditious speech with rebellious activity, particularly in his analysis of spiritual authorities seeking to undermine and appropriate civil sovereignty. In general, "there have been in all times in the Church of Christ, false Teachers, that seek reputation with the people, by phantasticall and false doctrines; and by such reputation (as is the nature of Ambition,) to govern them for their private benefit." These false teachers are the agents of what Hobbes called the "Kingdome of Darknesse," in contrast to the light of true religion and "of the Understanding." In particular, the seditious preachers of the Gospel misinterpreted scripture to prove, above all, that their church is the kingdom of God. Consequently, the persons that they deceive obey these teachers rather than their civil sovereigns.¹²⁵ Hobbes placed enormous importance on the power of words to make human beings believe and act according to them.¹²⁶

In the Christian context, the original teachers of darkness after the pagans have been adherents to the Church of Rome. They have held that the Catholic—or as Hobbes preferred to call it, "Papist"—church constitutes the spiritual authority in the commonwealth which makes laws concerning spiritual matters, just as the civil power makes laws pertaining to temporal matters. The effect of this doctrine, taught for centuries, has been "to make men see double, and mistake their Lawfull Sovereign." It may appear plausible to distinguish spiritual from temporal sovereignty—one concerning the matters of the soul, the other concerning the body—but Hobbes objected that this doctrine has merely enabled the church to interfere in civil affairs. The Catholic church claimed that as a spiritual power, it should exercise only indirect temporal power, i.e., intervene in the government of the commonwealth only "so far forth as such actions tend to the hindrance or advancement of religion and good manners," through such powers as "absolving subjects of their duties."

But in Hobbes's view, the rule of right and wrong is the civil law; the promotion of "religion and good manners" falls squarely in the jurisdiction of the state. In effect, the Papist distinction of temporal and spiritual sovereign is a conceptually confused bid for absolute sovereignty, reinforced by the power to damn the soul forever if one disobeys (in contrast to the civil sovereign who can at most kill the body).¹²⁷ What Milton found objectionable in the ecclesiastical policy of the Catholic church was the suppression of particular churches. Hobbes, however, was most opposed to its interference in civil affairs, his concern being unified sovereignty rather than freedom of worship.

It might seem odd that Hobbes would devote so much space to Papism and the Catholic church. After all, the Presbyterians and Independents were the chief antagonists to the monarchy and Anglican clergy during the English civil war. But besides the possible resurgence of Catholicism, Hobbes made a conceptual link between Papism and Presbyterianism. According to Hobbes's character A, the Presbyterian ministers in Scotland refused an offer of union with England on the pretext

that it drew with it a subordination of the Church to the civil state in the things of Christ.

B. This is a downright declaration to all kings and commonwealths in general: that a Presbyterian minister will be a true subject to none of them in the things of Christ; which things what they are, they will be judges themselves. What have we then gotten by our deliverance from the Pope's tyranny, if these petty men succeed in the place of it, that have nothing in them that can be beneficial to the public, except their silence?

Hobbes did not deny that Catholic priests and Presbyterian ministers preached substantially different doctrines. But he detected in their attitudes to the civil authority a common insistence that the spiritual power must be kept independent of the civil authority's aegis, and perceived a similar strategy of aggrandising worldly power on the pretence of spiritual sovereignty. Although the Presbyterian clergy sought to suppress what they regarded as Papist doctrine in England, they also taught that the kingdom of God is manifest in their church, with the same end of attaining sovereign power. Thus, when Hobbes warned that the "Spirit of Rome" may rise again in Europe, he added that there may be in Rome's place "an Assembly of Spirits worse than he, [who would] enter, and inhabite this clean swept house, and make the End thereof worse than the Beginning."¹²⁸ Hobbes was in agreement,

though for different reasons, with Milton's declaration that "New *Presbyter* is but old *Priest* writ large."¹²⁹

Nevertheless, Hobbes recognised the importance of the fact that the Papists and Presbyterians took opposite sides over scriptural interpretation and ecclesiastical government. First, their disagreements over scripture posed a particular dilemma for Hobbes. The Catholic church sought to "seal up" the scriptures in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin so that the people were forced to hear God's word through the interpretation of priests and thus through the medium of Papist doctrine. With the Reformation, the number of Bibles in vernacular translations multiplied so that "every man, nay, every boy and wench, that could read English, thought they spoke with God Almighty, and understood what he said." Although the Catholic priests abused scripture for their own purposes, Hobbes saw some merit (minus the Pope and Catholic clergy) in papal-style restrictions on scriptural interpretation, compared to the license granted to the people and "poor scholars" such as Presbyterian ministers to judge scripture for themselves as they pleased.¹³⁰ The seditious abuse of scripture by the Catholic church could be mastered by placing interpretation in the hands of the civil authority. But the modern translations of the Bible popularised the radical Protestant doctrine that individuals can interpret God's word for themselves and thus be judges of right and wrong independent of civil law.

Second, Presbyterian ecclesiastical government and revolutionary methods diverged considerably from that of the Papists. The Catholic church claimed spiritual sovereignty and thus indirect temporal power in the various commonwealths of Europe. After the power of the Catholic church was suppressed in England, even rebellious Papists—such as the Gunpowder Plot conspirators—sought to reinstate the Pope's former authority, not to change the form of civil government. The Presbyterian sect, in contrast, colluded with Parliament to institute popular rule in England. According to their plans, the assembly of Presbyterian ministers, called synods, would govern the church and make spiritual laws for the commonwealth. By this means they would govern Parliament

themselves, because the civil laws would be subject to the spiritual laws. They desired to turn England into a priestly oligarchy.¹³¹ As with the ambitions of the Catholic church, the civil authority would be subject to the spiritual authority; but with the difference that the Presbyterians felt that their ends were best served through political change, as Parliament more closely resembled their ecclesiastical organisation than did the monarchy.

Thus, the seditious doctrine that the kingdom of God is the church has fuelled not only the historic wrangles between sovereign and Pope, but also the Presbyterians' collusion with Parliament against the monarchy. It should not be surprising, then, that Hobbes also targeted other ecclesiastics in his critique, including the Independents and even the Anglican clergy. That is to say, his particular criticisms of Papism and Presbyterianism reflect a general concern with all religious institutions not subordinated to the needs of civil society. For example, while commending the moral integrity of most of the Anglican clergy, he severely criticised their writings. Even the best of their treatises of moral philosophy--*The Whole Duty of Man Laid Down in a Plain and Familiar Way*-- is defective because it recommends active obedience to lawful commands of the sovereign but only passive obedience to laws contrary to God's commands. Passive obedience means the refusal to observe the law but a willingness to suffer the penalty. According to Hobbes's conception of law, however, obedience to the law means no less than acting or forbearing as it commands: so this distinction of active and passive obedience is meaningless. Furthermore, we have seen that for Hobbes, subjects are not to judge God's law as distinct from civil law.¹³² That is to say, this doctrine assumes at the very least that the Anglican clergy knows God's commands independently of the sovereign's interpretation. The notion of "passive obedience" served to separate spiritual and civil duties--a distinction which was also the major pretext for religious sedition by the Anglicans' supposed enemies.

Hobbes subjected the Independents and their allies to a similar, if stronger, critique. These radical sects became a significant political force in the struggle between Cromwell

and the Presbyterian-controlled Parliament. Hobbes described their “strange and...pernicious doctrines” as “out-doing the Reformation (as they pretended) both of Luther and Calvin; receding from the former divinity (or church philosophy, for religion is another thing) as much as Luther and Calvin had receded from the pope.” But Hobbes showed no sympathy for the out-done reformers, and found a delicious irony in the fact that the Presbyterians were undermined by “this brood of their own hatching.”¹³³ In other words, in preaching political disobedience on religious grounds—that the people (led by ministers), not the sovereign, are judges of God’s commands—the Presbyterians opened the floodgates for more radical sects to claim a divine right from God. In this respect, the Independents simply continued the seditious work of the Presbyterians.¹³⁴

Hobbes considered Miltonian “Christian liberty” in this light. When the Parliament was reduced by Cromwell, the Rump “voted liberty of conscience to the sectaries; that is, they plucked out the sting of Presbytery, which consisted in a severe imposing of odd opinions upon the people, impertinent to religion, but conducing to the advancement of the power of the Presbyterian ministers.” Hobbes may have preferred such liberty over Presbyterian impositions—a point we shall develop below—but impugned the motives of the Rump: “What account can be given of actions that proceed not from reason, but spite and such-like passions?” The stance of the Independents was not unclouded by malice.¹³⁵ In Hobbes’s view, not only did this act display the self-destructive consequences of the Presbyterians’ freewheeling interpretation of scripture, but it also showed the true import of the Independents’ version of Christian liberty. Milton regarded Presbyterians as half-hearted reformers of the church, because they would not advocate absolute freedom of conscience. Hobbes, however, argued that the Independents and their allies merely sought to bring to fruition the license which the Presbyterians themselves assumed in opposing the king. We saw that Hobbes regarded inward conscience as exempt from human jurisdiction, but not publicly displayed worship—which is included in Miltonian freedom of conscience. For Hobbes, then, the Rump’s act of voting liberty of conscience merely

served to reinforce sectarian power in government.

Nevertheless, Hobbes did make some remarks in favour of Christian liberty, but within the framework of the law. Despite themselves, the religious enemies of peace might have inadvertently brought about the dismantling of the kingdom of darkness. Hobbes wrote of the web spun around the religion of the Apostles, “whom the people converted, obeyed, out of Reverence: not by Obligation: Their Consciences were free, and their Words and Actions subject to none but the Civill Power.” With the rise of ecclesiastical organisations, three knots were tied upon this Christian liberty: the early Christian presbyters (assemblies) obliging belief in their doctrines; the setting-up of bishops in every city and province; and the “whole *Synthesis and Construction* of the Pontificall Power” in which universal spiritual authority was invested in the Bishop of Rome. Now the knots have been untied, beginning with the last—the dissolution of papal power by Queen Elizabeth—then the putting down of the episcopacy by the Presbyterians, and finally the Presbyterians’ subsequent loss of power. The result is a return of sorts to the “Independency of the Primitive Christians to follow...every man as he liketh best: Which, if it be without contention, and without measuring the Doctrine of Christ, by our affection to the Person of his Minister...is perhaps the best.”¹³⁶ Was Hobbes an Independent like Milton? It may be significant that Hobbes returned to England shortly after the time liberty of conscience was voted in by the Rump (1650). Still, this apparent endorsement of Christian liberty is qualified: after all, did Hobbes think that the freedom to follow whomever one pleases could be granted “without contention”? His analysis of religious conflict indicates that peaceful independency (though perhaps possible and even desirable) was unlikely, especially in his time. Hobbes may have strongly believed in shielding individual faith from ecclesiastical interference; but his commitment to Christian liberty was limited by his concern for peace. In light of everything else he wrote in *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*, the only Christian liberty that would be realistically compatible with his political teaching is freedom of inward belief. But that he made these remarks at all is indicative of a

recognition that were peaceful independency achievable, it could be (like the establishment of a public religion, which he usually advocated) an effective tool against the power of the priesthood. One could imagine a state whose policy is that religion is a purely private affair. Hobbes at least considered the possibility that there is more than one strategy for rendering religion politically harmless, though he did not waver from the position that some strategies are more realistic than others.

The priority of peace to Christian liberty of worship is reflected in Hobbes's positive account of civil religion. In place of papal interference and disputatious sects, Hobbes recommended, apart from this single passage, not peaceful independency--an unlikely option give the sectarian violence of his day--but public worship. "Private worship," as Hobbes defined it, is free only in secret; in "the sight of the multitude" it is subject to restraint by law or custom--in keeping with his distinction between invisible faith and visible action (including speech) which is subject to regulation. Public worship is in a sense free, but for the whole commonwealth as one person.¹³⁷ That is to say, it is free from the interference of other commonwealths and insubordinate churches. Hobbes advocated public worship of a sort and the restriction of private worship by law.

Is Hobbesian worship akin to Anglican practice? This is unlikely, given his criticism of Anglican doctrines which distinguish God's commands from civil law. English clergymen were not, in his view, sufficient teachers of public religion, as they tended to the temporal/ spiritual distinction of their openly rebellious counterparts. Public worship must be squared with obedience to the laws of the sovereign. As such, it should consist in uniformity of words, gestures, and other actions used to honour God. Since public worship is of the commonwealth as one person, the representative person--the sovereign--must therefore determine the uniform worship. Thus, the civil law is the rule of public worship.¹³⁸ Hobbes was far less willing than Milton to grant individuals the freedom to worship in public as they please.

Likewise, the ministers of Hobbesian civil religion are to be determined by the

sovereign. In his discussion of prophecy, Hobbes noted the proliferation of false prophets, including individuals fancying themselves to be led by the spirit of God in their hearts. As with scriptural interpretation, the only means of resolving conflicting claims to represent God's will is to be guided by an impartial human authority. The civil sovereign is to determine who is God's prophet, and it is thus "the Sovereign Prophet." All prophets must be authorised by the sovereign.¹³⁹ This does not mean that the sovereign itself will receive God's prophecy—which is arguably absurd in the case of a non-clerical sovereign assembly—but rather, it means that the sovereign will judge whether or not what is claimed as God's revealed word is in accord with the religion and peace of the commonwealth. Indeed, since a prophet is that person who speaks the word of God, the sovereign interpreter of scripture is logically the chief judge of prophecy. Although the prophets of old were holy men and women directly inspired by God, Hobbes insisted that God's word is now sufficiently contained in scripture. It is consistent with his materialist account of nature and his scepticism of modern claims to divine inspiration that he reduced prophecy thus to teaching scripture, which falls under civil jurisdiction.¹⁴⁰

The sovereign must also have complete pastoral authority. Hobbes argued that the right of heathen kings to appoint pastors cannot have been taken away from them upon their conversions. Without this right, sovereigns render (and have rendered) themselves vulnerable to pastors, appointed by others, who may teach the people contrary to their civil duty. Since God commands civil obedience, he has given sovereigns pastoral authority; all pastors in turn derive their right of office from the sovereign. As God's lieutenant, the sovereign has supreme right over his flock. In sum, the sovereign is the head of the church, which is the whole commonwealth, since the uniform public religion is to be professed by all the subjects and preached by sovereign-appointed officers.¹⁴¹ In Anglicanism, the English sovereign is the nominal head of the church, but the teachings of church doctors showed that Anglican clergymen considered themselves to be in some measure independent of the Crown, i.e., as the king's servants only when there was no

conflict with obeying God. Hobbes's conception was novel—a departure from Anglicanism—as it sought to effect a more perfect unity of the two heads of the eagle in the interests of civil peace.

Yet, to what extent is the civil religion true? Is the identification of church and state merely a tool for political obedience? Milton argued that the interference of civil power in ecclesiastical affairs—in Hobbes's case, the complete regulation of the latter by the former through a particular conception of civil religion—undermines the integrity of religious belief. This view would seem confirmed in Hobbes's treatment of heretical and non-Christian commonwealths. We noted previously that “heresy” in itself is no reproach, and that the sovereign is judge of what is contrary to God's law. By definition, then, the sovereign itself cannot be a heretic. The case of subjects' obedience to non-Christian (“Infidell”) sovereigns is more difficult. Cardinal Bellarmine had maintained that Christians should both choose Christian kings and depose infidel ones. Hobbes, of course, countered that it is against the laws of nature—God's laws—to disobey. Moreover, Christians ought “for conscience sake...to tolerate their Heathen Princes, or Princes...that authorize the teaching of an Error.” Hobbes justified this view from scripture and also from the principle that subjects are not judges of what “danger that may arise to Religion” from tolerating such sovereigns. What some might regard as an outrage to God from obeying a non-Christian sovereign—or from publicly professing an alien faith, for that matter—is apparently outweighed by the requirements for civil peace and the sovereign's rights by God's command.¹⁴²

It may be that Hobbes had greater political than religious convictions. In any case, he insisted that “true religion” ought not to be interpreted in terms of faith alone, particularly as the freedom to worship as one will. On the contrary, “True religion consists in obedience to Christ's lieutenants, and in giving God such honour, both in attributes and actions, as they in their several lieutenancies shall ordain.” This assertion reduces religion to political obedience, from the perspective of church doctors and thinkers such as Milton;

but Hobbes countered that this view does not preclude the importance of faith. Salvation, as we noted, requires obedience to laws and faith in Christ. A Christian need only believe that "Jesus is the Christ" to be saved, because it is the foundation for all other articles of faith. That is to say, this article contains within it the teachings of Christ and the significance of his mission on earth and the hereafter. Moreover, this article is independent of the often obfuscating and contradictory doctrines of the Christian churches.¹⁴³

Milton might agree with this central article of faith; but, he might ask, does faith in Christ not contain within it the necessary morals and good works for salvation, independent of civil law? In other words, from a Miltonian perspective, faith alone is sufficient for salvation; and whether or not one ought to obey civil law depends on the consonance of law with Christian faith and with liberty (in its various senses). Hobbes, however, put faith and obedience to law on an equal and complementary footing. In his conception of Christianity, the belief that Jesus is the Christ implies the quietistic duty to obey the civil sovereign, whether Christian or not. Hobbes reasoned that no infidel sovereign would be so unreasonable as to punish a law-abiding subject who quietly awaits the second coming (especially, we might add, one who would obey a sovereign's command to public profession).¹⁴⁴ For Milton, the Reformation is perfected in the independent and conscientious Christian who is freed from the interference of civil power; whereas Hobbesian subjects who are Christian would be more akin to the first Christians, by combining faith in Christ with obedience to laws. The only difference between the first Christians and Hobbesian Christians is that Christ does not walk among us, and so modern Christians must rely on their sovereigns to interpret God's word. Thus, the "true religion" of Hobbes consists in both inward belief and outward obedience, while the civil religion proper regulates the latter only.¹⁴⁵

Accordingly, Hobbes argued that the content of civil religion should be kept to the minimum of professed faith and obedience to civil law. The view that religion is a "law of the commonwealth" indicates not only the sovereign right over civil religion, but also the

limitations to the content of civil religion. The purpose of civil law is to ensure the comfortable self-preservation of the members of society. Accordingly, the purpose of civil religion (qua law) is to foster peace. Hobbes considered it crucial, in the context of the civil war, that the people be instructed in their civil duty and the “rules of justice.” After all, it has been preachers who have misled the people into accepting seditious doctrines, so that reforms of both the universities (in which most preachers were instructed) and churches are in order. If “our rebels were publicly taught rebellion in the pulpits,” then the remedy is for preachers to teach civil obedience. Hobbes even suggested that the laws of England might be read out to the congregations on Sundays.¹⁴⁶

Since civil religion should consist principally in instruction in the laws of the commonwealth, theological doctrines would be accordingly reduced to uncontroversial and socially (and morally) beneficial teachings. Civil law applies to actions, not wills, and is intended to ensure the peaceful regulation of society. Accordingly, civil religion has as its purpose the conformity of *action* with faith in Christ and obedience to law. Hobbes, it should be recalled, criticised Dr. Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury, for embroiling the church in unnecessary and contentious disputes over the nature of free will and predestination. The Church of England was, in his view, by no means blameless in the wars within England and with Scotland and Ireland. Still, one might wonder why religion is needed at all, as it has served as a pretext for sedition. Why not just convert churches and Sunday service into non-religious civics classes? We noted above that Hobbes regarded religion as “wholsome pills” when swallowed whole, but cast up when chewed. Abstruse theology is harmful, but scripture is true and useful at an elementary level:

There are so many places of Scripture easy to be understood, that teach both true faith and good morality (and that as fully as is necessary to salvation), of which no seducer is able to dispossess the mind (of any ordinary readers), that the reading of them is so profitable as not to be forbidden without great damage to them and the commonwealth.

After all, the laws of nature as set out in chapter 15 of *Leviathan* generally resemble many of the simple teachings of the Gospels, albeit in a form conducive to promoting a well-governed commodious society¹⁴⁷--arguably, it might be added, not Christ's concern.

Combined with the teaching of laws, then, we have the content of Hobbesian civil religion. In England in particular, the universities must be reformed so that

the politics there taught be made to be (as true politics should be) such as are fit to make men know, that it is their duty to obey all laws whatsoever that shall by the authority of the King be enacted, till by the same authority they shall be repealed; such as are fit to make men understand, that the civil laws are God's laws, as they that make them are by God appointed to make them; and to make men know, that the people and the Church are one thing, and have but one head, the King; and that no man has title to govern under him, that has it not from him; that the King owes his crown to God only, and to no man, ecclesiastic or other; and that the religion they teach here, be a quiet waiting of the coming again of our blessed Saviour, and in the mean time a resolution to obey the King's laws (which also are God's laws); to injure no man, to be in charity with all men, to cherish the poor and sick, and to live soberly and free from scandal; without mingling our religion with points of natural philosophy, as freedom of will, incorporeal substance, everlasting nows, ubiquities, hypostases, which the people understand not, nor will ever care for.¹⁴⁸

This long sentence (only partially quoted) in *Behemoth* nicely summarises many of the elements of Hobbes's concerns with religion that we have discussed in this chapter: obedience to the laws of the sovereign; the consistency of civil with natural and divine law; the sovereign as head of the church; the supremacy of the sovereign authority in all matters; the subordination of priests to the sovereign; the Christian teaching of quiet obedience and commodious living; and the elimination of unnecessary spiritual doctrines, propagated by Schoolmen such as Bramhall and radical Protestants such as Milton.

The intended effect of Hobbesian civil religion may be to make religion politically innocuous. Hobbes thought that civil peace demanded no less. Milton, we argued, advocated the separation of church and state for the sake of fostering Christian liberty. Hobbes, however, regarded such non-interference of the civil power in ecclesiastical affairs as tantamount to licensing seditious abuses of religion. He considered the possibility of peaceful independency, but only under certain conditions of peace that could not be met in his time. In his view, the most practicable solution was the joining of church and state in which only inward belief would be exempt from civil law, and in which there would be a civil religion which teaches civil duty and an accordingly minimal theology.

 Notes to Chapter Four

¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 43, 622-623.

² William B. Hunter, "The Provenance of the *Christian Doctrine*," *Studies in English Literature* 32 (1992), 129-142. See also pages 143-166 for objections and replies. Hunter argues that the heterodoxy of the treatise is inconsistent with the orthodoxy of *Paradise Lost*, putting Milton's authorship of both under question. I do not address issues of orthodoxy; my view is that one can develop an argument about free will based on certain ideas present in both works. Furthermore, "heterodoxy" is not necessarily an objection against Milton's authorship, since his theological views were radically unconventional.

³ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, trans. by John Carey, in *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 6, ed. by Maurice Kelley, 161.

⁴ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *The Complete Poems*, ed. by John Leonard (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1998), 1.26, 4.291-293, 8.234; and *Christian Doctrine*, 350-351 and 382. Roland M. Frye has suggested that Adam and Eve before the Fall were not only God's image but also exemplified puritan ideals of the household and of marriage, in which physical and spiritual love are united. Frye, "The Teachings of Classical Puritanism on Conjugal Love," *Studies in the Renaissance* 2 (1955), 158-159.

⁵ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 165; *Paradise Lost*, 3.128; and *Samson Agonistes*, in *Complete Poems*, lines 374-376. Christopher Hill remarks that "God's (and Milton's) continual harping on human freedom shows uneasiness about this part of the argument." Hill, *English Revolution*, 359. It is unclear why Hill would characterise the emphasis on freedom as a sign of uneasiness: the very existence of sin in a world ruled by a just God entails that human beings must be free from divine determination.

⁶ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 159.

⁷ John Calvin and William Farel, *Confession of Faith*, reprinted in *The Protestant Reformation*, ed. by Lewis W. Spitz (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 115 and 117.

⁸ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), pt. 1, q. 6, 28-30.

⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 31, 397-399.

¹⁰ A.P. Martinich views Hobbes as a sincere adherent to a form of Anglican theology which was "a hybrid of calvinism and Roman Catholicism. Insofar as it was calvinist it was opposed to the idea that a human being merited salvation on the basis of good works." Martinich, *A Hobbes Dictionary* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995), 155. Martinich notes some of the similarities between Hobbes and Calvin; but the parallels should not overshadow crucial disagreements. Calvin stridently warned Christians against obeying their earthly sovereigns to the detriment of their duties to God. See Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, art. 32, in *On God and Political Duty*, ed. by John T. McNeill (New York: Macmillan, 1950). In sharp contrast, Hobbes attempted to show how obedience to God is consistent with obedience to the sovereign.

¹¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 5.525-527 and 9.351-356. See Northrop Frye's *Return of Eden*, 60-61, on the hierarchy of reason, will, and appetite in the soul as depicted by Milton. The will may obey reason or appetite: Adam and Eve succumbed in particular to sexual appetite and the appetite for "food."

¹² Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 5.535-543; and see *Christian Doctrine*, 163.

¹³ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 5.573-576 and 11.84-85.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.105-111.

¹⁵ Accordingly, William Blake emphasised the dynamism of Milton's Satan which is not to be found in God and the angels, famously declaring that "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it." Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), Plate 6. It is unquestionable that the forcefulness of the character of Satan is a testament to Milton's poetic ability (which Blake exalted above his theology); but the point of this characterisation for unpoetic scholars is perhaps that Satan's superficial attractiveness reflects his deeper evil and the greater temptation he represents to humanity.

¹⁶ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1.263 and 2.229-335.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.124, 5.600-693, 5.771-802, and 6.164-170.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.809-831 and 6.178-181.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.124-125, 10.1-16, and 10.797. As Northrop Frye has pointed out, "Liberty for Milton is not something that starts with man; it starts with God. It is not something that man naturally wants for himself, but something that God is determined he shall have; man cannot want it unless he is in a regenerate state, prepared to accept the inner discipline and responsibility that go with it." Frye, *Return of Eden*, 85.

²⁰ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 9.1059-1063, 9.1181-1183; and *Samson Agonistes*, 410-413. Milton's treatment of women in the character of Eve has spawned an enormous body of scholarly literature. Feminist thinkers have for the most part decried the patriarchy of Milton's conception. But some scholars have tried to show that Milton was a feminist of sorts. For a survey of women writers on Milton and a counter-argument to the prevailing view, see Joseph Wittreich, *Feminist Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), *passim*. Wittreich suggests that the early female readership's use of Milton's writings puts the current view of him into question. Such a view, even if valid (which I doubt), should not affect the argument in this thesis that the government of passions represented by the fallen Eve's temptation of Adam is contrary to divine liberty.

²¹ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 394-395; and *Paradise Lost*, 10.824-827.

²² Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 11.520-525; and *Christian Doctrine*, 396-398.

²³ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 168-177; and *Paradise Lost*, 3.173-182. Cf. Jackson C. Boswell, "Milton and Prevenient Grace," *Studies in English Literature* 7 (1967), esp. 86.

²⁴ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 453-460; and *Paradise Lost*, 11.1 and 11.359. Hill argues that the "possibility of regeneration salvages something of man's dignity, freedom and responsibility from the wreckage of 1660." Hill, *English Revolution*, 358. Certainly, the failure to institute the free commonwealth exemplified for Milton the upper hand of sin in this world.

²⁵ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 3.144-166.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.203-241, 266-269, and 4.386-387. One might compare Milton's presentation here with that of Joseph de Maistre, who argued some 130 years later that "Christianity...rests entirely on this...dogma of innocence paying for crime." Maistre, *Considerations*, 31. One difference between Milton and Maistre is that only the former emphasised the redemptive aspect of sacrifice.

²⁷ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 3.281-297.

²⁸ William G. Madsen notes Milton's "brilliant manipulations of rising-to-fall and falling-to-rise...in *Paradise Lost*." Milton's Christ is "Head of mankind in Adam's room; He is the second root; He is the new Garden in which man will live transplanted; His descent into the flesh is the true pattern of the humiliation that exalts." Madsen, *From Shadowy Types to Truth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 121-122.

²⁹ Milton, *Paradise Regained*, in *Complete Poems*, 1.1-7 and 2.135.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.143-145 and 634-635.

³¹ But why not focus on Christ's liberation from hell (and therefore Satan's power) after his death on the cross? As Northrop Frye points out, "For Milton,...the scriptural evidence for the descent into hell was weak, and besides, Milton believed that the whole of Christ's human nature died on the cross, with no soul or spirit able to survive and visit hell...the temptation is what becomes for Milton the scripturally authorized version of the descent into hell, the passing into the domain of Satan, and the reconquest of everything in it that is redeemable." Frye, *Return of Eden*, 121.

³² Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 10.498-499 and 12.404-419. One might contrast Milton's emphasis on Christ's satisfaction with Hobbes's argument that the Bible teaches civil obedience: as Milton wrote, "the prime end of the Gospel is not so much to exact our obedience, as to reveal grace and the satisfaction of our disobedience." Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644), in *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 2, ed. by Ernest Sirluck, 304-305.

³³ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 12.480-497.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.842-850.

³⁵ As Edward Andrew puts it, Miltonian conscience both proscribes and prescribes, marking a departure from the principally retrospective conscience of, for example, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Milton and Shakespeare both included "consciousness"—i.e., self-awareness—in their conceptions of conscience, but the prescriptive aspect of conscience was novel. Andrew, *Conscience and its Critics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 56. Perhaps another example of the earlier conception of conscience is to be found in Christopher

Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, a work which is thematically closer to *Paradise Lost* than is *Hamlet*. A Good Angel and Evil Angel counsel Faustus only about the consequences of his resolve to dabble in the black arts. (Did Marlowe therefore think there is an evil conscience that one might follow? He was accused of atheism and heresy in his lifetime. Perhaps these angels are too external and dialogical to be considered as Faustus's conscience, in contrast to the (ambiguous) pangs of guilt at the end of the play: "My God, my God, look not so fierce on me! / Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while! / Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer! / I'll burn my books!—Ah, Mephistophilis!" Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, in *Plays and Poems*, ed. by M.R. Ridley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1909), 120-158.)

³⁶ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 132, 186; and *Paradise Lost*, 4.23-26.

³⁷ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 12.587, 3.194-197; *Samson Agonistes*, 1689; and *Christian Doctrine*, 623. Cf. Mary Ann Razinowicz, "'Samson Agonistes': The Divided Mind," in *John Milton*, ed. by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1986), 183-184, on the contrasting imagery of outward blindness and inward sight.

³⁸ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 4.356-394; and *Eikonoklastes*, 373.

³⁹ It may be said that the similarities between Bramhall and Milton stem from their Arminianism: Bramhall followed Archbishop Laud, and Milton "needed Arminianism to save God. He justified God's ways to men by substituting for the Calvinist God of arbitrary power an Arminian God of goodness, justice, and reasonableness." Hill, *English Revolution*, 275. My concern here, however, is not with how closely they followed Arminius and Arminianism, much less whether or not, for example, Hobbes held some Calvinist ideas. I shall not be tracing the complex historical currents of theology in the 17th century.

⁴⁰ John Bramhall, "Discourse of Liberty and Necessity," in *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*, ed. by Vere Chappell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13-14.

⁴¹ As Hobbes (and Milton) would argue, his conception of presentiality demonstrated his scholastic education, and thus his lack of originality. Cf. Graeme Hunter, "The Fate of Thomas Hobbes," *Studia Leibnitiana* 21 (1989), 11.

⁴² Bramhall, "Discourse of Liberty," 3-4.

⁴³ Hobbes, "Of Liberty and Necessity," in *Hobbes and Bramhall*, 22. Of course, Hobbes's view of divine justice raises difficult theological questions. If God is good, and thus would not punish an innocent man, then is the basis of his justice simply power? As Graeme Hunter notes, however, "Questions regarding the nature of God fall outside the scope of philosophy proper" for Hobbes. Hunter, "Fate of Hobbes," 9. According to Hobbes, to suppose that God's irresistible power is not the primary justification of his acts may lead one to believe in the mysterious and unnecessary doctrine of free will, the negative consequences of which will be discussed later.

⁴⁴ Bramhall, "Discourse of Liberty," 1-2; and "A Defence of True Liberty," in *Hobbes and Bramhall*, 43.

⁴⁵ Bramhall, "Defence of Liberty," 46 and 57.

⁴⁶ Cf. Frye, *Return to Eden*, 60.

⁴⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 6, 127-128; chap. 21, 262; and chap. 4, 100-101. A.G. Wernham has defended Bramhall's view that there is an inconsistency in Hobbes's view of freedom: one who wills to do something and is not hindered by external impediments is, at the moment of action, both free (to do as one will) and not free (in the sense of no longer being free to do or forbear as one will). Wernham, "Liberty and Obligation in Hobbes," in *Hobbes Studies*, 118-120. But both Bramhall and Wernham impute a sense of freedom to Hobbes which he never employed: freedom for Hobbes begins where the will ends, and applies only to actions; it is true that one no longer deliberates to do or to forbear, but Hobbesian freedom is not a property of *willing* to do or forbear—contra Bramhall and Wernham's objections.

⁴⁸ Hobbes, "Of Liberty," 31; and "The Questions Concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance," in *Hobbes and Bramhall*, 83.

⁴⁹ Hobbes, "Of Liberty," 38; and "Questions Concerning Liberty," 29.

⁵⁰ G. Hunter, "Fate of Hobbes," 15.

⁵¹ Mitchell, "Equality of All," 79.

⁵² See Mitchell, "Equality of All," 86: "The salvific drama of earthly existence here is a transmuted and politically defused version of the quest after God; *all men stand equal, prideful, before the one sovereign—the only figure capable of 'redeeming' man and without whom there can be only 'death'*" (Mitchell's emphasis).

⁵³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 21, 259-260.

⁵⁴ Martinich argues that Hobbes's "use of Leviathan [as a symbol of order] is thoroughly biblical, not merely in that he derives the name from the Bible but because he understands the root of human trouble to be pride." Martinich, *Two Gods*, 49. Martinich misses a key distinction which is manifest in Hobbes's treatment of the original sin: the Hobbesian pride of subjects against their sovereign is different from the Miltonian pride of human beings who enslave their wills to their passions rather than pursuing freedom, i.e., choosing the good.

⁵⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 38, 478-480.

⁵⁶ Cf. Martinich, *Hobbes Dictionary*, 184.

⁵⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 27, 335-337.

⁵⁸ As Richard Tuck writes, "The account of the passions which Hobbes gave, after all, treated them as broadly beneficial: what men feel strongly about or desire strongly is what helps them survive, and they cannot for long want a state of affairs in which their survival is endangered." Tuck, *Hobbes*, 55.

⁵⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 27, 336-337.

⁶⁰ Martinich, however, interprets Hobbes as arguing that "civil sovereigns should punish only those sins that are also crimes...." Martinich, *Two Gods*, 75 (my emphasis). My argument, however, is that it is impossible for sin to be punished other than as crime because sin is otherwise legally invisible and politically irrelevant.

⁶¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 28, 353-354.

⁶² Thomas S. Schrock thinks that "Hobbes's attempts to reconcile the right to punish with the right to resist punishment eventuates in a shambles" for two major reasons. First, he predicated the sovereign's right to punish on an illusory rights transaction in which one party passively "steps aside" so that the second party retains its right to punish, without the first party conceding its right to resist punishment. This transaction is illusory because the second party could not know that it came into this right to punish unless the first party declared that such a transaction were taking place—which is an active, not passive, transaction. Second, Hobbes, according to Schrock, failed to distinguish between the foundation of the right to punish—the natural right of self-preservation—and the right itself. He distinguished punishment from acts of hostility (war), but the natural right of self-preservation is, in the state of nature, a right of war. Therefore, the sovereign does not "keep" its natural right, because the right to punish is something different. Schrock proposes some possible ways out of the impasse, but they turn out to be straw men. Schrock, "The Rights to Punish and Resist Punishment in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *The Western Political Quarterly* 44 (1991), 853-890.

His main objections are, however, flawed. First, the sovereign is not party to the social covenant (except in the case of conquest): thus, subjects do not "transact" with the sovereign. The subjects transact with each other to lay down their rights to everything; the sovereign instituted to ensure performance retains its natural right *because* it is not party to the contract as public person. In the case of conquest, the sovereign clearly retains its right to punish the conquered; declaration and transaction would be unnecessary.

Second, the sovereign does retain a right of war, but in relation to other commonwealths and non-subjects. In relation to subjects in civil society, however, the sovereign's retained natural right of self-preservation is no longer the right of war, because the self-preservation of the commonwealth and its subjects necessarily entails punishment for the sake of peace.

⁶³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 28, 353-355.

⁶⁴ Hobbes, "Questions Concerning Liberty," 70; and *Behemoth*, 42 and 55. See Stephen Holmes, "Political Psychology," 135.

⁶⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 21, 263-264.

⁶⁶ David van Mill considers the "dual" conception of freedom as the point at which "Hobbes's system of thought begins to disintegrate," according to the following argument. The laws can only limit natural liberty if subjects are morally obliged to obey them. But obligation can only arise out of voluntary contracts. In the case of covenants made out of fear (which Hobbes considered valid), the fear limits liberty and hence makes the contract involuntary: thus, obligation is inconsistent with fear. Therefore, the laws of a commonwealth by acquisition (i.e., based on covenants made out of fear of the conqueror) do not limit liberty. Mill, "Hobbes's Theories of Freedom," *The Journal of Politics* 57 (1995) 458.

J.R. Pennock makes a stronger point, arguing that instead of making a sharp distinction between voluntary and involuntary acts, Hobbes should have made the "less clear distinction between actions

motivated by fear and those not so motivated—often a matter of degree.” For the latter conception of freedom would render the obligation to obey the laws arising from the free act of covenant more morally persuasive. Pennock, “Confusing ‘Clarity,’” 105-106.

Mill wrongly assumes that fear limits liberty, rendering his disintegration thesis invalid. Pennock does not make the same mistake, and instead argues that Hobbes *ought* to have made liberty and fear inconsistent (thus revising his definition of natural liberty) in order to make his conception of law and the liberty of subjects more compelling. But Hobbes realised, unlike (apparently) Pennock, that “there is scarce a Common-wealth in the world, whose beginnings can in conscience be justified” (*Leviathan*, conclusion, 722). Among other things, this passage indicates that it may be the case that sovereignty has historically always been acquired, never instituted—and if covenants out of fear are morally binding, then the laws are as binding in such commonwealths as they would be if the sovereign were instituted. Pennock’s “less clear distinction” is also potentially anarchic—and thus arguably a less persuasive conception of liberty in a theory of political obligation.

⁶⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 21, 264, 271; chap. 30, 388; and *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 73. As we saw before, the Hobbesian subject also retains certain inalienable rights. For an account of Hobbes as upholding these “true liberties,” see Carmichael, “Natural Right in Society.”

⁶⁸ Bramhall, “Discourse of Liberty,” 4.

⁶⁹ Hobbes, “Of Liberty,” 24-25. In his discussion of this exchange, F. C. Hood believes that Hobbes made a “slip” in failing to distinguish civil from natural law (which he “quietly recovered from” in a later reply to Bramhall). Hood, “Definition of Liberty,” 121-122. As Hood rightly points out, the laws of nature do not require consent; but he neglects the fact that the laws of nature are only binding on human action in society when contained in the form of civil law. Therefore, Hobbes did not slip in remarking that laws oblige acts by the standard of “man’s preservation.”

⁷⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 21, 264-266; chap. 27, 346-347; and *Dialogue of Common Laws*, 75.

⁷¹ D.J.C. Carmichael argues that the sovereign could on this basis establish “social rights”—to medicare, employment, and so on—stemming from the right to the means to live well. He thinks that this is possible in accordance with an Hobbesian model because there is no necessary link between rights and correlative duties. In other words, the universalisation of rights which are linked to duties eliminates the possibility of “positive welfare rights specific to modern societies.” Carmichael, “Natural Right in Society,” 18-21. Apart from the question of whether or not welfare, medicare, and so forth should be seen as rights, it can be argued that the model may be useful in justifying social rights, but that the Hobbesian sovereign is not constrained from interpreting the inalienable liberties of its subjects in a much less expansive fashion.

⁷² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 21, 271-272; and chap. 15, 214. The impartiality of judges will be examined in further detail in the discussion of legal interpretation.

⁷³ Andrew, *Conscience and its Critics*, 71.

⁷⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 26, 312-313; and chap. 29, 367.

⁷⁵ In an attempt to make Hobbes’s thought compatible with American constitutional practice, R. Ladenson argues that one can conceive of an “Hobbesian model of the separation of powers” in which the “fact that each...branch of government in turn is subject to the sovereignty of the other branches outside of its proper domain does not affect its own sovereign status.” Ladenson, “In Defence of a Hobbesian Conception of Law,” in *Critical Assessments*, vol. 3, 433-434. But Hobbes repeatedly warned of the dangers of setting up more than one sovereign in the commonwealth, and was thus a radical opponent of the separation of powers. Ladenson should have turned to Locke in his analysis of the historical and philosophical underpinnings of the US constitution.

⁷⁶ Hobbes, *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 96-97; and *Leviathan*, chap. 26, 313-314. Mark C. Murphy argues, however, that Hobbes was a natural law theorist of civil law (and, it would follow, of common law as well), in that by the law of nature, subjects are not obligated to obey certain commands of the sovereign, which, therefore, cannot be made civil law. Murphy, “Was Hobbes a Legal Positivist?” *Ethics* 105 (July 1995), 846-873. A consequence of Murphy’s argument is that common law is not binding by sovereign authority, but instead obligatory by natural law. Hobbes, however, would not distinguish the two, since the laws of nature are binding *in foro externo* only in the form of the civil laws as made by the sovereign—who is also the chief interpreter of natural law. The dispute over Hobbes’s “legal positivism” is in some

ways semantic and anachronistic; and even Murphy concedes that the natural rights retained by subjects do not detract much from the tremendous legislative power of sovereigns.

⁷⁷ Sir Edward Coke, *Institutes of the Laws of England; or, a Commentary upon Littleton* (London: Clarke, Phene, and Brooke, 1823), vol. 1, lib. 2, chap. 6, fol. 97b.

⁷⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, intro., 81; chap. 8, 138; chap. 26, 316-317; and *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 54-55, 61-62, and 143 (Hobbes's emphasis). See also Joseph Cropsey's introduction to Hobbes's *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 16.

⁷⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 26, 317-320. Deborah Baumgold suggests the publication of laws is also a means of ensuring public order and perhaps a form of political education. Baumgold, *Hobbes's Political Theory*, 110. These may be the chief aims of publication; nevertheless, see below for a possible connection with consultation.

⁸⁰ Hobbes, *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 71.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 68.

⁸³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 31, 408.

⁸⁴ S.M. Okin argues that the *Dialogue* represents a "mellowing of Hobbes's attitude to Parliament" in relation to a hostility to it in his earlier works. Despite these "correctives to some of the evils of his theory of sovereignty," Okin writes, Hobbesian subjects may still find themselves "totally obligated to obey an insane individual who will not listen to Parliament's advice or seek its assent." Okin, "The Sovereign and His Counsellors," 797-807. Okin is correct to point out that nothing in *Leviathan* alludes to this consultative role, that Hobbes was indeed hostile to the Long Parliament, and that the role of Parliament suggested in the *Dialogue* does not detract from the absolute authority of the Hobbesian sovereign. Nevertheless, Hobbes's hostility to the Long Parliament and the lack of any explicit role for Parliament in works such as *Leviathan* is not in itself proof that he had not considered this possible role. *Leviathan* and other chief political works have a much more general scope than that of the late *Dialogue*: his theory of sovereignty is applicable to all forms of government, including aristocracy and democracy. If an assembly were sovereign, then theorising its consultative role would be redundant.

As for the problem of a madman on the throne, we have already seen in chapter three that Hobbes advocated representative government, be it monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy. A sovereign monarch ought to consult Parliament, but Hobbes would not go so far as to advocate an institutional check on sovereign power. The "evils" of Hobbes's theory may be compared with the paralysis in government and attenuation of democracy due to the separation of powers intended to check tyranny.

⁸⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 26, 316-317 and 322. D.J.C. Carmichael suggests that sovereign interpretation of law, although always authoritative, may be incorrect and thus in Hobbes's conception an abuse of authority. Carmichael, "Natural Right in Society," 12. Nevertheless, civil law may be interpreted by the sovereign in a way contrary to natural law and yet cannot be officially interpreted otherwise (because of the sovereign's authority) and thus disobeyed (because of the fundamental law of nature commanding obedience).

⁸⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 26, 322-323 and 325-326. Carmichael applies his distinction between "correct" and "authoritative" determination of law to the interpretation of natural law with respect to the infringement of inalienable rights. Carmichael, "Natural Right in Society," 10-12. This distinction can also be applied to the sovereign's interpretation of civil law generally, which is authoritative but may not always be in accordance with Hobbes's philosophy.

⁸⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 212; chap. 26, 327-329 and *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 101 (Hobbes's emphasis). Joseph Cropsey interprets "equity" as "common sense," because "judges are fully as able to hear and measure witnesses as any jury might be." Cropsey's introduction to Hobbes's *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 29. As Ed Andrew has pointed out, however, Hobbes insisted that jurors would be judges not only of fact (witnesses) but also of right, i.e., of the meaning of the law as it applies to individual right. He suggests that for Hobbes, "the jury system will educate both jurors and the general public to see the sovereign will," thus reconciling law as command of the sovereign with equitable interpretation of law. Andrew, *Conscience and its Critics*, 73-75. Nevertheless, one might question whether or not jury participation is sufficient education for the public. If not, then the teaching of laws during Sunday service, for example, may be required: see below, p. 70.

⁸⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 26, 314-315; chap. 27, 340; and *Behemoth*, 44. F.A. Olafson, following Howard Warrender, argues that Hobbes was essentially a natural law theorist: although subjects must obey civil law, sovereigns are morally obliged under God to obey natural law in making and interpreting civil law. Olafson, "Thomas Hobbes and the Modern Theory of Natural Law," in *Critical Assessments*, vol. 3, 372-374. We should keep in mind, however, that natural law is binding only in the form of civil law, to which the sovereign is not bound. Duties to God are a matter between the sovereign and God alone.

⁸⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 215; and chap. 26, 315.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 27, 337; and *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 158-159. A.E. Taylor and scholars following him have emphasised the binding internal obligation of natural law in civil society. Civil law is binding in actual fact because of the internal obligation of natural law. See, for example, A.E. Taylor, "Ethical Doctrine," 41-42. Under God, of course, we may be bound to obey the laws of nature at all times. But the sovereign is not God and cannot enforce internal obligation. The laws of nature have no teeth, so to speak, except as civil laws of the sovereign arising from the establishment of civil society. Internal obligation is legally and politically invisible.

⁹¹ See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, 210.

⁹² Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 44-45.

⁹³ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 121-122. How is this view consistent with Milton's aristocratic proclivities (discussed in chapter three)? As Christopher Hill notes, the very reason Milton stressed the need for individual examination of scripture was the incompetence and corruption of previous interpreters: "Labour and considerable scholarship are...necessary for a proper understanding of the Bible," and thus a task for learned and virtuous individuals. Thus, Milton's *Christian Doctrine* "was written in Latin, which the common people could not understand." Hill, *English Revolution*, 248-250. In contrast, as we shall see, the sovereign must be chief interpreter of scripture, according to *Leviathan*—a book Hobbes wrote in English.

⁹⁴ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 118; and *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes* (1659), in *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 7 (revised), ed. by Robert W. Ayers, 242-244. Cf. Hill, *English Revolution*, 250-251: for Milton, trusting another's interpretation is tantamount to trusting another's conscience. As Hill writes, "We would no more hand our consciences over to someone else than—if we were good business men—we would hand our business concerns over to some factor." The conscience is our "dearest and best possession."

⁹⁵ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 583-586, and *Paradise Lost*, 12:507-514.

⁹⁶ As Hill puts it, Milton "believed in continuous Reformation." Hill, *English Revolution*, 252.

⁹⁷ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 587-592. Milton was careful, however, not to give fanatics license to misinterpret the Bible as they please. The inward Spirit may revise written scripture only in cases of glaring inconsistencies. See Hill, *English Revolution*, 246.

⁹⁸ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 566, 570-573, 593-594, and 601. A.L. Rowse thinks that the dedication of *Christian Doctrine* is a contradiction: "Milton had no use for an organised church or for ministers—once more generalising from his own self-sufficiency to ordinary simpletons who much needed such guides to keep them on the rails." Rowse, *Milton the Puritan* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 208 and 213. On the contrary, Milton's preference for independent churches was intended to balance individual salvation with the benefits of mutual association for scriptural reading and worship.

⁹⁹ Milton, *Civil Power*, 247-249 and 251-252.

¹⁰⁰ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 6:142-148. Commentators have noted the possible connection to Archbishop Laud's characterisation of non-conformers to the Church of England as "sectaries." See Alastair Fowler, ed., *Paradise Lost* (London: Longmans, 1971), 6.147n; and Roy Flannagan, ed., *Paradise Lost* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 6.147n.

¹⁰¹ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 515, 517, 525, 528-531, 548; and *Paradise Lost*, 12:300-306. "Shadowy types to truth" seems to evoke Platonism or Neoplatonism, but William G. Madsen argues that "it is more meaningful to describe the symbolic method of *Paradise Lost* as Christian" in that "Christ is the symbolizing center of the poem since it is through Him that the major metaphors find their significance." For example, the Garden of Eden, Satan, and Adam's exaltation of Eve are shadowy types (and in the latter cases, false images) of the image of Christ in humanity, of Christ as "intercessor and re-creator," and of Christ as son of God. Madsen, *From Shadowy Types*, 83-84. In light of the contrast made between the old

religion of law and the new religion of faith in *Christian Doctrine*, the symbol of Christ is more useful than the allegory of the cave for understanding Milton's theology.

¹⁰² Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 528-534. A.S.P. Woodhouse points out that the concept of an inward law qualifies a doctrine of Christian liberty which would otherwise "lead to Antinomianism, and apparently did so in some sects." Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). Compared to the fanatical sects of the Revolution, Milton's internalisation thesis places limits on Christian liberty; compared to Hobbes's conception of religion as law, however, Milton's view is antinomian. Conversely, Hobbesian religion from Milton's perspective is servile obedience, a negation of Christian liberty.

¹⁰³ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 535-536.

¹⁰⁴ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 123-124; and *Civil Power*, 263 and 265. Austin Woolrych writes that Christian liberty "frees us not only from the bondage of Judaical ceremonies but from all set forms, places, and times in the worship of God," and suggests that this view may be an implicit critique of the enforcement of Sabbath-keeping by law in Milton's time. Woolrych's "Historical Introduction" to the *Complete Prose Works*, vol. 7 (revised), 51-52.

¹⁰⁵ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 611-613; and *Civil Power*, 255 and 260.

¹⁰⁶ It may be noted in passing that Milton's argument was directed only at true Christians. No reference is made to religious liberty for human beings generally (including Catholics and "infidels"). See Arthur E. Barker, *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 253.

¹⁰⁷ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, 436-437, 797-799; and *Civil Power*, 244, 261, 266, 268, and 271.

Milton's emphasis was on the non-interference in varieties of Christian doctrine and individual faith, not of outward forms of worship (which are secondary). As Barker points out, corruption of religious service would take away from the "freedom, not of all men, but the truly conscientious." Barker, *Puritan Dilemma*, 254-255. In a limited, external respect, the Christian magistrate's duty to protect religion would include the prohibition of abhorrent practices, such as human sacrifice.

¹⁰⁸ Milton, *Civil Power*, 252; *Paradise Lost*, 12: 521-522; "To the Lord General Cromwell, May 1652," in *Complete Poems*, p. 114, 9-14; and *Readie and Easie Way*, 439 (Milton's emphasis).

¹⁰⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 31, 395.

¹¹⁰ Rousseau, *Du contrat social*, bk. 4, chap. 8, 162.

¹¹¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 32, 409-410 and 414. As James Farr points out, to assert that scripture can never be contrary to natural reason means—for Hobbes—that nothing in the Bible should contradict the careful reasoning of the first two parts of *Leviathan*. Farr, "Atomes of Scripture: Hobbes and the Politics of Biblical Interpretation," in *Hobbes and Political Theory*, 177-178. Farr recognises the complex uses of Scripture for Hobbes's political purposes, but concludes that he was a theorist of intolerance, insisting on his reinterpretation of religion, in contrast to the position of dissenters such as Milton and Locke (pp. 188-191). As I argue below, however, Hobbes tolerated inward belief and sought to minimise the content of religion in political life, unlike Milton, whose intolerance of established churches stemmed from deep religious convictions.

¹¹² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 32, 410.

¹¹³ Hobbes, *Dialogue of the Common Laws*, 125-127.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 128-132 (Hobbes's emphasis). Richard Tuck links Hobbes's view on heresy with his critique of churchmen imposing doctrine. Tuck, "Hobbes and Locke on Toleration," in *Hobbes and Political Theory*, 160-164. But Tuck exaggerates the difference between the earlier and later Hobbes as a shift in attitude from religious repression to full-blown toleration (see p. 166). In fact, Hobbes's position was consistent throughout his works, with only minor changes. He combined public profession with toleration of inward faith. Tuck's earlier and later Hobbes represent extreme positions to which Hobbes did not adhere.

¹¹⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 32, 410; and *Behemoth*, 3. As Stephen Holmes suggests, Hobbes may be implicitly criticising Christianity as a "book-centred religion" and thus as particularly prone to misinterpretation. Holmes, "Political Psychology," 136.

¹¹⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 5, 111; and chap. 33, 425-427. J.G.A. Pocock thinks that the sovereign is thus confronted by a "new system of authority" based on God's word as revealed in history. This theological-historical account of sovereign authority "will come into direct and potentially competitive coexistence" with the ahistorical account based on reason which justified the institution of sovereignty.

Pocock, "Time, History, and Eschatology," 166. But in the context of the civil war, the sovereign's ecclesiastical authority is derived from the ahistorical problem of resolving controversies, and Hobbes's scriptural exegesis is largely devoted to confirming this authority in the Bible.

¹¹⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 35, 442-444 (Hobbes's emphasis). Furthermore, as David Johnston notes, "By arguing that the kingdom of God described in Scripture was a kingdom in the literal sense, Hobbes could claim that no division between spiritual and civil authority had existed in Biblical times." Johnston, *Rhetoric of Leviathan*, 169. This may also help to explain Milton's largely negative account of the religion of the Jews: the unity of civil and ecclesiastical powers in Old Testament kingdoms as a model for commonwealths generally is, of course, contrary to his advocacy of the separation of church and state.

¹¹⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 41, 514-518. Ronald Beiner characterises Hobbes as seeking to "Judaicise" Christianity, i.e., to reinterpret the New Testament as endorsing a theocratic politics in the model of the old Jewish kingdoms, particularly the sovereignty of Moses, in order to make religion compatible with his political thought. Beiner, "Civil Religion," 629-631. Beiner's argument that Hobbes interpreted the new kingdom of God in light of the old Jewish kingdoms is persuasive, but the notion of "re-theocratizing" politics should be qualified by Hobbes's conception of law: if the religion of law is a matter of external obedience rather than inward belief, then how "theocratic" is Hobbesian civil religion? Regulating inward belief is impossible, but genuinely theocratic regimes arguably take external obedience as a sign of internal faith, whereas Hobbes did not concern himself with whether or not the two are connected in an individual.

¹¹⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 41, 516; and chap. 43, 610-612. Cf. Beiner, "Civil Religion," 628-629.

¹²⁰ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 29, 366.

¹²¹ The characterisation of law as public conscience may be linked with Hobbes's critique of the private interpretation of scripture. In this sense, his conception of law was in part a response to Protestantism. Cf. Whitaker, "Hobbes's View," 45-58: "the whole of *Leviathan* can be said to be a commentary on the Reformation" (49).

¹²² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 26, 332-333; and chap. 40, 500-501.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, chap. 42, 572-579; and chap. 43, 550-551.

¹²⁴ Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. by R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951), chaps. 19-20, 245-266.

¹²⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 43, 609-610; and chap. 44, 627-630.

¹²⁶ Cf. Whitaker, "Hobbes's View," 54-55; and Holmes, "Political Psychology," 128-130. As Whitaker and Holmes point out, political turmoil for Hobbes was in part a result of the misuse of language and the consequent disjunction between things and their proper significations: for example, the meaning of "kingdom of God."

¹²⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 29, 370-371; chap. 39, 498-499; and *Behemoth*, 5-8.

¹²⁸ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 172; and *Leviathan*, chap. 47, 704-706 and 714-715. Cf. Whitaker, "Hobbes's View," 53-54: "Hobbes writes so much about Catholics—both in *Behemoth* and *Leviathan*—because he is constantly posing the question of what has changed with the Reformation, and what has not." The private interpretation of scripture was a new problem; the doctrine of the church as kingdom of God was not.

¹²⁹ Milton, "On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament," in *Complete Poems*, 87, line 20 (Milton's emphasis).

¹³⁰ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 21-22. Whitaker, however, argues that "private Bible reading is for Hobbes a key to future political peace." Whitaker, "Hobbes's View," 51. Nevertheless, Whitaker acknowledges that private interpretation has been seditious, while I argue below that private reading—of certain parts of the Bible—can be socially useful. Protestantism not only brought about strife but also offered new potential for peace (at least in its challenge to abstruse theology and to ecclesiastical interference in state affairs). Still, it should be kept in mind that although Hobbes may have been something of a Protestant, his concern for peace took priority over any purely religious stance.

¹³¹ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 23 and 75.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 46-50. Paul J. Johnson overlooks this strident critique of Anglican doctrine in his argument for Hobbes's Anglicanism. But what of Aubrey's remark that Hobbes "declared that he liked the religion of the church of England best of all other"? Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, 254. Assuming Aubrey's veracity (which may be assuming too much), an argument could be made that Hobbes agreed with Anglicans who "argued for a simplified Christianity whose essence lay in a very few fundamental doctrines which had been so clearly

presented in Scripture as to require no interpretation and no special qualifications to understand beyond the simple willingness to read the words without prejudice." Johnson, "Hobbes's Anglican Doctrine of Salvation," in *Hobbes in his Time*, 105. But Archbishop Laud's harping on free will and predestination (reflected in Bramhall's intellectual concerns) hardly fits this description; and if Hobbes preferred Anglican-style minimal Christianity in the *Leviathan*, he did so primarily in the interests of peace.

¹³³ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 135-136 and 165.

¹³⁴ Royce MacGillivray observes that "Hobbes is inclined to blame the Presbyterians the more heavily" than the Independents for the King's murder. MacGillivray, "Hobbes's History," 196. One should not, however, misconstrue this apportioning of blame as sympathy (on the same page, MacGillivray characterises Hobbes's treatment of Cromwell as "not unfriendly.") Hobbes did not attribute much originality to the acts of the Independents and their allies, because of their resemblance to the Presbyterians.

¹³⁵ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 169.

¹³⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 47, 710-711. Hobbes's remarks on the "circular motion" of sovereignty during the English civil war at the end of *Behemoth* (p. 204) are reminiscent of this account of the knots of Christian liberty. Did Hobbes perhaps have a cyclical view of history? Since these are the only two places in his opus where he alludes to the circularity of historical events, it is safer to conclude that they are literary and rhetorical touches rather than intimations of a philosophy of history.

¹³⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 31, 401.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. 31, 405-406. As a part of civil law, then, public worship consists wholly in external obedience. But Charles D. Tarlton argues that external obedience is enforced for the sake of the "wise" and the deeply religious, while the superstitiousness of the rest of society would be exploited in the service of a political and religious education employing "myth and illusion." Tarlton, "Creation and Maintenance," 326-327. Not only are Tarlton's categories of "wise," "religious," and "superstitious" contrary to Hobbes's account of natural equality and scepticism about the seeds of religion, but his characterisation of Hobbesian civil religion as relying on myth and illusion is inconsistent with Hobbes's conceptions of law and equity. Civil religion as external obedience would apply equally to all members of society.

¹³⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 36, 466-469.

¹⁴⁰ Edwin Curley thinks that Hobbes's treatment of prophecy was an ironic one, intended to mask his secret atheism from all but careful readers of his work. Curley, "Hobbes's Theological-Political Treatise," 531-543. Since many careful readers have not detected subtexts of secret atheism, it is perhaps more plausible to interpret Hobbes as seeking to contain prophecy within the bounds of civil peace: a sufficient standard of truth for Hobbes.

¹⁴¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 42, 567-571 and 575-576.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, chap. 42, 604-606. A.P. Martinich argues that the toleration of infidel sovereigns "appeared to be compatible with genuine Christianity, according to Hobbes's contemporaries." Martinich, *Two Gods*, 285. Many of Hobbes's contemporaries—who accused him of atheism—might, if they were still around, beg to differ. The point, however, is not how genuinely Christian this view was (or is), but rather that the version of Christianity Hobbes advocated is not inconsistent with the laws of nature which promote civil peace—and that his civil religion was largely, perhaps wholly, determined by the latter.

¹⁴³ Hobbes, "Of Liberty and Necessity," 42; and *Leviathan*, chap. 43, 615-622.

¹⁴⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 43, 623-625.

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Holmes argues, however, that Hobbes sought to "rechannel" the power of religion by providing a divine authorisation for the secular authority. Holmes, "Political Psychology," 142-143. The view that subjects would come to believe that the sovereign is literally a mortal God is, I argue, contrary to the rather minimal theology of civil religion, and inconsistent with the teaching to obey infidel sovereigns. Christianity for Hobbes is arguably useful (as well as true) in encouraging quiet law-abiding behaviour rather than in giving rise to awe of the sovereign's divinity.

¹⁴⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 30, 384; and *Behemoth*, 16, 46, 70-71, 90, and 144.

¹⁴⁷ Hobbes, *Behemoth*, 52-55, 62-64, and 73.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The central theme running throughout this thesis has been that Hobbes and Milton represent two competing strands of modern political thought. Their particular conceptions of political life are invaluable aids to understanding the religious conflict of their day, as well as religious conflict in contemporary societies. For as we have seen, Milton provided solid philosophical and religious justifications for political resistance, while Hobbes sought to counter what he regarded as seditious abuses of religion. Milton interpreted classical and especially Judeo-Christian texts in such a way as to lend support to his revolutionary programme. It could be said that he drew out the political implications of his religious principles. Hobbes developed a comprehensive political philosophy which consistently emphasises the pursuit of civil peace as the means to the comfortable self-preservation of all members of society. Accordingly, he sought to neutralise the power of religion because of its tendency to distract the people from political obedience. In this way, he drew out the religious implications of his political principles.

Yet, are there points of convergence of the two thinkers? Did Aubrey, in his brief comparison of the two, overlook the common features of Hobbesian and Miltonian thought? There are certain commonalities which I have tried to highlight as marking them as characteristically modern thinkers, and which are linked. First, I have argued that both Hobbes and Milton advanced novel conceptions of religion and government that challenged traditional doctrines. Hobbes's analysis rested on mechanistic and materialist premises, reflecting the influence of the new scientific world-view in Europe. While Milton was less influenced by modern science, his interpretation of Christianity departed from the dogma of all the established churches in Europe, and his revolutionary politics challenged what was thought to be divinely sanctioned royal thrones.

Second, both thinkers focused on the needs of the individual. Throughout his opus, Milton defended the sanctity of the individual person. Nothing, he argued, is more

important than the religious integrity of the Christian in his or her individual pursuit of goodness and piety. Hobbes, we argued, may have also believed in the integrity of inward belief. But his priority was clearly on the security and comfort of individuals in society. Neither thinker regarded political society as an essentially collective body oriented to a good greater than that of any individual alone. Even though the pursuit of the good entailed for Milton a goal higher than worldly existence alone can offer, it is for him the individual Christian who embarks on the path to godliness. And although Hobbes may have spoken of a "public" or "common" good, he always meant what is good for all individuals in society--the multitude as opposed to the collective--for even if this common good entailed harm to some members of society, such acts would be committed for the sake of preserving civil society which, above all, secures individual goods.

Third, Milton and Hobbes were liberal theorists. Of course, their anti-traditionalism and individualism are characteristics of liberal thought, but it is their emphases on freedom which distinguish them as definably liberal. The central doctrine of Milton's theology and politics is arguably that of the sanctity of the free will. The individual's ability to choose good must be protected from political and ecclesiastical interference. He upheld the liberty of true Christian citizens against the potential tyrannies of church and state. Hobbes was a liberal thinker in the sense that a well-governed society, he argued, should provide for maximal liberty of subjects to pursue their private affairs within the boundaries set by the law.

Nevertheless, significant contrasts between Hobbes and Milton are apparent in the very commonalities I have highlighted. Leo Strauss argued that modern political thought came in two waves, the first of which included thinkers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke, who rejected classical conceptions of virtue and natural law, but who still adhered to the concept of an unchanging human nature.¹ Would Milton belong to the first wave of modernity? His emphasis on individual freedom and rejection of divine right theory class him as a proponent of early modern liberalism, but his appeals to classical republican ideals

and especially the deeply religious content of his thought blur the Straussian categorisation. Instead, there may be more strains of modernity than are dreamt of in Strauss's philosophy. As I shall argue presently, the issues dealt with in this thesis reflect to some extent the significant divergences between early modern political thinkers—in particular, between these two thinkers who reflected on the same historical events and yet held contrary perspectives on religion and politics.

The points of convergence and the greater points of divergence have been examined in chapters two, three, and four. In chapter two, we looked at the role of pride in religiously based conflict. Milton and Hobbes both distanced themselves from the theory of the divine right of kings, espoused by James I and others, for whom it is an expression of pride to resist one's divinely ordained monarch. Milton, the poet and apologist for the English revolution, inverted the Stuart defence of monarchical rule by asserting the divine rights of the people over and, if necessary, against their king. He traced the origins of pride to Satan, which was subsequently transmitted to humanity through the temptation of Eve. He concluded that it is tyrants, not revolutionaries, who are guilty of Satanic pride as rebels against God. Milton's concerns were no less religious than those of medieval theorists and Stuart absolutists such as James; and yet his revolutionary interpretation of Biblical theodicy challenged the political quietism and divine right of kings justified by other Christian thinkers.

We saw that Hobbes was deeply critical of the revolutionary doctrines of writers such as Milton, but that his ideas were even more radical than those of the latter. Unlike James I or Milton, his account of pride is rooted in a naturalistic analysis of thought, imagination, and the passions. Pride is excessive vainglory, a form of madness, which plays a role in the war of all against all. In particular, there is a religious form of pride which contributes to outbreaks of religious conflict. If I am persuaded that I am inherently superior to others—or even that I have a direct, unmediated relationship with God—then I will feel that others do not sufficiently honour my power. This disjunction between my

and others' valuations of myself gives rise to rage. The consequent invasions of others' property by individuals motivated by pride and other antisocial passions leads to conflict. The antithesis of pride is equality; the antithesis of antisocial pride is contractual equality. Just as pride and other passions lead to war, so contractual equality--where all parties to a contract agree to lay down their natural right to all things--can secure peace. But this social contract requires the institution of a sovereign power who can subdue antisocial passions such as pride and enforce performance by the contracting parties.

In contrast to the divinely sanctioned kings theorised by Stuart absolutists, the Hobbesian king of the proud is instituted by the people to secure peace. It is perhaps ironic, then, that the power of the Hobbesian sovereign is in some ways more absolute than that of divinely sanctioned monarchs. Like James I and contrary to revolutionary doctrines, Hobbes maintained that the sovereign must be supreme under God and regarded as God's lieutenant. But popular consent in Hobbes's thought is logically prior to divine sanction in the institution of the sovereign, though Hobbes hastened to add that this consensual basis could not be used as a pretext for resisting the sovereign. Indeed, maintaining, as Milton did, that people have a God-given right to overthrow "proud kings" itself manifests religious pride: once instituted, the sovereign is chief interpreter of God's commands, and thus its authority cannot be legitimately questioned. Thus, Hobbes both departed from Stuart absolutism in developing a novel theory of sovereignty and severely censured the revolutionary politics of men such as Milton.

Were Milton's politics simply an inversion of divine right theory? Was Hobbes in effect presenting a new defence of proud kings? In the third chapter, I tried to show that neither interpretation would do justice to the scope of their ideas. Milton ground his view that the rights of people could be asserted against their kings in classical authors and in scripture. He did not, however, treat ancient works and the Bible merely as textual evidence for his advocacy for revolution. Rather, he interpreted these texts with a generally consistent theory of government in mind. With respect to Aristotle and other classical

writers, Milton emphasised the teaching that governors should rule for the sake of the governed. He also argued that the best of the Old Testament kings were at best servants of Gods, and at worst tyrants who were resisted with God's blessing. And his account of the New Testament depicts Jesus as more than otherworldly saviour: he was for Milton not only a critic of tyranny but also an advocate of the free commonwealth, i.e., a republican regime governed by pious and virtuous citizens. In his pamphlets, Milton outlined the essential characteristics of this regime, particularly in the years following what he regarded as the betrayal of the English revolution by its instigators. The Presbyterians' opposition to having the king put to death and the common people's desire for restoration of the monarchy confirmed for Milton the view that only a virtuous few are capable of exercising their political freedom wisely. The best regime is a government of virtue, not number. Consequently, he thought that the free commonwealth should combine popular sovereignty with an aristocratic form of government. Milton's radical proposals thus blended classical virtue with Christian piety in a regime which would maximise civil freedom. In this way, he reinterpreted the philosophical and religious traditions of Western civilisation in light of an aristocratic and revolutionary liberalism.

As I argued in chapter three, Hobbes scholars have not in general examined Hobbes's critique of the Aristotelian and Christian traditions apart from his polemics against the Scholasticism of the universities. In regard to the issues raised by Milton, however, Hobbes should be regarded as an important critic of the appropriation of ancient and Biblical texts by revolutionaries in the English civil war. He argued that members of Parliament and revolutionary theorists drew upon classical authors to justify their resistance to the king. They focused on the negative account of tyranny in such works to bring monarchical government into disrepute, and focused on classical conceptions of virtue, which (he thought) was merely a name for private appetite. Against this self-serving use of the ancients, Hobbes countered that ethics should be regarded as wholly subsumed in politics: that is to say, moral virtue and maintenance of peace—consisting of obedience on

the part of subjects and effective government on the part of sovereigns—are one and the same. This politicisation of ethics was clearly a challenge to the elevation by Milton and others of moral virtue above the rights of sovereigns. He concluded that judging sovereigns by supra-political standards of virtues is in effect a rhetorical pretext for seizing the reins of power for oneself.

Hobbes did not express himself clearly as to the validity of modern interpretations of the ancients, nor to what extent his account of the misappropriated texts really applies to the original authors themselves. But he was unequivocal in his insistence that scripture had been wholly misinterpreted. For Hobbes, the rights of kings as explicated in the Old Testament are in accordance with his own teaching on sovereignty: God decreed that the sovereignty of the Jewish kings was absolute. Hobbes emphasised the quietism of the Gospels and writings of the early Apostles—a generally received view of the New Testament—but went further in arguing that Christ and the Apostles preached obedience to civil sovereigns in the interim period before the second coming. There is no otherworldly kingdom of God; God's kingdom is a this-worldly commonwealth to come. The Bible, in short, preaches political obedience to one's civil sovereign. Thus, Hobbes sought to undermine the very foundations of Miltonian republicanism, a potent combination of ancient virtue and Christian piety justifying political revolution.

Hobbes also confronted the accusations of Charles's alleged tyranny. There are, he maintained, only three stable forms of government, and each is equally valid—though monarchy enjoys certain advantages. More importantly for our purposes, each kind should be regarded as both an effective and representative form of government. Among these unmixed forms, no regime is inherently more oppressive than another. Furthermore, as the representative person of the commonwealth, the sovereign has a duty to make good laws and offer public instruction in political obedience. Good laws effectively prohibit illegal activity and facilitate the natural liberty of the members of society; public instruction is necessary to counteract the popular tendencies to rebellion taught by corrupting preachers,

since coercion alone is insufficient to ensure obedience. Thus, Hobbes, like Milton, advocated lawful government and regarded the people as corrupted, though they disagreed on the nature of this corruption. But Hobbes rejected the revolutionary conclusions Milton drew from the importance of lawfulness—since the laws are the sovereign’s command and hence not above the sovereign—and believed that the common people could conceivably govern themselves in a democratic assembly, given the right conditions. Hobbes’s liberalism, then, was more egalitarian and potentially more democratic than Milton’s, but he nonetheless denied that there could be any lawful pretext—particularly from classical teachings and scripture—for popular resistance.

The discussions in chapters two and three hover around a central point of disagreement: the very meaning of freedom, the subject of chapter four. Although elements of Milton’s understanding of the Bible were consistent with Augustinian theology, his overriding emphasis on the free will had radical implications for his views on ecclesiastical authority. God, he argued, decreed that human beings would possess freedom of the will. We are free to choose good or evil, which entails absolute moral responsibility for our actions. True freedom, however, is the choice of the good, because it means obeying the higher part of the soul which is oriented towards God. Adam and Eve, in contrast, abused their God-given freedom and enslaved themselves to their passions, the lower part of the soul. They degraded their souls and those of their descendants. Subsequent human history has consisted of efforts to redeem ourselves from our fallen state; but redemption even of a pious few is not possible without the mediation of Christ the saviour. In the meantime, between Christ’s ascent into heaven and his second coming, we must follow the Holy Spirit implanted within our hearts—our consciences—in order to merit God’s grace.

The redemption of the will is a spiritual journey of the soul towards an otherworldly good; but for Milton, such redemption requires certain conditions in this world. Christian doctors had traditionally prescribed observance of church doctrine on scriptural and other moral and religious matters in order to facilitate the quiet pursuit of spiritual redemption.

Christians, they believed, should let the church guide their consciences. Milton, in contrast, argued that the individual conscience is the primary guide to scriptural and thus religious and moral truth. Abiding by the laws set down by the ecclesiastical authority may have been necessary in the old Jewish theocracies; but the satisfaction of the law by Christ on the cross means that religion is now primarily a matter of faith and love, of inward conscience as opposed to outward law. The church should at most be a place where individual Christians may assemble to determine the truth of scripture for themselves. This is the substance of what he meant by "Christian liberty": the freedom of the will from ecclesiastical and political interference, necessary for redemption in Christ. Milton opposed hierarchical authority in the church because, he believed, the church had been used to subordinate individual conscience to tyrants and ambitious priests. He thus proposed a radical democratisation of the church and a rigid separation between church and state.

What is both novel and revealing about Milton's argument is that he justified this separation on religious grounds. The separation of church and state has been regarded as an important pillar of contemporary liberal—especially American-style—democracy, as it protects political life from interference by churches which represent sectarian interests. But Milton advocated this separation in order to protect religious sectarianism from political interference. If the state—and those churches that are organs of the state—cannot legislate on any religious matter, then the conscientious individual is free to interpret God's word as he or she sees fit, even if such interpretation reveals that God has commanded him or her to disobey the sovereign. If we take Milton seriously, separating church and state can be seen as potentially fostering religiously-based conflict. Such a perspective may help to explain why countries such as the United States may serve as breeding grounds for revolutionary Protestantism.

Hobbes's account of liberty, law, and ecclesiastical authority casts a different, often opposing, light on the relation between church and state in early liberal thought. At the fundamental level, Hobbes denied the existence of the free will. All acts are necessarily

caused; we are free to do what we will, not to will what we will. Thus, despite some resemblance between Hobbesian human nature and Augustinian fallen man, Hobbes radically reconceptualised key theological concepts. For example, since liberty pertains to motion--the absence of external impediments to one's endeavour--not to moral choice, one is not morally responsibly for one's actions. Consequently, sin for Hobbes is punishable only as intent to commit a crime, i.e., to breach the laws of the commonwealth in which one lives. Arguably, this is to deny the existence of sin at all. The original sin, then, was nothing more than criminal activity on the part of Adam and Eve against the law of God, their sovereign. Punishment is therefore justifiable (and arguably ceases to be "punishment" as it is normally understood) as a means of regulating behaviour--of deterring the offender and others from future crime--in order to ensure the self-preservation of the commonwealth. It cannot be retribution for sins committed. Absent from Hobbes's philosophy is the notion that the will must somehow be redeemed from its degradation. If the will necessarily follows appetite, then there is no higher state to which the will can attain. Accordingly, the saviour Christ for Hobbes was not the mediator who facilitates the spiritual redemption of the will, but merely the ransom who lifted God's punishment upon humanity and made possible bodily immortality at the second coming. In contrast to Biblically-derived accounts of sin, moral responsibility, punishment, and salvation as found in the writings of Augustine, Bramhall, Milton, and others, Hobbes's account was consistent both with his materialist conception of nature and with his overriding concern for civil peace.

His conception of liberty in relation to law reveals the "liberal" content of his thought. Liberty in its natural sense applies to the motion of bodies, but it may also be taken in an artificial sense in terms of freedom from law. Just as natural liberty is the absence of physical impediments such as chains, so civil liberty is enjoyed where metaphorical impediments to doing what one will--the laws of the commonwealth--are absent. This conception of civil liberty as the freedom to do what the laws do not forbid--

such as buying and selling, and other private business—augments natural liberty while limiting natural right. Accordingly, although the sovereign is not subject to the laws, it ought to govern lawfully, which includes public (or Parliamentary) consultation and equitable interpretation of law. A lawful society is a better guarantor of commodious living than one in which the sovereign governs arbitrarily in times of peace (though the sovereign nevertheless has the right to rule arbitrarily). Thus, Hobbes's views on law are certainly contrary to the Miltonian (and American) conception of the law as an institutional check on the sovereign, but are compatible to some extent with parliamentary sovereignty in modern regimes where commodious living is the paramount goal.

This has implications for the proper scope of ecclesiastical authority. The laws restrict natural right. Since rights are a metaphorical kind of liberty to do what one wills—not to will what one wills—the laws can only regulate human activity, not human willing. Hobbes argued that religion should be part of the laws of the commonwealth; it is otherwise subject to abuse by rebellious preachers and revolutionary writers such as Milton. But as a part of the laws, civil religion is subject to the same limits as those of any other law and should be instituted for the same purpose: to secure civil peace. Accordingly, he argued, it should be reduced to the simplest tenets of faith and obedience—in contrast to the seditious obfuscations of church doctrine by ambitious priests—and its scope is limited to outward action.

Hobbes thus advocated a purely public religion, in which subjects must profess their obedience to the laws of the sovereign as part of their religious duty (a quite radical notion) and act accordingly, but whose internal beliefs are outside human jurisdiction. Hobbesian “toleration”, then, consists of a public religion which subjects must observe in speech and action, but which should not attempt to control the inward faith of these subjects, in contrast to the inquisitorial practices of Catholicism and other religions. That Hobbes actually respected the integrity of individual belief—rather than merely conceding that no-one can know another person's inward thoughts—is evinced by his remarks on

peaceful independency: he suggested that toleration of individual religious practice as well as belief might be the best state of affairs, if possible. For religion would thus be taken out of the hands of priests altogether. Hobbes was not interested in engendering a specific dogma beyond what is necessary to ensure political obedience; as long as subjects observe the law, their beliefs are their own business. The most effective way of taming religion may ultimately be to render it a completely private affair.

In some ways, Hobbes was both an Erastian and a secularist. He was unequivocal in his view that the churches in the England of his day must be, for the sake of peace, subordinated to the sovereign power. But simple subordination in itself is insufficient to curtail the power of religion: the civil religion should be kept as simple as possible, and inward belief tolerated—perhaps even encouraged in its outward forms as a peaceful, private alternative to organised religion. The *Leviathan* can successfully subjugate Behemoth only if the latter is drained of its relevance to political life. Milton's argument for separating church and state was underpinned by a radical Protestant outlook and revolutionary politics, whereas Hobbes's wholesale reinterpretation of religion was intended to undercut the potential threat religion poses to civil peace. Hobbes sought to circumscribe religion and defuse its power to seduce the people away from civil obedience. I have argued that there is no specifically religious agenda behind Hobbes's diagnosis and prescriptions concerning the problem of religious conflict. If the price of defeating Behemoth is the decline of religiosity in public and even private life, then Hobbes was willing to pay it.

In sum, Hobbes and Milton were profoundly original thinkers whose conceptions of religion and the state represent two alternatives for modern political life. Milton was opposed to Stuart absolutism and the power of organised churches in England and abroad. In powerfully engaging prose and the highest level of poetic expression, he championed the liberty of the individual from the twin tyrannies of church and state, and thus attempted to bring about the conditions for restoring a direct relationship between the believer and God.

But his radical Protestantism entailed revolutionary excesses and religious zeal which seriously threatened the security and livelihood of 17th century Englishmen and may continue to provide religious pretexts for political sedition. Hobbes was no less radical in his thinking but sought to curb and eventually eliminate the dangers posed by such new forms of Protestantism. In response to the turmoil of his time, he developed a philosophical account of brilliant complexity and subtlety which is nonetheless single-mindedly directed towards one goal: ensuring the conditions for peaceful, commodious living. Hobbes's thought is thus a sober alternative to the perpetual reformation advocated by Milton. But one could argue that a meaningful role for religion and spirituality in political life is thereby sacrificed on the altar of peace. The members of an Hobbesian society would not have a sense of collective aspiration beyond the mundane goal of comfortable self-preservation. The shortcomings of Milton's thought are reflected in bloody religious conflict; the shortcomings of Hobbes's may be evinced by the shallowness prevalent in societies where religion is increasingly viewed as a chiefly private matter. Is there a way to mediate between these two visions of political life? Or must both conceptions be wholly rejected? I have tried to show the merits of each; but the former question falls outside the scope of this dissertation. Contemporary societies, in the west and elsewhere, continue to display to some extent the strengths and shortcomings of Miltonian and Hobbesian ideas; the purpose of this thesis has been to show that there are meaningful and perhaps insoluble debates at the heart of English-speaking liberalism. Political philosophers must not dismiss these debates as irrelevant or merely historical, much less overlook what problems such debates may expose in our contemporary political life.

Notes to Chapter Five

¹ Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

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