

**NEW-MODELLING ENGLISH GOVERNMENT:  
BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS, JEWISH POLITY AND  
CONSTITUTIONAL FORMS DURING THE INTERREGNUM (1649-1660)**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of  
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**by**

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## ABSTRACT

*New-Modelling English Government: Biblical Hermeneutics, Jewish Polity and Constitutional Forms During the Interregnum (1649-1660)* represents a systematic examination of the political use of the Bible in the major works of prominent seventeenth-century commonwealthsmen, such as James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), Sir Henry Vane's *A Healing Question* (1656) and John Milton's *Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660). I argue that these early moderns reflected vigorously on the polity of ancient Israel and other aspects of the Bible as they drew up their civil principles and model commonwealths.

The current historiography has tended to marginalize the relationship between biblical hermeneutics and political visions in the Interregnum by seeking to emphasize classical and Renaissance influences. It has also pre-judged early modern readings of the Bible as too haphazard to warrant painstaking investigations of its political role.

I argue that these three commonwealthsmen presented constitutional arguments shaped by their biblical reading, and can be termed biblical republicans. Their hermeneutical approaches were more sophisticated, measured and methodical than is often assumed and their religious arguments cannot be secularized, or separated from their political models. In this regard, their political use of the Scriptures should not be reduced to "rag bag" methods, or dismissed as a merely opportunistic move designed to lure a biblically literate audience to their political agendas.

I conclude that the prevailing secular interpretations of the current historiography are inadequate at capturing the use of the Bible as a political text among early moderns, that there was no standard republican approach to the political reading of the Scriptures, and that the English republicanism of the 1650's was both biblical and classical in its roots and sources. Historians should reconsider how other early modern figures might be recast in light of their own political use of the Scriptures.

## DEDICATION

For all those who truly cherish the pursuit of Gospel liberty as God's reforming mission of salvation among men.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The many individuals who sacrificed their time and finances over the last four years in service to my successful completion of this project and personal cultivation in scholarship are simply too numerous to account for here. To all these, I want to express my enduring gratitude.

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I must also express my thankfulness to StoneBridge School in Chesapeake, Virginia, my former employer and community of like-minded scholars and visionaries. The establishment of the Scholars Fund on my behalf to launch me into this new season of scholarship proved a double sacrifice on their part. Not only were they willing to release one of their own teachers, but the parents of my dear students sacrificed their finances to underwrite my living expenses in Cambridge.

I also want to thank Tyndale House for the extended use of its library and resources, and especially Dr. Bruce Winter for allowing me a place as a reader for four years among scholarly giants.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Authors investigated in this thesis, other commonly quoted sources, as well as articles are given the following abbreviations. These will be employed throughout the footnotes with their complete references found only in the Selected Bibliography. London publications are not given here, but assumed. Footnote references to the writings of James Harrington, Henry Vane and John Milton will only contain the abbreviated title along with the appropriate page numbers. Since J.G.A. Pocock's edition of *The Political Works of James Harrington* is becoming the resource standard for Harrington's works, I include in the footnotes the appropriate abbreviation of the Harrington tract cited followed by the page to Pocock's *Works*. Harrington's tracts were also investigated apart from this edition to check for marginalia, which explains why I have included their full titles under his name in the Selected Bibliography. Don M. Wolfe's eight-volume Yale edition of *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton* was also resorted to, but which is not as accessible as the Harrington edition. In this case, I only quoted the Yale edition in a few of Milton's tracts, which I indicate by the tract's abbreviation, then *CPW*, the volume number, and pages. The abbreviations and pages of Milton's other tracts relate to the originals or a seventeenth-century translation from the Latin.

### Authors

#### James Harrington

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>AP</i>           | <i>Aphorisms Political</i> (1659)  |
| <i>ART</i>          | <i>The Art of Lawgiving</i> (1659)   |
| <i>BD</i>           | <i>Brief Directions</i> (1658)   |
| <i>DSS</i>          | <i>A Discourse Showing That the Spirit of Parliaments, With a Council in the Intervals, is not to be Trusted for a Settlement</i> (1659) |
| <i>DUS</i>          | <i>A Discourse Upon this Saying</i> (1659)   |
| <i>LS</i>           | <i>A Letter Unto Mr. Stubbe</i> (1660)   |
| <i>FE</i>           | <i>A Note Upon the Foregoing Eclogues</i> (1658)   |
| <i>Oceana</i>       | <i>The Commonwealth of Oceana</i> (1656)   |
| <i>PEC</i>          | <i>Pour Enclouer le Canon</i> (1659)   |
| <i>Politicaster</i> | <i>Politicaster</i> (1659)   |
| <i>PP</i>           | <i>Pian Piano</i> (1656)   |
| <i>PSP</i>          | <i>A Parallel of the Spirit of the People with the Spirit of Mr. Rogers</i> (1659)   |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>Prerogative</i> | <i>The Prerogative of Popular Government</i> (1658)   |
| <i>Rota</i>        | <i>The Rota or a Model of a Free State</i> (1660)   |
| <i>SB</i>          | <i>The Stumbling-Block of Disobedience and Rebellion</i> (1658)                                       |
| <i>SP</i>          | <i>A System of Politics</i> (1661?)   |
| <i>VP</i>          | <i>Valerius and Publicola</i> (1659)  |
| <i>WM</i>          | <i>The Ways and Means Whereby an Equal and Lasting Commonwealth may be Suddenly Introduced</i> (1660) |

## **John Milton**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>Areopagitica</i>   | <i>Areopagitica</i> (1641)  |
| <i>BN</i>             | <i>Brief Notes upon a later Sermon Titl'd The Fear of God and the King</i> (1660)               |
| <i>Character</i>      | <i>Character of the Long Parliament</i> (1681)  |
| <i>Considerations</i> | <i>Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hierlings Out of the Church</i> (1659) |
| <i>De Doctrina</i>    | <i>De Doctrina Christiana</i> (1655-1674)   |
| <i>FD</i>             | <i>A Defence of the People of England in Answer to Salmasius's Defence of the King</i> (1695)   |
| <i>Eikon</i>          | <i>Eikonoklastes in Answer to a Book Intitl'd Eikon Basilika</i> , 2nd ed (1649)                |
| <i>Prelactical</i>    | <i>Of Prelactical Episcopacy</i> (1641)   |
| <i>Readie</i>         | <i>The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth</i> (1659, 1660)                   |
| <i>Reason</i>         | <i>The Reason of Church Government</i> (1641)   |
| <i>Reformation</i>    | <i>Of Reformation</i> (1641)  |
| <i>SD</i>             | <i>Second Defense of the English People</i> (1652)  |
| <i>Tenure</i>         | <i>Tenure of Kings and Magistrates</i> (1649)   |
| <i>Treatise</i>       | <i>A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes</i> (1659)                                |

## **Henry Vane**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>Face</i>       | <i>The Face of the Times</i> (1662)  |
| <i>HQ</i>         | <i>A Healing Question Propounded and Resolved Upon Occasion of the Late Publique and Seasonable Call to Humiliation</i> (1656) |
| <i>NC</i>         | <i>A Needful Corrective or Balance in Popular Government</i> (1659)  |
| <i>Pilgrimage</i> | <i>A Pilgrimage Into the Land of Promise</i> (1664)  |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <i>Proceeds</i>  | <i>The Proceeds of the Protector (so called)</i> (1656)                                      |
| <i>RM</i>        | <i>The Retired Mans Meditations</i> (1655)   |
| <i>Treatises</i> | <i>Two Treatises: Epistle General to the Mystical Body of Christ</i> (1662)                  |
| <i>Tryal</i>     | <i>The Tryal of Sir Henry Vane, Kt at the King's Bench</i> (1662)                            |
| <i>ZE</i>        | <i>Zeal Examined: Or A Discourse For Liberty of Conscience in Matters of Religion</i> (1652) |

### Other Texts

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Baxter, <i>CC</i>            | <i>Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter</i> , eds. N.H. Keeble and Geoffrey F. Nuttall, 2 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991)   |
| Baxter, <i>HC</i>            | Richard Baxter, <i>A Holy Commonwealth</i> , ed. William Lamont (Cambridge University Press, 1994)  |
| Baxter, <i>Key</i>           | <i>A Key for Catholicks</i> (1658)  |
| Baxter, <i>RB</i>            | Richard Baxter, <i>Reliquiae Baxterianae</i> , ed. Matthew Sylvester (1696)   |
| Clarendon, <i>CSP</i>        | <i>Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers Preserved in the Bodleian</i> , eds. H.O. Cox, C.H. Firth, W. Dunn Macray and Frederick James Routledge, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869-1970) |
| Clarendon, <i>SP</i>         | <i>State Papers Collected by Edward, Earl of Clarendon</i> , ed. Thomas Monkhouse, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1767)   |
| <i>CJ</i>                    | <i>Journals of the House of Commons</i>   |
| <i>CSP</i>                   | <i>Calendar of State Papers</i>   |
| <i>CSPM</i>                  | <i>Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts</i>   |
| <i>CMHS</i>                  | <i>Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society</i>  |
| <i>DNB</i>                   | <i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> (1885-1913)   |
| Finch, <i>Animadversions</i> | Martin Finch, <i>Animadversions Upon Sir Henry Vane's Book, Entitled The Retired Mans Meditations</i> (1656)  |
| <i>LAC</i>                   | <i>Library of American Civilization</i>   |
| Ludlow, <i>Memoirs</i>       | <i>Memoirs of Edmund Ludlow Esq., in two volumes.</i> (Switzerland: Vevey, 1698)  |
| Mather, <i>MCA</i>           | <i>Magnalia Christi Americana</i> , (Hartford, Conn.: Silas Andrus, 1820)   |
| <i>CPW</i>                   | <i>The Complete Prose Works of John Milton</i> , ed. Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols. (Yale University Press, 1953-82)   |
| <i>NHGR</i>                  | <i>New England Historical Genealogical Register</i>   |
| <i>PCCSM</i>                 | <i>Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts</i>  |

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>PH</i>                    | <i>The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803. A.D.,</i> ed. William Cobbett 1642-1660 (1808) |
| Pocock, <i>Works</i> ,       | <i>The Political Works of James Harrington.</i> J.G.A. Pocock, ed. (Cambridge University Press. 1977)                              |
| <i>PRMHS</i>                 | <i>Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society</i>   |
| Rogers, <i>Diapoliteia</i>   | John Rogers, <i>Diapoliteia. A Christian Concertation</i> (1659)   |
| Sikes, <i>LDV</i>            | George Sikes, <i>The Life and Death of Sir Henry Vane, K<sup>t</sup></i> (1662)  |
| Stubbe, <i>Malice</i>        | Henry Stubbe, <i>Malice Rebuked</i> (1659)   |
| Thurloe, <i>SP</i>           | <i>A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esq.,</i> ed. Thomas Birch, 7 vols. (1742)                                    |
| Toland, <i>Oceana</i>        | John Toland, <i>The Oceana of James Harrington and His Other Works</i> (1700)  |
| Whitelocke, <i>Memorials</i> | <i>Memorials of English Affairs</i> (1732)   |
| Wood, <i>AO</i>              | Anthony Wood, <i>Athenae Oxoniensis</i> , 2 vols., 2d ed. (1721)   |

### Periodicals

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <i>AHR</i>  | <i>The American Historical Review</i>        |
| <i>AJIL</i> | <i>American Journal of International Law</i> |
| <i>APSR</i> | <i>The American Political Science Review</i> |
| <i>AQ</i>   | <i>American Quarterly</i>                    |
| <i>BJRL</i> | <i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>  |
| <i>CE</i>   | <i>Cahiers `Elisabethains</i>                |
| <i>CH</i>   | <i>Church History</i>                        |
| <i>CHJ</i>  | <i>Cambridge Historical Journal</i>          |
| <i>CT</i>   | <i>Christianity Today</i>                    |
| <i>CTJ</i>  | <i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>            |
| <i>EHR</i>  | <i>The English Historical Review</i>         |
| <i>EQ</i>   | <i>The Evangelical Quarterly</i>             |
| <i>FH</i>   | <i>Fides et Historia</i>                     |
| <i>HJ</i>   | <i>The Historical Journal</i>                |
| <i>HLQ</i>  | <i>The Huntington Library Quarterly</i>      |
| <i>HPT</i>  | <i>History of Political Thought</i>          |
| <i>HT</i>   | <i>History Today</i>                         |
| <i>HTR</i>  | <i>Harvard Theological Review</i>            |

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <i>JEGP</i> | <i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>      |
| <i>JEH</i>  | <i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>              |
| <i>JETS</i> | <i>Journal of The Evangelical Theological Society</i> |
| <i>JHI</i>  | <i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i>                |
| <i>JHP</i>  | <i>Journal of the History of Philosophy</i>           |
| <i>JMH</i>  | <i>The Journal of Modern History</i>                  |
| <i>JPSR</i> | <i>Jewish Political Studies Review</i>                |
| <i>JR</i>   | <i>The Journal of Religion</i>                        |
| <i>JRH</i>  | <i>Journal of Religious History</i>                   |
| <i>MP</i>   | <i>Modern Philology</i>                               |
| <i>MQ</i>   | <i>Milton Quarterly</i>                               |
| <i>NEM</i>  | <i>The New England Magazine</i>                       |
| <i>NEQ</i>  | <i>New England Quarterly</i>                          |
| <i>NHJ</i>  | <i>The Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal</i>                |
| <i>PMLA</i> | <i>Proceedings of the Modern Language Association</i> |
| <i>PP</i>   | <i>Past &amp; Present</i>                             |
| <i>PS</i>   | <i>Prose Studies</i>                                  |
| <i>PSQ</i>  | <i>Political Science Quarterly</i>                    |
| <i>RES</i>  | <i>Review of English Studies</i>                      |
| <i>RP</i>   | <i>Renaissance Papers</i>                             |
| <i>SC</i>   | <i>The Seventeenth Century</i>                        |
| <i>SR</i>   | <i>The Sewanee Review</i>                             |
| <i>TJ</i>   | <i>Trinity Journal</i>                                |
| <i>TRHS</i> | <i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>   |
| <i>WMQ</i>  | <i>William and Mary Quarterly</i>                     |
| <i>WTJ</i>  | <i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>                |
| <i>YES</i>  | <i>The Yearbook of English Studies</i>                |

### **Editorial Method**

Every attempt was made to retain an author's original seventeenth-century spellings, including emphasis such as italics and capitalized words. Their works were mainly consulted through Bell and Howell's electronic resource known as *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, which includes digitized versions of the contents of the *Short Title Catalogue 1471-1640* and *1641-1700*. If a particular work could not be consulted

through *EEBO*, I made use of the original source at the Cambridge University Library, and in some instances, microform versions.

One particular source unrelated to *EEBO* which was consulted by Microform is *Vane, Sir Henry the Younger; Sermons, Expositions on Job, and 'A Letter of S<sup>r</sup>. H:V<sup>r</sup>.: to H:C:Y', Margaret Vane her Book Began July 1677. F. 48. D. 41. located in Harvester Microform, MS 8790, Reel 14.*

Short titles have been employed in footnotes to replace extended titles consisting of more than two lines. When this is the case, the full citation will be found in the Selected Bibliography.

When quoting an author within my own sentence, I typically lowercased the first letter of the first word if it was capitalized in the original.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

When our Pretorian Sectarian Bans had cut all Bonds and pull'd down all Government, and after the Death of the King had twelve Years kept out his Son, few Men saw any probability of his Restitution; and every self-conceited Fellow was ready to offer his Model for a new Form of Government: Mr. *Hobbs* his *Leviathan* had pleased many: Mr. *Tho. White* the great Papist, had written his Politicks in English for the Interest of the Protector, to prove that Subjects ought to submit and subject themselves to such a Change; And now Mr. *James Harrington* (they say by the help of Mr. *H. Nevill*) had written a Book in Folio for a Democracy called *Oceana*, seriously describing a Form near to the *Venetian*, and setting the People upon the Desires of Change: And after this Sir *H. Vane* and his Party were about their Sectarian Democractical Model, which *Stubbs* defended; and *Rogers* and *Needham* (and Mr. *Bagshaw* had written against Monarchy before).

Richard Baxter, *RB*, Book 1, 118.

This thesis attempts to provide a systematic examination of the political use of the Bible, specifically the OT, in the works of three prominent seventeenth-century commonwealthsmen. The successive chapters examine James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), John Milton's *Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free-Commonwealth* (1660), and Sir Henry Vane's *A Healing Question* (1656). The intense political developments of the Interregnum furnished the motivation to resort to the Scriptures, the supreme political source for all parties engaged in the civil-settlement controversy.

Early modern British political theorists reflected vigorously on the polity of ancient Israel and various aspects of OT literature in an attempt to derive and develop civil principles and constitutional proposals in response to the political events of the English Interregnum. All parties engaged in the settlement controversy found within the Scriptures a political power to legitimize their civil proposals and to denounce and undermine their opponents. The liberty to publish, coupled with the collapse of England's ancient constitution, provoked intense political reflection and resulted in dynamic and radically diverse theories, which were often biblical in emphasis. Their passionate and energetic use of the Bible during these turbulent times of civil upheaval demonstrates the need to thoroughly investigate the intricate relationship between the deep motivations of their faith and the manner in which they put the Scriptures to political use.

Some of these radical early moderns were commonwealthsmen, typically referred to as republicans by their political opponents. In their quest to settle the constitutional question, they crafted proposals emphasizing the abolition of monarchy and the institutionalization of free-states, representative assemblies, and limited executive authority typically subordinate to a sovereign legislature. But not all republicans arrived at their conclusions similarly, as some incorporated biblical texts alongside classical and Renaissance ideas into their models, while others attempted to

locate all of their political principles in the Scriptures, and within a protestant biblical tradition.

### **The Background of the Study**

The current research momentum in early modern British political thought seems to witness against the substantial political use of the Scriptures by its reluctance to explore the dynamic between hermeneutical frameworks, religious views, and political visions of seventeenth-century religious radicals. Nevertheless, it is difficult to dismiss the political relevance of the most often quoted text of the seventeenth-century, and this apparent marginalization may be motivated, in part, by resistance to the religious dimension of Puritanism. Mark Goldie in his “The Civil Religion of James Harrington” (1987) claims that the prevailing belief in the autonomy of politics results in modern scholarship’s refusal to make the connection between religion and political thought. Scholarship in political science tends to be both rewarded and celebrated when it emerges “from the embrace of theology.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, George Marsden maintains in his *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (1997), that the “separation of faith and learning is widely taken for granted in our culture,” and “for the past century academic prestige has been closely correlated with the jettisoning of institutional religious heritages.”<sup>2</sup>

Historians inclined to exclusively locate English republican values in the secular political theories of the classical and Renaissance eras, and even post-seventeenth century political commitments, often overlook the biblical political arguments of the seventeenth-century. These motivations indicate that republican political theology, or biblical republicanism, is at best, a less inspiring study, at worst, simply irrelevant.

Some scholars have acknowledged the political reading of the Bible during the seventeenth-century, and concluded, rather precipitately, that such scriptural employment was haphazard, unsystematic, and even too manipulated towards preconceived political ends to warrant painstaking investigations of its political role. The work of the late prominent Oxford scholar, Christopher Hill, reflects this assumption. In his chapter “The Revolutionary Bible,” in *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (1993), Hill concludes that the seventeenth-century political use of the Scriptures was a random, opportunistic enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Goldie, “The Civil Religion of James Harrington,” in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe*, ed., A. Pagden (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 198.

<sup>2</sup> George Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 7, 11.

But the Bible produced no agreed new political philosophy: it came to be used as a rag-bag of quotations which could justify whatever a given individual or group wanted to do. As with the practice of seeking guidance from the Lord by turning up a text at random, the Bible ultimately contributed to pragmatism, lack of theory, the rise of empiricism.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the fact that Hill has written an entire book on this subject, his position, while containing an element of truth, and echoing Erasmus' complaint that the Scriptures were read politically "as if they were of wax."<sup>4</sup> seems too categorical a judgment on the entire body of Civil War tracts. This criticism of the use, and hence opportunistic abuse of Scripture in the seventeenth-century tends to justify a disregard for capturing its political relevance during the most extraordinary constitutional upheaval of English history.

### Thesis Statement

Early modern British historiography tends to overlook the political use of the Scriptures among commonwealthsmen, either by separating their scriptural references and readings from their civil models, interpreting them as exclusively devoted to classical and Renaissance texts, or manipulating the Scriptures to popularize political theories. These types of determinations seem unbalanced, and tend to discourage serious investigation of the Bible's political role, consequently resulting in a vacuum of scholarship significantly related to biblically derived political ideals.

To demonstrate the need for moving beyond such standard interpretive conjectures, I argue that these three select commonwealthsmen presented constitutional arguments that were central to their use of the Bible as a political text, and hence, can be identified as biblical republicans. In this regard, their religious arguments cannot be secularized or separated from their political models to make them more accessible to a modern audience. With this, their hermeneutical approaches are somewhat more sophisticated, measured, and methodical, and reflect the methods of the pre-critical era, such as the grammatical historical and the allegorical approaches. Neither did they draw politically from the Scriptures in the same way, but their variations and differences cannot be reduced to "rag bag" methods, or opportunistic and subversive approaches to satiate a biblically literate audience and popularize political agendas.

Vane excepted, Harrington and Milton employ classical and Renaissance political ideas in the construction of their commonwealths, but not exclusively, and in the case of Harrington, his republicanism shows a significant level of dependence upon

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993; Penguin Group, 1994), 188.

<sup>4</sup> H.C. Porter, "The Nose of Wax: Scripture and the Spirit from Erasmus to Milton," *TRHS*, 5th ser., 14 (November 1963): 155.

the Hebrew Polity. The seventeenth-century was marked by an upsurge in Jewish erudition, and both Harrington and Milton were well versed in the Rabbis and the classics. I argue that their resort to non-biblical authors did not entail an epistemological entrenchment to the classics, but testify to their Christian humanist scholarship. Finally, these republicans were political artisans who attempted to construct civil models by wielding religious discourse within a Protestant theological tradition. The Bible was the frame, fabric, and foundation of their models, rather than mere window dressing to make them more habitable and attractive, or furbish their political agendas with an air of scriptural authority.

### Historiographic Justification

Some modern scholars have embarked on a similar inquiry, or stressed the need to recapture the connections between faith and societal reformation among seventeenth-century writers. Jeremy Waldron, in his book *God, Locke, and Equality* (2002), persuasively argues on behalf of the religious foundations of Locke's political thought with the intention of addressing contemporary policy issues on equality. He explains that Locke, in the *First Treatise*, explored the Scriptures in detail "for the precise bearing that it might have on the resolution of quite particular political issues."<sup>5</sup> But "secular theorists often assume that they know what a religious argument is like," presume it "should be excluded from public life," and "conclude therefore that we can have very little in common with John Locke or his interlocutors, who seem to have made the opposite assumption – that public reason should be conducted more or less exclusively in these terms." According to Waldron, the religious dimension of Locke's theory of equality can not be "bracketed out" with the view that "a defensible secular conception of equality would remain."<sup>6</sup> This "hypothesis that we might be able to bracket out the religious content" to simply focus our attention upon equality "presupposes that the religious content has a purely *external* relation to the equality principle," by which he means that such "does not go to the meaning of the principle in question."<sup>7</sup> Locke was "wrestling philosophically with the problem of interpreting biblical texts," and, simply because "it is *about* scripture doesn't make it any the less philosophical, any more opportunistic or occasional."<sup>8</sup>

Lea Campos Boralevi in his "Classical Foundational Myths of European Republicanism: The Jewish Commonwealth" (2002) argues that the political history of

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<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke, and Equality* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

the Netherlands evidences a tradition of republicanism, despite the clear deficiency of Machiavellian political influences considered paramount for the English republican current. Sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch republican theories were biblically informed, and particularly prominent was the Hebrew Commonwealth. Boralevi claims that “proper editions and translations of the Bible,” along with “an enormous quantity of learned commentaries on the Old Testament, . . . – functioned as a bridge between scholarly elaboration and the great public.” The republicanism of the Netherlands evinces “a pervasive presence of the political model of the Jewish Commonwealth and by its peculiar discourse, the ‘scriptural idiom’.”<sup>9</sup>

Other noteworthy early modern historians have responded to this scholarship gap regarding the relationship between biblical hermeneutics, religious views and political visions in the Puritan Revolution. The multi-authored article “Winstanley: A Case for the Man as He Said He Was” (1977), represents a reaction to Hill’s *Winstanley: The Law of Freedom and Other Writings* (1973), and claims Hill “misconstrues his intellectual sources and historical significance by minimising the part theology played in his theories of social and moral change.”<sup>10</sup> Patricia Crawford in her article “Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood” (1977), argued that the Army and Presbyterians used Genesis 9:6 and Numbers 34:33 to prove that Charles I was a “man of blood,” and “one against whom the Lord had set his face;”<sup>11</sup> critical texts for his execution and trial.<sup>12</sup> Blair Worden in his “English Republicanism” (1991), states that republicans perceived their politics as “a supremely religious activity,” though their “religious commitment . . . is easily underestimated or misunderstood.”<sup>13</sup> Barbara Tuttle examined the Levellers’ political use of the Scriptures alongside Milton’s up to 1654, and noted that though the “margins of the religious and political pamphlets of the early 1640’s were often crammed with abbreviated references to biblical texts; these were usually deleted from recent editions of the great Puritan writings,” and her chapter was motivated out of a “curiosity aroused by these italics in fine print.”<sup>14</sup> She concludes that despite the

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<sup>9</sup> Lean Campos Boralevi, “Classical Foundational Myths of European Republicanism: The Jewish Commonwealth,” in *Republicanism. A Shared European Heritage*, vol. 1, *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, eds., Martin Van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 253, 260.

<sup>10</sup> Lotte Mulligan, John K. Graham and Judith Richards, “Winstanley: A Case for the Man as He Said He Was,” *JEH*, 28 (January 1977): 57, 58.

<sup>11</sup> Patricia Crawford, “Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood,” *JBS* 16 (1977): 41.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 51, 58.

<sup>13</sup> Blair Worden, “English Republicanism,” in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700*, eds., J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 472.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara Tuttle, “Biblical Reference in the Political Pamphlets of the Levellers and Milton, 1638-1654,” in *Milton and Republicanism*, eds., David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 63.

maturing “interest in classical political ideals,” the use of the Bible “remained a potential source not only of religious enthusiasm but also of political commitment,” even beyond the “English republican experiment.”<sup>15</sup> Warren Chernaik in his article “Biblical Republicanism” (2000), recognized that “one aspect of seventeenth-century republican thought which has not been sufficiently emphasized is its religious dimension,” which is evident “in the polemical writings of Milton and his contemporaries,” where “secular arguments appealing to nature and reason are again and again buttressed by citations from Scripture and reformed theologians.”<sup>16</sup> John Morrill and Philip Baker in “Oliver Cromwell, the Regicide and the Sons of Zeruiah” (2001), investigated the nature of Cromwell’s “attitude to monarchy,” by examining his personal comments in light of “a keener biblical hermeneutic.”<sup>17</sup> Cromwell’s forty-three letters, from October 1647 to 6 December 1648, revealed from the various quotations and paraphrases employed, that he read thirty-four biblical books, twenty-one of which are from the OT, and thirteen taken from the NT. They conclude “there is not a shred of evidence from this period that Cromwell read anything other than the Bible,”<sup>18</sup> as his “political theory derived exclusively from his understanding of God’s willingness to work with and through a variety of forms as recorded in the Old Testament.” To understand his attitude regarding “what was right to be done about the king in 1647-1649 we must follow him though the Bible and the Bible alone.”<sup>19</sup> Finally, Sarah Barber in “Belshazzar’s Feast: Regicide, Republicanism and the Metaphor of Balance” (2001), argues that regicide and republicanism are connected through “metaphors of ‘balance,’” or a “balance of judgment” in regards to Charles I, who had disturbed this balance of trust between the people and their representatives through his “unparliamentary autocracy.” A commonwealth would restore this “equilibrium.”<sup>20</sup> The arguments in support of this “balance of judgment” she claims, were “by means of scriptural parallel.” Since the downfall of the line of the Stuarts took place over two generations, “oppressive reigns of father and son,” parallel texts for such demise were located in “the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>16</sup> Warren Chernaik, “Biblical Republicanism, *PS* 23 (April 2000): Abstract, 147.

<sup>17</sup> John Morrill and Philip Baker, “Oliver Cromwell, the Regicide and the Sons of Zeruiah,” in *The Regicides and the Execution of Charles I*, ed., Jason Peacey (Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 16. This chapter is also found in David L. Smith, ed., *Cromwell and the Interregnum* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003), 15-37. For more of Morrill’s views on Cromwell’s political thought, especially his typological use of Exodus, see his “William Bereton and England’s Wars of Religion,” *JBS* 24 (July 1985): 331-332.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Barber, “Belshazzar’s Feast: Regicide, Republicanism and the Metaphor of Balance,” in *The Regicide and the Execution of Charles I*, 94.

biblical stories of Nebuchadrezzar and Belshazzar.”<sup>21</sup> The prophetic warnings against these Babylonian rulers were just as relevant to explain the downfall of Charles I.<sup>22</sup>

### Methodology

This study incorporated an inductive analysis of not only the principal political tract associated with each author, but also their wider Interregnum writings, and in some cases, pre-1649 as well as post-restoration tracts to determine a pattern of hermeneutical and exegetical method. This is especially critical for understanding Sir Henry Vane and John Milton, both of whom wrote theological treatises. The larger historiographical context of these political writings was also investigated to determine what prompted the writer to assert his views, or the political and literary circumstances governing a tract. In this regard, I examined newsbooks, parliamentary speeches, diaries and correspondence, state papers, and various civil war pamphlets. Harrington and Vane clearly wrote anti-Cromwellian treatises, while Milton, an employee of the successive Interregnum administrations, is motivated differently. It was assumed from the outset that they would not evidence the same pattern of use, nor highlight equally the same discrete biblical texts in modelling their proposals.

The following represents key questions addressed to examine and establish relationships between their Interregnum reform proposals and their political reading of the Scriptures:

- Do they evidence organizing principles of interpretation? In other words, do they emphasize the grammatical historical method, or the allegorical and typological approaches?
- Did these theorists believe the Bible to be an infallible record divinely authored by God, or assume its authority equal to that of the classics, or prominent Renaissance works?
- Was the Bible employed merely as a polemical tool to buttress preconceived political conceptions to stimulate greater public appeal? In other words, do they use the Bible ornamentally as a textual accessory, or to constitute part or all of their political argument?
- What significant role, if any, did their education play in their approach to the Scriptures?
- Did they seize upon particular texts, and distinct passages as bearing political authority? In this regard, what political issues are underscored with regard to particular parts of the Bible?
- How did they understand the reformational dictum *sola scriptura*? Did they adhere to the concept of *adiaphora*, or the view that scriptural silence justifies the use of reason and prudence?

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 95-96.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 99-101.

- What biblical translations do they regard as authoritative? Did they consider it critical to have a working knowledge of the original languages of Scripture for its interpretation?
- What was the significance of covenant theology relative to political ideas?
- Should the employment of classical and Renaissance sources alongside scriptural references throw into question a writer's political use of the Bible? If in borrowing such language, do they direct it towards biblical ends and purposes? Should their quotation of classical and Renaissance sources be interpreted as a non-biblical epistemological orientation or more indicative of Christian humanism?
- Was the polity of the Hebrew Commonwealth considered normative, or suited to Israel's circumstances rather than a paradigm for all time? Were there particular aspects of Israel's polity that these theorists found attractive? How did they understand the role of Moses or Israel's judicial law? Was Israel's polity seen as a divine civil blueprint or simply another historical example to set alongside those of Greece and Rome?
- Did any of these authors examine the Scriptures through the Nature/Grace relationship?

### **Rationale for Choice of Political Theorists and Outline of Chapters**

These particular republican writers were chosen not only because their civil proposals represent radical attempts to comprehensively overhaul England's ancient constitution, but they uniquely employ an arsenal of biblical principles and texts in their modelling. Significant also for my choice relates to the historiographic trends regarding their civil models. There is much disagreement over the type of classical republican Milton was, and minimal discussion and scholarship is devoted to Vane's model, and who is often secularized. Harrington is consistently interpreted as a Machiavellian, with hardly any serious attention paid to his use of the Hebrew Polity.

The second chapter opens with James Harrington primarily because he is considered the measure of English classical republican political theory of the Machiavellian school. Though he uses the Scriptures, his employment is either considered pragmatic and opportunistic, or his resort to the Hebrew Polity rarely mentioned. It also seemed reasonable to position Harrington first because his *Oceana* spawned a constitutional controversy which Vane thought significant enough to respond to with *Needful Corrective*, while Milton denounced its larger constitutional outlines in *Readie and Easie*.

The chapter attempts to challenge the assertion that Harrington's model is purely classical, and his biblical use inconsequential, by arguing for a republicanism steeped in Hebraic political overtones and principles as evidenced in *Oceana* and subsequent tracts, especially his *Art of Lawgiving* (1659). In this regard, I discuss accusations of atheism by a few of Harrington's contemporaries as well as a continuous current of

royalist indictments of his overuse of the Hebrew Polity throughout the chapter. The bulk of the chapter is taken up with Harrington's political use of the Hebrew Commonwealth, which includes a discussion on his rabbinic studies, the political role of Jethro, the Priest of Midian found in Exodus 18: 19-27 and Harrington's positive portrayal of heathen counsel, as well as the role of the Scriptures in Oceana's education system. I also include a section of his political philosophy, principles of government, and constitutional design and demonstrate how these are either derived from or paralleled in Israel's pre-monarchic government.

Chapter three covers John Milton, who is categorized somewhat similarly as Harrington, though to a lesser extent, as a classical republican. The historiography is somewhat conflicting as to the exact nature of his classical extraction, and he is often accused of being a lesser sort of political theorist compared to Harrington. But Milton evidences a rather strong attachment to certain aspects of the Hebrew Polity, though dissimilar to Harrington, while maintaining the preeminence of the Gospel in his struggle for Christian liberty. In this regard, he exhibits a distinctive political use of Matthew 20: 25-28, which functions as a signature text in his *Readie and Easie*, but rarely mentioned in the literature.

The chapter argues that Milton is more a biblical republican than a classical one, and that his use of classical sources is consistent with his Christian humanist education. This is demonstrated first by explicit statements regarding his view of the Scriptures and hermeneutical method in his theological tract *De Doctrina*. Milton, like Harrington, underwent an education steeped in the classics, and his tenure at St. Pauls, founded by the famous English Christian humanist John Colet, influenced his literal approach to the Scriptures. In this regard, Milton resorted to Greek and Roman classics for theological and political illustrations. Moreover, given the pervasive Christian humanism of the times, neither Harrington nor Milton saw any contradiction in synthesizing pagan classical works with the Christian text to model a commonwealth. After all, pagan authors, though harboring a corrupt image of God, could bear witness to moral truths, and their rhetoric, along with the secular languages of reason, common law, or civic republicanism, could be infused with religious and theological meanings.

Milton is also interpreted as indulging in literary opportunism in corroboration with civil authorities given his service as Secretary of Foreign Tongues throughout the Interregnum. But his tracts seem to testify against this, and prove that he held to the same political principles from 1649 to 1660 and beyond. Also relevant for understanding his biblical republicanism is his marginalization of the Mosaic Judicials

and the ascendancy of the Gospel dispensation in his pursuit of Christian liberty. I have included an extensive discussion of his OT political authorities of Deuteronomy 7:14-20 and 1 Samuel 8:1-22 in arguing for limited authority of kings, popular sovereignty, and supremacy of the Hebrew Commonwealth. His key NT political texts of Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13 are also discussed as to their relevant place in establishing divinely instituted and directed civil authority. But most supportive of his biblical republicanism is the political role of Matthew 20:20-28 from which Milton derives a language of *gentilism*, or tyrannical authority, and in combination with the Deuteronomy and 1 Samuel passages, erects a commonwealth model of a standing senate subordinated by local judicatures.

The fourth chapter is devoted to Sir Henry Vane, who represents the most difficult political theorist to comprehend, though there is agreement in the literature that he represents the most “religious” of republicans. But his political ideas, such as limited government and liberty of conscience, are secularized, and stripped of their biblical foundations. This chapter is the longest, partly because it considers Vane’s short tenure of service as Governor of Massachusetts Bay from 1635-1636, including his role in the Antinomian crises. It seemed relevant to cover this period to establish the early stages of his theology of union with Christ, critical for understanding his hermeneutical method, as well as his principles of limited government and liberty of conscience. The chapter explores his role as an MP in the Long Parliament and the Rump Parliament, especially as it touches religious reform and the bill for establishing an equal representative. I include a discussion on his recorded speeches and comments related to the Parliaments of 1659 to profile his last political models.

Vane’s *A Healing Question Propounded* (1656) is an anti-Cromwellian tract, and I incorporate a lengthy section on its historiographical context, in part, to reveal the affectionate relationship between him and Cromwell. Though this tract is logical, concise, and direct in its political purpose, as is *A Needful Corrective* (1658), his theological treatise *Retired Mans Meditations* is not. Its appearance as a subjective theological discourse with rambling disconnected chapters advancing towards a radical millennial reign of Christ with the rule of the saints, has hindered serious investigation of its contents. Few, understandably, have attempted to tackle this treatise systematically to tease out Vane’s theology, let alone mine it for political nuggets. And yet it does equip readers with forthright assertions of his allegorical hermeneutical method, his doctrine of union with the spirit, and a chapter devoted to political theology.

Vane presents some rather difficult political concepts, which are apocalyptic and millennial in nature, and drawn in large part from OT and NT prophetic passages. I attempt to unravel his biblical reading of a “restoration of primitive magistracy,” limited civil jurisdiction and liberty of conscience, supreme laws for civil-modelling, the right of representation and legislative supremacy, and limited franchise. Also reviewed is his understanding of the political relevance of the Mosaic Judicials, and his fundamental political disagreements with James Harrington’s *Prerogative of Power* in regards to his agrarian, rotation, and the salutary nature of good laws expressed in his *Needful Corrective*.

### **Historiography: How Early Moderns Read the Scriptures**

Early moderns approached the Scriptures through various languages and vocabularies to convey their political views. Anthony Pagden’s *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (1987) concentrates on four that represent what he describes as “the most important, most easily identifiable languages of political theory in use in early-modern Europe.” These are the languages of the “law of nature,” which is also referred to as “political Aristotelianism,” “classical republicanism,” as well as “political economy,” and the fourth, the “language of the science of politics.”<sup>23</sup> Harrington, with his “civic humanism” and Milton with his “language of liberty” are typically categorized under classical republicanism. Milton also employs the law of nature in his arguments, but not simply within an Aristotelian tradition. As will be indicated, he believed that all men had been created in God’s image, and despite the Fall, could still understand truth. J.P. Sommerville explains that “the law of nature was God’s law since it consisted of a set of instructions which God had imprinted in human nature at the Creation.”<sup>24</sup>

It might be supposed that the Protestant emphasis on the corruption of human nature would have led to a rejection of natural law. In fact, Protestants believed that corruption had not entirely obliterated people’s ability to distinguish between good and evil. The doctrine of natural law was held to be compatible with a Calvinist theology of grace. . . . Human nature was totally corrupted in the sense that on their own people could do nothing to achieve salvation. Yet nature was not so corrupt that pagans, lacking grace, were wholly blind to God’s laws.<sup>25</sup>

In this regard, there is a Protestant biblical approach to the law of nature argument that simply cannot be confined neatly to Aristotelian categories.

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<sup>23</sup> Anthony Pagden, “Introduction,” in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3.

<sup>24</sup> J.P. Sommerville, *Royalists and Patriots: Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640*, 2d ed (London: Longman, 1999), 14.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Vane would not seem to fall within any of Pagden's four categories, though he certainly employed that "language of liberty" like Milton, but which is often identified with classical republicanism. What this thesis attempts to demonstrate is that there is also a language of biblical republicanism, whose various vocabularies, concepts and constructs include relationships between Nature and Grace, Christian humanism, Jewish political thought, as well as hermeneutical methods established within the pre-critical era of exegesis. If these categories of biblical republicanism are considered, then our understanding of the civil models of Harrington, Vane and Milton will be enlarged, and the manner in which they used the Bible politically more intelligible.

### Nature and Grace

According to Arthur Woodhouse this "scheme of *nature* and a scheme of *grace*" was the rudimentary lens from which the world was viewed. If one refuses to acknowledge this framework, or misconstrues their relationship, then the "Puritan mind has eluded you."<sup>26</sup>

Albert Wolters in his "Christianity and the Classics," delineates five different combinations of this paradigm with their analogous relationship to attitudes to the classics.<sup>27</sup> Such a taxonomy of hermeneutical positions evidences greater or lesser levels of continuity and discontinuity between Nature and Grace.

If Grace replaces Nature, or "*opposes nature*," then the "natural is antithetical to the spiritual." The newness of life found in the Gospel message is in conflict with the old sinful man, or "old nature."<sup>28</sup> This translates into a "resolute rejection" of classical sources, as "the new life in Christ is simply incompatible with classical culture and must avoid it." Tertullian's pronouncement "'What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem'," is a condensed summary of this position,<sup>29</sup> which would also find agreement among Fifth Monarchists, and to some extent Vane. But if Nature presents itself as somewhat deficient in declaring knowledge, then "it cannot come to the point of complete realization of what it strives for," and is therefore "imperfect" and "incomplete." Scripture then must come alongside Nature to "perfect" it, and therefore it is "subordinated to grace." Thomas Aquinas and the teachings of Roman Catholicism

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<sup>26</sup> A.S.P. Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty. Being the Army Debates (1647-9) From the Clarke Manuscripts with Supplementary Documents* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons LTD., 1974), 39.

<sup>27</sup> My categorization comes from Albert M. Wolters, "Christianity and the Classics: a Typology of Attitudes," in *Christianity and the Classics, The Acceptance of a Heritage*, ed., Wendy Helleman (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1989), 189-203. Nature and Grace have been employed to contrast various antithetical realities. I am employing this paradigm to contrast faith and revelation with reason.

<sup>28</sup> Wolters, "Christianity and the Classics," 194.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 195, 196.

represent this view.<sup>30</sup> In this regard, “classical antiquity points forward or paves the way for the advent of Christianity,” “the supernatural order completes” the natural realm, and “natural reason is perfected by revelation.” The classics then can be used in a positive and instrumental way.<sup>31</sup>

The third category is that “Grace *flanks* nature.” Here, the natural stands alongside the spiritual as an independent realm with its own validity,” which “does not need to be validated or in any sense raised to a higher level by grace.” This category seems to represent “classical Lutheranism.”<sup>32</sup> If Grace simply confirms Nature in this regard, then classical literature acts “as a parallel authority” and “the realms of the sacred and the secular coexist alongside each other.” Wolters notes that a common method depicting this attitude is revealed in the use of classical citations in marginalia to buttress a biblical text, as it is assumed that “there is great congruence between the proverbial wisdom of pagan antiquity and that of the Bible.” The classics then are “supplemented” by the Scriptures, “but not in a way which subordinates or depreciates” them.<sup>33</sup> It would seem that Harrington corresponds closely to this category.

The fourth category is that “Grace restores nature,” or “enters into nature in order to renew it from within, to bring it back to its created purpose.”<sup>34</sup> Nature is seen as corrupt and fallen, and must be transformed by Grace, a view shared by Augustine and dominate in Calvinism. The classics can be legitimately used for Christian purposes.<sup>35</sup> Milton would tend to find agreement with this category. And Finally, if Nature and Grace are viewed as “equal,” then “all sense of contrast, or even distinction” between them is “eliminated.” This category reflects the view found in “classical liberal theology,”<sup>36</sup> and assumes classical literature incorporates Gospel truths in “germinal form,” and Christianity “its natural product or extension.”<sup>37</sup>

### Christian Humanism

Some Protestants, like Harrington and Milton, saw no contradiction in synthesizing pagan classical works with the Christian text to model a commonwealth. Since all truth was God’s truth, pagan authors, though retaining a corrupt image of God,

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 196-197.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 194-195.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 197-198.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 198-199.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 199-200.

could bear witness to truth, and therefore it was acceptable to revitalize their secular languages and rhetoric with biblical concepts.<sup>38</sup>

Margo Todd in her *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (1987), attempts to de-mythologize Puritan scholarship by suggesting that Puritans exceeded Scriptural assumptions, ventured “beyond the Bible or their Reformed heritage for their ideas,” and approached both Scripture and theology in a way continuous with their immediate Christian humanist predecessors.<sup>39</sup>

Christian humanists contributed significantly to social reform, but did so with both Renaissance and classical sources in mind. Todd believes “scholars have failed to see the puritans as the heirs of a complex intellectual legacy – classical, medieval, and Renaissance humanist as well as Reformed.”

The intellectual development of a sixteenth-century protestant was no more monochromatic than ours, and they were no better at drawing lines and making distinctions than most people, contemporary or modern. So we find their social and political treatises citing Xenophon and St. Paul in the same breath. Erasmus and Zanchius in the same marginal note. Heretofore, our solution to this apparent paradox had been simply to ignore half of their sources and insist that the other half was exclusively formative – of a single, consistent, protestant social ideology.<sup>40</sup>

Todd maintains that the prominent characteristic of Christian humanism was “devotion to a biblical reformation of Christendom.”<sup>41</sup> The contribution of Renaissance scholarly techniques to Scriptural investigation and hermeneutical inquiry is also too well documented to be dismissed. “The Renaissance demand for a return to the sources became for Christian humanists an imperative to apply the critical assumptions and the exegetical techniques of the Italian humanists to the Christian’s most authoritative text.” Robert Linder notes in his “Calvinism and Humanism” (1975), that “Christian humanism has one main unifying feature – its historical approach to the classical texts of the Christian faith.”<sup>42</sup> With its appreciation for these scholarly investigative techniques, Christian humanism demanded “a return to the sources,” which consequently drew attention back to a profound appreciation and investigation of ancient historical sources, both patristic and classical. But the “text of the Bible itself was, of course, paramount among Christian humanist concerns.”<sup>43</sup> This Renaissance

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<sup>38</sup> This seems to be the conclusion of Peter Leithart in regards to Calvin’s employment of Cicero. See “That Eminent Pagan: Calvin’s Use of Cicero in Institutes 1. 1-5,” *WTJ* 52 (Spring 1990): 1-12.

<sup>39</sup> Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 6, 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>42</sup> Robert D. Linder, “Calvinism and Humanism: The First Generation,” *CH* 44 (June 1975): 168.

<sup>43</sup> Todd, *Christian Humanism*, 22-23.

extraction of philological approaches to biblical exegesis, as well as Scholastic textual methods for that matter, emphasize a mode and manner of scholarship as opposed to an integration of a new philosophical thrust or tendency, a topic well covered and discussed by Richard Muller in his “Calvin and the “Calvinists”: Assessing Continuities and Discontinuities Between the Reformation and Orthodoxy,” (1995-1996).<sup>44</sup>

Todd comments further that “for Christian humanists the pagan classics were servants of Christianity,” and Erasmus the towering figure of influence.<sup>45</sup>

Their stance was not simply neo-stoic; nor is it accurate to identify it simply with the civic humanism of Italy. Biblicism, patristic influences, Stoicism and civic humanism were all tightly interwoven in Erasmianism to produce a thoroughly distinctive movement, religious, civic, Christian and humanist. With Seneca and Christ, humanists called for individual self-control; with Cicero, they called for good government; with the Old Testament prophets, they called for social justice. The search for practical solutions to real problems in this world came to be seen by them as the believer’s true calling. This amalgam of pious yet practical social activism should be seen as another hallmark of Erasmian humanism.<sup>46</sup>

“Christian humanist social theory was in essence, then, a framework for the reformation of the commonwealth.”<sup>47</sup>

According to Calvin, in his *Institutes*, the employment of pagan sources was to be qualified by the Scripture’s prominent place as the absolute source of truth.

Read Demosthenes or Cicero; read Plato, Aristotle, and others of that tribe. They will, I admit, allure you, delight you, move you, enrapture you in wonderful measure. But betake yourself from them to this sacred reading. Then, in spite of yourself, so deeply will it affect you, so penetrate your heart, so fix itself in your marrow, that, compared with its deep impression, such vigor as the orators and philosophers have will nearly vanish. Consequently, it is easy to see that the Sacred Scriptures, which by far surpass all gifts and graces of human endeavor, breathe something divine.<sup>48</sup>

Calvin highlighted his own personal regard for the pervasive wisdom that abounded in the works of the classics. “That admirable light of truth shining in” secular writings can

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<sup>44</sup> Richard Muller, “Calvin and the “Calvinists”: Assessing Continuities and Discontinuities Between the Reformation and Orthodoxy,” part one, *CTJ* 30 (1995): 345-75, and part two, 31 (1996): 125-60. Muller takes his audience through ten “Premises of Reappraisal,” in discussing the trend of “pitting Calvin against the Calvinists and of the Reformation against all things Scholastic.” This assessment is also found in his *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>45</sup> Todd, *Christian Humanism*, 27.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>48</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed., John T. McNeill, trans., Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 20 (London: SCM Press, LTD., 1961), Book 1, 82.

“teach us that, the mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God’s excellent gifts.”<sup>49</sup>

### Rabbinic and Jewish Studies in the Seventeenth - Century

Another aspect of seventeenth-century political thought was the infusion of Hebraic literature with its accompanying Rabbinic scholarship. Edwyn Bevan’s and Charles Singer’s “Hebrew Studies in the Reformation and After,” in *The Legacy of Israel* (1927) represents a thorough discussion of the history of Hebrew studies in pre- and post-Reformation Europe.<sup>50</sup> J.W. Rogerson’s “Writing the History of Israel in the 17th & 18th Centuries” (1992), explains that one method of “writing Israel’s history,” was to analyze her civil institutions.<sup>51</sup> Significant for any study of the issue of Jewish history and Jewish readmission into England in the seventeenth-century is David S. Katz’s *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England* (1982) and *The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850* (1994, 1996).<sup>52</sup> Most recently, one of the most significant current contributions to the study of Hebrew history and civil government is Adam Sutcliffe’s *Judaism and Enlightenment* (2003). Sutcliffe notes that “English Protestant identification with the ancient Hebrews reached a dramatic crescendo in the Interregnum period, and is reflected in the writings of Selden, Hobbes and Harrington.”<sup>53</sup>

### Pre-critical Exegesis

The seventeenth-century is typically understood as the latter end of the pre-critical age, and hence a dominant hermeneutical approach. In *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* (1984), Henning Reventlow highlights in his chapter, “The Age of the Puritans,” the lack of attention paid to the diverse “church-political attitudes” of Puritans and Anglicans regarding their “understanding of the Bible.” The reason is that the “history of theology seldom looks at biblical hermeneutics because hitherto the history of exegesis has regarded this period as a pre-critical age and

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>50</sup> Edwyn R. Bevan and Charles Singer, eds., “Hebrew Studies in the Reformation and After,” in *The Legacy of Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 317-375.

<sup>51</sup> J.W. Rogerson, “Writing the History of Israel in the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” in *The Scriptures and the Scrolls, Studies in Honour of A.S. Van Der Woude on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, eds., F. Garcia Martinez, A. Hilhorst and C.J. Labuschagne, *Supplement to Vetus Testamentum*, 49 (Leiden, New York, Köln, 1992), 220.

<sup>52</sup> David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Reasmission of the Jews to England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) and *The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, 1996).

<sup>53</sup> Adam Sutcliff, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 16, 51.

therefore found it somewhat unattractive.”<sup>54</sup> Richard Muller and John Thompson in their chapter “The Significance of Precritical Exegesis: Retrospect and Prospect” in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of Reformation* (1996) explain that the term pre-critical “was neither coined nor embraced by those supposed to have practiced it.” but instead, “spawned by an era and a method that held these earlier practitioners in some contempt.” In this regard, it “represents a profound (and, one may add, uncontrolled) bias in the historical literature.”<sup>55</sup> This “bias” which Muller refers to stems from proponents of the historical-critical approach, which had been “lionized as the key to unlocking the past,”<sup>56</sup> and who identify “precritical” with “uncritical.” But as Muller explains, pre-critical interpreters “were not bereft of method merely because they followed a different method,” nor were they without “standards for self-evaluation.” Rather, pre-critical exegetes “saw the text in a different light, and employed their own criteria in examination of the text,” and “exhibit substantial differences over against the methods of ‘higher criticism.’” To refuse to understand and respect these differences is nothing short of “chronological snobbery.”<sup>57</sup>

Pre-critical exegetes were just as concerned with issues of “philology and context,” as historical-critical interpreters.<sup>58</sup> Muller and Thompson identify four main differences between pre-critical and historical-critical exegesis. First, patristic, medieval and Reformation exegetes equated the story of a biblical text with its “literal or grammatical sense,” and allowed the text to be “governed by the scope and goal of the biblical book in the canonical revelation of God.” In other words, they assumed that “a divine purpose and divine authorship unite the text of the entire canon.” Scripture manifests a “historical and theological unity,” and such unity was brought to bear upon the interpretation of a passage or book. The shorthand explanation is that Scripture interprets Scripture.<sup>59</sup> Another common assumption was the belief that the pursuit of the literal sense of the text was located in “the believing community that once received and continues to receive the text,” and not simply an “historical community” or a “repository of the religious relics of a past age.” In this regard, the text was “the divinely inspired message to an ongoing community of faith.” Thirdly, Pre-critical exegetes also

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<sup>54</sup> Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, trans., John Bowden (London: SCM Press LTD., 1984), 105.

<sup>55</sup> Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson, “The Significance of Precritical Exegesis,” *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of Reformation* ed., Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996), 335.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 335-336.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 339. See also David C. Steinmetz, “The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis,” *IT* 27 (April 1980): 27-38.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.

approached the Scriptures as “sacred text,” which directed attention “beyond its original context into the life of the church.”<sup>60</sup> And finally, pre-critical exegetes did not conduct their scholarship in isolation of the work of their forebears.<sup>61</sup>

### Definition of Key Terms

I also readily acknowledge the difficulties associated with making definitional statements regarding the exact nature of English “republicanism” and “republican” political thought. John Pocock claims that it represented “a language, not a programme.”<sup>62</sup> Worden states that “behind that rhetoric we would search in vain for a systematic republican theory,”<sup>63</sup> and that “it was not a philosophy likely to produce a united political platform.”<sup>64</sup> Worden does explain that parliamentary republicans did agree “that all power derived originally from the people and could be resumed by the people.”<sup>65</sup> Jonathan Scott states that “English republicanism cannot be reduced to that antimonarchical component,” or “to a particular language or a particular constitutional vision.”<sup>66</sup>

Thomas Corns in his “Milton and the Characteristics of a Free Commonwealth,” has researched the term “republic” and found that it “is infrequently used in the mid-century to describe the constitutional experiments of 1649-60. The more commonly used word for government in that period is ‘commonwealth’, though that remains a deeply ambiguous term.”<sup>67</sup> Corns explains that he concluded this by conducting an electronic search of “republic,” “republican” and “republicanism” by “scanning all the material cited in quotations dating from the period 1630-80.” He states that the term “republic” occurs usually in discussions of Geneva or Venice, rather than England,” while during the Interregnum, “Commonwealth” is usually employed to refer to the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 340-341.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 342. According to Anthony Thiselton in his *New Horizons in Hermeneutics, The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), the pre-critical, or pre-modern age of interpretation, includes the allegorical method, which is sometimes referred to as a typological approach, which seeks to determine correspondences between historical situations, people, or events. Sir Henry Vane was an allegorist.

<sup>62</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, ed., *The Political Works of James Harrington* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), 15.

<sup>63</sup> Blair Worden, “Milton’s Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven,” in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed., Gisela Block, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli, Ideas in Context, Richard Rorty, J.B. Schneewind, Quentin Skinner, and Wolf Lepenies (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 227.

<sup>64</sup> Blair Worden, “Classical Republicanism and the Puritan Revolution,” in *History and Imagination, Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper*, eds., Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl, and Blair Worden (London: Duckworth, 1981), 193.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Jonathan Scott, “Classical Republicanism in Seventeenth-Century England and the Netherlands,” in *Republicanism, A Shared European Heritage*, vol. 1, 61.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Corns, “Milton and the Characteristics of a Free Commonwealth,” in *Milton and Republicanism*, eds., David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge University Press, 1995, 1998), 27-28.

English State.<sup>68</sup> I have taken into consideration Corns' research, and for the sake of this thesis, I frequently employ the term commonwealthsmen as opposed to republicans. But my decision is also based upon the observation that this is primarily how they seemed to identify themselves as a party, while their enemies referred to them as "republicans" in a condemnatory and condescending way. But, I do use the terms interchangeably.

### **Delimitations**

One other significant figure rarely mentioned in the literature was originally part of this project, though word limitation requirements would simply not permit his inclusion. John Eliot's *Christian Commonwealth, or the Civil Polity of the Rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ* (1659), presents a rather fascinating political use of Exodus 18, with its rulers of tens, fifties, hundred, and thousands, for constructing a commonwealth. Eliot is best known for his missionary work among the Algonquin tribes of Massachusetts Bay and he modelled his praying towns upon his understanding of the civil application of the Exodus passage. He wrote his *Christian Commonwealth* in 1652 after he established his first praying town at Natick, and then sent it to England as a model to follow, though Livewell Chapman never published it until late 1659. His primitivist reading of Exodus 18 would have made for an interesting contrast with Harrington's use of it, and his resurrection of the Judiciais as part of his model commonwealth contradicts the views of Milton and Vane on their applicability under the Gospel.

Another figure whose political use of the Scriptures would have enhanced this thesis is the radical Fifth Monarchist John Rogers. His interaction with Harrington, Baxter and Vane highlights their contrasting uses, and though he is profiled in the thesis, a separate chapter on him for a larger work would prove interesting.

There is scholarship currently underway which would have served this thesis. Ruth Mayers, an Assistant Professor of History at Geneva College in Pennsylvania, is currently working on a biography of Vane as a republican statesman, and Professor Walter S. Lim of the National University of Singapore is writing a book entitled *John Milton, Radical Politics, and Biblical Republicanism in Early Modern England*. The publication dates of both their works is still unknown.

### **Significance of the Study and Contribution to Scholarship**

A work of this character is meant to contribute to the historical scholarship already devoted to understanding early modern British political thought, but also offer a

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. see footnote 4.

timely recognition of the significant place of the Bible for republican thought generally. In this regard, I hope to demonstrate how a study of the Bible can illumine the political thought and civil-modelling of the seventeenth-century. It is also my intention to advance the investigation of biblical political theology further, especially as it relates to applications of the Hebrew Polity.

## CHAPTER II

### JAMES HARRINGTON'S *OCEANA* (1656): WRITING POLITICS OUT OF ISRAEL - THE AUTHORITY OF ISRAEL AS PARADIGMATIC FOR *OCEANA*

Oceana, I say, cannot be wounded by piercing the authority of Israel, with which she is armed cap-`a-pie.

James Harrington, *Prerogative of Popular Government* (1657)<sup>1</sup>

There is a greater light than the sun, but it doth not extinguish the sun; nor doth any light of God's giving extinguish that of nature, but increase and sanctify it. James Harrington on the utility of the Scriptures in *Oceana*'s university system. *Oceana* (1656)<sup>2</sup>

Harrington's *Oceana* ignited a major constitutional controversy, and historians continue to debate the ideological origins and influence of his model. The focus of this chapter is Harrington's reading of the Scriptures, and particularly his reflections upon and adaptations of the Hebrew Commonwealth in crafting *Oceana*'s constitutional essentials. The historiography typically treats *Oceana* as a thoroughgoing non-Christian classical model, and interprets Harrington's political employment of the Scriptures as opportunistic to appease a scripturally saturated audience. In this regard, he is often referred to as an English Machiavellian or a formative thinker presaging Enlightenment political perspectives. His uses of such classical material notwithstanding, these standard judgments neglect his considerable detailed analysis of the Hebrew Commonwealth and its formative place in *Oceana*. Not only does he positively employ Israel's polity as illustrative of some of his political principles alongside the classical models of Athens, Rome, Lacedaemon, and Venice, but attributes to it a singular divine status. This chapter will argue that the Hebrew Commonwealth played a significant and prominent political role in *Oceana*, specifically as a republican constitutional paradigm, and that Harrington's political use of it was in keeping with his understanding of its divine status as an authoritative exemplar, and not for purposes of political expediency.

Harrington's interest in Israel's government and the dynamics of its polity is evidenced by his self-confessed study of the leading rabbinic sources and scholars of his day, such as Selden and Grotius, to give two examples. The foundations of Israel's agrarian law, along with the popular establishment of her Sanhedrin and the Jethronian Courts, as well as the rotation of her prerogative or congregation, are used paradigmatically in *Oceana*'s constitutional structure. In this regard, Harrington writes *Oceana* out of Israel by recognizing and extending her "authority" over his model, as opposed to her "power." Most of Harrington's polemical debates entered into with

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<sup>1</sup> *Prerogative*, 464.

<sup>2</sup> *Oceana*, 307.

royalists after *Oceana*’s publication turned on disputes regarding his use of the Hebrew Polity, and his responses testify to its political importance for his republican model, and the integrity of his use of it as more than merely a religious propaganda prop.

This chapter explores Harrington’s political reading of Exodus 18: 19-22 in regards to the heathen advice Jethro gave to Moses in establishing Israel’s local judicatures, which not only represents his primary political text for popular prerogative, along with Deuteronomy 1: 13, but secures divine permission to plunder non-biblical sources for principles inherent within all “ancient” commonwealths. Harrington’s defense against accusations of atheism for resorting to those same heathen and pagan authors who are given disproportionate attention in modern historiography is also discussed. His manifest demonstration of a grammatical and historical exegetical method of biblical interpretation evidences the possibility that Christian humanism influenced his use of the Scriptures and extra-biblical texts.

Apart from a brief biography of Harrington, the historiography of *Oceana*, as well as its historical and literary context, the remaining sections of the chapter fall under four significant heads. The first relates Harrington’s perspective of the nature of the Hebrew Commonwealth, his rabbinic scholarship and study, as well as the place of the Scriptures in *Oceana*’s educational system. The second represents a distillation of his principles of government as found in Nature, or how he writes politics out of Nature, which includes a discussion of his use of Jethro’s advice found in Exodus 18:19-27, his principles of power and authority, agrarian balance, and the debate and result in a commonwealth. The third section, the most significant, contains his adaptation of the Hebrew Commonwealth to *Oceana*, or how he writes politics out of Israel. Here, I detail Harrington’s rabbinic and biblical scholarship as it concerns Israel’s genealogical and local divisions, including her agrarian law, the authority of Israel as to the establishment of her Senate Sanhedrin and Jethronian Judicatures, the ballot of Israel, and the rotation of her congregation, and how he incorporated these orders into *Oceana*. The chapter closes with the disintegration of Israel’s orders, which highlights his understanding of 1 Samuel 8:6-7 and Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

### **Brief Biography of Harrington up to 1656**

“Harrington,” says Toland, “*was the greatest Commonwealthsman in the World,*” and that “*Oceana is, . . . , the most perfect Form of Popular Government that ever was.*”<sup>3</sup> He was born of noble birth in Rutlandshire in January 1611, and attended

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<sup>3</sup> John Toland, *The Oceana of James Harrington and His Other Works; Som wheret are now First Publish'd from His Own Manuscripts. The Whole Collected, Methodiz'd and Review'd with an*

Trinity College, Oxford as a “Gentleman Commoner.” in 1629 where he matured in his mastery of Greek and Latin, so clearly evidenced in his writings. He would travel the continent during the Thirty Years’ War for approximately five years, including a visit to Holland, which Toland says inspired him “to make Government the Subject of his Meditations.” He travelled to France, and then Italy where he “prefer’d *Venice* to all other places in *Italy*, as he did its Government to all those of the whole World.”<sup>4</sup>

Harrington returned to England during the initial stages of the Civil War, and Wood notes that in 1642, he attempted, but failed, to capture a seat in the Commons. In 1647 he was made groom of the King’s bedchamber, and his discussions with Charles I frequently turned on government, though “when they hapned to talk of a Commonwealth, the K. seemed not to endure it.”<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding his closeness to the King, Toland states that Harrington’s regal service was with “untainted fidelity, without doing any thing inconsistent with the Liberty of his Country.” Upon the King’s death, Harrington “was obeserv’d to keep much in his Library, and more retir’d than usually, which was by his Friends a long time attributed to Meloncholy or Discontent.” Harrington’s self-imposed isolation was in service to his *Oceana*, and is reported to have said that when “he began to examin things seriously, he had principally addicted himself to the study of Civil Government, as being of the highest importance to the Peace and Felicity of mankind.”<sup>6</sup>

### Historiography of *Oceana*

#### Early Modern: a Classical and Renaissance Model

John Pocock notes that Harrington “insisted that the Mosaic commonwealth had been a true classical republic.”<sup>7</sup> The term classical though is often considered to have begun with the Greco-Roman influence with its vast literary milieu of Greek and Latin

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*Exact Account of His Life* (London, 1700), vii, ix. See also Luc Borot, “The Life of James Harrington,” in *James Harrington and the Notion of Commonwealth; With a critical edition of John Toland’s . . . of Harrington, Harrington’s Mechanics of Nature, and Proposition in order to the Proposing of a Commonwealth or Democracie*, ed. Luc Borot, *Collection Astrae* 6 (Paul-Valery University - Montpellier III, 1998), 23-77. Borot follows the 1747 reprint of Toland.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xiii, xiv, xv. Toland states that Harrington came under the influence of Chillingworth while at Oxford, though I have not been able to establish the exact nature of this.

<sup>5</sup> Wood, *AO*, vol. 2, 436.

<sup>6</sup> Toland, *Oceana*, xvi, xvii. Woods states that Harrington attended the King on the Scaffold, and “received a pledge of his Majesties affection. From that time always, even when *Oliver* raigned, he would speak of the said King with the greatest zeal and passion imaginable, and would often say to his Companions, that his death gave him so great grief, that he contracted a disease by it, and that never anything went more near to him than the death of that most wise and pious Prince.” See Wood, *AO*, vol. 2, 437. Elazar suggests that Harrington’s friendship with Charles I probably “kept him from being a mere doctrinaire republican.” Daniel Elazar, *Covenant and Civil Society; The Constitutional Matrix of Modern Democracy, The Covenant Tradition in Politics*, vol. 4 (New Brunswick; London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 61.

<sup>7</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment, Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 1975), 398.

authors, non-inclusive of Hebrew political thought. Some historians though do refer to the Bible as a classical text, and recognized that early moderns like Harrington did as well. For example, Avraham Melamed in his "English Travellers and Venetian Scholars," stated that Harrington considered the OT as relevant of a political source as the other classic texts, but viewed "the ancient Hebrew government no less instructive about the ideal state than the Roman republic of the Venetian "governo misto."<sup>8</sup> Similarly in his "Jethro's Advice in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish and Christian Political Thought," he claimed that Harrington believed the "Jews represented . . . the classical past no less than did the Greeks and Romans."<sup>9</sup>

But most historians understand classical to exclude the Scriptures, or assumed that Harrington read the Bible like any other historical text. For example, H.F. Russell-Smith, in *Harrington and His Oceana* (1914) believed he approached the Bible as nothing more than the history of the Jews, and "although for these peculiar reasons important," considered it "subordinate to both classical and modern history." Smith concluded, that "it was above all to the cities of the ancient world that he looked."<sup>10</sup> Christopher Hill in *Puritanism and Revolution* (1962) claimed that Harrington "was a theoretical republican, especially admiring the Venetian constitution," who practiced a "rational approach to religion," meaning he "treated the Old Testament as a historical document to be examined and used like any other, and he described the rule of the saints as a mere oligarchy."<sup>11</sup>

Early modern historians are also quick to rest their case for Harrington as a classical republican who was largely influenced in his political views by the philosopher Machiavelli. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975) and *The Political Works of James Harrington* (1977) have been a formidable influence on the reading of Harrington's politics. According to Pocock, the "historical significance" of Harrington's work "is that it marks a moment of paradigmatic breakthrough, a major revision of English political theory and history in the light of concepts drawn from civic humanism and Machiavellian republicanism."<sup>12</sup> Blair Worden in "Classical Republicanism and the

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<sup>8</sup> Avraham, Melamed, "English Travellers and Venetian Jewish Scholars. The Case of Simone Luzzatto and James Harrington," in *Gli Ebrei e Venezia* (Milano, 1987), 514 -515.

<sup>9</sup> Avraham Melamed, "Jethro's Advice in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish and Christian Political Thought," *JPSR* 2, no. 1-2 (Spring 5750/1990): 20. See also Blair Worden, "Classical Republicanism and the Puritan Revolution," in *History and Imagination, Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper*, eds. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl and Blair Worden (London: Duckworth, 1981), 183.

<sup>10</sup> H. F. Russell-Smith, *Harrington and His Oceana: A Study of a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Utopia and Its Influence in America* (Cambridge University Press, 1914), 20-21.

<sup>11</sup> Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg LTD, 1958: Pitman Press, 1962), 300, 309.

<sup>12</sup> Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 384.

Puritan Revolution,” (1981) also refers to Harrington as “the most distinguished thinker of English Machiavellianism.”<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Scott in “The English Republican Imagination,” (1992) claims that one of the reasons Harrington's *Oceana* is “justly famous” is because it represents “the mature and quintessential statement of English classical republican doctrine,” which incorporates “the doctrines of the mixed constitution, drawn from Aristotle, Polybius and Machiavelli: the model republics of Sparta, Venice and Rome.”<sup>14</sup> Scott mentions nothing of Harrington's use of the Hebrew Commonwealth.

Other historians accused Harrington of an undercover approach to the Scriptures, implying he adopted and adapted religious language to curry favor with his audience. Charles Blitzer in *The Political Writings of James Harrington* (1955) stated that Harrington's readership was largely persuaded by the notion that “any attempt at demonstration without reference to divine revelation and received opinion was impertinent, if not actually blasphemous.”<sup>15</sup> Blitzer attempted to convince readers that “on the whole, it seems accurate to conclude that Harrington's undeniable preoccupation with religion and the Bible was dictated by considerations of expedience rather than by conviction,” and that “he lacked the self-confidence that would have permitted him to turn his back on divine revelation.”<sup>16</sup> Blitzer's assessment had not changed with his *An Immortal Commonwealth* (1970), claiming that “it seems accurate to say that in most instances, and particularly where the Bible is concerned, Harrington's appeal to earlier authorities are intended primarily to impress his readers rather than express his humility before great figures of the past.”<sup>17</sup> In *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (1993), Hill acknowledges Harrington's numerous biblical references, explaining that he, “like Hobbes, is thought of as a secular political theorist, but he quotes the Bible more often and more extensively than any other source; the Bible and the history of Israel loom large in all his writings.”<sup>18</sup> Hill though later qualified Harrington's use of abundant biblical citations, claiming he, “like Hobbes, found it

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<sup>13</sup> Worden, “Classical Republicanism and the Puritan Revolution,” 184.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Scott, “The English Republican Imagination,” in *Revolution and Restoration, England in the 1650s*, ed. John Morrill (London: Collins & Brown, 1992), 45-46.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Blitzer, ed. *The Political Writings of James Harrington, Representative Selections* (New York, 1955), xxx. Blitzer may not be entirely correct here as neither Wren nor Ferne argued against Harrington's use of pagan authors, and their own responses contained an arsenal of classical and Renaissance learning. Interestingly, Harrington would confront them on their employment of non-biblical sources.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, xxix, xxxiv.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Blitzer, *An Immortal Commonwealth: The Political Thought of James Harrington* (Yale University Press, 1970), 277.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane, 1993; Penguin Group, 1994), 21.

expedient (to say the least) to demonstrate that his argument had Biblical authority.” *Oceana*, referred to Israel “only incidentally.” but in his subsequent writings, Harrington took “great pains to show that Israel was a *Commonwealth*, and that its history illustrated his doctrine of the balance.”<sup>19</sup> But, he does not seem to be suggesting that Harrington’s use of the Bible was pursued with an authentic appreciation for its political principles, but rather with a pragmatic prudence.<sup>20</sup>

An especially noteworthy exposition of the difficulties associated with the interpretation of *Oceana* is Judith Shklar’s 1959 article “Ideology Hunting: The Case of James Harrington.” Shklar illustrates through Harrington the interpretive issues associated with presuppositional bias, or “the intrusion of ideology on historical analysis,” in support of political agendas.<sup>21</sup> Her point is well proved by her explication of the variety of political roles writers have assigned to Harrington. Such disparate interpretations demonstrate “the play of ideology upon history,” by those determined to read into Harrington their own “political convictions and preoccupations,”<sup>22</sup> resulting in a “Whig” theory of Harrington, as well as a Marxist’s “dialectical Harrington.”<sup>23</sup> Shklar mentions the religious inclination of his writings, but is dismissive of the Scripture’s influence upon his political ideas. His “main aim was to get God out of politics. If he quoted the Old Testament it was as history. When he spoke of Christianity it was only to show that it was in no way incompatible with ‘ancient prudence.’”<sup>24</sup>

Felix Raab in *The English Face of Machiavelli* (1964), acknowledged, like Shklar, the multifaceted interpretation of Harrington in the historiography, and concurred with her thesis, as many writers “start with presuppositions about the period (or about political thought generally) which have little connection with Harrington.”<sup>25</sup> As for the presence of God in the politics of *Oceana*, Raab states that Harrington’s “point about God is not that he is non-existent, but that he is irrelevant. The theme of this whole work has been the retreat from God in the realm of politics, and in this campaign Harrington was an important figure.” His “political world is a world of human reason; a world from which revelation or any kind of arbitrary supernatural intervention is categorically excluded.” Raab asserts that for Harrington, “God appears briefly on

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 192-193.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>21</sup> Judith Shklar, “Ideology Hunting: The Case of James Harrington,” *APSR* 53, no. 3 (September 1959): 662.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 662-663.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 666-667.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 684-685.

<sup>25</sup> Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation 1500-1700* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; University of Toronto Press, 1964), 185-186.

stage, where He sets the terms of the action (as author of the Law of Nature) and then retires for the rest of the play.”<sup>26</sup> Raab also suggests that Harrington simply employed Scripture opportunistically as decoration in recognition of a scripturally knowledgeable readership.

It is true, of course, that in his role of republican polemicist, Harrington could not afford to ignore the terms in which most of his contemporaries thought. Thus he is often at pains to convince his readers that his plans bear the conspicuous mark of divine approval. But *functionally*, God's role in human affairs is limited in the way described above, leading Harrington to a totally secular analysis of history and politics.<sup>27</sup>

Raab concludes that Harrington's “republican preference” was “untheological,” and regardless of which “direction we approach Harrington, we shall find ourselves led back to Machiavelli, for here was the real starting-point of the Englishman's approach to politics.”<sup>28</sup> But, Raab's conclusion here might represent a reading of Machiavelli into Harrington.

Similarly as Smith, Hill and Raab, Luc Borot emphasized Harrington's indebtedness to classical and Renaissance sources, suggesting that his “republican utopia, *Oceana*,” was “inspired by Machiavelli and Livy,” as well as “the Florentine and Venetian theoreticians of the *Serenissima*.”<sup>29</sup> Perez Zagorin referred to Harrington as “the foremost of the republican theorists,” and *Oceana* “the political ideal of classical antiquity lived again.”<sup>30</sup>

Daniel Elazar disputed the notion that Harrington employed the Scriptures out of opportunism or expedience, claiming instead that he considered “the Mosaic polity the best regime for their England as well as for ancient Israel.”<sup>31</sup>

Twentieth-century analysts of Harrington's thought have claimed that he, like Hobbes and Locke, used the Bible and religious matters only out of expedience, because it was expected at the time, but was actually rather indifferent to religion and in any case did not need biblical or other religious sources as a grounding for his thought, which was derived from human prudence analyzed on scientific principles. Space does not permit a thorough examination of that question, but it can be stated that there is no way for the reader to approach Harrington's thought without doing so though the biblical prism that he presents.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>29</sup> Luc Borot, “Hobbes, Harrington, and the Concept of Liberty,” *Cahiers Elisabethains* 32 (October 1987): 49, 50.

<sup>30</sup> Perez Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1954; Reprint, Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1997), 132.

<sup>31</sup> Elazar, *Covenant and Civil Society*, 62.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Other historians concluded that Harrington's empirical approach to political thought lies in natural philosophy,<sup>33</sup> and in appreciation for the work of William Harvey, a leading anatomist of his day. Just as Harvey had investigated human anatomy to derive the flow and circulation of blood, so too had Harrington examined the course of the history of commonwealths, transcribing in like manner their inherent principles and patterns.<sup>34</sup>

### Contemporary Criticisms of *Oceana*

One method with which to investigate the nature of Harrington's employment of secular writers is through an examination of his personal defense against accusations of atheism for consorting with them. Harrington's political contributions were marginalized by Richard Baxter and John Rogers because he employed pagan authors alongside Moses and the Scriptures. The fact that he never dismissed his debt to Scripture to defend against such charges testifies against his alleged biblical opportunism, and reveals his specific use of Israel's Commonwealth for *Oceana*'s method of rotation. Confirmation of his use of the Hebrew Polity is likewise found in counter arguments against the leading royalists Henry Ferne and Matthew Wren who disapproved of his fixation upon it in *Oceana*.<sup>35</sup>

### The Presbyterian and Fifth Monarchy Reaction

The Presbyterian Richard Baxter, and the radical Fifth Monarchist John Rogers, condemned Harrington's criticisms of saintly rule and godliness as a qualification for civil leadership and his commendation of the virtue of good laws and fixed orders to secure the commonwealth. Baxter devoted part of his *A Holy Commonwealth* (1659) to a refutation of Harrington's *Oceana*, and noted, as one of his primary concerns, Harrington's lack of securing the succession of "good Governors" necessary for righteous government.

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<sup>33</sup> See W. H. Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism and Politics: Two Traditions of English Political Thought* (Oxford University Press, 1964). Greenleaf is convinced that Harrington's political writings "are to be seen most satisfactorily as reflecting in general this empirical style of political thought." See 232. William Craig Diamond is similarly convinced that Harrington's political thought is a derivative of natural philosophy, and evidenced in Toland's inclusion of Harrington's *The Mechanics of Nature* in his *Works*. See his "Natural Philosophy in Harrington's Political Thought," *JHP* 16, no. 4 (October 1978): 387-398.

<sup>34</sup> *The Anatomical Exercises of Dr. William Harvey Professor of Physick, and Physician to the Kings Majesty* (London, 1653). See also Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles, Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 317-341. For Harrington's references to Harvey, see *Oceana*, 162; *Prerogative*, 403, 412, and *DSS*, 725. See also Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714* (New York: Routledge, 1961, 2001), 180.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Vane would write his *Needful Corrective* in early 1658, a personal letter to Harrington in response to *Prerogative*, but which I discuss in my chapter on Vane.

That Mr. Harrington's *Oceana*, and *Venetian Ballot*. have no such tendency, is plain. 1. In that it is such a Government as Heathens have been our Examples in, and in which he thinks they have excelled us, that he propoundeth. And therefore doubtless he intendeth not that his frame shall secure us the Christian Religion, without which we can have no happy Government.<sup>36</sup>

Baxter was convinced that "Venice" was Harrington's "perfectest Pattern of Government," and that the inevitable result of his "Ballot and Rotation" was the rule of "strangers to Prudence, and enemies to Piety . . . and consequently Christianity be expelled." In *Oceana*, "the ignorant and ungodly rabble are made the Lords and Rulers of all."<sup>37</sup> Parliament's members will be "fetch'd out of the Dung-cart to make us Laws, and the Alehouse and the Maypole to dispose of our Religion."<sup>38</sup> In *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, Baxter stated that he "perceived that *Harrington's* Common-wealth was fitted to *Heathenism*."<sup>39</sup>

John Rogers dealt similar verbal blows to Harrington in his *Diapoliteia* (1659). Rogers expressed high regard for Vane's *A Healing Question*, but as for Harrington's July 6 Petition to Parliament, a distillation of *Oceana's* constitution, wondered "how busie some are in this work of refunding, retunding and confounding us in our Cause; not onley with old Popish *Mumpsimus's*, but with new *Paganish Sumpsimus's* and *Idea's* exhibited to the Parliament like the CHAOS indeed."<sup>40</sup> Rogers claimed that Harrington himself struck at the root of the "cause."

In *Civils*, they have not stated their *Aequale cum justitia*, neither in Righteousness to the *Cause*, nor indeed to the *Reasons* or *Prudentials* of their own Authors; I mean the *Heathens* whom Mr. *Har.* most follows, (for they admit not the *Holy Scriptures*; or our (heavenly) Politicks *ad Theocratiam* <sup>41</sup>

Rogers believed Harrington's "New Platforms or Principles *Paganish* or *Popish*" were simply "fetch'd from *Athens*, or from *Venice*," and "would more gratifie Popery, *Atheism* and *Paganism*; than the Platforme of a Christian Commonwealth."<sup>42</sup> He chides Harrington further for his opposition to the rule of the saints "who (of all the Rest) saith *Oceana*, . . . are the most dangerous."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Richard Baxter, *A Holy Commonwealth*, ed. William Lamont, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*, eds. Raymond Guess and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 135. For his complete discussion on *Oceana*, see 135-144. Baxter indicted Hobbe's *Leviathan* similarly, referring to him as an "irreligious author."

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>39</sup> Baxter, *RB*, Book 1, part 3, 71.

<sup>40</sup> John Rogers, *Diapoliteia. A Christian Concertation with Mr. Prin. Mr. Baxter. Mr. Harrington, for the True Cause of the Commonwealt* (London, 1659), 70.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 76. Harrington responds to this comment regarding the saints in the margin of his *A Parallel of the Spirit of the People with the Spirit of Mr. Rogers*. (London, 1659), with "No! find them another way for liberty of conscience." 758.

There is no record of Harrington's response to Baxter,<sup>44</sup> though he did confront Rogers in *A Parallel of the Spirit of the People with the Spirit of Mr. Rogers* (1659) with plenty of sarcasm and wit, which included castigations over his unskilled handling of Greek and commonwealth authors. Harrington, knowing Roger's resolute determination to employ Scripture as the single political source for his Christian Commonwealth, mockingly states "Nor is there much of his quotations out of ancient authors, that is less mistaken, and it may be out of Scripture." In the marginalia, Harrington defends himself against Roger's accusations of atheism.

Mark his art in slandering: he dareth not to call me atheist, because by my writings all men may know that I am none.<sup>45</sup>

In denying the charge further, Harrington exclaimed, "Mark the ingenuity of these men: that I have written the commonwealth of Israel, they will take no notice; nor that from thence especially rotation is derived." Rogers, like other "divines," had demoted Harrington to the status of "a moral spirit," and denounced him as a "madman or atheist."<sup>46</sup>

Their dialogue would continue with Rogers' *Mr. Harrington's Parallel Unparalle'd* (1659), which in part, summarized their contention as a contest over the nature of the commonwealth. Rogers utilized a Greek language metaphor to stress that "where the *Platformes* of Commonwealths are many, let us keep to that which is most worthy in its Gender, Nature, Case, and number, i.e. a holy, Christian, and *Theocratic Commonwealth*; and not a *Heathenish* nor *Popish* Platforme."<sup>47</sup> The most interesting aspect of this dialogue, apart from their obvious disparate political uses of the Scriptures, is Harrington's defense against accusations of atheism, and insistence that *Oceana* incorporated the Hebrew Commonwealth, especially that of rotation.

### The Royalist Reaction

Ferne had received a copy of *Oceana* from one of Harrington's sisters, and returned a short critique to her in the form of a letter, stating, "I conceive, first, that he is

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<sup>44</sup> Harrington though apparently did correspond with Baxter in regards to oligarchy. See Rogers, *Diapoliteia*, 70 and *PSP*, 757. In regards to Baxter's commonwealth, Toland states that Harrington "vouchsaf'd no other answer to it but half a sheet of Cant and Ridicule." *The Oceana of James Harrington*, xxvii. Baxter though reverses the chronology somewhat, claiming that "by *Harrington's Scorn* (Printed in a half Sheet of *Gibberish*)," he was provoked to write that Book." See *RB*, Book 1, part 3, 71. James Hickman comments on Harrington's response to Baxter's book, stating "I understand from some of our ingenioso's that your *holy Com[m]onwealth* [(1659)] had like to have committed a peece of murder on Mr. [James] Harrington for he thought he had found you quoting Herodotus to prove the rudenesse of the Roman Soldiers & thereupon did fall into such a laughter that caused a deliquium out of which the Physitians scaresly recovered him." See Baxter, *CC*, vol. 1, letter 605, 411-412.

<sup>45</sup> *PSP*, 757. Interestingly, Vane never charged Harrington with atheism.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 758, 759.

<sup>47</sup> John Rogers, *Mr. Harrington's Parallel Unparalle'd* (London, 1659), 6. Harrington never responded.

not a little mistaken in thinking the Israel commonwealth of government under Moses so applicable unto his purpose as he would make it.”<sup>48</sup> Ferne's critique of *Oceana*, and personal responses to Harrington's queries preserved in *Pian Piano*, reveal his assumption that Harrington was making political use of the Hebrew Commonwealth, which antagonized his royalist opponents and their sympathies for Israel's tradition of kingship. Ferne stated that given the various commonwealths which Harrington resorted to, the Hebrew Commonwealth “was less applicable” for his *Oceana*, because “there was nothing like in that government,” of a “senate debating, proposing, or the people resolving, choosing.”<sup>49</sup> *Oceana*'s main legislative orders. Ferne not only disputed Harrington's analysis of Israel's Polity, but his political use of it as well.

Matthew Wren engaged Harrington in his *Considerations* (1657) and *Monarchy Asserted* (1659), the arguments of which Harrington partly records in *Prerogative* (1658), *Art of Lawgiving* (1659), and *Politicester* (1659). Wren, upon examining Harrington's interpretation and political use of “the Republique of *Israel*,” sought to establish “how far we are now bound to work after that Original,” and understood Harrington as advancing it “with more authority then belongs to a bare Example,” and reproaching “the Christian World” for its “negligence . . . for not transcribing from it.”<sup>50</sup> This practice of crafting “laws and modelling a Commonwealth to tread in the steps of *Moses*,” was valid, unless Israel's peculiar institutions had been “terminated with the Revelation of the Gospel, or . . . altered by some general or special constitutions of Christ.” But Wren was unconvinced “of any prerogative of Authority belonging to the *Israelitish* more then any other Republique: For a Law can only oblige onely those to whom it is given, which were the children of *Israel* only.” Wren further argued, that it was not “enough to look at the Dignity of the Legislator,” when “considering of Laws and frames of Government,” as due “regard must be had also to circumstances of times, places, and persons.”<sup>51</sup> According to P. Avis, “the mainstream of Anglican reformed theology is quite unambiguous in holding the judicial law as such to be abrogated, with the exception of the ban on usury and the doctrine of the prohibited degrees in marriage.”<sup>52</sup> Harrington then was dealing with the standard Anglican royalist argument.

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<sup>48</sup> *PP*, 370. Ferne was an able and effective writer. For a discussion of his writings as well the sort of royalist writer Harrington contended with, see Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism 1628-1660* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 145-146, 213-214, 204-205, 209 and 230.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>50</sup> Wren, *Considerations on Mr. Harrington's Commonwealth of Oceana* (Oxford, 1657), 36-37.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>52</sup> P. Avis, “Moses and the Magistrate: A Study in the Rise of Protestant Legalism,” *JEH*, 25, no. 2 (April 1975): 166.

Harrington did not argue against Wren by marshalling an array of biblical texts to prove the normativity of Israel's Polity. Instead, he focused upon Israel's ascendancy as a political model, and differentiated between her power and authority. He conceded that laws do have a special province, but Israel's "were given as to the power or obligation of them only," whereas "the power . . . of a commonwealth and her authority are different things." Israel's "power extends no farther than her own people, but her authority may govern others," similar to the manner in which Rome's "twelve tables" were written after that of Athens. Harrington explains "though a man or a commonwealth, writing out of ancient governments, have liberty to choose that which suits best with the occasion out of any," if "we consider the wisdom and justice of the legislator supremely good, or the excellency of the laws, the prerogative of authority, where the nature of the thing admits, must needs belong unto Israel. That this should go sore with divines is strange."<sup>53</sup> But Harrington takes another polemical swipe at Wren for favoring the pagan Commonwealth of Venice over Israel's.

For while he finds me writing out of Venice, he tells me I have 'wisely put myself under her protection or authority, . . .

But when he finds me writing out of Israel, he tells me that 'he is not aware of any prerogative of authority belonging to the Israelitish more than any other republic;' which is to take part with the Devil.<sup>54</sup>

Wren's response to Harrington's remarks on his *Considerations with Monarchy Asserted* (1659) was a reaction against his enthusiasm for the Mosaic Judicials, which Wren accused him of reintroducing.

And what if the *Romans* being resolved to erect a Popular Government, to save themselves the pains of contriving, were content to borrow their *Twelve Tables* of the *Athenians*? Must We therefore be inforced to have recourse to the *Jewes*, though We neither have Need of nor Roome for any of their Particular Constitutions? This may give just cause to suspect his Design is to introduce the *Judaicall* Law, And that there is nothing to choose between James *Harrington* Legislator, and *William Medley* Scribe.<sup>55</sup>

It is difficult to read Harrington's successive responses to his royalist adversaries without noticing the antagonisms within their respective understandings of the Jewish Polity. This hermeneutical dialogue regarding the political role of the Hebrew

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<sup>53</sup> *Prerogative*, 464.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Wren, *Monarchy Asserted or the State of Monarchiall & Popular Government in Vindication of the Considerations Upon Mr. Harrington's Oceana* (Oxford, 1659), 138-139. Harrington would respond to Wren's *Monarchy Asserted* in his conclusion to *The Art of Lawgiving* (London, 1659) as well as in *Politica* (London, 1659). Wren is probably referring to Fifth Monarchist William Medley, who wrote *A standard set up: whereunto the true seed and saints of the most High may be gathered together into one, out of their several forms: . . . ; as in the restitution of all things. Subscribed W. Medley, scribe* (London, 1657). Bernard Capp notes that Medley (1654-1683) had taken part in Venner's plot, signed its manifesto as "scribe," and even married Venner's daughter. See *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), Appendix I, 255.

Commonwealth in new-modelling, prompted by royalists, represents a sufficient justification to investigate the exact nature of his use of it in *Oceana*.

### Recognition of the Political Influence of the Bible in *Oceana*

A few of Harrington's contemporaries highlighted the biblical and Christian character of *Oceana*. Toland explained that it was framed in a manner consistent with that of lawgivers, enlightening readers as to why Solon, Confucius, Lycurgus and Numa, all included alongside the OT figure Moses, are displayed within the frontispiece of his title page to *The Oceana of James Harrington*. These figures seem less descriptive of the sources Harrington mined, and illustrate rather his choice of genre, and possibly his perception of himself as a type of legislator writing a commonwealth for England.

*The Commonwealth of Oceana*, a name by which he design'd *England*, as being the noblest Iland of the *Northern Ocean*. But before I proceed further, I must explain from other words occurring in this Book, which is written after the manner of a Romance, in imitation of PLATO's *Atlantic Story*, and is a method ordinarily follow'd by Lawgivers.<sup>56</sup>

Interestingly, Toland declared that *Oceana* was a "Christian Model" of a commonwealth, as opposed to a heathen one.

*LET not those therefore, who make no opposition to the reprinting or reading of PLATO's Heathen Commonwealth, ridiculously declaim against the better and Christian Model of HARRINGTON.*<sup>57</sup>

In his *Aphorisms Political*, Harrington qualifies Israel's Commonwealth as having been equal, and compares it to that sort of equality found in a "Christian Commonwealth" under Christ. Harrington's remarks are useful in understanding Toland's description.

The highest earthly felicity that a people can ask, or God can give, is an equal and well-ordered commonwealth. Such a one among the Israelites was the reign of God; and such a one (for the same reason) may be among Christians the reign of Christ, though not everyone in the Christian commonwealth should be any more a Christian indeed, than everyone in the Israelite commonwealth was an Israelite indeed.<sup>58</sup>

Toland was not the only contemporary to conclude a Christian character to *Oceana*; so did Henry Stubbe, the noted disciple of Sir Henry Vane, but who had also been influenced by Harrington and Hobbes. Stubbe admired *Oceana*, and published his own critique of Harrington's use of the Republic of Sparta in *The Common-wealth of*

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<sup>56</sup> Toland, *Oceana*, xii.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., ix.

<sup>58</sup> *AP*, 778.

*Oceana Put into the Ballance, and Found too Light* (1660).<sup>59</sup> But in his *The Commonwealth of Israel, or A Brief Account of Mr. Prynne's Anatomy of the Good Old Cause* (1659), Stubbe draws Prynne's attention to Harrington's *Oceana* to combat his scriptural political readings in proof of Monarchy with Harrington's analysis of the rise of kingship in the Hebrew Commonwealth. "God" said Stubbe, "did institute a *Commonwealth* in *Israel*, as Mr. Harrington hath excellently shown, and the *rejecting* thereof he calls a rejecting of God, I Sam. 8 v 7." He continues, saying "I desire all judicious persons to read that Chapter, and consider the preheminance of the *best* of Government, viz, Mr. Prynne's *Monarchy*."<sup>60</sup> Even in his *An Essay in Defence of the Good Old Cause* (1659), Stubbe stated, "I admire this model, and am ready to crye out, as if it were the pattern in the Mount." Stubbe did not completely adhere to Harrington's idea of an "equall Common-wealth," as he disputed the notion that it could be "imposed upon all," or "how a power can be erected over any men which if not derived from them." Nevertheless, he found Harrington's model quite attractive if it incorporated those who were faithful to the cause. He suggests somewhat more strongly the link between Harrington's model and Israel's.

I cannot but declare my judgment for the promoting Mr. Harrington's model . . . yet as limited to the good people which have adhered to the *Good Old Cause*, and I suppose the *Common-wealth* of *Israel* may here in, as in other causes, become our pattern.<sup>61</sup>

Some early modern historians have been calling attention to this phenomenon of interpreting *Oceana* in isolation of its Scriptural political theology. Goldie in his "The Civil Religion of James Harrington" (1987), claims that historians are discouraged from reflecting on the connection between Harrington's religious views and political ideas by the prevailing demand upon historical scholarship to pursue a political autonomy. Goldie contends that scholarship in political science tends to be both rewarded and celebrated when it emerges "from the embrace of theology,"<sup>62</sup> which explains the tendency among historians to elevate Harrington's use of non-biblical, classical and Renaissance sources. Goldie insists that Harrington incorporated "one of the most pervasive political languages of early-modern Europe, that of civil religion," and that "a

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<sup>59</sup> Henry Stubbe, *The Commonwealth of Oceana Put into the Ballance, and Found too Light or, An Account of the Republick of Sparta with Occasional Animadversions upon Mr. James Harrington and the Oceanistical Model* (London, 1660). Harrington's rather short response is found in LS, 828-831.

<sup>60</sup> Henry Stubbe, *The Commonwealth of Israel, or A Brief Account of Mr. Prynne's Anatomy of the Good Old Cause*. By H.S. (London, 1659), 4.

<sup>61</sup> Henry Stubbe, *An Essay in Defence of the Good Old Cause, or A Discourse Concerning the Rise and Extent of the Power of the Civil Magistrate in Reference to Spiritual Affairs* (London, 1659), Preface. For an excellent overview of Stubbe's political views, see James Jacob, *Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>62</sup> Mark Goldie, "The Civil Religion of James Harrington," 198.

Christian Reformist vision was integral to Harrington's construction of the just polity."<sup>63</sup> Goldie asserts further that "Christian political thought has always been eclectic, drawing upon the secular languages of Graeco-Roman culture," and "reformed political thought redeployed this eclecticism on behalf of the laity and civil state."<sup>64</sup> Since radical puritan thinkers of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century were saturated with "classical republican ideas as with Hebraic and Apocalyptic ones" alike,<sup>65</sup> James Harrington may simply not be the "canonical 'modern'" prevailing scholarship demands he be.<sup>66</sup>

Cedric Brown in his chapter "Great Senates and Godly Education" (1995), identifies the nature of the debate over the political use of the OT polity which occupied Harrington, Milton and others, as hermeneutical.

The model of the Sanhedrin had often been used to authorize non-monarchical forms of government by different groups during the revolutionary period. In the many tracts of the republican James Harrington, for example, some of them interconnecting with Milton's writings of 1659/60, the Mosaic 'senate' forms a basis of definition. Indeed, those of different persuasion sought to appropriate the Jewish model, so that many of the debates entered into in Harrington's tracts are conducted on the basis of biblical interpretation concerning the various systems of government of the Jews.<sup>67</sup>

Adam Sutcliffe in his *Judaism and Enlightenment* (2003) reveals that Harrington, like Hobbes, though with more heightened passion, was "fascinated with Hebraic politics," and that he "read the Old Testament as a fundamentally political text." Like Hobbes, Harrington "intended his hermeneutic act as an explicit challenge to the clerical orthodoxy,"<sup>68</sup> though possibly less obnoxiously and with more deference to orthodox society.

Avraham Melamed suggests that Harrington was influenced in his scriptural reading of Exodus 18 by "Abrabinel," otherwise known as Don Isaac Abravanel, a Jewish scholar of Portuguese descent, who, after having been expelled from Spain under Ferdinand, resided in Venice. While in Venice, Abravanel wrote his Commentary on Exodus, and interpreted the Jethro passage through the Venetian constitution, reading

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>67</sup> Cedric Brown, "Great Senates and Godly Education: Politics and Cultural Renewal in Some Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Texts of Milton," in *Milton and Republicanism*, eds. David Armitage, Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge University Press, 1995; 1998), 47.

<sup>68</sup> Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment*, 51. Goldie's chapter is also relevant for understanding seventeenth-century anti-clericalism, an attitude held by Harrington. For a brief discussion on the replacement of "Priestcraft" with civil religion by commonwealthsmen, see Justin Champion, "May the Last King be Strangled in the Bowels of the Last Priest": Irreligion and the English Enlightenment," in *Radicalism in British Literary Culture, 1650-1830; From Revolution to Revolution*, eds. Timothy Norton and Nigel Smith. (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29-44.

into it a radical republicanism.<sup>69</sup> Harrington lists Abravanel or Abarbinel, among his Jewish sources, whose commentaries he would have had access to through the Latin translations of J. Buxtdorf Jr's, which Melamed claims were circulated quite widely in "humanist circles."<sup>70</sup> He argues that "Abravanel's views on the ancient Jewish constitution, which influenced Grotius, among others, may have influenced Harrington's interpretation of the ancient Jewish state as well."<sup>71</sup> As for Harrington's dependence upon Machiavelli, Melamed notes that he failed to follow his Renaissance mentor in all things, and refers to the following Latin passage in Machiavelli's *The Prince* as proof of their differences. I have quoted from Henry Neville's English translation of this section of Chapter VI, "Of Principalities Acquired by Ones Own Proper Conduct and Arms," which Melamed refers to. Machiavelli is discussing the political advancement from a private station to that of a prince, claiming that those who

have advanced themselves to that Dignity, I say, that the most renowned and excellent, are *Moses*, *Cyrus*, *Romulus*, *Thestus*, and the like: And though *Moses* might be reasonably excepted, as being only the Executioner of God's immediate Commands, yet he deserves to be mention'd, if it were only for that Grace, which render'd him capable of Communication with God. But if we consider *Cyrus*, and the rest of the Conquerors and Founders of Monarchies, we shall find them extraordinary; and examining their Lives and Exploits, they will appear, not much different from *Moses*, who had so incomparable a Master.<sup>72</sup>

Melamed read Machiavelli as reducing Moses, that he "was but one among a host of ancient first legislators," and that he treated Moses' "divine mission ironically." Whereas "the political thinkers of the Reformation and English Puritanism," like Harrington, read Moses as "the foremost ancient legislator. . . his Divine mission with utmost seriousness," and "the Mosaic constitution as the first perfect model."<sup>73</sup>

### **The Historical and Literary Context of *Oceana***

#### **England's Failed Commonwealth and the Tyranny of Cromwell**

Harrington met with some difficulties in publishing *Oceana*, as the text was confiscated at print and conveyed to Whitehall. To retrieve it, he graciously approached one of Oliver's daughters, Lady Claypole, apparently his favorite, and after playing with her daughter, quite cryptically compared his temptation to steal her, out of "revenge."

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<sup>69</sup> Melamed, "Jethro's Advice," 8-17.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 23-24; *Prerogative*, 520.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>72</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Works of the Famous Nicolas Machiavel, Citizen and Secretary of Florence, Written Originally in Italian, and from thence newly and faithfully translated into English*. Translated by Henry Neville. (London, 1675), 205.

<sup>73</sup> Melamed, "Jethro's Advice," 21. See also 25. See also his, "Machiavelli on the Ancient Hebrew Leaders – Prototype for Political Leadership," in *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Division C vol. 1 (Jerusalem, August 16-24, 1989): 338-344. Hebrew.

for her own father's theft of his "child that he has stolen." She was taken in by Harrington's charming demeanor, and he received his book back after having convinced her that it was "a kind of a Political Romance, so far from any Treason against her Father."<sup>74</sup>

*Oceana* was entered into the Stationer's Register on the 19 September 1656, and published during the first week of November after the sitting of the second Protectorate Parliament. Harrington claimed in his "Epistle to the Reader," that *Oceana* was "but a rough draft," which occupied him for at least two years.<sup>75</sup> He intended his proposal to be received with all seriousness, especially by Cromwell, though it nevertheless represented "a republican tract attacking monarchy," or "Cromwell, the man who might have been tempted to institute a monarchy either by arms or a nobility."<sup>76</sup> As Pocock notes, some members of the army were simmering under "increasing discontent" with a Protectorate "which showed no sign of establishing the frequently elected parliaments called for since 1647 and had placed the army under the control of the Protector as chief of the executive power." This, along with the attempt by some "protectoral grandees" to transform the Protector's office "into a hereditary monarchy," as well as create "a nominated "other House," seemed far too reminiscent of the "historic constitution," and nothing short of a betrayal of the principles of "the good old cause."<sup>77</sup>

*Oceana* describes a "civil history of the sword and civil history of property" rendered within the imagery of a "fictionalised England" which Harrington proposed to transform from an unequal commonwealth of "independent freeholders" to that of a republic.<sup>78</sup> Harrington's solution to England's settlement crisis rested in recognizing her transition to a popular balance of property relationships, which required a corresponding constitutional shift to a republican form of popular government to match this new arrangement.<sup>79</sup>

Toland explained that Harrington's immediate concern in crafting his model related to England's "groaning under a horrid Usurpation," rendering him duty-bound "as a good Citizen to offer a helping hand to his Countrymen and to shew 'em such a Model of Government as he thought most conducing to their Tranquility, Wealth, and

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<sup>74</sup> Toland, *Oceana*, xviii-xx.

<sup>75</sup> *Oceana*, 156.

<sup>76</sup> Andrew Sharp, "The Manuscript Versions of Harrington's *Oceana*," *HJ* 16, no. 2, (June 1973): 237.

<sup>77</sup> Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 383-384.

<sup>78</sup> Pocock, *Works*, 43. See also *Machiavellian Moment*, 384-385.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

Power.”<sup>80</sup> According to Toland, he clarified in his examination-confession, conducted while imprisoned in the Tower, that the kingly pretensions of Cromwell motivated him to write *Oceana*.

I did not write under a Prince, I wrote under an Usurper. OLIVER. He having started up into the Throne, his Officers (as pretending to be for a Commonwealth) kept a murmuring, at which he told them that he knew not what they meant, nor themselves; but let any of them shew him what they meant by a Commonwealth (or that there was, any such thing) they should see that he sought not himself: the Lord knew he sought not himself, but to make good the Cause. Upon this som sober men came to me and told me, if any man in *England* could shew what a Commonwealth was, it was my self. Upon this persuasion I wrote.<sup>81</sup>

Toland even likened Harrington’s motivation for publishing *Oceana* with Paul’s Gospel-preaching at Athens. Like Paul, he “indeavor’d to make known to the People what they ignorantly ador’d,” by demonstrating “that a Commonwealth was a Government of Laws, and not of the Sword.”<sup>82</sup> The general political crisis and destabilization of the commonwealth, coupled with Harrington’s perception of the “Tyranny of OLIVER CROMWEL,”<sup>83</sup> provided the general and immediate contexts for *Oceana*. Interestingly, its publication was also timed as a recommendation for England’s readmission of the Jews.<sup>84</sup>

### **The Superiority of the Hebrew Commonwealth, Rabbinic Scholarship and Education in the Scriptures in *Oceana***

Though Harrington resorts positively to pagan source illustrations for his commonwealth model, the superior and exalted status of Israel’s political experience is sustained throughout *Oceana* and his subsequent writings, attesting circumstantially to its significance for his commonwealth model. As Sutcliffe notes, though Harrington “presents a wide range of exemplary models for this polity. . . . The commonwealth of Israel, however, is singled out for unique attention.”<sup>85</sup> Melamed notes similarly, claiming that though “Harrington was not a dogmatic Puritan, he considered the ancient Jewish state to be the first ideal commonwealth, endowed by Divine providence.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Toland, *Oceana*, xix. It is legitimate to ask if Toland presents a reliable source for such an assertion, which I include with caution.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., xxxiv.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., xviii.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> *Oceana*, 159.

<sup>85</sup> Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment*, 52.

<sup>86</sup> Melamed, “Jethro’s Advice,” 23.

## The Political Role of Machiavelli for Harrington

Harrington refers to Machiavelli as “the only politician that hath gone about to retrieve” ancient prudence, the “learned disciple” of the “ancients,” “the only politician of later ages,” and “that sole retriever of this ancient prudence.”<sup>87</sup> Clearly he held Machiavelli in high political regard, but modern scholarship's historiographic nostalgia for Machiavelli contradicts Harrington's higher esteem for the political relevance of Moses. After discussing God's authority of proposition to Israel, in his “commandments” which he “wrote . . . in two tables,” Harrington mentions pagan examples of proposition among the Romans, Athenians, and Venetians, but reserves a special place for Moses since the proposition of God to the people of Israel passed through him. With this, “Moses,” states Harrington, “was the first writer in this kind,” but who “shall be pardoned, but Machiavel, the first in later times that hath revived his principles or trodden in his steps, is deservedly pelted for it by sermons.”<sup>88</sup> Harrington's respect for Machiavelli is based in his perception that he was that singular latter-time disciple of ancient prudence, not the original, like Moses, who is more eminent. Harrington refers to Machiavelli as one who actually resurrected Moses' “principles,” and walked in his political steps, explaining why he refused to submit to the view that quoting him was tantamount to atheism.<sup>89</sup>

## Oceana as a Natural and Unique Commonwealth Model

Oceana incorporates the organizational elements of the Hebrew and pagan commonwealths but retains a unique application of their principles. Harrington never maintained that Oceana was wholly Roman, Athenian, Venetian, Lacedaemon, or Hebrew for that matter.<sup>90</sup>

By what hath been shown in reason and experience it may appear that though commonwealths in general be governments of the senate proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing, yet some are not so good at these orders as others, through some impediment or defect in the frame, balance, or capacity of them, according unto which they are of divers kinds.<sup>91</sup>

Harrington claimed that Nature demonstrates the fundamental principles of a commonwealth, which are also provable out of Scripture, and confirmed in the political experiences of pagan commonwealths. This “art” of observing the political significance of Nature, involves “the skill of raising such superstructures of government as are

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<sup>87</sup> *Oceana*, 161, 162, 178.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

<sup>89</sup> For a sense of how the Scriptures were read as supporting Machiavelli's principles, see Peter Donaldson, “Biblical Machiavellism, Louis Machon's *Apologie pour Machiavel*,” in his *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 186-222.

<sup>90</sup> *Oceana*, 180.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

natural to the known foundations.”<sup>92</sup> Such “art.” Harrington equates with “Policy,” which signifies “the observation or imitation of nature,” which in turn represents “the providence of God in the government of the world.” If one “proceeds according unto principles acknowledgeth government unto God,” but one “that proceeds in defiance of principles attributes government unto chance,” which is tantamount to “denying the true God or introducing a false one,” and hence “the highest point of atheism or superstition.”<sup>93</sup> *Oceana* represents Harrington’s attempt at reasoning “the principles of an equal commonwealth” from Nature, as opposed to an historical simulation or exact replica of any ancient model. Not even Venice “arrived at the full perfection of equality.”<sup>94</sup> Harrington even chided Wren for alleging in his *Considerations* that “*Oceana* is but a mere transcription out of Venice.”<sup>95</sup> Rather, it represented the first equal commonwealth, a quality he never attributed to Venice.<sup>96</sup> The uniqueness of Harrington’s natural model is clarified in a response to Wren’s misunderstanding of it as a model in fact.

For the model is not proposed to show the truth of fact, or that there hath been any such exactly in practice, but to show the truth of nature, or that such a model is practicable; wherefore he needeth not to have alleged that it hath not the truth of fact, which we all know, but was to show where it faileth of such truth in nature as can any way render it impracticable.<sup>97</sup>

Though it cannot be denied that the Commonwealth of Venice exercised tremendous political influence on Harrington.

### **The Divine Nature of the Hebrew Commonwealth and the Advice of Jethro, Priest of Midian: Exodus 18:19-27**

The preeminence of the OT Hebrew Commonwealth<sup>98</sup> in *Oceana* is demonstrated by Harrington’s reading of it as more than simply political history and “ancient prudence.” It represented a unique and divinely inspired institution, a claim he never attributed to any other commonwealth. Harrington claimed that the Scriptures contain the “original of a commonwealth,” whose “legislator” was “infallible,” and by whom her “laws” were delivered. Not even the Sanhedrin, who administered God’s

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>93</sup> *Prerogative*, 390.

<sup>94</sup> *Oceana*, 181-182.

<sup>95</sup> *Prerogative*, 485. See Wren, *Considerations*, 93.

<sup>96</sup> *Oceana*, 180-181; *Art*, 693.

<sup>97</sup> *Art*, 693-694. See Wren, *Monarchy Asserted*, 177-178.

<sup>98</sup> I will be employing the term Hebrew Commonwealth and Polity as opposed to Jewish Commonwealth since Harrington himself differentiates between them, as will be discussed below. Harrington states in *PP* that he believes himself to be the first to actually employ the term “the commonwealth of Israel.” See 373.

laws, immediately improved upon them, or modified them. “in regard of the fulness and infallibility of the law already made. (Dueteronomy. 17: 9. 10. 11).”<sup>99</sup>

The ancient commonwealth models employed in *Oceana* differ somewhat in their institutional peculiars but share core civil components utilized by Harrington to prove that God’s natural providence instructs all men in commonwealth principles. As Blair Worden observes, “It would be a mistake to call Harrington’s approach secular, for God is at the root of his thought, and he believes the movement of history to be guided by God’s providence,” which involves “secondary agencies, through the “human prudence”,” imprinted in Nature and available to all.<sup>100</sup>

Evidence of the Commonwealth of Israel’s prominent and exceptional place is first found in the political linkage of her commonwealth with ancient pagan models through the heathen judicial counsel of Jethro, the priest of Midian, to Moses, who was also his father-in-law. Harrington read Jethro’s heathen advice to God’s legislator for Israel as scriptural permission to consult “human prudence” within the histories of heathen commonwealths, and an endorsement for inquiring into their “written” political counsel. Heathen histories are relevant political sources because the God of the Hebrew Commonwealth, “the original of a commonwealth made by the same hand that made the world,” created the natural order from which pagans extracted principles for their own models.<sup>101</sup> In “the Council of Legislators” the Lord Archon took counsel “of the commonwealth of Israel as of Moses, and of the rest of the commonwealths as of Jethro, framed the model of the commonwealth of Oceana.”<sup>102</sup> signifying the figurative authority of Jethro’s counsel for all subsequent political advice found in pagan commonwealths. Melamad stated that for Harrington, “Jethro’s advice solved the problem of viewing ancient Israel as a republic based on “human prudence”.”

Jethro, being a Midianite and, therefore, a gentile and heathen, could not have been prophetically inspired directly. Since, however, “human prudence” was defined as man’s legislative intelligence, and since God could not act and found a commonwealth but upon reason, Jethro’s advice to Moses was an expression of Divine will, even though not prophetically inspired directly. . . .

The Lord, then, was acting not only through the prophetically inspired Moses, but also through the rationally motivated Jethro. The Midianite, in advising the Hebrews how to found a commonwealth, stood at the point at which prophecy joined with human prudence.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> *Oceana*, 176-177.

<sup>100</sup> Blair Worden, “James Harrington and the Commonwealth of Oceana, 1656, in *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society: 1649-1776*, ed. David Wootton (Stanford, CA: 1994), 84.

<sup>101</sup> *Oceana*, 177. See also 210.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 209. See also “To the godly man,” in *Prerogative*, 496; *Art.* 616.

<sup>103</sup> Melamad, “Jethro’s Advice,” 24.

Other aspects of Harrington's use of the Scriptures rests in their capacity to confirm what Nature displays. Pocock notes that "Harrington has interwoven studies of ancient Israel with those of Rome and Venice, with a view to proving that the former was a republic of the same order as the two latter, and that the principles of government are known to us through reason and revelation."<sup>104</sup> Further testimony of her unique status is found in Harrington's sequencing of his political illustrations, as well as his rankings of commonwealths utilized in *Oceana*. Those civil principles extracted from the universal progression of heathen commonwealths faithfully follow initial appraisals of the Hebrew model, the first commonwealth fruits in a series of ancient prudence. The classical commonwealths, as well as Venice, though utilized positively, were ordered out of Israel's example, and thus highlighted secondarily, a pattern of illustration retained throughout his political writings.<sup>105</sup> His subordination of classical and Renaissance republics to the divinely inspired Jewish one seems to demonstrate a greater dependence on biblical material than is typically asserted, and suggests that the Bible's political function is not supplemental in deference to other ancient commonwealths. The Scriptures contain "the original whereof all the rest of the commonwealths seem to be copies."<sup>106</sup>

Harrington's arrangement of commonwealth authority is found in the introductory paragraphs to *Oceana*. He explains that the "Lord Archon" who, "being, from Moses and Lycurgus" is "the first legislator that hitherto is found in story to have introduced or erected an entire commonwealth at once," and hence required more political tools of construction than was presented to him by the Council. Harrington augments "what was wanting in the promulgated epitome" with "three remarkable testimonies," the first extracted from Israel, then Lacedaemon, and finally Rome.<sup>107</sup> all of which convey advice for crafting a commonwealth from its foundation. Harrington highlights Israel's unique civil place among the other two.

The first is taken out of the commonwealth of Israel. *So Moses hearkened unto the voice of (Jethro) his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people; tribunes as it is in the vulgar Latin, or phylarchs, that is princes of the tribes, sitting sellis curulibus, saith Grotius, upon twelve thrones, and judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and next unto these he chose rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, rulers of tens, which were the steps or rise of this*

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<sup>104</sup> Pocock, *Works*, 70.

<sup>105</sup> I recognized Harrington's arrangement of his political illustrations, though J. W. Gough does draw the same conclusion. See J. W. Gough, "Harrington and Contemporary Thought," *PSQ* 45 (September 1920): 398.

<sup>106</sup> *Oceana*, 205.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

commonwealth, from her foundation or root unto her proper elevation or accomplishment in the Sanhedrim and the congregation, already opened in the Preliminaries.<sup>108</sup>

Harrington reveals that the Exodus 18 passage represents a prominent textual authority proving Israel was a popular commonwealth, though here he splits the text to indicate two different groups of magistrates. The first part of the text relates to the heads of the tribes judging Israel, while the other half informs the popular foundation of the Sanhedrin, subordinate rulers or Jethronian Judges, and the congregation. But the testimony out of Lacedaemon, with its Delphic Oracle, does not approximate the human/divine revelation.

The second is taken out of Lacedaemon, as Lycurgus (for the greater impression of his institutions upon the minds of his citizens) pretended to have received the model of that commonwealth from the oracle of Apollo at Delphos, the words whereof are thus recorded by Plutarch in the life of that famous legislator.<sup>109</sup>

Interestingly, Wren enlarged positively upon Harrington's reference to the Delphic Oracle in settling the Lacedaemon Commonwealth, explaining that Lycurgus attempted to impose the "*Agrarian of Lacedaemon*," to "drive in Exile Riches, and the Effects of the Luxury and Debauchery," and not "equality in the Frame of Government." Which, Wren states, "would have been impossible had he not wisely attained Response from *Delphos*, . . . after which all Resistance would have been downright Impiety and Disobedience to the Gods."<sup>110</sup> Harrington responded, countering with a reiteration of the privileged place of the Scriptures in crafting a commonwealth, and demonstrating his anticlericalism.

The Bible then is not so good an oracle as was that at Delphos. But this reflection hath a tang with it that makes me think it relates to that where he says: 'I know not how; but Mr. Harrington hath taken up a very great unkindness for the clergy'. He will know nothing: neither that the oracle of the Scripture is, of all other, the clearest for a commonwealth; nor that the clergy, being generally against a commonwealth, is in this below the priests of Delphos, who were more for Lycurgus than these are for Moses.<sup>111</sup>

Harrington accused Wren and clerics in general, of being disloyal to their own divine oracle. He relates other statements suggestive of the divine initiation of the Hebrew Commonwealth never used to qualify pagan models, and evidence of its place for him politically. In *Pian Piano*, he clarifies his understanding of the role of Israel's

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. Pocock notes in footnote 1 that Harrington cites in the marginalia Exodus 18:1 and Numbers 1:16. With this, the reference to Grotius is from *Annotiones in Evangelium secundum Mathaeum*, 19, 28.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 210-211. I found this wording rather interesting in light of the charge that Harrington was an opportunist in his use of the Scriptures.

<sup>110</sup> Wren, *Considerations*, 80.

<sup>111</sup> *Prerogative*, 466.

Sanhedrin by arguing against Ferne's claim that he was "mistaken in thinking the Israelitish commonwealth or government under Moses to be so applicable to my purpose as I would make it," and asserts that "the laws of the commonwealth of the Hebrews" were "all made by an infallible legislator, even God himself," and therefore the "senate had no laws in the beginning to propose."<sup>112</sup> Harrington also contended with Peter Heylyn in *The Stumbling-Block of Disobedience and Rebellion* (1658) over the nature of Israel's monarchical origins.

There is nothing more clear nor certain in Scripture than that the commonwealth of Israel was instituted by God; the judges and the kings no otherwise than through the imprudence and importunity of the people.<sup>113</sup>

As for the Roman Commonwealth, Harrington cites a passage from Livy relating the division of the people "according to the institution of Romulus,"<sup>114</sup> but explains that these particular commonwealths, Israel's included, will be referred to for "frequent reflection,"<sup>115</sup> a subtle indication of his own political dependence upon the Hebrew model. As Melamed observed, in Harrington's attempt to locate the "sources of "human prudence" in the first legislators of human societies, he should have turned, by classical norms, to the likes of Solon, Lycurgus, and Romulus." Instead, he "located the first source of ancient prudence in the commonwealth of Israel."<sup>116</sup>

### **Harrington's Jewish and Rabbinic Scholarship**

Entire segments of some of Harrington's works are exclusively devoted to explicating the Hebrew Commonwealth against his royalist opponents, which also include acknowledgements of his reliance upon Jewish Rabbinic sources. Harrington displays an interested, involved analysis of the Scriptures, indicative of an exegetical skillfulness in handling original biblical languages and historical contexts. This sort of in-depth, intricate approach to Israel's Commonwealth testifies more to a radical use of the OT as a political text, as opposed to simply a passive engagement to buttress a political agenda. In his rather intense interchanges with Henry Ferne, Harrington demanded he reveal exactly who the authorities were regarding the nature of the Hebrew Polity, to which Ferne complained that "gentlemen . . . are too bold with holy things," such as "the commonwealth of the Hebrews, the form that God then anointed." But Harrington reminded Ferne of its scholarly neglect by the "Divines," as "nobody hath

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<sup>112</sup> *PP*, 374.

<sup>113</sup> *SB*, 576. By "judges" here, he is not referring to the Jethronian Prefects, but those judges elected after the settlement in Canaan.

<sup>114</sup> *Oceana*, 211.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>116</sup> Melmad, "Jethro's Advice," 24.

written in this kind, but Carolus Signonius, Buxtorfius. Cornelius Bertramius, Hugo Grotius, Selden and Cunaeus, all which were gentlemen or such as were not in orders.”<sup>117</sup>

Harrington summarizes *Prerogative* as “In which two books is contained the whole commonwealth of the Hebrews, or of Israel, senate, people, and magistracy, both as it stood in the institution by Moses, and as it came to be formed after the captivity.”<sup>118</sup> Harrington reveals here as well his historical sources for investigating the government of the Hebrews, which conditioned his analysis of many of her political particulars, especially that of popular suffrage.

The authors or writings I use by way of paraphrase upon the Scripture are the Gemara Babylonia, Midbar Rabba, Sepher Siphri, Sepher Tanchuma, Solomon Jarchius, Chiskuny, Abarbinel, Ajin Israel, Pesiktha Zoertha, these and many more being for the election of the Sanhedrim by the ballot. I might have spoken them more briefly, for the truth is in all that is Talmudical, I am assisted by Selden, Grotius, and their quotations out of the rabbis, having in this learning so little skill that, if I miscalled none of them, I showed you a good part of my acquaintance with them.<sup>119</sup>

Harrington's next major political treatise, *The Art of Lawgiving* (1659), reveals his significant erudition on the Jewish Polity invested in six chapters “Showing the frames of the commonwealths of Israel and of the Jews.”<sup>120</sup> His treatise contains a history of the Hebrew Commonwealth, which was divinely established by God, and the Jewish Commonwealth, which depicts her political degeneracy. Sutcliffe maintains that *The Art* represents the “political history of the Hebrews,” and “Harrington recast the decline and loss of divine favour of the Jews as an essentially political narrative of the corruption of their republican institutions.”<sup>121</sup>

Toland states that Harrington wrote this treatise after “BEING much importun'd from all hands to publish an Abridgement of *Oceana*.” Of the three books of *The Art*, Toland comments that the second contains “a full *Account of the Commonwealth of Israel, with all the variations it underwent*.” Interestingly, he claims that Harrington was one of the first to unfold its intricacies, stating, “Without this Book it is plainly impossible to understand that admirable Government concerning which no Author wrote

<sup>117</sup> *PP*, 383.

<sup>118</sup> *Prerogative*, 389.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 520. Harrington states after this passage that, “Nor am I wedded unto Grotius or Selden, whom sometimes I follow and sometimes I leave, making use of their learning but out of my own reason.” See also *PP*, 375-376. Selden's works on Jewish Law are *De succession in bona Defunctorum ad Leges Ebraeorum* (1631), *De succession in Pontificatum Ebraeorum* (1636), *De jure naturali et Gentium juxta disciplinam Ebraeorum* (1640) and *Uxor Ebraica* (1646). Selden's *De Synedrjs* (1652-54) contains his scholarship on the Jewish Sanhedrin and courts which Harrington relied upon. See Pocock, *Works*, 45, 92.

<sup>120</sup> *Art*, 599.

<sup>121</sup> Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment*, 54.

common sense before HARRINGTON, who was persuaded to complete this Treatise by such as observ'd his judicious Remarks on the same Subject in his other Writings."<sup>122</sup> The third book contains a model of *Oceana* proposed both "notionally" and "practicably," the latter containing thirteen parallel's with the civil, religious, military and provincial parts of Israel's Commonwealth. He closes his "parallel," by "appealing to the present or the next age, whether throughout I have not had God himself for my vouchee."<sup>123</sup>

Sutcliffe notes the major works related to the new political genre of the Hebrew Polity published between 1546 and 1710. Extremely influential was Carlo Sigonio's *Respublica Hebraeorum* (Bologna, 1582), and even more noteworthy was Petrus Cunaeus' *De Republica Hebraeorum* (Leiden, 1617), who, according to Sutcliffe, "exalted the political organization of the Mosaic republic, admiring in particular the equity of its agrarian laws and its institution of the Jubilee."<sup>124</sup> It might be possible to conjecture that Harrington derived his agrarian emphasis in part from Cunaeus, whom Harrington notes, along with Sigonio, as one of his rabbinic sources, not to mention John Selden and his *De Synedriis & Praefecturis Juridicis Veterum Ebraeorum* (London, 1650-1653).<sup>125</sup>

### ***Oceana's Appeal for Readmission of the Jews***

The seventeenth-century witnessed an increased interest in Jewish political studies among European political theorists, and *Oceana's* publication coincided with the debate over readmission of the Jews into England. Harrington's confessed dependence upon Jewish sources and scholarship for his study of the Hebrew Commonwealth has been closely scrutinized by S.B. Liljegren in *Harrington and the Jews*, (Lund, 1932). It is important for the purposes of this chapter to highlight his findings since they do support my assertion that *Oceana* is not a thoroughly secular political treatise.

Liljegren claims that Harrington and other early moderns took an "extraordinary interest . . . in the history, traditions, and institutions of the Jews,"<sup>126</sup> and in the "Introduction" to *Oceana*, Harrington addresses the instability of Ireland (Panopea) by proposing that she be colonized by Jews. "*Oceana*" says Harrington, should "have disposed of this province, being both rich in the nature of the soil and full of commodious ports for trade, . . . by planting it with Jews, allowing them their own rites

<sup>122</sup> Toland, *Oceana*, xxvi, xxvii.

<sup>123</sup> *Art.*, 664-684, 692. Harrington notes the parallel's in the margin, which will be discussed below.

<sup>124</sup> Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment*, 44.

<sup>125</sup> *PP.*, 383; *Prerogative*, 520.

<sup>126</sup> S.B. Liljegren, *Harrington and the Jews* (Lund, 1932), 65.

and laws.” He believed that such a policy would encourage Jews to gather “suddenly from all parts of the world, and in sufficient numbers” while their agricultural skills, evidenced “in the land of Canaan,” and merchandizing would benefit Panopea, and financially profit Oceana.<sup>127</sup> Liljegren explains that Harrington's proposal for re-admission was born out of his “predilection for everything connected with the Agrarian law.”<sup>128</sup> The fact that his advocacy of their resettlement in Ireland included the institution of their own laws testifies to his positive acknowledgment of their political efficacy.

Though the controversy of re-admission was intensely rehearsed in the English pamphlet literature, Liljegren claims that the most compelling attraction for the Jews to return to England was “the increasing Hebraism of English religious thought, as represented by the Puritan movement.”<sup>129</sup> But this was not the only reason. Menasseh ben Israel was the critical figure promoting readmission of the Jews, beginning in 1654, with a personal letter in October 1655 to Cromwell, which included various points favoring their return.<sup>130</sup> As a result of this letter, Cromwell convened the famous Whitehall Conference on readmission of the Jews on 4 December 1655, and Henry Jessey recorded the proceedings in *A Narrative of the Late Proceeds at Whitehall* (1656), which includes ben Israel's petition.<sup>131</sup> Among his points, he claimed that their readmission would be “for the profit” of England, meaning economically.<sup>132</sup> Harrington was most obviously aware of the readmission issue and of ben Israel himself, and though it cannot be asserted that *Oceana* was published in anticipation of the Whitehall Conference, but well after, it can be concluded that its publication was timed to coincide with the controversy and provide a positive policy alternative to their inclusion in Ireland. This historiographical context, and Harrington's continuous resort to the

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<sup>127</sup> *Oceana*, 159. Harrington's complete passage on the Jewish question seems somewhat negative actually as to the Jewish manner of inhabiting lands, which makes more sense possibly of his assertion that they populate Ireland only. See also Melamed, “English Travellers and Venetian Jewish Scholars,” 511-521.

<sup>128</sup> Liljegren, *Harrington and the Jews*, 66.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 68. Liljegren relies upon Lucien Wolf's *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell, Being a Reprint of the Pamphlets Published by Menasseh ben Israel to Promote the Re-Admission of the Jews to England, 1649-1656* (London: Macmillan, 1901).

<sup>130</sup> *To His Highness the Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Humble Address of Manasseh Ben Israel, a Divine, and Doctor of Physick, in behalf of the Jewish Nation* (London, 1655).

<sup>131</sup> Henry Jessey, *A Narrative of the Late Proceeds at Whitehall* (London, 1656). Postscript.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, Postscript, 9. His *Humble Address* covers this rather extensively, though the letter is without pagination. For an excellent history of the Jewish question, see David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Reasmission of the Jews to England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 158-190 and *The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994, 1996).

Hebrew Commonwealth, indicates he had more than a passing interest in their laws and civil polity.

Liljegren states that though Harrington was clearly dependent upon “Talmudical literature . . . for his constitutional ideas,” it was not an unusual practice among “contemporary pamphletists,” to “illuminate by means of a reference to Rabbis.”<sup>133</sup> He cautions against attributing to Harrington, and others for that matter, the same sort of scholarly familiarity with Jewish traditions which Selden displays, claiming that “to suppose that they knew the sources even superficially, is beside the mark.” Even some of Harrington’s own Talmudical references are “difficult” to verify, and probably because “forgetfulness has fallen on many a handy work of reference of his time.”<sup>134</sup>

### **Harrington on Bible Translation and Religious Education in *Oceana***

Further testimony of Harrington’s use of the Scriptures as a unique divine text is found in the consternation he evinced over mistranslations of passages bearing political import.<sup>135</sup> In the seventh query of *Pian Piano*, Harrington and Ferne’s sparring over translation issues reveals not only Harrington’s contempt for clerics but respect for the integrity of the Scriptures. Ferne states “these latter times make exceptions against our translation, delight in some notions of words in Scripture, vent new interpretations, make strange inferences, . . . from notion or origination of *ecclesia* to infer democratical government of the church.”<sup>136</sup> Harrington, convinced that the Scriptures supported such popular suffrage, complained that Ferne and his fellow divines “never lay any blame upon the translators, but upon them that find fault with the translation, as if it were less impiety in divines to corrupt the Scriptures than in others to vindicate them from corruption.”<sup>137</sup> Harrington’s respect for sound English translations based

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<sup>133</sup> Liljegren, *Harrington and the Jews*, 91. Melamed explains that Harrington’s acquaintance with Jewish sources was “generally indirect,” and that his “references . . . were mainly based on Selden’s extensive research on the ancient Jewish state.” See also his “Jethro’s Advice,” 23.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. See also 85. Liljegren has sourced many of Harrington’s phrases and Rabbinic quotations. See his *James Harrington’s Oceana* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1924). For a more thorough analysis of Hebrew scholarship in Europe before and after the Reformation, and including England, see Edwyn R. Bevan and Charles Singer, eds., “Hebrew Studies in the Reformation Period and After: Their Place and Influence,” 315-375, and J.W. Rogerson, “*Writing the History of Israel in the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*,” For an excellent treatment of Dutch scholarship of the Hebrew Commonwealth, including the greater European interest, see Lea Campos Boralevi, “Classical Foundational Myths of European Republicanism: The Jewish Commonwealth,” in *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, 2 vols., Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, eds. vol. 1 (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 247-261.

<sup>135</sup> One example in *Oceana* comes from the book of Judges, where Harrington disputes the insertion of “king” for “*in those days there was no king in Israel*,” asserting that the proper English term should have been “*no judge*.” The “translator,” he says, “abused you so much; seeing that the dictator (and such as the judge of Israel) or the dictatorial power, being in a single person, so little differs from monarchy (which followed in that).” See 254.

<sup>136</sup> *PP*, 383.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 384.

upon the original languages is also evidenced in *Prerogative* where he attempted to demonstrate popular suffrage from various translations of Acts 14.<sup>138</sup>

Harrington identified an interpretive abuse of the Scriptures among clergy bent on asserting the political superiority of a monarchy over a commonwealth, and exposed contradictions in their own hermeneutical method. He rebuked Wren in *Policaster* for his use of heathen authors in support of monarchy.

Tell me not in this place that Doderus is as good a book as the Bible: nor let divines (for a thing that I know) run here as they do from the Scriptures unto heathen authors. It is confessed that Diodorus Siculus, Aristotle, Cicero, Sallust and Trogus say that in the beginning of things and of nations, the power was in monarchs. But then the heathen stories know nothing beyond Nimrod, or his successor Belus, which is no excuse to you, while the Scripture is so much a more ancient record; much less to divines, at least such of them as preach against the squaring of government according to the rule of heathen authors.<sup>139</sup>

Harrington accused Wren, and divines in general, of hermeneutical equivocation in their political use of the Scriptures to prove monarchy a superior form of government. Should “a commonwealth be described out of heathen authors,” states Harrington, “they will undertake to prove that of Israel to have been a government of king, lords and commons.” But “if a commonwealth be out of this of Israel described unanswerably otherwise, then they run to Aristotle, Trogus, and the rest of the heathens for the antiquity of monarchy.”<sup>140</sup> While inferring that *Oceana* was drawn from the Hebrew Commonwealth, Harrington seems to have caught the clerics in their own opportunistic use of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures are also significantly ranked in *Oceana*'s university system, which, educationally, “answers unto religion.” Moses, “the divine legislator,” is rendered as a model for learning because he was educated “in all the learning of the Egyptians,” and “took into the fabric of his commonwealth the learning of the Midianites in the advice of Jethro.” Moses then established the “foundation of an university, laid in the Tabernacle and finished in the Temple,” which “became the pinnacle from whence all the learning in the world hath taken wing,” even “the philosophy of the Stoic from the Pharisees, that of the Epicureans from the Sadducees,” as well as “the learning of the Jews, so often quoted by our Saviour and fulfilled in him, the Christian Religion.”<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> *Prerogative*, 558-559. The Bible translations Harrington refers to are on 558-559, including Pocock's further elaboration of them.

<sup>139</sup> *Politica*, 714.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Oceana*, 305.

Harrington also advocated a civil religion in the interests of liberty of conscience and favored establishing regular benefactions to a national ministry to preserve it. He considered a national religion, if established correctly, as a non-coercive institution, and a means of “leading” as opposed to “driving” the public “in divine things, or in the worship of God.” In this regard, he advocated that the universities be sufficiently furnished financially for the education of the ministry. After all, according to Isaiah 49:23, “magistrates . . . ought to be *nursing fathers and nursing mothers* unto the church,” and Christ, in John 5: 39, commands “*to search the Scriptures*.” Harrington explained that such steps by the state would guard against “ignorance or interest as, through the infirmities or bias of translators, interpreters and preachers,” and enhance the “acquisition of such light as is by the command of Christ to be attained or exercised in searching the Scriptures.” The learning of the Levitical cities even provided Harrington with an educational model to follow, and Israel’s system of tithes might be an appropriate means to attain this end of benefaction and support. His educational parallel between *Oceana* and Israel is found in the “excellent learning of the Levites” as a model of erudition, whose “forty-eight cities were so many universities,” and whose revenue surpassed England’s universities.<sup>142</sup>

Harrington also praises the study of the “Holy Scriptures” in their original languages of “Hebrew and Greek” by juxtaposing the relevance for such training alongside the need to understand the “circumstances, persons, things, times and places,” among speakers of the same language for effective communication, let alone those of a different language or era.<sup>143</sup> The following passages probably represent most clearly Harrington’s humanist hermeneutics, with its emphasis upon an analysis of the linguistic and contextual particulars of the Bible, or any ancient text. An approach he does agree with the clerics on versus the more radical Puritan spiritists.

Wherefore to the understanding of the Scripture, it is necessary to have ancient languages and the knowledge of ancient times. . . . We are commanded (as hath been said more than once) to search the Scriptures; and whether do they search the Scriptures that take this pains in ancient languages and learning, or they that will not, but trusting unto translations only, and to words as they sound unto present circumstances (than which nothing is more fallible or certain to lose the true sense of Scriptures), pretend to be above human understanding, for no other cause than that they are below it?<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> This is what Harrington argues for in that part of his *Art* “Containing the Religious Part of This Model Proposed,” 678-682. See also his “Certain Maxims” at the end of his *DSS*, 752. In regards to tithes, Harrington states that it “cometh up so close unto the orders of Israel as in our days may show that a commonwealth may come too near that pattern to be liked.” This is the ninth parallel. See 680.

<sup>143</sup> *Oceana*, 306.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 306-307.

It is in this context that Harrington subtly reveals his view that Grace, or that Scriptural revelation confirms Nature, or natural reason.

But in searching the Scriptures by the proper use of our universities, we have been heretofore blessed with greater victories and trophies against the purple hosts and golden standards of the Romish hierarchy, than any nation; and therefore, why we should relinquish this, upon the presumption of some that because there is a greater light they have it, I do not know. There is a greater light than the sun, but it doth not extinguish the sun; nor doth any light of God's giving extinguish that of nature, but increase and sanctify it.<sup>145</sup>

These initial observations of Harrington's regard for the Scriptures indicate that the Bible, for him, was more than just one historical text among many. Rather, he revered it as divine revelation requiring translational and interpretive care. As will be shown, the methodical effort with which he defended his analysis of the Hebrew Commonwealth indicates an epistemological commitment to its political viability as opposed to his employment of it as mere decoration and ornamentation to rally a religious audience to his commonwealth cause.

### **Harrington's Natural Principles of Government: Writing Politics Out of Nature**

The complexities and intricacies of Harrington's model republic will not be rehearsed here, as it is only necessary for my purposes to present his political principles and constitutional outlines which evidence the formative influence of the Scriptures, and more particularly his political use of the Hebrew Commonwealth.

### **The Hebrew Commonwealth as the Exemplar of Ancient Prudence**

In the 'Preliminaries' of *Oceana*, Harrington categorizes his principles of government as political knowledge sourced in ancient and modern prudence, distinct eras of paradoxical political philosophy culled from Giannotti's historical periodization.<sup>146</sup> He claims ancient prudence was "first discovered unto mankind by God himself in the fabric of the commonwealth of Israel, and afterward picked out of his footsteps in nature and unanimously followed by the Greeks and Romans,"<sup>147</sup> who made subsequent discoveries of the same political material. Harrington though explicitly established the ancient primacy of the Hebrew Commonwealth.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>146</sup> For further discussion on Harrington's contrasts between ancient and modern prudence, see 397-401. In *Politicaster*, 711-712, Harrington disputes Wren's argument against his use of Giannotti.

<sup>147</sup> *Oceana*, 161. Liljegren explains that this passage is found in the Preface of Selden's *De jure naturali & gentium*. See *James Harrington's Oceana*, 235.

### Ancient Prudence in the Advice of Jethro: Exodus 18:13-27 - Harrington's Hermeneutic of Heathen Counsel

Harrington derived the biblical basis of ancient prudence from the commonwealth advice given to Moses by his heathen father-in-law, Jethro of Midian, found in Exodus 18:13-27. The historical interchange between Moses the divine Jewish lawgiver, and Jethro, the pagan Midianite ruler, represents Harrington's fundamental warrant for putting the Hebrew Commonwealth to political use and probing pagan sources.

That part of this commonwealth which was instituted by Moses upon the advice of Jethro the Priest of Midian (Exodus, 18), as I conceive an heathen, are unto me a sufficient warrant, even from God himself who confirmed them, to make further use of humane prudence wherever I find it bearing testimony unto itself, whether in heathen commonwealths or others. And the rather because so it is, that we who have the holy Scriptures, and in them the original of a commonwealth made by the same hand that made the world, are either altogether blind or negligent of it, while the heathens have all written theirs, as if they had no other copy.<sup>148</sup>

Harrington considered the Hebrew Commonwealth as the exemplary model, and given his analysis of the divine endorsement of Jethro's advice, understood God as sanctioning it with his divine imprimatur as a political prefiguring of the natural discoveries of the ancient commonwealths. Moses' unqualified acceptance of Jethro's advice permitted Harrington to mine ancient prudence for commonwealth principles reflected in the biblical text, but which were not discoverable in modern prudence. His comments do not seem to suggest that he resorted to non-biblical material for political purposes after he discovered the Exodus 18 passage. Rather, given his emphasis upon God's creation of Israel's Commonwealth, the world, as well as pagans and Christians alike, he believed God deposited the same political principles and natures in both, which further supports his general hermeneutic of Scripture confirming Nature. As Pocock notes:

Even at Sinai, however, the republic had not been a simple matter of revelation. Harrington insisted that the orders of civil society, which it developed and embodied, were accessible to human reason, and that God did not act contrary to the intelligible natural order.<sup>149</sup>

In *The Art*, Harrington considered it legitimate to compare "heathenish" legislators and commonwealths with Moses and Israel, because "Jethro, being an heathen, informeth Moses of the orders of his own commonwealth, which also was

<sup>148</sup> *Oceana*, 177.

<sup>149</sup> Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 398-399. Harrington did not believe there was a fundamental difference between the governance of Christians or heathens because both had the same natural frame. "As the natural body of a Christian or saint can be no other, for the frame, than as hath been the natural body of an Israelite or of a heathen; so the political bodies or civil governments of Christians or saints can be no other, for the frame, than such as have been the political bodies or civil governments of the Israelites or of the heathens." See *AP*, 776, CV.

heathenish.” Though Jethro’s advice hardly qualified as direct revelation from God, but merely civil guidance from Midian’s own political experience. “in Scripture is both Jethro joined with Moses, and the commonwealth of Midian with the commonwealth of Israel.” If Scripture links the divine commonwealth with a pagan one, then why, asks Harrington, “cometh it to be irreverent or atheistical, as some say, in politicians . . . to compare . . . other legislators or politicians, as Lycurgus, Solon, with Moses, or other commonwealths, as Rome and Venice, with that of Israel?”<sup>150</sup> Harrington not only employed Jethro’s advice as a textual authority for his use of heathen politicians and commonwealths in *Oceana*, but also as the basis for Israel’s lower judicatures, which “were transcribed out of another government, though heathen, as namely that of Midian.”<sup>151</sup> He reiterates the influence of Midian’s political structures upon Israel in *Prerogative*, stressing that “neither God nor Christ ever instituted any policy whatsoever upon any other principles than those of human prudence.” Israel’s “inferior courts, . . . were transcribed by Moses out of the commonwealth of Midian, upon advice of Jethro his father-in-law.”<sup>152</sup>

### **Orders of Oceana: Natural Political Observations of the Ancients**

Harrington demonstrates the governmental principles of a commonwealth by illustrating the manner in which natural political reflection proceeds in deriving them,<sup>153</sup> and proceeds to prove that his principles of power and authority, the agrarian balance and rotation are intrinsically inherent and discoverable in God’s natural order.

#### **Principles of Ancient Government: Power and Authority**

Harrington purports to proceed beyond the ancients, “To go mine own way” as he states, to trace the two-fold nature of “the principles of government,” but which nevertheless “follow the ancients.” These are authority, which represent the internal “goods of the mind,” such as “natural or acquired virtues,” and power and empire, which represent the external “goods of fortune” such as “riches” as well as goods of the “body, as health, beauty, strength.”<sup>154</sup> Domestic empire is established upon dominion defined as real property in land, money, and goods, while the proportioning of lands defines the balance of dominion, and hence the nature of an empire, or its government

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<sup>150</sup> *Art*, 629.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 652.

<sup>152</sup> *Prerogative*, 547. See also *Politicester*, 713. Harrington infers that the advice Jethro imparted to Moses meant that Midian practiced a similar judicature. Melamed highlights the historical exegesis of Exodus 18:13-27 and Deuteronomy 1:12-17 as to their political readings. See “Jethro’s Advice,” 3-41.

<sup>153</sup> *Oceana*, 162-163. Harrington contrasts his understanding of the three civil forms, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, with that of Hobbes, stating that “Leviathan is positive . . . that there is no other government in nature than one of the three,” referring to monarchy.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

This property balance leads to either an “absolute monarchy,” or a “government of servants,” an “aristocratical monarchy,” which is a “government of subjects,” or a “commonwealth,” which represents a “government of citizens,” like “those of Israel, of Rome, of Holland.”<sup>155</sup> A sole proprietorship of land, or its possession consigned to a few, overbalances the people in their ownership, and defines the empire as either a monarchy or mixed monarchy. But, if the people retain ownership of the land, the balance of dominion is united with them, resulting in a commonwealth,<sup>156</sup> or, an “empire” that “is popular.”<sup>157</sup> Government, which is most “natural” to the foundations of any empire, rests entirely upon the division and allocation of property or land distribution.<sup>158</sup>

### **Power: Agrarian Balance and Equality in the Foundation of a Commonwealth**

Harrington explains that an empire must establish a law fixing the balance in lands, called an “agrarian,” in order to sustain its existence, as without it, a “government, whether monarchial, aristocratical or popular, hath no long lease.” The agrarian’s primary power is its stabilizing quality in effecting the longevity of governments. This law, he claimed, was “first introduced by God himself, who divided the land of Canaan unto his people by lots,” and was “of such virtue that, wherever it hath held, that government hath not altered, except by consent: as in that unparalleled example of the people of Israel, when being in liberty they would needs choose a king.”<sup>159</sup> Harrington seems to suggest that an agrarian law, by its very nature, is God inspired, evidenced in his administration of it for his own people, which in turn, prolonged the Hebrew Commonwealth until their remarkable request for a king. Harrington hints at his reading of 1 Samuel 8:19 as evidence of a negative alteration in Israel’s government, and nothing short of a civil blunder. Even his poem, “On the Political Balance,” from *An Essay Upon Two of Virgil’s Eclogues* (1658), alludes to Israel’s rejection of God, and hence her original balance. In the marginalia, Harrington records, “As when the balance was popular. I Samuel. 8:7. When monarchial. Jeremiah. 27:9, 10, 11’-.”

Nature is that preserv’d which God began:  
The soul of empire and the soul of man  
(Though each of heav’n be the diviner seed)

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<sup>155</sup> *Prerogative*, 441.

<sup>156</sup> *Oceana*, 163-164.

<sup>157</sup> *Prerogative*, 458.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 564-565. According to Toland, Harrington’s most critical contribution to political philosophy was that “*empire follows the Balance of Property*.” See *Oceana*, xviii.

<sup>159</sup> *Oceana*, 164.

Bodies by various temper shape and feed.  
 Where elements are strong, or where they faint,  
 'Tis life or death, be thou or wretch or saint:  
 Who other steps through blind ambition trod  
 Invaded not the throne of man but God.<sup>160</sup>

Harrington is not suggesting that any sort of agrarian law is desirable, though as will be seen, he did believe that Israel's was the most effectual because it established popular government. In an allusion to Psalm 115:116, Harrington states that "seeing God hath given the earth unto the sons of men – that of a sole landlord (as Turkey) is not so natural in the cause or foundation (as the *timars*)."<sup>161</sup>

An agrarian law balances power, but authority must also be balanced, and "the legislator that can unite in his government" this principle "with those of fortune, cometh nearest unto the work of God, whose government consisteth of heaven and earth." Such aspirations of unity are likened with Plato's remark, "when princes should be philosophers, or philosophers princes, the world would be happy," and Solomon's observation in Ecclesiastes 10:5-7, which, interestingly, Harrington merges with a line from Tacitus' *Germania* 44 taken from Grotius's *Annotiones in Vestus Testamentum*, which also refers to Solomon's text.

*There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, which proceedeth from the ruler. Enimvero neque nobilem, neque ingenuum, nec libertinum quidem armis praeponere regia utilitas est. Folly is set in great dignity and the rich (either in virtue and wisdom, in the goods of the mind, or those of fortune, upon that balance which giveth them a sense of the national interest) sit in low places. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.*<sup>162</sup>

Harrington interprets Solomon's words as "sad complaints," because "the principles of power and authority, the goods of mind and of fortune, do not meet and twine in the wreath or crown of empire!" In other words, Plato's philosophers are not princes. Solomon's disparagement relates to an "evil under the sun," which is "the mire of private interest."

From those principles of power which, balanced upon earthly trash, exclude the heavenly treasures of virtue, and that influence of it upon government which is authority. We have wandered the earth to find out the balance of power; but to

<sup>160</sup> *FE*, 581. See Pocock's footnote 1.

<sup>161</sup> *Prerogative*, 433. For further discussion on the Agrarian, see also 404-407, and 459-473. The passage reads in the NASV as "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord; But the earth He has given to the sons of men."

<sup>162</sup> *Oceana*, 169. See Pocock's statement here in footnote 1, where he notes Liljegren's comment that such use of Grotius "is highly revealing of H's methods of composition." Harrington though does note Grotius' name in the margin. Liljegren states that the Latin part of the quote above is an exact quotation from Grotius accompanied by the words "Sic Tacitus in Germania." *Oceana*, 244.

find out that of authority we must ascend, as I said, nearer heaven, or to the image of God which is the soul of man.<sup>163</sup>

Harrington's reading of Solomon relates to his integration of power and authority through debating and resolving.

### **Authority: The Debate and Result of the Commonwealth**

Unity between power and authority rests in the elevation of the common interests of man over the private interests of individuals and parties. Harrington divided man's soul into the rivals of passion, whose reign results in "vice and the bondage of sin," and reason, which "is virtue and the freedom of soul."<sup>164</sup> He assumed that man's soul (any man, not simply a saint), bears the image of God,<sup>165</sup> which resides as the empire of reason and not passion. Consequently, an empire of laws, or rule of common reason, is to the liberty of a commonwealth as the reign of reason is to the liberty of the individual. It is here that Harrington discusses his principles of debate and result in the commonwealth, or how common reason brings forth virtuous laws.

Now government is no other than the soul of a nation or city; wherefore that which was reason in the debate of the commonwealth, being brought forth by the result, must be virtue; and for as much as the soul of a city or nation is the sovereign power, her virtue must be law.<sup>166</sup>

The political difficulty lies in "how the debate or result of a commonwealth is so sure to be according unto reason, seeing they who debate and they who resolve be but men."<sup>167</sup> Harrington identifies this perplexity as an issue of interest or reason, which is either private, and identified with rulers, or common, and associated generally with the people. He links the common interest of mankind to laws of nature by resorting to Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594-1662), and Hugo Grotius' *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (1646). Hooker described a natural law among senseless creatures as that which "directeth them, . . . to their own perfection," and another "which toucheth them as they are sociable parts united into one body," and hence a "law which bindeth them each to serve unto the others' good, and all to prefer the good of the whole, before whatsoever their own particular."<sup>168</sup> Grotius explained that though "creatures are naturally carried forth unto their proper utility or profit," some "abstain . . . either in

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 169-170.

<sup>165</sup> *SP*, 837. Toland produced this tract from Harrington's original manuscript still in his possession on 28 December 1661 at the time of his arrest. See Pocock, *Works*, 118-119, and Toland, *Oceana*, xxvii.

<sup>166</sup> *Oceana*, 170. Pocock inserts a footnote indicating the first occurrence of "debate" and "result."

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. From Richard Hooker's *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, I, iii, 5.

regard of those of the same kind, or at the least of their young." From these, Harrington understood a "common right, law of nature, or interest of the whole, which is more excellent, . . . , than the right or interest of the parts only."<sup>169</sup> concluding that since man is hardly "less just than the creature," surely he is able to "acknowledge also his common interest to be common right."<sup>170</sup>

Harrington defended his use of Hooker and Grotius against Wren's objections, and in part, through I Timothy 5:8 and Matthew 7:7-12. Wren's assertion that "action in Beasts is so different from the emanation of human Reason, that the Inferences from one to the other must needs be very weak."<sup>171</sup> Harrington accused him of deliberately confusing "natural affection," which Grotius meant in regards to the sensation of creatures towards their offspring, with "human reason," stating, "Doth it therefore follow that the eminent degree of reason, wherewithal God hath endowed man, must in him deface that natural affection and desertion in some cases of private for common good, which is apparent even in beasts?" Marshalling I Timothy 5:8 to counter Wren further, Harrington provokes him to consider whether or not one "worse than an infidel that provideth not for his own family."<sup>172</sup> A commonwealth exemplifies a "great family; and a family is a little commonwealth." Even beasts endanger themselves in "providing for their families" and in doing so, "their whole commonwealth." Harrington is not proposing a cause and effect relationship between animals and men. Rather, both man and creatures share the sacrificial tendency to die to private interests to benefit relationships. Since "we see it is with the creatures in this part, so we find it to be with man. And that so, and more than so, we find it to be with man (who though he *be evil gives good things unto his children*, will work hard, lay up, deny himself, venture his life for his little commonwealth) is thus farther demonstrated."<sup>173</sup>

Harrington confesses that man's proclivities towards private interest do not consistently confirm a natural tendency towards choosing the common good. Persuasion will not rid him of this propensity, which instead, requires "deposing passion and advancing reason unto the throne of empire,"<sup>174</sup> achievable by establishing "orders of government as, like those of God in nature."<sup>175</sup> These orders are that of dividing and

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid. From Grotius, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Prolegomena (Amsterdam, 1646). See Pocock's footnote 3 on 171.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Wren, *Considerations*, 21. Harrington quotes Wren in *Prerogative*, but inserts his verbal irritations into the text.

<sup>172</sup> *Prerogative*, 414.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. A partial reference to Matthew 7:7-12.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 415.

<sup>175</sup> *Oceana*, 172.

choosing, which represent natural civil capacities Harrington claims God distributed among men.

To demonstrate these orders, Harrington resorts to an unlikely illustration of a private and simple division of a cake between two girls, though both have an interest in acquiring as much of the cake as possible.<sup>176</sup> He is persuaded that if they can agree from the outset that one will divide the cake and the other choose a piece, that both will receive an equal portion, since regardless of who initiates the division, the parts will surely be equal. If one girl divided the cake unequally she would most certainly forfeit the greater portion since it would be in the interest of the other to take the larger piece. An equal division insures that both parties will receive what is in their best interest, and hence common right, to which Harrington exclaims “*O the depth of the wisdom of God!*” and “*by the mouths of babes and sucklings hath he set forth his strength.*”<sup>177</sup> Harrington believed this simple illustration clarified “the whole mystery of a commonwealth, which lies only in dividing and choosing.”<sup>178</sup> and part of God’s natural ordering:

Nor hath God (if his works in nature be understood) left so much unto mankind to dispute upon as who shall divide and who choose, but distributed them for ever into two orders, whereof the one hath the natural right of dividing, and the other choosing.<sup>179</sup>

Constitutionally, these natural functions of “dividing and choosing, in the language of the commonwealth, is debating and resolving.”<sup>180</sup> or, as Pocock summarized, a “method of mechanizing virtue, of distinguishing and distributing the elements of the decision process so that men were obliged to act disinterestedly.”<sup>181</sup> Harrington claims that “the debate of the few,” represents “the wisest debate,” and “the result of the many . . . is the wisest result.” God himself, “who doth nothing in vain,” actually “divided mankind unto the few, or the natural aristocracy, and the many, or the natural democracy.”<sup>182</sup> These natural orders translate institutionally into an aristocratic senate that debates and proposes laws and a democratic assembly that resolves and enacts them.<sup>183</sup> Harrington exclaims that “there is not that order in art or nature that can

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<sup>176</sup> Harrington explains that his choice of illustration was intended to avoid offense, though Wren was somewhat put off by the figure, and emphasize the principle of equality and common interest resulting from these two orders, and not those parties dividing and choosing. See *Prerogative*, 415.

<sup>177</sup> *Oceana*, 172. Harrington quotes sections of Romans 11:33 and Psalm 8:2 though he does not identify these references.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 174; *Prerogative*, 416.

<sup>181</sup> Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 394.

<sup>182</sup> *Prerogative*, 416; *Oceana*, 173.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 417; *Oceana*, 174.

compare with a popular assembly. The voice of the people is the voice of God.” After all, even “Solomon and Machiavel” agree that “in a multitude of counselors . . . there is strength.”<sup>184</sup> He comments briefly upon the executive order and then summarizes the essence of a commonwealth.

The commonwealth consisteth of the senate proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing, whereby partaking of the aristocracy as in the senate, of the democracy as in the people, and of the monarchy as in the magistracy, it is complete.<sup>185</sup>

Harrington's model commonwealth represents an empire of laws, resting upon a balance in the dominion of property and mind, with the common interest of the whole secured through two fundamental orders of dividing and choosing or debating and resolving. He claims to have “transcribed the principles of a commonwealth out of nature,” which contains no other orders, and submits the precision of his analysis “unto God and to the world. Unto God in the fabric of the commonwealth of Israel, and unto the world in the universal series of ancient prudence.”<sup>186</sup> This transition to analyzing the Hebrew Commonwealth first within the tradition of ancient prudence, seems to confirm a hermeneutical inquiry of the Scriptures which reads them as confirming what Nature demonstrates politically.<sup>187</sup>

### **Oceana as an Equal Commonwealth Structure: Equal Agrarian and Equal Rotation**

Harrington stressed the uniqueness of *Oceana* among commonwealths, even as compared to Israel's, in that it is equal in its entire constitution, or “equal both in the balance or foundation and in the superstructures,” meaning her “agrarian law and in her rotation.”<sup>188</sup> Together, they represent “the fundamental laws of *Oceana*, or the centre of this commonwealth.”<sup>189</sup>

The agrarian law establishes the foundation of a commonwealth, and considered “equal” if it is “perpetual” in nature, by which Harrington means it settles, safeguards, and perpetuates “the balance of dominion.” Such an equal balance secures a popular land distribution by law, prevents the dominion from being established within the authority of “the few or aristocracy,”<sup>190</sup> and maintains “equality in the root.”<sup>191</sup> Rotation

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 391. Harrington alludes to Proverbs 11:14 and 24:6 in regards to Solomon.

<sup>185</sup> *Oceana*, 174.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid. Harrington immediately launches into the manner in which Israel evidences his observations, which I take-up in my next section.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 180. See also *Art*, 609.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 231.

relates to the successive elections of magistrates, or alterations in the composition of rulers in the superstructures through popular suffrage and ballot, and guards against a “prolongation of magistracy.”<sup>192</sup> Popular suffrage through “an equal rotation” transfers the equality established through the agrarian into “the branch, or exercise of sovereign power.”<sup>193</sup> Harrington summarizes *Oceana* as an equal commonwealth.

An equal commonwealth . . . is a government established upon an equal agrarian, arising unto the superstructures or three orders, the senate debating and proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing by an equal rotation through the suffrage of the people given by ballot.<sup>194</sup>

Harrington concludes that his “reasoned” commonwealth, *Oceana*, represents “the first example of a commonwealth that is perfectly equal,” and states quite categorically that history does not evidence the existence of such a model. Israel lacked rotation in her Sanhedrin because her rulers were established for life. As for Venice’s role in constructing his equal commonwealth, “though she come the nearest, . . . , is externally unequal.” Venice is not quite Harrington’s exemplar model which early moderns understand it to be.

Nevertheless Venice internally and for her capacity is by far the most equal, though she hath not in my judgment arrived at the full perfection of equality: both because her laws, supplying the defect of an agrarian, are not so clear nor effectual at the foundation, nor her superstructures by the virtue of her ballot or rotation exactly librated, in regard that through the paucity of her citizens, her greater magistracies are continually wheeled through a few hands.<sup>195</sup>

But whether a “commonwealth be equal or unequal,” it incorporates “the three general orders, . . . of the senate debating and proposing, of the people resolving and of the magistracy executing.”<sup>196</sup>

The constitutional outlines and political mechanisms of Harrington’s model republic are thoroughly detailed throughout *Oceana*’s thirty orders, summarized in the “Epitome of the Whole Government,” and elaborated on further in Book III of *The Art*.<sup>197</sup> Harrington also published condensed versions of his larger model such as *Brief Directions* (1658), *The Rota* (1660), and *The Ways and Means* (1660).<sup>198</sup> to either address requests for clarity, or engage later interregnum debates on new-modelling the government.

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 231. See also *Prerogative*, 472. Harrington discusses six types of rotation from 474-485.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 181. See also *Prerogative*, 424 and *Art.* 613 for similar definitions of an equal commonwealth.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 333-337; *Art.* 662, 664-668.

<sup>198</sup> *BD*, 590-597; *Rota*, 809; *WM*, 824-826.

## Harrington's Republican Model: Moses' Model Commonwealth - Writing Politics Out of Israel

Harrington proceeds to confirm his natural orders scripturally from the Hebrew Commonwealth, and Israel's testimony to his copy is detailed meticulously in chapter 2 of Book 2 of *The Art*, titled "Showing What Commonwealth Israel Was."<sup>199</sup> What I attempt in this section is to explain Harrington's reading of Israel's Polity, which includes his rabbinic research, and then demonstrate how he incorporated its constitutional particulars into *Oceana*. I conclude that the nature of his use is paradigmatic, and in part, based upon his differentiation between Israel's power and her authority as a civil exemplar.

### Orders of the Hebrew Commonwealth: Division of Israel

#### Genealogical Division: Popular Assembly of Israel

"All political methods," Harrington states, "that are collective of the people must necessarily begin with a distribution or division of the people."<sup>200</sup> He locates Israel's method of genealogical tribal division in Exodus 1:1-4, and her detailed rankings within the tribes from Numbers 1:1-2.

Harrington understood from Numbers 1, that Israel was first divided by "ten tribes, houses or families," with all the first born positioned as tribal princes, excepting Levi, given its unique service before the altar of God.<sup>201</sup> Israel's genealogical divisions demonstrated "certain ranks, qualities or degrees," as evidenced by the census taken in the wilderness upon her immediate departure from Egypt. These internal hierarchical divisions included "phylarchs," who ranked as "princes of tribes," and "patriarchs," who were "princes of families."<sup>202</sup>

When Moses called for Israel's census in Numbers 1:18, he ordered the "congregation," or as Harrington referred to it, "the political convention of the people," to assemble "*after their families by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upwards.*" He conflates the list of tribal heads or princes of Numbers 1: 5-15 with the number of military men counted within each tribe from Numbers 1:20-43, and arrives at the census tally of 603,550 of Numbers 1:46. Harrington referred to Israel's military population as the "muster-roll in the twelve

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<sup>199</sup> I will be transitioning in my discussion on the Hebrew Commonwealth mainly between *Oceana* and *Art*.

<sup>200</sup> *Art*, 621.

<sup>201</sup> *Oceana*, 174-175.

<sup>202</sup> *Art*, 621.

tribes.”<sup>203</sup> The phylarchs then led Israel's “armies of the commonwealth,” into battle, which were divided further into “four brigades” containing three tribes, all surrounding the tabernacle as they proceeded.<sup>204</sup>

Harrington delineates the second category of Israel's genealogical division from Numbers 26:5-50, noting the twelve tribes with their various and numerous families or patriarchs. He clarifies that he does not believe the text equates patriarchs with single families, but rather with a “lineage or kindred,” and that those families listed were “the greatest about the plantation of the commonwealth.”<sup>205</sup>

### **Local Division: The Land of Canaan and the Agrarian Balance**

Israel's next division was geographic, or local, and by lots in the land of Canaan among the twelve tribes,<sup>206</sup> an order of division which Numbers 26:53-56 and 33:54 indicate Israel was commanded to execute before she entered Canaan.<sup>207</sup> From Israel's local order, coupled with the popular division of Canaan according to families, Harrington concluded the establishment of popular government in Israel.<sup>208</sup> The institution of an agrarian law for Canaan, known as the Jubilee land law, fixed the lands allotted to families such that they “were immovably entailed upon the proprietors and their heirs forever.” But should land be transferred, through sale or otherwise, the Jubilee Law required it to be returned to the original proprietor after fifty years. Harrington states that the only indication for a lawful accumulation of land was through “casual inheritance,” or by “marriage with an heiress, as in the case of Zelophehad, or his daughters.”<sup>209</sup> He condenses this aspect of Israel's agrarian.

The whole people of Israel, through a popular distribution of the land of Canaan among themselves by lot, and a fixation of such popular balance, by their agrarian law, or jubilee, entailing the inheritance of each proprietor upon his heirs forever, was locally divided among the twelve tribes.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 621-622. Harrington itemizes each of the tribes along with their princes and numbered men.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 623. The pattern and order of the march is in Numbers 10:14-28, and though Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan are all designated as standard bearers with three camps each, the biblical text makes no mention of a Lion, Man, Ox, or Eagle as representative of these brigades. Harrington most likely observed this in Grotius' *Opera Omnia Theologica*. See Pocock's footnote at 3 and 4 on 623.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 624. This Numbers passage actually represents the second census taken after the plague of God upon Israel for committing idolatry and fornication with Moab and Midian, and includes the second totaling of Israel's military capacity. But what differentiates the Numbers 1 passage from chapter 26 is that specific families are indicated through which Canaan was to be divided.

<sup>206</sup> *Oceana*, 174-175.

<sup>207</sup> *Art*, 631.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 632.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 634. The exception indicated in regards to the daughters of Zelophehad is found in Numbers 36.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

These genealogical and local divisions represented the “assemblies of the people,” who were gathered together in the wilderness on specific occasions “by trumpets (Numbers, 10:7) unto the congregation.”<sup>211</sup> When the “congregation of the people of Israel assembled in a military manner (Judges, 20:2),” she “had the result of the commonwealth, or the power of confirming all their laws, though proposed even by God himself, as where they make him king (Exodus, 19).”<sup>212</sup>

### Royalist Reponse to Harrington's Agrarian Division

Henry Ferne contended with Harrington's agrarian balance, claiming that it cannot “stand so steady in his form as in a well tempered monarchy,” and characterized it as “some other levelling order,” which required man's nature “first to be new-modelled” before it could be realized.”<sup>213</sup> Harrington responded by proving Israel's popular balance through a detailed elaboration of the division of Canaan from Josephus' *Against Apion*, whose accounting concluded that approximately three million acres could have been divided between the 603,350 numbered military men as listed in Numbers 1:46.<sup>214</sup> A four acre allotment to each man totaled at least two million four thousand acres, with a remaining five hundred thousand acres reserved “for Joshua's lot, Caleb's portion, with the princes of the tribes, and the patriarchs or princes of families.” This proportion of land allowance between the people and rulers demonstrated that Israel's agrarian was a popular balance, since the rulers “holdeth not above a sixth part in the balance with the people.”<sup>215</sup> Harrington argues similarly for Israel's popular balance in *The Art*, where he reiterates the geographical analysis of the division of Canaan.<sup>216</sup>

Wren not only accused Harrington of overemphasizing Israel's agrarian in *Oceana*, claiming “the examples of an *Agrarian* are so infrequent that Mr. *Harrington* is constrained to wave all but two Commonwealths, and can find in the whole extent of History only *Israel* and *Lacedaemon* to fasten upon,” but misinterpreting it as well.<sup>217</sup> Wren's argument against the applicability of Israel's agrarian reveals the extent to which he understood Harrington's use of it, though he stressed its legitimate

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<sup>211</sup> *Oceana*, 175.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>213</sup> *PP*, 370.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 379. Harrington is actually referring to Abderites' analysis, though the final census taken in Numbers 26:51 indicates a reduction in the numbered men after the plague to be that of 601, 730.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> *Art*, 632. Harrington did not believe that the law was applied so evenly for the division of the land. According to his understanding of Josephus' account, the surveyors entered into their “lot-book” an estimated guess of the proportion each tribe would receive.

<sup>217</sup> Wren, *Considerations*, 73. Harrington quotes this text in *Prerogative*, 460.

interpretation must be understood through the context of Abraham's obedience to God in departing his native country for Canaan. God rewarded Abraham and his "posterity" by granting them Canaan, and though the Israelites kept faithful records of their lineage, when it was time for the "impletion of the Promise. There was no Man that was able to make out his descent from *Abraham* by *Jacob*, but had an unquestionable Title to the Possession of the Land, and consequently it was necessary to divide the Land *viritim* among the people of *Israel*." <sup>218</sup> Harrington, states Wren, "thinks not upon the promise of God to *Abraham*, but considers the Division of the Lands as a politick constitution upon which the Government was founded, though in the whole History of the Bible there be not the least Footstep of such a Design." To argue that Israel's agrarian "was meant as Fundamental to the Government" was tantamount to ignoring the government's "45 year" existence prior to the agrarian's establishment. In other words, "the Constitution of the Jewish Government by Mr. *Harringtons* compute . . . bears date before the sending the dozen spies to discover the Land, but from that Action to the Division of the Land was 45 years, *Jos.* 14.10."<sup>219</sup>

### **The Agrarian Land Law of Israel: A Political Foundation of *Oceana's* Government**

Harrington responded to Wren's arguments regarding his use of Israel's agrarian, stating first, that he had indeed written of all the commonwealths, but that Wren actually attacked "three of them," that is "Israel, Lacedaemon and *Oceana*."<sup>220</sup> As for Wren's assertion that the Scriptures failed to reveal the political nature of Israel's agrarian, or any land law for that matter, Harrington demonstrates that "footsteps of such a design do exist" in the Scriptures. He argued that not only was Israel's agrarian political, but fundamental to her government by identifying three methods of dominion in Scripture, one of which he claims to have incorporated into *Oceana*.

The footsteps of God, by the testimony of David, may be seen in the deep waters; much more, by the consent of the whole Bible, in the land or in the foundation of empire, unless we make the footsteps of God to be one thing and his ways another.<sup>221</sup>

His first biblical proof of an agrarian performing the political function of a popular balance is situated in Canaan's division, when "God, by the ballot of Israel . . . divided the land" of Canaan by lot and thus "intended popular government." The second represents the alteration of the popular balance in favor of the nobility, and affected

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 77-78.

<sup>220</sup> *Prerogative*, 461.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 462.

when Israel requested a king in I Samuel 8:14. God commanded Samuel to demonstrate to Israel “*the manner of the king,*” who “*will take your fields and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give unto his servants.*” He will also “*take the tenth of your feed, and of your vineyards, and of your sheep,*” and Israel’s “*daughters shall come to be his cooks and confectioners, and your sons to run before his chariot.*” According to Harrington, “from the balance to the superstructures, a more perfect description of a monarchy by a nobility,” cannot be found. His third example is derived from Joseph’s role as Egypt’s administrator with his attempt to resolve the famine crisis presented in Genesis 47:19-20. The people approached Joseph saying “*Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharoah.*” Joseph’s subsequent purchase transformed the balance to that “of a sole landlord or absolute prince, with the miserable and yet necessary consequence of an enslaved people.”<sup>222</sup> Given these three scriptural instances, Harrington unequivocally states that the commonwealth of Oceana finds its agrarian exemplar in the commonwealth of Israel.

Now, the balance of governments throughout the Scriptures being of three kinds and no other, the balance of Oceana is exactly calculated unto the most approved way, and the clearest footsteps of God in the whole history of the Bible; and whereas the jubilee was a law instituted for the preservation of the popular balance from alteration, so is the agrarian in Oceana.<sup>223</sup>

That agrarian which Harrington considered “the most approved way” which he integrated into *Oceana*, was that established by God through the ballot of Israel, and permanently fixed through the Jubilee land law. He believed the Scriptures proved that empire followed property, and his other examples of the people’s choice of a king, and the self-inflicted slavery of Egypt, were indications of this. But Israel’s government was secured as a popular one through the agrarian law, which by its nature, establishes “the balance of a government, in such a way that it cannot be altered.” The popular division of Canaan, which was ordained by God, proved that Israel’s dominion was popular, while the establishment of the agrarian as a law, also divinely ordained, secured it. God therefore desired popular government for Israel. England transitioned to a popular balance which now required an agrarian law, in the manner of a Jubilee land law, to secure it, and therefore establish popular government. It was the effectiveness of an

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 462-463.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 463. I assume Christopher Hill meant the same when he stated that “Harrington was careful to point out that his agrarian law was exactly modelled on the Biblical jubilee which preserved ‘the proper balance of property’.” See *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, 165.

agrarian law in establishing popular government, already divinely sanctioned, which Harrington extracted from Israel in his attempt to fix the balance in Oceana.

Harrington was hardly adopting any sort of leveling agenda or program, and explained to Wren that “the agrarian of Oceana doth no more than pin the basket, which is already filled,” meaning that the property currently in possession is not “stirred, but all entirely left as it was found.”<sup>224</sup> Oceana’s balance will not be initiated like Israel’s, which was “introduced at the institution” and “by God, or Moses.” Rather, Oceana experienced an “alteration in property,” which “changed from aristocratical to popular.”<sup>225</sup> Given “the voluability of the balance being apparent,” legislators need to discern the sort of agrarian law to implement to secure the “balance of government.” Israel’s law was characteristic of “entailing the lands upon certain families, without power of alienation in any case.”<sup>226</sup> Oceana’s agrarian law does not follow Israel’s method of entailing lands. Rather, Harrington’s method is “by the regulation of purchases,” whereby a “man’s land shall not exceed some certain proportions - for example, two thousand pounds a year.” But should he surpass this amount, he is to “divide” it in a “descending” order to his “children as soon as, being more than one, they shall be capable of such a division or sub-division, till the greater share exceed not two thousand pounds a year in land, lying and being within the native territory.”<sup>227</sup> It was not the method of Israel’s agrarian which Harrington extracted, but rather the law itself as a political constitution.

Harrington states again in his argument with Wren, that “property” in Oceana, “is taken as it is found, and not stirred an hair.” Oceana’s division is not related to God’s promise to Abraham regarding the division of the land of Canaan, which was “made,” while Oceana’s is “found made,” and “each according unto the law of the government.” The division of Canaan for Israel was a unique act of divine institution. It would seem Harrington extracted as a fundamental constitutional principle from Israel the very point which Wren contended against – that Israel’s agrarian was intended to establish the “foundation of the government.”<sup>228</sup> In other words, it was a political mechanism by which to establish popular government, “and whereas the jubilee was a law instituted for the preservation of the popular balance from alteration, so is the agrarian in Oceana.”<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 458. See also *Art*, 664.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 459.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 460.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 462.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 463.

Harrington is not suggesting that the exact nature of Canaan's division as to specific land dimensions is modelled in *Oceana*, but rather the divine and natural law of the agrarian as to its constitutional essence. Israel's agrarian law was paradigmatic, or the original pattern and prototype for Harrington's popular balance in *Oceana*. It is also important to stress that Harrington believed Israel was equal in her agrarian,<sup>230</sup> meaning that the popular balance would be preserved. Further proof that Harrington was after the effect of Israel's agrarian law and not her particulars is found in the "Civil Part of the Model Proposed Practicably" in the third book of *The Art*, which represents *Oceana*'s "first parallel" with Israel.

The balance of the commonwealth of Israel, through the distribution of lands at the introduction of the same, became popular and, becoming popular, was fixed by the law for the jubilee. *That which was sold shall remain in the hands of them that bought it till the year of jubilee; and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return to his possession.* The ways in Israel and in the commonwealth proposed, where the balance is not made but found, are divers; but the agrarian laws in each, as to the end, which is preservation of the balance, are of like effect.<sup>231</sup>

The application of Israel's agrarian represents a political parallel between *Oceana* and the Hebrew Commonwealth, and one example of how Harrington was practicing the art of writing out of Israel.

### **Orders of the Hebrew Commonwealth: Authority of Israel and System of Courts**

#### **The Senate Sanhedrin: Numbers 11:10-16 and Deuteronomy 1:9-16**

Harrington considered the Senate or Sanhedrin of the Hebrew Commonwealth, inaugurated in Numbers 11:10-16, as the locus of authority, and according to Deuteronomy 1:9-16, originally elected by Israel,<sup>232</sup> a text of popular suffrage which he would refer to as "the rule of Moses."<sup>233</sup> Harrington likely equated the election of the Sanhedrin with this passage because of the reiteration of Moses' complaint of judicial oppressiveness first found in Numbers 11: 10-16. His royalist opponents would debate him on his use of it for a popular prerogative, as they read the creation of the Sanhedrin from Jethro's advice in Exodus 18. Harrington also referred to the Sanhedrin as "the supreme, and a constant, court of judicature,"<sup>234</sup> whose status was unique and exceptional among commonwealths because her legislator "was infallible," who delivered laws "as were not fit to be altered by men." In this regard, Israel's Senate

<sup>230</sup> *Oceana*, 184.

<sup>231</sup> *Art*, 665. Harrington quotes from Leviticus 25:28. See footnote 1.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>233</sup> *DUS*, 739. This will be discussed further below, but Harrington refers to this text twice

<sup>234</sup> *Oceana*, 294.

originally operated in an “executive” capacity, or as an administrator of preexisting law, or “law made (Deuteronomy, 17:9, 10, 11).”<sup>235</sup>

### Jethro's Judicatures: Exodus 18:17-26

Israel's judicatory also consisted of lesser magistrates who, upon Israel's settlement in Canaan, administered courts of law consisting of twenty-three elders who sat at city gates throughout the land. These represented “that part of this commonwealth which was instituted by Moses upon the advice of Jethro the priest of Midian (Exodus, 18),” and constituted the “executive magistracy subordinate unto the Sanhedrin.”<sup>236</sup> Harrington referred to these local judicatures as the “inferior courts,” or branches, as it were, of the Sanhedrim,<sup>237</sup> and even the “lesser Sanhedrim.”<sup>238</sup>

Harrington defined the members of the Sanhedrin and lower courts as the “ordinary magistrates” of Israel's Commonwealth, whose “institution and election” proceeded through the proposition of Moses to the “congregation of the Lord.” According to Deuteronomy 1:13, Moses proposed that the people “*take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, kai katastaso and I will make (or constitute) them rulers over you.*”<sup>239</sup> Harrington emphasized the Greek term to “constitute,” which he did not equate with the authority to singly appoint rulers, to prove that Moses' authority modelled that of a lawgiver, like Solon, as opposed to that of a king.

Harrington believed that the origin of these lesser courts pre-dated Israel's genealogical and local divisions, and were a consequence of Moses having to bear the entire burden of the judicatory. After Jethro observed Moses' judicial procedure, he advised him to institute a new approach, and “*chose . . . able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.*”<sup>240</sup> Jethro counseled that their judicial activities should be “*at all seasons,*” and their jurisdiction should extend only to “*every small matter*” to “*bear the burden with*” him, who would decide “*every great matter*” submitted from these courts. Harrington read Exodus 18 as inaugurating two judicial authorities: Moses singularly acted as a court of appeals, while the prefectures would administer the burden of lesser judicial matters. Harrington believed these judgeships were instituted when Israel was an army, but which, according to Deuteronomy 16:18, continued when Israel

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 176-177.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>238</sup> *Prerogative*, 523.

<sup>239</sup> *Art*, 628. I have transliterated Harrington's Greek terms.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 628-629. Quotation from Exodus 18: 24-25.

transitioned into a commonwealth: "*Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes; and they shall judge the people with a just judgment.*"<sup>241</sup>

As for the formation of the Sanhedrin, Harrington did not interpret its establishment as a service to aid an overburdened Moses, as some of his royalist contenders assumed, but only to assist him in the appeals process. Judicial apportionment through the lower judicatures had already relieved Moses of the lesser court function. But, Harrington did not understand the appeals process as proceeding according to Jethro's advice, which he believes explains Moses's statement in Numbers 11:14, that he was "*not able to bear all this people alone,*" to which the Lord responded, saying "*Gather unto me seventy men, of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand with thee.*" God's command that they "stand" with Moses was symbolic of their judicial equality, and not evidence of Moses as a monarch, as "crowns will have no rivals." These seventy would "*bear the burden of the people with*" Moses, so he would not "*bear it not alone,*" as a monarch would. Moses then "*went out, and told the people the words of the Lord* (which a monarch needed not to have done) *and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people.*"<sup>242</sup> The Sanhedrin shared "a joint political capacity" with Moses, who "was no king in their sense." In this regard, Harrington read Numbers 11: 14-16 to prove that the Sanhedrin acted as an appellate court alongside Moses, who was no monarch, as such would neither share his crown, bear the burden of judgment with others, or propose to the people for their consideration.

According to Harrington's understanding of Deuteronomy 17:8-12, the Sanhedrin represented those "priests and Levites" to whom Moses directed the people in their appeals over difficult controversies, and not an example of the Sanhedrin referring cases to him, and hence proof of their political subordination. The Sanhedrin was only authorized to stand with Moses, and thus "their power could be no more than was that of Moses." Since Moses' own authority "were never more in the matter of lawgiving than to propose unto the people," the Sanhedrin's authority was limited likewise; Scripture never indicates that the Sanhedrin created law apart from the people.<sup>243</sup>

Harrington's interpretation of Numbers 11:14-16 is also found in his *The Stumbling-Block of Obedience and Rebellion*, where he argues again that Moses'

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<sup>241</sup> *Art.* 629. Quotation from Deuteronomy 16:18

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 620.

authority was not monarchical, and chides Heylyn for confusing Jethro's advice in Exodus 18 with the institution of the Sanhedrin.<sup>244</sup> But to demonstrate further to Heylyn that the Sanhedrin operated as a court of appeals alongside Moses when Israel was a commonwealth, he resorted to Deuteronomy 17: 8-9 as he did in *The Art*.

'If there arise a matter of controversy within thy gates' (which plainly is addressed to the Jethronian courts) 'too hard for thee in judgment, then shalt thou come unto the priest and the Levite' (by which in the sense of all authors, Jewish and Christian, is understood the Sanhedrim) 'or to the judge that shall be in those days' (the *suffes* of dictator) 'and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment;' whence, by the clear sense of Scripture, all matter of appeal in Israel lay into the Sanhedrim.<sup>245</sup>

Harrington argued similarly with Ferne in *Pian Piano*, who also assumed that Moses instituted the Sanhedrim upon the advice of Jethro, and stood as "chief in the whole government."<sup>246</sup>

### Orders of the Hebrew Commonwealth: Rotation and the Ballot

Harrington delineates the exact nature of Israel's complex election methods through the assistance of the Talmud, as well as Grotius and Selden, the latter of whom Harrington referred to as "the ablest Talmudist of our age or any."<sup>247</sup>

Harrington claimed that "Israel, from the institution of Moses to the monarchy, was a democracy or popular government,"<sup>248</sup> because her agrarian law was fixed and therefore equal. But her rotation was unequal and irregular in the Sanhedrin because its members were originally elected for life, though her electoral method was subsequently altered from a popular vote to ordination. This shift in electoral approach occurred "without any precept of God," during the period of the Judges, and progressed through to the captivity of Israel under Babylon, eventually influencing the election of church leaders of the New Testament Christian era. Harrington would differentiate between the Jewish Commonwealth and that of the Hebrew Commonwealth, in part, based upon differences in election procedures.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> *SB*, 573.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> *PP*, 375-377.

<sup>247</sup> *Prerogative*, 531.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 528.

<sup>249</sup> For Harrington's analysis of the shift in Israel's election procedures, see Book II of *Prerogative*, "A Political Discourse Concerning Ordination," written in response to Hammond's *A Letter of Resolution to Six Quares, of Present Use in the Church of England* (London, 1653), and Seaman's *Vindication of the Judgment of the Reformed Churches, and Protestant Divines, from Misrepresentations Concerning Ordination, and Laying on of Hands* (London, 1647). Harrington claims these books were sent to him "by way of objection." See also Chapter's III-VI of Book II of *The Art*, 636-653. A succinct contrast between the models of the Hebrew Commonwealth and the Jewish Commonwealth is found on 634-635 and 648-649.

### Election of Israel’s Sanhedrin and Lesser Magistrates

Israel’s senate was unique given its divine commissioning and reception of revealed law, established life-membership, and predominantly executive function. Harrington believed it never practiced its authority of proposition until after its return from the Bablyonian captivity.<sup>250</sup> But when Israel operated under her original orders before her fatal transition to monarchy, the people, or the tribes, represented the basis of popular suffrage.

Deuteronomy 1:12-17 provided Harrington with his Scriptural mandate for the popular election of magistrates, a process which proceeded first through Moses’ proposition to the people to “*take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, kai katastaso and I will make (or constitute) them rulers over you.*”<sup>251</sup> Harrington makes minimal mention of the electoral dynamics of this method in *Oceana*, stating that it is “intimated” from Numbers 11, rather than demonstrated. For its intricacies, he relies upon the Jewish scholarship of “Talmudists.”<sup>252</sup>

### The Suffrage of Israel: *Chriotonia*, *Kathistana* and *Psemphisma*

Harrington’s discussion of the nature of Israel’s electoral process reveals his exegetical method of examining extra biblical sources to determine the lexical intricacies of word meanings which evidence his claims of Israel’s popular government, and method of debating and resolving.<sup>253</sup> For my purposes, it is critical to establish the lexical differences between two Greek terms which Harrington emphasizes as bearing electoral import; that of *chirontonia* and *chirosthia*. He devotes the first chapter of his “A Political Discourse Concerning Ordination” in *Prerogative* to an analysis of their distinct renderings from historical sources to compare with their biblical instancing.<sup>254</sup> *Chirotonia* denoted a suffrage expressed through the holding up of hands, which Harrington considered the more popular approach to the election of magistrates, while *chirosthia*, or the laying on of hands, represented the more aristocratical method which Israel adopted outside her original orders, the preferred method of ordination in the

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<sup>250</sup> *Oceana*, 176.

<sup>251</sup> *Art*, 628.

<sup>252</sup> *Oceana*, 176.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>254</sup> *Prerogative*, 502-506. Harrington resorts to the 12<sup>th</sup> century Greek Lexicographer Suidas in his *Lexicon*, who explained that *chirotonia* represented a method of “popular suffrage,” evidenced in Athens “by the holding up of hands,” and in Rome and other commonwealths through verbal acknowledgment. Pocock includes numerous footnotes regarding his use of Erasmus and the AV. Harrington also offers a rather extensive analysis of the differences between these two terms through Roman histories and accounts.

Jewish Commonwealth, and “conferred by one man or a few men.”<sup>255</sup> He established these same textual differences through an extensive exegesis of Acts 11:19 through Chapter 14 with the aid of the Christian humanist exegete Erasmus, and his “In Acta Apostolorum Paraphrasis per Des” in *Opera Omnia* (Basle, 1540).<sup>256</sup> With this, he also resorted to Livy, Strabo's *Geographica*, and Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* to prove popular government in the Roman provinces.<sup>257</sup> He even claimed to have demonstrated out of Ephesians his textual findings from Rome, concluding that those particular Roman cities and provinces visited by Paul and Barnabas under popular government influenced them in their implementation of ecclesiastical election practices.<sup>258</sup> As Jethro was to Moses, so Rome was to Paul and Barnabas.

To demonstrate the existence of debating and resolving in Israel, Harrington adds to his word study discussion an analysis of *kathistana*, which “signifies to constitute or ordain,” and relates to authority and proposition, and *psephisma*, defined as “a decree or law” which “always implies the suffrage of the people” in respect to “popular government.”<sup>259</sup> He arrived at these definitions by marshalling an array of extra-biblical sources such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Demosthenes, Pollux, the Constitution of Athens as well as the role of Romulus in Rome.<sup>260</sup> Harrington concludes with a rather revealing comment on the role of studying pagan sources for determining word meanings:

Have I not also discovered already the original right of ordination, whether in civil or religious orders? This will be scandalous. How! Derive ordination as it is in the church of Christ, or as it was in the church of the Jews, from the religion or rather superstition of the heathens! I meddle not with their religion, not yet with their superstitions, but with their ordination, which was neither, but a part of their policy. And why is not ordination in the church or commonwealth of Christ as well a political thing as it was in the churches or commonwealths of the Jews or of the heathens? Why is not election of officers in the church as well a political thing as election of officers in the state?<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 502. It is important to note here that Harrington is distinguishing the Jewish practice of ordination within the Jewish Commonwealth from the procedure of popular election under the Hebrew Commonwealth.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 502-506.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 506-516. Harrington even inserts correspondence between Pliny and Trajan to prove the popular nature of some governments in Asia Minor.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 514-515.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 516-517.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 516-519.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 519.

Harrington even claimed Philo “expressly said” that Moses “introduced the *chirotonia*.”<sup>262</sup> He now applies his lexical research of these three key terms to their respective uses in the Scriptures, and hence election of Jewish magistrates.

All ordination of magistrates, as of senators, or elders of the Sanhedrim, of the judges, or elders of inferior courts, of the judge or *suffes* of Israel, of the king, of the priests, of the Levites, whether with the ballot or *viva voce*, was performed by the *chirotonia* or suffrage of the people.<sup>263</sup>

Harrington refers back to Numbers 11:16, 24 and Deuteronomy 1: 9-16 to prove that Israel's election method employed the *chriotionia*, *kathistana*, and *psephisma*. At the inception of Israel's Senate in Numbers 11:16, 24, God commanded Moses to “gather me seventy men of the elders of Israel, and Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord,” which Harrington understood as proof that Moses “proposed the dictate of the supreme legislator unto the *chriotionia* of the congregation.” In Deuteronomy 1:13-15, Moses proposed that the people “take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, (*kai katastso autos eph humon hyoumenos humon*,) and I will constitute them rulers over you,” as further proof of the people's *chirotonia*, adding:

Now how the people could otherwise take or choose these rulers of magistrate thus proposed than by their *chirontonia*, let divines show; or notwithstanding the constitution of Moses, both the senate of Israel and the inferior courts were decreed by the *chirotonia* of the people.<sup>264</sup>

Deuteronomy 1:14 indicates that the people gave their consent or *psephisma*, for they “answered and said, the thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do,” to which Moses, (*katestasa autous hyeisthai*.) constituted or ordained them governors.” Harrington concludes that “you have the three words, or the three things, again, nor as to the things, is it or ever was it otherwise in any commonwealth.”<sup>265</sup>

### **Election of Competitors for the Sanhedrin and Jethronian Judges**

Harrington described the electoral process of the Sanhedrin through the assistance of Selden and his *De Synedriis*, while Deuteronomy 1:13 provided the election template. Every tribe “elected among themselves by their suffrages *six wise men and understanding, and known among them*.” Their names were subsequently written and “delivered each in a several scroll unto Moses,” who gathered the names of “seventy-two competitors,” two more than required. Moses then “took two urns” and

<sup>262</sup> Ibid. In footnote 3, Pocock notes this reference to Philo's observation as being from his *The Special Laws*, iv, xxx, 157.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 520.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid. See also 530.

into the one urn “cast the seventy-two competitors” presented by the people, and into the other, “seventy-two scrolls, of which two were blanks, and seventy were inscribed with the word ‘presbyter.’” Once this was finished, “the whole congregation prayed,” and then “gave forth their lots.” Lots were chosen simultaneously out of the “urn of the competitors” and the “urn of the magistracies,” and magistrates were chosen when their name matched with “presbyter.” But two candidates would choose blank lots, whom Harrington believed were Eldad and Medad, which explains why they “went not up into the tabernacle.”<sup>266</sup>

In that part of *The Art* which proposes the religious aspect of his model, Harrington relates his “tenth parallel,” which is Moses’ institution of Israel’s senate through the electoral template of Deuteronomy 1:13, and mentions again the failure of the lot to fall to Eldad and Medad. Harrington explains that the Apostles practiced the “senatorian office” similarly, by requiring the congregation to make a choice of two apostles to replace Judas, and where the “lot of apostleship fell upon Matthias.” Harrington concludes that this method of ordination which was first “instituted by Moses, and the prime of those which were taken up by the apostles, is both Mosaical and apostolical.” *Oceana* will provide for similar ordination.<sup>267</sup>

Harrington concludes his lexical study by recalling those terms which evidence popular suffrage in Israel. “Moses the legislator *katestasa*, constituted; the people chirotonised; and that which they chirotonised was *psephisma*, their decree.”<sup>268</sup> Harrington expressed exasperation that his reasoned historical study and lexical analysis contradicted what he called “times that are coifed with such opinions that to show scripture to be reason is to make it lose weight with them, and to talk of the Talmudists is to profane it.”<sup>269</sup>

Thus, if this place in Scripture admit of no other interpretation, so much as I have cited out of the Talmud (though otherwise, for the most part but a fabulous and undigested heap) must needs be good and valid. In this manner, one or more senators happening to die, it was easy for each tribe, choosing one or more competitors accordingly out of themselves, to decide at the urn which competitor

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 522. Pocock notes in footnote 1 that the “modern reader may need reminding at this point how elaborate are the interpretations of the scriptural text by which H. arrives at this picture of the Venetian ballot being carried out in the wilderness.” Harrington though claims rabbinic scholars as his source. He does though qualify this by pointing his readers to Selden’s *De Synedriis*, II, iv, 6-7, which seems to have assisted him in his understanding of the election process for the Sanhedrin. See also *Art*, 628. The passage which Harrington refers to in regards to Eldad and Medad is Numbers 11:26. For more on this process, and Harrington’s understanding of the responses of Eldad and Medad, see *Oceana*, 176 and *PP*, 384.

<sup>267</sup> *Art*, 681. Harrington refers his readers to his discussion of apostolic ordination in Book 2, chapter 8, which cannot be in *Art*. *Prerogative* discusses this in book two, chapter 5. See 538-552.

<sup>268</sup> *Prerogative*, 522.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

so chosen should be the magistrate, without partiality or cause of feud: which, if a man consider this constitution, was not perhaps so readily to be done otherwise.<sup>270</sup>

Harrington explains that the ordination of the “lesser Sanhedrim or inferior courts,” was similar to that of the Senate.<sup>271</sup> To prove Moses’ authority of constitution, he resorts to Deuteronomy 1:15-16, where Moses “took *the chief of your tribes, wise men and known, kai katestasa, and made them heads over you, captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, etc.*” These became the Jethronian judges who sat in Israel’s cities who Moses “*charged . . . saying, hear the causes and judge righteously.*”<sup>272</sup> In *The Art*, Harrington again states that the election process for the Sanhedrin in regards to the lot and urns was the same for these judicatures, as “the like, no doubt, was done for the inferior courts, save that such elections (the commonwealth being once settled) were more particular, and performed by that tribe only in whose gates that court was sitting.”<sup>273</sup>

Harrington addressed the advantage of popular government as contrasted with that of a saintly oligarchy in his *Discourse Upon this Saying* (1659), a response to the Army’s 11 May 1659 *Humble Petition*, and with this Deuteronomy 1: 13 passage in mind, which he referred to as the “rule of Moses.” In his attempt to emphasize popular government, he reminds his readers that the Bible plainly states, “*Put not your trust in princes,*” but “doth not anywhere say the like of the congregation of the Lord, or of the people.” Harrington then resorts to the Deuteronomy 1: 13 text, explaining that Moses commanded the people to choose “*wise men, and known among your tribes,*” which he would constitute over them as rulers, which meant that the people “were supreme both in matter of religion and government.” Proof, said Harrington, that by both God’s command and Moses’ example, “you have the spirit of the people trusted with all matters either civil or religious.”<sup>274</sup> Among its various proposals in new-modelling the government, the Army requested that those “entrusted, (with power or authority) be such as shall be found to be most eminent for godliness, faithfulness, and constancy to the good old cause and interest of these nations.” Harrington understood their appeal to exclude the people’s prerogative, and quotes the Deuteronomy passage again, stating that if the people are made “judges, without which it is impossible there should be any

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<sup>270</sup> *Art*, 628. Pocock notes in footnote 3 that it is difficult to know for certain which one of the Jewish writers Harrington is referring to here, but Liljegren states that this explanation of Israel’s election of the Sanhedrin is found in Selden’s *De Synedriis* II. 4. 6f. See *James Harrington’s Oceana*, 249.

<sup>271</sup> *Prerogative*, 523.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 523-524; *Art*, 629.

<sup>273</sup> *Art*, 628.

<sup>274</sup> *DUS*, 736.

well-ordered commonwealth," there was no other "rule" by which to proceed. "than according to Moses: *Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes.*" Qualifications of "godliness" or "faithfulness to the good old cause," as a test of leadership would not usher in a "free state." Rather, it was sufficient to "leave the people according to the rule of Moses, unto their judgment in these cases."<sup>275</sup> The political importance which Harrington attached to the Deuteronomy text is instanced by his use of it three times in this tract alone. He even refers to it again in his *Aphorisms Political*:

Not the party which cannot govern without an army, but the party which can govern without an army, is the refined party, as to this intent and purpose truly refined; that is by popular election, according to the precept of Moses and the rule of Scripture: *Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.*<sup>276</sup>

Though Harrington read the Exodus 18 passage as the popular election of Israel's lower judicature, he never referred to it as often as the Deuteronomy 1 text. He even explains in *Oceana* that Israel never practiced hereditary succession in the Sanhedrin, "though there be little question but the 'wise men and understanding, and known among their tribes,'" were those "which the people took or elected into those or other magistracies, and Moses made rulers over them (Deuteronomy, I:13)."<sup>277</sup> The reason for choosing the Deuteronomy text may be found in its divine import; the Exodus 18 passage incorporated Jethro's advice, and hence was not completely divine, while Deuteronomy 1: 13 represented a clear command from God to Moses to proposition the people, or direct them to a popular election of their senate.

### **The Authority of Israel for *Oceana*'s Superstructures**

Harrington accused Wren, and other "divines" of attempting to "overthrow the commonwealth of Israel," but claimed nevertheless that *Oceana* was untouchable. He demonstrated that the political aspects of Israel's commonwealth were integrated into *Oceana*.

I will give them my word they shall never be able to touch that of *Oceana*, which, except in the hereditary succession and dignity of the princes of the tribes and the patriarchs, and that the senate was for life, differs not from the former; for as to the divers working up of the superstructures in divers commonwealths according unto the diversity of occasions, it comes unto no accountable difference; and much (I conceive) of this carving or finishing in Israel (which had it been extant would perhaps have shown a greater resemblance) is lost.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 739.

<sup>276</sup> *AP*, 763. See XV.

<sup>277</sup> *Oceana*, 260.

<sup>278</sup> *Prerogative*, 463-464.

Harrington's terminology of comparison and connection between the two commonwealths is important, and relates to his previous discussion with Wren regarding the differences between power and authority. *Oceana* "differs not" from Israel, despite the exceptions mentioned. Neither is there "no accountable difference" in their manner of construction and architecture. And, had Israel's model actually existed, the similarities would have been starker. As further evidence of Harrington's use of Israel's model, he explained that the numerical differences between her senators and *Oceana*'s are inconsequential given their populations, as *Oceana*'s "three hundred . . . exceedeth not that of the seventy in Israel." It was not necessary for *Oceana* to retain "the succession and dignity of the princes of the tribes and of the patriarchs" which were only "ordained for the preservation of the pedigrees," which Christ's coming rendered unnecessary. Neither was it constitutionally imperative to model Israel's senatorial terms:

And that the senators were for life derived from a former custom of such a number of elders exercising authority in Egypt (though not that of the senate till it was instituted by God), from the descent of the patriarchs into that land, who being at their descent seventy persons and governing their families by the right of paternity, as the people increased, and they came to die, had their successors appointed in such manner that the number of seventy in remembrance of those patriarchs was diligently preserved.<sup>279</sup>

He comments similarly in *The Art* regarding the unnecessary transposition of the exact numbers of senators from Israel to *Oceana*, which represents his "fifth parallel" between them.

To dismiss this whole senate with one parallel: the institution of the seventy elders in Israel . . . , for their number, related unto an accident and a custom thereupon anciently introduced. The accident was that the sons of Jacob who went into Egypt were so many; these first governing their families by natural right, came as those families increased to be for their number retained and continued in the nature of a senatorian council, while the people were yet in Egyptian bondage. So we, having had no like custom, have as to the number no like inducement.<sup>280</sup>

To consider the original number of the senate's members as an "accident" seems to contradict his other contention that God had ordained it, and the Numbers 11 passage includes the amount of "seventy" as part of that inspired process. But Harrington stresses that the quantity of Senators is irrelevant, given historical dissimilarities and population differences. Neither was it necessary to follow the pattern of division in Canaan.

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 464.

<sup>280</sup> *Art*, 673.

Again, the territory of Canaan amounted not to a fourth of our country: and in government we are to fit ourselves unto our own proportions. Nor can a senate consisting of a few senators be capable of so many distributions as a senate consisting of more.<sup>281</sup>

In *The Art*, Harrington relates Oceana's system of courts to that of Israel's in his "third parallel." He proposed the construction of various courts under the authority of magistrates of tribes, "along with twenty justices elected at the hundreds," to function as a "court for the government of the tribe called the phylarch." Harrington then instances Deuteronomy 16:18: "*Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee throughout they tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.*" These were Israel's courts which consisted of twenty-three elders who sat in the gates of Israel's cities, and who could render appeals to the Sanhedrin. Similarly, Oceana's phylarch's would have "a court or two of appeal, eligible out of the senate and people."<sup>282</sup>

Finally, Harrington states in his "seventh parallel" in *The Art*, that Israel's "Sanhedrim made no law without the people, nor may the senate in the model." But Israel's "Sanhedrim with the congregation might make laws: so may the senate in the model, with the representative of the people."<sup>283</sup> It would seem that Oceana and the Hebrew Commonwealth are political correspondents, and not uniform replicas in their particulars. Harrington jettisoned Israel's cultural baggage as wholly unnecessary for his model and possibly because they represented categories of power exclusive to its governance. Harrington concludes his comments in *Prerogative* that "these things rightly considered, I have not varied from the authority of Israel in a tittle, there being neither any such necessary use of pedigrees nor uninterrupted succession of elders for life in Oceana." He highlights his term "authority," a subtle indication that he is not referring to Israel's power, or her sovereign province in Oceana's political and legal life. Rather, Israel's prerogative over Oceana, or her authority, governs and directs Oceana's constitutional framing as to structure and fundamental laws, such as rotation, the agrarian, and the main orders of the commonwealth. Again, Harrington exclaims that "Oceana, cannot be wounded by piercing the authority of Israel, with which she is armed *cap-`a-pie*,"<sup>284</sup> or from head to toe.

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<sup>281</sup> *Prerogative*, 464.

<sup>282</sup> *Art*, 668. It might be possible to conclude that Harrington choose his twenty-third order to be the establishment of these courts to match Israel's judges.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 675.

<sup>284</sup> *Prerogative*, 464.

### Israel's Prerogative and Rotation in the Congregation – 1 Chronicles 27

Harrington, in his polemic against Rogers, claimed that he had “written the commonwealth of Israel,” and “from thence especially rotation is derived.”<sup>285</sup> Apart from extracting the actual function of Israel's prerogative, it would seem that the rotation he carved out for *Oceana* related to her very local tribal method of choosing this 24,000-member prerogative monthly, and out of which her local magistrates in the senate and lower judiciary were chosen. Also, Israel's representative rotated through the population annually. The correspondent seems to lie most particularly at *Oceana*'s first level of election, or the parish.

Harrington understood Israel's prerogative to have consisted of a congregation of military men numbering 24,000 combined delegates, or 2000 from each of the twelve tribes, who sat for one month terms.<sup>286</sup> 1 Chronicles 27:1-15 lists the twelve tribes as standing monthly along with their commanders and officers, followed by a division of 24,000 under their command. Verses 16-22 include the tribal heads or princes whom Harrington explained remained in their separate provinces as judges, and from where they sent the required military reinforcements. His understanding of the complexity of the prerogative's rotation from 1 Chronicles 27 was influenced by his reading of Grotius' *Annotationes* (1641).

*Now the children of Israel after their number, to wit, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that served the king in any matter, of the courses which came in and went out month by month, throughout all the months of the year, every course, were twenty and four thousand.*<sup>287</sup>

Israel's congregation functioned as a military body, where “they were the constant guard of the country,” and as representatives, “in which they gave the vote of the people at the creation of their laws and election of magistrates - . . . monthly.”<sup>288</sup> These men only stood for one month terms, and over the course of a year, Israel's military population was completely rotated. Harrington concludes this discussion by stating that “these things rightly considered, there remains little doubt but we have the courses of Israel for the first example of rotation in a popular assembly.”<sup>289</sup>

Harrington instances the law-making function of the prerogative from 1 Chronicles 13:1-3, which relates King David's desire to convey the Ark of the Covenant

<sup>285</sup> *PSP*, 758.

<sup>286</sup> *Art*, 634-635; *Prerogative*, 474-475; *AP*, 771, LXXI.

<sup>287</sup> *Prerogative*, 474. Harrington cites Grotius here from his *Annotations* as proof of this assertion. See Pocock's footnote 3.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, 475.

from Kiriath-jearim to Obed-edom, but who nevertheless propositioned the people before proceeding with his plans. He inserts his parenthetical emphasis into the passage to stress the King’s authority of proposition and the people’s prerogative.

And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, if it seem good unto you, and it be of the Lord God, let us send abroad to our brethren everywhere (the princes of the tribes in their provinces) that are left in the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites, which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us; and let us bring again the ark of our God to us; for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul. And all the congregation (gave their suffrage in the affirmative) said that they would do so; for the thing was right in the eyes of the people. (*Nulla lex sibi soli conscientiam justitia sua debet, sed eis a quibus obsequium expectat.*)<sup>290</sup>

In *The Art*, Harrington explains that this passage reveals that the nature of King David’s authority was not absolute, since he did not establish “any law than by the proposition unto the people,” and made “the people judges what was of God.” And though they were “unanimous in their result” in favoring his proposal, their agreeableness should not be interpreted as if “they could do no otherwise by a king, for they did not the like by Rehoboam,”<sup>291</sup> whose kingship they rejected.

Harrington also claimed from 1 Chronicles 25:1 that the representative capacity of the congregation extended to the election of “priests, officers and magistrates,” as “*David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries and with cymbals.*” Even King Solomon and Zadok the priest were established in their offices through the congregation of Israel.<sup>292</sup>

### **The Rotation of Israel’s Prerogative Paralleled in *Oceana***

Like the agrarian, rotation represents a fundamental law of *Oceana*, and intended to supply equal changes and shifts in the magistracy to insure a smooth succession of rulers. It also attempts to include the entire body of people in the process, though “by parts,”<sup>293</sup> to insure that the common interest of the people is maintained.

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid. Pocock states Harrington inserted a marginal reference of “*Grot. e Tertul*” for “gave their suffrage in the affirmative,” while the included annotation at the end is also from Grotius. See *Opera Omnia Theol.*, I, 178. See also *DUS*, 736.

<sup>291</sup> *Art*, 619.

<sup>292</sup> *Prerogative*, 475. Though 1 Kings 1:23 indicates that Solomon received the kingship as a result of the rebellion of Adonijah, while Zadok replaced his co-conspirator Abiathar, the priest, 1 Chronicles 28 indicates that David actually initiated the process of turning the kingdom over to his son Solomon with instructions for building the Temple, and inquired into the willingness of those in the assembly who would consecrate themselves to its construction. Solomon was then elected King of Israel “the second time,” and anointed . . . unto the Lord to be chief governor, and Zadok to be priest,” by the congregation, who were propositioned to the vote by King David.

<sup>293</sup> *Oceana*, 181.

Harrington instances six types of rotation in *Prerogative* related to the magistracy, senate and people.<sup>294</sup> But he discovered no rotation in Israel's Sanhedrin, as her members were originally elected for life. After explicating the various differences in rotation among Israel, Athens, and Venice, Harrington relates a sixth type which solely describes Oceana, and when "a commonwealth goes upon it in all her orders: senate, people, and magistracy. Such an one, taking in the many and being fixed upon the foot of a steady agrarian, hath attained unto perfect equality." He claims that "of this example there is none, or you must accept of Oceana," whose rotation consists of "two parts;" the electors are rotated annually, and those elected, triennially.<sup>295</sup> Oceana's electors choose the other magistrates, but not all at once, but in "three steps." The first step Harrington explains, is "at the parishes, where every fifth elder is annually elected by the whole people," and which seems to find its parallel with Israel. Harrington qualifies this step in parenthesis with "there is no doubt but there was some such order in Israel whereby the monthly rotation of her congregation or prerogative, by election of two thousand in each tribe, was preserved." Harrington's correlation of this "order in Israel," and Oceana's local "parish" level of election, seems to be the manner in which elected officials rise equally and directly from the people, and for Oceana, eventually make their way into the assemblies. In Israel, choice was made of 24,000 to stand every month in a representative capacity, which positioned an equitable amount from each tribe through a well regulated process, but just how this occurred, Harrington does not explain here.<sup>296</sup> But, Israel's local process of election which extended the elected into the prerogative monthly, with annual cycles through the entire body, seems to represent this parallel. Israel's method of rotation, which Harrington adopted from the example of her congregation, was its local monthly tribal establishments of the representative. *Valerius and Publicola* sheds more light on this connection between Israel and Oceana, as Publicola attempts to explain the local electoral role of the people in establishing their senate, as opposed to the representative assembly, and resorts to Deuteronomy 1:13.

They would not derive so immediately, nor rise so equally from the people, as chosen in the precincts; because this way, every shire cometh necessarily to have a share in the senate; besides, wise men and understanding are better known in their tribes than they can be in an assembly out of their tribes, especially while they are newcomers; now will the popular assembly afford so good choice as the whole people.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> *Prerogative*, 474-486.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 486.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 486-487.

<sup>297</sup> *VP*, 791.

Harrington proposed that Oceana's territory be divided into fifty shires, or parishes, the smallest electoral unit, and hence akin to Israel's tribe, her smallest electoral unit. The shires elected officials not only to their representative assembly, but also to the senate, and the judiciary, just as he claimed Israel's tribal representative elected all her magistrates as it cycled through its monthly rotation.<sup>298</sup> With this, every military man who participated as a ruler left the prerogative experienced, and ready to stand again at another point in the cycle, like Oceana.

The senate and the prerogative, or representative of the people, being each of like constitution, drop annually four hundred, which in a matter of ten years, amount to four thousand experienced leaders, ready upon new elections to resume their leading.<sup>299</sup>

This relationship in rotation seems to square with his "fourth parallel" in *The Art*. It is after his discussion of these three levels of rotation where he instances Israel's local tribal level of elections, but with more particulars.

The representative of Israel collected monthly by the two thousand out of each tribe, if we consider what method must have been used in the like elections, is such as may infer, first, that there were subdivisions unto that end in each tribe, perhaps of the nature of our hundreds and parishes. Secondly, there were qualifications in those elections as to the patriarchs or chief fathers, and as to the people with their captains of thousands and captains of hundreds; which is enough thus far to embrace and encourage the foregoing propositions.<sup>300</sup>

The electoral capacity was then lodged in tribal segments, akin possibly to the "hundreds," and "parishes," in Oceana. His "seventh parallel" also seems to indicate a relationship between Israel's monthly rotation with Oceana's method, the connection here being that both incorporated this method of moving elected officials out of and into office. Whereas the "congregation of the people being monthly, and the representative proposed being annual and triennial, they are each upon courses of rotation." Israel's congregation consisted of "twenty-four thousand – in which the whole number of princes of the tribes of the families, amount not, I might say, unto one hundred, but will say unto one thousand." From this, Harrington reasoned that in Israel, "the lower sort in the congregation of Israel held proportion unto the better sort above twenty to one." But in Oceana, "the lower sort hold proportion unto the better sort but six to four."<sup>301</sup> "As the congregation of Israel was held either by the princes in person, with their staves and

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<sup>298</sup> The most succinct rendition of his model is the Rota. See 809 for the electoral authority of the parishes. I indicate above his other pamphlets which distill the essentials of his model as well.

<sup>299</sup> *Prerogative*, 494.

<sup>300</sup> *Art*, 669.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 675. Pocock notes in footnote 2 that Harrington indicates in the errata that "of the people" should altered to "of Israel," but which Pocock suggest is an error. Since Harrington was comparing Oceana's representative to Israel's, stressing that both were on rotation, it makes sense that Harrington would want to make the switch to avoid any ambiguity.

standard of the camp, or by the four and twenty thousand in military discipline: so the representative proposed is in the nature of a regiment."<sup>302</sup> To conclude, the parallel between these two commonwealths is equal vicissitude in rotation at the most local level ascending into the superstructure, or the senate, assembly, and judiciary.

### **Disintegration of Israel's Orders: Period of the Judges and Monarchy**

#### **Dissolution of the Sanhedrin and Jethronian Judges**

Harrington's disregard for monarchy is evidenced in his analysis of Israel's careless neglect "of the excellent orders of their commonwealth, given by God," namely that of the senate and lower courts. In his rebuttals to Ferne's insistence on the advantages of monarchy in *Pian Piano*, Harrington explained that Israel abandoned these orders after the death of Joshua and the elders of the courts. Judges 2:7 indicates that "*the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua*," but from which time the Scriptures are silent as to their existence until the reign of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 19 when they restored. Harrington states that because "a commonwealth without the senate must of natural necessity degenerate into anarchy," that of the Hebrews' deteriorated into dictatorial judgeships, and civil anarchy. This state of affairs, coupled with the corrupt judgeship of Samuel's sons, "was the true cause why the people chose to have a king and so fell into monarchy, under which they fared worse."<sup>303</sup> Harrington also believed that Israel's failure to completely rid Canaan of their enemies weakened their commonwealth foundations, "which came now to fail also in her superstructures."<sup>304</sup> Without an elected senate, Israel's tribes lacked "any common ligament," which resulted in tribal leagues and intertribal war, and provided fertile ground for a ruling figure such as the "judge of Israel."<sup>305</sup> The frequent phrases in Judges that "*there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes*," simply meant that "there was neither Sanhedrim nor judge in Israel; so every man, or at least every tribe, governed herself as she pleased."<sup>306</sup>

#### **God: Israel's Original but Rejected King**

Harrington's position on Israel's improvident institution of monarchy intersects with his republican interpretation of I Samuel 8:6-7 and Deuteronomy 17:14-20. Wren,

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> *PP*, 378.

<sup>304</sup> *Art*, 638.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 639.

in his 'Preface' to *Monarchy Asserted*, summarized the nature of their diverse readings of similar biblical texts and recorded histories.

*THAT Mr Harrington who undertakes to vindicate the reason of Popular Government and I who have professed my selfe a Friend to Monarchy, should from the observation of the same Naturall Causes, and of the same Actions in Historie, forme different Judgements, is no more a wonder then that two Men viewing the same Object by various lights, should judge it to be of various Colours. But it seems a little strange that even in such things were We both make use of the same light, and where it is my interest to be of his Opinions, our Judgements; should not be reconcileable.*<sup>307</sup>

Harrington insisted that Exodus 19:5 established God as Israel's original King, not Moses, "his sole legislator," whom he instructed to propose unto the people, saying, "*Thus shalt thou say unto the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, . . . Now therefore if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.*" All of Israel "*answered together* (gave their suffrage, *nemine contradicente*) and said, *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do; and Moses returned the words* (that is, the suffrage, or result) *of the people unto the Lord.*" Harrington concluded that "God was the king in Israel by covenant, which he proposed or his servant Moses, and resolved upon by the people."<sup>308</sup> He augments his argument for God's original kingship by comparing it to Christ in the church. Just as "Israel was God's chosen people, and God was Israel's chosen king. . . . In like manner the church is Christ's chosen people, and Christ is the church's chosen king." As the Father propositioned Israel, so Christ "upon his proposition or those of his apostles, sent by him as he was sent by the Father, resolved to obey his voice and keep his covenant," and so "she hath chosen him her king."<sup>309</sup>

His reading of I Samuel 8: 6-7 evidenced Israel's subsequent rejection of their original King, given their choice of another, and proved their prerogative of power to repudiate proposed law, even which they had "resolved" upon. If they could reject God in this manner, then "the people must have had power to have rejected anything that was proposed, and not confirmed by them."<sup>310</sup> And, if such a privilege extended to all laws which God proposed, then God's response to Israel's rejection of his authority modelled her power of result to depose of earthly magistrates as well. God imparted "no such example unto a legislator in a popular government as to deny or evade the power of the people, which were a contradiction: . . . But to reject him, that he should not reign over

<sup>307</sup> Wren, *Monarchy Asserted*, Preface.

<sup>308</sup> *PP*, 374. See also *Oceana*, 175.

<sup>309</sup> *Prerogative*, 538-539.

<sup>310</sup> *PP*, 374.

them, was as civil magistrate to depose him.” Israel’s rejection of God “leaveth little doubt, but that they had power to have rejected any of those laws confirmed by them throughout the Scripture.”<sup>311</sup>

Ferne claimed, on the other hand, that Moses was “chief in the whole government,” while Aaron “the chief in the priesthood, and after Moses Joshua.” Subsequent to their deaths, God “still raised up single persons to judge his people.”<sup>312</sup> Harrington countered Ferne by resorting to the example of Gideon, who proclaimed neither he nor his son would rule over Israel; instead, “*the Lord shall rule over you.*” Given Gideon’s example, “monarchial government, even in the time of the judges, was in this commonwealth to the rejection of God.”<sup>313</sup>

Harrington interpreted Israel’s kings as limited monarchs who ruled under God’s law rather than by divine right. While contending with Peter Heylyn in *The Stumbling Block* over the nature of the Israelite Monarchy, Harrington exclaimed that “if divine right be derived unto kings from these of the Hebrews only, it is most apparent that no absolute king can be of divine right.” According to Deuteronomy 17:19, Israel’s kings were under law, “as they could neither multiply horses nor wives, nor silver nor gold, without which no king can be absolute; but were ‘to keep all the words of this law and these statutes’.” Consequently then, Israel’s kings “were regulated monarchs.”<sup>314</sup>

Wren challenged Harrington’s interpretation of Israel’s prerogative, and rejected the logical conclusion that her authority extended to discarding the Decalogue.<sup>315</sup> Wren claimed that “if we should admit of Mr. *Harrington’s* Position that the people of *Israel* had the power of confirming all their Laws, so that without their consent they had not . . . been Laws, We must abate much of the precedent Proposition.” Wren stated that if the people “had a liberty of dissenting by which they might have exempted from those Laws,” which are the Ten Commandments, and if the “people of *Israel* need not have been subjected to them without their own consents, there is no reason but we should enjoy the same.” He concludes that “Mr. *Harrington* proves an huge benefactour to Mankind; for he hath with no greater expence then the withholding their consents asserted them into the mighty Liberty of being free from the whole Morall Law.”<sup>316</sup>

Harrington once again accused Wren of confusing authority with power. Unlike Moses, the “Almighty God” is not a “mortal legislator,” but bears “another nature which

<sup>311</sup> *Oceana*, 175. See also 178, 236; *Prerogative*, 423; *SB*, 574.

<sup>312</sup> *PP*, 377.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.* See also *Art.*, 638.

<sup>314</sup> *SB*, 576.

<sup>315</sup> *Prerogative*, 420.

<sup>316</sup> Wren, *Considerations*, 37-41.

unto him is peculiar, from whom, as he is the cause of being or the creator of mankind, omnipotent power is inseparable.” Nevertheless, “so equal is the goodness of this nature unto the greatness thereof, that as he is the cause of well-being by way of election, for example in his chosen people Israel, or of redemption, as in the Christian church, himself hath preferred before his empire his authority or proposition.”<sup>317</sup> Just as God prioritized his propositioning authority over his omnipotence, and hence never asserted his power to command Israel, neither did “Christ in the like, who also is king after the same manner in his church.” Christ himself was rejected by the Jews, “that he should not reign over them,” and therefore, “the law of the gospel came not to be the law of the Jews.” Harrington reasons, “if the Ten Commandments came to be the law of Israel, it was not only because God proposed them – seeing Christ also proposed his law, which nevertheless came not to be the law of the Jews – but because the people received the one, and rejected the other.”<sup>318</sup> In other words, God offered and proposed his Law to people, but did not impose it upon them. In this regard, the people exhibited the right of choice through their consent, and hence popular sovereignty.

Wren was unconvinced, and addressed the issue again in *Monarchy Asserted*, though he was reluctant to delve deeply into an analysis of Israel's Commonwealth. Israel, said Wren, was unlike any other nation, since she was God's “more particular Concernment, And did by an express Declaration of his Will to and by *Moses*, both at first enact their Lawes and Modell their Government, and reserve to himself the Result of their most important Affairs.”<sup>319</sup>

### Conclusion

According to Wood, Harrington organized a gentleman's club called the Rota in 1659 at Miles Coffee House, where “their discourses about Government and of ordering of a Commonwealth, were the most ingenious and smart that ever were heard,” in comparison, the “arguments in the Parl. house were but flat.” But the Rota dissolved itself the 21 February 1660 upon the restoration of the secluded members and the return of General Monk.<sup>320</sup>

After the restoration of Charles II, Harrington was approached by an “eminent Royalist” to draft something by which the king might best govern, and though he answered the request, his composition was rejected. He then set to work on his *Political*

<sup>317</sup> *Prerogative*, 421. Pocock states that “Wren's view of Jewish history is markedly more secular and antitypological than H's own.” See footnote 5.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 422.

<sup>319</sup> Wren, *Monarchy Asserted*, 64-65.

<sup>320</sup> Wood, *AO*, vol. 2, 439. See also *DNB*, vol. 24, eds. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (London: L Smith, Elder, & Co., 1890), 434-436.

*Aphorisms*, the ideas of which he also shared with friends and acquaintances, but which led to his imprisonment in the Tower, either on the 26 November or 28 December, 1661.<sup>321</sup> Harrington was accused of conspiring to alter the government, and eventually sent to Plymouth Harbour where he suffered delusions. He would die of paralysis, and was buried on 11 September 1677 at St Margaret's Church next to Sir Walter Raleigh.<sup>322</sup>

Christopher Hill in his *Puritanism and Revolution* includes a poem Harrington wrote while in prison, which seems to capture simultaneously his despondency over his state of affairs, as well as hope for what the future might hold for his work.

Bee there a writing nere so high,  
The writer while he lives may die,  
Blasted by scorn of envy bitten;  
But if hee die for what is written,  
The pen how lowe so ere it bee  
For ever lives, and so doth hee.<sup>323</sup>

Interestingly, Harrington's model would provide the constitutional draft for the little known French political theorist Théodore Lesueuer.<sup>324</sup>

The historiography on Harrington generally classifies him as a classical republican of the Machiavellian strain, that he approached the Scriptures as he would any other historical text, and that he was somewhat pressured to outfit *Oceana* with scriptural language as a method of accommodation and concession to capture the attention of a biblically literate audience. Modern historians have also described Harrington as a secular thinker, while his contemporaries called him an atheist and referred to his model as a heathenish platform of government. But what this study seems to suggest, given his eclectic use of sources, is that Harrington's republicanism is also biblical because it is sufficiently grounded in the Hebrew Polity by way of civil parallels with *Oceana*. Harrington's own claim that he had written out of Israel contradicts the prevailing assertion that his republicanism is only classical in nature. This study also suggests that he was somewhat of a Christian humanist in his scholarly techniques.

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<sup>321</sup> *Biographia Britannia* (1747-1766), vol. 4 (Hildesheim: George Olms Verlag, 1970), 2536. Wood claims the November date. See *AO*, vol. 2, 439.

<sup>322</sup> Wood, *AO*, vol. 2, 441.

<sup>323</sup> Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, 299. Hill indicates that this poem was "written in a Moscow copy of the first edition of *Oceana*, quoted by Yu. M. Saprykin in *Sredniye Veka*, IX, p. 381."

<sup>324</sup> Théodore Lesueuer: *A French Draft Constitution of 1792 Modelled on James Harrington's Oceana* by Theodore Lesueuer, ed. S.B. Liljegren (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1932) in *Skrifter Utgivna Av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet* 1 Lund 16-17. Liljegren states that very little is known of Lesueuer, but when the French National Convention met in early November 1792, his draft model seems to have been handed over to a committee, and later printed in the Acts of the Convention on 17 April 1793. For Liljegren's commentary regarding Harrington's influence on Lesueuer, see 80-101. The French text of the model is found on 162.

First, Harrington's use of the Hebrew Polity as a republican paradigm, coupled with his continuous interchanges with leading royalists regarding his application of it, does not suggest biblical opportunism. He even catches the clerics, Wren in particular, in their own hermeneutical expediency. In his response to Rogers, Harrington denied atheism by countering with his Biblicism – that he had indeed written out of Israel. Rogers, and Baxter for that matter, like his royalist opponents, were writing politics out of the OT differently, indicating that their political battles with Harrington were hermeneutical in nature. With this, his multiple acknowledgements that Israel's Commonwealth was the divine original, and his assigning it primacy of place among those of Athens, Rome, and even Venice as the authoritative exemplar, also confirms that his ambitious application of it was not merely motivated by political expedience, nor was it simply a religious accessory to enhance his model. The educational priority he gives to instruction in the Scriptures in *Oceana's* university system, including mastery of her original languages and history, coupled with strong appeals for sound and faithful translations, and his call for a nationally funded ministry, underscore his genuine regard for the Scriptures as a divine text above texts. And finally, his timing of *Oceana's* publication was targeted to respond to the Jewish readmission issue; his high regard for Jewish laws and patterns of productivity, and his suggestion they be settled in Ireland and allowed to establish their laws, confirm not only an interest in, but appreciation for, Israel's Polity.

Harrington believed that Nature attested to the fundamental principles of a commonwealth, but that Scripture confirmed them. In this regard, Grace does not swallow Nature, or overwhelm it; rather, it authenticates and corroborates man's natural political reflections as written in the ancient commonwealths. With this, Harrington's use of the Exodus 18 passage represents a unique political reading. He understood God's divine sanctioning of Jethro's advice to Moses as permission to seek out political discernment in all ancient commonwealths. In this regard, he employs it as a hermeneutic of heathen counsel that legitimized his political searching beyond the Hebrew Commonwealth to include all ancient pagan models. And though he finds abundant justification to write out of either, Israel's Polity would bear more authority as the divine original republican exemplar.

The study also demonstrated that the phrases "writing out of," and terms such as "parallel," and "authority," identify Harrington's political use of the Hebrew Commonwealth as paradigmatic. In this regard, he models *Oceana* after Israel by recognizing and extending her "authority" as opposed to her "power."

Oceana's parallels with Israel include the popular nature of her government and her agrarian. Israel's contribution is found in her popular division of the land of Canaan with its family allotments secured through the Jubilee land law. Since the divine division of land allocations held largely with the people and then secured by the agrarian, Harrington concluded that God ordained a popular government in Israel that had been fixed until the establishment of monarchy. He believed that Scripture confirmed that agrarian laws perform political functions, and considered the example of God's division of Canaan to secure a popular government as superior to the other two methods of dominion he discovered. He then incorporated Israel's agrarian land law into Oceana as a political foundation, or fundamental law. As God established the Jubilee land law to preserve its popular balance, and hence popular government, so Oceana established its agrarian. He was after the laws purpose, which was the same in both commonwealths - the preservation of the popular balance.

The Hebrew Senate found its way into Oceana via its legislative function and electoral method. Leaving aside Israel's hereditary succession of princes and patriarchs, her number of senators with their life terms, Harrington incorporated the Sanhedrin's authority by adopting her legislative function of debate; as the Senate of Israel established law with the congregation, so too would Oceana's Senate function legislatively with the representative assembly in making laws. Even Israel's local judgeships, established out of Exodus 18 through Jethro's advice, and later developed into permanent courts throughout Israel's cities, provided Oceana with its model of phylarch courts with the authority of appeal to the Senate. With this, Deuteronomy 1: 13 represented Harrington's electoral "rule of Moses," whereby the people, as propositioned by him, would chose "wise and discerning," leaders, to sit in the Sanhedrin and lower courts. This text functioned as Harrington's scriptural proof of popular prerogative for all levels of magistracy and even confirmed that proposition and resolution took place in Israel's Commonwealth. Harrington's employment of this text three times alone in his 1659 *Discourse Upon this Saying* reinforces its place as his scriptural text for popular suffrage.

Out of Israel's congregation, Harrington extracted her legislative authority of result and confirmation. But also significant is Harrington's use of Israel's rotation, and his confirmation to Rogers of this continuity between them clarifies its important political role. Apart from the agrarian, rotation was a fundamental law of Oceana, and incorporated to insure equity in the transition of magistrates for the common interest through a method that included the entire body of the people, as Israel's did. Israel's

method of rotation at the most local tribal level whereby 2000 military men were chosen monthly to establish a 24,000 member representative corresponds to Oceana's constituency of representatives chosen at the local level of parish elections. With this, just as Israel, through her popular body of armed men, elected magistrates at every level, and therefore established the civil superstructures, so too does Oceana's through a series of coordinate electoral steps beginning with the parishes, who chose "wise and discerning" leaders into the superstructures. In this regard, Oceana's parish system, which Harrington suggested could consist of fifty total, was akin in electoral status to Israel's tribal level; the numbers were irrelevant just as they were in regards to the amount of senators. The parallel then between these two commonwealths is equal vicissitude in rotation at the most local level ascending into the superstructure, or the senate, assembly, and judiciary.

Harrington's explanation of the disintegration of Israel's orders reveals his republican readings of 1 Samuel 8:6-7 and Deuteronomy 17:14-20. Not only did the Mosaic Law limit Israel's kings, but also that original dynamic of proposition and result turned on God's kingship and the people's consent to covenant with him as their ruler. Harrington even extended this governing authority of proposition to include Christ's kingship over his church through the Apostles' resolution to obey and keep his covenant. But, because Israel's prerogative was also evidenced in her rejection of God as their king, which he consented to by preferring his authority to his power, then their prerogative extended to deposing any earthly magistrate as well. The Jews had even rejected Christ, but because neither God nor Christ asserted their divine authority as rulers in spite of this rejection, the popular right of sovereignty remained with the people.

All these political points of contact seem to suggest that Israel and Oceana were commonwealth correspondents, whereby the authority of Israel is found throughout the fundamental laws, framing, and superstructures of Oceana.

### CHAPTER III

#### JOHN MILTON'S *READIE AND EASIE WAY TO ESTABLISH A FREE COMMONWEALTH* (1660): A COMMONWEALTH OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY – THE JEWISH POLITY, LANGUAGE OF *GENTILISM* AND PERPETUAL SENATE

For Milton as for most Protestants the Bible is the authoritative source of all wisdom. Since it is the Word of God, everything in it must be respected. Nevertheless, the Bible is a large book, incorporating many different points of view: naturally different social groups selectively emphasized different parts of the Bible. Texts which were uncongenial could be ignored, or explained away.

Some of what strikes modern readers as the less attractive aspects of Milton's thought are due to his deliberate and dedicated faithfulness to the text of the Bible.

Christopher Hill in *Milton and the English Revolution*<sup>1</sup>

John Milton (1608-1674) was a prolific English author whose literary talents extended beyond poetry to encompass political and religious-liberty topics. The crisis of England's civil settlement motivated Milton to direct his efforts toward reforming the constitutional relationship between rulers and ruled by arguing forcefully for a republican model to replace the monarchy and House of Lords, and in part, from the Scriptures. His distinguished political tract, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1659, 1660),<sup>2</sup> presents a republican constitutional proposal to recast the Rump Parliament into a perpetual standing senate with subordinate local judicatures.

Milton's core theme which permeated his republican model is Christian liberty, which denoted civil and religious institutional limitations in contrast to the slavish and tyrannical features of prelacy and monarchy. Milton committed his life to discerning the jurisdiction between church and state to insure its restoration, and crafted a political theology in its service to further England's reformation. This grand pursuit influenced his scriptural search for constitutional principles for its protection and promotion, shaping his hermeneutic of biblical republicanism.

It is not my intention to summarize Milton's political theory, or his views on church-state relations, but rather to target that neglected area of his biblical-political reading in new-modelling England's government. My investigation into his political use of the Scriptures entailed an examination of his Interregnum prose<sup>3</sup> and my method involved an investigation of both his discrete statements of hermeneutical procedure and

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London; Boston: Faber and Faber, 1977, 1997), 245-246.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent discussion differentiating between the two editions of this tract see Robert Ayers, "The Editions of Milton's *Readie & Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*," *RES* 25, n.s. (1974): 280-291. My references are from the 1660 2d. ed.

<sup>3</sup> I have not considered his post-restoration poetry, though I do incorporate briefly some political conclusions drawn from his *Paradise Lost* by Cedric Brown. As for his Divorce Tracts, I rely on the hermeneutical insights of Regina M. Schwartz's "Milton on the Bible," in *A Companion to Milton*, ed. Thomas Corns (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2001, 2003). See below.

his habitual resort to specific passages for constitutional design. In some instances this entailed a study of his presentation of a commonly used text rather than just his interpretation of it. Biblical quotations in his English prose are usually rendered in italics. In some instances, he deliberately clipped and shortened them, but without radically deviating from the AV. In this regard, Milton presents himself as both translator and interpreter when explicating passages he thought bore political import, a method attributable to his reliance upon his own linguistic scholarship. His transcriptions are especially important for understanding what appears to be an original political use of Matthew 20: 25-28.<sup>4</sup>

Like other commonwealthsmen seeking to settle a republic, and royalists to restore the monarchy, Milton resorted to Jewish OT political structures and discrete OT texts such as Deuteronomy 17:14-18 and 1 Samuel 8:10-19 in constitutional modelling. I conclude that his political application of these can be distilled down to the essentials of anti-monarchy and anti-lordship, the right of revolution coupled with liberty of civil choice, and the divine status of the Jewish Commonwealth.

Milton also believed the Mosaic Judicials were no longer a relevant model for crafting civil or ecclesiastical structures, as its institutional particulars of conjoined authorities were voided by the Gospel model of liberty. Milton's liberty paradigm of limited government is also partly derived from Romans 13:1-4 and 1 Peter 2:13-15, two commonly utilized texts considered to bear political import. But his civil reading of Matthew 20:25-28, with its language of *gentilism*, bears the most unique application among seventeenth-century Puritan political theory. This is perhaps the most distinct feature of his political use of the Bible. Its political pre-eminence is evidenced in his *Tenure*, *First Defense*, *De Doctrina*, with three prominent uses in the second edition of *Readie and Easie* alone, one of which is part of that augmented section not found in his first edition. The Matthew 20 passage provided him with conclusive political proof of Christ's command against kingship and tyranny in government, and from which he conclusively construed anti-lordship and inferred a perpetual senate of civil-servants; so critical was his reading here that his royalist contenders attacked his political application of it. Milton also frequently combines the Matthew text with Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Samuel 8 for a forceful biblical argument against all remnants of royalism. Milton was

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<sup>4</sup> Harris Fletcher explains this tendency of Milton's to "clip Biblical passages in order to make them briefer and more pointed as he employed them." This technique of his is evident in his English and Latin works, and "a peculiarity of his use of quotation in general rather than one entirely pertaining to his style." See his "Milton's Use of Biblical Quotations," *JEGP* 26 (1927): 148. He does not analyze the Matthew 20 text. For the various versions Milton used, see 149-165.

also consistent in his political use of each of these Old and New Testament texts throughout the successive Interregnum administrations, as all carried immutable political authority with uniform civil application, and linked to his radical advocacy for a commonwealth devoid of absolute human authority. He then institutionalized them into a federal commonwealth model consisting of a unicameral perpetual senate, a standing council, and subordinate local judicial bodies.

The existence of a distinct body of scholarship devoted exclusively to Milton's employment and citation of the Scriptures throughout his works testifies to his impressive and extensive biblical scholarship. Those which were consulted frequently are *A Concordance to the English Prose of John Milton*, edited by Laurence Sterne and Harold H. Kollmeier (1985), Samuel Rogal's *An Index to the Biblical References, Parallels, and Allusions in the Poetry and Prose of John Milton* (1994), Michael Bauman's, *A Scripture Index to De Doctrina Christiana* (1989), and Harris Fletcher's *The Use of the Bible in Milton's Prose* (1929).<sup>5</sup>

The chapter begins with a brief biography of Milton which also situates his Interregnum tracts within their historical and historiographical contexts. This is followed by a section which relates the historiography on Milton's republicanism and the early modern historian's understanding of him both as a political theorist and as a classical republican.

The third section discloses Milton's scholarly studies of the Scriptures and incorporates a discussion of his *De Doctrina Christiana* to reveal his hermeneutical method. I also briefly review his doctrine of man's nature and God's governance over him, as well as his view of the Gospel's supremacy over the Mosaic Judicials and Jewish Polity to reveal his core value of Christian liberty and its effect on his theory of jurisdiction and a free commonwealth form. In this section, I also found it necessary to demonstrate the nature of his Christian humanist scholarship by including a discussion of his *Areopagitica*.

The fourth section deals with Milton's political reading of the Scriptures by highlighting his OT and NT political authorities. I mention here my research on his use

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<sup>5</sup> Laurence Sterne and Harold H. Kollmeier, eds., *A Concordance to the English Prose of John Milton* (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies 35, 1985); Samuel Rogal, *An Index to the Biblical References, Parallels, and Allusions in the Poetry and Prose of John Milton* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1994); Michael Bauman, *A Scripture Index to De Doctrina Christiana*, (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies 67, 1989); Harris Fletcher, *The Use of the Bible in Milton's Prose with An Index of the Biblical Quotations and Citations Arranged in the Chronological Order of the Prose Works; Another Index of All Quotations and Citations in the Order of the Books of the Bible; And An Index of the Quotations and Citations In The De Doctrina* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1929), 50.

of the Matthew 20:25-28 text as incorporating the political language of *gentilism*, and hence civil warning against tyrannical rule, his most unique contribution to republican modelling. This is followed by another short section which attempts to compare, by way of a chart, the constitutional outlines of his very brief 1659 models found in *A Letter to a Friend*, *Proposalls of Certain Expedients*, and *The Present Means*. I included this in an attempt to prove the constitutional consistency of Milton's proposals.

The sixth section is the longest, and focuses directly upon Milton's *Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*. After a brief discussion of the problem of dating the two editions of this tract, I move into his political reading of key biblical texts, such as Deuteronomy 17, 1 Samuel 8 and Matthew 20 to show how he employed them to derive a free commonwealth consisting of a unicameral legislature, or a perpetual senate of servant leadership. I briefly discuss the possibility that he may have derived his local judicatures from Israel's pattern. This section also mentions the anti-Milton tracts which targeted him and his commonwealth model to demonstrate how their polemic against him was hermeneutical in nature, as it turned on their recognition of his political use of Matthew 20.

I close by briefly mentioning Milton's exemption from the Bill of Indemnity which is accompanied by the chapter's conclusions.

### **Brief Biography and Historiographical Context of Milton's Interregnum Tracts**

John Milton was born 9 December 1608 at his parent's home in Bread Street, London.<sup>6</sup> Milton records the educational influence of his father, that he "destined me in early childhood for the study of literature, for which I had so keen an appetite that from my twelfth year scarcely ever did I leave my studies for my bed before the hour of midnight."<sup>7</sup> Around 1620, at the age of twelve, the young Milton became a pupil at St. Paul's School, founded in 1509 by the famous humanist scholar John Colet. He entered Christ's College on 12 February 1625 where he remained for seven years, receiving a B.A. in March 1629, and an M.A. in July 1632. While matriculating at Christ's, Milton wrote an affectionate letter on 25 March to one Thomas Young, a Scottish Presbyterian,

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<sup>6</sup> I am following the main autobiographical sources for Milton, such as David Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, 6 vols., new and rev. ed. (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965); *The Life Records of John Milton*, ed., John Milton French, 6 vols. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1949), and the most recent biography by Barbara Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton, A Critical Biography*, rev. ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2003). See Masson, vol. 1, 1-40 for an overview of Milton's early childhood and education, as well as Harris Fletcher, *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, vol. 1, *The Institution to 1625: From the Beginnings Through Grammar School* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1956). There are other worthy biographies to consider. See *The Early Lives of Milton*, ed. Helen Darbishire (London: Constable Co. LTD, 1932), which includes the accounts of Aubrey, Toland, Wood, Edward Phillips, John Phillips, and Jonathan Richardson.

<sup>7</sup> *SD, CPW*, vol. 4, 612. Milton explains that this led to his vision problems, and later blindness.

which revealed his formative academic influence prior to St. Paul's. Milton refers to Young as "Preceptor," and states, "For I call God to witness how much in the light of a Father I regard you, with what singular devotion I have always followed you in thought," and thanks him for his "truly most acceptable gift," a Hebrew Bible.<sup>8</sup> Aubrey records that Milton "was an early riser (that is at 4 o'clock in the morning)," and the first book he would read, and later have read to him "was the Hebrew Bible, and that was at half past four."<sup>9</sup>

Milton traveled to Italy and other parts of the continent from April 1638 to July 1639, and upon his return to England, began to employ his pen in the struggle for religious liberty and church reformation. He published five anti-prelatical tracts, and his *Of Reformation* (1641) is briefly mentioned to highlight his concern over poor biblical hermeneutics, as well as his *The Reason of Church Government* (1642). Since modern scholars tend to categorize Milton as a classical republican thinker, I also investigated his employment of pagan authors in *Aeropagetica* (1644), and found him to be more of a Christian humanist.

The execution of Charles I and Milton's publication of his first anti-monarchical tract *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) caught the eye of the new Council of State and was instrumental in launching his literary career on behalf of the successive Interregnum governments. On 15 March 1649, Milton accepted their offer to become the Commonwealth's Secretary of Foreign Languages, a position he would retain with greater and lesser intensity shortly past May 1659. The Council requested Milton to direct his anti-monarchical literary talents against treatises defending Charles I and royalism in general. *Eikon Basilike, The Portrait of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitude and Sufferings*, which claimed to contain Charles' musings written previous to his trial, "was easily the most dangerous royalist polemic challenge to the new government."<sup>10</sup> It was published in the summer or fall of 1649, and probably written by the Presbyterian John Gauden. Milton responded in October with *Eikonoklastes*, a powerfully crafted polemic persuasively arguing chapter by chapter against the King's "idoloatrous image" presented in *Eikon Basilike*, and penned as if the King himself had written it.<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>8</sup> Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, vol. 1, 147-148. See also Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, 5. Harris Fletcher explains that the Bible Young sent to Milton was the Buxtorf Bible, published in Basel, 1618, 1619. See *Milton's Rabbinical Readings* (University of Illinois Press, 1930; Archon Books, 1967), 70.

<sup>9</sup> Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, 209.

<sup>10</sup> Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, 247.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 248. Lewalski notes that Gauden confessed to writing the treatise in a letter written to Clarendon after the restoration, though it is very possible that Charles supplied him with material. See 619, note 54.

Council also requested Milton direct his polemic again in defense of the Commonwealth, and this time, his opponent was Salmasius, professor of the University of Leyden, in his *Defensio Regia Pro Carlo I*, published in November 1649. Milton though was beginning to labor under serious vision problems, and his Latin defense *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* was not released until February 1651.

Milton next published his *Defensio Secunda* (1654), written under the Protectorate, and began work on his theological treatise *De Doctrina Christiana* (1655-1674),<sup>12</sup> which I have investigated to grasp his view and use of the Scriptures generally. His *Defensio Secunda* was a targeted response to *The Cry of the Royal Blood to Heaven Against the English Parricides*, an anonymous counter attack to his *Pro Populo*. Milton reveals his core value of liberty, and himself as a man of destiny in its service against tyranny and slavery, and asks "What can tend more to the honor and glory of any country than the restoration of liberty both to civil life and to divine worship?" Milton claims that his writing was not "influenced by ambition, [46] gain, or glory, but solely by considerations of duty, honor, and devotion to my country. I did my utmost not only to free my country, but also to free the church." This duty he considered a divine call, which his blindness would not detract him from,<sup>13</sup> and only inspired him further to "risk the greatest dangers for the sake of liberty."<sup>14</sup> Upon his return from his continental travels, he was impressed with Parliament's pursuit of the Bishops, and "perceived that men were following the true path to liberty . . . and making the most direct progress towards the liberation of all human life from slavery."<sup>15</sup> This literary conflict, beginning

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<sup>12</sup> The dispute over Milton's authorship is still ongoing, though I am assuming *De Doctrina* to be his. The scholarship regarding this issue is covered in Maurice Kelley's "Introduction" to *De Doctrina* in vol. 6 of *CPW*, as well as William B. Hunter's, *Visitation Unimplor'd: Milton and the Authorship of De Doctrina Christiana* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1998). See also the extensive combined efforts of Gordon Campbell, Thomas N. Corns, John K. Hale, David I. Holmes, and Fiona J. Tweedie in "Province of *De Doctrina*," *MQ* 31 no. 3 (1997): 67-117. Critical to consider of course is Charles R. Sumner's initial work, *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, Compiled from the Holy Scriptures Alone; by John Milton*, 2 vols. (London edition; Boston: Cummings, Hillyard, and Co., 1825). 67-117.

<sup>13</sup> *SD*, *CPW*, vol. 4, 550, 587-588.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 591.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 621-622. Milton classified liberty into civil, ecclesiastical, and personal, and drew a correspondence between character and external institutions. He also believed character was linked to liberty, stating, "For, my fellow countrymen, your own character is a mighty factor in the acquisition or retention of liberty." See 624 and 680. Milton seemed to suggest that a Christian form of civil polity begins with internal self-government when he commented that if men are willing to be "slaves within doors, no wonder that they strive so much to have the public State conformably govern'd to the inward vitious rule, by which they govern themselves." See *Tenure*, 1. Blair Worden recognized this, stating that "Milton's political thought may appear to us never more distinctive than in his repeated insistence that reformation of the state begins with reformation of the soul and reformation of the household." See "Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, eds., Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge University Press, 1990). 229. Quentin Skinner in his "John Milton and the Politics of Slavery," separates Milton's biblicism from his ideas on liberty and slavery, and instead, locates his views within classical and Roman law. See *Prose Studies* 23, no.1 (April

with the prelatical controversy and ending with the imminent return of the Stuarts, engaged his attention and energies until his death. But it was the crises years of the restored Rump which provoked him to write more frequently on civil and religious liberty topics, themes systematically presented in his February 1659 *Of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*, published during Richard's Protecrotate, and the *Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings* released in August during the sitting of the restored Long Parliament.

Milton's more systematic constitutional proposals of 1659/1660 must be contextualized within the fast paced events of the Interregnum's finale. His first three, *A Letter to a Friend* (October 1659), *Proposalls of Certain Expedients* (November 1659), and *A Letter to Monck* (March-April 1660), are considerably shorter than his *Readie and Easie*, and represent distillations of his constitutional views devoid of scriptural texts. I incorporated a chart for purposes of comparison, and to highlight the consistency of his constitutional proposals more fully detailed in his second edition of his *Readie and Easie Way* (April 1660), which represents his most complete republican model. His last anti-monarchial tract *Brief Notes upon a Late Sermon* (April 1660) against Matthew Griffith has also been explored.

I attempt to show that his expeditious technique in these final tracts should not overshadow his consistency in political principles and purposes. In this regard, I argue that Milton's political use of the Scriptures projects a biblical republicanism, and displays methodological rigor and constitutional congruity through the successive Interregnum administrations, indicating that his civil service did not fundamentally alter his political views. This position contradicts the prevalent themes in the historiography which marginalize Milton's status as a constitutional theorist for his so-called political inconsistencies and pressured political service. I conclude that he was predominantly concerned that absolute lordship, the very threat to liberty, never be institutionalized, and his political language of "gentilism," often linked with Israel's choice of a tyrannical heathenish monarchial governor, conveyed this. A commonwealth devoid of king and House of Lords, and replaced with a perpetual senate with a standing council and local judicatures, would serve such liberty purposes. With this, the highlighting of his key NT political text of Matthew 20, often neglected in the current historiography, is of especial importance.

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2000): 1-21. As indicated below, Milton formulated a theory of "Christian liberty" wholly connected to the advent of the Gospel, and referred to Christ as our "Liberator."

### Modern Historiography on Milton's Republicanism

Much of the scholarly debate surrounding Milton's political theory is in regards to his use of classical sources, with little attention seriously paid to his biblical republicanism. There is even disagreement as to what sort of classical republican Milton was. Worden suggests that a pursuit of his religious views and "political radicalism" should focus primarily upon "his unpublished writings, where he could express himself more freely." As "the unpublished *de Doctrina*" exposes Milton's "religious heresies," any "clues to his political heresies lie in his private compositions."<sup>16</sup> Worden is referring to Milton's *Commonplace Book* (1631 - ), which is replete with classical and non-biblical citations. John Aubrey remarks on the impressive extent of Milton's classical knowledge and his employment of it while instructing his own nephews, who in three years "went through the best of Latin and Greek poets."<sup>17</sup> Martin Dzelzainis disagrees with Zera Fink's claim that Milton projected a "Polybian theory of the mixed state," whom Dzelzainis asserts "misrepresented the sources" and hence, "the nature of Milton's classical republicanism."<sup>18</sup> He is convinced that Milton's prominent republican authorities were "Aristotle, Sallust and, above all, Cicero."<sup>19</sup> Peter Lindenbaum, on the other hand, believes that Milton's Italian travels left him fascinated with Paolo Sarpi's Venetian model, and despite Milton's failure to mention "Sarpi's work" in his republican *Interregnum* tracts, his influence is in reference to "Venice . . . as a possible model - if only in his decision to call his commonwealth's main governing body a Grand Council and to urge that its members sit for life."<sup>20</sup> Perez Zagorin observes an aristocratic element in Milton's political thought, which combined Platonic and humanistic assumptions. His aristocracy of virtue as opposed to birth accounts for his standing senate, where he pressed "his aristocratic principle to the limit by proposing the lifetime rule of a council of oligarchs."<sup>21</sup> Noted Milton biographer Barbara Lewalski also reads Milton's model as an "aristocratic commonwealth with a supreme senate," and evidence of "the aristocratic republicanism of ancient Greece and Rome."<sup>22</sup>

Milton's supposed political fluctuations and truncated proposals have led some to regard him as a second rate political theorist, charging his *Readie and Easie* as a

<sup>16</sup> Blair Worden, "Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven," 231.

<sup>17</sup> Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, 206-207.

<sup>18</sup> Martin Dzelzainis, "Milton's Classical Republicanism," in *Milton and Republicanism*, 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Lindenbaum, "John Milton and the Republican Mode of Literary Production 1558-1658," *YES* 21 (1991): 130.

<sup>21</sup> Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution*, 111, 118.

<sup>22</sup> Barbara Lewalski, "Milton: Political Beliefs and Polemical Methods 1659-1660," *PMLA* 74 (1959): 198.

rather weak, hastily thrown together, unoriginal constitutional proposal. Zagorin complains that “the vast amount of writing that has appeared, . . . about Milton, serves. . . to obscure the fact that as a political theorist and systematic thinker, he was not of the first order.”<sup>23</sup> Lewalski claims “as the revolution teetered on the brink of collapse . . . Milton published in two versions a jerry-built utopia . . . to try to stave off the Restoration.”<sup>24</sup> Even in her biography, she states that “Milton’s models of government in these months are makeshift, provisional, temporary, and anything but utopian,” though “desperate” given the impending Restoration.<sup>25</sup> But Lewalski does recognize the eminent place which Milton’s assigns to liberty as a motivating factor in these political shifts. He responded “to the maelstrom of contemporary politics,” and by this “conscious adaptation” to events, attempted “to preserve certain religious and civil liberties from every danger but especially from the permanent destruction awaiting them in a Stuart restoration.”<sup>26</sup> Ernest Sirluck contends that Milton’s political thought followed a “tortuous course,”<sup>27</sup> while Jesse Mack believes “the changes in his thinking are not due, however, to a systematic and logical development of principles previously entertained,” but “to the turn of events.” Milton demonstrates “little maturing in his political thought and still less the consistency that comes from a systematic development of principles antecedently held.”<sup>28</sup> Robert Fallon follows Mack, claiming that “no reader of these tracts will come away with the impression that Milton was particularly original in his political thought.” Milton “is clearly improvising as he goes along,” and “more indebted to the experience of ten years of public service than to any carefully constructed corpus of political thought.”<sup>29</sup> Christopher Hill believes that “between October 1659 and April 1660 Milton put forward no less than six variants of his plan for averting a restoration of monarchy.” As for his constitutional proposal in *Readie and Easie*, “the perpetual oligarchy recommended . . . was far from being Milton’s ideal solution: it was the only remedy he could think of to check the Gadarene rush to monarchy.”<sup>30</sup> William Riley Parker believes that *Readie and Easie* was hardly “a

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<sup>23</sup> Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution*, 106.

<sup>24</sup> Barbara K. Lewalski, “Milton and the Hartlib Circle: Educational Projects and Epic *Paideia*,” in *Literary Milton: Text, Pretext, Context*, eds. Diana Trevino Benet and Michael Lieb (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994), 214-215.

<sup>25</sup> Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, 359.

<sup>26</sup> Lewalski, “Milton: Political Beliefs and Polemical Methods,” 192.

<sup>27</sup> Ernest Sirluck, “Milton’s Political Thought: The First Cycle,” *MP* 61, no. 3 (1964): 209.

<sup>28</sup> Jesse Mack, “The Evolution of Milton’s Political Thinking,” *SR* 30 (1922): 193.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Thomas Fallon, *Milton in Government* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 187, 188.

<sup>30</sup> Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, 199, 200.

statement of reasoned political theory.”<sup>31</sup> Milton “was dealing, not with ultimate ideals, but with desperate expedients,” explaining why he altered “his proposal each time he uttered it from October of 1659 to April 1660.” But, Parker also notes that the single consistent political theme in Milton’s proposals “was his plea for a perpetual senate, without a king,” which “he defended . . . with the usual weapons of Scripture, history, and human reason.”<sup>32</sup>

My analysis challenges these observations, which seem too resolute regarding Milton’s supposed political shifts, and negligent of his use of the Bible, one of his most important texts. These comments are also laden with assumptions of what exactly constitutes a constitutional proposal. Thomas Corn points out that historians are too inspired to denounce Milton for political deficiency after comparing his *Readie and Easie* with the complex political accomplishments of Machiavelli and Harrington, criticisms he qualifies by emphasizing Milton’s “other massive strengths.” His “*Readie and Easie Way* offers an image, rendered retrospectively poignant, of an English free commonwealth founded on the service of the godly.” As for his “Republicanism,” Corns believes it is “more an attitude of mind than any particular governmental configuration.”<sup>33</sup> Cedric Brown addresses these evaluations of political expediency as well, and remarks that regardless of the accusations that Milton offered a “pragmatic solution,” his “various writings of 1659/60 about the government have in them some consistent characteristics,” which cannot “be construed as desperate, because they accord with writings at other points in his career.”<sup>34</sup>

### Milton’s Scholarly Study of the Scriptures

Masson details the contents of Milton’s manuscript, the *Poemata Miltoni Manuscriptu*, housed at Trinity College Library, Cambridge, which reveals not only his desire to write a History of Britain, but to study biblical narratives and history. Of the seven pages which contain these divisions, Masson notes ninety-nine subjects of interest, “sixty-one are Scriptural, and thirty-eight are from British History.”<sup>35</sup> Lewalski records that Milton itemized this list sometime between late 1639 and mid 1641<sup>36</sup> during the literary conflict with Bishops on church reformation. The OT list is larger than the NT one, and though no political topics are mentioned, Milton did intend to pursue the

<sup>31</sup> William Riley Parker, *Milton, A Biography*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 543.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 557.

<sup>33</sup> Corns, “Milton and the Characteristics of a Free Commonwealth,” 41.

<sup>34</sup> Brown, “Great Senates and Godly Education,” 51.

<sup>35</sup> Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, vol. 1, 105.

<sup>36</sup> Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, 123.

great biblical figures among the Judges, Kings, and Prophets, as well as John the Baptist and the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ.<sup>37</sup>

### Inspiration of the Scriptures and Hermeneutical Method in *De Doctrina Christiana*

Milton's represents one of the few lay Interregnum writers who, like Sir Henry Vane, wrote an impressive theological treatise. *De Doctrina* not only relates Milton's doctrine of the Scriptures, but reveals his hermeneutical approach. Milton writes that during his early childhood he began an "earnest study of the Old and New Testaments in their original languages," as a scholar would, with "a fresh start," and determined to craft his own treatise "from the word of God and from that alone," and remain "scrupulously faithful to the text."<sup>38</sup> Milton claims that his pursuit of "Christian Doctrine," was principally driven by his view that "nothing else can so effectively wipe away the two repulsive afflictions tyranny and superstition from human life and human mind."<sup>39</sup> In his *Readie and Easie*, Milton rehearses their history towards liberty, and characterizes England's civil and religious liberty as a "victory at once against two [of] the most prevailing usurpers over mankind, superstition and tyrannie."<sup>40</sup>

One of the more remarkable examinations of Milton's use of the Scriptures is Harris Fletcher's 1929 work, *The Use of the Bible In Milton's Prose*, undertaken because of the vacuum of such scholarship in his prose works.<sup>41</sup> Fletcher states that "any understanding of the *de doctrina* for its own sake or for the sake of Milton's other works must begin with its enormous use of the Bible."<sup>42</sup> Fletcher compiled citation lists of Milton's biblical references in his prose works, excluding *De Doctrina*, and investigated the editions and texts he resorted to. He noted approximately "five hundred separate quotations or citations, each of which is clearly recognizable" and exclusive of numerous allusions and phrases.<sup>43</sup> Milton's pre-1651 prose works, inclusive of *Pro Populo*, contain "approximately three hundred and fifty Biblical citations, of which about two hundred fifty appear with quotation." His post-1651 prose works, written when he was blind, contain "one-hundred seventy-four citations . . . , fifty-one of which

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 106 -112 for Milton's complete list of biblical topics.

<sup>38</sup> *De Doctrina*, CPH, vol. 6, 120. Harris Fletcher notes that Milton was quite able to read the Scriptures in "Latin, in Greek, and in Hebrew, including the Targumim or Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament, and the Syriac version of the New, together with the available commentaries of those several versions." See Fletcher, "Milton's Use of Biblical Quotations," 149.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>40</sup> *Readie*, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Fletcher, *The Use of the Bible in Milton's Prose*, 10. Fletcher states that "the only accounts of consequence," are Sumner's, found in his Introduction to his personal translation of *De Doctrina*, and his own, "Milton's Use of Biblical Quotations," 145-165, referred to above.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 14.

are not quoted.”<sup>44</sup> *De Doctrina* contains “over seven thousand chapter and verse citations . . . , more than three-fourths of which include quotations.”<sup>45</sup> In his Latin prose works, including *De Doctrina*, Milton quotes directly from the Latin version of Junius-Tremellius, though he also used the Vulgate in his attempt to follow Salmasius.<sup>46</sup> The English version which Milton used generally was his own family Bible, an edition of the 1612 Authorized Version printed by Barker, and now in the British Museum.<sup>47</sup>

Similar concerns over this lacuna of biblical recognition in Milton's prose was expressed by Theodore Long Huguelet in his 1959 dissertation “Milton's Hermeneutics: A Study of Scriptural Interpretation in the Divorce Tracts and in *De Doctrina Christiana*.” Huguelet's motive for pursuing Milton's exegetical techniques is similar to Fletcher's.

In view of Milton's extensive use of the Bible and his repeated avowal of dependence upon Scripture alone in theology, there is a need for ascertaining the theory of interpretation implicit wherever Milton cites the Bible. The fact that this theory has received little attention from Milton scholars is partly owing to the predominating interest in Milton's poetry, and partly to the assumption that Milton simply twisted the Scriptures to fit preconceptions and the needs of controversy. Critics who assume that Milton's exegesis is constrained or insincere would naturally attach little value to his principles of hermeneutics.<sup>48</sup>

Regina Schwartz in her “Milton on the Bible,” claims that “Milton is surely the most biblical of all English poets,” while “his prose is also saturated with biblical citation.” Not only was he such “an adept practitioner of biblical hermeneutics himself,” but he went “so far as to craft consistency between two completely contradictory biblical mandates about marriage in order to justify his doctrine of divorce.”<sup>49</sup> Milton was “so preoccupied with biblical hermeneutics” in his divorce tracts, that “his *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* could have been justifiably titled *The Doctrine and Discipline of Biblical Exegesis*.”<sup>50</sup>

In *De Doctrina*, Milton states quite categorically that “the writings of the prophets, the apostles and the evangelists, . . . were divinely inspired,” and therefore the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 92, 93.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 43-45. Fletcher explains that Milton tended to rely on Tremellius for OT quotations, but did resort to the Hebrew if he disputed the Latin, while he used Beza's Latin and Greek versions of the NT. See “Milton's Use of Biblical Quotations,” 165.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 22

<sup>48</sup> Theodore Long Huguelet, “Milton's Hermeneutics: A Study of Scriptural Interpretation in the Divorce Tracts and in *De Doctrina Christiana*,” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1959), 2. Huguelet is somewhat indebted to the work of George Newton Conklin's *Biblical Criticism and Heresy in Milton* (NY: King's Crown Press, 1949).

<sup>49</sup> Regina M. Schwartz, “Milton on the Bible,” in *A Companion to Milton*, ed. Thomas Corns. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2001, 2003), 38.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 39.

Scriptures,<sup>51</sup> which “were written for the use of the church throughout all succeeding ages” are “both in themselves and through God’s illumination absolutely clear.”<sup>52</sup> His interpretive view is that “each passage of Scripture has only a single sense,”<sup>53</sup> while his clear emphasis upon the knowledge of Scripture’s original languages, the historical context of its passages, the interpretive role of grammar and syntax, as well as special figures, all indicate his commitment to the grammatical historical method, and indicative of his Christian humanist scholarship.

The right method of interpreting the scriptures has been laid down by theologians. This is certainly useful, [390] but no very careful attention is paid to it. The requisites are linguistic ability, knowledge of the original sources, consideration of the overall intent, distinction between literal and figurative language, examination of the causes and circumstances, and of what comes before and after the passage in question, and comparison of one text with another. It must always be asked, too, how far the interpretation is in agreement with faith. Finally, one often has to take into account the anomalies of syntax, . . . Lastly, no inferences should be made from the text, unless they follow necessarily from what is written. This precaution is necessary, otherwise we may be forced to believe something which is not written instead of something which is, and to accept human reasoning, generally fallacious, instead of divine doctrine, thus mistaking the shadow for the substance.<sup>54</sup>

An understanding of his hermeneutical approach is critical for discerning his intense denunciations of the Bible’s misappropriation by his royalist and Presbyterian opponents. In his anti-prelatical tract *Of Reformation*, he reprimanded the Bishops whose exegesis modelled that of their predecessors, and asks, “Who is ignorant of the foul errors, the ridiculous wresting of Scripture, the Heresies, the vanities thick sown through the volumes of *Justi Martyr*, *Clemens*, *Origen*, *Tertullian* and others of eldest time?”<sup>55</sup> In *Eikonoklastes* he rebukes the writer of *Eikon Basilike* for adulterating “thos Sacred words from the grace of God,”<sup>56</sup> while in his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, he denounced the Presbyterians as “dancing Divines, who . . . , come with Scriptures in thir mouthes, gloss’d and fitted for thir turnes with a double contradictory sense.”<sup>57</sup> Likewise in *Brief Notes*, Milton was appalled at Matthew Griffith’s hermeneutics in support of kingship in his royalist sermon *The Fear of God and the King* (1660), and insisted that it represented nothing short of textual distortion. Regarding Griffith’s exposition of I Samuel 8:7, Milton complained “how well you confirm one wrested

<sup>51</sup> *De Doctrina*, CPW, vol. 6, 574.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 575, 578. Milton buttresses his claims with numerous scriptural citations.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 581.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 582-583.

<sup>55</sup> *Reformation*, 24.

<sup>56</sup> *Eikon*, 48.

<sup>57</sup> *Tenure*, 6.

Scripture with another,” and “notorious abuse of Scripture.”<sup>58</sup> Milton presented himself as a serious exegete as opposed to a dabbler who simply treated the Scriptures as a potpourri of interpretive possibilities or polemical window dressing.

Scripture's authority surpassed that of heathen writings as well. In his *Reason of Church Government* (1642), Milton claims that “all wisdom is infolded,” in the Scriptures, which is “a better & more ancient authority, then any heathen writer hath to give us.”<sup>59</sup> In his *Treatise of Civil Power* (1649), Milton argues for liberty of conscience upon the absolute authority of Scripture, the only “divine rule or autoritie from without us warrantable to one another as common ground . . . and no other within us but the illumination of the Holy Spirit so interpreting that scripture.”<sup>60</sup> Despite the possibility of interpretive abuse, Milton argued in *De Doctrina* that “every believer is entitled to interpret the scriptures,” and that “no one should be forbidden to read” them. “On the contrary, it is very proper that all sorts and conditions of men should read them or hear them read regularly.”<sup>61</sup> Milton believed that “under the gospel,” there was “a double scripture,” consisting of the “external scripture of the written word” and “the internal scripture of the Holy Spirit” which God promised, and “engraved upon the hearts of believers.”<sup>62</sup> Don M. Wolfe, in his *Milton in the Puritan Revolution*, states that his “conception of liberty,” was significantly influenced by that “Christian individualism which filled his soul,” indicating the “acceptance of truth by authority to an unaided personal interpretation of the Bible.”<sup>63</sup>

### Milton's View of God's Universal Governance and Man's Nature

Milton's views of God's governance, man's nature, fall, and subsequent regeneration and adoption, as well as Christian liberty, were essential to his formulation of a political theology. Milton believed man was originally created “in the image of God, and the whole law of nature [143] was so implanted and innate in him that he was in need of no command.”<sup>64</sup> The fall of man never eradicated all remnants of God's image in him, evidenced “not only from the holiness and wisdom in both word and deed of many of the heathens,” but proved out of the Scriptures. Genesis chapter 9: 2, 6 states

<sup>58</sup> *BN*, 6.

<sup>59</sup> *Reason*, preface.

<sup>60</sup> *Treatise*, 5-6.

<sup>61</sup> *De Doctrina*, *CPW*, vol. 6, 583, 577.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 587. Milton's understanding of this double sense of Scripture is akin to Sir Henry Vane's in his *RM*. Given the dating of Milton's *De Doctrina*, it is possible to conclude that Milton read it, or rather had it read to him.

<sup>63</sup> Don M. Wolfe, *Milton in the Puritan Revolution* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1941), 326. See also Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World*, trans. John Bowden (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1980; London: SCM Press Ltd., 1984), 159.

<sup>64</sup> *De Doctrina*, *CPW*, vol. 6, 353. See *Tenure*, 8.

that “*every beast shall have fear of you,*” and “*who sheds man's blood . . . because God made man in his image,*” prove that “traces” of his image “remain in our intellect.” While Romans 1:19-20 indicates that “which can be known about God . . . the invisible things are evident from the creation of the world.”<sup>65</sup>

Since man's fallen state was not so destitute of the divine image, he retained volition and could still understand profound truths, explaining why Milton made political use of heathen writers. He conjectured that freedom of the will was either a remnant of “his primitive state,” or quality “restored to him as a result of the call of grace.”<sup>66</sup> But when a man undergoes a “supernatural renovation,” his “natural faculties of faultless understanding and of free will” are renewed, and “more completely than before,” as God “infuses by divine means new and supernatural faculties into the minds of those who are made new.”<sup>67</sup> Part of this regeneration leads to adoption, and “the first result of adoption is *liberty*,” which “has appeared in a much clearer light since the coming of Christ. That is why it is called Christian liberty.”<sup>68</sup>

### **Gospel Supremacy over Mosaic Judicials and Jewish Polity**

Milton dismissed the notion that the Mosaic Judicials were a politically viable and civilly enforceable code for England, and construed them rather as peculiar stipulations originally and exclusively directed to the Israelites. The Law's role is to educate nations toward “THE ADULT STATURE OF A NEW CREATURE, AND TO A MANLY FREEDOM UNDER THE GOSPEL,” which is “MUCH MORE EXCELLENT AND PERFECT THAN THE LAW,” and now “WRITTEN IN THE HEARTS OF BELIEVERS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.”<sup>69</sup> The Societal relevance of the Judicials rested in their timeless moral substance which was “grounded in nature,” and testified to by the Gospel, that superior covenant which “stands with her dignity most,” and “lectures to us from her own authentick handwriting, and command.”<sup>70</sup>

Neither did Milton consider the Mosaic Judicials relevant for ecclesiastical government, considering it inconceivable to ground “Evangelick government in the Imitation of the Jewish Priesthood,” and dismissing such application for lack of apostolic example and authority. He repudiated those Prelates who tried to “build their Hierachy upon the sandy bottome of the law,” and not the “authority of the Gospell,” and “repulst as it were from the writings of the Apostles, and driven to take sanctuary

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 396. Milton quotes numerous other passages to prove his point.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 397. The use and understanding of the term “primitive” here is also reminiscent of Vane.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 461.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 496.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 517, 521.

<sup>70</sup> Reason, 11.

among the Jewes.”<sup>71</sup> He also completely dismissed the jurisdictional union of the civil and religious offices under the Jewish Polity as an unworkable pattern for England by appealing to the primacy of the Gospel. The church, now in a “state of grace,” had shifted from the status of servant to son in the new Gospel covenant, which now “belongs willingness and reason, not force.” Under the Mosaic Code, “the law was . . . written on tables of stone, and to be performed according to the letter, willingly or unwillingly,” and with “no distinct government or governors of church and commonwealth,” since “the Priests and Levites judg’d in all causes not ecclesiastical only, but civil.” Since the NT never re-established such concentration of mixed authority, man is “freed from the judgments of men, and especially from coercion and legislation in religious matters.”<sup>72</sup> Under the new Gospel covenant, the Law is written “upon the heart of every believer to be interpreted only by the sense of charitie and inward perswasion.”<sup>73</sup> Milton even equated the “Judaick law,” with a “borrow’d manuscript of a subservient scrowl,”<sup>74</sup> and was resolute in his revulsion for those Prelates who derived ecclesiastical forms from it.

Though since some of our Brittish Prelates seeing themselves prest to produce Scripture, try all their cunning, if the New Testament will not help them, to frame of their own heads as it were with wax a kinde of Mimick Bishop limm’d out to the life of a dead Priesthood.<sup>75</sup>

The Gospel’s new jurisdictional requirements rested on the covenant of grace, and resulted in the separation between the civil and spiritual swords for purposes of liberty; the very distinction of which he praised Sir Henry Vane for recognizing in his famous poem devoted to him. Nevertheless, Milton was not advocating the wholesale dismissal of the Law, as its “substance . . . love of God and of our neighbor, should not. . . . be thought of as destroyed.” Rather, “only the written surface has been changed,” as the “law is now inscribed on believers’ hearts by the spirit,” which is outside the province of the magistrate.<sup>76</sup> The Gospel’s preeminence only rendered the Judicials irrelevant as to the external enforcement of the “letter,” while the internal enforcement of its substance was now a matter of conscience, and liberty.

The law of slavery having been abrogated through the gospel, the result is Christian Liberty. It is true that liberty is primarily the fruit of adoption, and was consequently not unknown in the time of the law, . . . . However, our liberty could not be perfect or manifest before the advent of Christ, our liberator.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>72</sup> *De Doctrina*, CPW, vol. 6, 537-538.

<sup>73</sup> *Treatise*, 48-49.

<sup>74</sup> *Reason*, 11.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>76</sup> *De Doctrina*, CPW, vol. 6, 532.

Therefore liberty is a matter relevant chiefly to the gospel, and is associated with it.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY means that CHRIST OUR LIBERATOR FREES US FROM THE SLAVERY OF SIN AND THUS FROM THE RULE OF THE LAW AND OF MEN, AS IF WE WERE EMANCIPATED SLAVES.<sup>77</sup>

The primacy of the Gospel over the Judicials, with its political implications of “Christian liberty,” required the restriction of civil power in religious affairs. Milton even linked fitness for governance with discernment of their jurisdictional differences, a distinction vital for his cause of liberty, and reminiscent of his electoral conditions for prospective electors and civil authorities which he reiterated repeatedly in his later political tracts.

That then both commonwealth and religion will at length, if ever, flourish in Christendom, when either they who govern discern between civil and religious, or they only who so discern shall be admitted to govern. Till then nothing but troubles, persecutions, commotions can be expected.<sup>78</sup>

According to Schwartz, the Law of Nature and Christ's Gospel commands translate into hermeneutical principles identifiable in Milton's divorce tracts. These interpretive principles of imprinted laws and charity she claims Milton extracted from Moses' permission of divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-2, and Christ's command against it, except on the grounds of adultery, in Matthew 19:3-8. Milton claimed Christ intended “to preserve those his fundamental and superior laws of nature and charitie, *to which all other ordinances give up their seals*,”<sup>79</sup> indicating he prioritizes these “higher divine laws of nature and charity” to discern “the validity of biblical injunctions.”<sup>80</sup> As further proof of these superior principles, she quotes Milton's further claim that “God the Son hath put all other things under his own feet; but his Commandments he hath left all under the feet of charity.”<sup>81</sup> Schwartz claims that “charity dictates not only Milton's biblical hermeneutics, but also his revolutionary politics, his personal life and his critique of church government.”<sup>82</sup> As for his principle of nature, Milton claims that though “God indeed in some wayes of his providence, is high and secret past finding out: but in the delivery and execution of his Law . . . hath plain anough reveal'd himself, and requires the observance therof not otherwise then to the law of nature and of equity imprinted in us seems correspondent.”<sup>83</sup> Her analysis is born out by Milton's

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 536-537.

<sup>78</sup> *Treatise*, To the Parliament.

<sup>79</sup> Schwartz, “Milton on the Bible,” 39. Milton quote from *CPW*, vol. 2, 325. The italics represents her emphasis.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 40. Milton quote from *CPW*, vol. 2, 356.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Milton quote from *CPW*, vol. 2, 297.

prioritizing of the Gospel principle of liberty over the Mosaic Judicials. Milton still clung to the moral substance of the Law as binding, but as to its institutional relevance, and lawful civil enforcement, he subjected it to the standard of charity and the dispensation of grace, and concluded that Christian liberty was now the quintessence of a civil model.

Milton's understanding of the Gospel's liberty requirements represents a biblical anchor from which he directs political contrasts between the liberty of commonwealths and the tyranny and slavery of monarchies. His civil-liberty theme targeted civil-slavery in *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*. Milton asks Salmasius whether "kings may do what they list with Impunity," or if "God has exempted them from all humane Jurisdiction, and reserved them to his own Tribunal only," and posits that "the Gospel . . . that Heavenly Promulgation, as it were, of Christian Liberty," does not "reduce us to a condition of Slavery to Kings and Tyrants."<sup>84</sup> "Unlimited power," whether "in Temporal things," or "Ecclesiastical" are equally subversive to liberty. God is just as concerned for "civil affairs" as he is ecclesiastical ones, and therefore, "he would have the same reformation made in the Commonwealth, that he would have made in the Church." Moreover, "God has not so modelled the Government of the World" to require "any Civil Community to submit to the Cruelties of Tyrants," while leaving the "Church at liberty to free themselves from Slavery and Tyranny."<sup>85</sup> In *Readie and Easie*, Milton contrasts the settlement of a "free Commonwealth" with the impending "bondage" of restored monarchy, and nothing short of a return to "heathenish government," as "slaves of a single person," requiring a "yoking . . . to . . . the natural adversarie and oppressor of libertie."<sup>86</sup> But "A free Commonwealth" is "the most agreeable to all due libertie and proportioned equalitie, both human, civil, and Christian."<sup>87</sup>

### Milton's Christian Humanism

Milton employed classical texts politically, and his own education on the classics, as well as travels to Italy most certainly influenced his political thought. In his *Character of the Long Parliament* (1681), he compared the beneficial role of importing "foreign writings," with that of ripened "Wine and Oyl," clarifying that the "Sun which we want, ripens" these as well as "Wits."<sup>88</sup> Thomas Corns explains that there is little evidence "in his vernacular writing of 1649 and almost nothing in his Latin defences to

<sup>84</sup> *Pro Populo* is part of Milton's Latin prose corpus, and this quote is from the 1695 English translation *A Defence of the People of England*, 52. I am employing this translation throughout the paper.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85.

<sup>86</sup> *Readie*, 3-4, 6, 72, 74, 78, 104, 107.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

<sup>88</sup> *Character*, 11. This is also referred to as *Digression*.

show that Milton actively sought to argue for the English republic in terms derived either from classical models or from Machiavellian political theory.<sup>89</sup> Nowhere does Milton suggest a wholesale acceptance of the political preeminence of heathen writers, and his resort to classical authors is not inconsistent with his view of man's fallen state and an imprinted law of nature. Milton believed that "even before Moses' time the law had to some extent already been given," though "not written down,"<sup>90</sup> leading him to conclude an "unwritten law of nature" and a "kind of gleam or glimmering of it still remains in the hearts of all mankind." According to Rom. 1:19, 32, and 2:14-15, the heathen have a sense of God's will, and "do by nature the things contained in the law, for they are their own law: they show the work of the law written in their hearts." Nevertheless, the transformative experience of the "regenerate" is distinct from the heathen, as this law "is daily brought nearer to a renewal of its original perfection by the operation of the Holy Spirit."<sup>91</sup> With this, instruction in the classics alongside the Scriptures was an acceptable educational practice in the seventeenth-century. Reventlow notes that "Milton's intellectual background" was fed by "humanism, which dominated his days as a student in Cambridge; and Puritanism, to which he was introduced by his teacher, T. Young." He was unconvinced that these streams could be severed. Reventlow also draws attention to Barker's observation that the confidence in man and human reason which emerges in Milton's *Areopagetica* was not without precedent in pamphlets of contemporary Puritans.<sup>92</sup>

*Areopagitica* is more instructive for proving Milton a Christian humanist as opposed to a classical one. Milton views reason as a mental faculty linked directly to God's image bearing nature, and believed that he "who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, God's Image," but "hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye."<sup>93</sup> Milton's statement is associated with Christian and pagan writings. Though *Areopagitica*, a Christian ethic of reading, abounds with classical allusions and historical examples, Milton invokes biblical giants as models for his own scholarship to prove liberty of the press. "Moses, Daniel, & Paul," were all "skilfull in all learning of the AEgyptians, Caldeans, and Greeks, which could not probably be without reading their Books of all sorts." Paul "thought it no defilement to insert into holy Scripture the sentences of three Greek Poets, and one of

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<sup>89</sup> Corns, "Milton and the Characteristics of a Free Commonwealth," 26.

<sup>90</sup> *De Doctrina*, *CPW*, vol. 6, 516.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible*, 156.

<sup>93</sup> *Areopagitica*, 4.

them a Tragedian.”<sup>94</sup> Since prominent biblical figures were knowledgeable of their contemporary pagan writers, why should the seventeenth-century readership be prohibited in its literary privileges? Milton resorts to Acts 10:9-16 to further prove the legitimate reading of pagan authors.

To the pure, all things are pure, not only meats and drinks, but all kinde of knowledge whether of good or evill; the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defil'd. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evill substance; and yet God in that unapocryphall vision, said without exception, Rise *Peter*, kill and eat, leaving the choice to each mans discretion.<sup>95</sup>

Milton's reference to Peter relates to his withdrawal to a housetop to pray where he subsequently experienced a vision of unclean creatures presented on a sheet dropping from heaven, followed by the Lord's admonition to “Arise, Peter, kill and eat.” Peter refused, because he had “never eaten anything unholy and unclean.” Upon meeting Cornelius, Peter realized the Lord was hardly referring to animals, but salvation coming to the Gentiles. “God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.”<sup>96</sup> Milton read this passage as endorsing the intellectual pursuit of pagan writings, then currently considered “unclean,” but rendered pure once strained through an undefiled reader. Similarly, in *Reason of Church Government* (1642), Milton validates the practice of resorting to extra biblical sources for crafting ideas on arts education because such artistic “abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God rarely bestow'd.”<sup>97</sup>

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott in her “The Bible, the Classics, and Milton,” observed that Milton intimated the subordination of the classics to the Scriptures when he suggested they were ““to be *reduced* in their nightward studies wherewith they close the day's work, under *the determinate sentence* of David or Solomon, or the evangelists and apostolic scriptures,””<sup>98</sup> and concluded that Milton “is counseling that each night the student must relate his classical learning to scriptural principles.” His definition of “right reason” meant “*the powers of a mind wholly dedicated to the service of God.*” and hence “theological rather than secular,” and further proof that his humanism was Christian and not classical.<sup>99</sup> According to Mollenkott, pagan works “provided the Christian humanist

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>96</sup> Acts 10:1-48 NASV. This covers the entire passage depicting both Peter's vision and Cornelius' conversion.

<sup>97</sup> *Reason*, 39.

<sup>98</sup> Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, “The Bible, the Classics, and Milton,” *CT* 9, no. 7 (January 1965): 10-11. She takes this quote from Milton's *Of Education* found in Frank A. Patterson, ed., *The Student's Milton*, rev. ed. (New York: F.S. Crofts & Co.), 729.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

with illustrations and objectifications of abstract theological truths and helped to create experiences that make the reader more deeply aware of biblical meaning.”<sup>100</sup> a method Milton followed, while his “few heterodox viewpoints have sometimes been overemphasized to the point of obscuring his devotion to scriptural authority.”<sup>101</sup> Warren Chernaik in his “Biblical Republicanism,” confirms Mollenkott’s observations, noting that “in the polemical writings of Milton and his contemporaries,” their “secular arguments appealing to nature and reason are again and again buttressed by citations from Scripture and reformed theologians.”<sup>102</sup>

Milton though was mindful of the sensitive issue which the use of heathen authors posed, especially for the Presbyterians. In *Tenure*, he explains that his proofs on behalf of regicide will be by “authorities and reasons, not learnt in corners among Scisms and Heresies, as our doubling Divines are ready to claumniat,” rather such are “fetch’t out of the midst of choicest and most authentic learning, and no prohibited Authors, nor many Heathen, but Mosaical, Christian, Orthodoxal, and which must needs be more convincing to our Adversaries, Presbyterial.”<sup>103</sup> Milton truncates his employment of pagan authors, “lest it bee objected they were Heathen.”<sup>104</sup> Elizabeth Tuttle in her “Biblical Reference in the Political Pamphlets of the Levellers and Milton, 1638-1654,” explains that Milton was not only “very much aware of the possible misuse of biblical references,” a concern which he frequently underscored, but increased his use of them “to sustain and enrich his own arguments.”<sup>105</sup>

### Milton’s Political Reading of Scripture

#### Old Testament Political Authorities: Deuteronomy 17: 4-20 and I Samuel 8:1-22

Throughout his pamphlets, Milton employed discrete scriptural texts to substantiate his commonwealth model consisting primarily of a standing senate without king and House of Lords. From Deuteronomy 17:14-20 he read the multiple political applications of limited government, the right of revolution and popular sovereignty, and the “Commonwealth” as “a more perfect form of Government than a Monarchy.”<sup>106</sup> He

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>102</sup> Chernaik, “Biblical Republicanism,” Abstract, 147.

<sup>103</sup> *Tenure*, 8.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>105</sup> Tuttle, “Biblical Reference in the Political Pamphlets of the Levellers and Milton, 1638-1654,” 72.

<sup>106</sup> *FD*, 18.

understood I Samuel 8:10-19 as evidence of Israel's rejection of her divinely ordained commonwealth and God as her Lord and King.<sup>107</sup>

**Limited Authority of Kings, Popular Sovereignty and Supremacy of the Hebrew Commonwealth: Deuteronomy 17: 4-20**

Milton's republican readings contradicted the standard royalist ones. Where he inferred the limitation and legal accountability of kings from Deuteronomy 17, most royalists reasoned a monarchy as responsible to God alone, and none assumed it communicated any right of choice regarding government. In *Tenure*, Milton claims that "these words confirme us that the right of choosing, yea of changing thir own Government is by the grant of God himself in the People."<sup>108</sup> He forcefully frames his counter arguments against absolute kingship in favor of popular sovereignty in his *First Defence*. He attacks Salmasius' assertion that a king alone represents "*the Supream Power of the Kingdom*," who is only "*answerable to God*," and "*bound by no Law*,"<sup>109</sup> by confidently resting his case in Deuteronomy 17:14, which bore tremendous political weight because "God himself" spoke. Milton read the passage, "*When thou are come into the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt say, I will set a King over me, like as the Nations that are round about me*," to mean "that all Nations are at liberty to erect what form of Government they will amongst themselves, and to change it when, and into what they will." And though directed to the Hebrews, Milton understood this as a civil privilege for all nations.<sup>110</sup>

Milton extended the political usefulness of Deuteronomy 17 beyond popular choice of government to include the superiority of a commonwealth form generally, claiming it also proves "that a Commonwealth is a more perfect form of Government than a Monarchy, and more suitable to the condition of Mankind; and in the opinion of God himself, better for his own people; for himself appointed it." God reluctantly permitted the Hebrews to alter this divine form to a monarchy only after He was "prevail'd" upon, "and at their own importunate desire." God's response did not translate into a prophetic certainty, but a political choice "to be Govern'd by a single person, or by more," and should Israel "resolve upon a King," God "prescribes Laws for this King," requiring he "transcribe with his own hand all the Precepts of the Law, . . . that his mind might not be lifted up above his Brethren."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> BN, 6.

<sup>108</sup> *Tenure*, 15.

<sup>109</sup> *FD*, 15.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

Sir Robert Filmer, a prominent royalist, adhered to Salmasius' reading of the Deuteronomy 17 passage, and attacked Milton's more popular understanding of it in *Observations Concerning the Original and Various Forms of Government* (1696) in his defense. Filmer claims Milton's reading of "Peoples Power," for "the choosing of kings" in Deuteronomy 17:14 is unwarranted, because the "foretelling or forewarning of the *Israelites* of a wanton and wicked Desire of theirs, which God himself condemned," cannot "be made an Argument that God gave or granted them a Right to do such a wicked thing." With this, such a right cannot stand because the passage itself fails to prove "that God . . . expresly saith, that there was always a Right in the People to use what Form of Government they please."<sup>112</sup>

Salmasius' had also argued for absolute authority of kings through the example of Christ, hermeneutical grounds Milton was too adept in. He responded that the "Gospel" released man from "the old Law, that Mistress of Slavery."<sup>113</sup> The fact that Christ was "born and lived and died under a Tyrannical Government," indicates he "has thereby purchased Liberty for us," and though "he gives us his Grace to submit patiently to a condition of Slavery," he "encourageth us" to seek our freedom. "St. Paul not only of an Evangelical, but a Civil Liberty, says thus, . . . . *Art thou called being a servant, care not for it; but if thou maiest be made free, use it rather; you are bought with a price, be not ye servants of men.*"<sup>114</sup> Christ, as savior, "by submitting to such a condition himself, has confirmed even our Civil Liberties," and has not "established and strengthened a Tyrannical Government, and made a blind subjection the duty of all Christians."<sup>115</sup> In *Eikonoklastes*, Milton also resorted to the nature of Christ's authority as proof of a popular choice of government, claiming that he "declares professedly his judicature to be spiritual, abstract from Civil managements, and therefore leaves all Nations to thir own particular Lawes, and way of Government."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Sir R. Filmer, *Observations Concerning the Original and Various Forms of Government* (London, 1696), 184.

<sup>113</sup> *Defense*, 52.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 53. Milton is referring to 1 Corinthians 7:21.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Eikon*, 217. In his 1998 dissertation, "The Triumph of "Christian Hebraism" in Verse," (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1998), Matthew Biberman believes he located "Christian Hebraic" elements in Milton's poetry and prose, stating that his "mature work" was "a sustained attempt to animate both Christian and Jewish traditions." Biberman links Milton's reading of Deuteronomy 17:14 as a peoples' right of choosing and changing their own government, with John Selden's natural law (or divine law) philosophy. But, Biberman does not develop his argument regarding Milton's use of Selden here. See his Introduction and 356-357.

### Hebrew Commonwealth - A Divinely Ordained Model for a Reformed Commonwealth: 1 Samuel 8: 1-22

In *Tenure*, Milton also read Israel's request for a King in I Samuel 8 as signaling their abandonment of a divinely ordained commonwealth and rejection of God as their supreme sovereign. By illustrating the disastrous civil choice of Israel, Milton claimed God was summoning England "to liberty and the flourishing deeds of a reformed Common-wealth," and would bless her if she rejected kinship and established him as her "supreme governor" in the likeness of his "ancient government."<sup>117</sup> In *Defense*, Milton explained that the "Israelites, "prevail'd" upon God, who "at their own importunate desire," allowed them to alter their commonwealth "into a Monarchy."<sup>118</sup> The exemplar political pattern which Israel offers England is not, as the royalists would contend, her choice of a king; rather it is her pre-monarchic commonwealth devoid of any human king. Milton warns England against repeating the civil mistakes of the Jews in *Eikonoklastes*.

And who knows, if we make so slight of this incomparable deliverance, which God hath bestowd upon us, but that we shall like those foolish *Israelites*, who depos'd God and *Samuel* to set up a King, *Cry out* one day *because of our King*, which we have bin mad upon; and then God, as he foretold them, will no more deliver us.<sup>119</sup>

Milton comments similarly in *Brief Notes* where he accuses Griffith of "grossly misapplying" 1 Samuel 8:7, "which were not spoken to any who had *resisted or rejected* a King, but to them who much against the will of God had fought a King, and rejected a Commonwealth, wherein they might have lived happily under the Raign of God only, thir King."<sup>120</sup> Griffith even understood Gideon's rule in Judges 7:20 "*which couples the sword of the Lord and Gideon*," as a political model of kingship. Milton, irritated with Griffith's use of 1 Samuel 8, because it is "abus'd and most impertinently cited," claims he did not extend his interpretation far enough to cover verses 22 and 23, which clearly states that neither Gideon nor his son would rule over Israel. Instead, Gideon was a "worthy heroic deliverer of his Country" who "thought it best governd, if the Lord

<sup>117</sup> *Tenure*, 40-41.

<sup>118</sup> *FD*, 18. Milton does not seem to imply that the Jews rejected the Sanhedrin or Jethronian courts, only God as their king.

<sup>119</sup> *Eikon*, 210.

<sup>120</sup> *BN*, 6. In his *Commonplace Book*, Milton notes in his section on "The State" a reference to Sulpicius Severus' *History* (Leyden, 1635) regarding how "the name of Kings has always been hateful to a free peoples." Milton condemns the Hebrews for "choosing to exchange their freedom for servitude." The editor states that Milton included in the marginalia I Reg 8. See *CPW*, vol. 1, 440. In another place Milton notes that "The King of the Hebrews was not free from obedience to the law," with a reference to William Schickhand and his *Iust Regium Hebraeorum e Tenebris Rabbinicis Erutum & Luci donatum* (*The Law of the Kings of the Hebrews Dug out of Rabbinical Shades and Brought to Light*, Strassburg, 1625). See *CPW*, vol. 1, 460.

governd it in that form of a free Commonwealth, which they then enjoid without a single person.”<sup>121</sup>

Filmer also objected to Milton's use of I Samuel 8, claiming the Israelites already had a king, “God himself, and his Vice-roy *Samuel*.”<sup>122</sup> Israel's sin “did lye, not in Desiring a King, but in desiring such a King like as the Nations round about had.” The people “distrusted God Almighty, that governed them by the Monarchial Power of *Samuel*.”<sup>123</sup> Filmer comments on the I Samuel passage in *Patriarchia* (1695), explaining that “the Unlimited Jurisdiction of kings is so amply described by Samuel,” who “was to teach the People a duitiful Obedience to their King, even in those things which themselves did esteem Mischievous and Inconvenient.” Samuel was merely guiding them as to “what a Subject must Suffer; yet not so that it is Right for Kings to do Injury, but it is Right for Kings to go Unpunished by the People if they do it.” In this regard, I Samuel 8 provided “no Remedy . . . against Tyrants, but in Crying and praying unto God in that Day.”<sup>124</sup>

Milton's political reading of Deuteronomy 17:14-17 and 1 Samuel 8: 1-22 reveals how his proposal of a commonwealth model without king or House of Lords may have been construed. He consistently understood the political implications of Israel's choice of kingship as fatal to her divinely ordained commonwealth, and interpreted Samuel's speech as an earnest warning against the potential tyrannical procedure of the king. The prophet's itemized list of expected political consequences indicated, in part, not only God's dismay at Israel's choice of an earthly head of state, but his concession testified to their rejection of his direct rule and commonwealth and consent to popular civil choice. Milton's commonwealth model, devoid of human lordship after the manner of a king and House of Lords, incorporates the assumption that the divinely ordained commonwealth delivered to the Jews, with God as supreme lord, represents an exemplar civil pattern.

### **New Testament Political Authorities: Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13 and Matthew 20:20-28**

Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-16 are commonly referenced NT political texts in the seventeenth-century, and Milton's reading seems to represent the standard republican position. Not only did they clarify that the origin and nature of government is from God, but offered specific qualifications on subjection to governing authorities.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>122</sup> Filmer, *Observations*, 185.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 191-192.

<sup>124</sup> Sir R. Filmer, *Patriarchia, or the Natural Power of Kings*, (London, 1680), 80-81.

rather than commands of unconditional and categorical obedience. Milton though would add to this scriptural political corpus his unique civil reading of Matthew 20:20-28 which depicts Christ as admonishing his disciples against a rulership reminiscent of the Gentiles, and often employed it alongside Deuteronomy 17 and I Samuel 8 to strengthen his argument against kingship in favor of a commonwealth.

### **Limited Submission and Lawful Civil Ends: Romans 13:1-7 and 1Peter 2:13**

In *Tenure*, Milton augments his OT arguments against unlimited authority of kings with his political readings of 1 Peter 2:13 and Romans 13:1-7. He insists that Peter's command of submission to magistrates and human ordinances refers to those whose governance demonstrates "the punishment of evil-doers, and the encouragement of them that doe well." His reading of verse 16 qualifies such submission even further, that it must be "*as free men*" only. He concedes that Paul's statement in Romans 13:1, that "*there is no power but God,*" seems to conflict with "*Peter* who calls the same authority an Ordinance of man," but explains that such a power refers only to those who are "Lawfull and just," and "not a terror to the good but to the evil." Any power which "be not such, or the person execute not such power, neither the one nor the other is of God, but of the Devil, and by consequence to bee resisted."<sup>125</sup> Man is only obliged to obey rulers if their power is divinely ordained, which is demonstrated primarily by their punishment of wickedness and praise of righteousness. If kings or magistrates abuse that trust, the people can "dispose of it by any alteration, as they shall judge most conducing to the public good."<sup>126</sup> Milton even resorts to Jewish case histories to illustrate that "this custom of tyrant killing was not unusual" to support civil dethronements.<sup>127</sup> God raised up Ehud to deliver Israel from their foreign Moabite King, Eglon, who was their sovereign and tyrant for eighteen years. The prophet and judge Samuel slew Agag, a foreign enemy, and King Jehu assassinated Israel's King Jehoram "a successive and hereditarie Tyrant," by an extraordinary commission from God.<sup>128</sup>

Some of Milton's most powerful uses of these passages are found in his *Defense*, where he employs the logic of the law of submission's rational purpose to prove the limited extent of a subject's obedience. "No Law that is grounded upon a reason, expressly set down in the Law it self, obligeth further than the reason of it extends." Men are to "*submit for the Lord's Sake*. . . . Because a King is an Officer *appointed by*

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<sup>125</sup> *Tenure*, 17-18.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-23.

*God for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God.*" Therefore, "we should submit and yield Obedience to such as are here described. There is not a word spoken of any other." But what "if Princes pervert the design of Magistracy. . . , to the ruin and destruction of good men: and the praise and encouragement of evil doers?" Milton asks "Must we all be condemn'd to perpetual Slavery, not private persons only, but our Nobility, all our inferior Magistrates: our very Parliament it self?" Absolutely not.<sup>129</sup>

So that the institution of Magistracy is *Jure Divino*, and the end of it is, that Mankind might live under certain Laws, and be govern'd by them: but what particular form of Government each Nation would live under, and what Persons should be entrusted with the Magistracy, without doubt was left to the choice of each Nation. Hence St. *Peter* calls Kings and Deputies; *Human Ordinances*.<sup>130</sup>

Such "subjection is not absolutely enjoined, but upon a particular Reason," which "must be the rule of our Subjection; where that reason holds, we are Rebels if we submit not; where it holds not, we are Cowards and Slaves if we do."<sup>131</sup>

Though God providentially intervened in the civil affairs of the Hebrews, Milton believes he left no such command requiring other nations to consider his counsel, nor the expectation that he would involve himself in the formation of their civil institutions. The Hebrews "could have access to God himself, and consult with him; they could not chuse a King themselves by Law, but were to refer the matter to him." But "other Nations have received no such Command."<sup>132</sup> God now ordains the nature of lawful civil authority and power, and leaves the nations at liberty to decide their institutional forms. But, Milton's views here should not be read as dismissive of the Jewish Polity's relevance for England as a commonwealth model. Rather, he is simply highlighting God's unique political relationship with Israel, the liberty of civil choice, and the connection between institutional forms and the moral capacities of nations.

For though God himself declared openly that it was better for his own people to be Governed by Judges than by Kings, yet he left it to them, to change that form of Government for a worse, if they would themselves. . . ; for it is very certain that the same form of Government is not equally convenient for all Nations, nor for the same Nation at all times; but sometimes one, sometimes another may be more proper, according as the industry and valour of the people may increase or decay. But if you deprive the people of this liberty of setting up what Government they like best among themselves, you take that from them, in which the life of all Civil Liberty consists.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> *Defense*, 61-62.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 69. Milton argues similarly for his reading of Romans and I Peter in *BV*, 5.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-76.

Milton makes a similar point regarding God's divine arbitration and intervention in Israel's political life in *A Treatise of Civil Power*. Israel experienced God's distinct and discrete heavenly direction through rulers, but such divine activity was profoundly altered by the dispensation of the Gospel. Civil rulers are now defined as God's ministers to "countenance good and deterr evil" only.

To little purpose will they here instance *Moses*, who did all by immediate divine direction, no nor yet *Asa*, *Jeshosaphat*, or *Joshua*, who both might when they pleasd receive answer from God, and had a commonwealth by him delivered them, incorporated with a national church exercis'd more in bodily then in spiritual worship, so as that the church might be called a commonwealth and the whole commonwealth a church: nothing which can be said of Christianitie, delivered without the help of magistrates, yea in the midst of thir opposition: how little then with any reference to them or mention of them, save only of our obedience to thir civil laws, as they countenance good and deterr evil: which is the proper work of the magistrate, . . . wherein he is the minister of God, *a revenger to execute wrath on him that doth evil*.<sup>134</sup>

Milton's distinctions between Paul's "jure divino" and Peter's "jure humano" are subtle, but he consistently reads them as demonstrating limited submission, lawful governance, and civil choice. Paul highlights the ultimate origin of civil power as divinely ordained, whose operation must abide within God's established purpose for it, and through which submission is defined. Peter, on the other hand, emphasized the human role in choosing and constituting magistrates and civil forms. With this, Israel's singular status as God's unique recipient of divine civil instruction and intervention through ordained civil and ecclesiastical rulers is no longer a relevant relationship for Christians under the Gospel.

### **The Political Language of *Gentilism* and Perpetual Senate: Matthew 20:20-28**

Milton's unique civil reading of Matthew 20:25-28 provided him with the political language of *gentilism*, or tyrannical heathenish rule, to reinforce his denunciation of monarchy already inferred from the OT. Contextually, this passage relates Christ's response to the request of the mother of the sons of Zebedee that they be seated with him in his kingdom, but which Milton read as excluding forever civil human lordship, equating it with that domination, tyranny, and political slavery characteristic among the Gentiles. Matthew 20:20-28 represents Milton's most forceful use of a NT text for endorsing and articulating a free commonwealth form embodying a standing senate of servant leadership. His multiple warnings against the "gentilizing" effect of kingship, stressed four times in his second edition of *Readie and Easie*, is also given

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<sup>134</sup> *Treatise*, 27-29.

prominent attention by his adversaries who charged him with rendering civilly a passage they claimed was intended for faith alone, attesting to its political importance in his constitutional proposals. Unfortunately, many modern historians fail to recognize the political significance Milton attributed to the Matthew text. An examination of his prose indicates that he consistently read from it a civil-servant motif and at times, combined it with allusions to, and partial quotations from, Deuteronomy 17 and I Samuel 8. Milton's reading of this passage also evidences some intentional deviations from the AV.

The Matthew text is first found in *Tenure* where Milton clarifies Christ's perpetual proscription to his disciples against exercising Gentile-like lordship or tyrannical rule.

Wee may pass therefore hence to Christian times. And first our Saviour himself, how much he favoured Tyrants, and how much intended they should be found or honoured among Christians, declares his mind not obscurely; accounting thir absolute authority no better than Gentillim, yea though they flourish'd it over with the splendid name of Benefactors; charging those that would be his Disciples to usurp no such dominion; but that they who were to bee of most autoritie among them, should esteem themselves Ministers and Servants to the public. *Matt. 20:25. The Princes of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them, and Mark 10. 42. They that seem to rule, saith he, either slighting or accounting them no lawful rulers, but yee shall not be so, but the greatest among you shall be your Servant.*<sup>135</sup>

Milton's use of Matthew 20:25 here demonstrates some deviation from the AV in his resort to the terms "Princes" as opposed to rulers, "Lordship" as opposed to dominion, and "Servant" instead of "minister," indicating his personal translation from the Greek Text. What is clear is that he read the text as a civil prescription, and not an ecclesiastical one, the reasons for which he relates in *Readie and Easie*.

Milton resorts again to the Zebedee narrative in his *Defense*, where he extends his analysis to include Christ's prescription of a "form of Civil Government" he desired among his disciples, and categorically maintained that "absolute Lordship and Christianity are inconsistent."<sup>136</sup> Here, Milton combines Christ's admonition against "gentilism" with the Israelites' settlement upon a king in I Samuel 8, a similar political combination found in *Readie and Easie*.

Now, let us [s]ome at last to enquire what his Doctrine was upon this Subject. The Sons of *Zebedee* were ambitious of Honour and Power in the Kingdom of *Christ*, which they persuaded themselves he would shortly set up in the World; he reproves them so, as withal to let all Christians know what Form of Civil Government he desires they should settle amongst themselves. *Ye know, says he, 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*

<sup>135</sup> *Tenure*, 23-24.

<sup>136</sup> *Defense*, 58, 59.

*whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*<sup>137</sup>

The Matthew passage is also found in *De Doctrina* under Milton's discussion "Of Public Duties Towards Our Neighbor" and the nature and form of Christian government. Again, Milton uses terms of authority other than the AV, and is strikingly colloquial in his paraphrasing.

Matt. xx. 25, 27, 28: *you know that heathen rulers lord it over their subjects, and their great men throw their weight about; but it shall not be so among you. Among you, whoever wants to be great shall be your servant . . . ; similarly* Mark x. 42 etc. and Luke xxii.25.<sup>138</sup>

Milton understood Christ's warning as epitomizing the Jewish experience of "gentile" like tyranny. "Our Saviour, lest Christians should desire a King, such a one at least, as might Rule as, he says, the Princes of the *Gentiles* did, prevents them with an Injunction to the contrary; *but it shall not be so among you.*" Milton concludes, "What can be said plainer than this? That stately, imperious Sway and Dominion that Kings use to exercise, shall not be amongst you." In this regard, "Christians either must have no King at all, or if they have, that King must be the People's Servant."<sup>139</sup> The sort of "gentile" king the Jews demanded was no different than the sort of gentile princes Christ admonished against. Christ's directive against establishing a rule reminiscent of the "*Princes of the Gentiles*" represents a condensed summary of Israel's destructive experience in desiring a king, which God reluctantly consented to. The continuity of commands regarding civil rule from the Father and the Son also seemed politically authoritative to Milton. From 1649 to at least 1655, depending upon when Milton wrote *De Doctrina*, he retained the same political interpretation of this text. Milton's reading of Matthew 20: 25-28 militates against absolute authority in government, the institutional expression of which denies the legitimacy of an English king and House of Lords.

### Milton's Late Interregnum Political Tracts

Milton scholars have discerned constitutional differences between the two editions of *Readie and Easie* with Milton's three earlier Interregnum tracts. I propose that these apparent structural contradictions are less relevant than the consistency with which Milton held to his political principles. These tracts are understandably short given the intensity of the moment, and it seemed more expedient to evidence their common political features in a chart.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>138</sup> *De Doctrina*, CPW, vol. 6, 795.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

Milton's wrote his *Letter to a Friend* on 20 October 1659, and shortly after the Rump had been dissolved by the Army. He apparently entertained a conversation with a "friend," who was also quite acquainted with the constitutional crises, only to write a letter to him the next day containing a civil settlement to be submitted to the officers.<sup>140</sup> Milton recommends a unicameral model incorporating a senate to consist of either the re-admitted Parliament, or, a Council of State. The language of a "senate" is significant, as Milton probably intended to speak in terms the Army could hear, and indirectly responding to their settlement proposal of October 5 or *The Humble Representation*.<sup>141</sup> The Army requested that Parliament conclude their previous requests established in their May 13 *The Humble Petition and Address*, the thirteenth provision of which called for a civil settlement inclusive of "a select senate, co-ordinate in power, of able and faithful persons eminent for godliness, and such as continue adhering to this cause."<sup>142</sup> Milton employed the language, though his form was unicameral, and even recommended a limited franchise of electors with election conditional upon adherence to liberty of conscience, and rejection of a "single person."

Further testimony to the significance of Milton's use of the term senate is found in his contrasting address to Parliament in early to late 1659. In *A Treatise Of Civil Power* (February 1659), Milton referred to Parliament as the "Supream Councel,"<sup>143</sup> but in *Considerations of the Likeliest Means*, published sometime in August, and well after *The Humble Representation*, he refers to Parliament as the "Supream Senat."<sup>144</sup> It is therefore possible to conclude that Milton adapted his language to serve the moment, without violating his political principles.

It will be noticed upon reading through the chart that Milton remained largely committed to fundamental constitutional forms and election qualifications while adapting them to the prevailing crises and civil exigencies leading England back to monarchy. It might be more correct to suggest that his method is one of immediate application, not abandonment of political ideas or radical civil shifts. Human lordship is found nowhere in his proposals, and the main features and larger outlines of his model commonwealth are presented in each. The current civil or parliamentary configuration

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<sup>140</sup> Woolrych notes in his Introduction to the Yale edition of this tract that it was not uncommon for pamphleteers to write in this sort of genre, though he does not believe the "friend" Milton referred to was Vane. See *CPW*, vol. 7, 120.

<sup>141</sup> *The Humble Representation and Petition of the Officers of the Army, to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England Presented to them Wednesday the Fifth of October, 1659* (London, 1659), 4 - 5.

<sup>142</sup> Cobbett, *PH*, vol. 3, 1554.

<sup>143</sup> *Treatise*, Preface.

<sup>144</sup> *Considerations*, Preface.

was to be re-crafted into a grand council, or senate, and in most instances, called to sit perpetually as his first preference. Subordinate bodies and local councils were proposed to deal with local judiciary matters and the electorate and electors were to adhere to liberty of conscience, while denying a king and House of Lords as a constitutional option.

| Comparison of Constitutional Proposals of Milton's Interregnum Political Tracts   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <i>A Letter to a Friend Concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth</i><br>20 October 1659<br><br><i>CPW</i> , vol. 7, 324-333.   | <i>Proposalls of Certain Expedients for the Preventing of a Civill War Now Feard, and the Settling of a Firme Government</i><br>20 October – 26 December 1659<br><br><i>CPW</i> , vol. 7, 336-339.  | <i>The Present Means, and Brief Delineation of a Free Commonwealth. Easy to be put in Practice, and without Delay. In a Letter to General Monk</i><br>March 1660<br><br><i>CPW</i> , vol. 7, 392-395.   |
| Constitutional Crisis   |   |   |
| <b>Army dissolves Rump 13 Oct. 1659 and appears to wield civil power</b><br><br>"But, because our evils are now grow more dangerous & extreame, than to be remedied by complaints, it concerns us now to finde out what remedies may be likelyest to save us from approaching ruine. Being now in Anarchy without a counselling & governing power." (329)   | <b>Army unsuccessful in settling the constitutional crisis and now retains the civil power. The Rump Parliament Re-assembles Dec. 26</b><br><br>"First to lay before them in power the scorne we are to foreigne nations by these our <i>continually</i> changes and the danger we are in, not only from the common enemy at home, but from two potent kingdoms abroad Spain and France by most certaine intelligence, designing with joynt forces a speedy invasion of this Iland." (336)  | <b>General Monck readmitted the purged MP's on Feb. 21; Long Parliament dissolves March 16 and new Parliamentary elections are underway</b>   |
| Constitutional Proposal   |   |   |
| <b>Rump Readmitted or Council of State Chosen by Army to Sit Perpetually</b><br><br>"The 1 <sup>st</sup> thing to be found out with all speed, without which no Common wealth can subsist, <b>must be a senate, or generall Council of State.</b> . . This must be either the <i>Parlament</i> readmitted to sitt, or a Councell of State, allowed of by the Army since they only now have the power." If the Parliament thought be well dissolv'd. . . then must the Army forthwith choose a Council of State, whereof, as many to be of the Parliament, as are undoubtedly affected to these two Conditions propos'd. . . That is to say, that the Army be kept up, and all these Officers in thir places during life, and so likewise the Parliament, or Counsellors of State, unless any be found false to any of these two Principles."<br><br><b>Qualification:</b> "And whether the civill government be an annual democracy, or a perpetual | <b>Rump Newly Re-assembled Should Sit Perpetually</b><br><br>"that no government is like to continue unless founded upon the publick authority and consent of the people which is the parliament the only probable way in all appearance can be, and the only prevention of this civill war now at point to ensue, that the <i>parlament</i> be again treated with to sitt on these following conditions. (336)<br><br>3. <sup>dly</sup> <b>that a former Act of their owne be reinforced, whereby they sitt undissolubly, and that they and all henceforth to be chosen into the parlament do retaine their places during life, . . . the place of Senator hath bin always during life both in Rome, Venice, and elsewhere: the Senate being the basis and foundation of government.</b> " (336)<br><br>"5. it might be very agreeable with our freedome to chang the name of parliament . . . into the name of a Grand or Supreme Counsell: whose | <b>Parliament to be elected cast into a Perpetual Council</b><br><br><b>Grand or General Council Locally Elected (Milton inverts the order between local governments and Grand Council)</b><br><br>"FIRST, all endeavors speedily to be us'd, that the ensuing Election be of such as are already firm, or inclinable to constitute a free Commonwealth . . . without single Person or House of Lords. If these be not such, but the contrary, which forsees not, that our Liberties will be utterly lost in this next Parlament, without some powerful course taken, of speediest prevention? The speediest way will be to call up forthwith the chief Gentlemen out of every County; to lay before them . . . the Danger and Confusion of readmitting Kingship in the Land; . . . but will put it to thir hands forthwith the possession of a free Commonwealth; if they will first |

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| <p>Aristocracy, is to nice a <i>consideracon</i> for <i>the</i> extremeties wherein we are, &amp; <i>the</i> hazard of our safety from a common enemie, gapeng at present to devour us. That it be not an Oligarchy, or <i>the</i> faction of a few, may be easily prevented by <i>the</i> numbers of their owne chusing, who may be found infallibly constant to those <i>conditions</i> afore nam’d, Full liberty of <i>conscience</i>, &amp; the abjuracon of Monarchy propos’d.” (329)</p> | <p>power may be in a manner <i>the</i> same with <i>that</i> of <i>parlaments</i>.” (337)</p> <p>“7. <i>that the</i> number of those who are to be of <i>the</i> grand counsell be so many as shalbe judged sufficient to carry on <i>the</i> great affaires committed to them, <b>and in regard they are to sitt during life.</b>” (338)</p> <p>“8. <b><i>that the</i> supreme counsell chuse out of their owne number <i>and</i> to them, if it be thought fit, some others also of eminent ability, to be a counsell of State, with the same power, which it had under the parliament, and to the same intents.</b>” (338)</p> <p>“9. <i>that</i> both counsell do deale as little as may be with <i>the</i> execution of lawes, but leave <i>that</i> to <i>the</i> severall appointed Magistrates; <i>and</i> both maintenance of Minister[ers] <i>and</i> all matters Ecclesiasticall to <i>the</i> church in her severall congregations.” (338)</p> | <p>return immediately and elect them. <b>by such at least of the People as are rightly qualifi’d, a standing Council in every City, and great Town, . . .</b> to assume the judicial Laws, either these that are. or such as they themselves shall new make severally. in each Commonality. and all Judicatures. all Magistracies. to the Adminstration of all Justice between man and man. and all the Ornaments of publick Civility. Academies, and such like. in thir own hands. . . Next. That in every such Capital Place. they will choose them the usual number of ablest Knights and Burgesses. engag’d for a Commonwealth. to make up the Parliament. or . . . <b>the Grand or General Council of the Nation.</b>” (393-394)</p> <p><b>“Though this grand Council be perpetual</b> (as in that Book I prov’d would be best and most conformable to best examples) yet they will then. thus limited. have so little matter in thir Hands, or Power to endanger Liberty: and the People so much in thirs, to prevent them, having all Judicial Laws in thir own Choice. and free Votes in all those which concern generally the whole Commonwealth that we shall have little cause to fear the perpetuity of our general Senat.” (393-394)</p> <p><b>Qualification:</b> If this yet be not thought enough. the known Expedient may at length be us’d. of a partial Rotation.</p> |
| <b>Jurisdiction of Grand Council or Standing Senate</b>  |  |   |
| <p>“Senate of general Counsell of State in whome must be <i>the</i> power 1<sup>st</sup> to preserve <i>the</i> publick peace, next the commerce with forraign nacions, &amp; lastly to raise moneys for <i>the</i> managing of these affairs.” (329)</p>  | <p>“Grand or Supreme Counsell: whose power may be in a manner <i>the</i> same with <i>that</i> of <i>parlaments</i>, to make lawes, peace, war. league, <i>and</i> treaties, with forreigne nations to raise taxes, coyne mony <i>and the</i> like which have bin formerly called regalities.” (337)</p>   | <p>“Grand or General Council of the Nation: whose Office must be. with due Caution, to dispose of Forces. both by Sea and Land, under the conduct of your Excellency. for the preservation of Peace, both at home and abroad, must raise and manage the publick Revenue, but with provided inspection of thir Accompts; must administer all forein Affairs. make all General Laws. Peace, or War. but not without Assent of the standing Council in each City or such other general Assembly as may be call’d on such occasion.” (394)</p>  |
| <b>Election Qualifications</b>   |  |   |
| <p>“The terms to be stood on are. <b>Liberty of Conscience to all professing Scripture the Rule of their faith &amp; worship, and the Abjuracon of a single person.</b>” (330)</p>   | <p>“2.<sup>dly</sup> <i>that the</i> main conditions of their agreement be full liberty of conscience to all who profess their faith <i>and</i> worship by <i>the</i> scriptures only, <i>and against</i> single government by any one person in cheif <i>and</i></p>  |   |

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|  | house of Lords. (336)<br><br>6. <i>that the Elections</i> of them who shall here after sit in this supreme councill may be of such as are certainly known to have besides their ability, <i>the two qualifications</i> above named <i>and to the persisting</i> in them shall take their oath, whither they be nominated by <i>the</i> grand Councill, <i>and</i> elected by the well affected people, or nominated by those of <i>the</i> people <i>and</i> elected by <i>the</i> grand Councill. The people also, especially such as look to be entrusted with offices or places of advantage <i>and</i> elections in <i>the</i> Common wealth, should be enjoyned by oath to <i>the</i> same two principles.” (337-338) |                 |
| <b>Local Government</b>  |  |                 |
| “& <i>the</i> well ordered committies of thir faithfuller adherents in every county may give this government the resemblance & the effects of a perfect democracie.” (332) | “10. <i>that the</i> administration of Civill Justice may be in <i>the</i> City or cheif towne of every county <i>without</i> appeal, Judges <i>and</i> all such officers by themselves chosen, whereby they shall have no cause to clamour <i>against</i> the supream Councill, nor can hope for more equall Justice in any other place. As for those of severall Countyes who have causes <i>and</i> suites, there may be still a common Judicature. as ther is here. in <i>the</i> Capitall city.” (338)  | Indicated Above |

Milton’s civil models presented here represent a dual form of government, or federal arrangement, consisting of a unicameral legislative body checked by local assemblies and judicatures, with a limited franchise. His most important political tract, *The Readie and Easie Way*, endorses these same constitutional structures.

***The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660):  
Political Gentilism of Monarchy versus a Perpetual Senate of Servant Leadership**

**Dating the editions of *The Readie and Easie Way***

The second edition of *Readie and Easie* contains Milton’s most extensive treatment of “gentilism.” Milton notes on the title page that this edition is both revised and augmented, and in the text, “especially that part which argues for a perpetual Senat.”<sup>145</sup> That augmentation includes a use of Matthew 20 not found in the first edition.

The composition of both editions of *Readie and Easie* is sufficiently different to raise questions over the nature of Milton’s revision. Ayers makes a strong case for placing the publication of his first edition in February 1660, after “he had become so

<sup>145</sup> *Readie*, 5.

disillusioned with a succession of parliaments since 1649."<sup>146</sup> and desired to affect the reestablishment of the Rump dissolved by Lambert on 13 October. The decision on 18 February 1660 to perpetuate the Rump may have provided him with the surest political context to secure the standing senate he outlined, despite General Monck's decision to readmit the Secluded Members, implying Milton may have written his first edition by February 21. The second edition, written in response to Parliament's dissolution and call for new writs, appeared "no later than the first week of April 1660."<sup>147</sup>

In describing Milton's biblical republicanism in *Readie and Easie*, Warren Chernaik explains that his "arguments against monarchy and in favour of 'a free commonwealth' are reinforced by a recurrent pattern of Biblical allusion, parallels between the history of the Jews and the recent history of England."<sup>148</sup> Gary Hamilton in his "Milton and the Anti-Rump Tracts: On Revising *The Readie and Easie Way*," saw this as Milton's attempt, in part, to "combat both 'false' interpretations that supported the enemy cause and 'false' applications to current events that resulted from such interpretations."<sup>149</sup> Royalists were reading all the same passages Milton and the republicans were but aiming at contrary civil applications. But Hamilton is also convinced that Milton's redaction was not only "redefining how a free commonwealth could best be constituted," but "was also instructing his readers – on the eve of the Restoration – on how they should view him."<sup>150</sup> Hamilton sees an "apologetic element" underscoring the second edition, and interprets Milton's motive as a challenge to the proliferation of anti-Rump pamphlets in February 1660, which were "brief and often crude writings that ridiculed the Rumpers and celebrated their fall from power." His revision was more of a "self-justification," and less "an interventionary act," and Milton himself "was about to take his place among the castigated 'fanatics.'"<sup>151</sup> In spite of their sarcastic tone, these anti-Rump, and hence anti-republican tracts, are replete with "biblical language."

Less remarkable for their political ideas than for their sarcasm and derisive tone, many of these satirical works featured an abundance of scatological references. But biblical language also abounded. Sometimes it was used for praise: . . . . But just as often scripture was wittily employed for purposes of blame: several works featured the fallen Rumpers in hell, or, as in the broadside entitled *A Phanatique Prayer*, petitioning Lucifer in hell.

<sup>146</sup> Ayers, "The Editions of Milton's *Readie & Easie Way*," 281.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>148</sup> Chernaik, "Biblical Republicanism," 55.

<sup>149</sup> Gary Hamilton, "Milton and the Anti-Rump Tracts: On Revising *The Readie and Easie Way*," *RP* (1989): 110.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

In a large number of these tracts the term “fanatic” was frequently and indiscriminately used as an expressive synonym for members and supporters of the Rump. Milton, of course, was included among them. . . . In the context of the ridicule that these tracts displayed, the revised *Readie and Easie Way* looks very much like another Miltonic answering of his detractors, one in which he sought to position himself so that, in the face of a hostile new order, his career as antiroyalist polemicist might be perceived in the most honorable - if not the most pardonable - light.<sup>152</sup>

Milton's response to such an intractable audience of royalist and Presbyterian readers led him to augment his revision with a “renowned company of biblical writers whose expanded presence in the revised edition served as a further answer to the charge that his motives were those of an opportunistic parasite.”<sup>153</sup> In this regard, his amplified use of biblical references was an attempt to deal with biblical misinterpretations, and “correct current ‘misuses’ of scripture,” buttress his own previously stated political arguments, and reassert himself as “not merely the Rump's ‘Goos-quil ‘Champion’; in spite of the expected failure of his current pleas, he was God's champion too.”<sup>154</sup>

### ***Gentilism of Monarchy and House of Lords versus Servant Leadership in a Perpetual Senate***

Milton's first instance of civil “gentilism” is found without any changes in both editions, juxtaposed with England's impending return to kingship, and coupled with a reminder of God's displeasure over Israel's rejection of her divine commonwealth. He recalls to his readers that the “wisest men in all ages” have perceived “a free Commonwealth,” as “the noblest, the manliest, the equallest, the justest government, the most agreeable to all due liberties and proportiond equalitie, both human, civil, and Christian, most cherishing to vertue and true religion.” He qualifies these descriptives by claiming that a commonwealth, “with greatest probabilitie,” was “planely commended, or rather enjoind by our Saviour himself, to all Christians,” and “not without remarkable disallowance, and the brand of *gentilism* upon kingship.” Milton reiterates that “God in much displeasure gave a king to the *Israelites*, and imputed it a sin to them that they sought one: but *Christ* apparently forbids his disciples to admitt of any such heathenish government.”<sup>155</sup> Milton then alters the AV translation of the Matthew text to match his admonition against kingship.

*The kings of the gentiles, saith he, exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authoritie upon them; are call'd benefactors: but ye shall not be so; but*

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 102-104.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>155</sup> *Readie*, 25-26; First Edition, *CPW*, vol. 7, 359.

*he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serveth.*"<sup>156</sup>

It is only here that Milton inserts "kings" instead of rulers or princes of the gentiles, but continues to use his preferred reading of "lordship" as opposed to the AV rendering of dominion, though he also adds "authoritie." He even renders the AV's "minister," not with the noun "servant," but with the verb "serveth." Milton was probably motivated to translate the Greek terms these ways to impress upon his readers the impending dangers inherent in a return to monarchy, and it is only here that he explains how he reasoned his civil-servant theme. That Christ is speaking "of civil government," states Milton, "is manifest by the former part of the comparison, which infers the other part to be always in the same kinde." In this regard, Milton seems to have meant that "*the kings of the gentiles*," which "*exercise lordship*," represents the former civil part of the comparison which directs the character of the latter part, and implies that "*greatest*" and "*chief*" are also civil roles, but whose function it is to serve. Christ then delivered a civil maxim, and that "government" which "comes nearer to this precept of Christ," is a "free Commonwealth." Milton poignantly contrasts the nature of a commonwealth with a monarchy by highlighting the characteristics of servant leadership found in the Matthew text, which only a commonwealth embraces, and which a monarchy, by its nature, rejects. "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 their brethren," qualities far removed from kings, who "must be ador'd like a Demigod." Milton augments the nature of their service as "perpetual," used only here, to endorse his standing senate, while countering the common pleas for successive Parliaments, and amplifies it further as self-less and sacrificial in contrast with the self-absorbed character of kings with their idolatrous demands. Such service harmonizes well with the injunction against kings in Deuteronomy 17 not to exalt themselves above the ruled, but which these sons of Zebedee were attempting in Christ's kingdom.<sup>157</sup> Milton employs a clipped version of the Deuteronomy passage to enforce his comparison of God's displeasure over Israel's desire for a king, or "heathenish government," with Christ's proscription of such. He also refers to a commonwealth as a "self-governing democracie" embodying "the joint providence and counsel of many industrious

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 26-27; First Edition *CPW*, vol. 7, 359.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 27-28. Worden comments here that "behind that rhetoric we would search in vain for a systematic republican theory." I would agree, as Milton's republicanism was not entirely lodged within this paragraph, though Worden does exclude any remarks on the Matthew text that launched Milton into these words. See "Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven," 227-228.

equals,”<sup>158</sup> and most certainly in support of a senate body. Milton had previously emphasized that bearing the burdens a king means he will “not be thir servant, but thir lord.”<sup>159</sup> But Milton's combined assessment of the prohibitions against this status of civil exaltation, which he read from Deuteronomy 17 and Matthew 20, coupled with his sense of their normative force, since both find their authority as divine commands, seems to illumine his preference for a commonwealth without human lordship, and a perpetual senate of civil servants.

Milton's second and third references to the Matthew text are found in both editions, clipped, and related again to the Deuteronomy 17 text in regards to kingship. Milton stands amazed as to “how any man who hath the true principles of justice and religion in him, can presume or take upon him to be a king and lord over his brethren.” That a “Christian” king, “can assume such extraordinarie honour and worship to himself,” contradicts “the kingdom of Christ our common King and Lord” who “is hid to this world, and such *gentilish* imitation forbid in express words by himself to all his disciples.”<sup>160</sup> Protestantism proclaims that Christ governs his church from heaven, and since he left no instructions for a “viceregerent of his power,” how, asks Milton, is it possible that a “Christian-man derive his kingship from Christ,” who did not even leave “the least shaddow of a command for any such vicegerence from him in the State.” Rather, Christ “expressly declar'd, that such regal dominion is from the gentiles, not from him, and hath strictly charg'd us, not to imitate them therin.”<sup>161</sup> Only here does Milton employ “regal” as opposed to the AV's term “dominion,” in order to disassociate monarchy from Christ. Not only does Christ declare against kingship, it is impossible to equate a kingly government with his kingdom: he alone stands as both king and lord.

### **Perpetual Senate and Restricted Franchise**

Milton extends his application of the Deuteronomy and Matthew passages to election guidelines governing the choice of members to this new and free Parliament. The people were to elect “Knights and Burgesses able men, and according to the just and necessarie qualifications . . . men not addicted to a single person or house of lords.” The language here of “men not addicted” is reminiscent of Paul's instruction to Timothy

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 38-39; First Edition, *CPW*, 364.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

in 1, 3:8 regarding the qualifications of church Deacons, that they “not be addicted to much wine.”<sup>162</sup>

Milton explains that should the country proceed with such an election process, “the work is don; at least the foundation firmly laid of a free Commonwealth, and good part also erected of the main structure.”<sup>163</sup> This main foundation Milton refers to is a “Grand Councel,” or perpetual senate, where “the soverantie, not transferred, but delegated only, and as it were deposited reside.”<sup>164</sup>

And although it may seem strange at first hearing, by reason that mens mindes are prepossed with the notion of successive Parliaments, I affirme that the Grand or General Councel being well chose, should be perpetual; for so thir business is or may be, and oft time urgent; the opportunitie of affairs gained or lost in a moment.<sup>165</sup>

Milton's “grand Councel is both foundation and main pillar of the whole State.”<sup>166</sup> Its jurisdiction encompasses the greater powers of national concern with the authority to “elect, . . . out of their own number and others, a Councel of State.”<sup>167</sup> Unlike successive Parliaments, a standing council would be prompt and swift to confront all occasions with skillful consistency. Since “the ship of the Commonwealth is always under sail; they sit at the stern; and if they steare well, what need is their to change them; it being rather dangerous.”<sup>168</sup>

Words are also directed against Harrington's proposal. Milton cannot understand the benefits of “successive and transitory Parliaments,” since they simply “unsettle . . . free governments.” He reminds his readers that some have emphasized that “long continuance of power may corrupt sincerest men,” and proposed, “that annually (or if the space be longer, so much perhaps the better) the third part of Senators may go out according to the precedence of thir election, . . . and this they call *partial rotation*.”<sup>169</sup> Milton would prefer “that this wheel or partial wheel in the State, . . . might be avoided: as having too much affinitie with the wheel of fortune,” and that such rotation will only deplete the Senate of “the best and ablest,” while filling the ranks with the “raw” and “unexperienced.”<sup>170</sup> To augment his discussion further on the necessity of a perpetual senate, he reminds his readers of the stabilizing role senates play in commonwealths.

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 43. But Milton's main qualifications for civil leadership mentioned in his three previous tracts – rejection of a single person and House of Lords – remained a parliamentary statute since the Long Parliament had been returned in May. See *CJ*, vol. 7, 661.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 45-46.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 48-49.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

and then classifies his list of historical examples beginning with the Jewish Sanhedrin and Moses.

But a Commonwealth is held immortal; and therein firmest, safest and most above fortune: for the death of a king, causeth oftentimes many dangerous alterations; but the death now and then of a Senator is not felt: the main bodie of them still continuing permanent in greatest and noblest Commonwealths, and as it were eternal. Therefor among the *Jews*, the supreme council of seaventie, call'd the *Sanhedrim*, founded by *Moses*, in *Athens*, that of the *Areopagus*, in *Sparta*, that of the Ancients, in *Rome*, the Senat, consisted of members chosen for term of life; . . . . In *Venice* . . . . So in the United Provinces, the States General.<sup>171</sup>

Milton, extracted the life tenure of members of the Sanhedrin as a viable political principle, unlike Harrington, who considered it a defect, and instead, employed its power of proposition for Oceana. Milton warns that "this annual rotation of a Senat to consist of three hundred," and "another popular assembly upward of a thousand" will be "unweildie with thir own bulk, unable in so great a number to mature thir consultations as they ought," and when "they meet . . . to sit a whole year lieger in one place only now and then to hold up a forrest of fingers, or to convey each man his bean or ballot into the box."<sup>172</sup> In contrast, Milton's proposal is "plane, easie and open before us; without intricacies, without the introduction of new or obsolete forms, or terms, or exotic models."<sup>173</sup> Neither will his proposal require the "circumscription of mens lands and properties," since in his "Commonwealth, temporal and spiritual lords remov'd no man or number of men can attain to such wealth or vast possession, as will need the hedge of an Agrarian."<sup>174</sup>

Laura Knoppers reads the *Readie and Easie Way* as a "jeremiad," or "a prophetic lament over the apostasy of a chosen nation." His "central proposal of a perpetual Senate is given in the jeremiad language of the good old way," and he "rewrites the call for repentance as a call for a certain form of government."<sup>175</sup> Biberman emphasizes the Hebraic elements of Milton's senate model by noting the prominent place of the Sanhedrin in his list of republics,<sup>176</sup> as well as the designation of the more "profane

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 51-52.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 57-58.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>175</sup> Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Milton's *The Readie and Easie Way* and the English Jeremiad," in *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, ed. David Lowenstein and James Grantham Turner (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 213, 219.

<sup>176</sup> Biberman, "The Triumph of 'Christian Hebraism' in Verse," 366-367.

term” of a grand or general council in its place to maintain a separation of the “common” office of the judge and “sacred” office of the priest.<sup>177</sup>

Milton's final use of the Matthew text is instanced in combination with 1 Samuel 8 and framed prophetically after Samuel's warnings against monarchy, and only found in the second edition. He seems to have even placed himself in a prophetic posture modelled after Samuel, given his itemized list of disconcerting particulars the return of kingship would entail.<sup>178</sup> He explains that England's retreat to Monarchy would be a sign of rebellion against God, like “the gentilizing *Israelites*; who though they were governd in a Commonwealth of God's own ordaining, he only thir king, they his peculiar people, yet affecting rather to resemble heathen, . . . clamour'd for a king.”<sup>179</sup> Just as Samuel warned of God's disregard for Israel's outcry against their chosen king, so too England, once delivered, will return to the same impending slavery and captivity previously experienced under the Stuarts, hence paralleling Israel's political tragedy.<sup>180</sup>

Lewalski downplays Milton's political use of the Scriptures, especially Matthew 20, though she attempts to argue that his political readings must be understood as connected to the order of grace and nature, but seems to consider the Fifth Monarchist approach of biblical political use as a model by which to judge Milton's. Lewalski claims Milton “did not draw his model of government directly from the Scripture pattern, though his many references to Israel's experience and to Christ's precepts as favoring commonwealth government give some appearance of this.”<sup>181</sup> She states further that Milton's “scripture references did not constitute the only basis for argument,” as his references to Israel's rejection of her commonwealth as a pattern to avoid must be interpreted in light of his view that God's law and the “law of nature” were not always in agreement, as these “laws left the choice of a particular form of government free to the nations of mankind, though both clearly pointed out the superiority of a commonwealth form.” She even views Milton's “argument making Christ a good Commonwealthsman,” as “tenuous.”<sup>182</sup> Besides, Milton's preference for a “perpetual senate,” was not only grounded in the “precedent of the Jewish Sanhedrim, but also the Areopagus of Athens, the Ancients of Sparta, and the Senate of Rome.”

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<sup>177</sup> Biberman, “The Triumph of “Christian Hebraism” in Verse,” 367-368. Biberman's point here is interesting in light of Milton's concern that the Mosaic Judicials not be applied to ecclesiastical forms as indicated above. Harris Fletcher does not comment in his *Milton's Rabbinical Readings* on Milton's use of Selden, or any of his political views for that matter. Fletcher focuses instead on Milton's use of Rabbinical commentaries on creation and their relationship to his *Paradise Lost*.

<sup>178</sup> *Readie*, 67-84.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-77.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>181</sup> Lewalski, “Political Beliefs and Polemical Methods,” 200.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 200-201. See note 59.

Even in regards to Christ's confirmation and commendation of a commonwealth, Lewalski links it to his previous assertion that it was after all, considered the "noblest, the manliest, the equallest, the justest government." In this regard, Milton employed the Scriptures to confirm "to Christians," a commonwealth which he "defended as superior in terms of the natural order itself," and did so to enforce his separation between nature and grace.<sup>183</sup>

Hamilton views Milton's biblical political readings somewhat differently, and suggests that "in the added material of the revised work," this use of I Samuel 8 represents "the most obvious example of using scripture to correct royalist misinterpretation." The Samuel passage "had been central not only to Stuart assertions of unlimited royal power but also to Milton's refutation of that assertion in the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*."

In revising *The Readie and Easie Way* Milton once again felt compelled to emphasize the antiroyalist reading of the Israelites' cry for kingship, this time handling the story in such a way as to expand on an argument central to his first edition of the treatise — that monarchy was unchristlike gentilism. Here a distinctive feature of Milton's use of this Old Testament text is in reference to "the gentilizing *Israelites*," whose clamoring for a king involved their wanting "to resemble heathen," and their "pretending the misgovernment of *Samuel's* sons."<sup>184</sup>

Hamilton explains that Milton's addition of this passage was a counter-claim to those convinced that God had providentially dismantled the Rump to prepare the nation for their king. Rather, his decision to concede "Israel's heathenish request" was instead, a "testimonial to 'God's wrath,'" and sign of "punishment for a nation's sins," rather than "an indication that God prefers this form of government."<sup>185</sup>

### Subordinate Judicatures

Milton augments his Commonwealth with local courts as institutional replacements of the House of Lords, and it is difficult to determine if he derived these in any way from the judicatures of Israel, which were authorized to solve local disputes between men. His discussion of these local authorities is in the context of his address over the potential "mistrust" of the permanent nature of this new Senate. In this regard, Milton recommends that each county be transformed into a "subordinate Commonalitie or Commonwealth," with one designated "chief town or more" and from "where the nobilitie and chief gentry . . . , may bear part in the government, make thir own judicial laws, and execute them by thir own elected judicatures and judges without appeal, in all

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>184</sup> Hamilton, "Milton and the Anti-Rump Tracts," 110.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

things between man and man." Laws will be "executed fully and finally in thir own counties and precincts," with "fewer laws to expect or fear from the supreme autoritie."<sup>186</sup> Milton's description of his civil model of a combined perpetual Senate and local judicatures is federal in nature, or "many Commonwealths under one united and entrusted Sovrantie."<sup>187</sup>

The text seems to indicate that Milton developed part of his local court system from the "*Athenian Commonwealth*,"<sup>188</sup> suggesting that he is not arguing this component of his civil treatise biblically. But, the forms are somewhat akin to the local judgeships subordinate to the Jewish Sanhedrin, and his phrase "in all things between man and man" is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 1:16, where Moses commanded Israel's judges to "judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him."<sup>189</sup> Biberman believes that Milton's Commonwealth was "designed to divide power through the implementation of a state and federal government,"<sup>190</sup> and represents an English counterpart of the Hebrew model derived from Selden's *De Synedriis*,<sup>191</sup> "in which each tribe ruled itself but submitted to the great Sanhedrin on matters involving the nation or other tribes."<sup>192</sup>

Cedric Brown believes he found a "shadowing of a polity in the educational pilgrimage of the Hebrew people," in the twelfth chapter of *Paradise Lost*,<sup>193</sup> and God's endorsement of a republican form modeled after the Sanhedrin.

This also shall they gain by their delay  
In the wide wilderness, there they shall found  
Their government, and their great senate choose  
Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained:<sup>194</sup>

Brown believes, like Biberman, that Milton extracted from the Jewish polity a "federal kind of republicanism," with tribal representation lodged in the central council. His assessment admits the difficulty of discerning just "how fully the political is figured" in Milton's poem, realizing that "the reference to the Sanhedrin is short-handed," and "confined to a bare factuality in an unelaborated reference."<sup>195</sup>

<sup>186</sup> *Readie*, 94-95.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-100.

<sup>189</sup> Deuteronomy 1:16 NAS. Biberman notes this as well, but does not mention the passage. See 365.

<sup>190</sup> Biberman, "The Triumph of "Christian Hebraism" in Verse," 364.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 365. Biberman quotes from *De Synedriis* (Syn. III. Iv. Op. Om. I 1641-42). His English translation is from Moses Lowman's *A Dissertation on the Civil Government of the Hebrews* (London, 1740), 69.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>193</sup> Brown, "Great Senates and Godly Education," 46-47.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* 47-48

Brown believes that this “episode in the wilderness” may bear a relationship with England’s critical moment in accepting or rejecting a commonwealth, and with the option of returning to Egypt as did the Jews.

To have emerged from Egypt and come to the point at which a senate has been adopted by God is to have taken the people to the threshold of liberty; to contemplate monarchy again would be to behave like the ignoble waverers in the wilderness, those who thinking of return to the relative ease of Egypt wish idolatry and alien rule upon the nation.<sup>196</sup>

Warren Chernaik also commented on Milton’s highlighting of Israel’s Egyptian bondage as a metaphor for returning to monarchy.<sup>197</sup> Chernaik is referring to Milton’s comparison of the English with the Jews, who are placing their “necks again under kingship, . . . to returne back to *Egypt* and to the worship of thir idol queen,” or were “now chusing them a captain back for Egypt.”<sup>198</sup> Gary Hamilton understood Milton’s use of the Egyptian bondage motif as an example of his “continuing warfare with “enemy” polemicists,” especially since he enlarges upon this metaphor in the second edition. Hamilton notes that prior to Milton’s publication of the first edition, royalists employed “the Egyptian bondage motif” as a means to interpret “current political developments,” and began to regard General Monck as England’s new liberator, and a “Moses who had led his people out of bondage.” Milton closing of this narrative with a warning that England was “now chusing them a captain back for *Egypt*,” meant that the royalist “reading of events constituted a false application of the biblical narrative,” and inferred that Monck would shackle them to the slavery of kingship the Lord had redeemed them from.<sup>199</sup>

### Contemporary Critiques of Milton’s Commonwealth Model

Milton certainly had his literary contenders, but some actually understood his use of Matthew 20:20-28 as the heart of his commonwealth proposal. It is worth considering their arguments with Milton’s political reading of this text, how they counterattacked his commonwealth model, and critiqued the political weight he assigned to it.

The anonymous author of *The Censure of the Rota Upon Mr. Miltons Book Entitled, The Ready and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660) is replete with witty sarcasms and silly taunts wrapped up in non-stop ridicule. The author charges Milton with quite “unmercifully” interpreting the Matthew passage as

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>197</sup> Chernaik, “Biblical Republicanism,” 55. See also *A Letter to a Friend* October 20, 1659, where Milton reiterates this concern of returning to Egypt.

<sup>198</sup> *Readie*, 104, 107.

<sup>199</sup> Hamilton, “Milton and the Anti-Rump Tracts,” 111.

presenting a “*Brand of Gentilism, upon King-ship,*” in order to prove “that though Christ said, His Kingdome was not of this world, yet his Common-wealth is.”<sup>200</sup> He also accuses Milton of confusing temporal authority with Christ's other-worldly kingdom.

For if, the Text which you quote, . . . be understood of Civill Government. (and to infer Common-wealth (as you will have it right or wrong) and not to be meant of his spirituall Reigne, of which he was then speaking, and expressely calls so: You must prove that he erected a Republique of his Apostles, and that notwithstanding the Scripture, everywhere calls his Government the Kingdome of Heaven, it ought to be Corrected, and Rendred the Common-wealth of Heaven, or rather the Common-wealth of this World; and yet the Text, does as well prove Benefactors heathenish as Kings, for if our Saviour had meant to brand Kingship with any evill Character, He would never have styld himselfe King of the Jewes, King of Heaven, King of Righteousness, &c. as he frequently do's, but no where a State-holder, or Keeper of the Liberties.<sup>201</sup>

The Royalist George Starkey in his *Monarchy Triumphant Over Traiterous Republicans* (1661) also attacked Milton's use of the Matthew text, claiming he seriously misinterpreted not only the desire of these two disciples, but the context of Christ's response. According to Starkey, Christ was not denouncing kingship, but commanding against “*Kingly Authority* among them,” and the broader proscription against their practice of any sort of “*temporall power*” since *Christs Kingdome was not of this World.*” Starkey sarcastically turns Milton's use of this passage on its head and likened the Long Parliament as representative of Christ's warning to his disciples.

Upon the indignation of the other tenne, (when they heard this) follows this discourse of Christ, in which he speaks not only of *Kings* that bear *dominion*, but of those that are *great* and *grandees*, and are therefore called *gracious Lords*. Not unlike to the *Hoghen Moghen*, Heers of *Holland*. What you insinuate of a Free *Commom-wealth*, Comming nearest as you conceive, this *Pattern*, and *Precept*: I would conceive you would have it understood of our *blessed Republique* from 48 to 53. Wherein our *humble Servants*, (as you term them) who were also (if we be so mad as to believe them) the *servants of God*, served both *God* and the *Nation*, whom they pretended equally to be serviceable to.<sup>202</sup>

Starkey also claims that Christ's command here, as in other instances with his disciples, “was but for a time, and suited to the present occasion,” and hence specific and temporal in nature. Christ was only establishing a “Precept” for his disciples, and concludes that if Milton's interpretation is correct, then all temporal power is jeopardized.

<sup>200</sup> [James Harrington] *The Censure of the Rota Upon Mr. Miltons Book Entitled, The Ready and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (London, 1660), 10.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>202</sup> George Starkey, *Monarchy Triumphant Over Traiterous Republicans, or, the Transcendent Excellency of that Divine Government Fully Proved Against the Utopian Chimera's of our Ridiculous Common-wealths-men* (London, 1661), 88.

He that expounds that precept of Christ, as given to all Christians, and to be perpetually binding (which was by you cited) I dare promise him he shall not stop at *Kingly Government*, but upon the same rule shall in fine, *reject* all *Authority*. For at that time Mr. *Milton*, you know, many of the *Gentiles* were governed by *Republiques*, as to their own Formall constitution, although they acknowledged and payd a Homage to the Roman Empire.<sup>203</sup>

John Toland acknowledged in his *The Life of John Milton* (1699), Milton's political use of Matthew 20 in *Readie and Easie*, and its connection to his "Model of a Commonwealth," though only by way of quotation from his tract, as opposed to commentary.<sup>204</sup> But Toland's account was immediately denounced by the royalist Roger L' Estrange in *Remarks on the Life of Mr. Milton As Publish'd by J.T* (1699). While commenting upon Milton's reading of Matthew 20, L' Estrange accused him of misunderstanding Christ's view of kingship.

*This is plain from many Instances, but from none more than the Life of Mr. Milton, lately, published by J.T. where he endeavors to turn the Gospel against Kingly Government as a piece of Gentilism, forbidden by our Saviour.*<sup>205</sup>

He then contends directly with Milton's political use of the Matthew text, preferring instead the interpretation of "Lording it over the Faith of Christians" rather than a civil denouncement of kingship.

And thus J. T brings in Mr. *Milton*, . . . saying, That Christ forbad his Disciples to admit of any such Heathenish Government as that of Kings; from that Scripture, . . . This Text hath been often and properly urg'd against Lording it over the Faith of Christians, and domineering over God's Heritage, which the Apostles themselves disclaim, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. but there seems no reason (with deference to Mr. *Milton's* Judgement) to apply it against Kingly Government, any more than against that by States.<sup>206</sup>

Like Starkey, L' Estrange understood Milton's reading as "Anarchical," such that "at this rate of arguing, no sort of Magistrate must be allowed at all." He chides Milton further by stating "it is ridiculous to call Kingly Government Heathenish, when it was the Government of the Jews, and approved of by God himself, who gave a Law to direct their Kings in their Administration, *Deut.* 17. v. 14."<sup>207</sup>

Milton's contemporary critics chastized him for his civil use of Matthew 20:25-28, recognizing the weight he assigned to it for his commonwealth proposal. Where Milton read constitutional relevance, his adversaries construed this text with more of an

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>204</sup> John Toland, *The Life of John Milton, Containing Besides the History of His Works Several Extraordinary Characters of Men and Books, Sects, Parties and Opinions* (London, 1699), 120-122. Toland still felt that Harrington's *Oceana* was superior to Milton's model.

<sup>205</sup> Roger L' Estrange, *Remarks on the Life of Mr. Milton As Publish'd by J.T With a Character of the Author and His Party* (London, 1699), Preface.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 25-26.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 26.

ecclesiastical emphasis. Where Milton saw a normative command against kingship in general, and civil lordship in particular, others read a temporal and personal proscription directed to his disciples, or a warning against domination over the faith of God's followers. Milton was also accused of misconstruing the true temporal nature of the passage by making Christ's heavenly kingdom a civil one. Possibly the most challenging counter-argument against his civil reading was the consequential one, claiming his interpretation justified civil anarchy.

### Milton and the Restoration

Masson records with great detail the unexpected turn of events which kept Milton from receiving that ignominious traitor's death on Tower Hill. He recites the history of the Indemnity Bill, and the unnerving expectation that Milton's name would appear alongside those destined for death.<sup>208</sup> But when the Bill passed on 29 August 1660, Milton's name was left out, to which Masson claims "there is no greater historical puzzle than this complete escape of Milton after the Restoration."<sup>209</sup> Milton though had been imprisoned for a short period in 1660, and his anti-royalist treatises *Eikonoklastes* and *Defensio* were both publically burnt.<sup>210</sup>

Apart from the anti-Milton tracts already mentioned, there was a barrage of others which vented the invective almost as intensely as Milton did himself when sparring with royalists. French records them for us in detail, including the Official Proclamation against him<sup>211</sup> and those mentioned by Hamilton suffice to show that he was the recipient of an onslaught of satirical royalist outrage.

Milton died on 9 November 1674, and was buried in St. Giles Cripplegate, where a small stone now marks his resting place. The complexities of Milton's thought and his cross-continental influence make him a difficult figure to draw to a close. John Phillips' reminder of his literary greatness at his funeral might suffice, as he records that "hee had his Elogy in common with the Patriarchs and Kings of Israel that he was gather'd to his people; for hee happen'd to bee bury'd in Cripplegate where about thirty yeer before hee had by chance also interred his Father."<sup>212</sup>

### Conclusion

The historiography surrounding Milton's political thought has tended to stress classical republican influences, though there is wide disagreement over the exact nature

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<sup>208</sup> Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, vol. 6, 169. Discussion on the Indemnity Bill is from 167-185.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 183-184.

<sup>210</sup> Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, 398.

<sup>211</sup> French, *The Life Records of John Milton*, vol. 4, 305-338.

<sup>212</sup> John Phillips, "The Life of Mr. Milton," in *The Early Lives of Milton*, 34.

of his dependence. Some historians point to a Polybian or Aristotelian influence, while others have located Milton's republicanism in Sallust or Cicero. Some even see Sarpi and his Venetian model as providing him with the constitutional framework for his Grand Council. Very few have investigated his biblical republicanism.

The historiography also suggests that Milton should not be construed as any sort of first-rate political theorist, especially of the order of a Harrington or Hobbes. He shifted significantly in his proposals, crafted his models quickly, and without consistency. With this, his long-term position as Secretary of Foreign Languages beginning with Cromwell's Protectorates, as well as the pressured political events of the Interregnum, were a far greater influence than any sort of developed political theory.

What this study has revealed is that Milton resorted to the Scriptures when developing his republican model, and reasoned political principles dependent upon discrete passages he cultivated over the course of his Interregnum service. It also shows that he does evidence constitutional consistency throughout his late 1659 and early 1660 tracts.

First, Milton's self-identification as an advocate and defender of the cause of Christian liberty, in steady opposition to slavish tyranny in its civil and religious expressions, pervades his prose, represents his prominent core value, and lies at the heart of his republican model. This indefatigable and all-consuming pursuit, which his blindness hardly hindered, most certainly influenced his scriptural search for constitutional principles and models which expressed and protected its dynamic. A free commonwealth reflects this priority of Christian liberty.

Secondly, it has been shown that his theological treatise, *De Doctrina*, identifies the Bible as the inspired and revelational authority for the whole of life, including the political realm. It also reveals his hermeneutical method. Milton approached the Scriptures as a serious grammatical historical exegete, an interpretive approach no doubt instilled in him while schooled at home, but reinforced and developed further at St. Paul's and Christ's College.

It has also been demonstrated that Milton's classical education influenced his use of non-biblical authors but without undermining his dependence upon the Scriptures as the inspired text for life and faith. In this sense, he was a Christian humanist. Despite man's fallenness, Milton concluded that there remained within all men remnants of the divine image, from which he reasoned that even the heathen could discern and declare God's truth. Nevertheless, their writings must be subjected to the authority of the Scriptures. This, coupled with the Apostle Paul's knowledge of contemporary pagan

writers and the Apostle Peter's divine vision, reinforced his point that Christians can make legitimate use of all writings. In this regard, Grace can restore Nature to its God-ordained place.

Milton also prioritized the Gospel over the Mosaic Judicials and sought to extend the benefits of church reformation to institutional limitations on the authority of civil magistrates. The Judicials combined the ecclesiastical with the civil, which the Gospel sundered, explaining why he never looked to the old priestly and Levitical pattern for England's civil model. Nevertheless, the Gospel dispensation never removed the prominence of the Law's moral authority, which still maintained jurisdiction over men, but rather confirmed it as an internal regulator of conscience as opposed to a legislative sword. With this, the Gospel dispensation elevated regenerate man's faculties to approximate God's more perfect pattern, transformed him from a slave to a son, and sensitized him to the nature of true Christian liberty. Milton's proposal of restricted elections and governing qualifications is more easily understood in light of this: those most acquainted with Christian liberty are its best keepers!

It has also been revealed that Milton does evidence constitutional consistency relative to the significant political features of his model commonwealth, such as a unicameral federated republic with a standing Senate, local judicatures, and electoral qualifications. These features are linked to his political reading of discrete biblical texts directing attention back to God's divinely ordained commonwealth and Christ's command against gentile lordship. Milton understood Deuteronomy 17: 14-18, 1 Samuel 8: 10-19, and Matthew 20: 25-28 as divine civil commands and warnings emanating from both the Father and the Son, and hence continuous and mutually supportive. For lawful rule to proceed, and liberty to prevail, England's civil settlement must be divested of any remnants of lordship or absolute human authority. Milton remained loyal to these political readings through the successive Interregnum administrations, contradicting common assertions that he was a second-rate political theorist, or spun them out unreflectively in moments of civil crises.

Milton seems to have resorted to the larger constitutional outlines of the Hebrew Polity, qualifying its use by his emphasis upon the supremacy of the Gospel. His reading of Romans 13: 1-5 and 1 Peter 2: 13-16 are important for understanding his view of the divine origin and purpose of civil government, as well as its lawful use, and though he never employs them textually in his model, they represent a pervasive undercurrent of civil limitation. But his republican readings of Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Samuel 8, combined with his understanding of Gospel liberty, can be summarized as anti-

monarchy and anti-lordship, popular sovereignty and the liberty of civil choice, and the lordship of God as England's only governor and king. In this regard, he does not construe contemporary civil exemplars from Jewish magistrates: rather, he extracted the great divinely ordained framework of the Hebrew Commonwealth while embracing the Gospel's jurisdictional distinctions between church and state. The exact nature of this pattern might be inferred from his constant references to God ordaining a commonwealth for the Jews, acting as her supreme magistrate and governor, and without any human magistrate competing or acquiring a civil capacity equal to his own. With this, the most relevant political principle to be institutionalized in England was God's sovereignty and absolute lordship. Since the Hebrew Commonwealth also contained the Jewish Sanhedrin which seemed to sit perpetually, Milton may have had this in mind when considering the perpetual nature of his own Senate. It still remains to be seen if the local dimension of his form was extracted at all from the Israel's court system.

Given Milton's vehement denunciation of the political nature of the Judicals, it would seem that any adoption of the Jewish model's great constitutional delineations as relevant for England represents a political pick and mix approach to force a republican reading. But it must be remembered that Milton never contended with the divine establishment of this twinned jurisdictional system; he believed God delivered it as a peculiar institution for the Jews, and them alone, leaving the nations to decide their civil fates. The Gospel message of liberty superseded it, and, coupled with regenerate man's transformation from a slave to a son, qualified him as his own self-governor in matters now given over to conscience. The Law was now an educator towards Christian liberty, not a slave master.

It has also been demonstrated that Milton's unique civil reading of Matthew 20: 25-28 as a warning against the "gentilizing" effect of kingship, represents his most prominent NT political text for establishing a free commonwealth form incorporating a perpetual senate of servant leadership devoid of king and House of Lords. Milton manipulated his translation of this passage in *Readie and Easie* to enforce the impending threat of regal tyranny in contrast to the liberty-serving leadership of a perpetual senate. His powerful political combinations of the Matthew text with Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Samuel 8 enforced his emphasis on God's dissatisfaction of Israel's choice of "heathenish government," which embodied a king as lord and tyrant. Israel's ruinous civil choice was an example Christ instructed his disciples to avoid, not imitate, contradicting his royalist contenders in a politically charged atmosphere.

Milton proclaims in *Readie and Easie* that England's "true and rightfull and to be expected King" is "the Messiah, the Christ," who alone is the "universal Lord of all mankinde."<sup>213</sup> Human sovereignty and absolute lordship should rest nowhere in government. Milton was indeed familiar with the theorists of antiquity, but Polybius' mixed state theory, Cicero's *De Officii*, Sarpi's Venetian model, Platonic aristocracy with its rule of oligarchs, all seem less significant models for Milton's constitutional proposals, especially his standing senate, than the Hebrew Commonwealth and the Christian liberty of the Gospel.

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<sup>213</sup> *Readie*, 64-65.

## CHAPTER IV

### SIR HENRY VANE'S *A HEALING QUESTION PROPOUNDED* (1656): A PRIMITIVE CONSTITUTION FOR A MILLENNIAL COMMONWEALTH OF SAINTLY RULE

From his derided theosophy, however, Vane had derived certain practical principles, now of recognised value, which no statesman before him had dreamt of, and which were not less potent when based on religious ideas struggling for articulate utterance, than when stated by the masters of an elegant vocabulary from which God and spirit were excluded.

*Collected Works of T.H. Green*, vol. 3, ed. Peter Nicholson<sup>1</sup>

Sir Henry Vane (1613-1662) persists as an enigmatic seventeenth-century political figure whose cryptic religious writings have discouraged modern researchers from investigating their relationship with his constitutional views. Apart from David Parnham's notable endeavor to reconstruct Vane's theology, the historiography on his political Biblicism is sparse.<sup>2</sup> And despite a moderate surge of literature surrounding his political ideas, there remains a vacuum of scholarship linking his biblical hermeneutics with his new model republic. Unfortunately Vane's exegetical method is as difficult to unravel as his theological musings are to fathom, explaining why most scholars secularize his political principles, especially that of liberty of conscience. As Parnham reminds us, "the lexicon of Vane's political writings of the 1650's" is "overwhelmingly biblical," and "religion was invariably at the core of Vane's utterances concerning politics."<sup>3</sup> This chapter attempts to link the richness and uniqueness of his political principles with his religious musings and biblical hermeneutics.

I have attempted to enhance Vane's political presence by arguing that his allegorical hermeneutic, inspired by his theology of covenantal union with Christ and apocalyptic expectations of an imminent millennium, fundamentally shaped his political scriptural readings and republican model crystallized in *A Healing Question*. Contrary to the comments of his critics, contemporary and modern, Vane's approach was not haphazard or unreflective though it was enthusiastic and derived its energy from a spiritual union with Christ that sensitized the interpreter to profound scriptural mysteries concealed by the letter of the Word; a radical contrast with, and a reaction to, the prevailing literal method. His meditations were freighted with the conviction that the comprehension and interpretation of divine revelation proceeded through a spiritual process of illumination which elevated a regenerated believer's mind beyond a rational

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<sup>1</sup> *Collected Works of T.H. Green*, vol. 3, ed. Peter Nicholson (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1997), 296.

<sup>2</sup> David Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse* (Cranbury, NJ; London; Ontario, Canada: Associated University Presses, 1997), 51.

<sup>3</sup> David Parnham, "Politics Spun out of Theology and Prophecy: Sir Henry Vane on the Spiritual Environment of Public Power," *HPT* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 58.

interaction with the text; a hermeneutic which Vane cultivated and popularized while Governor of Massachusetts Bay in 1636.

My inquiry into Vane's political reading of the Scriptures focused upon his Interregnum tracts, which he contributed to the constitutional debate.<sup>4</sup> His civil ideals are first expressed in Chapter 24 of his theological treatise *The Retired Man's Meditations* (1655), written during his political disaffection and temporary retirement. Vane wrote three other theological essays during his imprisonment under Charles II: *Two Treatises: Epistle General to the Mystical Body of Christ and the Face of the Times* (1662), and *A Pilgrimage in the Land of Promise* (1664), which elucidate his allegorical approach and millennial themes presented in *Meditations*. His political reflections on liberty of conscience are cogently expressed in his treatise *Zeal Examined* (1652). Vane's most significant political tract containing his systematic constitutional proposal, and the primary focus of this chapter, is *A Healing Question Propounded* (1656), the civil principles of which are corroborated in *A Needful Corrective* (1659), his personal letter to James Harrington.

My method of inquiry followed Vane's rising influence and maturity in religious and political reformism so as to situate his ideas historically, and demonstrate their continuity through his Interregnum tracts, parliamentary speeches, and later commonwealth models. I begin with the historiography on Vane, and then launch into his continental travels. This is followed by a discussion of his short tenure in Massachusetts Bay, which includes Michael Winship's recent scholarship on the Antinomian crisis in *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (2002). This section will also include Vane's initial

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<sup>4</sup> I also examined Vane's published speeches delivered at the Guildhall and Common Hall, but only his speech against Episcopacy on 11 June 1641 seemed relevant to my brief discussion on his religious reform proposals. The Bodleian copy of a tract entitled *A Letter from a True and Lawfull Member of Parliament, and one Faithfully Engaged with it from the Beginning of the Warr to the End* (London, 1656) has "by Sir Henry Vane" inscribed on it, and was first owned by Bishop Barlow. See Clarendon, *CSP*, vol. 3, 79. The pamphlet was written shortly after 31 October 1655 in response to *A Declaration of His Highnes, By the Advice of His Council; Shewing the Reasons of their Proceedings for Securing the Peace of the Common-wealth, Upon Occasion of the Late Insurrection and Rebellion*, October 31 (London, 1655). It is doubtful Vane was the author as this tract was written by someone who employed numerous classical citations, and claimed to be a Member of Parliament with battle experience, and also "immoderately inclined to the Royall party." See 9, 17. Given the tract's royalist bent, Vane would have likely referred to it in support of his trial defense. *The People's Case Stated* (London, 1653? 1662) does not factor significantly in this chapter because of the uncertainty of its publication and hence contribution to Interregnum politics. The tract is part of a corpus of items included in the 1662 publication of *Tryal*. Margaret Judson in her *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane the Younger* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969) stated that Vane wrote it "in retrospect," and mainly as "an explanation of the earlier ideas which had influenced his behavior. See 5, 16. In a short review of Judson's work, Glenn Gray asserted that Judson's late dating of this tract betrays its internal evidence, which he claims indicates an earlier 1653 publication in response to Cromwell's dissolution of Parliament. See review, Margaret Judson, *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, *WMO*, 3d ser., 28, no. 4 (October 1971): 683.

reflections on the nature of a Christian Commonwealth published in a response to the Bay's immigration controversy. The next segment covers his return to England in 1637 and subsequent immersion in the Long Parliament. His leadership over the settlement Bill is highlighted to reveal his first modelling attempts, as well as his political and relational divorce from Cromwell.

I next address his allegorical approach and theory of spiritual union with Christ as discussed in *Meditations*, which is then followed by the historiographical context of his *Zeal Examined*, *A Healing Question* and *Needful Corrective*. The next section, which is the lengthiest, topically highlights his numerous political principles to reveal their relationship with his hermeneutical method, while simultaneously demonstrating how a few of his contemporaries, such as Richard Baxter, John Rogers, and James Harrington engaged them.

Vane's political reflections reveal unique civil concepts unaddressed in the current literature, and possibly because of their scriptural connections. In this regard, I investigated his understanding of Moses' political utility as a foreshadowing of Christ's governing authority and emphasize his principle restricting civil authority drawn from David's prophecy in 2 Samuel 23:3-7 and the Atonement of Christ. Even more novel is his primitive pattern of magistracy and the restoration of righteous rule established through a millennial reading drawn from Isaiah 1:26, which makes its political appearance in two tracts.

It will also be demonstrated that Vane's apocalypticism shaped his republican frame. His prominent Interregnum tracts are all underscored by Christ's immanent millennial reign through a godly republic of saintly rule; an eschatological model with earthly application in the war against Antichrist whose beastly rule is established through a conjoined civil and ecclesiastical magistracy. Vane's republican model consists of a supreme judicature, which is over the executive and enfranchised by adherents to the "good old cause," as well as a Standing Council or select senate of the godly. This represented a civil platform for Christ's millennial rule, and a unique biblical republicanism which most of his fellow commonwealthsmen distanced themselves from.

The final section relates Vane's role in Richard's Parliament and the restored Long Parliament to deal adequately with his debates in the Commons, which are extracted mainly from Burton's *Diary*, as well as the political dynamics of the Army's petition with its demand for a select senate. His extraordinary political commitments to liberty of conscience and the sovereignty of Parliament delivered during the restored

Rump, chronicled by contemporaries in diaries and correspondence, were also investigated to complete his political profile and illumine his biblical principles. Isolating this into a separate section seemed more favorable for featuring this rather intriguing and revealing material which incorporates significant snippets of one of Vane’s radical June parliamentary speeches on new-modelling English government, as well as his late November draft, neither of which are generally discussed in the literature. I close the chapter with comments related to Vane’s trial and death.

### Historiography

#### Reconstructions of Vane’s Civil Ideals, Political Career and Theology

Margaret Judson’s *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane the Younger* (1969) represents the most comprehensive distillation of Vane’s political philosophy but one that rejects his use of the Scriptures. As Leo Solt noted, Judson’s work “clarified several of Vane’s political ideas,” but “we need to know more about his millennialism, which provided much of the framework of these ideas.”<sup>5</sup> Judson alleged a connection between Vane’s religion and politics, and even remarked that “his political ideas have been neglected” and “dismissed too casually or misunderstood, perhaps because Vane buried some of his most fundamental political thought in a work concerned primarily with his mystical religious views.”<sup>6</sup> Christopher Hill questioned Judson’s positive appraisal of Vane’s ““profound and original contribution to political philosophy,”” and cautioned that even though “Vane’s courageous attempt to retain his ideals whilst coping with a hopeless political situation,” is admirable, “his thought will not bear comparison with Hobbes, Harrington, Filmer, Parker, the Levellers and Winstanley.”<sup>7</sup> According to Hill, Vane’s writings are “contorted,” evidence a “fundamental lack of rigour in his thought,” and only of “considerable historical interest” because he “was a very good practical politician.”<sup>8</sup> Hill himself seems to have avoided a substantive investigation of Vane’s ideas, stating in his Introduction to *The Experience of Defeat* (1984) that “Sir Henry Vane might have been added to my republicans, but I shrank from the impenetrable thickets of his prose.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Leo Solt, review of *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, by Margaret Judson, *AHR* 75, no. 6 (October 1970): 1721.

<sup>6</sup> Margaret Judson, *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Hill, review of *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, by Margaret Judson, *EHR* 88, no. 343 (April, 1972): 416.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat, Milton and Some of his Contemporaries* (New York, Viking Penguin Inc., 1984), 20. He was probably referring to *Meditations*, and later theological writings.

Violet Rowe's *Sir Henry Vane the Younger: A Study in Political and Administrative History* (1970) also captured Hill's attention. He complained that Rowe "tells us more about his attendance at Parliamentary committees than about his political ideas," adding, "the reader gets no sense of his deep religious and political convictions."<sup>10</sup>

David Parnham's *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse* (1997) represents the singular reconstruction of Vane's theology. Unfortunately, Parnham's prose is almost as unfathomable as Vane's, which is why John Morrill branded it with a rather scathing review. "The great snag," says Morrill, is that having decoded what he terms "Vane's concocted unintelligibility," Parnham proceeds to re-encode it into a concocted unintelligibility of his own.<sup>11</sup> Not only is his contribution difficult to negotiate, he failed to link Vane's life with his thought.<sup>11</sup> Michael Finlayson applauded Parnham for remedying that scholarly gap in understanding Vane's theology, adding that Vane's "political ideas and career have been of only marginal interest to scholars, while his theology has been almost totally ignored." But like Morrill, he stressed concern over Parnham's failure to "place his writings firmly in their historical and historiographical context," and asked whether "there is nothing to be said about a possible connection between his complex and eccentric theology and contemporary politics."<sup>12</sup>

Nicholas Tyacke's concerns regarding Parnham's book are similar to Morrill's. Not only is Parnham not "an easy read," but he "omits one of the concerns for which Vane is most famous - - namely religious toleration." Tyacke observes that what is "lacking is any sustained analysis of Vane's political thought," and "with no attempt to examine the processes by which Vane acquired his views."<sup>13</sup>

These modern critiques of three fairly recent attempts to explicate Vane's theology and political ideals identify the scholarly confusion surrounding his political Biblicism.

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Hill, review of *Sir Henry Vane the Younger: A Study in Political and Administrative History*, by Violet Rowe, *EHR* 88, no. 346 (January 1973): 186.

<sup>11</sup> John Morrill, review of *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse*, by David Parnham, *JRH* 23, no. 1 (February 1999): 134.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Finlayson, review of *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse*, by David Parnham, *AHR* 104, no. 1 (February 1999): 242.

<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Tyacke, review of *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Religious and Political Discourse*, by David Parnham, *EHR*, 114 (June 1999), 715.

## Early Travels and Political Experiences (1629-1637)

### Leyden and Geneva

Subsequent to Vane’s short academic tenure at Westminster and then Magdalen College, Oxford his father, Sir Henry Sr., sent young Vane to Ferdinand II in Vienna with the English Ambassador during the momentous period of the Thirty Years War, and later in the year he ventured to Nuremburg. But his short, impressionable visits to Geneva and Leyden may have conditioned his religious and theological perspectives, at least according to Clarendon, who claimed he returned filled with “prejudice and bitterness against the church, both against the form of government, and the liturgy.”<sup>14</sup>

Most of Vane’s modern biographers mention his continental travels but disagree over the influential nature of his experiences.<sup>15</sup> James Hosmer speculates that Vane may have “spent a period at Geneva,” where “he was much affected by the theological atmosphere of Calvin’s town,”<sup>16</sup> while Willcock cautions against any “trace of any influence.” Vane seemed “much more inclined towards mysticism than towards the type of religion which Calvin represents.”<sup>17</sup> Adamson and Folland conjectured that Vane acquainted himself with some “Puritan congregations on the continent,” and even entertained the company of Hugh Peter, pastor at Rotterdam, whom he later labored with in New England.<sup>18</sup> But Charles Dalton in *History of the Wrays of Ghentworth* (1881) was more forceful in his assertion that Vane’s republicanism and “bitterness against the Government and the liturgy of the Church of England,” was birthed out of Geneva.<sup>19</sup>

### Massachusetts Bay

*His Election will remain a blemish to their judgments who did elect him, while New-England remains a nation; for he coming from Old-England, a young inexperienced gentleman, (and as young in judgment as he was in years) by the industry of some that could do much, and thought by him to play their own game, was presently elected governour; and before he was scarce warm in his seat, began to broach new tenets; and these were agitated with as much violence, as if the welfare of New-England must have been*

<sup>14</sup> Edward Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, Together with an Historical View of the Affairs of Ireland*, vol. 1, book 3 (Oxford University Press, 1849), 262. Anthony Wood claims that “by the instigation of some Separatists of his Neighbourhood he went beyond the Seas and spent much time in *New England* and *Amsterdam*.” See *AO*, vol. 2, 292.

<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, Sikes, Vane’s contemporary biographer, does not comment on his travels to Leyden or Amsterdam.

<sup>16</sup> James K. Hosmer, *The Life of Young Sir Henry Vane Governor of Massachusetts Bay, and Leader of the Long Parliament with a Consideration of the English Commonwealth as a Forecast of America* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, Limited, 1888), 7, 8.

<sup>17</sup> John Willcock, *Life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger, Statesman & Mystic (1613-1662)* (London: The Saint Catherine Press, 1913), 12. Willcock explains that if Vane did reside in Geneva for any length of time, it appears he never entered any regular course of study in the University there, as his name is not found in the student lists. In footnote 4 he mentions Professor Bussemacher’s investigation of Vane’s presence at Leyden but which failed to uncover any links between him and the University.

<sup>18</sup> J.H. Adamson and H.F. Folland, *Sir Harry Vane* (Boston: Gambit Inc., 1973), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Dalton, *History of the Wrays of Glentworth, 1532-1852, Including Memoirs of the Principal Families with Which They were Connected*, vol. 2 (Aberdeen: A. King & Co., 1881), 96.

*sacrificed than these not take place. But the wisdom of the state put a period to his government; necessity caused them to undo the work of their own hands, and leave us a caveat, that all good men are not fit for government.*

Cotton Mather, *MCA*, Book 2, 124-125.<sup>20</sup>

George Garrard wrote to Edward, Viscount Conway & Killultagh, on 18 September 1653, that “Sir Henry Vane also hath as good as lost his eldest son, who is gone into New England for conscience’ sake,” and who disliked “the discipline of the Church of England.” And though he “has more sons,” they too were “bred up at Leyden.”<sup>21</sup> Vane disclosed his intention to depart for New England, but not his motive, in a letter to his father crafted at Charring Cross, 7 July 1635. He confessed that he was “compassed about w<sup>th</sup> many infirmitys,” considered himself “too great a blemish to the Religion I do professe,” and qualified his decision to depart by his faith in God, who was “all sufficient” “to protect . . . direct . . . and reward” him.<sup>22</sup>

### **Antinomian Controversy and Union with the Spirit**

On the 25 May 1636, Vane was elected Governor of Massachusetts Bay, which John Winthrop interpreted as a direct result of his being the “son and heir to a privy counsellor in England.”<sup>23</sup> This is consistent with Michael Winship’s assertion that Charles intended to install Ferdinando Gorges as governor-general with a view to nullifying the Massachusetts Charter, thus associating Vane’s governorship with an electoral reaction to the Crown’s potential threat to the Colony’s self-governance.<sup>24</sup>

Vane’s short but radical tenure in the Colony seemed to have ignited the famous Antinomian crisis, or free-grace controversy, which culminated in the trial of Anne Hutchinson. Winship observed that “although Vane is almost entirely neglected by scholars, he may have been the single most important reason why the controversy reached the pitch that it did.” The failure of many of Vane’s contemporaries to include damaging critiques of his influence and administration resulted from fear of reprisals from Charles’ Court.<sup>25</sup> Denouncements though were eventually publicized, and especially critical were Thomas Shepard’s, who claimed that the “the opinions of Familists, begun by Mistress Hutchinson,” were “raised up to a great height by Mr.

<sup>20</sup> Mather, *MCA*, book 2, 124 -125. Mather claims to have recovered this quote from an “old New-English manuscript,” which contained Vane’s *Tryal* and other speeches.

<sup>21</sup> “Letter of Henry Vane,” *PRMH*, 1871-1873 (Boston: Published by the Society, 1873), 245-246.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649, The Governour of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay from His Original Manuscripts with Notes*, vol. 1, ed. James Savage (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853), text-fiche, LAC 22736, 222.

<sup>24</sup> Micheal Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (Princeton University Press, 2002), 78.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 51.

Vane too suddenly chosen governor, and maintained too obscurely by Mr. Cotton."<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Giles Firmin claimed that "*when I returned to New-England; . . . the Men told us, the Churches were on fire. . . . All the Discourse was about Justification, and the Assurance of it, by the immediate Testimony of the Spirit, or an absolute promise applied by the Spirit. . . . Mr. Vaughan [who when Governor, was the great Favourer and Maintainer of these Errors, and did animate that Faction].*"<sup>27</sup> Even Roger Williams, a recognized admirer of Vane and who shared his religious liberty views, noted in an April 1638 letter to Winthrop that Hutchinson and her family were "longing great after Mr. Vane," and his promised return, and that "the Eyes of some are so earnestly fixt upon him that Mrs. Hutchinson professeth, if he come not to New she must go to Old Engl."<sup>28</sup> Governor William Coddington appealed to Vane to return in his 24 August 1640 letter from Newport, stating that "upon Earth ther is no man so much desired Amoungest us as yo<sup>r</sup>self . . . remember we besech you yo<sup>r</sup> promise."<sup>29</sup>

Vane was so sensitive to the accusations of his singular association in the controversy that he covertly used letters from friends in England he claimed demanded his return to request the Council for permission to depart. But out of concern for the Colony's stability, the Council induced Vane to divulge his real motive, which was "the inevitable danger he saw of God's judgments to come . . . for these differences and dissensions, . . . and the scandalous imputation brought upon himself, as if he should be the cause of all; and therefore he thought it best for him to give place for a time."<sup>30</sup>

The Antinomian controversy revealed Vane's initial emphasis upon a regenerate's personal union with the Holy Ghost, and the nature of that spiritual transaction. Winthrop records:

The governour, Mr. Vane, a wise and godly gentleman, held, with Mr. Cotton and many others, the indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost in a believer, and went so far beyond the rest, as to maintain a personal union with the Holy Ghost.<sup>31</sup>

Winthrop explained that the dispute over the Spirit's indwelling turned on whether the

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Shepard, *God's Plot, Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard's Cambridge*, ed. Michael McGiffert, rev. ed (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 67.

<sup>27</sup> Giles Firmin, *Panergia, A Brief Review of Mr. Davis's Vindication: Giving no Satisfaction* (London, 1693), To the Reader.

<sup>28</sup> John Winthrop, *Winthrop Papers, 1638-1644*, vol. 4 (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1944), text-fiche, LAC 22360, 25.

<sup>29</sup> *Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, 1755-1794 with a Selection from his Correspondence*, ed. Franklin Bowditch Dexter (Yale University Press, 1916), 370.

<sup>30</sup> Winthrop, *The History of New England*, 247.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 246. A sermon delivered by John Wheelwright, which gained the favor of Anne Hutchinson, initiated the controversy. See Winthrop, *History of New England*, vol. 1, 241-242 and 256-257. See also David Hall's *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History* (Connecticut: Wesley and University Press, 1968), 153-172.

Scriptures or the primitive church referred to him as a "person," as opposed to emphasizing his divine status, and "whether by his gifts and power only, or by any other manner of presence, seeing the scripture doth not declare it."<sup>32</sup> Vane's views on the Spirit were radical, and Winship identifies the extent of their disruptive nature in Shepard's 20 May 1637 letter to Winthrop. Shepard infers that Vane authored that "Apologie," which Winthrop apparently responded to, but gently chastises him for extending too much "charity" to him who was "so notoriously known to be the prime craftsman of forging all our late novelties, the Sheba of our distractions." Shepard believed Vane had "cunningly and slyly layd down the principle and sown the seed of the confusion of this in all states in the world," and "untill we see his repentance and return why shall our charity cover his craft, and yet tell the woorld he may be an honest man."<sup>33</sup>

### **Antinomian Controversy and the Immigration Issue**

Unfortunately, the first order of Vane's governorship had not been concluded during his term, for if it had, the records of Boston's General Court would have left the first intimation of his views regarding the relevance of the Jewish Polity for the Commonwealth's legal code. On 26 May the General Court ordered Vane, along with other members of the Bay Government, "to make a draught of such lawes agreeable to the word of God, which may be the Fundamentalls of the commonwealth."<sup>34</sup> John Cotton's draft entitled "Moses his Judicials," was submitted in October, but taken up by the next General Court, and after Vane had been well out of office and back in England. The Colony decided to adopt Nathaniel Ward's *Body of Liberties* in 1641 instead. Unfortunately, little is known of Vane's attitude towards Cotton's original submission, and given their rather intimate working relationship and living arrangements, it could be safely assumed that they discussed that proposal. It would be a bit presumptuous to suggest they collaborated, especially since Vane's view of the civil enforcement of the Mosaic Judicials at this stage is unclear.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 246. John Wheelwright's tenacious holding to a personal indwelling of the Spirit and stance on the covenant of grace resulted in his conviction of sedition. Boston adherents responded with a "Remonstrance or Petition by Members of Boston Church," in Favor of Wheelwright, March, 1637. See Appendix, 481-482. Apparently Vane, with other disgruntled members of the Court, submitted "a now disappeared Protestation," on behalf of Wheelwright which Winthrop responded to. See Winship, *Making Heretics*, 127, 136.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 136; *Winthrop Papers, 1631-1637*, vol. 3 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1943), text-fiche, LAC 22359, 415-416.

<sup>34</sup> *The Correspondence of John Cotton*, ed. Sargent Bush, Jr. (Chapel Hill, London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 400.

Vane departed the Bay having left behind one document that hinted at some of his constitutional views, though born out of an immigration controversy that simmered within the context of the Antinomian crisis. According to Winship, the General Court's attempt to prohibit the influx of theological malcontents and heretics like Vane from reaching Massachusetts' shores may have been influenced by Thomas Shepard's sermon "Father of the Country." Among various points, he cautioned that should the Court "be gentle and open the door to all comers," they "may cut our throats in time."<sup>35</sup> Governor Winthrop subsequently issued a very unpopular order intended to severely regulate the influx and residence of newcomers and supported it with a "Defence of the Order of Court Made in the Year May 1637." Vane responded with "A Brief Answer to a Certain Declaration,"<sup>36</sup> and capitalized upon the issue of immigration to publicize his understanding of "the relation of liberty of conscience to the governance of a Christian commonwealth,"<sup>37</sup> his hallmark political contribution. Winthrop asserted, with little explanation in support, that "the essential forme of a common weale or body politic such as this is," is characterized by "the consent of a certaine companie of people, to cohabite together, under one government for their mutual safety and welfare." Vane argued against each of Winthrop's points at great length, and claimed to the contrary that a "christian commonwealth," must incorporate "a consent as is according to God; a subjecting to such a government as is according unto Christ." This is the only place Vane inserted biblical references in the marginalia, noting Proverbs 8:5 and Isaiah 6:7, not as support for his idea of consent, but as a rebuke to Winthrop, accusing him of being simple and foolish, in need of understanding, and having unclean lips which needed atoning for. Vane considered Winthrop's definition as comprehending a commonwealth's general characteristics only, which could refer to a "companie of Turkish pirates as well as of Christian professors." For "unlesse the consent and government be better limitted than it is in this definition," then "sure it is, all Pagans and Infidels, even the Indians here amongst us, may come within this compasse."<sup>38</sup> Vane reasoned his response scripturally and legally. Limited consent meant that "members of

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<sup>35</sup> Winship, *Making Heretics*, 137. This sermon is found in Thomas Shepard's *Parable of the Ten Virgins Opened and Applied*, 2 vols. (London, 1695).

<sup>36</sup> Both declarations are found in Thomas Hutchinson, *A Collection of the Original Papers Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, New England: Thomas and John Fleet, 1769), 67-83, including Winthrop's reply to Vane from 84-100. The complete title of Winthrop's defense from which Vane's title is almost wholly derived is "A Declaration of the Intent and Equitye of the Order Made at the Last Court, to this Effect, That None Should be Received to Inhabite Within this Jurisdiction but Such as Should be Allowed by Some of the Magistrates."

<sup>37</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 104.

<sup>38</sup> Hutchinson, *A Collection of the Original Papers Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts*, 72. Vane assumed the Court's objective was the prohibition of immigrants whose views were either similar to Wheelwrights, or who dissented doctrinally from the authorities. See 80-81.

a commonwealth may not seeke out all means that may conduce to the wellfare of the body," but only "all lawful and due means, according to the charter they hold by, either from God or the King, or from both." He explained further "that our consent regulated by the worde, and sutable to our patent ought to be required," and not Winthrop's "vast and illimited consent." Vane based his notion of limited consent from 1 Cor. 6: 19-20, which states, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body."<sup>39</sup> In this regard, "our consent is not our owne, when rightly limited."<sup>40</sup> This passage may have a double meaning for Vane, as he probably intended to press the point of union with the Spirit as well. Deuteronomy 17 also limits the civil magistrates in prescribing laws for a commonwealth. Vane hints at their differences in jurisdictional understanding, categorizing this immigration law as crossing over into God's realm of authority.

Because this law doth leave these weightye matters of the common-wealth, of receiving or rejecting such as come over to the approbation of the magistrates, and suspends these things upon the judgment of man, whereas the judgment is Gods, Deut. I. 17. This is made a ground worke of grosse popery. Priests and magistrates are to judge, but it must be according to the law of God, Deut. 17.9, 10, 11. That law which gives that without limittation to man, which is proper to God, cannot be just.<sup>41</sup>

Vane departed for England on 3 August 1637, and to the relief of the leadership. Winship believes that Thomas Shepard referred to Vane's negative influence in his election-day sermon of 1638 by preaching against him as a figure of Abimelech, that "young courtier," "bramble" and factious maker, who "advances another religion then what they had under Gideon . . . a god of a new covenant."<sup>42</sup> Shepard's view of Vane radically contrasts with Sikes, who left readers with a more favorable rendition of his New England experience, that "he ripened into more knowledge and experience of Christ, than the Churches there could bear the Testimony of."<sup>43</sup> What is certain is that Vane's intense emphasis upon the personal, intimate indwelling of the Holy Spirit was initially cultivated in Massachusetts Bay as a companion doctrine of his covenantalism.

<sup>39</sup> I Corinthians 6:19-20 NAS

<sup>40</sup> Hutchinson, *A Collection of the Original Papers Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts*, 73.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 82-83.

<sup>42</sup> Winship, *Making Heretics*, 143-147. Shepard's sermon is found in the *NEHGR* 24 (Boston: Published by the Society, 1870), 361-366. Winship modernizes his quotes, found on 361, and 365. Vane's name is of course nowhere mentioned, but the references seem true to Winship's view. Shepard's sermon focuses upon the narrative of Gideon and the treacherous usurpation of his rule by Abimelech in Judges chapter 9. Shepard states "here is the last electio that all the trees m<sup>d</sup> of a bramble gouvernour over them," and "that a Bramble gouvernour will be the mischiefe if not the ruine of a people." See 362, 364

<sup>43</sup> Sikes, *LDV*, 8.

and would become a critical component of his allegorical method. The Bay colony also afforded him the opportunity to articulate his initial reflections and principles of a Christian Commonwealth, despite its ignominious and grievous context. And interestingly, Vane the “Abimelech” would eventually expose the “Achan” Cromwell.

### Early Parliamentary Career (1641-1653)

#### Religious Reform: Bill for the Abolition of Episcopacy

Upon his return, Vane entered political life with an appointment as joint Treasurer of the Navy by Charles I in 1639, and election to the Long Parliament on 3 November 1640 as a representative of Kingston upon Hull.<sup>44</sup> Algernon Sidney states that Vane “appeared a vehement Asserter of the rights and liberties of his country.”<sup>45</sup> His religious reforms began with the Root and Branch Petition of 11 December 1640 and his role on the new Grand Committee on Religion on 27 May 1641, which delivered the Root and Branch Bill, a collaborative effort between him, Hasilrig, St. John, and Cromwell.<sup>46</sup> Within this reform context, Vane presented his famous speech against Episcopacy on 11 June 1641,<sup>47</sup> explaining that “the maine ends for which Church-government is set up, is to advance and further the perfect reformation and growth of Religion,” which Episcopacy “doth contradict.” Rather, “the very spirit of this order” elevates “it selfe in the Temple of God, over all that is called God,” which entered “in by the back doore . . . by the spirit of Antichrist.”<sup>48</sup> This speech reveals, seemingly for the first time, Vane’s doctrine of the Antichrist, or tyranny, in relationship to the abuse of authority by equating Episcopal government with ecclesiastical tyranny.

#### Liberty of Conscience

Robert Baillie noted in a 25 October 1644 letter to William Spang that Vane while acting as an English Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, “twyce at our table prolixlie, earnestlie, and passionatelie, had reasoned for a full libertie of conscience to all religions, without any exceptions.”<sup>49</sup> Vane’s appearance at the assembly took place within three months of Roger William’s publication of *The Bloudy*

<sup>44</sup> For a comprehensive overview of Vane’s political and administrative career, see Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*.

<sup>45</sup> Algernon Sidney, “The Character of Sir Henry Vane,” in Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, Appendix F, 277.

<sup>46</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 155-156.

<sup>47</sup> Rowe doubts Vane actually delivered this speech. See *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, 192. For her discussion of Vane’s “Religious Policy,” see 191-201. I used Rowe as a template for my own investigation.

<sup>48</sup> *Sr. Henry Vane his Speech in the House of Commons, at a Committee for the Bill Against Episcopall-Government* (London, 1641), 2, 5, 6.

<sup>49</sup> *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, 1637-1662*, vol. 2, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1841), 235.

*Tenant of Persecution* (July 1644). Williams, a personal friend of Vane, and fellow adherent of liberty of conscience, memorialized his contribution in securing Rhode Island in 1636 while Governor of the Bay Colony. In a 25 August 1658 letter to the General Court of Commissioners of Providence Plantations, Williams explained that “it was not price nor Money” which purchased Rhode Island, but “by that Love and Favour wch that honble (honorable) Gentleman Sir Hen. Vane and my selfe had with that great Sachim Miantunnomu.”<sup>50</sup> Williams explained that Vane “hath bene so great an Instrumt in the hand of God for procuring of this Iland from the Barbarians as also for the procuring and confirming of the Charter,”<sup>51</sup> the fruit of Williams’ own lobbying efforts as the Colony’s Commissioner to England in 1643, and testimony to Vane’s political principles of consent and liberty of conscience. The Patent, among other provisions, explicitly stated that Rhode Island’s inhabitants had “full power and authority to govern and rule themselves . . . by such a form of civil government as by voluntary consent of all, or the greater part of them, they should find most servicable in their estate and condition.”<sup>52</sup> Absent is any claim for civil government’s role in religious affairs. Rowe notes:

The charter made no mention of the civil government’s connexion with religious matters, an omission which in the circumstances of Rhode Island’s quarrel with Massachusetts, must have infuriated his old colony. Vane’s biographers have failed to notice that his policy in relation to the charter is consistent with his writings, in which he advocated that the State should refrain from concerning itself at all with church matters. The Rhode Island charter was his first victory.<sup>53</sup>

Back in Massachusetts Bay, the plight of William Pynchon, a Bay Magistrate, and the condemnation of his book, *The Meritorious Price of Our Redemption* (1650) by the authorities, caught the attention of Vane as a liberty of conscience issue. On 16 October 1650 the Court issued their formal declaration against Pynchon’s book as “false, eronyous, & hereticall,” and ordered it to be burned in Boston’s marketplace.<sup>54</sup> Some in England responded negatively to their judgment, including Vane, who sent his own letter on 15 April 1652. The letter itself is not found among the Court’s records, but

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<sup>50</sup> *The Correspondence of Roger Williams, 1654-1682*, 2 vols., ed. Glenn W. La Fantasia, revised from an unpublished manuscript (Providence: Brown University Press, 1988), 2: 485. “Charter” here refers to the 1644 Patent. See note 5, 491. See also “The Narraganset Patent,” *PRMHS* (Boston: Printed for the Society, 1863), 47.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Irving Berdine Richman, *Rhode Island, Its Making and Meaning. A Survey of the Annals of the Commonwealth from its Settlement to the Death of Roger Williams 1636-1683*, 2 vols., (New York: London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1902), 1: 179.

<sup>53</sup> Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, 195-196.

<sup>54</sup> *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in England, 1614-1657*, 5 vols., ed. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff (Boston: William White, 1854), 3: 215-216.

their 20 October response reveals Vane's request that they "deal lightly with Mr. Pynchon." In their defense, the Council claimed that "Mr. Pincheon might have kept his judgment to himself, as it seems he did above thirty years," and though he was being persuaded contrary to his original convictions, "received letters from England, which encouraged him in his error to the great grief of us all." In reference to Vane, "touching that which your honoured self doth advise us unto, viz, not to censure any person for matters of a religious nature or concernment; . . . Yet we conceive with submission still to better light."<sup>55</sup> Vane's concern for Pynchon, though matured and seasoned, was born out of that same liberty of conscience doctrine displayed thirteen years earlier over the Bay's judgment upon theological malcontents.

### Political Reform: Bill for an Equal Representative

Though Vane and Cromwell seemed united on the Root and Branch Bill, among other early measures of the Long Parliament, Vane became one of Cromwell's most resolute political enemies. Their relationship would evolve and progress with spasms of fondness and affection interrupted by verbal assaults and jabs of treachery. In a letter to Oliver St. John in September 1648, Cromwell referred to Vane as "my dear brother,"<sup>56</sup> and in another that November to Col. Hammond, as "my dear brother Herne whom I love in the Lord."<sup>57</sup> In a letter of Vane, dated 2 August 1651, he not only speaks protectively of their "ancient friendship," but their differences in regards to religious perceptions and acuity, noting that even Cromwell "esteemed" his "principles too high to fathom." It was Vane's expectation that Cromwell would experience an "increasing

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<sup>55</sup> *The First Century of the History of Springfield, The Official Records from 1636-1736*, vol. 1, ed. Henry M. Burt (Springfield, Mass.: Henry Burt, 1898), 124-125. For a complete account of these circumstances, including a copy of Pynchon's book, see 79-118. I have not been able to recover the contents of Vane's letter, only that it was written and responded to by the Bay authorities. It is not in the contents of Vane's letter, only that it was written and responded to by the Bay authorities. It is not in the *Bay Records*, nor Winthrop's *Journals or History of New England*. Neither is it in *CMHS* 3d. series, vol. 1 (Boston: Phelps and Farnham, 1825), which only contains the response, 37. For an excellent account of Pynchon and his struggle with the Bay authorities, see Micheal Winship, "Contesting Control of Orthodoxy Among the Godly: William Pynchon Reexamined," *WMQ*, 3d ser. 54 no. 4 (October 1997): 795-822. Winship though does not mention Vane's letter.

<sup>56</sup> *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell with Elucidations by Thomas Carlyle*, vol. 1, ed. S.C. Lomas (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), 350. Footnote 1 indicates that Vane had this letter in mind when he delivered a personal letter to Cromwell during his second appearance before the Council in September 1656, which is in *Proceeds*. "The message which in former times you sent me is in my memory still. It was immediately after the Lord had appeared with you against Duke Hamilton's army, when you bid a friend of mine tell your brother Herne (for so you then thought fit to call me), that you were as much unsatisfied with his passive and suffering principles as he was with your active. And indeed I must crave leave to make you this reply at this time; that I am as little satisfied with your active and self-establishing principles, in the lively colours wherein daily they show themselves, as you are or can be with my passive ones, and am willing in this to join issue with you and to beg of the Lord to judge between us and to give the decision according to truth and righteousness." See 11.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 392. This particular letter incorporates six references to Vane as "Herne."

with the increasings of God which passes knowledge” as he had.<sup>58</sup> Such affectionate brotherly language contrasts sharply with the rapid deterioration of their relationship, initially discernable within the context of the Bill for an Equal Representative, but unrecoverable after Cromwell's dissolution of Parliament in April 1653. Sidney explains that despite a “long and particular Friendship contracted between Cromwell and him,” Vane “broke it off as soon as he observ'd Cromwell to aim at the sole power, and attempt it by Force.”<sup>59</sup>

### Recruiter Scheme for Equal Representation

The new “Government” was “now settled in the way of a Commonwealth,” and *The Act Abolishing the Office of King* required the Commons to prepare a bill to “dissolve” Parliament “as soon as may possibly stand with the safety of the people that hath trusted them.”<sup>60</sup> Vane had absented himself from the king's trial and execution, though he would serve on the new Council of State beginning in late February 1649,<sup>61</sup> and rapidly ascend to various governmental roles and administrative positions. As part of his docket of duties, on May 15 Parliament delegated to Vane “special Care” for new-modelling the government, and charged him and Dr. Palmer with the oversight of the Bill for establishing Parliament's dissolution and electoral guidelines for future ones.<sup>62</sup>

Vane delivered his initial recommendations to the House on 9 January 1650 under four main heads, one of which proposed new representative allotments or parliamentary re-apportionments which required that Members be elected “from time to time,” to fill vacancies to a capacity of 400. His scheme of redistribution of seats acknowledged the membership depletion of Pride's Purge, but never intended for all four hundred representatives to be seated through new elections, or the current members replaced. Rather, the “qualifications . . . for succeeding Parliaments,” required that all authorized voting locales “shall have their complete Number and Proportion, in that Act, limited to sit and serve in this present Parliament; accounting those members now sitting in Parliament.” Current members were to remain, with vacancies filled through a process of recruitment in keeping with the proportion of representatives recommended

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<sup>58</sup> John Nickolls, *Original Letters and Papers Addressed to Oliver Cromwell*, (London, 1743), 78-79, quoted in George C. Rogers Jr, “Sir Henry Vane, Junior, Spirit Mystic and Fanatic Democrat,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago), 1953, 203.

<sup>59</sup> Sidney, “The Character of Sir Henry Vane,” 279.

<sup>60</sup> *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-1660*, ed. Samuel Rawson Gardiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 386.

<sup>61</sup> Rowe notes that Vane never actually sat as a member of the Council until February 23, though the Council of State was established February 7, and his name included without his consent; an issue he raised at his trial. See *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, 139, note 5.

<sup>62</sup> *CJ*, vol. 6, 210.

for each electoral region. Vane's plan even prohibited traditional schemes that allowed the sitting of any member outside the electoral process, unless otherwise stipulated by an Act of Parliament. The House immediately adopted the representative limit suggested by Vane, with the remaining heads to be debated in Grand Committee.<sup>63</sup> His recruiter plan, and refinement of the rules of House membership, reinforced what would become a long-term dedication to the civil right of representation and consent.<sup>64</sup>

Vane's motive behind his proposal is difficult to ascertain from the *Journals*,<sup>65</sup> though his political tracts and subsequent comments in House debates reveal an abiding concern over the electorate's ability to choose wisely on behalf of that sort of liberty afforded by a republican model, and critical to its maintenance. A very broad franchise could fill the Commons with members hostile to the reform efforts, such as royalists or Presbyterians, and jeopardize hard won civil and religious liberties, representing a vexatious electoral dilemma he attempted to solve in *A Healing Question* and *A Needful Corrective*.

Worden suggests that Vane's proposal was a response to "the re-emergence of the Leveller unrest," and their demands for a "new representative,"<sup>66</sup> an observation consistent with Parliament's own published *Declaration* of 27 September 1649, which vindicated its proceedings, in part, against the Leveller agitation. Establishing "a sure foundation," required "time to erect upon it the most happy structure of a *just Liberty*, and settled *Prosperity* that may be expected in this world, under the direction and Government of *successive* and equal *Representatives* in *Parliament*." The retention of seasoned members was necessary to birth the expected commonwealth and stabilize it, otherwise, it "might run into Tumultuary *Confusions* in the Infancy," and lack "any

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 345.

<sup>64</sup> Vane's scheme is mentioned in a 13 November 1649 letter from John Moyley to Colonel Robert Bennett. See *The Manuscripts of J. Eliot Hodgkin, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part II* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1897), 47. Wilbur Abbott notes that "Vane, Marten, Sydney, Neville and the Republicans generally," endorsed the recruitment of members rather than a general election." See *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, The Commonwealth 1649-1653*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 573.

<sup>65</sup> The *Journals* indicate that this Committee sat almost every week, typically Wednesdays, to discuss the Bill, but unfortunately, the debates are not recorded. Like many others, I scanned the sixth and seventh volumes to get a hint of commentary on the Bill itself, which is scanty. From 16 January 1649-50 to 19 June 1650, the House adjourned into a Grand Committee to discuss the Bill weekly, though gaps arise in the typical Wednesday sessions between June 19 and July 24, with a rather significant delay in discussions between 14 August and 3 October 1650, after which the House did resolve again to meet every Wednesday. See *CJ*, vol. 6, 486. The House met the Wednesday deadline up to 26 March 1651 when it sat somewhat infrequently on this issue up to 26 September 1651. *CJ*, vol. 7, 20. The House sat quite regularly on this Bill from 14 October 1651 through the end of the year because of pressure from Cromwell.

<sup>66</sup> Blair Worden, *Rump Parliament 1648-1653* (Cambridge University Press, 1974), 221. See John Lilburne, *England's New Chains discovered; of the Serious Apprehensions of a Part of the People on Behalf of the Commonwealth* (London, March 1649), 2.

measure of strength and settlement, in the hands of those whom God hath owned and used as Instruments to bring the work thus far." The Levellers agitated for "a *Dissolution* of this Parliament," and called for a "new Representative, pretending the People ought to have the liberty of new and frequent Elections," which the *Declaration* viewed as willful ignorance of the political reality of the people's disposition. Rather, "the violence of Faction, and activity of their secret Enemies," rendered free elections impossible and the loss of their liberty certain.<sup>67</sup> The *Declaration*'s reasoned concern over the electoral environment infers support for Vane's recruiter scheme, and evidences his hand in drafting it.

Many of Vane's biographers, as well as historians such as Gardiner and Worden, record a royalist writer's comments in *News From England*, Feb 27/March 9, 1650, which claimed that Colonel Henry Marten considered Vane's scheme too radical. Martin supported his recommendations for retaining the current membership from the biblical narrative of Moses' childhood development. Parliament, claimed Martin, "might find the best advice from the scripture what they were to do in this particular." Just as the infant "Moses was found upon the river, and brought to Pharaoh's daughter," who "took great care that the mother might be found out, to whose care he might be committed to be nursed; which succeeded very happily," so too "their Commonwealth was yet an infant, of a weak growth and a very tender constitution; and therefore . . . nobody would be so fit to nurse it as the mother who brought it forth." Moses, as an infant, was a type of fledgling Commonwealth, which required the nurture of its mother, the Rump Parliament, which "should not think of putting it under any other hands until it had obtained more years and vigour."<sup>68</sup> This rather loose analogy represents a very interesting scriptural use of the growth of Moses to argue against Vane's recruiter scheme, even more intriguing since it was advanced by a very unpuritanical figure.

Parliament was under mounting pressure to settle the government, and further delays strengthened accusations they intended to retain power at the expense of the people's liberty.<sup>69</sup> Policy rifts between Vane and Cromwell were mildly identifiable on 25 September 1650 when Cromwell returned from his military successes at Worcester with the authority to provoke the House to action.<sup>70</sup> Worden conjectured that by

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<sup>67</sup> *A Declaration of the Parliament of England, In Vindication of their Proceedings, and Discovering the Dangerous Practices of Several Interests, Against the Present Government, and Peace of the Commonwealth* (London, 1649), 16, 25.

<sup>68</sup> *News From England*, Feb 27/March 9, 1649: 50, quoted in Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 221.

<sup>69</sup> *PH*, vol. 3, 1353-54.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 1373.

September 26, Vane’s proposal had been abandoned,<sup>71</sup> as Cromwell, with Mr. Scot, led the Tellers for the yeas at 33 to 26 that a new bill should be brought in to establish Parliament’s dissolution, with both Vane and Cromwell added to a new committee to craft it.<sup>72</sup> On November 18 it was agreed that Parliament would dissolve 3 November 1654.<sup>73</sup>

Discussion on the Bill was sidelined for a time, but revived on 12 May 1652, with the Grand Committee charged to sit every Wednesday for its consideration. The *Journals* indicate that debates commenced on May 19 and 26, but mentions no other deliberations until September 14.<sup>74</sup> Vane’s intense involvement in the cause of Scottish union and English-Dutch relations absented him from both the Commons and the Council from 1 July to 9 September 1652.<sup>75</sup> Parliament made little progress on the substance of the Bill from 14 September to 16 February 1653, as it passed through Carew’s committee,<sup>76</sup> then Harrison’s,<sup>77</sup> after which it was discussed regularly again. On 30 March 1653, Parliament extended the franchise to property owners,<sup>78</sup> and on April 13, added a religious test of leadership requiring “such as are persons of known Integrity, fearing God, and not scandalous in their Conversation,”<sup>79</sup> should be admitted. Adamson and Folland claim that Vane was apprehensive over this clause, and considered it a “dangerously imprecise provision” which could place “all power in the hands of whoever might interpret and apply it.”<sup>80</sup> Contrary to Worden, who is convinced that Vane’s original recruiter scheme was never incorporated into the Bill,<sup>81</sup> they argue that Vane was still pressing for it, and demanding “that the present members be given authority to decide on the godliness and virtue of those newly elected.” Should the amendment pass, Vane planned to request a six-month parliamentary adjournment

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<sup>71</sup> Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 266.

<sup>72</sup> *CJ*, vol. 6, 20,

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 36, 37.

<sup>74</sup> *CJ*, vol. 7, 131, 133, 136.

<sup>75</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 305-310. They speculate that this may have been due to Vane’s tendency to dismiss himself from proceedings which he considered impossible to alter. It is possible as well that Cromwell sent him to France. As Rowe indicates, it is almost unimaginable that Vane would be absent from Parliament during such a crucial time. She speculates he may have been sick, protesting Parliament’s Dutch policy, or on a secret mission to Paris. See *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, 147. His absence for such a lengthy period might explain the lack of attention given to the settlement Bill.

<sup>76</sup> *CJ*, vol. 7, 178, 229,

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 277-278.

<sup>80</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 314.

<sup>81</sup> Worden claims to have shown that Vane’s 1649 proposal to fill parliamentary vacancies most likely never made it into this new Bill, undermining the prevalent view that Cromwell dissolved Parliament in April 1653 as a radical move to stop his scheme.

“to gain . . . – a little more time for the truth to carry its own conviction into the hearts of the honest people.”<sup>82</sup>

Though Vane had pressed for a recruiter method in the attempt to maintain the seasoned membership of the Rump, Cromwell urgently called for a postponement of elections entirely. He called a meeting of the leading members at Whitehall on April 19 to resolve the settlement issue, and the exchanges and tentative agreements illuminate the verbal anger he vented at Sir Henry upon his dissolution of Parliament the next day. Whitelocke remarked that some in attendance, including himself, considered it “a most dangerous thing to dissolve the present Parliament, and to set up any other Government, and that it would neither be warrantable in Conscience or Wisdom so to do.” Apparently Cromwell put forth his own proposal, which Whitelocke explained would consist of “*forty-Persons, or about that number of Parliament – men and Officers,*” to be “*nominated by the Parliament,*” and who would administer all Commonwealth affairs until a new one met, while the present one was “*to be forthwith dissolved.*”<sup>83</sup> The meeting adjourned with Vane apparently representing one of those prominent members who assured Cromwell that discussion on the Bill would be sidelined. Despite the previous evening’s agreement, it was debated the next day by an extraordinary number of attendees, which “Cromwell learned of with shock and disbelief.”<sup>84</sup>

The details of the dissolution of the Long Parliament are recorded in a few diaries of the time.<sup>85</sup> In the midst of Cromwell’s emotional dismissal he and Vane exchanged some intense verbal shots. Cromwell, angry at what he understood as

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<sup>82</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 314-315. Unfortunately, they do not source their comments.

<sup>83</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, 554.

<sup>84</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 315. See also Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, 529. Woolrych notes that Cromwell most likely received a “pledge” from Vane to halt the debate on the Bill and its proceedings, which squares with Cromwell’s subsequent accusation that he was a “juggler,” and “might have prevented this extraordinary course.” Nevertheless, Woolrych states that Cromwell may have been unduly unfair in his attack on Vane, “who for all he knew may have tried and failed to persuade the House to give his proposals a hearing.” See 530-531.

<sup>85</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, 554; Ludlow, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 457; *A Journal of the Earl of Leicester, and Original Letters of Algernon Sydney*, ed. R. W. Blencowe (London: John Murray, 1825), 139-41. Cromwell explained in his 4 July 1653 speech at the opening of the Barebones Parliament that “two or three of the chief ones, the very chiefest of them, did tell us that they would endeavor to suspend farther proceedings about the Bill for a new representative until they had a further conference.” Abbott claimed this reference to “chiefest” is Vane, while Worden is convinced it was Sir Arthur Heselrige who pressed for final resolution on the Bill. See Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Cromwell*, vol. 2, 639, note 27, and Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 337. The *Journals* do not record the dissolution, but the entry on 19 April 1653 states, “This Entry was expunged, by Order of Parliament, Jan. 7 1659.” See *CJ*, vol. 7, 280, 805. Cobbett records the nature of the dissolution from a “Diary” which seems to be an excerpt of *Several Proceedings in Parliament, and other Intelligence and Affairs*, which, prior to the dissolution, represented the official paper of the Rump, but which fell into the hands of the army and protectorate. According to the text, from 14 to 21 of April, the Army dissolved the Parliament based upon fear of recruiter elections. See *PH*, vol. 3, 1382-1390. Worden dismisses this as an after-thought. See his chapter “The Army Apologias,” in *Rump Parliament*, 345-363.

Parliament’s “prating,” threatened them with dissolution, and after he summoned elements of the Army, Sir Henry said, “This is not honest, yea it is against Morality and Common Honesty.” Cromwell shouted in reply “O Sir *Henry Vane*. Sir *Henry Vane*. the Lord deliver me from Sir *Henry Vane*.” He even extended his rage further, claiming Vane “might have prevented this extraordinary course but that he was a juggler, and had not so much as common honesty.”<sup>86</sup>

Cromwell confiscated the Bill from the clerk before departing the House, and its subsequent disappearance renders it difficult to surmise its contents with certainty, and hence explain his historic actions. Abbott notes that “yet with all the patient investigation which has been lavished on the incident, . . . No one now knows exactly what was in the bill which the General thrust under his cloak and carried away with him on that fateful day.”<sup>87</sup> Historians are divided on this unknown. Woolrych maintains the Bill did not contain a proposal for a “a *new* representative, but for filling up the present one by means of elections only to the vacant seats,”<sup>88</sup> implying Vane’s scheme was debated that fateful morning. Worden’s significant scholarship demonstrates the contrary; that the final Bill never included Vane’s proposal, and that both Cromwell’s and the Army’s subsequent charge that the recruiter scheme was the issue, “was inaccurate.” Rather, Cromwell’s dissolution of the Rump lay in the fact that the Bill “provided for elections at all,” which means it conspired against his secret Whitehall proposal.<sup>89</sup>

One T. Robinson, in a letter to Mr. Stoneham of the Hague on 3 June 1653 wrote that Vane declined an invitation by the new Council of State to sit in the Nominated

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<sup>86</sup> Ludlow, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 457. Ludlow records the general thrust of some of Cromwell’s meetings with Parliament’s leaders, and explains that the Army had no viable civil alternative should the entire body be turned out. It was at this time that Parliament decided to dissolve themselves, but “leave as a Legacy to the People the Government of a Commonwealth by their Representatives, when assembled in Parliament, and in the Intervals thereof by a Council of State chosen by them.” See vol. 1, 445. Richard Baxter, who was hardly a friend of Vane and favored the Protectorate, highlighted this episode between Cromwell and Vane, summing up their relational rift around Vane’s “Fanatick Democracie,” and Cromwell’s predilection “for Monarchy.” See *RQ*, Book 1, 75. Baxter’s appraisal seems to fall short of a proper estimation of their positions in 1653, especially since critics of Cromwell’s Barebones Parliament, which Vane refused to participate in, viewed it as somewhat fanatical.

<sup>87</sup> Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. 2, 647.

<sup>88</sup> Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, 532.

<sup>89</sup> Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 288, 345. For his complete argument, see his chapter on “The Army Apologies,” 345-363, as well as his Conclusion, 364-384. See also his, “The Bill for a New Representative: The Dissolution of the Long Parliament, April 1653,” *EHR* 86, no. 340 (July 1971): 473-496. Worden examines the Army’s claim that the Rump was attempting to prolong their existence by legislative authority. See also C.H. Firth, “Cromwell and the Expulsion of the Long Parliament in 1653,” *EHR* 8, no. 31 (July 1893), 526-534. Firth explains through a series of significant source data, which includes Newsletters from the Clark and Clarendon papers, that Cromwell’s actions resulted from pressure from the Army, and not, as Cromwell seemed to suggest in his speeches, “by the sudden breach of a compromise which had been agreed upon between the officers and the leading parliamentarians.” See 527.

Parliament “by a letter extracted out of that part of the Apocalyps. wherein the reign of the saints is mentioned,” which “he believes will now begin.” Vane “was willing to defer his share in it until he came to Heaven.”<sup>90</sup> and left political life for Lincolnshire to “enjoy a retirednesse under the immediate teachings of God’s spirit.”<sup>91</sup> and from where he wrote his *The Retired Mans Meditations* and *A Healing Question*. Close to the end of 1655, Cromwell sent Vane a personal letter, which Vane responded to with some affinity.

I desire not to be insensible of the civility intended mee in it by the first hand, which accordingly I desire you to represent in the fittest manner you please, from one who upon those primitive grounds of publick-spiritedness and sincere love to our country and the godly party in it, am still the same as ever, both in true friendship to his person, and in unchangeable fidelity to the cause so solemnly engaged in by us.<sup>92</sup>

### *Retired Mans Meditations* (1655)

#### Contemporary and Modern Critiques of Vane’s Hermeneutics

It is quite customary for those who have read Vane’s *Meditations* to either characterize it as esoteric and enigmatic, or spiritually lofty and heaven inspired; positions which reflect appreciation either of the literal or allegorical approaches. In this regard, contemporaries criticized *Meditations*, in part, by screening Vane’s allegorical method through the conventional and more acceptable grammatical-historical approach. Others compared his *Meditations* to his tight and forceful political arguments presented in *A Healing Question* and Commons debates. The nineteenth-century historian Guizot underscored Vane’s seeming contradictions, claiming that he “was at once a politician and a mystic, a clear-headed statesman and a dreamy theologian.”<sup>93</sup> But some simply failed to understand him. Parnham isolates this dearth of scholarship in regards to Vane’s “unreadability.”

Historiographical precedents for such a focus are neither abundant nor consolatory; the link between biblical interpretation and readability has not appeared an obvious one in the received scholarly wisdom about Vane. It has seemed, indeed, that Vane’s works manifest a sorry spectacle of exegetical anarchy, providing as emphatic a reinforcement of his unreadability as any hermeneutic-ignoring plunge into his dogmatic depths.<sup>94</sup>

Richard Baxter, noteworthy for his publicized contempt of Vane’s theological and political views, claimed that his “doctrines were so cloudily formed and expressed, that

<sup>90</sup> Birch, *SP*, vol. 1, 265-266.

<sup>91</sup> Stubbe, *Malice*, 55.

<sup>92</sup> Thurloe, *SP*, vol. 4, 329.

<sup>93</sup> M. Guizot, *History of Richard Cromwell and the Restoration of Charles II*, trans. Andrew R. Scoble, vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1856), 185.

<sup>94</sup> Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian*, 104.

few could understanding them.”<sup>95</sup> Thomas Hall labeled *Meditations* a “vain peece of Learned Nonesense,” while his millennial projections demonstrate how he “wacks and wrests” Scripture “to prove his thousand years reign.”<sup>96</sup> Martin Finch, the only contemporary to direct a pamphlet against Vane's *Meditations*, wrote in *Animadversions* (1656) that he “*hath waded into the deeps of Divinity, possibly so far sometimes as that he cannot feel the ground of Scripture.*”<sup>97</sup> The Earl of Clarendon spoke of Vane as “a perfect enthusiast” who believed himself “the person deputed to reign over the saints upon earth for a thousand years.”<sup>98</sup> Even Vane's preaching and praying, according to Bishop Burnet, was with such “peculiar a darkness,” that he was unable to “find out his meaning in his words,” despite his focused efforts.<sup>99</sup> In his references to Vane in *Magnalia Christiana*, Cotton Mather incorporates the attitude of some eminent persons, such as “Dr. Manton” who sought “the *censure of a wicked book,*” of “the *Mystical Divinity,*” which was “the book of this knight.”<sup>100</sup>

A few sympathetic contemporaries countered these criticisms, the most noteworthy being George Sikes, Vane's biographer, who described him as “a partaker of the Divine Nature, (2 Pet. 1.4.),” and hence “past the skill of humane nature to interpret him,” reasoning that *Meditations* produced “most groundless calumnies of his Person, and gross mistakes of his Doctrine and Principles.”<sup>101</sup> Henry Stubbe, a contemporary admirer and disciple, explained that Vane wrote *Meditations* “not in the perswasive words of human wisdom, . . . but . . . in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit.”<sup>102</sup> An anonymous author of the Epistle to the Reader of Vane's *Two Treatises* believed God had imparted to him the “spiritual view . . . of the heavenly and eternal things themselves,” and had “taken him up in the Holy Mount with Himself, where he saw what he is made to testifie.”<sup>103</sup> Algernon Sidney, his friend and revolutionary parliamentary colleague, stated that Vane “was not a little conversant in human Learning, but th'roly vers'd and skill'd in the Sacred Writings.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Baxter, *RB*, 75.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas Hall, *An Exposition by way of Supplement, on the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Chapters of the Prophecy of Amos* (London, 1661), 582-583.

<sup>97</sup> Martin Finch, *Animadversions Upon Sir Henry Vane's Book Entituled the Retired Mans Meditations* (London, 1656), To the Reader. Finch does not discuss Vane's political readings.

<sup>98</sup> Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, vol. 6, book 6, 167.

<sup>99</sup> Bishop Burnet's *History of His Own Time: The Restoration of Charles II. To The Treaty of Peace At Utrecht, in the Reign of Queen Anne*, new ed. (London, 1838), 108.

<sup>100</sup> Mather, *MCA*, book 2, 124.

<sup>101</sup> Sike, *LDI*, 3. Anthony Wood claims that Sikes was a “thorough-pac'd Sectariat,” while his biography of Vane “contains much canting Divinity and little History relating to the man.” See *IO*, vol. 2, 296.

<sup>102</sup> Stubbe, *Malice*, 7-8.

<sup>103</sup> *Treatises*, Epistle to the Reader.

<sup>104</sup> Sidney, “The Character of Sir Henry Vane,” 279.

Modern biographers and commentators have also tended to indict *Meditations* as bewildering, though some have recognized clear connections between Vane's religious views and political ideas. Ireland noted that "in reading Vane's theological writings, one grasps at the meaning, believes there is meaning, yet it escapes."<sup>105</sup> Willcock asserted that "the singularity of the book consists in the fact that Vane, who could be so perfectly clear and definite in argument, should write in such dark and strange terms." *Meditations* is "baffling to even the most sympathetic reader who opens the volume," and though "it might seem a hopeless task to enunciate the main features of Vane's theosophy; . . . there was a definite spiritual foundation on which his whole political life was based."<sup>106</sup> F.J.C. Hearnshaw claimed similarly, that "the whole of Vane's system of thought is based on religion." Nevertheless, he was quite guarded in his appreciation of Vane's hermeneutical method, claiming he "wrenched text from context, obliterated time, and place, and circumstances of writing." The Holy Spirit was "the discoverer of that mystical and allegorical meaning of the passage of Scripture which was incomparably more important than any meaning that was discernable by the eye of human reason."<sup>107</sup> Adamson and Folland suggest that those "first readers of Vane's book, who must have been looking with sharp eyes for sedition, were disappointed, for their first problem was to understand what in the world Vane was trying to say."<sup>108</sup> Michael Fixler, while disagreeing with Barker's assertion that *Meditations* demonstrated similarities between Milton's and Vane's thought, claimed "the *Meditations* are primarily speculative, and constitute an incredible *melange* of mysticism, prophetic exegesis, political theorising, and veiled apocalyptic fulminations."<sup>109</sup> Rufus Jones lamented similarly, maintaining that Vane "had no sound principle of Scripture interpretation, but allowed his untrained and unformed imagination to run wild"<sup>110</sup> Violet Rowe even conjectured that Vane's "ecstatic prophecies of Christ's thousand year Kingdom," reveal a "certain hysteria, indicating some mental unbalance." She continues, suggesting that his "fall from power in 1653 must have been a cruel blow to his pride," and therefore, "the millenarian views then becoming widely current had a

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<sup>105</sup> William Ireland, *The Life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger With a History of the Events of His Time* (London: E. Nash, 1905), 447. I must confess that this has been my experience.

<sup>106</sup> John Willcock, *Life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, 255-256.

<sup>107</sup> F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *The Life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger, Puritan Idealist in Congregational Worthies Series*, no. 2 (London: Congregational Union of England & Wales, Inc., 1910), 75, 56. See also Roger Howell, "Henry Vane the Younger and the Politics of Religion," *HS* 13, no. 4 (April 1963): 280.

<sup>108</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 325.

<sup>109</sup> Michael Fixler, *Milton and the Kingdoms of God* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 190, note 1.

<sup>110</sup> Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1914), 275.

new attraction for him.”<sup>111</sup> W.K. Jordan, best known for his work on the history of religious toleration in England, commented that though Vane's “religious writings are difficult to understand and are hazy in their texture,” his “treatment of the subject of religious toleration, . . . is clear, precise, and carefully ordered.”<sup>112</sup>

Judson bemoans that “neither the seventeenth - or twentieth-century historian seems to have been aware of the close connection between Vane's religious and political views,” concluding that “their integral relationship should not be ignored by a future biographer.”<sup>113</sup> Blair Worden's observation of the eighteenth century's failure to include Vane in its “pantheon of seventeenth-century patriots,” substantiates Judson's concerns. Vane represented the Rump's “presiding spirit,” and Ludlow, Sidney, and Milton each looked to him as “the single hero of their time.” But Vane's “religion” had propelled him “beyond reclamation” by eighteenth-century historians, as his religious tracts are “opaque, cloudy speculations on the inner life of the spirit and on the Book of Revelation,” and “would have defied even Toland's ingenuity.” Hence, “no non-religious substance could have been extracted from them.”<sup>114</sup>

The distinguished nineteenth-century philosopher Thomas Hill Green believed that Vane's “ideas are worth studying, for they are the best expression of the spirit which struggled into brief and imperfect realization during the commonwealth.” His hermeneutics contained “a most involved phraseology and an allegorizing interpretation of scripture.” If Vane's “secondary gifts had been those of a poet instead of a politician,” they “might have made him the rival of Milton.”<sup>115</sup>

### **Allegorical Method**

Vane confirms in *Meditations* that his hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures is allegorical in nature and encourages readers to consider the full scope of his “leisurely Survey.” He admits that some of the initial chapters are more “theoretical,” “knotty and abstruse,” while others “are more practical and speak directly to the works of God in the consciences of men . . . found very easie and familiar.”<sup>116</sup> His method diverges significantly from the humanist exegesis of the historical and grammatical approach, and was possibly a concerted reaction against it.

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<sup>111</sup> Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, 202.

<sup>112</sup> W.K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England: Attainment of the Theory and Accommodations in Thought and Institutions (1640-1660)* (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1940), 55.

<sup>113</sup> Judson, *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane*, 71-72.

<sup>114</sup> Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations, The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001), 197-198. See also 238-241.

<sup>115</sup> *Collected Works of T.H. Green*, vol. 3, 291.

<sup>116</sup> *RM*, To the Reader.

George Sikes devoted considerable space in his biography to an explanation of the allegorical method, even equating aspersions against Vane for employing it with those Origen labored under, “that famous Allegorizer.”<sup>117</sup> Sikes explained that allegorists, like Vane, endured accusations of dislocating the Scriptures from “*their native significancy and intendment*,” while “*wresting and forcing all to their own purpose and conceit, and so frame Divinity Romances, what Conclusions, and Bodies of discourse they please*.”<sup>118</sup>

According to Sikes, the allegorical method rests on the signification of types, which represent a “more excellent” concept or person, and “pitching singly and expressly on the spiritual and mystical substance, the more excellent person or thing that is to be understood.” Consequently, “Christ is typified and represented by other persons, who when they are spoken of in the capacity and intendment, some of the expressions outpace the shadow, and are not all applicable, save meerly and singly to the very person of the Messiah.”<sup>119</sup>

The method also denies that human reason, in its degerenate sinful state, has the capacity to interpret the Scriptures properly. Sikes states that “*the whole Scripture*” is “*an Allegory, in case it be presumed to speak intelligibly to humane understanding*.” In this regard, the allegorical nature of the text is testified to by its own message, that “things spiritual and eternal, things not seen, (2 Cor. 4.18. Heb. 11.1.),” are “not at all immediately and in themselves discernable to meer humane understanding.” As 1 Cor. 2:14 indicates, “*The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*.” “Spiritual things” themselves cannot be adequately conveyed through words, which, even “in the original language,” can only communicate “natural things.” God then “must condescend to gratifie the capacities and understandings of men by presenting spiritual and heavenly things through such natural, earthly Mediums, as are suitable and adequate objects to humane understanding.”<sup>120</sup> Words are but “signifiers of natural, first creation things,” which in turn, “are but the types, letters, shadows, resemblances, rhetorical figures, and significant expressions of spiritual, heavenly, new-creation things.” Sikes exclaims that “if this be true, what can the main bulk of Scripture be, but an Allegory?”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Sikes, *LDV*, 52-73.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

Allegorical interpretation moves from “history, then Mystery.”<sup>122</sup> The Gospel message contains “spiritual things,” which are “discernable onely to the eye of faith, the spiritual discerning, the hearing ear.”<sup>123</sup> Sikes’ comments on the nature of the method enlarges upon Vane’s own antipathy towards reason in the service of interpretation, and the literal method’s replacement of the Spirit’s direct illuminations via a personal union with Christ. As Parnham explained, what Vane found “objectionable. . . . about prevailing literalism was its Spirit-suppressing attachment to the mere letter. In calling upon the Spirit, Vane was presenting himself as a righteous opponent of an entrenched but unrighteous theocracy.”

The clerical monopolization of biblical exegesis was doubly pernicious. In the first place, spiritual revelation and not clerical ordination qualified the interpreter to pursue the exegetical task. . . . In the second place, the powerful backing that clerical exegetes received from the civil magistrate would have dire consequences for the soteriological health of the nation. The magistrate, here, found use for the clergy in ousting Christ from his rightful rule over Christian consciences.<sup>124</sup>

Vane articulated a hermeneutic in antipathy of clerical literalism for interpretive liberty, as well as liberty of conscience.

### Spiritual Union with Christ

Winship expressed concern that *Meditations* “has been ignored in studies of the free grace controversy,” though “it is the only surviving document of any length from a Boston lay voice explicating, on its own terms,” the doctrine of “union with Christ.”<sup>125</sup> Vane’s understanding of this intimate spiritual union resulting in the indwelling of Christ is a formative component of his hermeneutical method.<sup>126</sup>

*Meditations* takes the reader through various doctrinal dichotomies, dualities and divisions, such as the first and second creations and covenants, and Christ’s first and second appearances; types which stand for the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. Parnham believes Vane “constructed the full body of his theological writings on the basis of this kind of progressivist hermeneutic – so suitable an interpretive

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 68, 72.

<sup>124</sup> Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian*, 117-118, 120. Parnham believes that Vane was influenced by the exegesis of John Saltmarsh, and together, they were attacking a type of clerical literalism. See 25. Parnham did not state that Vane was completely abandoning the letter of the text, but thought he was pursuing “a middle ground between the aims of extreme literalism and extreme spiritualism.” See 104.

<sup>125</sup> Winship, *Making Heretics*, 87.

<sup>126</sup> It has been assumed that Vane wrote one tract, now missing, entitled *Of Love and Union With God*. It is possible that he wrote this in New England and later incorporated elements of it into his *Meditations*. Wood did not seem to know anything about its printing or where it could be located. See *AO*, vol. 2, 295.

groundwork for rumination on the consummative relation of the covenant of grace to the covenant of works.”<sup>127</sup> These two covenants also incorporate the hermeneutical differences between the literal (letter) and natural (outward) methods with the allegorical and spiritual (inward).

Vane read Isaiah 42 and 49 as signifying Christ as “*the Covenant*,” who enters “any soul,” “by becoming the received *Lord and Christ* in that heart.” The resulting consummation is a “participation and fellowship with him in spirit, by the power and presence of himself there,” intimacy the Israelites never experienced since they were “according to the first Covenant,”<sup>128</sup> and “received Christ thus in part only,” as “perfection through him” comes through “his grave and resurrection.”<sup>129</sup> These are, according to Isaiah 59:21 “the true spiritual seed and chosen ones of God,” who “receive Christ not in part only, . . . but in whole,” and acquire “over and above, that which excels, possessing and enjoying the riches of both covenants.”

*As for me, this is my covenant with them saith the Lord, My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of that mouth of thy seeds seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.*<sup>130</sup>

This second covenant, or covenant of grace, is an “everlasting covenant” whereby “Christ is given and received in whole,” resulting in a “unity of mind” with the Father, and a righteousness “in all his operations after the tenor of the law,” accomplished “through his indwelling spirit and presence.” Christ’s “entire gift of himself,” allows “the mind of man to be of *one heart* and one way with him throughout,” just as Christ is one with the Father.<sup>131</sup> Vane is not suggesting “that the Saints by this union with Christ” are “deified” or “Christed, but have the place only of his *Bride and Spouse*,”<sup>132</sup> and become “one seed with Christ,” affecting his “inhabitation and abode” in the soul.”<sup>133</sup>

Christ also transforms those under the second covenant by “*renewing them in their minds, through the putting on of the new man, to the exercising as well their spiritual senses.*”<sup>134</sup> Parnham explains that “the covenant of grace was the realm of the greatest efficacy of the Spirit,” and “where spiritual gifts, among them higher cognition, were conveyed to the saint.” The ability to interpret “the sacred writings was a benefit

<sup>127</sup> Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane, Theologian*, 118.

<sup>128</sup> *RM*, 117-118.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 120, 121.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 122, 123.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

of regeneration,” and only “the true saints were fully qualified to interpret Scripture.”<sup>135</sup> Vane had “differentiated the cognitive capacity of the natural man from that of the true saint,” who partook of a “further revelation via the Spirit - the “inward” and “unwritten” Word or “indwelling” Christ. Only the saint, among Vane’s various types of Christian, could bring the Spirit to the letter.”<sup>136</sup>

Vane reveals this nexus between spiritual union and authoritative allegorical exegesis in his *Pilgrimage into the Land of Promise*. He posited the existence of “inward and spiritual senses,” through which a “man of God sees, heares, tastes, savours and handles the word of God.” Since “words themselves are divine, even words of spirit and life,” they can only be “perceaved then by sense suited to their nature, spirituall senses.” These Vane “distinguished from those of the animalish, outward man of the soule, which is not at all skilled in that manner of knowing and discerning.” From the activation of these senses “proceeds the spirituall tast, savour and approbation of those divine words, that are the significations of Gods will and law to us.” Only “experienced men, skilled in the words of truth,” can reveal “the true and full significancy of divine oracles.” Such an approach “is the much more excellent way of understanding the Scriptures,” and even acknowledged by the Apostle Paul, who desired “that your love may abound in knowledge and in all judgment, or in every spirituall sense.”<sup>137</sup>

### **Inward and Spiritual Meaning versus Letter of Human Reason**

Vane’s object in *Meditations* was to extract out of those “mystical and dark prophesies,” their “inward and spiritual meaning,” without intending “to exclude thereby their literal and historical sense, but to shew how well both may stand together.” His “essays,” Vane explains, “deserve to be born with, considering how much of the one sort is made extant by many pens already, and how little of the other.”<sup>138</sup>

Vane believed that the divine nature of Scripture dictated its meaning, and hence required a divine process of interpretation which progressed beyond the mere human inspection of its words, grammar, and history. Scripture was not, “of any private interpretation,” but demanded “the inspiration of the living WORD, to open and declare the true and full meaning of them.”<sup>139</sup> Since regenerate believers internalized the inspiring presence of the spirit of Christ, the indwelling Word, they alone were spiritually sensitized to enter into that process.

<sup>135</sup> Parnham, *Sir Henry Vane Theologian*, 103, 105, 119.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>137</sup> *Pilgrimage*, 49. Vane quotes part of Philippians 1:9 and references it.

<sup>138</sup> *RM*, To the Reader.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

That then which doeth enable to the work of the Ministry, thus considered, is the *shining forth of the Truth in the face of Jesus Christ*, by his indwelling presence *in the heart*, comparing it self in the mind and understanding of the Saint, with the testimony which is given of it self in the Outward Word: And by discerning the perfect Analogie and Harmony that springs up between both, answering one another as face answers face, the believer receives such certainty and satisfaction in the mind of God made known, as warrants him in the delivery and declaration thereof unto others. This, as the safest and best rule, in judging and declaring truth from the Scriptures.<sup>140</sup>

This process of illumination is dependent upon Christ's internal presence and therefore union with him, producing an understanding testified to by the external word, or Scripture. Truth results from a correspondence or congruity between the "faces," of the internal Spirit of Christ and the external word.

John 5:39 may have augmented Vane's Christ-centered hermeneutic. "The Scriptures," he explains, "are not properly the inward and living WORD, but have a testimony and expression peculiarly their own." We are to "*search the scriptures, they are they which testifie of me*, saith Christ . . . either as a servant and *preparer of the way* unto the living WORD, as those that literally testifie of it, pointing at Christ, the life and spirit of them; or else they are to be considered as one and the same with the living WORD, in perfect analogie and harmony." Christ himself, "as breathing into them, becomes their life, and is made use of as the key to open them; so that both together make up one and the same divine oracle." To read the "Scriptures in the letter only," results in "a meer *private interpretation* and humane sense put upon them," and a type "of prophecying that hath its rise out of the *divination of mans own heart*, or the single ability of the natural mind, exercised in them." Such an approach represents man following "*his own spirit* and not Gods, *Ezek. 13.2.3. &c.*"<sup>141</sup>

The very method of inspiration, which resulted in inscription, was essential for interpretation.<sup>142</sup> Vane's "key" to explicating the Scriptures is the appropriation of the "unwritten Word" or Spirit of Christ, who inspires the text with the life of truth. Christ is the risen word, and "if the body of the Scriptures deserve the name (as they do) of the word of God, their spirit and Original deserves it much more, and is much more eminently of authority and use, for the effecting of all that is or can be done by them." From Hebrews 4:12, with its description of the "*WORD of God*" as a "*discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*," Vane understood the Holy Spirit to be a "person."<sup>143</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>142</sup> *Pilgrimage*, 6-7.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 20.

In *Zeal Examined*, Vane also explains that the interpretation of the Bible through “*natural Reason*” will only yield “the *Letter of Scripture, or Precepts of men*.”<sup>144</sup> Rather, “*knowing of things according to the Principle, and not according to the outward appearance*” is what “*makes the true measure of all righteous judgement*.” He typifies the differences in these two approaches by signifying “Mans Day” as a judgment “in the Light of *thy naturall understanding of the Letter of the Scriptures*,” and the “Lords Day,” as a judgment by the “*light of his Spirit, which being the true Originall of Scripture*” proceeds to “*a right understanding thereof, and of all other Spirituall Truth*.” Vane claims that Christ himself emphasized the superiority of principle and inward substance “*by his precept*” as well as “*practice . . . when he spake of John the Baptist, as of Elias that was to come, because he acted in the same Spirit and Principle*.”<sup>145</sup> Vane’s method moves from “the *Type to the Substance*,”<sup>146</sup> and by mining Scripture with this interpretive approach, he attempted to extract the “*spirituall understanding of things*.”<sup>147</sup>

The famous natural philosopher Robert Boyle was not so generous as Sikes in his comments on Vane’s allegorizing tendencies. According to Sir Peter Pett, Boyle attended one of Vane’s home preaching sessions while he was “in the height of his authority in the state,” and listened to his allegorical exposition of Daniel 12:2: “*And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*.” Vane, finding greater substance reflected in the resurrection than simply bodies, inferred “that many false doctrines being then likewise revived, should, by the power of truth, be then doomed to *shame and everlasting contempt*.”<sup>148</sup> Boyle apparently stood and criticized Vane’s allegorizing technique like a reformed humanist predisposed to grammatical-historical exegesis. Since Daniel’s passage was “the clearest one in all the old testament for the proof of the resurrection, we ought not to suffer the meaning of it to evaporate into allegory.” Pett records that Boyle was ready to demonstrate that “the plain and genuine meaning of those words in the Prophets is to assert the resurrection of dead bodies. . . . both out of the words of the text and context in the original language, and from the best expositors both Christian and Jewish.”<sup>149</sup> Boyle sought clarification from Vane as to whether his interpretation was “designed by him only in the way of occasional meditations from

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<sup>144</sup> ZE, 23-24.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. To the Reader.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., To The Reader.

<sup>148</sup> Thomas Birch, ed. *Life of the Honourable Robert Boyle* (London: A. Millar, 1744), 295-296. See also Flora Masson, *Robert Boyle, A Biography* (London: Constable & Company LTD., 1914), 195-196.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 296.

those words in *Daniel*,” and therefore, not intended “to enervate the literal sense as their genuine one.” Vane apparently responded that his was indeed of “such occasional meditations, which he thought edifying to the people: and declared, that he agreed, that the literal sense of the words was the resurrection of dead bodies.”<sup>150</sup>

### **Contexts of Vane's Political Contributions to Interregnum Politics**

#### ***Zeal Examined* (1652)**

As already indicated, Vane would return from New England to become a highly respected Parliamentarian, and the fact that the duty of settling the Bill for an Equal Representative devolved to him speaks to his fast maturing authority. His pursuit of a policy of liberty of conscience would take more formal form in his *Zeal Examined* (1652), written in the context of the toleration debates church reform.<sup>151</sup>

John Owen, along with Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye and Sidrach Simpson, among others, put forth a short petition to be debated in the Committee for Propagating the Gospel on February 11.<sup>152</sup> Their request was nothing short of ecclesiastical reform, which included the prevention of the publication and propagation of heresies and blasphemies during church assemblies. The Proposals sparked numerous petitions and tracts of protest, one of which was *The Fourth Paper* (1652) written by Roger Williams, which would be followed by his *The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody* (1652), *The Hireling Ministry None of Christs* (1652) and *The Examiner Defended* (1652).<sup>153</sup> Carolyn Polizzotto notes in her *The Campaign Against The Humble Proposals of 1652* (1987) that “the Independent divines made it clear, once for all, that their more extreme brethren, the sects, could no longer look to them for support.” In submitting their petition, they had “allied themselves finally and irrevocably with the Cromwellian regime.”<sup>154</sup> *Zeal Examined* was part of the corpus of tracts written to engage the *Humble Proposals*. It confronted head on the assumption that the Magistrate is empowered by God to punish heresy and idolatry, and responded to all those “arguments from

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 297.

<sup>151</sup> Vane did not sign his name to this tract to apparently prevent potential readers from either being ill-motivated in their examination of it, or avoidance. He explains that “we are *apt* to receive or reject *things*, as we have a good or ill opinion of the Man from whom they come,” and therefore, kept his name anonymous for the reader’s sake, and “the Truth.” See To the Reader. For an excellent argument favoring Vane’s authorship, see Carolyn Polizzotto’s “The Campaign Against The Humble Proposals of 1652,” *JEH* 38, no. 4 (October 1987): 572-581.

<sup>152</sup> Since the title of the petition is extremely lengthy, only a very abbreviated short title is given here, with a more substantial one in the bibliography: *The Humble Proposals of Mr. Owen, Mr. Tho. Goodwin, Mr. Nye, Mr. Sympson, and Other Ministers, Who Presented the Petition to the Parliament, and Other Persons, Febr. 11. Under Debate by a Committee this 31. of March, 1652. for the Furtherance and Propagation of the Gospel in this Nation* (London, 1652).

<sup>153</sup> Polizzotto, “The Campaign Against The Humble Proposals,” 569, 571.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 569.

Scripture and reason which had been voiced against liberty of conscience ever since 1644.” Polizzotto explains that Milton’s memorable Sonnet to Vane was in response to “something sufficiently outstanding” he had written, which was this tract.<sup>155</sup>

### *A Healing Question Propounded* (1656)

On 13 March 1656, the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell issued a Proclamation calling for a national day of fasting and prayer “that the Lord would pardon the iniquities both of Magistrate and the people in these Lands, wherein the Magistrate desires first to take shame to himself and find out his provocations.”<sup>156</sup> His appeal was triggered by the catastrophe of his campaign at Hispaniola in July 1655, which also testified to his tendency to measure God’s favor and providential presence in military successes.<sup>157</sup> Cromwell would have interpreted this disastrous military campaign as essentially a failure of England’s godly armies to conquer Spanish America, a sign of God’s wrath. His defeat was a shameful portrayal of “an ill-prepared, ill-disciplined force,” the likes of which found no parallel in his military career. When news of defeat reached him, he locked himself in his room.<sup>158</sup> In the Proclamation, Cromwell explained that the abortive West Indies endeavor may have been a result of a failure in the “manner wherewith this business hath been undertaken, or that the Lord sees some abomination, or accursed thing, by which he is provoked to appear against Us.” Cromwell seemed to typify himself as the “Joshua” commander, leading England’s army into God’s battle, which might explain his decision to frame his appeal around the sin of Achan. He also entreated the Lord to “hasten the time of the pulling down of Antichrist, and expelling out of these Lands the unclean Spirit.”<sup>159</sup> Though Cromwell called for fasting and prayer, Henry Vane would respond with a pamphlet, which identified the “accursed thing,” and offered a new commonwealth model as the means by which the “Antichrist” could be dispelled.

Sir Henry Vane responded anonymously to the Protector’s Proclamation on May 12 with his *A Healing Question*,<sup>160</sup> offering an articulate answer to Cromwell’s

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 578.

<sup>156</sup> *A Declaration of His Highness, Inviting the People of England to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation* (London, 1656), in *Proclamations and Ordinances Put Forth by Oliver During the Years 1653, 4, 5, 6.*, no. 122, section II.

<sup>157</sup> Blair Worden, “Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan,” in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best, eds. *History, Society, and the Churches: Essays in Honor of Owen Chadwick* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 125, 129.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>159</sup> *A Declaration of His Highness, Inviting the People of England to a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation*, no. 122, section VII.

<sup>160</sup> Vane does not attach his name, though it is definitely his. Abbot claims that the copy Vane first sent to Cromwell via General Fleetwood was returned without comments, which Vane apparently

insistence that the godly seek out the provocations of the Lord in the commonwealth camp, and an unexpected civil model which addressed the broader context of the constitutional crises itself, including the Protector's own maladministration.<sup>161</sup> Cromwell's distinct executive feature of dissolving parliaments conflicted with Vane's esteem for them as the supreme representative body and protector of civil and religious liberties, explaining possibly his refusal to refer to Cromwell as Protector, or Richard for that matter. He would accuse Cromwell of indulging in the pervasive and persecuting spirit of the Antichrist to the detriment of the saints, and promoting the work of the devil through a civil throne transformed to the service of the beast. He was the Achan in the camp, and Vane's subtle accusations of treachery and subversion woven into his *A Healing Question*, energized in part by his dismay over the Rump Parliament's dissolution, would eventually land him in prison.<sup>162</sup>

*A Healing Question* represented Vane's systematic republican political tract, which unnerved the Protectorate. Cromwell's intelligence chief, John Thurloe, conveyed concerns over its initial popularity and Vane's apparent determination to see it realized in a 16 June 1656 letter to Cromwell:

Sir Henry Vane hath lately put forth a new form of government, plainly laying aside thereby that which now is. I suppose somebody might have sent it to your lordship. At the first coming out of it, it was applauded, but now upon second thoughts it is rejected, as being impracticable, and coming in truth at the setting up the long parliament again. But all men judge, that he hath some very good hopes, that he shows so much courage. His name is not to it, but he doth acknowledge it to be his. It is certain, it doth behove us to have a watchful eye upon that interest. I do not desire to have this part of my letter seen.<sup>163</sup>

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understood as tacit approval to print. See *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. 4, 231. See also Ludlowe, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 577. Vane explains similarly in *Proceeds*, claiming that the Council had actually received the book which in turn was printed in the usual way. See 4. Vane's anonymous publication may have had little to do with fear of reprisals since Cromwell had already been apprised of his authorship through official channels. It might be possible to assume then that Vane was motivated to write *A Healing Question* anonymously for the same reasons he wrote *Zeal Examined*. His tract had been reprinted in 1660, with "the stationers advertisement to the reader, upon his reprinting this discourse at this time," explaining "but the main substance of it may be found very seasonable and of much use at this day: Its therefore offered to they perusal." See *Collection of Scarce and Valuable tracts, in the most Interesting and Entertaining Subjects, by that of the Late Lord Somers*, ed. Walter Scott, 2nd ed., vol. 6 (London, 1811), 315.

<sup>161</sup> For a discussion regarding the relationship between Vane's proposal and Cromwell's appeal, see David Armitage, "The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire," *HJ* 35 (1992): 545.

<sup>162</sup> According to Francisco Giavarina, the Venetian resident in England for the Doge and Senate, Cromwell "expressed his personal wish that men should be allowed liberty of conscience, except for the Roman Catholic faith. Knowing that the members greatly resented the exile of Sir [Henry] Vane and the imprisonment of other older parliamentarians considered suspect, he expressed his intention to tell them another time of the motive which had led him to take this step." But, no such explanation has yet been found. See *CSPM, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1655-1656*, vol. 30, ed. Allen B. Hinds (London, 1930), 266. The nature of Vane's imprisonment is found in *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. William Bray, vol. 1 (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1907), 320.

<sup>163</sup> Thurloe, *SP*, vol. 5, 121-122.

The Council, which summoned Vane over the contents of his tract, indicted it as “seditious” and “tending to the disturbance of the present government and the peace of the commonwealth.”<sup>164</sup>

Henry Cromwell sarcastically contrasted the civil aspirations of Vane, whose “purpose was a republic,” and that “every Englishman should be a King,” with Cromwell’s intention “that there should be but one King in England.”<sup>165</sup> Sikes choose to summarize Vane’s arguments by highlighting his trademark political principle, “that the Magistrate ought to keep within the proper sphere of Civil Jurisdiction, and not intermeddle with mens Consciences by way of Imposition and Force, in matters of Religion and divine Worship.”<sup>166</sup> John Rogers in his *Diapoliteia* saw heavens hand in its composition, that it contained “such a Healing *Spirit* and *Frame*,” that “indeed I do think there is in this little *Treatise*, such *Apples of Gold*, if well considered, as were taken from the *Lord Jesus*, that Tree of Life, Prov. 3. 18. *whose Leaves are for the Healing of the Nations* Rev. 22.1.2.”<sup>167</sup>

Most modern historians comment positively on Vane’s tract. Charles Wentworth Upham considered it “one of the most remarkable political papers, ever written,” which “contrasts the great principles of civil and religious liberty, in a complete exposition,” and “develops and illustrates, . . . the idea of a written constitution or body of fundamental laws by which the government itself is to be controlled, restrained, and limited.”<sup>168</sup> John Hughes considered it “a mystical millenarian tract.”<sup>169</sup> Zagorin believed that Harrington’s *Oceana* and Vane’s *A Healing Question* were the most critical pamphlets which supplied “some solid alternative around which the opponents of kingship and protectorate might, perhaps, be able to unite.” But he cautions that though Vane “was one of the revolution’s great political leaders, . . . he ought not, perhaps, to be called a republican, though this is how he is usually characterized.” Zagorin mentions Vane’s principles of “the supremacy of Parliament,” “allegiance to liberty of conscience, and a contractual theory of government,”<sup>170</sup> but nothing of his political theology in deriving them.

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<sup>164</sup> *Proceeds*, 5.

<sup>165</sup> Quoted in Charles Wentworth Upham, *Life of Sir Henry Vane, Fourth Governor of Massachusetts* in *The Library of American Biography: Conducted by Jared Sparks*, vol. 4 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1856), 281.

<sup>166</sup> Sikes, *LDV*, 98.

<sup>167</sup> Rogers, *Diapoliteia*, 41.

<sup>168</sup> Upham, *Life of Sir Henry Vane*, 250-251.

<sup>169</sup> John H. F. Hughes, “The Commonwealth Divided: Edmund Ludlowe, Sir Henry Vane and the Good Old Cause 1653-1659,” *SC*, 5, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 58, 55. Vane’s *Healing* hardly seems mystical or substantially millenarian in comparison to his *Meditations*, or later writings.

<sup>170</sup> Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution*, 152.

Vane's approach in *A Healing Question* is also quite systematic and straightforward, lacking the more circuitous and "leisurely survey" of the *Meditations*. But this is a strictly political piece, and the Postscript reveals that his primary motive for writing was to address the Proclamation as to the conviction and provocation of the Lord.<sup>171</sup> He clarifies further in *The Proceeds of the Protector*, that the invitation to a "free and open profession of a ready subjection of mind" was the "chief motive" which inspired him to respond.<sup>172</sup>

### *A Needful Corrective or Ballance in Popular Government* (1659)

Vane responded to Harrington's *Prerogative* of June, 1658, with a *Needful Corrective*, a personal rejoinder to its open invitation as to "how the commonwealth of Oceana may be examined or answered by divers sorts of men," such as a scholar, godly man, learned commonwealthsman, or rational man.<sup>173</sup> Vane again writes anonymously, and without dating the letter, referring to himself only as the "advocate for the godly Man."<sup>174</sup> Pocock identified in this tract "a difference in outlook already visible in any comparison between *Oceana* and *The Healing Question*," which he probably wrote in May 1659.<sup>175</sup> Had Vane directed his response earlier in the year, Baxter would have most certainly employed it as literary fodder against him in *A Key for Catholicks*, published 1 February 1659. Baxter's 22 June 1659 publication of *A Holy Commonwealth* confirms the more favorable early May date of Vane's letter, as Baxter explains in his "Addition to the Preface" that he had recently acquired a copy of it, along with Harrington's *A Discourse Upon This Saying*, dated 16 May 1659, which was directed to the Army and their *Humble Petition* of May 13.<sup>176</sup> Given these benchmark publication dates, and the contents of Vane's letter, he probably wrote *Needful Corrective* in response to Harrington's *Discourse*, but via the open-ended invitation of *Prerogative*.

Despite the highly inflammatory public pamphlets penned against *Oceana*, and *Prerogative*, accompanied by Harrington's own impassioned responses, Vane

<sup>171</sup> *HQ*, Postscript. Ruth Mayer's understanding of the Postscript led her to conclude that Vane's tract represented a "political polemic" as opposed to "political theory." See "Real and Practicable, not Imaginary and Notional: Sir Henry Vane, *A Healing Question*, and the Problems of the Protectorate," *Albion* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 43.

<sup>172</sup> *Proceeds*, 4. C. Firth examined the authenticity of Ludlowe's accusation that Cromwell attempted to secure Vane's political allegiance by threatening legal action against his forest walks near his estate in Raby Castle after his release from Carisbrook. See "Cromwell and Sir Henry Vane," *EHR*, 26, no. 104 (October 1911): 751-754.

<sup>173</sup> *Prerogative*, 496.

<sup>174</sup> *NC*, 2.

<sup>175</sup> See Pocock, *Works*, 96 and 109.

<sup>176</sup> Woolrych comments on the dating issue in "The Good Old Cause and the Fall of the Protectorate," *CHJ* 13 (1957): 154 n. 112.

approached him personally, and humbly, perceived him as an ally, and expressed high regard for his work. He even claimed to “conntenance the essentials of the Government” Harrington proposed, embracing with him “those principles of common right and freedome.” But Vane’s goal, in contrast to Harrington’s, was to “perfect the principles of true freedom, which are taught by ancient Prudence, to the rendring us a holy as well as a free people.”<sup>177</sup> His response represents a gentle though clever admonition, qualifying their political differences with subtle correctives and counterbalances with Harrington’s own political language.

### Vane’s Biblical Principles of Government

#### Apocalypticism and Millennial Expectations: Eschatological Reading of the OT

Vane devotes his final chapter of *Meditations* to the inauguration and nature of Christ’s thousand-year reign, though the entire treatise rings with millennial expectations. Saints, according to Vane, will rule “as *KINGS and PRIESTS reigning with Christ a thousand years*” in a creation restored “to its Primitive purity.”<sup>178</sup> Satan’s thousand-year imprisonment will end his unremitting attempts to lure men away from the lordship of Christ, including “publick persons in their Ministry of Rule and Government over one another,”<sup>179</sup> and with it, the pervasive spirit of the Antichrist. The second beast of Revelation 13:11 was of the same unrighteous substance as “the *little horne*” of Daniel 7:8. This beast impersonates “visible Saintship,” by employing “the power of his Rule and Government in the Magistracy,” to craft “Lawes and Rules in Gods worship under colour of warrant from the Scriptures, making himself Umpire of all controversies in matters of Religion, and declarer of Heresies, Blasphemies, and the like.”<sup>180</sup>

Vane’s scriptural reading of antichristian tyranny rests on his hermeneutical pillar of extracting inner principles as precursors to outward expressions. In *Zeal Examined*, Vane states that “*this principle of Force in matters of RELGION,*” or the private or collective capacity of men “*to impose their Determinations on others in matters of meer Religious concernment*” represents the “*bitter Root of Antichristian Persecution,*” and “*Principle of Antichrist*” which “*makes the great Whore which is charged with the bloud of Prophets and of Saints, and of all that were slain on the Earth.*” Daniel’s description of four beasts in chapter 7 as four monarchies embodied “the same Antichristian Rule and Power” as the “one beast” of Revelation 13, which

<sup>177</sup> NC, 2-3.

<sup>178</sup> RM, 403.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 356.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 368-369.

represents the throne of the Dragon himself, and the epitome of global tyrannical governance. The dynamics of antichristian tyranny are revealed in its essence, and most “*grosse Form*” by the Holy Spirit through Daniel and Revelation as “*the Combination of its Ecclesiasticall and Civil Jurisdiction,*” to provoke men to “*hate her, and find out her Principles,*” and “*to discover her afterward in any other Form wherein she shall act.*”<sup>181</sup> The pervasiveness and expansiveness of such power, “was signified unto *Nebuchadnezzar*” in Daniel 4, “under the similitude of a great tree. . . . whose height reached to the heavens, and the sight thereof to all the earth.” Though Antichrist may take on a “variety of formes and administrations,” they emanate from the “same evil spirit and corrupt interest,” personified in “this universal Rule and Dominion throughout the whole earth,” and evidenced “by the meanes of civil Rule and Government, domineering over the Saints in the world, and alwayes *making warre with them.*”<sup>182</sup> Vane respectfully qualified his reading of these passages, as he did not want to be understood “to exclude the literal or historical sense, and common acceptance of the four Monarchies,” but which he assumed corresponded with his interpretation. But Christ will rule “*in the Kingdomes of men, (and not the Prince of darknesse.) giving them to whomsoever he will,* in a subserviency unto himselfe, as restored to their Primitive constitution and perfection.”<sup>183</sup> This climactic event culminates in the “triumphing Church of the NEW JERUSALEM, and universal worldly Government or Magisterial Dominion in this true COMMON-WEALTH OF ISRAEL.”<sup>184</sup>

Vane exhorted Cromwell to settle England’s government after the heavenly pattern in *A Healing Question*, and even challenged his negligence of this civil calling, as well as the lawful institution of his magisterial authority, and placed his administration within the forces of Antichrist. Vane’s republican model would prevent earthly civil rulers from acquiring authority reserved for Christ and his end time saints, but which nevertheless was an earthly type of the heavenly primitive polity to come.<sup>185</sup> Towards the close of *Needful Corrective*, Vane returns Harrington’s challenge of *Prerogative*’s queries, claiming that the sort of government he proposed could possibly lead “to the setting up of Christ as King throughout the whole Earth, and causing the

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<sup>181</sup> ZE, To the Reader.

<sup>182</sup> RM, 357-359.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 412. For a more comprehensive understanding of Vane’s millenarian views, and his reading of the Bible in this regard, see Vane, *Sir Henry the Younger: Sermons, Expositions on Job, and A Letter of S<sup>r</sup>. H:V<sup>e</sup>. to H:C:Y<sup>e</sup>.*, Margaret Vane her Book Began July 1677, F. 48, D. 41.

<sup>185</sup> RM, 395.

Nations and Kingdomes of this World to become the Kingdomes of our Lord, and of his Christ, in a visible manner here below, for the space of a thousand yeares.”<sup>186</sup>

### Primitive Magistracy and the Government of Christ

In chapter 24 of *Meditations*, Vane articulated a political theory of magistracy which incorporates distinct terminology, such as “the constitution of civil magistracy,” “the primitive pattern of government,” and the “restoration of righteous judgment.” These represent political languages with apocalyptic, millennial, and eschatological emphases wrapped within the historical paradigm of war between the forces of the Lord and Antichrist.

Vane described his doctrine of civil magistracy as a “primitive constitution and right exercise,” which is part of “the Reign and government of Christ over men, in this world,”<sup>187</sup> and bears a millennial description of a godly republic of regenerated saints. This primitive pattern of magistracy serves the “holy designes and glorious interest of Christ and his people,” in anticipation of the “restitution that all things are to be brought forth in at last.”<sup>188</sup> This restorative apocalyptic event of restitution is depicted in Revelation 19:15 when Christ establishes “his earthly *Throne, wherein he will sit and rule the Nations as with a rod of iron,*” and Daniel 7:14, 26-27, which describes the destruction of all dominion contrary to his kingdom service, and the establishment of saintly rule.<sup>189</sup>

### Limited Civil Jurisdiction: King David’s Prophecy – 2 Samuel 23: 3-7

Vane believed that Moses’ forecast of a successor prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15, 19 referred to Christ, while Isaiah 32:1-2 designated him as a “King” who “*shall reigne in righteousness, and Princes shall Rule in judgement.*” Therefore, as Vane explains, it is by “faith” that one “sees or may see an image and Rule in Christ, *by whom Kings Rule and Princes decree justice.*” Magistracy then, in its primitive institution and right exercise, is to model Christ’s pattern of just rule. Vane qualifies the nature of such rule further through David’s prophecy in 2 Samuel 23:3-7: “*He that rules over men must be just, ruling in the feare of God.*” In this regard, primitive magistracy relates to authority which is over man in his outward circumstances alone. David’s administration did not depict the full nature of “this Rule which was in him as in the type,” but rather, “he foresaw it and accordingly prophesied of it as a thing to come.”<sup>190</sup> This “right

<sup>186</sup> NC, 10-11.

<sup>187</sup> RM, 383.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. See Fixler’s summation of Chapter 24 in *Milton and the Kingdoms of God*, 191.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 386.

exercise" of magistracy is defined as "*he that rules over men must be JUST, ruling in the fear of God,*" or "a rule over men which is Gods Ordinance," or the "outward concerns of men, in their bodily converse in this world." Christ has reserved to himself a "distinct jurisdiction from the outward exercise of Rule by man."<sup>191</sup>

For when the Scripture saith that the Rule of Magistracy is over men, we are to understand by this terme, the proper sphere, bounds, and limits of that office: which is not to intrude itself into the office and proper concerns of Christs inward Government and rule in the conscience . . . but is to content it self with the outward man, and to intermeddle with the concernes thereof in reference to the converse which man ought to have with man, upon the grounds of natural just and right, in *things appertaining to this life*; wherein the Magistrate or higher power is not only the proper Judge, but hath the right of coercion thereunto, if not obeyed.<sup>192</sup>

Vane's theory of just rule, defined as limited jurisdiction over man's external acts, was not extracted from David's administration, but his prophetic pronouncement. Green remarks that Vane's "doctrine of natural right and government by consent, . . . was the result of the recognition of the 'rule of Christ in the natural conscience,' in the elemental reason, in virtue of which man is properly a law to himself." It is from this "the principle of universal toleration" was concluded.<sup>193</sup> Vane's unique political reading of David's prophecy contradicted the standard use of him as the model of righteous civil rule, a common alternate reading among his political opponents. As Parnham observes:

David was useful to Vane not for his exemplary historical rulership, but for his offering a vision for the future. Vane's David was not Hobbes' sovereign, the possessor of 'full Power, both *temporall* and *spirituall*'; . . . . Although Vane shared friendship and theological ideas with John Cotton, he did not sympathize with Cotton's insistence that David and other Old Testament magistrates functioned as 'patternes and examples to Christian Magistrates' in maintaining the 'care of the welfare both of Church and Commonwealth'.<sup>194</sup>

But neither was Vane's political employment of King David an attempt to reinstate the "magisterial 'primordium' delivered in the Old Testament." Rather, "Vane's David adverts to a future that is severed from the ways of the past – an apocalyptic grasping of the new rather than a primitivist reinstalling of the old."<sup>195</sup> Vane's focus upon "Old

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 387-388.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> *Collected Works of Thomas Green*, vol. 3, 296.

<sup>194</sup> Parnham, "Politics Spun out of Theology & Prophecy," 79-80. See also 82.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 80. In note 110, Parnham differentiates between Vane's idea of Primitive Magistracy from that of Primitivism. "Vane can appeal to the 'primitive constitution and right exercise' of magistracy; but it becomes clear that the primitivism to which he refers is qualitative rather than chronological, and that it is to be manifested in the apocalyptic future – Christ's kingdom at the parousia (the second coming) – rather than reinstalled from the Old Testament past. Vane seeks the arrival of an end, not the reversion to a beginning." For an excellent study of the nature of primitivism and its identification with the reading of the Scriptures, see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives*.

Testament rulers" related to the "content of their prophecy, not the details of their governance."<sup>196</sup> In this regard, his primitive magistracy countered a primitivism, which sought to reestablish the civil structures and laws of the Jewish Polity.

### **Right Establishment of Primitive Magistracy: Romans 13:1, 1 Peter 2:13 and Acts 17:26**

Vane incorporated two of the most commonly cited NT texts among republicans, royalists, and Presbyterians into his constitutional theory. Romans 13:1 revealed that civil authorities are "*ordained of God*," while 1 Peter 2:13-14 described them as "the *ordinance of man*." Their combination supplied the necessary political "ingredients . . . requisite to the setting up of Magistracy amongst men in its right constitution and exercise."<sup>197</sup>

Acts 17:26 established a universal equality of condition among men. Because God created all mankind "*of one blood*," therefore, by "*Gods ordinance*" alone, he has "distinguished and fixed in such different conditions and capacities of Rulers and subjects," to "serve some holy and glorious end of his."<sup>198</sup> Since "magistracy," represents "the good Creature and Ordinance of God" for just rule,<sup>199</sup> subjection must be "rational and voluntary," with subjects "perswaded by the sense of their common good and benefit thereby." This sort of political participation differentiates "just and righteous Rule and Government over men, from a Tyranny and subjection unto private will and lust, which is none of Gods Ordinance, but the abuse of it." Vane cautions that when "lust thus creeps into Magistracie, . . . , it knows how to engender to bondage and tyranny," and represents "no part of the Primitive institution of a right Magistracie."<sup>200</sup>

In *Needful Corrective*, Vane understood government as a "power" instituted as "supreme" and "exercised over Nations or people" to ensure "the good of the whole Body," regardless of the people's status, resorting to Harrington's categories of "servants, Subjects, or Citizens." Civil authorities find their "rise and being" not simply as a result of man's choice, as Harrington would believe, but through "Gods Ordinance and Institution," since "there is no Power but is of God, and the Powers that are" result either directly "from his Authority and Commission, or from his Tolleration and Permission." Vane's interpretation of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 indicated that

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*The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (London; Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 12-49.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 80, 81.

<sup>197</sup> RM, 384.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> RM, 384-385

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 385.

government is “so limited and ordered” by God, “whether it respect the form of their constitution, the force of their operation, or the time of their continuance, as well as the use and end which they serve unto.” In the final analysis, “Power only belongs to God,” though, as to “right” and “exercise” does depend upon man who institutes it “under God.”<sup>201</sup> For Vane, government was divinely ordained, but established through man, leaving him somewhat unimpressed with Harrington’s ballot and rotation.

### **Restoration of Primitive Magistracy or Righteous Rule: Isaiah 1:26 and 60:17-18**

From David’s prophecy, Vane understood the nature of righteous government to be over man and restricted to his external converse alone. But he also understood the advent of this “primitive institution of a right Magistracie,” as a prophetic promise from Isaiah 1:26, which was “to be set up as part of Christ Kingdome, as reduced to its original patterne.” God claims he “*will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Counsellors as at the beginning, afterwards thou shalt be called the CITY OF RIGHTEOUSNESSE.*”<sup>202</sup> Here, Vane’s “original patterne” seems to look backward to a time of righteous rule, but also forward in anticipation of a future restoration, the nature of which he believed Isaiah 60:17-18 described.

*For brasse (says he) I will bring gold, and for yron I will bring silver, and for wood brasse, and for stones yron; I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall be heard no more in thy Land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders, but thou shalt call thy wall salvation, and thy gates praise.*<sup>203</sup>

The political importance which Vane attributed to Isaiah 1:26 is indicated by his further use of it in *Meditations* as proof of a “primitive patterne and Rule” which predates the Mosaic Judicials.<sup>204</sup> He also employs this text with its principles of righteous rule at the conclusion of *Needful Corrective*. He asks Harrington whether or not his proposal is “that righteous and faithful City spoken of, *Isai. I. 26.* to whom her Judges are restored, as at the first, and her Counsellors as at the beginning,” and whether it “be not the most exact platforme of the purest kind of popular Government, and that which hath its foundation and first pattern in the Word of God, in the practice of *Israels* Commonwealth, and so plainly of Divine Creation and Institution.”<sup>205</sup> In this regard, it would seem that Vane’s model commonwealth was a copy or imitation of that divine Jewish pattern of righteous rule which David foresaw as to its right exercise, and Isaiah prophesied as to its impending restoration.

<sup>201</sup> NC, 3

<sup>202</sup> RM, 384-385.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 385.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 386.

<sup>205</sup> NC, 10.

### Christ is Superior to Moses: The Mosaic Judicials and the Original Primitive Pattern

That Vane focused upon the substance of the divinely ordained Jewish Polity as opposed to its institutional form is supported by his political use of the Mosaic Judicials, which he identified as a “shadow and type” of that original primitive pattern “as through which did shine forth a Magistracie yet in promise, in the *man Christ Jesus*: which *Moses* beheld as the true Original in the Mount.” God admonished Moses to make “*all things according to the patterne shewed in the Mount*,” the revelation of which was a symbolic representation of Christ’s rule, the “Original.” In this regard, the prophecy of Isaiah 1:26 does not refer to a restoration of the Judicials,<sup>206</sup> but rather Christ’s rule and government.

Vane linked the unique authority of Israel’s “lawes of Civil Government” with her peculiar and distinguished status.<sup>207</sup> The Jews were under the jurisdiction of the first covenant, that of works, and “this earthly Jerusalem, in the times of the Law, had judicial Laws, for the heightening of a civil Magistracy into a sutableness unto the divine service of this worldly sanctuary.” Only “the spirituality of this very temple” is “to be continued under the Gospel.”<sup>208</sup> His hermeneutical key of extracting the inner substance or principle is relevant for understanding his caution against the strict, literal application of Jewish Law.

In *Zeal Examined*, Vane acknowledged the prevailing view that the “*Magistrates cognizance*” comprehended the Decalogue, and confessed to “the Moraltie of the ten Commandments,” but he “desire[d] that the *first Table* (at least) may rather be taken according to the *spirit* and *principle* then the *letter* of it.” Civil authority then should be prohibited from sanctioning the first table because “in matters of *Religion*,” or duties owed directly to God, he is nothing “but a fellow-Servant with us.” On the other hand, “in matters concerning our neighbor, he is appointed a Judge and Ruler between us.”<sup>209</sup> Vane explains that “the spirit and original patterne of those very Judicials is set up by Christ in men, through his resurrection from the dead,” implying that earthly rulers are capable of a “*righteous ruling over men, in the fear of the Lord, by the pouring out of his Spirit upon all flesh*; . . . qualifying them unto that office, as well as to all other Christian duties; performable by the renewed natural man.”<sup>210</sup> Though “many attempts have been made, . . . to revive a like Magistracy again, in conformity to the judicials of

<sup>206</sup> *RM*, 386.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 389. See also *ZE*, 31.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 154, 198.

<sup>209</sup> *ZE*, 9, 11.

<sup>210</sup> *RM*, 389. See also *ZE*, 31.

Moses, in the very letter of them, there hath seldom been found any considerable progress of success herein.”<sup>211</sup> This was Baxter's objective, as he considered the “Decalogue” as “the Vitall part of the Jews Political Laws.” and since “every Commandment of the first Table was seconded with a Penall Sanction: therefore these things belong to the Magistrate.”<sup>212</sup> His support for magisterial authority in religious affairs was argued particularly from OT rulers and Kings who prohibited the public practice of “false Worship” and the propagation of a “false Faith.”<sup>213</sup> Vane viewed the Jewish polity as a mixture of the civil and ecclesiastical spheres, but understood Moses as a type of Christ as opposed to an enduring example of earthly civil authority, the Judicials peculiar ordinances for the Jews and their Monarchs, and the spirit of the Gospel as superior to the Law.<sup>214</sup>

Vane conceded to his royalist and Presbyterian opponents that civil rulers under the Judicials were authorized to sanction religious behavior and enforce religious duties. But the Gospel dispensation established Christ as better than Moses, and his internal rule superior to the Jewish Polity; the substance surpassing the letter, his significant hermeneutical principle. That “original patterne” which Moses received on the Mount, though reflected externally in the Judicials, was Christ's ruling principle in all men. To accept the civil application of the Judicials implied a retreat to a pattern which Moses claimed Christ had superseded. According to Acts 7, Moses foresaw Christ as his prophetic replacement, obliging the people to “*hear in all that he shall say unto you,*” including “the right discharge of Magistratical duties.” The original pattern revealed to Moses is now set up in men as an internal spiritual rule leading to individual self-governance, and a righteous ruling “over” other men, with limitations, and in the “fear of the Lord.”<sup>215</sup> And since “Moses *Judicials* are thus to be left behind, as they that have lost their force and obligation,” human legislation is even less permanent, and hardly “exempt from change and removal.” The Judicials are as “*old garments,*” which must “make way for the *new heaven and new earth* that Christ is bringing into their room,” and whose removal “is their improvement, perfection, and establishment, according to the Primitive and best Constitution of Government.”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>212</sup> Baxter, *HC*, 26.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 22, 23-24.

<sup>214</sup> See also Sikes, *LDI*, 49-50. According to Sikes, Vane disclaimed the “*Jewish Sabbath*” as “*Cermonius and Temporary, ending upon the coming of the Son of man, who was Lord of the Sabbath day, Matt. 12.8.*”

<sup>215</sup> *RM*, 389-390.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. See also Parnham, “Politics Spun out of Theology and Prophecy,” 80, 81.

### Supreme Law for Civil Modelling: Liberty of Conscience

Vane’s new-model government represented in *A Healing Question* was in service of civil and religious liberty, twin imperatives of the “good old cause”<sup>217</sup> yet to be realized under Cromwell, which he institutionalized through constitutional constraints. Vane considered “natural right” in “matters of Religion,” as more distinguished in its origin and purpose than civil rights because “it respects a more heavenly and excellent object.”<sup>218</sup>

Vane reasoned a religious liberty principle from the Atonement, which “the Nations of the World have right and title, by the purchase of Christ’s blood,” and enumerated it as a “supreme Law,” in his civil model. Christ’s “death and resurrection” authorized him as “sole Lord and Ruler in and over the conscience,” and therefore to God and Christ alone are men obligated to render “an account . . . in all matters of God’s worship,” and “unto whom they stand or fall in judgement, and are not in these things to be oppressed, or brought before the Judgment-seats of men.” Vane was unyielding in his assertion that neither the governed nor governors can judge one’s “faith and conscience,” or reliably “intrude into the proper office of Christ,” who alone is capable of rendering judgment with certainty.<sup>219</sup> Judson refers to this “right principle of governing” as Vane’s claim that “the line between the spiritual and civil must be an absolute one.”<sup>220</sup> The magistrate’s authority was bounded by God’s mandate in Romans 13:1-4 to punish wickedness and praise righteousness alone.

By vertue then of this Supreme Law, sealed and confirmed in the blood of Christ unto all men . . . it is that all Magistrates are to fear and forbear intermeddling with giving rule or imposing in those matters. They are to content themselves with what is plain in their commission, as ordained of God to be his Minister unto men for good, whilst they approve themselves the doers of that which is good in the sight of men, and whereof earthly and worldly Judicatures are capable to make a clear and perfect judgement: In which case the Magistrate is to be for praise and protection to them. In like manner he is to be a Minister of terrour and revenge to those that doe evill in matters of outward practice, converse, and dealings in the things of this life between man and man, for the cause whereof the judicatures of men are appointed and set up. But to exceed the limits, as it is not safe nor warrantable for the Magistrate.<sup>221</sup>

Liberty of conscience was to be implemented as the supreme law of the land, and the constitutional implications of Vane’s theological argument for it, coupled with his political use Romans 13:1-4, restricted civil jurisdiction to external matters alone.

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<sup>217</sup> *HQ*, 3.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>220</sup> Judson, *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane*, 22.

<sup>221</sup> *HQ*, 6.

### Fundamental Constitution: Restraint of Supreme Power

Vane’s supreme law of Christ translated into a fixed and unalterable constitutional component of his civil edifice to be confirmed and agreed to before the establishment of the “supreme Power.” He referred to this restraint, as a “fundamental constitution,” one of his most rudimentary essentials of civil polity.<sup>222</sup> Once secured and established as a political non-negotiable, the people could freely consent to erect “the exercise of Supreme Authority over them, and on their behalf.” To confirm its crucial constitutional place, Vane required legislators to “acknowledge” that by this provision “herein they are bound up, and judge it their duty so to be,” to “God the Institutor of Magistracy, and the whole Body by whom they are entrusted.”<sup>223</sup> Not only will liberty of conscience be realized, but “the outward exercise of Antichristian Tyranny and bondage will be plucked up by the very roots.”<sup>224</sup> The supreme law of liberty of conscience, resting upon the Atonement of Christ, generated the constitutional principle of limited magisterial jurisdiction.

### Contemporary Controversy Regarding Vane’s Religious Liberty Principle

Two anonymous authors took exception to Vane’s political application of the Atonement. The first, *A Letter from a Person in the Countrey to His Friend in the City: Giving His Judgement upon a Book Entitled A Healing Question* (1656) stated, in a high Calvinist response, that apart from a special relationship with Christ, “non have right thereunto, which do not own him, by whom only they can have that right.”<sup>225</sup> Vane had enlarged upon the religious liberty implications of the Atonement to include all men, not simply Christians. The other is a neglected foreign political tract, *A Healing Motion from Abroad to the Parliament of the Common-wealth of ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND, &c.* (1656), which is armed with a proposal claiming to represent “the hearty desire of true Protestants abroad,” stressed three times at the outset.<sup>226</sup> The author seems to be English, refers to himself as a “good Patriot” devoted to his “native Country,”<sup>227</sup> and claims that he, and others, were amazed at the settlement proposed “by

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 6, 7.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> *A Letter from a Person in the Countrey to His Friend in the City: Giving His Judgement upon a Book Entitled A Healing Question* (London, 1656), 2.

<sup>226</sup> *A Healing Motion from Abroad to the Parliament of the Common-wealth of ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND, &c.*, A Letter. (No Date)

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 40.

a man of parts," which contained "a new design, as it were made in the ayre," and offered "so wilde and uncertain a foundation of Government."<sup>228</sup>

For in the whole discours there's no common ground of unity offered, nor any rule or character of true light suggested, whereby their aims should be fixed, or their Counsels and actions directed to a publick good; but the meer notion of a popular liberty which hath no bounds.<sup>229</sup>

Richard Baxter confessed in *Reliquiae Baxterianae* that those "two Courses," where Vane "had most Success, and spake most plainly were, His earnest Plea for universal Liberty of Conscience, and against the Magistrates intermeddling with Religion."<sup>230</sup> Baxter though would direct his most forceful attack against Vane's religious liberty doctrine in his *A Holy Commonwealth* (1659),<sup>231</sup> published when Vane's political reemergence converged with the establishment of Richard's Protectorate Parliament. He underscored his belief, consistent with Vane's, that the "consciences of men are out of the reach of the Magistrates judgment." Since Magistrates are unable to read hidden thoughts they should not be inquisitorial. But the real controversy for Baxter was not "whether men should have liberty for True Religion, true Faith, and true Worship of God," but "whether, there should be Liberty for false Religion, false Faith, and false Worship." His contention with Vane was over the magistrate's authority to "restrain them from publique practicing false Worship, and propagating a false Faith or Infidelity, and from drawing others to their mind and way."<sup>232</sup> Not only was Vane's identification of Parliament's cause with liberty of conscience "not the Old Cause," but "not a Good Cause" either.

It contradicteth the expresse revelation of the will of God, in the holy Scriptures. Moses had to do in matters of Religion as a Magistrate; and so had the Ruling Elders of Israel that assisted him: And so had the Kings of Israel and Juda, as is well known. Insomuch that in Asa's daies they covenanted to put him to death that would not seek the Lord God of Israel."<sup>233</sup>

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 40-41. Given Vane's rather inglorious experience in Massachusetts, it seems likely the pamphlet originated from there. The Bay authorities may have been attempting to distance themselves from him.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>230</sup> Baxter, *RB*, Book 1, 75. See also Sikes, *LDV*, 97-98.

<sup>231</sup> Baxter explained on his title page that he wrote at James Harrington's invitation, but intended to supply a "Sounder Answer to the Healing Question." See 1. In *RQ*, Baxter states "I confess my Writing was a means to lessen his Reputation, and make men take him for what *Cromwell* (that better knew him) called him a *Jugler*: and I wish I had done so much in time: But the whole Land rang his Anger and my Danger; and all expected my present Ruine by him. But to shew him that I was not about Recanting (as his Agents would have perswaded me) I wrote also against his *Healing Question*, in a Preface before my *Holy Commonwealth*." See Book 1, 76. William Lamont notes, though Harrington's *Oceana* was Baxter's "target," his "real enemy was Sir Henry Vane's *A healing question*." See "Puritanism, Liberty, and the Putney Debates," in *The Putney Debates of 1647, The Army, the Levellers and the English State*, ed. Michael Mendle (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 250.

<sup>232</sup> Baxter, *HC*, 20, 23.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 25.

Baxter inferred that should Vane's religious liberty principle prevail, England would duplicate Israel's wretched experiences, as when they "suffered greatly from false forms of worship," such as God's anger at the worship of "Aaron's Calf, and by his Sons, that offered strange fire which the Lord commanded not, Levit. 10." Other narratives exposed the idolatrous impact of free and false worship, such as "the Calves at Dan and Bethel" as well as "the High places." Baxter's point is that "law and Providence are quite changed," if "toleration of false Worship" and "other abuses of Religion" should not lead to "the ruine of the Commonwealth,"<sup>234</sup> reminiscent of Israel's experience.

John Rogers came to Vane's defense against Baxter's publication in his *Diapoliteia* in the following September, and their disagreements are highlighted by their opposing political readings of the Scriptures. Rogers, who had been imprisoned with Vane at Carisbrook, claimed to have heard him preach there, "and elsewhere," and referred to him as that "*prudent* and most pious *Asserter* of our Liberties."<sup>235</sup> He addressed Baxter's attack in his section "*The Healing Q, clear'd from Mr. B's Clouds of Vapours*,"<sup>236</sup> and may have clarified further Vane's political reading of Isaiah 1:26.

Rogers responded with his own scriptural proofs of Vane's religious liberty principle through a reading of disputed OT political texts which Vane would have well agreed with, and, possibly preached on. He accused Baxter of "flying for proof to *Moses* and them that were *Types of Christ*, under the Law; who did in *extraordinary* cases, and for *extraordinary ends*, exercise both swords *sometimes*." Likewise, "the *Kings of Israel* did meddle with the *external matters of worship*," and "even *Priests* and *Prophets* did sometimes execute in civil *matters* too; as *Phinehas* and *Zimri* and *Cozbi*, Numb. 25. *Elijah* upon the 400. I *King*. 18. and *Samuel* on *Agag*, I *Sam*. 15." But despite these OT examples restricting liberty, they do not supply "a *Rule* for *Magistrates* in these days." He chided Baxter for resting his case too heavily "in the Old Testament (If he keeps us all to THAT, for he must never come at New Testament." He also disputed Baxter's analysis of the religious authority wielded by magistrates, claiming "that Powers over any, in the worship and service of God, (or *Eccles. Powers* so called) were *ordinarily* distinguished (all along) from the *Civil*, or *Magistratical Power*, as *Moses* and *Aaron*, rulers and *Priests*, &c. kept in their *vistina Orbs* and *Places*."<sup>237</sup> Rogers makes his case from the NT as well, reminding Baxter of "all those Scriptures that call

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Rogers, *Diapoliteia*, 58-59.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 22. Rogers would dispute each of Baxter's propositions against Vane's understanding of the nature of cause. See 42-70.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 50.

for willing obedience, faith and perswasions of a Willing People *to the Lord*," and "all those that limite the Magistrates Civil Power to Civil Objects (as *to give to Casar, the things that are Cesars, &c.*) and *Rom. 13. 3.4. Psal. 83.11. 12. 13.*"

Most interesting and relevant for Vane's political reading is Rogers' mentioning of two of his key political texts. He states that 2 Samuel 23: 3-4 refers to a rule "over MEN in external and humane matters," which is followed by 2 Pet. 2: 13-14<sup>238</sup> to buttress his case for limited magistracy. More significantly, is Rogers' use of Isaiah 1:26 as an antithetical civil option to Baxter's preference for I Samuel 8, which may have enlarged upon Vane's understanding of the Isaiah passage as a prophetic restoration of primitive magistracy, indeed, he probably learned it from Vane. Rogers claimed at the outset of his tract that he favored "a *Christian Commonwealth*, in a *Theocratick* constitution," and later confessed that, "the truth is, I am from my heart, with thousand more, (as well as Mr. B. saith he is in *matter*.) for a Theocratick or a godly COMMONWEALTH."<sup>239</sup> But Rogers contended with Baxter over the scriptural nature of theocracy, questioning that "a Single Person should exercise the power of a human Soveeraign over us! Seeing I Sam. 8. 6, 7 the thing displeased the Lord, and was a great evil in Samuels eyes." But in the marginalia, he briefly elaborated on that sort of theocracy he advocated, and referenced it in Isaiah 1.26, as a type "not so well with a Single Persons *exercise of the* Power of Sovereignty, *as with* Judges as at first, and Counserlours as at the beginning, *Isai. 1.26* in Israel."<sup>240</sup> By examining Vane's use of this passage through Rogers' contrast of it with I Samuel 8, it seems clear he rejected the royalist reading of a divine establishment of monarchy. But it might be possible to assume that he looked to God's original ordination of the Sanhedrin with its body of elders, and the Judges of Israel first established through Jethro's advice to Moses as those divinely ordained civil institutions. But as will be indicated from his *Needful Corrective*, Vane never attempted to incorporate the civil particulars of these institutions into his republican model, or construct it upon an institutional primitivism as to their letter. He seems to stress rather the applicability of their character of just rule: that righteous civil substance or inner principle of just judgment which God intended for Israel's Elders and Judges to wield, which represents that original pattern, and foreshadows Christ's rule.

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 50-51.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., To the Council, 75.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 63.

### The Civil Right of Representation

In *A Healing Question*, Vane claims that the people retained their civil right of representation, “ratified, . . . in the blood of the last King,” but lacked the power to implement Parliament’s victory because of “a great interruption” or “the private and selfish interest of a particular part.”<sup>241</sup> He was referring to the Protector’s interference: the Achan in the camp. Representation and consent of the governed were the essential “substance” of the cause, though lately unsecured by the Lord Protector’s private selfish interest, resulting in the very division and disunity the Proclamation sought to remedy. The “offence” inquired into by Cromwell rested with the intentional withholding or continued delayed access of establishing the people’s freedoms, with the jealousies and divisions in direct proportion to that delay. It is in this context of perceived subversive dealings, private gain, and selfish interest, that Vane typologically employs the OT narrative of the Sin of Achan, also invoked by the Protector’s Proclamation, to infer comparable particulars between God’s pattern of judgment against “tyrannical principles and Antichristian reliques,” and England’s troubles.<sup>242</sup>

Achan’s sin was his theft of the bootied Canaanite garment, destined to destruction and devotion to God, but which he used selfishly upon himself. Just as Achan’s personal selfishness roused the Lord against the entire nation of Israel, so too will he move against England if some selfish act has transpired, such as the intentional and self-interested suppression of the people’s civil and spiritual rights. Like Cromwell, Vane subtly infers that the failed West Indies venture bears a direct correspondence to Israel’s implication in Achan’s sin. But unlike him, identified his administration as the sinful source; as Israel was rendered weak against her enemies because of Achan, so too would England be because of its Achan, the Lord Protector.

Vane of course regarded this event as historical, but it also had a symbolic significance: Achan, instead of bringing the fruit and gain of conquest into the Lord’s treasury, had converted it to his own use and so brought trouble to this whole people. Vane needed to say no more; the correspondence was clear. Oliver himself was the Achan of these troubled times.<sup>243</sup>

The sin of Achan was “self-interest, lodged by implication in Cromwell himself.”<sup>244</sup> Cromwell, like his Achan type, kept what was “devoted” to God by refusing to acknowledge him with “the fruit and gain of the Conquest.” Instead, he “covetously

<sup>241</sup> *HQ*, 2-3.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>243</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 341. The authors believe that Vane’s correspondence between Achan, Oliver, and the Antichristian spirit was probably construed as seditious, and sealed his imprisonment.

<sup>244</sup> Armitage, “The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire,” 544

went about to convert it to his own proper use.” Just as Achan's sin angered the Lord and rendered Israel “unable to stand before their enemies.”<sup>245</sup> So too did Cromwell's covetousness, the sin behind the failed West Indies campaign.

In his 9 February 1659 speech against the Bill of Recognition, Vane clearly elucidated his antipathy towards Cromwell's Protectorate, accusing him of acting “contrary to his oath of fidelity to the Parliament, contrary to his duty to the people, contrary to the respect he owed to that venerable body from whom he received his authority,” and therefore, “he usurped the government.”<sup>246</sup>

In *Meditations*, Vane equated self-interest and tyranny in civil government with the rule of Antichrist and hence Satan himself. He devoted considerable space to contrasting the “primitive magistracy” with that corrupt “*throne* and seat of the beast,” which advances the Devil's interest through “the Government that Antichrist keeps up.”<sup>247</sup> Antichristian rule is characterized by tyrannical power, and by implication, Cromwell's administration.

The springing up of this spirit in man at first, aspiring herein to be as God, was that that cast him down from his excellency, and gave him his Fall; setting up in him that greatest Idol, SELF-INTEREST, . . . that by its influence, the whole world seems to be governed, as well in Religion as Civil policy.<sup>248</sup>

Parnham believed that for Vane, “the conflicts of the age became intelligible hermeneutically,” explaining why he “overlaid the Cromwellian regime with a template of apocalyptic codes.” “Antichrist, we discover, was at large in Cromwellian England,” and “Cromwell, playing the part of godly magistrate, was trampling upon the children of the Spirit.”<sup>249</sup> The accusations Vane hurled at Cromwell in his *Proceeds*, personalized his warning in *Meditations* against a magistracy which “*frames mischief by a Law*.”<sup>250</sup>

You lift up your heel, and harden yourself everyday more than another, in a fixed Resolution not to become subject, as is your duty, nor to hold and keep yourself in your due station allotted to you in the Body: but are aiming at the Throne in spirituals as well temporals; and to set yourself up in the capacity of not holding your head either in the one consideration or the other.<sup>251</sup>

At his trial, Vane stressed that Cromwell's Administration represented an “Arbitrary Regal Power, under the name of *Protector*,” which he “opposed from the beginning to

<sup>245</sup> *HQ*, 14-15.

<sup>246</sup> *Biographia Britannica*, 3993. See also Upham, *Life of Sir Henry Vane*, 292-293.

<sup>247</sup> *RM*, 383.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, To the Reader.

<sup>249</sup> Parnham, “Politics Spun out of Theology and Prophecy,” 57, 64.

<sup>250</sup> *RM*, “To the Reader.”

<sup>251</sup> *Proceeds*, 8. According to Ludlow, when Vane appeared before the Council in 1656 on the eve of his imprisonment, he “delivered unto Cromwell's own hand another Paper, containing the Reasons of his disapproving the present Usurpation, and a friendly Advice to him to return to his Duty, with some Justification of his own Conduct with relation to the Publick.” See Ludlow, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 577.

the end,” though it almost cost him his “very Life. if he might have had his will, which a higher than he hindred.”<sup>252</sup>

### **The Supreme Judicature: Representative Assembly to Direct Righteous Application of Force**

In *A Healing Question*, Vane proposed the “sword” be used only for “promoting and upholding the publicke safety and welfare of the whole body,” and not for religious purposes. Force is the most powerful magisterial tool wielded by civil government, and Vane’s goal was to ensure an “equal and impartial administration” of its use to secure that “delightfull harmony, welfare, and correspondency,” of “the whole Body.”<sup>253</sup> He proposed that the “Supream Judicature,” or representative assembly, acquire from the ruling power, the authority “for the directing and applying the use of the rule of power or sword.”<sup>254</sup> In this regard, the current ruling power, embodied in Cromwell’s administration, would be required to relinquish its authority to wield the sword exclusive of the legislature. This provision, coupled with his fundamental constitution of magisterial restraint in legislative affairs, and supreme law of liberty of conscience, would establish religious liberty and prevent the encroachment of antichristian tyranny. The electoral franchise of the representative assembly would be limited to the faithful adherents of the cause itself,<sup>255</sup> as antagonists of religious liberty would seek to employ force in matters of conscience, and thus resurrect the spirit of antichrist in government.

Baxter contended with Vane’s claim that the people had a right “to choose a House of Commons,” which “should have the whole Sovereignty, or the whole Legislative Power,” asserting it was never a significant goal of the “good old cause.” He considered Vane’s proposal nothing more than a “Sectarian Democraetical Model.”<sup>256</sup>

In *Meditations*, Vane explained that the “ordinance and institution of God, may become also the ordinance and statute of man,” by the “free and natural way of common consent.”<sup>257</sup> He remarked to Harrington in *Needful Corrective* that consent “is the right door to enter into the exercise of the supreme power.” Vane considered this principle of consent to be “genuine, natural, righteous,” and “consonant to those pure principles of man’s nature, wherein he was first created,” and resting on his “partaking of the spirit of

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<sup>252</sup> *Tryal*, 42.

<sup>253</sup> *HQ*, 15.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>256</sup> Baxter, *HC*, 21, 118.

<sup>257</sup> *RM*, 395.

right reason, common to them as men made in the image of God.”<sup>258</sup> In *A Healing Question*, Vane conceded the reasonableness of the long-standing objection to the people’s ability to place the legislative power in the hands of wise, godly, and discerning leaders, as such could devolve to inept and unfit individuals “and hereby lose the cause instead of upholding and maintaining it.”<sup>259</sup> But he reminds his readers of God’s providential preparation of “a choice and selected number of the people unto this work,” who are already “tried and refined by their inward and outward experiences in this great quarrell,” and identifiable “if due care be but taken in the choice of them.” Vane is also convinced that God’s providential outpouring of his spirit will direct the electorate in their choice of “persons bearing his Image into the Magistracy,” which might result in “the setting up of the Lord himselfe as chiefe Judge and Lawgiver amongst us.”<sup>260</sup>

To establish godly leadership, Vane proposed the creation of a “General Council, or Convention of faithful, honest, and discerning men, . . . by the free consent of the whole Body of adherents to this Cause” to act as advisors. Their guidance must insure this advice is “by way of fundamental Constitutions,” which “shall be laid and inviolably observed,” and operate “as the conditions upon which the whole body so represented, doth consent to cast it selfe into a Civil and Politique Incorporation.”<sup>261</sup> Vane once again reiterates that his model rests on certain inviolable civil principles, such as liberty of conscience and limited civil authority, which must be established as unconditional constitutional requirements before the government is erected.

### **Fundamental Constitution: Separation of Executive and Legislative Power**

Vane’s final constitutional recommendations in *A Healing Question* are delivered by way of entreaty and appeal, matching the method he mentioned at the outset of his treatise, but without further scriptural support except for one more allusion to Romans 13. He inquires whether a “standing Council of State settled for life,” whose primary function would entail the security of the commonwealth, the management of foreign policy, as well as international commerce, under the “inspection and oversight of the Supreme Judicature . . . be disliked?”<sup>262</sup> This Council would be limited to rendering orders consistent with the “settled Lawes of the Common-wealth” while “the Supreme National Assemblies” were in recess. And, as another “fundamental

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<sup>258</sup> NC, 3-4.

<sup>259</sup> HQ, 19.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 20-21. See also Judson, *The Political Thought of Sir Henry Vane*, 46.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 18.

constitution,” the executive authority would be separated from both the Council and the Legislature, though “subordinate” to the later, and dependent upon it for its composition and erection, “as the experience of the future good or evil of it shall require.” Its authority would be limited to the enforcement of “lawes and Orders,” and hence “bear the Image or Representation, subordinate to the Legislative Power.”<sup>263</sup> Regardless of the number of executive rulers, if it is “founded upon this righteous bottome, that such a Lieftenancy of the peoples sovereignty in these three Nations, may always reside in some one or more persons, in whose administration, that which is reward and punishment may shine forth,”<sup>264</sup> once again invoking Romans 13.

### **Vane’s Constitution of Primitive Magistracy versus Harrington’s Jethronian Commonwealth**

Vane’s esteem for Moses’ political revelation conflicted with Harrington’s emphasis upon Jethro’s judicial advice. Vane endorsed Harrington’s veneration of “humane Prudence,” commenting that the “more ancient the date” which he resorted to, “doubtless the better, as most partaking of its primitive purity.” But he contested Harrington’s political use of Jethro in constructing Israel’s commonwealth “to the derogation and prejudice of that pattern for Magistracy it self, which was shewn to *Moses* in the Mount.”<sup>265</sup> Harrington’s primary political text lacked the pinnacle of antiquity, or the direct revelation of God, as Moses, not Jethro, received the primitive and pure pattern of magistracy while communing with God on the mount for “forty dayes,” “face to face,” and “receiving the lively Oracles.” Moses then “was much better qualified to lay down the rules of a perfect Common-wealth Government then *Jethro* was,” who being a “very knowing and able Politician,” could not “stand in competition with *Moses*.”<sup>266</sup> Vane’s reading of Moses’ divinely received revelation reaffirms his hermeneutical emphasis upon the spiritual “inward” substance of the Scriptures, and the time-bound limitations of the Jewish Polity.

In the wisdom of which Word he was then taught to see the most excellent platforme of Civil Government; as having its root and inward principles, as well as its outward administration flowing from Divine Institution & revelation: of which we may well suppose that the abilities in *Jethro* a Heathen (that appeared in the advice he gave touching the outward order to be observed for the administration of Justice in the Common-wealth of *Israel*) did fall very short, although there be nothing contained in the one, which may not have witness and

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>265</sup> NC, 1.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 2.

justification given unto it by the other, as was the case between *Jethro* and *Moses*.<sup>267</sup>

Jethro only perceived Israel’s judicial administration, while Moses received the entire civil platform consisting of “inward principles” as well as external form: the primitive pattern of civil government as to all its essentials. Harrington’s regard for ancient prudence was commendable, but his model lacked the principled essence of the divine form because he prioritized an external pattern bound to earthly Jewish Judges: the “letter” of the word over its inner substance, representing a critical fundamental difference between them in regards to their civil reading of the Scriptures.

### **Vane’s Heavenly Spiritual Balance versus Harrington’s Agrarian Property Balance: Good Men versus Good Laws**

This issue of corruption in the people versus corruption in the form represents a clear political difference between Harrington and Vane, though both were against selfish private interest in favor of the general welfare. Harrington looked to the form and orders of a commonwealth to solve the problem of private interest, while Vane stressed the need for a godly regenerate leadership and electorate.

Vane confessed his uneasiness over Harrington’s proposal of “an equal Common-wealth” balanced with “an Agrarian and Law for equal interesting the People in the Soyl,” as well as a “universal liberty unto the election of the Magistrates” by rotation and ballot. He judged Harrington’s model as deficient in “holiness in principles, by way of spiritual birth,” a necessary and “chief Ingredient to qualifie” one for “the exercise of the right of free Citizen,” and secure “good affection and faithfulness to common Right and publick Freedome.”<sup>268</sup> Harrington’s agrarian balance and orders fell short of addressing man’s moral corruption, which Vane linked to his electoral fitness. Harrington never asserted Vane’s view of man’s depravity when creating his commonwealth, claiming rather, “good orders make good men.” Vane, on the other hand, disputed the moral efficacy of civil institutions and his property-based model and proposed another “bottom” to balance man’s unrighteous tendencies:<sup>269</sup> a corrective balance to “compleat the motion of mans will, in the exercise of its own freedome,” which was the Spirit of God. The Scriptures indicate that “*it is not in man to order his own steps,*” and “at his best, stands in need of the ballancing and ruling motion of God’s Spirit to keep him stedfast.” Unless “his nature be made, as it was at first, holy and righteous, when his will was morally bounded . . . by the Law of God, unto which he did

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> NC, 8.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 6. See Hughes, “*The Commonwealth Divided*,” 62.

bear a naturall and willing conformity in the spirit of his mind, and was under the dictates of a pure enlightened reason,<sup>270</sup> man needs this spiritual balance. Vane equated Harrington's description of man's enlightened disposition with that first stage of creation when his reason remained unaffected by sin. But since man no longer behaves according to his originally created nature, a heavenly balance or spiritual remedy is essential to the construction and administrative maintenance of a commonwealth.

And how much therefore more does his nature and will want this ruling and moving influence now, from the Spirit of God, when it is at its worst, not only to heal and restore what is lost, but to add, by way of supply, that more grace may preserve from the danger of future relapse.<sup>271</sup>

Vane is reluctant to rest prematurely in the possibility that God will direct his providence in an extraordinary way to heal the nation so that it be "born at once" and restored to its original nature. Rather, "until the times of refreshing and healing shall come, from the presence of the Lord, upon the Nations of the World, as is promised in the last dayes," the franchise must be limited so as to regulate and direct man's will. By adopting Harrington's language, whose first series of "orders" erected the commonwealth and directed the settling of the various divisions of the people, Vane explained that to establish government, the people must "order" themselves in a manner which best contributes to the election "of meet and fit persons into either of the two Assemblies."

But the great difficulty remains yet to receive its solution, which is to shew how the depraved, corrupted, and self-interested will of man, in the great Body, which we call the People, being once left to its own free motion, shall be prevailed with to espouse their true publiick interest, and closely adhere to it, under the many tryals and discouragements they must be sure to meet with, before they obtain what they pursue.<sup>272</sup>

Vane argued his position by utilizing Harrington's political discourse, and even endorsed a senate body as an institutional element of the commonwealth. But until God pours forth his healing presence, care must be taken in those "ordinary meanes, daily afforded by God's providence, that are most conducing to guide and regulate the will of the People, unto their making a good choice of the Senate and their own Deputies."<sup>273</sup> Such regard must depend upon "one Rule" to be applied while the commonwealth is being settled "in a Nation much divided in affection and interest about their own Government." This rule is that "the right and priviledge of a free Citizen for a season," should be granted to those who are "free-born, in respect of their holy and righteous

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid. 6-7.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid. See also ZE, 44.

<sup>272</sup> NC, 6.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. 7.

principles, flowing from the birth of the Spirit of God in them. (restoring man in measure and degree, as at the first by Creation) unto the right of Rule and Dominion).“ If this rule is applied, then “the first great wheel of the Common-wealth” will be “set upon its right hinges,” and “all the other inferior wheelles would quickly be set to keep motion and harmony with that, to the bringing in, with great facility, a well composed order of Government throughout the whole State.”<sup>274</sup> Vane challenged Harrington to consider the establishment of a godly electorate, which would result in a godly magistracy. But nevertheless, Vane would be willing to extend the franchise to include those who demonstrated “their tryed good affection and faithfulness to common right and publick freedome,” and who have “deserved to be trusted with the keeping or bearing their own Armes in the publick defence.” This select number of free citizens would have “the liberty of exercising the choice of Magistrates for the whole Body,” but whose electoral privilege was only to “be for a season restrained.”<sup>275</sup>

Harrington never approved of the rule of the saints, whether in an electoral or governing capacity. Not only would such a governing power “reduce the commonwealth unto a party,” but also such “pretenses are against Scripture, where the saints are commanded to submit unto the higher powers, and be subject unto the ordinance of man.”<sup>276</sup> Harrington inferred the test of “saintship of a people as to government” from Exodus 18, which indicates that the threshold concerns should only involve “the election of magistrates fearing God and hating covetousness.”<sup>277</sup> Romans 13 and Matthew 20 supply relevant characteristics of saintly rulers as well.

The surest testimony of saintship in rulers is when they are willing to admit of such orders in government as restrain the power to do wickedly, or of lording it over their brethren.<sup>278</sup>

In his *A Discourse Upon This Saying*, written in response to the Army's May Petition, Harrington explained that “they who dare trust men do not understand men; and they that dare not trust laws or orders do not understand a commonwealth.” With this, it is “safer” to be governed under “evil men that can do no other than make just laws” than under “good men that must either make unjust laws or ruin themselves.”<sup>279</sup> Similarly, in *Aphorisms Political*, Harrington stated that if “the security is in the persons, the government maketh good men evil,” but “where the security is in the form,

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 8. See Hughes, *The Commonwealth Divided*, 56.

<sup>276</sup> *Oceana*, 204.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>278</sup> *PEC*, 731. Harrington does not cite his biblical references.

<sup>279</sup> *DUS*, 744, 753.

the government maketh evil men good.”<sup>280</sup> The rule of the saints was nothing more than a “narrow oligarchy,”<sup>281</sup> while a wider liberal franchise or “popular election.” was more faithful to the precept of Moses, as when he commanded Israel to “*take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you;*”<sup>282</sup> this is the electoral rule of Scripture. Vane’s model was dependent upon an administration of godly seasoned rulers to protect civil and religious liberty, while Harrington’s rested in the security of “stated laws or orders: so the trust is not in the spirit of the people,” who “can have no other motion than according unto the orders of their commonwealth.”<sup>283</sup>

Or if you mean to make the people judges, without which it is impossible there should be any well-ordered commonwealth, whether you can give them any other rule than according unto Moses: *Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes.*<sup>284</sup>

Harrington thought it more in keeping with the Scriptures to “leave the people according unto the rule of Moses, unto their judgment in these cases,”<sup>285</sup> a text from which Vane would have never located a political principle since it represented the letter of the Jewish Polity.

Toward the end of *Needful Corrective*, Vane congratulated Harrington for his recognition of the place of the Scriptures politically, “that the foundations of Government shall be laid so firm and deep as in the Word of God.” But if government is more particularly “bottomed upon that Corner-stone the Lord Jesus,” as opposed to Israel’s Commonwealth, Jethro’s advice, or an agrarian law, then “there is a Heavenly Ballance to be met with, which keeps all even.” Harrington placed too much political weight in Jethro and Israel’s external pattern of a commonwealth.<sup>286</sup>

### **The Restored Long Parliament and Final Years of the Commonwealth**

#### **Rump Parliament of 27 January - 22 April 1659**

Vane re-entered Parliament in January 1659 after six years of legislative retirement. He regularly held republican pre-election strategy meetings at his residence,<sup>287</sup> and continually pressed “towards establishing and maintaining Commons

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<sup>280</sup> *AP*, 763.

<sup>281</sup> *DUS*, 744-745.

<sup>282</sup> *AP*, 763.

<sup>283</sup> *DUS*, 737, 738.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 739.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> *NC*, 9.

<sup>287</sup> Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, 711.

as the source of all power,” refusing “any proposal that even by implication surrendered power to the Protector or the other House.”<sup>288</sup>

The *Petition and Advice* (1657) through which Oliver established the Protector's authority over the military, chose his son as successor, and appointed the second chamber, governed the context of the debates of Richard's first Protectorate Parliament. Vane spoke out forcefully against the negative power of the chief magistrate, the legitimate existence and jurisdiction of the “other house” and the destructive tendencies of the Declaration of Fasting and Publick Humiliation to liberty of conscience. These debates, recorded principally in Burton's *Diary*, afford a tremendous vantage point for discerning the consistency of Vane's adherence to limited government, lawful representative institutions and liberty of conscience. It is necessary therefore to isolate the significance of his contribution in their support from the opening of the Protectorate on 27 January 1659 to its dissolution on 22 April 1659 in a separate section, despite the fact that he and his fellow republicans were virtually defeated in each debate.

### **Bill of Recognition and the Authority of the Other House**

Richard opened his first Protectorate Parliament with a speech commemorating his father's administration and asserting his authority as his “successor,” “by the Providence of God, and the Disposition of the Law.”<sup>289</sup> Parliament's first order of business on 1 February 1659, brought in by Secretary Thurloe, was the Act of Recognition to confirm Richard Cromwell as Lord Protector, and legitimize the “other house.”<sup>290</sup> Vane delivered a powerful speech against the Act on February 9, and commenced by establishing that the English “zeal for . . . liberty,” had “drawn away the hereditary tyranny of the house of Stuart, at the expense of much blood and treasure, in hopes of enjoying hereditary liberty, after having shaken off the yoke of kingship.” But with some rather clever Roman metaphors of tyranny mixed with England's recent experience of ridding herself of Cromwell, he commented that some “are fallen into the error of those, who poisoned the Emperor Titus to make room for Domitian,” and “who made away Augustus; that they might have Tiberius, and changed Claudius for Nero.” Vane was referring to the House's urgency to legitimize Richard's rule at a time when England was, “renowned, all over the world, for their great virtue and discipline.” It

<sup>288</sup> Adamson and Folland, *Sir Harry Vane*, 356.

<sup>289</sup> Richard Cromwell, *The Speech of His Highness the Lord Protector, Made to Both Houses of Parliament at Their First Meeting, on Thursday the 27th of January 1658 as also the Speech of the Right Honorable Nathaniel Lord Fiennes, one of the Lords Keepers of the Great Seal of England* (London, 1658), 3.

<sup>290</sup> *CJ*, vol. 7, 596. The complete title of the Bill: “An Act of Recognition of his Highnesses' Right and Title to be Protector and Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Dominions and Territories Thereunto Belonging.”

astounded him that they were now about to “suffer an idiot. without courage. without sense, nay without ambition, to have dominion in a country of liberty.” Not only was Richard no Oliver, whom Vane stated could be born with “a little,” but his Protectorate was tantamount to kingship, and incompatible with a free representative Parliament.

But as for *Richard Cromwell*, his son, who is he? What are his titles? We have seen that he has a sword by his side, but did he ever draw it? And, what is of more importance in this case, is he fit to get obedience from a mighty nation, who could never make a footman obey him? Yet, we must recognize this man as our king, under the style of Protector! – a man without birth, without courage, without conduct. For my part, I declare, Sir, it shall never be said that I made such a man my master.<sup>291</sup>

Vane launched his verbal deathblow at Richard's authority to direct the House's attention to the critical issue of “a Protector in the office of Chief Magistrate.” He insisted that “the office of right” was in them to “have the honour of giving or not giving,” matching the political rule he proposed in *A Healing Question* that the people's representative had the authority to create the executive power. Though the Commons could “confer it,” Vane advised against giving “by wholesale, so as to beg by retail.”<sup>292</sup> To argue his case, he reviewed the legacy of “slavery,” and “oppression and tyranny,” under Charles I. Since Parliament retained the “legislative power,” says Vane, “God saw it good that we change the Government.” Though the King wielded the “power of the militia,” “the right of the militia lay; . . . in ourselves.”<sup>293</sup> The “delinquency of the King,” was met by “the taking away of kingship,” as “the original of all just power was in the people, and was reserved wholly to them, the representatives.”<sup>294</sup> Vane even explained that his six-week absence from the King's trial and Parliament was due to “tenderness of blood,” though he resumed his seat because “all power” was “in the people originally.” That “little remnant” then sitting was the “representative of the nation” and the “supreme judicature, to comprehend all government in itself.” The next step was their establishment of “a free state; to bring the people out of bondage, from all pretence of superiority over them.”<sup>295</sup> And “though this free state was shipwrecked,” Vane pressed the point that Parliament had “a liberty left to say it is now again in your possession.”<sup>296</sup>

<sup>291</sup> *Biographia Britannica*, vol. 7, 3993, and Upham, *Life of Sir Henry Vane*, 292-293.

<sup>292</sup> *Diary of Thomas Burton, Esq., Member in the Parliaments of Oliver and Richard Cromwell from 1656 to 1659: from the Journal of Guibon Goddard*, vol. 3, ed. John Towell Rutt (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 171-172.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 174, 176.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 177, 179.

A letter from the Protector on February 17 prompted the Commons to debate the nature and extent of his powers over the armed forces,<sup>297</sup> and Vane had actually been appointed to a committee authorized to consider national security in light of their supervision and regulation. But also critical was the issue of the Protector's negative power. Vane argued that the "essential" nature of the office of Chief Magistrate is "for the necessary preservation of the good of the whole, and the administration of justice," a function which prohibited him from having a negative authority over legislation. The magistrate should only "possess all things needful to his acting for the people: all the power to draw in the public spirits of the nation to a public interest, but not the power to do them or you any hurt." In this regard, he must be bound in his authority so that "he may grow up in the public interest."<sup>298</sup>

The Commons continued to debate the issue of the Protector's negative voice again on February 18,<sup>299</sup> with comments interspersed regarding the need to deal with the power of the other House first. As the debate vacillated between them,<sup>300</sup> Vane pressed a point of order, and accused the Commons of actually granting "an affirmative voice," while claiming to debate the negative voice, and stressed it was tantamount to nullifying everything passed thus far. With this, if the other House was recognized as a "co-ordinate power" for purposes of legislation, then the Commons already lacked the authority to pass any laws notwithstanding "their concurrence," and "at one time, and at one breath," would "void" all of its acts.<sup>301</sup> On March 7, Vane again stressed the need to limit the Chief Magistrate. If the Commons were to "pass in the negative," that implied that "all the power is here," but to affirm his negative power is to effectively "pass all."<sup>302</sup>

### **Declaration of Fasting and Public Humiliation**

During the first week of April, the Parliament debated a Declaration calling for "a day of fasting and public humiliation," scheduled for May 18, and drafted by a Committee Vane sat on.<sup>303</sup> Parliament intended for the Declaration to recognize magisterial authority in religious affairs, provisions that Vane objected to on grounds of liberty of conscience. The Declaration blamed the general prevalence of "abominations" on "the too much remissnesse and connivance of the civil Magistrates (to whom belongs

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 307, *CJ*, vol. 7, 604 - 5.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 318, 320.

<sup>299</sup> *CJ*, vol., 7, 605.

<sup>300</sup> *Diary of Thomas Burton*, vol. 3, 331-337.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 337, 344. The Commons voted on February 19 to establish Richard's Protectorate.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, 70-71. The Commons voted on March 28 to recognize the Other House.

<sup>303</sup> *CJ*, vol. 7, 622, 623. The Declaration is recorded in the *Journals* on 623, 625.

the care of maintaining Gods publique worship, honour and purity of doctrine as well as of punishing all sins against the second Table)." Magistrates were "suffering persons under the abuse of Liberty of Conscience to disturbe the publick Ordinances. and to publish their corrupt principles and practices, to the seducing and infecting of others."<sup>304</sup> Vane argued that the "fast will not answer" Parliament's objectives. that he was against it "upon the grounds adopted," considered it "hypocritical," and an "imposition upon consciences." Since Parliament was establishing the fast as a law, it was tantamount to abandoning their "cause," and therefore "a coercing the conscience."<sup>305</sup> Vane explained that should Parliament pass the Declaration to include the authority of the Protector and the other house, they would "admit a power both in them (the other house) and the Chief Magistrate," but which resided in the Commons "under a possessory right," and consequently by default virtually paralyze their authority since both could act against them. He exclaimed, "You put all out of your hands," and warned that "in every step you have yet gone, you give away all. Do something that may make you appear to be trustees indeed; and not in one moment give away all that you have fought for."<sup>306</sup> Burton records that Vane spoke against the Declaration, "principally because of the clause touching toleration,"<sup>307</sup> but which was endorsed by the Commons on April 5, and consequently secured the legislative authority of the Protector and the other House in matters of religious liberty.<sup>308</sup>

On 20 April 1659, Henry Stubbe, a disciple and devotee of Vane, delivered a timely advocacy on behalf of his character and principle of religious liberty by directing a formal attack against Richard Baxter's 1658 *A Key for Catholicks*, which Baxter had dedicated to Richard Cromwell.<sup>309</sup> Stubbe's *A Vindication of the Prudent and Honourable Knight, Sir Henry Vane*, respectfully addressed him as "the Honourable and True-hearted lover of his Countrey,"<sup>310</sup> whom Baxter had unjustly derided. Vane's destructive influence, wrote Baxter, began in New England, where "the whole game" of

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<sup>304</sup> *A Declaration of the Lord Protector And Both Houses of Parliament, For a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation, to be Observed in all Places within the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, upon the Eighteenth Day of May, 1659* (London, 1659), 5-6.

<sup>305</sup> *Diary of Thomas Burton*, vol. 3, 329. See notes, 328-329. Haselrig agreed with Vane. See 336-337.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 339. Vane states that "it was not so much sin in the Chief Magistrate to omit this, as for us to insert it." See 343.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>308</sup> One P. Church wrote to Hyde on April 8/18 that "Sir Harry Vane was called to the bar of the House of Commons, and with difficulty escaped being sent to the Tower for questioning the resolution to transact with the Other House." See Clarendon, *CSP*, vol. 3, 173.

<sup>309</sup> Baxter, *Key*, Dedicatory.

<sup>310</sup> Henry Stubbe, *A Vindication of the Prudent and Honourable Knight, Sir Henry Vane From the Lyes and Calumnies of Mr. Richard Baxter, Minister of Kidderminster. In a Monitory Letter to the said Mr. Baxter* (London, 1659), Epistle Dedicatory.

“the Vani” “was first plaid,” and that Parliament should “have carefully searcht how much of his doctrine and design were from heaven, and how much of them he brought with him from *Italy*.”<sup>311</sup> Stubbe indicted Baxter's *Key* as a “railing *Book*,” and denied Vane's involvement in the Kings's death, or that he traveled to Italy bringing back “most wicked and corrupt opinions.”<sup>312</sup> More importantly, he addressed Baxter's prominent contention with Vane, claiming that he was again squabbling over “an universall *Liberty* and Toleration in matters of *Religion*,” and accused him of failing “to answer those Scriptures, arguments, and reasons of *State*, which are alledged” on its behalf.<sup>313</sup>

### Rump Returns: 7 May – 13 October 1659

Richard dissolved Parliament on 22 April 1659, but Vane began entertaining republican Parliamentarians in his home at Charing Cross. Edmund Ludlow records that members of the Wallingford Party, which included Major General Lambert and Colonel Kelsey, met with them at Vane's residence on two separate occasions in the first week of May.<sup>314</sup> The Army's determination to reinstate the Long Parliament was conditioned upon four main heads, which they presented to the Charing Cross group on May 5. One in particular is of critical importance for the study of Vane civil principles: “that the Government of the Nation should be by a representative of the People, and by a select Senate.”<sup>315</sup> According to Ludlow, this new-model request was received with “a greater Difficulty,” and that not all present were “of the same Opinion with respect to that part of it relating to the *Senate*.” Nevertheless, to part company with the Officers without some prospects for its possibility would jeopardize Parliament's chances of reconvening, so Ludlow and the other Members present agreed to “a general Silence about that Matter, to give them hopes of our Compliance.”<sup>316</sup>

On May 7, the Long Parliament resumed their seats, and Major Salowey, Whitelocke, Scot, Haselrig, and Vane were ordered to stand on a Committee of Safety to “prepare a declaration, according to the Substance of the present Debate, upon the Declaration of the Army.” The Declaration was endorsed and reflected Vane's influence. “Parliament,” it stated, “resolved . . . to endeavour the Settlement of this

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<sup>311</sup> Baxter, *Keys*, 331.

<sup>312</sup> Stubbe, *Vindication*, 6-7.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. Stubbe itemizes his own biblical arguments for such liberty.

<sup>314</sup> Ludlow, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 645. See also the *Clarke Papers, Selections from the Papers of William Clarke*, ed., C.H. Firth, vol. 4 (New York: Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901), 6-7. According to a May 2 letter from J. Cooper to Hyde, both Vane and Haselrig “pressed” for the Long Parliament to be restored. See Clarendon, *CSP*, vol. 3, 193-194.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 645.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 648.

Commonwealth upon such a Foundation, as may assert, establish, and secure the Property and the Liberties of the People, in reference unto all, both as Men, and as Christians,” and to do so “without a single Person, Kingship, or House of Peers.” Parliament would “vigorously endeavor the Carrying on of Reformation . . . ; to the end there may be a godly and faithful Magistracy and ministry upheld and maintained in these Nations, to the Glory and Praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the reviving and making glad the Hearts of the Upright in the Land.”<sup>317</sup>

The Council would address the settlement issue by considering the Army’s May 13 *The Humble Petition and Address of the Officers of the Army*, which contained the essence of those same proposals presented by the Officers to the Charing Cross group and the basis for Parliament’s reinstatement.<sup>318</sup> The thirteenth provision was the most contentious.

That, in order to the establishing and securing the peace, welfare, and freedom of the people of these nations, for the ends before expressed, the legislative power thereof may be in a Representative of the people, consisting of a house, successively chosen, by the people in such a way and manner as this parliament shall judge meet, and of a select senate, co-ordinate in power, of able and faithful persons eminent for godliness, and such as continue adhering to this cause.<sup>319</sup>

The Army also requested a “Council of State” be formed to continue the authority of the executive branch.<sup>320</sup> On May 13 Vane was one of thirty-one members chosen to sit on this Council, which consisted of Parliamentarians and Army officers, including Lord Wariston,<sup>321</sup> who entertained contentious discussions with Vane regarding liberty of conscience. The French Ambassador M. De Bordeaux wrote to Cardinal Mazarin, the chief minister of France on 15 May, that “of the most distinguished Republicans,” “Sir Harry Vane is reputed to be the chief.”<sup>322</sup> On May 21, the House took up the Army’s Petition again and resolved to protect the liberty and property “of all the Free People of these Nations, . . . according to Law; under the Government of a Free State and Commonwealth; without a Single Person or House of Lords.”<sup>323</sup> The House also resolved this day the issue of religious liberty as requested by the Army, and in language reminiscent of Vane’s principle of liberty of conscience.

Resolved, That all Persons who profess Faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ his Eternal Son, the true God, and in the Holy Spirit, God coequal with the Father and the Son, One blessed for ever; and do acknowledge the Holy

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<sup>317</sup> *CJ*, vol. 7, 645-646.

<sup>318</sup> Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, 729.

<sup>319</sup> *PH*, vol. 3, 1554.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>321</sup> *CJ*, vol. 7, 653-654; Ludlow, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 656-657.

<sup>322</sup> Guizot, *History of Richard Cromwell*, vol. 1, 381.

<sup>323</sup> *CJ*, vol. 7, 661.

Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the revealed or written Word or Will of God; shall not be restrained from their Profession. but have due Encouragement, and equal Protection, in the Profession of their Faith, and Exercise of Religion; whilst they abuse not this Liberty to the Civil Injury of others, or Disturbance of others in their Way of Worship: so that this Liberty be not extended to Popery or Prelacy; nor to such as shall practice or hold-forth Licentiousness or Profaneness, under the Profession of Religion: And that all Laws, Statutes, Ordinances, and all Clauses in any Laws, Statutes, or Ordinances, to the contrary, shall be declared null and void.<sup>324</sup>

Also settled were provisions for elected office. In this regard, “no godly or other good Interest can be preserved or maintained, unless the Persons who are chiefly entrusted with the Management and Exercise of the Government, be of suitable Spirits to those Interests.” Only “those who are or shall be intrusted therein, be such Persons as shall be found to be the most eminent for Godliness, Faithfulness, and Constancy to the Good Cause and Interest of these Nations.”<sup>325</sup> Again, these provisions seem to testify to Vane's influence in declaring the need for godly leadership.

Ludlow notes that “the Opinions of Men were much divided concerning a Form of Government to be established among us,” and reiterated the demands of the Officers for a select Senate coordinate with the House.<sup>326</sup> Woolrych considered this request for a select senate “the most interesting” and reminiscent of Vane's model in *A Healing Question*, noting “something very like his ‘select senate’ had been advocated by Vane three years earlier . . . though he called it a ‘standing council.’” Woolrych posits that Vane “may well have been the source of its revival now, for he was drawing closer to Lambert and further apart from Haselrig, Scot, and the majority of republican Rumpers, who would brook no check upon the supreme authority of the people's representatives.” The fact that “the Council of Officers kept up their advocacy of a senate through the summer, and reiterated it when their relations with the Rump were coming to another crisis in October, its intended role is a matter of interest.” Unfortunately, “evidence is scarce as to its intended size, and how it was to be chosen, and just what powers it was to wield.”<sup>327</sup>

The Army's request for a select senate seems to have been addressed by Vane in his mid-May *A Needful Corrective*, and not wholly reminiscent of his *A Healing Question*, which proposed a unicameral legislature with a Standing Council for life subordinate to it, and authorized to establish orders in particular administrative affairs only, and consistent with the laws of the representative assembly. The Army was

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 662.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> Ludlow, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 674.

<sup>327</sup> Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, 729-730.

demanding a bicameral legislature, which included this coordinate senate. In *Needful Corrective*, Vane addressed the Army's settlement demand seriously, argued for his senate biblically, and quite cleverly by employing Harrington's own political language at a time when he too was bombarding Parliament with revisions of his own model. Harrington had responded quickly to the Army's *Petition* with his *A Discourse Upon This Saying*, dated 16 May, and as was already suggested, Vane was probably directing his polemic against this tract via a response to his *Prerogative* to speak to the Army's *Petition*. He even employed his political reading of Isaiah 1:26 and succinctly revealed the full nature of his primitive model of right magistracy. *The Needful Corrective* may also help clarify Vane's often-neglected June speech, which, according to correspondence, and Wariston's *Diary*, included a godly senate.

Vane presents his model in Harringtonian political language at the end of his tract. In contrast to Harrington's civil model, Vane claimed that his was "bottomed upon that Corner-stone the Lord Jesus." "God . . . gives forth, according to that pattern, the order and constitution of Magistracy, in its primitive purity and perfection," not Jethro, or any other source. The "authority and proposing Power," which secures "the will of the People in its right course of obedience, is first originally in God and Christ himself," who is "their Political King and Civil Legislator." While "under Christ," such propositions proceed through "the Ruling Senate, whose Office it is; . . . ; from the excellency of their debate and deliberation," to "providentially and faithfully" deliver this rule of obedience "to the People." The senate's function was "to move and keep the will of the People in its right course of obedience," and hence stands "in the place and power of God."<sup>328</sup>

Vane asks Harrington whether or not the promise of "the restitution of all things" means that "man himself shall not be restored to the gift and exercise of Righteousness in natural judgement and will," similar to that "perfection, . . . wherein he was at first created." He submits to Harrington that Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel 4:36, might represent a "type, in a good degree," of this possibility of restored perfection, and "to the enabling of whole Nations, . . . in such manner to obey Gods Voyce and keep his Covenant," and "render them unto God a Kingdome and holy Nation."<sup>329</sup> Vane takes for granted its possibility, and then basically leads Harrington into his own allegorical reading of Isaiah 1:26. This "restored people" represent "Gods peculiar treasure," like Israel once did, with him as "their chief Magistrate" and "Head." He will guide them.

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<sup>328</sup> NC, 9-10.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 9.

and they, “in the best capacity they can” listen to what he “hath to propose to them, as the rule of their obedience to him,” and “exercise that which they agree to bear the stamp and authority of the Wisdom of the Nation,” in regards to the “oversight of the whole Body.” Such authority should be lodged “in the hands of a Senate or Council of Elders,” who are equipped with the “executive” power, as well as that of proposition to the people who in turn, grant their “assent or dissent” through “their own chosen Deputies and Representative Body.” By granting the Senate body the power of enforcement, Vane would ensure against the abuse of conscience, since a godly senate sensitized to matters of religious liberty would never wield the sword unjustly. Vane equates this civil correspondence and responsiveness to “that righteous and faithful City spoken of” in Isaiah 1:26, “to whom her Judges are restored, as at the first, and her Counsellors as at the beginning, by whose Decrees that Law goes forth, wherein Christ himself shall appear judging amongst the Nations.”<sup>330</sup> This is the prophesied primitive pattern he previously mentioned, linked directly to Isaiah 1:26, and corresponded civilly with a senate body of elders empowered with executive authority. He does not entertain here a distinct executive office to be filled by one person.

Vane expands upon this model to include a civil coordination among the various parts of government in his third query to Harrington. His “ruling Senate” not only represents the “heads of the People,” freely elected, and charged with “executing the supreme Power,” but the legislative as well, “in association with the Representative Body of the People.” The senate would “propose” laws in the gathered “assembly,” which would pass laws consented to by the people. Vane asks Harrington if this is not the “most exact platforme of the purest kind of popular Government, and that which hath its foundation and first pattern in the Word of God, in the practice of *Israel’s* Commonwealth, and so plainly of Divine Creation and Institution?” He then establishes the connection between his primitive pattern, prophesied by Isaiah 1:26, with the substance of Israel’s divine Commonwealth as a restored civil and millennial institution, and through a civil harmony and symmetry between God, the ruling senate, and the people’s representatives. Such a model Vane thought, infused with “the mighty pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh,” would “grow and increase,” and eventually lead “to the setting up of Christ as King throughout the whole Earth, and causing the Nations and Kingdomes of this World to become the Kingdomes of our Lord, and of his Christ, in a visible manner here below, for the space of a thousand yeares.”<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 11.

Vane seems to propose a civil model, which accommodates Harrington's own political language and civil categories, as well as the Army's demand for a select senate coordinate in power with a representative assembly, but which also moves beyond both by introducing a senate eldership of godly rulers. Vane's senate would have executive authority, and share legislative functions with the representative assembly by way of their proposition and the wisdom of their debate. Vane defines their propositioning power as being directly under God and Christ to insure that the "will of the people" is "maintained in its right course of obedience," and delivered by way of "debate and deliberation" to the representatives.<sup>332</sup> By proposing this sort of senate, Vane is not subverting his own principles of liberty of conscience, or limited civil jurisdiction; rather, by the "will of the people," he means the legislative authority of her representative assembly. Vane has cleverly modelled a way to ensure that liberty of conscience and limited legislative authority is secured, reasoning that if his senate is fitted out with godly figures committed to the "good old cause," they would surely not propose any law which violates liberty of conscience, or enforce a law which attempts such. Given this, it might be possible to conclude that the senate proposed here, though not quite the equivalent of his Standing Council proposed in *A Healing Question*, may model more closely that primitive form of magistracy of judges ruling righteously, justly, and over man first explicated in *Meditations*. Both proposals are based upon his supreme law of liberty of conscience, and fundamental constitution of limited legislative authority.

There are other references to Vane's further musings on the nature and composition of this senate, which might clarify his biblical political reflections, and extracted primarily from Wariston's *Diary*, and correspondence, some of which is between De Bordeaux and Mazarin.

### Vane's June Model

Vane apparently delivered a rather controversial speech on new-modelling to the Commons, most likely in mid June, but which is not mentioned in the *Journals*.<sup>333</sup> Confirmation of this speech might be referred to in a letter W. Miles wrote on 17 June 1659 to Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State to both Charles I and II, regarding Vane's preference to establish godly rule.

Wee are here still buildinge vp a Republique. Some of the grandees are for a generall comprehensieue state of all men of all religions; but Sir Henry Vayne is

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>333</sup> Whitlocke does not record the speech either but merely notes on June 21 and 22 that Parliament heard several speeches. See *Memorials*, 681.

stiffe for y<sup>e</sup> guifted men allone, and those only such as his owne holiness shall deeme soe.<sup>334</sup>

Another letter echoing similar comments on Vane's rule of the saints was sent by W. Greene on June 24 to Nicholas.

Sir Hen. Vayne lookes vpon the nation as vnacquainted with its owne good and vnfit to be trusted with power, least they abuse it to their owne and his ruine. and therefore he would haue some few refyned spiritts (and those of his owne nomination) sitt att helme of State togeather with the Councell till the people be made familiar with a Republique and in loue with it. that is till he ceases to be.<sup>335</sup>

Rowe believes these comments are more likely reminiscent of Vane's *Needful Corrective*, as opposed to any Parliamentary speech.<sup>336</sup> Broderick supplies further insight into what seems to be Vane's settlement proposal delivered in Parliament in a letter to Lord Chancellor Hyde on June 24, which confirms the comments made by Miles and Greene. Rowe does not discuss this letter, which would make the case stronger for assuming that all three relate to a Commons speech.

Sir H. Vane as I lately told you, hath unriddled to the House and the Nation the long concealed mystery of the kingdom of Christ, which is, it seems, a coordinate power put into the hands of a few men truly religious, that shall restrain the carnal force of the present and future Parliaments, and command that arm of flesh the Soldiery. "Two props," he saith, support this government, religion and liberty; of the former, ought our principle care to be, and those Seers of Israel ought in all things to have the pre-eminence. They must not be many, nor ought the charge to be imported to any in whom there lays a known guilt. Too great is the burden for a single person, because liable to temptation, if not supported by Omnipotence, but a few, a very few.<sup>337</sup>

This letter seems to suggest that Vane's speech was delivered with his *Needful Corrective* in mind. This "coordinate power" lodged in the hands of a few godly men to "restrain" Parliaments, is most certainly reminiscent of his senate. He also reiterates his republican pillars of civil and religious liberty. His reference to "those Seers of Israel" having "pre-eminence" in the religious "prop" is difficult to ascertain, though this may be a metaphor for his senate, and an allusion back to the divine establishment of the Sanhedrin with its principled quality of just rulership and righteous judges. The following letter by Mr. Mordaunt to Hyde would place Vane's speech earlier than June 7.

<sup>334</sup> *The Nicholas Papers, Correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas Secretary of State*, vol. 4 1657-1660, Camden, Third Series, vol 31, ed. Sir George F. Warner (London, Offices of the Society, 1920), 157.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>336</sup> Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, 224.

<sup>337</sup> Clarendon, *SP*, vol. 3, 505-506; Clarendon, *CSP*, vol. 3, 248.

My judgement is, Sir H. Vanes Religion is to make a Party, and solely interest leads him, which I conclude from a speech of his lately, in which he desired the trust to seven, of which number he is one, might be confirmed for life.<sup>338</sup>

The staunch Presbyterian Scotsman who opposed Vane's views on government given their tolerationist bent, was Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, whose *Diary* covers the events of the Rump Parliament. He records on 14 June 1659, that he "had a conference with Sir Hery Vane about publick busines," and "found him for the Senate in the government." Then, on June 17, he claims that he "heard Sir H. Vayne debayted for the Senate from Scripture and Henry Nevil against it without Scripture."<sup>339</sup>

Comments that Vane was urging for "y<sup>e</sup> guifted men alone," "refyned spirits who sitt att helme of State," and power to be placed in the "hands of a few men truly religious," coupled with Wariston's record that he heard Vane debate "for a Senate from Scripture," all suggest that he may have been urging for that primitive model mentioned in *Needful Corrective*, whose publication was close to his June speech.

Mention is made of Vane's speech by de Bordeaux in a 10 July 1659 letter to Mazarin. De Bordeaux reported that in regards to his "form of government," Vane said "that the people were mad, and that the authority of the State ought not to be entrusted to them, but to pious and holy persons, under which name he is understood to mean the Sectaries of the Fifth Monarchy, to whom he preaches very regularly."<sup>340</sup> In *Needful Corrective*, as well as *A Healing Question*, Vane addressed the difficulty of "the practicableness of introducing and settling the exercise of the supreme power by the free and common consent of the Citizens."<sup>341</sup> He clearly regarded the people unfit to wield the electoral authority needed to place this ruling eldership in office. Bordeaux mentioned Vane again in another letter to Mazarin dated July 17.

The authority of the Parliament gains strength, though it is still greatly divided on the subject of the form of government; the true Republicans are opposed to Sir H. Vane, who wishes to establish a sort of oligarchy composed of Sectaries of the Fifth Monarchy; Lambert and some other officers of the army agree with him on this point.<sup>342</sup>

Thurloes's *State Papers* include one intercepted letter written on this date as well, which indicates that some sort of vote was taken in Parliament related to Vane's proposal.

Sir Hen. Vane and major Salway are disserted by many in their party, not having more than sixteen or seventeen, that can give concurrent votes. It is sayd, they

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 484.

<sup>339</sup> *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston*, vol. 3 1655-1660, ed. James D. Ogilvie, (Edinburgh: University Press by T. and A. Constable Ltd, 1940), 119, 120.

<sup>340</sup> Guizot, *History of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. 1, 424.

<sup>341</sup> NC, 5. See HQ, 17.

<sup>342</sup> Guizot, *History of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. 1, 426.

desire the adjournment of the house, that the whole range of affairs might pass by the council, where they believe themselves more prevalent.<sup>343</sup>

Bordeaux mentions Vane again in a September 29 letter to Mazarin. The context is the aftermath of Booth's uprising.

Sir H. Vane, and the Millenarians, otherwise called Saints, who expect the reign of Jesus Christ, daily increases; that they have procured the abandonment of a proposed pledge against the government of a single person; and that some of them, on the day before yesterday, presented a sort of petition to Parliament, which tends to deprive of all authority those persons who have held office under the Protector, and to form a Commonwealth of which the true elect of God shall have the sole administration. Sir H. Vane is said to have got up this address, and the leaders of the army are believed to have joined with him, and all are resolved to form a Council of forty persons of their own way of thinking, who shall have the entire authority in the State, and a veto on the resolutions of the Parliament, under the pretext that if the people were at full liberty, they would restore the King. The faction of true Republicans will strongly oppose this establishment, which would be capable of producing division even in the army.<sup>344</sup>

What this letter reveals is that not only are the Millenarians, and in particular the Fifth Monarchists, piggy-backing Vane's proposal, and his party, but this "Council of forty," which would wield executive authority and a negative power over Parliament, is probably a reference to his senate.<sup>345</sup>

### Vane's Late 1659 Model

Wariston notes in his *Diary* on October 3, that S[ir] A.H[azelrigs] party is mor for ordinances and against Quakers, but less for godly men," while Vane "more for godly men but less for ordinances."<sup>346</sup> Vane is now opposed by his fellow republicans Neville and Harrington, the Presbyterians as led by Baxter, and the Scottish Covenanters represented by Wariston. The Parliament was dissolved on 13 October 1659, and on October 28, a new "Council of Ten" was appointed by the Army out of the Council of

<sup>343</sup> Thurloe, *SP*, vol. 7, 704.

<sup>344</sup> Guizot, *History of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. 1, 474-475. See also their correspondence of September 29, 478. One rather interesting letter comes from T. Ross to Colonel Gervase Holles at Rotterdam, 27 July 1659, claiming that Vane was virtually assaulted by an officer, possibly Hesilrig. The letter mentions the divisions in the Army regarding the dissolution of Parliament, as "the foot" were "against the horse; these for a Republique, and the other for a single person, and soe furious some of them are that an officer [Hesilrige] meeting Sir Henry Vane, tooke him by the throat, and told him that unless hee did desist from driving that faction which hee now heads hee would cutt his throat. Since which Vane hath absented himselfe from the House." See *Historical Manuscripts Commission, Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath*, vol. 2 (Dublin: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1907), 135.

<sup>345</sup> Vane seems to have successfully included the Fifth Monarchy men into his party. John Hopebetter [Maj. Wood] wrote to Hyde on June 3 that there existed close to thirty-thousand armed Fifth Monarchists, and some five-thousand of them had gathered at Sussex around the first of June, claiming "they must with fire and sword prepare the coming of Christ." He states that "Harrison is their Major-General and Vane their Counsellor." In another letter from Barwick, dated June 21, he reports to Hyde that the "Republicans and Fifth Monarchy men are driving together." See Clarendon, *CSP*, vol. 3, 220, 244.

<sup>346</sup> *Diary of Sir Archibald Wariston*, vol. 3, 139. Wariston claims that Vane and Hasilrig disputed quite heatedly over the settling of the government in the Counsel-Chamber.

State with Vane as one of the nominees. The Army then appointed a Committee of Safety (on the same day) of twenty-three persons which included Vane, but out of which a sub-committee was formed. Vane was on this sub-committee as well, and he was requested to “consider of a Form of Government for the three Nations, as a Commonwealth.” They were then to submit their proposal to the Committee of Safety. Whitelocke was on this committee and nominated as “Keeper of the Great Seal.”<sup>347</sup> The army dispatched letters to the members as to the creation and purpose of this Committee of Safety, and Whitelocke records he was approached by Desborough and other Officers of the Army with the concern that “*some of this Committee,*” Vane, among others, “*had a Design to overthrow Magistracy, Ministry, and Law; and that to be a Balance to them, they had chosen*” him.<sup>348</sup>

On October 27, Wariston records that he, Vane, and Salloway were discussing the nature of “the present dispensation,” which Vane perceived as “an introduction to the glorious appearance of the Kingdom of God, and so calling much for faith and expectation of its aproch.” Wariston stated that he looked “to the ordinary reules in the Word, apprehending it looked judgmentlyk to the nation for their provocations.”<sup>349</sup> He wrote again on November 1, that he saw Vane’s “draught of the gouvernment and dislyked the fundation of it and toleration in it.” Then on November 8, he recorded, “I fand whyle I was out that S[ir] H. V[ayne] and Major Salloway had drawen up the busines of toleration. . . . I saw their designe to overturne the ministry and the ordinances of Jesus Christ.” On November 9, he wrote that he had been “keeping in continual debaytes with S[ir] H. V[ayne] and Major Salloway about the business of vast toleration and magistrats seclusion from medling in religious matters,” and that there were further debates on a new draft of Vane’s “anent liberty of conscience.” Finally, on November 10, Wariston wrote that the Committee “had a debayte upon a draught of S[ir] H. V[ayne] anent liberty of conscience.”<sup>350</sup>

The date of Vane’s final settlement model, which Lord Wariston seems to be referring to, is somewhat difficult to establish, but remnants of it are found in Wood’s *Athenae Oxonienses*, as well as *The Tryal of Sir Henry Vane*, K<sup>t</sup>., where it is mentioned as part of his indictment. The trial papers state that one Thomas Pury claimed that he was present at the “debating of the two last of these Propositions,” stating “they were proposed to the Chairman Whitlock, by Sir Henry Vane, but affirms confidently, that Sir

<sup>347</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, 687, 688; *PH*, vol. 3, 1569-1570.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, 685.

<sup>349</sup> *Diary of Sir Archibald Wariston*, vol. 3, 149-150.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 150, 151-152.

Hen. Vane gave Reasons to maintain them."<sup>351</sup> This was also the model Baxter referred to as a "Draught of a (not Free but) Fanatick Common-wealth."<sup>352</sup>

That the supreme Power, delegated by the People to their Trustees, ought to be in some fundamentals not dispensed with: That it is destructive to the People's Liberties (to which by God's blessing they are fully restored) to admit any earthly King, or single Person to the legislative or executive Power over this Nation: That the supreme Power, delegated, is not entrusted to the People's Trustees, to erect matters of Faith and Worship, so as to exercise compulsion therein.<sup>353</sup>

Vane's proposal is on the eve of an expected restoration, and gone are the radical millenarian tones. This is a simple stripped down proposal, which salvages the essentials of his hard fought principles of liberty of conscience, that supreme law of civil-modelling, and limited magistracy, a fundamental civil constitution. He maintains his political ideals that the origin and composition of the legislative power originates in the people, is supreme and a delegated trust, exempt from control by a king or person, and limited in its authority over the people in religious matters. Noteworthy as well is his recommendation that the executive not be lodged in any single person, King or otherwise, from which one could infer that he still held out for a ruling magisterial senate. Either way, this short model proposed that the supreme power be lodged in the legislature, not in a king ruling in the office of an executive magistracy.

In a July 16 letter to Hyde, Broderick states that "Vane now believes the King (for so he calls him) will at one time or other obtain the Crown, the nation being dissatisfied with any other government."<sup>354</sup> Whitelocke recorded that on November 26, "the Committee proceeded in preparing a *Form of Government*, wherein *Vane* was hard to be satisfied, but did much stick to his own apprehensions." A new Parliament had been called for January, but Vane was "discharged" from his membership on 9 January 1660.<sup>355</sup>

### Trial and Execution of Vane

The Long Parliament was dissolved on 16 March 1660, with the Convention Parliament commencing on April 25.<sup>356</sup> This Parliament contained an element that proceeded to direct "unsatiated vengeance" against both "Vane and Lambert," who were

<sup>351</sup> *Tryal*, 29-30.

<sup>352</sup> Baxter, *RB*, 207.

<sup>353</sup> *Biographia Britannica*, 3993, fn. [2]; Wood, *AO*, vol. 2, 294; *Tryal*, 30. Willcock includes in his biography "Morland's Narrative," which incorporates a document indicating Vane "burned a certain sheet of paper all written with" his "own hands (which was a draft of a model of a new government, with severe reflections on monarchy) as also several other papers, which would have been great evidences against him." See *Life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, 379.

<sup>354</sup> Clarendon, *SP*, vol. 3, 527; Clarendon, *CSP*, vol. 3, 282.

<sup>355</sup> Whitelocke, *Memorials*, 690, 694; Clarendon, *SP*, vol. 3, 639.

<sup>356</sup> *PH*, vol. 3, 1584.



cease.”<sup>363</sup> Vane was formally charged at the Court of King's Bench on 4 June 1662 “for compassing and imagining” the death of Charles I, and “keeping him out of the exercise of his rightful power,” as well as “attempting to subvert the ancient form of government, instanced by acts committed in May and December, 1659.” But his guilt also encompassed “a series of acts of high treason, from after January 30, 1648.”<sup>364</sup> Charles took personal offense at Vane's regard for the legislative supremacy of Parliament.

Vane's bearing in court, and, still more, his uncompromising denial that the King, while in exile, was King *de facto*, and his assertion, that the supreme power then rested incontestably in the Houses of Parliament, incensed Charles against the prisoner, and induced him to write a letter, which now rebounds to his eternal shame.<sup>365</sup>

Charles' letter, sent to Clarendon, ordered Vane's execution.

The relation that has been made to me of sir Henry Vane's carriage yesterday in the hall is the occasion of this letter, which, if I am rightly informed, was so insolent as to justify all he had done; acknowledging no supreme power in England but a parliament, and many things to that purpose. You have had a true account of all; and if he has given new occasion to be hanged, certainly he is too dangerous a man to let live, if we can honestly put him out of the way. Think of this, and give me some account of it to-morrow; till when, I have no more to say to you. C.<sup>366</sup>

Woolrych states as well that Charles pursued Vane's death “with an animus that can only be called vindictive, simply because he had been such a persistent and principled opponent of monarchy.”<sup>367</sup> Sidney, in his “Third Court Maxim” refers to Vane in his Fourth Dialogue where Philalethes and Eunomius debated the scriptural grounds of “*absolute and hereditary monarchy*.” After Eunomius expounded upon the nature of I Samuel 8, understood as a warning “from God to the people” of “threatenings of what would be, and not rules of what lawfully might be done,” he ended his argument by relating Vane's courage and death.<sup>368</sup> Sidney makes the following comment about Vane in the “Fourteenth Dialogue.”

He must be made a sacrifice, as solicitor Finch well said, for the good of the nation, which had not another man equal to him in virtue, prudence, courage, industry, reputation, and godliness. . . . Nor can it be imagined our king had any other desire when he cut off Vane's head, than to destroy, as in its root, all

<sup>363</sup> Bishop Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, 108 in notes.

<sup>364</sup> *Life and Administration of Edward, First Earl of Clarendon*, vol. 2, 119, 122. These represent the editor's comments, and a quotation from *State Trials*, vol. 4, 128.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, 122. These are the editor's comments, not Clarendon's.

<sup>366</sup> Henry Hallam, *The Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of George II*, vol. 2, 8 ed. (London: John Murry, 1867), 326. See also Charles Wentworth Upham, *Life of Sir Henry Vane*, 336. Part of this letter is also quoted in *Life and Administration of Edward, First Earl of Clarendon*, vol. 2, 122.

<sup>367</sup> Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, 381.

<sup>368</sup> Algernon Sidney, *Court Maxims*, eds. Hans W. Blom, Eco Haitsma Mulier and Ronald Janse (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 38, 48, 49.

virtue, wisdom, and godliness, since those, who were eminent in any of those qualities, looked on him as their master, and seemed to have learnt all they knew or practised by his precepts or example.<sup>369</sup>

Charles signed Vane's death warrant on 12 June 1662, and sentenced him to be beheaded at Tower Hill on the 14 for high treason.<sup>370</sup> Vane's own parting words on the scaffold relate that the cause he fought for was "*the CAUSE OF GOD, and for the Kingdom of his dear son JESUS CHRIST, wherein it is comprehended, our Liberties and Duties, both as Men and as Christians.*"<sup>371</sup> Sikes records that Vane was a "truly Christian *Common-Wealths-Man*," one "who was indeed, for what others talked of, the Liberty of Men as Men, and Christians as Christians,"<sup>372</sup> and "a dangerous Name to the Peace and the Interest of Tyranny." It was even claimed "*the King could not be safe while VANE was alive.*" His "insight in the Politie of the true Common-wealth of *Israel*, the *Holy Jerusalem that will shortly come down from God out of Heaven*, Rev. 21," gave "him no small aime at what he ought to be doing in the Common-wealth of *England* as preparatory thereunto."<sup>373</sup>

Vane finally bowed his head to the block under Charles II for his religious and political principles, and even in his death, considered himself one of the two witnesses of Revelation destined to inaugurate Christ's Second Advent. Nathaniel Hawthorne, paying tribute to Vane in his "Howes Masquerade," stated that he "laid down the wisest head in England upon the block for the principles of liberty."<sup>374</sup>

### Conclusion

The historiography on Vane has concluded that his theological prose, especially his *Meditations*, is simply too indecipherable, and that his hermeneutical approach to biblical interpretation makes it virtually impossible to understand his politics. Vane is a difficult commonwealthsman to pigeon whole, as his political readings reveal complex religious structures and unique republican reasoning. Though his political theology seems convoluted and his allegorical method confusing, what this study of his religious political writings has revealed is that his hermeneutical method is not random, and that there is a political theory at the end of it all. From his eschatological reading of the OT, his view of the battle over men's consciences being waged between the dominions of

<sup>369</sup> Ibid., 185-186.

<sup>370</sup> *Life and Administration of Edward, First Earl of Clarendon*, vol. 2, 123.

<sup>371</sup> *The Substance of What Sr. Henry Vane Intended to Have Spoken upon the Scaffold, on Tower-Hill, at the Time of Execution, being the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 1662*, in *Tryal*, 3, 6.

<sup>372</sup> Sikes, *LDI*, 113.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., 93, 112, 107.

<sup>374</sup> Roger Howell, "A Note on Hawthorne's Ambivalence Towards Puritanism: His View of Sir Henry Vane the Younger," *The Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal* (1972), 146.

heaven and hell, and his allegorical understanding of a restored primitive magistracy of Christ's righteous rule from the shadows of the Commonwealth of Israel, he asserted clear inviolable civil principles upon which he modelled his republic.

First, Vane's doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a theological counterpart to his covenantalism, influenced his reading of the Scriptures. The Spirit's union with a believer regenerated his mind, resurrected his spiritual senses, and so profoundly transformed his capacity to understand the Scriptures, that he could engage God's textual truths at a deeper more mystical level. It is highly probable that his trips to Leyden and Geneva influenced his radical Protestantism, but the particulars are difficult to precisely ascertain. And though his entanglement in the Antinomian controversy eclipsed his short tenure as Governor of Massachusetts Bay, it revealed this critical doctrine of his which John Cotton may have played a part in cultivating.

With this, we also know from *Meditations* that Vane was no scriptural literalist. His allegorical method also countered clerical literalism, but whether this was by design or by default is difficult to tell, though he viewed the literal method as too pervasive, and the clerics too close to civil power. The accusations that he "wrenched" his texts out of context, or failed to consider any context for that matter, would have seemed absurd to him, since meaning could not be isolated to texts alone, but determined from the more intimate illuminations of the Holy Spirit who enlivens them. Biblical truth, for Vane, was a correspondence between text and Spirit, and his response to Robert Boyle reveals that his antipathy to the literal method was due to its isolation to and dependence upon corrupt human reasoning. Since degenerate man was only capable of locking on to the letter, he would always fail to detect the superior spiritual substance of Scripture's allegories and symbolic types that were only in its service, and thus miss the inner principles of its passages. Discerning saints, transformed and renewed, were spiritually equipped to investigate and determine the substance behind the letter, eminently qualifying them not only for ministry, but for magistracy as well.

It was also shown that Vane's eschatology cannot be divorced from his republicanism. He read the OT as an eschatological text, which, not only contained the fundamental elements of his model commonwealth as to its primitive constitution, but the certainty of its appearance as the prophesied millennial model to come. This primitive model of magistracy was the New Jerusalem or Holy Commonwealth of Israel coming down from heaven, which represented the fulfillment of those NT prophecies of Christ's end-time reign.

It is also clear that Vane’s fundamental doctrine of civil magistracy is a “primitive constitution and right exercise” of government, which he understood from David in 2 Samuel 23:3-7 as a just rule over men, or a civil authority limited to external matters alone. This represented the rule of Christ over men. This pattern predates the Mosaic Judicials, which Vane identified as a “shadow and type” of this original primitive pattern, and through which this superior magistracy in Christ, that “true Original in the Mount,” was displayed.

The Isaiah 1:26 passage represents a prophetic promise of the restoration of this primitive pattern with righteous judges and magistrates, which David foresaw. This is a significant political text for Vane, as it incorporates the establishment of Christ’s “ruling principle in all men,” as distinguished from the rule of the Antichrist. Christ’s resurrection and outpouring of his Spirit internalized the Judicials in men, and qualified earthly rulers to a righteous ruling over them in the fear of the Lord. Vane is not advocating a primitivist return to the institutional structure of the Jewish Polity, but emphasizing the restoration of Christ’s righteous rule in that pristine and rudimentary quality of rule that God expected of Israel’s magistrates and judges.

It has also been determined that Vane’s republican model was structured to guard against the encroachment of antichristian tyranny. He labored to ensure that government contains no antichristian remnants. The eschatological context of his political readings assumes an ongoing struggle between the forces of Antichrist, characterized by ecclesiastical or civil tyranny, and Christ with his saints, whose dominion is defined as absolute and everlasting, and inaugurated on earth in the millennial kingdom. Vane’s all-consuming concern with antichristian tyranny relates to its destructive dominance; once seated in an earthly throne, it will forbid liberty of conscience by force, even under the guise of religion.

Vane identified the activity of this spirit through Daniel chapter 7 as having operated through four historical monarchies and whose influence reached to the beast of Revelation 13 with its throne of the dragon. But these passages bore a meaning beyond mere historical instances; they represented significant types of antichristian rule, which revealed an evolving principle of tyranny capable of manifesting itself in other forms, like Cromwell’s Protectorate. In this regard, Vane identified this spirit with any power attempting to force matters of conscience, or that persecuting rule of the Antichrist.

It has also been demonstrated that Vane’s protracted concern over the advancement of this spirit into the civil realm explains his insistence that his model rest on that supreme law of liberty of conscience and fundamental constitutions of legislative

restrictions and power separations. This law comprehends this ruling principle of Christ in all men which he secured by his death and resurrection, and transformed into a right of religious liberty for all, not just the saints. Christ is lord over men's consciences, and to whom all men must now render account. The civil corollary of this supreme law is the constitutional principle of limited magisterial jurisdiction, already confirmed in Romans 13, which relegates the role of civil authorities to punishing evil and praising righteousness alone. Nevertheless, Antichristian rule denies the legitimacy of Christ's peculiar and singular jurisdiction over man. If magistrates interpose laws restricting matters of conscience, and overstep their ordinance as servants of God, they function in the service of the Antichrist. Vane is driven in his attempts to craft a model which would serve as an institutional force against this spirit, but which is also squared after the heavenly pattern to come, and intended to advance it. Primitive magistracy was that heavenly polity which seated Christ as lord and advanced his interests, but which contrasted with that corrupt beastly throne of the Antichrist that drives the interests of the Devil. Vane's supreme law of liberty of conscience, and fundamental constitution of retrained magisterial power, were to be secured as binding and irrevocable civil components of his model to establish Christ's righteous rule among men. This sort of biblical reading, radical as it may strike modern readers, cannot be conveniently bracketed from his republicanism.

It has also been shown that Vane perceived the body of the people as unsteady in their resolve upon liberty and therefore incapable of choosing wisely in regards to their true interests. His first attempt at new-modelling the government evidenced this with its essential element of maintaining seasoned Parliamentary members to birth the commonwealth, and limiting elections to fill only vacant seats. Broadening the franchise would have eroded the Commons constituency and endangered the cause of civil and religious liberty. A restricted franchise would secure a godly leadership faithful to the civil and religious liberty imperatives of the cause itself.

We also know that Vane demanded that the will of the people be restricted, not only through the franchise, but even in their representative assemblies. With the pressured issues of settlement still occupying the restored Long Parliament, his model in *A Needful Corrective* argued for a senate of godly rulers in Harringtonian language. He even referred to his model of civil harmony between God, the ruling senate, and the assembly, as that primitive pattern which Isaiah prophesied, which would lead to Christ's rule among the nations. This is somewhat ingenious, as Vane found a way to address the increasing popularity of Harrington's model, the demands of an Army

wielding considerable power, while crafting a republican model which incorporates his fundamental civil principles. All the while, a monarchy was waiting in the wings.

Finally, Vane's last models, though extremely short, testify to the political importance of his fundamental constitutions in establishing a commonwealth. The June model, which is difficult to completely assess given the scanty information relayed in correspondence and diaries from royalists and Presbyterians, proposed a similar senate as that in *A Needful Corrective*, and incorporated his twin pillars of civil and religious liberty. His late 1659 model anticipates a restored monarchy, and though Vane empties it of its radical millenarian tones, he preserves his supreme law of civil-modelling and fundamental civil constitution of limited magistracy, the essentials of that primitive pattern.

Vane's model of magistracy was, in the final analysis, in service of a kingdom destined to come. As Sikes stated in regards to Vane, his "insight in the Politie of the true Common-wealth of *Israel*, the *Holy Jerusalem that will shortly come down from God out of Heaven*, Rev. 21," gave "him no small aime at what he ought to be doing in the Common-wealth of *England* as preparatory thereunto."<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Sikes, *LDI*, 107.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to provide an understanding of the political use of the Scriptures in James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), Sir Henry Vane's *A Healing Question* (1656) and John Milton's *Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free-Commonwealth* (1660). Each of these commonwealthsmen proposed to new-model England's constitutional crises differently, and this study reveals how they employed the Bible in their attempts, as well as the differences and similarities in their understanding of it as a political text.

I chose to investigate these particular commonwealthsmen not only because they presented radical proposals to replace England's ancient constitution, but because they employed an arsenal of biblical principles and texts in their modelling quite differently from each other. They were also familiar with each others tracts, and conducted part of their political disagreements within the context of the use of the Scriptures.

This thesis has taken issue with a historiography that regularly neglects the biblical dimension of early modern political thought. Minimal attention has been given to Milton's attempts at new-modelling, Vane's prose has been charged as too confusing to wade through, and Harrington has been touted as the model classical republican political theorist with virtually no acknowledgment of his use of the Hebrew Polity. With this, the historiography's disregard for the biblical aspects of political thought are demonstrated either in their tendency to separate scriptural references and readings from civil models, to interpret early modern political theorists as exclusively devoted to classical and Renaissance texts, or to allege that they used the Scriptures to popularize political theories. These judgments undermine attempts to seriously investigate the Bible's political role and result in a vacuum of scholarship in early modern biblical political thought. I attempted to argue that Harrington, Vane and Milton each presented constitutional arguments intrinsic to their theological assumptions, and hence, were biblical Republicans. Their religious arguments cannot be secularized or separated from their political models to make them more accessible to a modern audience and still retain the essence of their proposals. These authors also present sophisticated, measured, and methodical approaches to the Scriptures consistent with those of the pre-critical era of exegesis.

This study was based on an inductive analysis of each author's principal political tract as well as their wider Interregnum writings, and in a few cases, pre-1649

and post-restoration tracts to determine a pattern of hermeneutical and exegetical method. The larger historiographical context of their political writings was also investigated to determine what prompted the writer to assert his views, or the political and literary circumstances governing a tract. I also attempted to resolve the relationships between their hermeneutical methods and constitutional models by asking a set of key questions as presented in the Introduction.

### **Comparison and Contrast of Hermeneutical Methods**

#### **Diversity of Backgrounds: Biographical, Educational and Professional**

The biographical and educational backgrounds of Harrington, Vane and Milton were sufficiently different to result in diverse political uses of the Scriptures. Interestingly, each traveled abroad, was anti-Cromwellian to some degree, and was stalked by the restored monarchy for various levels of treason and subversion given their writings and political involvement. Though Harrington was spared the scaffold, he was imprisoned and eventually lost his sanity. Milton was exempted from royal punishment, for reasons still somewhat vague, though his blindness may have been a factor. He would continue to write poetry well into the restoration. Vane was less fortunate, but his courageous death matched his intense commitment to liberty of conscience. His outspokenness during a lengthy and productive parliamentary career was filled with far too many anti-monarchial activities and radical pronouncements for Charles II to grant him exemption, and his charismatic presence was simply too dangerous to allow to run rampant among the radical sects, especially the Fifth Monarchists. But it must be remembered as well that the political legacy and heritage of each would survive up into the modern era.

Harrington was the non-Puritan of the three, an Oxford man, and a scholar of the classics and their languages. Milton was a Puritan, though his classical education began at an extremely early age, and his blindness would become a testimony to the sort of scholarly rhythm he maintained, even throughout his life. His education at St. Paul's and Christ's College, Cambridge reveals a Christian humanist and scholastic background which seemed to shape his eclectic reading. But, his first love was poetry. Vane, like Milton, was a Puritan, but unlike him and Harrington, never seemed to have acquired that sort of classical education, and his time at Westminster and Magdalen, Oxford does not loom very large as an influence, except possibly away from the established church.

All three traveled to the continent. The civil institutions of Venice, Italy especially enamored Harrington. Milton, like Harrington, visited Italy, but seems to have been inspired by Geneva. Vane was most impressed by his trips to Leyden and

Geneva, which most likely influenced his radical Protestantism, but he never traveled to Italy. His departure for New England should be understood in light of his continental travels, and possibly undertaken to settle himself in his faith and to witness a new commonwealth claiming a biblical foundation first hand.

Each would return to England inspired to transition into a defining career. Harrington claims he was driven to consider the study of government as the most significant pursuit for promoting the welfare of mankind. He would establish himself as a courtier of the King, but his respect for his majesty, displayed even on the scaffold, did not diminish his republicanism. He never held a seat in the commons, despite his attempts early on in the Civil War, and he seems to have been largely a historian, political scholar, and philosopher. Milton, on the other hand, immediately engaged the controversy over ecclesiastical reform, and his early polemic is clearly anticlerical, as Harrington's would become, especially in his post-*Oceana* treatises and tracts. Milton's publication of *Tenure* would launch him into the post of Secretary of Foreign Languages, first under the Long Parliament, and then up through the Protectorates and the restored Rump. His vision was to promote Christian liberty by driving out tyranny in its ecclesiastical and civil forms, as well as superstition, and hence free man from slavery, both within and without. His political theology was in service to England's complete reformation, which in turn, affected the sort of republican readings he derived from the Scriptures. As for Vane, though his short tenure in Massachusetts Bay proved somewhat controversial, it reveals those key theological doctrines he would develop further in his *Retired Mans Meditations*. Upon concluding his civil service as a Governor in the New World, Vane returned to England where he quickly progressed up the civil ranks as a career politician. He was launched into civil life as joint Treasurer of the Navy, and then into a seat in the Long Parliament in 1640. Excepting his retirement during Cromwell's Protectorate Parliaments, Vane was one of the most outspoken and energetic parliamentary republicans until his dismissal in December 1660.

All three exhibited varying levels of anti-Cromwellianism. If Toland's account of Harrington bears any affinity with his attitude towards the Protectorate as a "horrid Usurpation," and Cromwell as a tyrant, *Oceana* was written in reaction to it, as its confiscation by the Protectorate also testifies, and to promote a commonwealth form of popular government which corresponded with England's popular balance of land. If this balance was neglected, the commonwealth would be lost. Vane too shared an antipathy towards the Protectorate, and when his affectionate relationship and collegial partnership with Cromwell turned disaffectionate, it became personal, not just political.

Vane was driven in his quest to secure liberty of conscience, and his *A Healing Question* was written to address the Protectorate's usurpation of it, and especially Cromwell's plundering of the people's civil and religious liberties.

Unlike Harrington and Vane, Milton was a retrospective anti-Cromwellian writer. He had worked for Cromwell, even penning a sonnet to him, and his early Interregnum writings were conducted under the authority of the government and on its behalf. It was not until the intense political developments of the end of the Interregnum that he reveals his commonwealth model, and his attitudes toward Cromwell and the Protectorate. In the Preface to his *Considerations* (1659), he rejoices over the establishment of the Long Parliament and the Nation's release from a "double bondage under prelatical and regal tyrannie," and freedom from that "slavish dejection, wherein from father to son we were bred up and taught." England was now liberated from that "short scandalous night of interruption." These comments represent sharp negative assessments of the Protectorates, which may have antagonized him throughout his civil service.

### **Hermeneutical Method: Grammatical Historical versus Allegorical**

Harrington and Milton approached the Scriptures largely as Christian humanists. The linguistic tools of interpretation and textual analysis codified during the Renaissance to study the classic texts, and redeployed during the Reformation to engage the Scriptures, largely summarize their approach. Their writings abound with classical citations and an eclectic use of authors. Vane, on the other hand, never resorts to non-biblical writers. Harrington and Milton also seem to employ their language training to the Scriptural text like they would to a pagan one, and held it as a critical hermeneutical rule to learn its original languages. Both were exasperated with interpretations of the Scriptures that ignored linguistic, contextual and historical essentials.

We learn of Harrington's hermeneutical approach in Oceana's orders, and Milton's in his theological treatise *De Doctrina Christiana*. But Harrington and Milton differed somewhat on the role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretive process, and the need for a new birth to sensitize man to its truths. Harrington never elucidates any role for the Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures, or the need for a transformed life and a renewal of the senses to establish their meaning. Harrington found no contradiction in using human reason alone to investigate the text. This helps to explain why he never stressed man's depravity as an issue for civil modelling, exhibited implicit trust in leaving the people's liberty up to them, and granted a very broad popular franchise. This might explain too why he focused upon the Deuteronomy 1:13 passage as a biblical text for popular

prerogative. But Milton approached the text as if its meaning required more than simply exegetical tools. He read it like a liberated man, newly created in Christ, and with his reason renewed. In this regard, he is slightly closer to Vane, but without adopting his allegorical approach.

Milton reveals in *De Doctrina Christiana* that the proper method for engaging the Scriptures required linguistic skills and syntactical expertise, respect for context, knowledge of the original languages and texts, a respect for authorial intent, and a sense of the clear differences between literal and figurative passages. He also assumed an analogy of faith, whereby Scripture must be compared to Scripture to establish doctrine. Vane mentions none of these investigative particulars, and never demonstrates their need to be utilized in biblical study. He was an allegorist, and perceived the letter of the text as consisting of types through which the substance of meaning was established. Milton's more grammatical historical approach seems to flatly contradict the allegorical method of Vane. But where they do compare, is their mutual understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit to quicken and enliven the text's meaning, that man was fallen and his reason was corrupt, and therefore in need of a renewed mind. They also utilized their methods to ensure that the "shadow" of the text was never confused for its "substance." And even though Milton believed that all fallen men retained part of God's image bearing nature, and therefore their writings could reveal truth, he does not seem to suggest that this alone qualified them to understand the Scriptures. Milton even held to the view that under the Gospel there was now a "double scripture" which consisted of the external word and the "internal scripture of the Holy Spirit," which God "engraved upon the hearts of believers." This is extremely close to Vane's language, and Milton may have had his *Retired Man's Meditations* read to him. But, he did not articulate Vane's radical doctrine of the indwelling presence of the Spirit, which presents a dimension of difference between their hermeneutical approaches.

### **Biblical Texts and Constitutional Models**

Harrington, Vane and Milton were in dialogue, and their constitutional differences are revealed in their direct and indirect responses to each other's proposals. Harrington of course is at the heart of this debate, since Vane and Milton have him in mind in their later tracts, and Harrington considers them as proponents of oligarchic councils that he explained were of the same spirit as a monarchy. But some of their constitutional differences can be traced to their political reading of the Scriptures, and how they looked to different aspects of the Bible to support their models. What is

common to each is a radical restructuring of England's constitution devoid of king and House of Lords, and a concern for securing liberty of conscience.

Harrington's discrete political texts for civil modelling, apart from his overall use of the Hebrew Polity, seem to be Exodus 18: 19-27 and Deuteronomy 1: 13 which supplied him with his theory of popular government. He derived a double emphasis from the Exodus passage. Not only did he read it as scriptural proof in support of "human prudence," and specifically as to political advice in heathen histories and commonwealths, but as evidence of the original popular basis of the Hebrew Commonwealth through her Jethronian courts. The choice of rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens represented the elevation and advancement of the commonwealth into the superstructures. With this, Deuteronomy 1: 9-16 represented that original electoral basis of popular suffrage for the Jewish Sanhedrin, as well as the lower courts which would come to sit in Israel's cities, and even the popular election of magistrates in general. He referred to Deuteronomy 1: 13 as the "rule of Moses" and employs it as proof that Israel incorporated proposition and resolution in her commonwealth. Moses proposed to the people that they choose wise and discerning leaders, and upon rendering their consent and choice, he constituted their governors or rulers. The strength of the Deuteronomy text for popular government is also in its divine command to Moses to propose this to the people, and confirmation that they could be trusted to judge properly in civil and religious matters. His use of this text three times alone in his 1659 *Discourse Upon this Saying* also evidences the strength of his understanding of it as scriptural proof for popular suffrage.

Harrington did resort to Deuteronomy 17:14-20 and 1 Samuel 8: 6-7, but to demonstrate the disintegration of Israel's orders, and not to model his commonwealth. The Deuteronomy passage proved that God intended Israel's kings to be limited and under law, and 1 Samuel 8:6-7 demonstrated that God was rejected as Israel's original divine king, two political inferences which Milton would have agreed with. But Harrington kept Israel's disobedience within the context of her rejection and neglect of her original orders, language not employed by Milton who considered Israel's choice of a king as an example of slavish tyranny and *genitilism*. Harrington though did emphasize through the 1 Samuel text that in spite of such profound rejection of God's rule, and at the expense of her divine commonwealth, God respected Israel's prerogative and choice of government, a position which Milton seemed to have agreed with him on along with the understanding that God had originally ordained for Israel a commonwealth as opposed to a monarchy.

Vane and Milton do not resort to Harrington's Exodus and Deuteronomy texts when crafting their models, and Harrington's trust in the collective wisdom of the people's judgment, even in the maintenance of their liberty, contrasts with Vane who thought the people were mad, and Milton, who considered them nothing but rabble. Their models incorporate a restricted franchise, and in part, to insure liberty, and prevent the restoration of monarchy and complete loss of the original cause. Vane advocated the rule of godly leaders who were faithful to liberty of conscience and parliamentary representation, and Milton's criteria for electoral candidacy stood on the unqualified acceptance and adherence to the principle of liberty of conscience for those who profess the Scriptures as the rule of their faith, and the repudiation of a single person established as head of the government, as well as the House of Lords. Given the nature of Oceana's orders, and the balance of interest between the senate and assembly, Harrington viewed such electoral qualifications as wholly unnecessary to preserve liberty of conscience. As long as the people were under their legislative orders of proposition and resolution, wisdom and interest, liberty of conscience and civil liberty were secure, even if Parliament was filled with Presbyterians, royalists, or independents for that matter. It would be impossible to introduce monarchy under these circumstances, and therefore suffer a loss of civil liberty because the very form and orders of a free commonwealth are contrary to the civil nature of a monarchy. If the people are secure in their civil liberties, they are also secure in matters of conscience.

In his *Needful Corrective*, Vane respectfully denies the constitutional relevance of Exodus 18. Jethro only perceived the external pattern of Israel's system of justice, the letter and not the substance of civil polity. Harrington was far too literal in his political reading, and focused too intensely upon good political advice as opposed to the divine revelation of primitive magistracy. Moses was better than Jethro because he received a divine civil platform of "inward principles," or the substance of righteous polity, as well as the form of its primitive original pattern. This sort of mystical dismissal of the political advice of Jethro represents a subtle denunciation of Harrington's entire model. His prudence was too "human," and not sufficiently ancient, and therefore not divine.

Vane's allegorical approach led him to locate political utility in other biblical passages quite different from Harrington, and Milton too. He does not detect a popular prerogative, or emphasize the importance of popular choice in the political process as Harrington does, but rather godly rule. Vane stresses limited jurisdiction and limited prerogative in the service of liberty of conscience, and lays down political principles for a polity to come by focusing upon OT prophecies and NT apocalyptic passages. He

derived limited magistracy from David's prophecy of a righteous rule over man in 2 Samuel 23: 3-7, which he further supported by Romans 13. God had ordained and established government to punish evil, and praise righteousness. One of his most significant passages is Isaiah's prophecy in 1:26 of a restoration of primitive righteous rule of godly saints in a millennial republic.

Milton's model rested primarily upon Deuteronomy 17:14-18, 1 Samuel 8:10-19, and Matthew 20:20-28, from which he established the liberty of choice, the right of the people to alter their government, as well as anti-lordship in any form. In *Readie and Easie*, he combined all three to prove that God and Christ both commanded a commonwealth and warned against heathenish tyranny in government.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20 represented Milton's scriptural text for popular choice, unlike Harrington who focused upon 1:13. God's recognition of the possibility that the people would request a king like those of the nations indicated to Milton their liberty to create whatever form they desired, and proceeded to establish it as a general rule for all nations. This was their prerogative. But should Israel indeed decide upon a king, not that she was destined to, Deuteronomy 17 limited his authority under law. In this regard, Milton, like Harrington, perceived God's respect for popular choice, even though such a decision would destroy the commonwealth, the best form of government since he established one for his people.

Like Harrington, Milton understood 1 Samuel 8:1-22 as Israel's abandonment of her divine commonwealth and a rejection of God as their sovereign king. And though both seemed to stress the role of consent in regards to choice of government from this passage, they would employ different languages. Harrington saw it as a rejection of orders, and a sign of the commonwealth's disintegration, with God's response an indication of his preference for his authority over his power. Milton never employed such language, but resorted to his categories of slavery, tyranny and liberty, and developed God's displeasure into a perpetual warning against kingly tyranny, and lordship in general, which Christ confirmed in Matthew 20:28. This Matthew text, which is normally read ecclesiastically, Milton read civilly, and represents his unique political contribution to England's settlement debates. In his arguments against the royalists and Presbyterians, Milton explained that Christ warned against the same sort of heathenish tyranny and "gentilizing" effect of kingship, which Israel disastrously reproduced in her civil experience. Milton equated Christ's model of just magisterial rule with self-sacrificial service on behalf of the governed, and quite contrary to the procedure of Gentile kings who lorded it over their brethren, which also represented the

practice of Israel's kings. He would extend this civil doctrine of servant leadership by new-modelling England's Parliament in a perpetual senate of servant civil leaders as opposed to successive parliaments.

### **The Jewish Polity and the Mosaic Judicials**

Harrington employed the Hebrew Commonwealth quite extensively when developing the orders of Oceana, and where the bulk of his biblical republicanism rests. Oceana was written out of Israel paradigmatically by which is meant that Harrington extended her authority over his model as a divine republican exemplar. In this regard, Israel's electoral method, her political constitution of the agrarian law, the legislative function of the senate and the congregation, including the congregation's method of rotation, as well as her local judgeships, were all incorporated into Oceana as civil parallels. Even Oceana's educational system was modelled somewhat upon his understanding of Moses temple-court university and the erudition of the Levites.

Harrington considered Israel's model as the divine authoritative republican exemplar. This was God's original commonwealth pattern, which he imprinted in Nature for all to investigate and from which the pagan models seem to be copies. In this regard, the Scriptures, or Grace, confirms what Nature declares. God created mankind with the same basic nature, and instilled within his created natural order political principles discoverable by all. Only Israel's Commonwealth was divinely delivered. But to prove the legitimacy of the political connections between the scriptural model and those of ancient prudence naturally derived, and affirm the practice of mining the ancient commonwealths for political principles, Harrington redeployed Jethro's acceptable advice to Moses in Exodus 18 to legitimize his inquiry into the heathen counsel of ancient prudence.

Harrington carved out of Israel two fundamental political constitutions, or foundational laws for Oceana, which contrast with Vane's political pillars. The first was her agrarian, or Jubilee land law, which was instituted by God to preserve the popular balance or dominion in Canaan. Since Canaan's land allocations were divinely established as a popular distribution and therefore balance, God desired popular government for Israel, which he confirmed further through his order of the Jubilee Law.

Harrington paralleled the effectual nature of Israel's popular agrarian in Oceana as a political constitution to sustain and secure England's popular balance. As for his principle of rotation, he coordinated Oceana's method with the monthly tribal revolutions of Israel's congregation by rotating the superstructures through the most local level of government to insure that the common interest was maintained. With this,

the legislative aspects and the electoral methods of his model were paralleled in the Hebrew senate and congregation. Law could only be established through the debate of 300 senators and the resolution of 1500 representatives, one third of which would be rotated out annually.

Milton refers to Harrington's model in his *Readie and Easie* as a bulky and transitory legislative apparatus with an overly complex electoral method. The liberty and security of the people was best retained through seasoned and stable servant leaders who sat for life, as opposed to a successive Parliament that consisted of such a rotation as Harrington proposed. Apart from his use of the Matthew text to promote his perpetual senate of servant leaders, Milton attacks Harrington's model in its practicality, and preference for popular prerogative. But Milton also utilized the Hebrew Commonwealth in his model, but as to his divine outlines only. He refers to the Jewish Sanhedrin as an example of a stable Senate, and seems to have had it in mind for his model, but does not consider her manner of elections or legislative role as critical. His suggestion of local subordinate judicatures to replace the House of Lords may have also rested upon the local courts of Israel first established by Jethro.

Vane never resorted to the institutional particulars of the Hebrew Polity for his commonwealth model, though it did play a profound political role. While Harrington seemed to craft a polity for an earthly kingdom, Vane's was modelled after a kingdom to come. His eschatological reading of the OT lead him to see the culmination of the battle waged between the forces of the Lord and the Antichrist in the victory of Christ's millennial kingdom rule. Israel's earthly institutions did not represent the original pattern, but the representation or type, which foreshadowed the civil antitype, or the true original primitive magistracy in Christ. God had promised a righteous magistracy to come that Moses saw on the mount as Christ's rule over men, and its complete restoration as a primitive constitution of magistracy with just and righteous judges as foretold by Isaiah. According to Vane, this prophecy found its fulfillment in Revelation 21 as that New Jerusalem coming down from heaven.

Vane contrasts his and Harrington's political reading of the Scriptures in *Needful Corrective* by highlighting, in some regards, their differences over human depravity. Both understood the necessity to restrain private interest for the sake of the general welfare, but resolved this issue differently. Harrington's solution was more external to man with a focus upon the fundamental laws of the agrarian and rotation, as well as a series of complex constitutional orders coupled with a very extensive franchise. In this regard, good laws, operating through the superstructures, were enough to restrain the

private will and ensure the general welfare. These were sufficient constitutional mechanisms that operated as institutional impediments to restrain rampant self-interest. Vane and Milton considered the people as deserving of liberty, but wholly unfit for its maintenance and care, lacking in an understanding and comprehension of it, and therefore called for godly and steady seasoned magistrates in standing councils and senates to secure it on their behalf until they were educated in its value. This was also the only way to stave off an impending restored monarchy, as a Parliament consisting of parties opposed to a commonwealth would reestablish the king. Vane also countered Harrington by asserting the need to balance and check man's will, even in his representative capacity, by a godly senate which would propose God's will to the people through their representatives. Harrington's model would never check interest and moral corruption because it failed to incorporate the necessity for spiritual regeneration. Man was fundamentally degenerate and unrighteous, and needed to be checked by the corrective balance of God's Spirit.

### **Jurisdiction: Liberty of Conscience**

Vane regarded religious liberty and the freedom of worship apart from coercion as an excellent and heavenly right secured for all men through Christ's atoning sacrifice and resurrection. Government was ordained by God to have limited authority over man in service of such liberty, while the forces of the Antichrist worked through the civil and ecclesiastical institutions to rob men of it.

Like Harrington, Vane articulated fundamental laws and constitutions for his commonwealth model, but in the service of liberty of conscience to check antichristian tyranny and self-interest in civil rule, and not to establish a popular prerogative. Harrington never articulated the apocalyptic language of Vane, and neither did Milton for that matter. But for Vane, this antichristian spirit was the epitomy of selfish private interest masquerading itself under the guise of religion in public service. This was to be checked and balanced by recognizing and acknowledging, before government was even institutionalized, that pre-existing and supreme law of liberty of conscience. Only God and Christ had the authority to hold men accountable for their religious convictions, and therefore civil authority was excluded from its province. Once the heavenly origin of this supreme law is recognized, the most fundamental political constitution which must be consented to before the erection of government is a magistracy limited to ruling over man, and in keeping with God's ordinance in Romans 13.

Milton and Vane both shared a vision of liberty that shaped their political readings. Milton frequently employed the language of Christian liberty to confront

slavery and tyranny in both the church and state and envisioned himself in his country's service to further its realization by reforming England's institutions. Though Vane would locate tyranny in the long history of that usurping spirit of the Antichrist as it dominated the civil and ecclesiastical thrones, Milton detected it directly in the attempt to force conscience civilly by resurrecting the Mosaic Judicials within the liberating dispensation of the Gospel. Though the Judicials retained their moral force, their external administration was no longer necessary under the Gospel precisely because the Spirit inscribed them on the hearts of believers. In this regard, the Gospel abolished the Jewish Polity's institutional incorporation of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities; now willingness of heart, reason, and not force, were to prevail.

Whereas Vane and Milton held to a disestablished church to promote liberty of conscience, Harrington supported a civil religion as a non-coercive institution to lead the people into worship and the things of faith. He understood Isaiah 49:23 as a clear command to civil magistrates "to be *nursing fathers and nursing mothers* unto the church." Persons could be equipped for the ministry through the universities, which would be sufficiently financed with public benefactions. The state's commitment to insuring an adequately trained ministry through the university would guard against bias, promote the instruction in Scripture's original languages to protect against corrupt translation, and ensure that Christ's command in John 5:39 "*to search the Scriptures*" is obeyed.

### **Biblical Politics and English Republicanism**

#### **Biblical Politics**

This study reveals how careful research into the political use of the Bible among important seventeenth-century figures can yield a fresh understanding of their political contributions and models, as well as highlight some of their distinctive features in contrast to others.

For example, Harrington's *Oceana* is an extremely complex model filled with classical history and ideas, but his response to Rogers that he had written out of Israel is a significant benchmark against which to investigate his use of the Hebrew Polity. A close analysis of *Oceana* reveals that Harrington's fundamental laws and superstructures find their civil parallels in Israel, which he highlights and explains further in his *Prerogative*, and *Art of Lawgiving*. With this, Deuteronomy 1:13 became his standard biblical text of popular prerogative, because it operated similarly for Israel. It is critical to consider the full extent of Harrington's political works, as much of it represents supportive commentary on *Oceana*.

Milton's commonwealth model makes more sense if his repeated use of the Matthew 20:20-28 text is taken into consideration. His language of "gentilism" is vital for understanding his proposal of a perpetual senate or standing council of godly leaders. His use of this passage, coupled with Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Samuel 8, assist us in grasping his emphasis upon a model emptied of human lordship. Together, these texts represent sufficient proof that both God and Christ condemned heathenish tyranny, and therefore slavery, and commanded a commonwealth, and therefore liberty.

Vane's millennialism must be taken into account in order to understand his model of a primitive polity of just and righteous rule to come, which David foresaw the substance of, and Isaiah its institution. This was the New Jerusalem, and Holy Commonwealth of Israel. Civil magistrates were limited in their authority by God and in service to a divine religious right of liberty of conscience secured for all through the Atonement. Government must now be structured according to this supreme law, and fundamental constitution of limited civil jurisdiction, which in turn, would prevent Antichrist from establishing his civil throne. Godly men, faithful to the cause, should sit in government to prevent legislation against liberty of conscience and balance the will of the people on behalf of their liberty.

This study also demonstrates the inadequacy of secular interpretations that attempt to isolate biblical use from political principles and civil-modelling. Our understanding of the development of the constitutional models of Harrington, Milton and Vane is enhanced if their biblical arguments are taken into consideration in light of their interpretive approaches. But their use of pre-critical methodologies does not mean they lacked intellectual rigor or scholarly sophistication. On the contrary, each used the Bible in a more systematic and sophisticated manner than is generally acknowledged, even by Professor Hill, who contributed a book of his own on this topic. These three case studies simply do not evidence a random approach to the Scriptures, and historians should reconsider the assumption that they merely represent some sort of a "rag-bag of quotations which could justify whatever a given individual or group wanted to do," and reflect how other critical early modern figures might be recast in the light of their own political use of the Scriptures.

### **English Republicanism**

First, the real surprise of this study is Harrington, the non-Puritan political thinker, whose model demonstrates substantial dependence upon the Hebrew Commonwealth. Though a few historians have commented on his use of this model, and most recently Adam Sutcliffe, the extent of its interconnectedness with Oceana as a

parallel authority has not been previously investigated. Harrington's engagement with the biblical text should challenge the widespread assumption that he was simply a secular theorist who modelled Oceana exclusively out of classical sources, and resorted to Scripture merely to gain adherents.

This study also reveals that there was no standard republican approach to reading the Bible politically. Harrington, Vane and Milton read the Bible differently. Their reading of the text had a symbiotic relationship with their political thought, since it both reflected and shaped their distinctive style of republicanism. Harrington explored the structures of the Hebrew Polity; Vane focused on prophecies of the millennial restoration of primitive magistracy; and Milton emphasized texts that dovetailed with his ideal of republican liberty. This underscores the diverse nature of English republicanism, and reinforces the contrast between Harrington's emphasis on structures, and Milton's stress on values. However, the fact that each theorist approached the Bible with equal seriousness confirms that the 1650s was an age of biblical, as well as classical, republicanism.

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