

‘No King but Jesus’: The Fifth Monarchists’ Idea of a Christian Commonwealth.

Leanne Kathleen Smith

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School of History, Classics and Archaeology

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## **Abstract**

The thesis explores the engagement of the Fifth Monarchists with English republican debates of the 1650s. The study challenges the dominant historiographical viewpoint that characterises the Fifth Monarchists as religious radicals rather than republicans. Leo Solt and Bernard Capp argued that Fifth Monarchists only adopted republican rhetoric to garner support for their declining movement. The notion that the Fifth Monarchists were insincere in their republicanism is reinforced by the approach to civil war republicanism, which emphasised the influence of classical texts and portrayed the ideology as primarily secular. In recent years historians of early modern republicanism have begun to acknowledge the cross-over with religious radicalism, but our sense of republican thought continues to be influenced by the overreliance on a limited canon of thinkers. By examining the contribution of Fifth Monarchists, the study expands the boundaries of republican thought.

The thesis analyses the writings of five Fifth Monarchists: John Rogers; Mary Cary; William Aspinwall; John Spittlehouse, and John Canne. The findings show that each author engaged with neo-Roman liberty and republican virtue to justify commonwealth rule. However, their approaches varied. For example, Rogers, Aspinwall and Spittlehouse drew on the model of the Hebrew Commonwealth to assert that sovereignty lay with God, whereas Canne used it to reveal that sovereignty originated with the people. Cary employed examples from prophecy to demonstrate the loss of liberty and to justify commonwealth rule. She also placed greater emphasis on virtue than the other writers, leading to innovative schemes to benefit the people and the Commonwealth.

The thesis suggests that the authors created a distinct language of godly republicanism based on interpreting contemporary events through millenarianism. The implications of this argument extend beyond the thesis, advocating for broader recognition of the impact of the interrelationship between politics and religion during the early modern period.

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Figure 1, page 161: Thomas Paine, 'An Emblem of Antichrist', in John Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN'D by White Hall, Or, the Papall Crown Demolisht: Containing a Confutation of the Three Degrees of Popery, Viz. Papacy, Prelacy, and Presbitery*. London, 1649.



## Introduction

‘And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High’.<sup>1</sup> The prophecy described in chapter 7 of the Book of Daniel marks the triumphant moment when God would mete out his divine judgement on the tyrannical forces of the antichristian empire, and the saints would be given dominion. It was interpreted that the act would lead to the eventual fall of the antichristian fourth empire and the start of Christ’s Fifth Monarchy. According to the millenarian sect, the Fifth Monarchy Men, the physical fulfilment of the prophecy took place on 30 January 1649, with the execution of Charles I. In her analysis of the parallels between contemporary events and the demise of the little horn in Daniel chapter 7, on account of its tyrannical actions, the Fifth Monarchist Mary Cary wrote that Charles I too ‘was said to be slaine, and his body destroyed: so it came to passe that his blood was also justly required at his hands, having caused so much innocent blood to be shed’.<sup>2</sup> The Fifth Monarchists considered the regicide to have permanently ended the British monarchy. This was seemingly confirmed through the abolition of the Office of the King on 17 March and subsequently, on 19 May, the Rump Parliament’s declaration of England as a ‘Commonwealth and Free State’. The execution of the king also signified the return of religious and civil liberties that had been lost under the tyrannical reign of monarchical rule, leading to the nation’s enslavement. For the next decade, the Fifth Monarchists attempted to protect those regained liberties by advocating for a godly republic, drawing inspiration from the exemplary principles outlined in the Hebrew Bible, alongside classical influences.

The regicide of Charles I marked the onset of a period that can be characterised as an experimental phase in English republicanism, lasting until the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660. The decade was characterised by political instability and frequent changes in governance. Writing in response to those changes, political thinkers such as Marchamont Nedham, John Milton, and James Harrington seized the opportunity to share their thoughts on establishing a lasting commonwealth. The political thought of these figures, among others, has played a pivotal role in creating what has come to be known as the English republican tradition. A tradition that, it is argued, subsequently influenced

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel 7:27 (King James Version).

<sup>2</sup> Mary Cary, *THE LITTLE HORNS Doom & Downfall OR A Scripture-Prophesie OF King James, and King Charles* (1651), 40.

revolutionary movements in both America and France by furnishing arguments opposing monarchical governance and advocating for the legitimacy of republican regimes.<sup>3</sup>

Despite writing contemporaneously and in direct response to the shifting political landscape, the contribution of the Fifth Monarchists to the development of English republican thought has largely been neglected by scholars. The issue is two-fold. First, within the historiography surrounding the Fifth Monarchists, the expression of republican language by some of its members, within their writings, has been dismissed as mere rhetoric. This interpretation was first proposed by Leo Solt in 1961 and subsequently endorsed by Bernard Capp in his 1972 study of the group.<sup>4</sup> This text has significantly shaped our understanding of the Fifth Monarchists.

Solt and Capp were referring to the potential collaboration between the Fifth Monarchists and advocates for the revival of the Commonwealth, as documented by John Thurloe, Cromwell's Director of Intelligence, in 1656. Thurloe's state papers suggested that certain Fifth Monarchists, such as John Rogers, William Aspinwall and Thomas Venner, might consider forming an alliance with individuals who aimed to reinstate the Commonwealth, such as Henry Vane. Moreover, it was believed that Vane's *A Healing Question* (1656) sought to reconcile these two disaffected groups.

While recognising its distinct millenarian tone in his assessment of *A Healing Question*, Solt argued that this was merely a superficial attempt to bolster support for the Fifth Monarchists, a sect he asserted that 'from 1656 was in decline'.<sup>5</sup> While Capp echoed a similar line of argument, he acknowledged that Rogers, during the later stages of the Protectorate, employed republican language. However, he attributed this to the influence of Vane and questioned Rogers's commitment to the movement.<sup>6</sup> It is essential to underscore that Capp's research aimed to enhance our comprehension of millenarianism, an ideology previously perceived as inconsequential. Furthermore, his study aimed to understand where the group's millenarian beliefs could be situated within the development of the Protestant apocalyptic tradition.

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<sup>3</sup> Rachel Hammersley, *Republicanism: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020), see chapters seven & eight.

<sup>4</sup> Leo Solt, 'The Fifth Monarchy men: Politics and the millennium,' *Church History*, Vol.30, No.3 (Sept.,1961), 314-324; Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972).

<sup>5</sup> Solt, 'The Fifth Monarchy men,' 320.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 139.

The second issue that has obscured the contribution of the Fifth Monarchists to republicanism arises from the study of republican thought itself, which typically traces its origins back to Greek or Roman literature.<sup>7</sup> During the Renaissance, the political philosophy of Aristotle, Polybius, Livy and Cicero was rediscovered. With new knowledge of ancient and great republics like Athens, Sparta and Rome, political theorists such as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Francesco Guiccardini (1483-1540) developed their distinctive republican theory. The republican ideology developed by Renaissance scholars offered a wealth of resources for republican thinkers in England during the 1650s. The study of republican thought has emphasised its roots in classical, pagan sources, and many historians have come to view it as a secular ideology.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, as the Fifth Monarchists predominantly expressed their republicanism through the language of millenarianism, their contribution to the republican debates of the 1650s has not been recognised. The thesis will explore the intellectual work of several Fifth Monarchists to reveal how they not only embraced republican ideals, such as liberty and virtue, but created a form of republican thought inspired by millenarianism. Only a self-governing commonwealth of the saints, no longer headed by an earthly monarch, would reform society sufficiently to allow for Christ's return and the start of the new millennium.

### **Historiography of Millenarianism within the European Protestant Tradition**

Within the Protestant tradition, the interpretation of prophecy has been and continues to be the subject of much speculation. Surprisingly, scholars have paid relatively little attention to the history of millenarianism until the second half of the twentieth century. Scholarly investigation into the emergence of an apocalyptic tradition largely stemmed from an interest in the British Revolution, albeit with a predominant focus on its characterisation as an English revolutionary era. Until the mid-twentieth century, Whig historians interpreted the Revolution as England's march towards modernity. In these accounts, the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 was a pivotal moment in the nation's history as the national church was brought back under the control of the state, and its influence in political affairs

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<sup>7</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Oxford: Princeton Classics, 2016). Pocock argued that Greek scholars, such as Aristotle, influenced the development of the republican tradition; Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Quentin Skinner illustrated that the republicanism that emerged from the Renaissance had its roots in Roman philosophy, in particular, Livy. Both Pocock and Skinner agree that Machiavelli was central in the transmission of ideas.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Scott, *Commonwealth Principles: Republican writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xi.

began to decline.<sup>9</sup> The so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 diminished any remaining religious sway within the political realm.<sup>10</sup>

As Whig historians considered British history to be a linear progression towards a modern and secularised state, this significantly impacted the study of millenarianism. As was noted by James. E. Force, enlightened thinkers, such as David Hume, viewed belief in a millennium reign of Christ as irrational and unintelligible.<sup>11</sup> During the early twentieth century, there was some recognition of the impact of millenarianism on the evolution of Puritan thought. For instance, A. S. P. Woodhouse, in his work *Puritanism and Liberty* (1938), highlighted the prominent role played by millenarianism within Puritan ideology. However, William Haller in *The Rise of Puritanism*, also published that year, failed to acknowledge the central importance of apocalyptic thought.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, Crawford Gribben has observed that other significant studies from that period, such as those by Perry Miller, ‘paid little attention’ to apocalyptic thought.<sup>13</sup> These works strengthened the idea that apocalypticism was not a significant driving force in the nation’s development.

During the second half of the twentieth century, there was, as described by Force, a ‘millenarian turn’. The ‘turn’ marked the moment historians began to take an interest in the impact of millenarianism.<sup>14</sup> Although no definitive explanation has been given for the sudden rise in interest, Gribben suggested that contemporary events could have been a factor. During the twentieth century, two ideological movements, Communism and Nazism, emerged, both envisaging a secularised golden age.<sup>15</sup> The search for a connection between millenarian groups in a religious and secular form was explored by Norman Cohn in *Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957). Cohn adopted a historical and sociological approach to studying several groups from the medieval period until the seventeenth-century. While Cohn’s research does not encompass the specific timeframe addressed in the thesis, his

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<sup>9</sup> C. J. Sommerville., *The Secularisation of Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 15.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 15; The once-dominant belief in the waning influence of religion on politics post-1660 has been contested in works such as the collection of essays edited by Tim Harris, Paul Seaward & Mark Goldie. Rejecting the ideas of 1660 as a secular watershed, the chapters emphasise continuity, challenging established views. See ‘Introduction: Revising the Restoration,’ in *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England*, ed. Tim Harris, Peter Seaward and Mark Goldie (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 1-28.

<sup>11</sup> James E. Force, ‘Introduction,’ in *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture Volume III the Millenarian Turn: Millenarian Contexts of Science, Politics, and Everyday Anglo-American Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. J. E. Force and R. H. Popkin (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), xxii.

<sup>12</sup> Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature and theology, 1550 -1682*, (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Gribben referred to Perry Miller’s *The New England Mind* (1939) & *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956) – both texts focused on the creation of godly societies in the American colonies.

<sup>14</sup> Force, ‘Introduction,’ xxii.

<sup>15</sup> Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium*, 2.



findings have demonstrated that millenarian belief often emerged during social, economic, religious and political upheaval. Furthermore, that millenarian belief was influential throughout history.<sup>16</sup>

### **Seventeenth-Century Millenarianism**

Our understanding of the influence of millenarianism during the seventeenth-century has predominantly been shaped by the work of William Lamont, Peter Toon, Bernard Capp and Katherine Firth. In *Godly Rule Politics and Religion 1603-60* (1969), Lamont offered an alternative perspective to the conventional belief that millenarianism was associated with fanatics.<sup>17</sup> Millenarianism, he argued, had been viewed as a minority belief because previous studies had only focused on its more militant elements.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the concept of millenarianism had been narrowly defined by associating millenarianism with individuals or groups that aimed to bring about the second coming.<sup>19</sup> More importantly, Lamont highlighted that previous historians had dismissed millenarianism because they had struggled to comprehend a belief system which can appear bizarre to those living in a more secular age. He emphasised the importance of exploring these beliefs as they permeated English intellectual life during the seventeenth-century and called for more consideration of the significance of millenarianism, particularly in the period immediately before and after the British Civil Wars.<sup>20</sup>

Lamont demonstrated that the first half of the seventeenth century was characterised by a more subtle form of millennial belief. Millenarianism became associated with violence after 1534 when Anabaptist leaders besieged the city of Münster. They sought to establish an egalitarian society based on their reading of the Bible.<sup>21</sup> The town was eventually recaptured by Roman Catholic armed forces in 1535. However, due to concerns about the spread of millenarian ideas, the authorities massacred the city's entire population.<sup>22</sup> Following this event, in Europe and Britain, millenarianism was perceived as a dangerous doctrine and the creed of fanatics.<sup>23</sup> Lamont's work, which concentrated on

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<sup>16</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London: Mercury Books, 1957).

<sup>17</sup> William Lamont, *Godly Rule Politics and Religion 1603-60* (London: Macmillan, 1969).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Anabaptist beliefs varied dependent on different groups and regions; however, they were fundamentally opposed to infant baptism. They emphasised adult baptism as this was the outward symbolic gesture of voluntary act of faith. This was a conscious act that could not be made by children.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Toon, 'Introduction,' in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970), 19; Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium*, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Firth has noted that despite this event interest in the apocalypse continued unabated. Katharine Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 32.

developments in England from 1603 to 1660, aimed to reveal that, despite its reputation, apocalyptic beliefs assumed a predominantly passive character during the first half of the seventeenth-century. This passivity was notably influenced by the works of John Foxe (1517-1587) and Thomas Brightman (1562-1607). Foxe and Brightman believed they lived through the end times but refrained from specifying particular dates.<sup>24</sup> It was only after the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642 that a marked shift occurred. This transition ushered in a more militant and radicalised form of millenarianism and instilled a sense of certainty regarding the anticipated arrival of the new millennium.<sup>25</sup> Notably, Lamont argued that from 1653, millenarianism was no longer a significant influence in Protestant England.<sup>26</sup>

Following Lamont's study, Peter Toon published an edited collection of essays entitled *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel* (1970). Through the individual chapters, Toon sought to provide a historical account of the progression of millenarianism, tracing its origins from the early church fathers through to the emergence of the Quakers. Three chapters have relevance to seventeenth-century millenarianism. Bernard Capp's chapter covered the transformation from 'subtle' millenarianism to a more extreme form. The chapter presented an overview of Capp's subsequent monograph, published two years later, which explicitly examined the Fifth Monarchy Men. Further elaboration on this topic is provided later in the chapter when discussing the historical scholarship surrounding the group. The chapters contributed by Toon and R.G. Clouse presented a comprehensive exploration of the biblical exegesis offered by theologians such as Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638), Brightman, and Joseph Mede (1586-1639). Their analysis sheds light on how these theologians influenced seventeenth-century writers such as John Milton.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly to Cohn and Lamont, Toon and Clouse also emphasised the 'social conditions in England' that made millenarianism appeal to a large section of society.<sup>28</sup> However, it was the exegesis of Alsted and Mede that caused a revolutionary form of millenarianism to develop. In his work, Clouse emphasised the influence of the German Calvinist Alsted on English Puritans who, from the 1620s, began to interpret various events as indicating end times, causing their outlook to become more millenarian. It is important to note that both Alsted and Mede's interpretations came at a time when belief in the future millennium had been deemed heretical by the Reformed Church, so there was caution in

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 19-31.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 19-20.

<sup>26</sup> Lamont, *Godly Rule Politics and Religion*, 106.

<sup>27</sup> R. G. Clouse, 'The Rebirth of Millenarianism,' in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970), 62.

<sup>28</sup> Toon, 'Introduction,' 7.

expressing such beliefs.<sup>29</sup> However, two decades later, the events of the Civil War destabilised the authority of the established church, and millenarianism began to be popularised. Furthermore, Clouse pointed out that the Long Parliament recognised the propagandistic value of millenarian literature and took the initiative to republish Mede's *The Key of Revelation*.<sup>30</sup> Following this, as Toon has noted, belief in the doctrine of a future millennium gained widespread acceptance 'in Cromwellian England'.<sup>31</sup>

Joseph Mede significantly impacted the development of the Protestant apocalyptic tradition, primarily owing to his 'synchronal scheme' for interpreting the prophecies in the book of Revelation. Unlike the conventional sequential interpretation of the visions of St John, Mede proposed that they should be understood as occurring concurrently. As Sarah Hutton observed, 'This scheme enabled him to suggest a more coherent chronological account of the Protestant tradition.' This account traced the progression from the decline of the Catholic Church into apostasy to the eventual triumph of Christ and his saints during the millennium.<sup>32</sup> Notably, while Mede had also not specified any particular dates for the thousand-year reign, he brought the concept of the millennium 'on to the horizon'.<sup>33</sup>

During the 1640s and 1650s, Mede's biblical interpretations were significant and influenced groups such as the Fifth Monarchists. However, it is essential to note that Mede was operating within the boundaries of the Laudian Church.<sup>34</sup> As Hutton further pointed out, although some Fifth Monarchists, such as Christopher Feake and John Canne, embraced Mede's interpretation of the book of Revelation, it was important to emphasise that Mede himself had not 'anticipate[d] a political outcome.' Instead, Mede's interpretation illuminated the concept of 'spiritual reformation' rather than pursuing a social or political agenda.<sup>35</sup>

In her 1979 publication, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645*, Katharine Firth presented a comprehensive historiographical account of the

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<sup>29</sup> At the 431 AD Council of Ephesus, the expectation of a future millennium was condemned, aligning with Augustine's view. Johnston suggests that, with Christianity as the Roman Empire's official religion, the church sought to suppress internal divisions by rejecting the belief in an imminent paradise, which was viewed as a source of disturbance. Wayne Johnston, *Revelation Restored: the apocalypse in later seventeenth-century England* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 3.

<sup>30</sup> Clouse, 'The Rebirth of Millenarianism,' 56; *The Key of Revelation* was the English translation Mede's *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1627) republished in 1643.

<sup>31</sup> Toon, 'Introduction,' 7.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Hutton, 'The appropriation of Joseph Mede: Millenarianism in the 1640s,' in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970), 5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

development of apocalypticism in Protestant Britain. Firth's work underscored the pivotal role played by the Reformation in shaping the trajectory of British apocalypticism. However, she challenged the prevailing narrative that this was either a 'wholly Puritan or British affair'.<sup>36</sup>

Much like Toon, Firth contextualised the emergence of millenarian beliefs within a broader European framework. She emphasised the dissemination of ideas among the Henrician and Marian exiles and explored how this exchange influenced the evolution of the Protestant apocalyptic tradition within Britain. Firth navigated the complexities of biblical exegesis, exploring the works of theologians such as John Bale (1495-1563), Foxe and Brightman. One of the pivotal findings in Firth's study sheds light on the impact of contextual circumstances on the interpretation of prophecy by individual authors. For example, she highlighted the critical role of the six-year period following Mary's accession to the English throne in 1553, which Firth identified as the most crucial phase in developing the British apocalyptic tradition.<sup>37</sup> During this time, the migration of scholars to the continent facilitated the spread of ideas. It marked a notable shift in the language used, changing from an emphasis on appealing to the 'monarchy to an appeal to the Protestant people'.

Firth specifically underscored the significance of John Foxe in this context, noting that his interest in apocalypticism did not surface until the Marian exile. Following his return to England, Foxe became a central figure in establishing 'the apocalyptic tradition in English Protestant historiography.'<sup>38</sup> As she explained, Foxe 'was the first British author to write a Protestant apocalyptic history that attempted to explain changes in time in terms of an unfolding pattern of events.'<sup>39</sup> For example, the theme of persecution, which ran throughout his writings, profoundly influenced his interpretation of the book of Revelation. His understanding of the book of Revelation was related to his awareness of historical persecution faced by early Christians and later Protestant reformers. According to Foxe, the prophecies in Revelation delineated three distinct periods of persecution. In one of these periods, Foxe connected the binding of Satan with the end of persecution, which occurred roughly around the time of Constantine. Conversely, he associated Satan's unbinding with the resumption of persecutions, notably referring to the instances of Wyclif and Huss after

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<sup>36</sup> Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition*, 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

1300.<sup>40</sup> Foxe's study of the book of Revelation and how it applied to historical events exemplified his contribution to the development of the apocalyptic tradition in Britain.

Firth also challenged William Haller's assertion that Foxe contributed to the notion of England as an elect nation and promoted 'apocalyptic nationalism'.<sup>41</sup> As Firth pointed out, Haller's analysis focused primarily on Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and disregarded his commentary on Revelation. As she contended, no passage in Foxe's text made a 'connection between England and the elect nation', and Haller had instead argued that it was 'implied'. In contrast, Firth demonstrated that in *Acts and Monuments* and Foxe's *Eicasmī*, his 'conception of the true church is international and mystical, identifying the Church as the congregation of the elect.' Moreover, in *Eicasmī*, he denied to England as a nation a special place in God's promise to the elect'.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to note that the apocalyptic tradition that evolved during the sixteenth century affirmed its commitment to the prevailing argument that the millennium had already occurred in the past. Following the events in Münster, belief in a future millennium, particularly the belief in a future 'golden age,' was officially condemned at the Second Helvetic Confession in 1566.<sup>43</sup> However, similarly to the findings of Lamont, Toon and Clouse, Firth's examination of the period also corroborated the emergence of millenarianism during the seventeenth-century, primarily through the works of Alsted and, notably, Mede.<sup>44</sup>

Firth asserted that the initial decades of the seventeenth-century bore witness to a 'new spirit of millenarianism' and emphasised once more that this transformation could be attributed to events on the continent, specifically the Thirty Years War.<sup>45</sup> Amid the conflict, Britain emerged as a refuge for foreign Protestants, coinciding with the widespread belief, 'both at home and abroad' that 'Britain had a special role to play in the defence of the Protestant faith'.<sup>46</sup> Like the previous authors, Firth also highlighted the importance of the publication of millenarian literature, especially those commissioned by the Long Parliament. Promoting millenarian beliefs gave the members of parliament and the wider populace a narrative that signalled 'change was imminent'. This thesis will also

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 91-92.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 108.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 148.

<sup>44</sup> Firth argued that shifts in the apocalyptic tradition after Bale and Foxe were influenced by John Napier, who approached the book of Revelation scientifically and mathematically. However, Napier also made a conscious effort to distance himself from millenarianism. Ibid, 149.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 204.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 253.

demonstrate that the Fifth Monarchists surveyed responded to the context in which they were living. They adapted their interpretation of prophecy to suit their means.

The authors discussed so far have broadened our knowledge of the development of seventeenth-century millenarianism. They challenged the earlier Whig assumptions that millenarianism was a minority belief system and beyond the realm of analysis. They have demonstrated that it was far more mainstream and formed within a European context.<sup>47</sup> However, they have also reinforced some of the prior misconceptions. First, they contributed to the theory of secularisation, which asserted that 1660 was a watershed moment in the decline of religion within the political sphere. The perception that millenarianism declined after that period leads to the consequential notion that it played no role in creating the modern state. Second, Lamont and Capp have characterised the millenarianism that manifested itself in the 1650s as being marked by violence and militancy.<sup>48</sup> This characterisation is evident in Capp's choice of title for his chapter, included in Toon's edited collection entitled 'Extreme Millenarianism.'<sup>49</sup>

### **The Historiography of the Fifth Monarchy Men**

Interest in the Fifth Monarchists followed the same trajectory as the broader study of millenarianism. The group's actions during the Interregnum were considered inconsequential in terms of their lasting influence on the evolution of the nation-state. Their millenarian beliefs were considered a 'relic' from the medieval period, and as Capp commented, they were deemed as 'beyond the pale of analysis.'<sup>50</sup> Historian Herschel Baker, when referring to the actions of a specific faction within the Fifth Monarchists, branded the group as 'ludicrous'.<sup>51</sup> However, the activities of the group did manage to prompt some earlier intrigue.

In 1910, Charles Burrage published an article in the *English Historical Review*, retelling the events leading up to the first attempted uprising in 1657, organised by Thomas Venner and his congregation.<sup>52</sup> The first planned rebellion was discovered; however, on 6 January 1661, a group of fifty from Venner's congregation, angered by the Restoration and

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<sup>47</sup> This narrative has also been further challenged in more recent scholarship of Wayne Johnston which will be discussed later in the chapter. See Johnston, *Revelation Restored*.

<sup>48</sup> Lamont, *Godly Rule*, see chapter 'Godly Parliament'.

<sup>49</sup> Bernard Capp, 'Extreme Millenarianism,' in *Puritans, the Millennium and the Future of Israel*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970), 66-90.

<sup>50</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 15.

<sup>51</sup> Herschel Baker, *The Wars of Truth* (London and New York, 1952), 85.

<sup>52</sup> Champion Burrage, 'The Fifth Monarchy insurrections,' *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 25, No. 100 (Oct, 1910), 722-747.

the execution of Major-General Thomas Harrison, entered London.<sup>53</sup> The group quickly descended on to St Pauls, loudly proclaiming ‘King Jesus, and the heads upon the gate’.<sup>54</sup> They successfully managed to repel an armed party dispatched to apprehend them. Following this encounter, they withdrew into the woods, only to reemerge after three days. On 9 January it was reported that they had slain around twenty soldiers, while twenty-six members of their own group had been killed. Notably, Venner was among twenty individuals apprehended, and twelve were tried and executed out of this group. The uprising had significant consequences for other sects, as some members had fled. Consequently, authorities apprehended members of sects not directly involved in the uprising.<sup>55</sup> This development stirred significant condemnation of the activities associated with the Fifth Monarchists.

Burrage’s article primarily provides a descriptive narrative of the uprising. Additionally, he included excerpts from a deciphered manuscript, now held at the British Library, containing the minutes from the meetings of Venner’s congregation. However, the focus on Venner’s group helped to popularise the characterisation of the group as violent militants. A perception that, to a certain degree, remains to the present day and will be challenged in this thesis.

The following year, *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men in England during the Interregnum* (1911), composed by Louise Brown, was published.<sup>56</sup> It offered the first scholarly publication that engaged with the group’s political activities. In her text, Brown detailed the interactions during the Interregnum between Oliver Cromwell and the Fifth Monarchists and Baptists. In the opening few pages, Brown endorsed the Whig narrative that dismissed the credibility of such sects, as she explained that ‘it is difficult in these days to follow with patience, or even with complete seriousness, all the ramifications of Fifth Monarchy speculation’.<sup>57</sup> Brown’s decision to differentiate between the Baptists and Fifth Monarchists was also problematic. The Fifth Monarchists included members from Baptist congregations alongside Independents.<sup>58</sup> As Capp later suggested, perceiving the Fifth Monarchists as a broad movement rather than a distinct group is more

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<sup>53</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 199.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 199-200.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 199; Capp stated that these arrests targeted Quakers, Baptists and Congregationalists.

<sup>56</sup> Louise Brown, *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men in England during the Interregnum* (London: Burt Franklin, 1911).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>58</sup> Capp provided a biographical appendix listing around 239 known Fifth Monarchists. Details include occupations, religious and political affiliations if known. See Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 239-269.

accurate. As the thesis will demonstrate, despite their shared objective, their beliefs and practices were far from unified.

Overall, Brown paid too much attention to Cromwell's role during the period to clearly represent the Fifth Monarchists' position within the intellectual milieu of the time. Brown even went as far as to blame the Fifth Monarchists for restoring the Stuart monarchy. As she explained, the group opposed Cromwell instead of recognising that the creation of the Protectorate prevented the restoration from happening earlier. Despite the inadequacies of Brown's account, she did present two arguments that have influenced the historiography of the group. First, from 1656, the group was declining in numbers, which Brown attributed to the rise of Quakerism, as individuals considered it the next best option. Second, the connection between the sect, specifically John Rogers and Sir Henry Vane Jr. Both Rogers and Vane were imprisoned in 1656 and held at Carisbrooke Castle. Vane's text *Healing Question*, published in 1656, has been considered an attempt to bring the Fifth Monarchists and disgruntled Republicans together so they could oppose the Protectorate. Brown asserted that Vane was able to 'moderate' some of Rogers's ideas concerning the 'kingdom of Christ'.<sup>59</sup> The thesis will demonstrate that although Rogers extended his vision of who should be allowed to govern to include commonwealthmen after his interaction with Vane, he was consistent in his views on the millennium and the form the godly commonwealth should take.

In 1966, P. G. Rogers published *The Fifth Monarchy Men*. Rogers picked up on similar themes that Brown had highlighted.<sup>60</sup> However, unlike Brown, Rogers focused entirely on the Fifth Monarchists. He provided a brief overview of the development of what he described as the 'cult of the millennium', providing a narrative of the group's activities. As with Brown, Rogers also highlighted the decline in the movement; however, he explained that due to the 'militancy of its extremists and their fanaticism, they failed to appeal to the majority'.<sup>61</sup>

Rogers also paid particular attention to the Fifth Monarchists' proposal for the government to be styled on the Sanhedrin described in the Old Testament and governed by godly men. Reflecting the earlier assumptions that had negated scholarly interest in the group and the study of millenarianism more broadly, Rogers wrote that their political thought was in contrast to the prevailing trajectory of political development during the

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<sup>59</sup> Louise Brown, *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men*, 189.

<sup>60</sup> Philip. G. Rogers, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 156.



seventeenth-century. The trajectory to a more secular state, which Rogers argued stemmed from the English Reformation, ultimately led to the emergence of modern democratic ideas. The intellectual thought of the Fifth Monarchists, however, ‘harke[d] back to the medieval conception that religion should embrace and control every aspect of human life’.<sup>62</sup> Once again, the Fifth Monarchists were dismissed as anachronistic and not contributing anything substantial to modern political thought.

In 1972, Bernard Capp’s *The Fifth Monarchy Men A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* was published. Capp offered the most comprehensive study of the group to date. He aimed to challenge the existing narrative that the group represented a moment of lunacy and to provide further insight into a complex period in British history. Capp offered a chronological account of the group’s activities from their first meeting until their decline after the Restoration, documenting its decline into obscurity by the turn of the century. As with previous authors, Capp also set the Fifth Monarchists within a European context as he demonstrated the influence of the Reformation, the impact of two periods of exile, and the influx of ideas brought back from Europe.<sup>63</sup> As with Clouse, Capp agreed that millenarianism became more militant from the breakdown in censorship during the 1640s. He argued that ‘the crucial development was the adoption and dissemination of millenarian views by puritan preachers.’<sup>64</sup> However, he commented that the ‘speed of this change is only explicable on the assumption that these beliefs were already widespread and were released and intensified, rather than created, by the war’.<sup>65</sup> Again, he reiterated that millenarianism by the outbreak of war was more mainstream.

Capp also reinforced the two claims made within the earlier historiography. Although Capp does appear to question the generalisation that the Fifth Monarchists were violent, he also endorsed those assumptions. As he explained, the ‘furore’ caused by the sect’s emergence in the 1650s was not because they were millenarian but rather that they had ‘developed a potent and dangerous synthesis in which these ideas became the justification for violent political action and sweeping social change’.<sup>66</sup> As the thesis will demonstrate, each Fifth Monarchist discussed advocated for a form of passive resistance. After Venner’s failed uprising in 1657, John Rogers denounced his plans. Second, Capp reaffirmed the secularising narrative that viewed the Restoration as marking the decline of religious

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 155.

<sup>63</sup> The first period of exile was during Mary I’s reign (1553-1558) when the nation returned, briefly to Catholicism, and the second in the 1630s due to religious reform imposed by Laud.

<sup>64</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 38.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 20.

influence within politics. As Capp wrote, ‘the non-fulfilment of their prophecies in the 1650s had been a disappointment [...] the Restoration shattered them all’.<sup>67</sup> After this moment, the group lost all momentum and faded into obscurity.

Capp’s research provided a weightier analysis of the Fifth Monarchists, including a discussion of the group’s composition and their ideas and attitudes in religious, political and economic spheres. However, he focused on millenarianism and dismissed other secular influences, only making fleeting references to their secular political views. As mentioned, Capp dismissed the adoption of republican concepts such as liberty and virtue, which appeared in some Fifth Monarchist literature. As Solt had before him, Capp dismissed a potential alliance between Fifth Monarchists and Republican authors as a tactical manoeuvre to increase numbers in the movement.<sup>68</sup> However, Capp acknowledged that John Rogers, toward the end of the Protectorate, began to express republican ideas. Capp’s evaluation rests on his interpretation of Rogers’s 1659 text, *Diapolitica. A Christian Concertation*, wherein Rogers advocated the eligibility to participate in elections should extend beyond the saints to include all ‘supporters of the (republican, oligarchic) ‘Good Old Cause’.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, Capp maintained that, by this juncture, Rogers should no longer be considered an ‘orthodox Fifth Monarchist’, as evidenced by his employment of the language of ‘natural rights’ and ‘fundamental rights’.<sup>70</sup>

Since the publication of his study of the Fifth Monarchists in 1972, Capp appeared to have slightly changed his evaluation of the inclusion of republican language in some Fifth Monarchist tracts. In his analysis of *A Door of Hope*, the manifesto written to accompany Venner’s uprising in 1661, he noted that ‘the author draws on secular, republican discourse to buttress his apocalyptic claims, revealing close links between even the most extreme Fifth Monarchists and wider currents of interregnum radicalism’.<sup>71</sup> However, Capp’s phrasing still implied that this was more of a tactical approach by Venner’s congregation.

However, there has been notable progress in the discussion of individual authors such as John Rogers. Rachel Hammersley agreed that the literature written by Rogers did reveal Republican ideology. However, her assessment was based on the study of Rogers’s tract *Diapolitea*, published during the heated republican debates sparked by the restoration of

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 195.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 109-115.

<sup>69</sup> John Rogers, *Diapolitica. A Christian Concertation WITH Mr. Prin, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Harrington, for the True Cause of the COMMONWEALTH* (1659, 42-3, 59-69).

<sup>70</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 139.

<sup>71</sup> Bernard Capp, ‘A door of hope re-opened: The fifth monarchy, King Charles and King Jesus,’ *Journal of Religious History*, Volume 32, Issue 1, March 2008, 16-30.

the Rump Parliament in 1659.<sup>72</sup> In her analysis, Rogers was situated among other republican thinkers like Henry Stubbe, Vane and Milton, highlighting their commitment to virtuous government and religious liberty achievable only through the separation between church and state.<sup>73</sup> This perspective contrasts with the brand of republicanism advocated by James Harrington. The thesis aims to substantiate the claim that Rogers promoted a commonwealth founded on concepts, such as liberty and virtue, associated with republican thought. Moreover, the study will establish that these ideas were articulated in his first text, published in 1653, and remained constant throughout the rest of his works.

Another Fifth Monarchist who has been associated with republicanism was William Aspinwall. This attribution primarily arose from John Donoghue's research and was reiterated in Jonathan Scott's *Commonwealth Principles: Republican Writing in the English Revolution* (2004).<sup>74</sup> The form of republicanism that Donoghue associated with Aspinwall was a 'practical Christian variant of republican thought' that emerged following the dissolution of the Rump Parliament.<sup>75</sup> As Donoghue expanded, Aspinwall was critical of self-interest in governments, believing that this led to 'neglecting the poor and disenfranchised', contending that a Commonwealth founded 'upon principles consistent with practical Christianity' could rule legitimately.<sup>76</sup> Donoghue paid much attention to one such practical solution: Aspinwall's proposal to introduce the Mosaic Code. However, it is interesting to note that besides the Mosaic laws, Donoghue did not mention the Hebrew Commonwealth's influence, which, as this thesis will demonstrate, was a significant source. Additionally, Aspinwall's millenarianism was not recognised, which was ultimately a driving force. His prophetic interpretations were employed to explain contemporary events and as justification for the new republican form of government.<sup>77</sup>

## Revisionism

The emergence of revisionism abruptly ended the studies of the apocalyptic tradition within English history.<sup>78</sup> Scholars like Conrad Russell challenged the traditional narrative

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<sup>72</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 88.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 89-91.

<sup>74</sup> John Donoghue, "Radical Republicanism in England, America, and the Imperial Atlantic, 1624–1661" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2006). Scott was part of Donoghue's dissertation committee, see page vi; Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 51.

<sup>75</sup> Donoghue, "Radical Republicanism", 244.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 244.

<sup>77</sup> Aspinwall published eight texts, one was a reprint with a new title. In his dissertation Donoghue only reviewed three of those texts – *A Discourse on the Principal Points Touching Baptism* (London, 1652); *The Legislative Power is Christ's Peculiar Prerogative* (London, 1656); *A Premonition of Sad, Sundry Calamities Yet to Come* (London, 1654).

<sup>78</sup> Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, 4.

that portrayed the English Revolution as inevitable. Instead, revisionists argued that the issues leading to the revolution arose primarily in the 1640s and could have been avoided through alternative paths. The short-term perspective clashed with the long-term nature of seventeenth-century millenarianism, which can be traced back to the Reformation.

### **Seventeenth-Century Millenarianism Revisited**

Since the turn of the century, many conventional ideas about millenarianism have been questioned. The link between millenarianism and ‘a radical agenda’, which Lamont had partially challenged, has been further undermined by Jeffrey Jue.<sup>79</sup> He acknowledged that Mede’s eschatological ideas were influential during the seventeenth century. However, the form of militant millenarianism which emerged during the Interregnum had developed from a manipulation of Mede’s ideas.<sup>80</sup> Mede’s Biblical exegesis did not advocate for any form of radical action. Mede called for patient expectance of the second coming and would not have recognised the supposed violent millenarianism that characterised the English Revolution.

Timothy Shilston has also raised doubts about the characterisation of the Fifth Monarchists as violent. Shilston argued that there was ‘a level of ambiguity not appreciated, or at least not acknowledged, by Capp’ in his study of the sect.<sup>81</sup> In Capp’s account of the group’s initial gathering, he explained that they agreed on several objectives referred to as the ‘six heads of prayer,’ Capp interpreted the goals as endorsing violent measures.<sup>82</sup> For instance, one of the heads of prayer stipulated that if anything stood in the way of Christ’s return, it ‘might be utterly pulled down’. According to Shilston, while Capp interpreted this as condoning violence, it was a ‘prayer to God’ and, more importantly, not an ‘instruction to members’. Furthermore, Shilston insisted that the violent actions pursued by Venner and his followers should be separated from the Fifth Monarchist movement more generally.<sup>83</sup> The thesis will also support Shilston’s reevaluation of the group’s alleged ‘violent’ nature. It is also important to note that the Fifth Monarchists employed language derived from the Old Testament, often characterised by explicit

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<sup>79</sup> Jeffrey K. Jue, *Heaven upon Earth Joseph Mede (1586-1639) and the legacy of millenarianism* (Netherlands: Springer, 2006).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 19-20.

<sup>81</sup> Timothy Shilston, ‘Thomas Venner: Fifth Monarchist or maverick,’ *Social History*, Feb 2012, Vol.37 issue 1, 56.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

aggression connected to eradicating idolatry. This could also explain why they were considered to support violent measures to advance the new millennium.

The widely accepted notion that millenarianism went into decline after the Restoration has also since been challenged by historians.<sup>84</sup> In *Revelation Restored* (2011), Wayne Johnston demonstrated that the influence of millenarianism continued well beyond the Restoration. He argued that post-1660 millenarianism was ‘marked by patience and passive resistance’.<sup>85</sup> The author illustrated that the calls for church and state reform persisted in Fifth Monarchist tracts published after the Restoration, albeit in a more moderate manner. Johnston’s research revealed that rather than declining after 1660, millenarianism transformed in direct response to the changing political climate. In addition, Johnston also opposed the opinion that millenarianism was ‘inevitably associated with radicalism’ as he revealed the peaceful nature of millenarianism before and after the English Revolution. However, despite claiming to have reevaluated seventeenth-century millenarianism, Johnston’s discussion of ‘radical millenarianism’ exhibited by the Fifth Monarchists merely referenced Capp’s study. This thesis will offer a new perspective on the group’s millenarian beliefs by re-examining the literature produced by several of its members to reveal that their ideas were far more mainstream than had been acknowledged.

In *The Puritan Millennium* (2008), Crawford Gribben critiqued the twentieth-century historiography of millenarianism based on the terms used to categorise and define the nature of millenarian beliefs. Three distinct traditions have been recognised: amillennial, pre- and postmillennial.<sup>86</sup> Amillennialists also referred to as non-millennialists by Gribben, did not adhere to the belief in a future 1000-year reign. Instead, they interpreted the period alluded to in Revelation 20 as symbolic rather than literal.<sup>87</sup> In this perspective, the millennium represented the present period and asserted that Christ’s reign should be understood in a spiritual sense. In amillennialism, Christ’s second coming signified the final judgement and the creation of an eternal kingdom. This is distinct from both pre-millennialism, which anticipates a literal 1000-year reign of Christ before the final judgement, and post-millennialism, which envisions Christ’s return occurring after the 1000-year period. Gribben, however, claimed the distinctions are too simplistic when dealing with the early modern period. For example, Capp has asserted that the Fifth

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<sup>84</sup> In *Puritan Millennium*, Gribben also demonstrated that millenarianism extended well beyond the seventeenth-century.

<sup>85</sup> Johnston, *Revelation Restored*, 103-121.

<sup>86</sup> Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, 8.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

Monarchists were mainly postmillennialists.<sup>88</sup> However, Gribben draws attention to Capp's earlier assertion that many of the Fifth Monarchist preachers were under the tutelage of William Bridge and yet, according to Gribben, Bridge's sermons strongly suggest he was a premillennialist.<sup>89</sup> To avoid further confusion, the thesis will explain each author's position as if explicitly expressed in their literature.

More importantly, however, Gribben has observed that millenarianism has been studied in isolation from other ideologies, leading historians to overlook the crucial aspect that Puritans did not simply study the end times but lived in anticipation of them. Moreover, he argued that millenarianism has not been recognised as a driving force during the English Revolution.<sup>90</sup> This thesis is an ideal case study to show how millenarian beliefs were motivating factors in the English political discourse of the 1650s.

### **The Historiography of Republican Thought**

Like millenarianism, republican thought received relatively little attention before the mid-twentieth century.<sup>91</sup> Interest in republicanism has, however, experienced a notable surge since the 1950s and extends across many academic disciplines.<sup>92</sup> It can be argued that Zera Fink's *The Classical Republicans* (1945) served as a catalyst for the renewal of interest. Fink aimed to emphasise the importance of the republican ideas of the ancients in influencing the political thought of authors, such as John Milton, Algernon Sidney and Henry Neville, in England during the seventeenth-century.<sup>93</sup> Fink's interpretation of republicanism was defined in terms of constitutional form, and, on this basis, he considered James Harrington's *Oceana* the epitome of English republicanism. The Venetian republic and the theory of mixed constitution were crucial components of the republican model of the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>91</sup> See W. Velema. & A. Weststeijn, 'Introduction in Classical Republicanism and Ancient Republican Models,' in *Ancient Models in the Early Modern Republican Imagination*, ed. W. Velema and A. Weststeijn (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 1-19; Rachel Hammersley, 'Introduction: The historiography of republicanism and republican exchanges,' in *History of European Ideas*, Vol 38, 2012, issue 3, 323.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 323; Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission, Development, and Circumstance of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies* (New York: Atheneum, 1968); Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1964).

<sup>93</sup> Zera S. Fink, *The Classical Republicans* (Oregon: Resource Publications, 1945).

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, vii; Following on from Fink, interest in understanding the development of a republican tradition increased in subsequent decades. As historians extended their research in both chronological and geographical terms. Focusing on the period between 1500 and 1700, Raab has revealed the early influence of Machiavelli in England. Whereas Robbins, demonstrated the influence of seventeenth century republicanism stretching into eighteenth century political discourse. Geographically, historians such as Hans Baron's *The Crisis of the Early*

## John Pocock and Quentin Skinner

In the late twentieth century, the reevaluation of Fink's definition of republicanism as a constitutional model emerged primarily through the influential scholarship of John Pocock and Quentin Skinner. Both scholars specialised in the history of political thought and were proponents of the Cambridge School methodology, which emphasised the significance of contextual analysis. They focused on the discourse of republican ideology rather than Fink's emphasis on constitutionalism.<sup>95</sup> They credited the Renaissance political philosopher Machiavelli as the source for transmitting classical ideas to future republican writers.<sup>96</sup> In his influential work *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (1975), Pocock synthesised previous research to trace the trajectory of republican thought from classical antiquity via Machiavelli and on to England and revolutionary America.<sup>97</sup> According to Pocock, Aristotle's political philosophy was the foundation of republican thought. Aristotle's ideas of a mixed form of government, the importance of virtue and the need for citizen participation in the republic were all essential components in the development of Machiavelli's political discourse. It was these Greek-inspired concepts, he argued, that influenced the political debates of seventeenth-century England and America in the following century. Pocock also reiterated Fink's evaluation of Harrington's republican philosophy as an exemplary model of English republicanism.

Since its publication, certain aspects of Pocock's argument have been challenged. One challenge came from Skinner, who questioned the Aristotelian origins of republicanism and the emphasis on virtue as the vital component of republican thought. Skinner agreed with Pocock that Machiavelli was integral to transmitting ideas that developed during the Renaissance and subsequently influenced republican thought during the seventeenth-century and beyond. However, according to Skinner, the republican

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*Italian Renaissance* (1955), explored the ideas of Leonardo Bruni and what is known as 'civic humanism'. Velema and Weststeijn have posited that Baron's contributions were pivotal in bringing about a renewed interpretation of 'Machiavelli's political thought'. This was further expanded through the research of Bernard Bailyn in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), and Gordon S. Wood's *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969) who connected early modern classical republicanism to 'the American revolutionaries of the eighteenth century'.

<sup>95</sup> The Cambridge School Methodology was developed by Skinner, Pocock and John Dunn during the 1960s. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>96</sup> David W. Carrithers, 'Not so virtuous republics: Montesquieu, Venice and the theory of aristocratic republicanism,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol.52. No.2 (1991), 247.

<sup>97</sup> J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975); Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 200.

debates that surfaced in England during the 1650s revolved around the concept of liberty. Skinner identified a distinct form of liberty, which he termed as neo-Roman, as it originated in ancient Rome. Skinner distinguished neo-Roman liberty from Isaiah Berlin's understanding of negative liberty, which is freedom gained from the absence of something, such as interference, and positive liberty, which is freedom that can be attained through self-realisation.<sup>98</sup> Neo-Roman liberty, as defined by Skinner, represented another form of negative liberty, wherein freedom is achieved by ensuring that an individual, or by extension a state, does not fall under the arbitrary will of another.<sup>99</sup>

Skinner recognised that this third form of liberty had its roots in ancient Rome and had evolved from the Roman legal system. He expounded that in Rome, only a citizen (that is, someone who was not enslaved) could be granted legal status and protected under the state's law.<sup>100</sup> When discussing liberty, Skinner highlighted that Roman law always contrasted it 'with the condition of slavery'.<sup>101</sup> In ancient Rome, if an individual depended on the will of another, they were regarded as being in a position of servitude. The 'lack of freedom' stemmed from the individual being 'subject to the jurisdiction of someone else'.<sup>102</sup>

It was through the works of Sallust, Cicero, and notably Livy that this concept found its way to the early modern period, with Machiavelli playing a significant role in the transmission of it.<sup>103</sup> Skinner noted that Livy's description of 'public servitude as living in a state of dependence on the will of another nation or state' resonated with early modern neo-Roman theorists, such as Nedham, Milton and Harrington.

## **Religion & Republicanism**

The methodology pioneered by Skinner and his colleagues at Cambridge has undoubtedly contributed to a deeper understanding of the early modern political landscape. Nonetheless, one criticism levelled at their approach is the tendency to ignore the role of religion.<sup>104</sup> The issue of religion, alongside other broader problems within the field of intellectual history, has been questioned in a collection of essays compiled by John Coffey, Alistair Chapman

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<sup>98</sup> Berlin explained positive liberty is 'not freedom from, but freedom to'. Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1969), 121-131.

<sup>99</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 10-11.

<sup>100</sup> Iseult Honohan, *Civic Republicanism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 36

<sup>101</sup> Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 39.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

<sup>104</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 6.



and Brad. S. Gregory.<sup>105</sup> In *Seeing Things Their Way*, the authors' premise for the collection was to make the case for an exchange of ideas and methodology between intellectual historians and historians of religion.<sup>106</sup> They explained that within these two fields, there has often been a division between intellectual historians drawn to secular concepts and historians of religion who look towards the sacred.<sup>107</sup> The text suggested that religious ideas should be studied in line with the same academic rigour as political ideas. The authors demonstrated that understanding the religious dimension of the past is essential for providing a richer and more complete intellectual history.<sup>108</sup>

In the introductory chapter of the text, the authors outlined what they perceived as 'the Priorities of Intellectual History'. They asserted that the priorities had been influenced by the Cambridge School methodological approach pioneered by Skinner, Pocock and John Dunn during the 1960s.<sup>109</sup> The methodology, which takes a contextual approach, emerged in response to the challenges posed by materialist reductionist theories and ahistoricism. Reductionist historians, often associated with ideologies such as Marxism or Namierite, viewed politics primarily as a power struggle stemming from class disparities or conflicting interests. In their analyses, the dynamics of these issues were reduced to mere ideological constructs.<sup>110</sup> Whereas ahistorical accounts of political philosophy treated ideas as abstract forms disconnected from the historical context in which they were formed.<sup>111</sup>

The Cambridge methodological approach, led by Skinner, offered a middle way. According to Skinner, to understand the ideas of the past, they must be placed within their own 'intellectual and political contexts.'<sup>112</sup> When attempting to understand these ideas, we must not dismiss their significance simply because they appear irrational or unfamiliar to us as modern readers.<sup>113</sup> Given Skinner's warning, it is surprising that he has overlooked the role of religion in the evolution of political thought.

In Coffey's contribution to the collection, he illustrated how an idea proposed by Skinner can be further substantiated by acknowledging the role of religion. According to

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<sup>105</sup> John Coffey, Alistair Chapman, 'Introduction: Intellectual history and the return of religion,' in *Seeing Things Their Way Intellectual History and the Return of Religion*, ed. Alistair. Chapman, John. Coffey and Brad S. Gregory (Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2009).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 2.

Skinner, the root cause of the English Civil War was essentially ideological. He argued that Parliament was motivated by the neo-Roman concept of liberty. Parliament had contended that because the nation was subject to the arbitrary will of another, namely Charles I, it was not free but in a state of servitude.<sup>114</sup>

Coffey drew upon the work of Michael Walzer, particularly his book *Revolution of the Saints* (1965), which focused on the Fast Sermons delivered before Parliament during the period. These sermons offered valuable insights into the political dimension of the Civil War. Many of them drew parallels between the predicament of the English nation and the plight of the Ancient Israelites in the Exodus story. As Coffey observed in Skinner's work, he highlighted the neo-Roman concept of liberty prevalent in John Milton's political arguments; however, he paid little attention to the religious aspects of Milton's treatises. Coffey argued that the biblical nature of Milton's argument was unmistakable, as he, too, drew inspiration from the Exodus story. Recognising the significance of the Exodus story during the Civil War would have strengthened Skinner's argument. As Coffey explicitly stated, introducing a religious narrative did not diminish Skinner's argument; instead, it reinforced it by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities that contributed to the conflict. The thesis will also demonstrate how the use of the Exodus story during the period aligns with and supports Skinner's argument.

Another key issue raised in *Seeing Things Their Way* pertained to the distinction between modern and pre-modern societies, which gained prominence in the mid-twentieth century due to the influence of sociological theories.<sup>115</sup> It was assumed that the division between such societies could be characterised by enlightened thinking and the growth of science, which resulted in the decline of religious influence and superstition.<sup>116</sup> From this assumption, the modern and the secular became inextricably linked.<sup>117</sup> As Chapman and Coffey illustrated, under the dominance of what came to be known as the theory of secularisation, some intellectual historians, when studying ideas such as the origins of modern concepts such as the state, have overlooked the influence of religion and therefore created a 'present-centred approach.'<sup>118</sup> As mentioned, the secularisation theory has impacted the historiography of Fifth Monarchists and millenarianism. Within political

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<sup>114</sup> Quentin Skinner, 'Classical Liberty and the Coming of the English Civil War,' in *Republicanism: Volume 2, Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Martin van Genderen and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9-28.

<sup>115</sup> Coffey, Chapman, 'Introduction' 3.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

thought, there has been a tendency to ‘downgrade religious beliefs’ as ‘there seemed little point in studying ideas that were doomed to decline and of little relevance to the modern world’.<sup>119</sup>

The lack of recognition of religion has already begun to be highlighted by scholars working within republican thought. Jonathan Scott has noted that the previous historiography suffered from a disconnect between classically inspired early modern republicanism and the religiously motivated ‘social radicalism’ that emerged during the seventeenth-century. This disassociation has made certain historians perceive republicanism as a purely secular force.<sup>120</sup> The disassociation is problematic given that many republican tracts, especially during the seventeenth-century, were primarily inspired by religious ideologies.<sup>121</sup>

Rachel Hammersley also observed the relative lack of attention to religion in studying republican thought. However, she argued that this could have resulted from the perceived incompatibility between Christian values and Republican ideals.<sup>122</sup> In Machiavelli’s republican thought, for instance, he believed that a citizen needed to be active and prepared to defend the state.<sup>123</sup> He attributed the Roman empire’s collapse to its adoption of the Christian faith and the fact that it had ‘glorified humble and contemplative men rather than men of action.’<sup>124</sup> Acknowledging the incompatibility between Christian virtues and his own form of virtù, Machiavelli also recognised that religion could provide certain advantages for the state. In ancient Rome, Numa had allowed the introduction of a Pagan religion to maintain the state. Machiavelli realised that Numa could maintain order through the constant fear of angering the gods.<sup>125</sup> Machiavelli wanted to replicate this concept by introducing the idea of civil religion. His idea of a civil religion would instil the ideals required to develop the attitudes needed. During the English republican debates of the 1650s, James Harrington also recognised the potential of civil religion in educating the nation’s citizens. The idea of civil religion has been the subject of historical enquiry for

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, xi.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>122</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 7.

<sup>123</sup> Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, 72.

<sup>124</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, ‘The Discourses,’ in *The Portable Machiavelli*, ed & trans. P. Bondanella & M. Musa (London: Penguin books, 1979), 298.

<sup>125</sup> Machiavelli, ‘The Discourses,’ 208.

historians such as Mark Goldie.<sup>126</sup> The fact that the concept of ‘civil’ religion has gained academic interest does, however, reaffirm the secularisation of republican thought.

### **Godly Republicanism**

The importance of religion in the development of early modern political thought has already begun to be recognised through the scholarship of figures like Scott, Justin Champion, and Mark Goldie.<sup>127</sup> In *Commonwealth Principles* (2004), Scott illustrated the religious nature of republican writings. As he explained, during the 1650s, some of the anti-monarchical sentiment was motivated by the desire to replace an earthly king with the monarchy of God. To argue his point, Scott referred to Algernon Sidney, who wrote, ‘God had delivered us from slavery and showed us that he would be our king’ and Milton’s comments following the Restoration that their current plight was caused because the nation had rebelled ‘Against the throne and Monarchy of God’.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, the successful outcome of the Civil Wars was considered an act of providentialism. The influence of Greek and Roman philosophy and the transmission of those ideas through Machiavelli has been well documented. Scott, however, highlighted that an additional feature of English republican thought was its ‘Christian-classical synthesis’.<sup>129</sup> It was important for republicans like Milton and Sidney to show that ancient philosophy was ‘conformable’ with scripture. Scott demonstrated the influence of Christian humanism, the cause of liberty of conscience, and the reformation of manners in those debates. Scott also emphasised Vane’s influence on Milton and Sidney’s political and religious thinking. He also pointed out that the issue of church government split republican thinkers. For Vane and Milton, for example, to achieve liberty of conscience, there needed to be a complete separation between church and state. In contrast, Harrington advocated for an Erastian form of church-state relationship through the concept of civil religion.

Although Scott acknowledged that millennialism was a feature of the radical reformation and that during the 1650s, in particular, ‘most’ republican literature contained

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<sup>126</sup> Mark Goldie, ‘The civil religion of James Harrington,’ in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. A. Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 197-222.

<sup>127</sup> Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696-1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Mark Goldie, ‘The civil religion of James Harrington’; Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*.

<sup>128</sup> Sidney *Court Maxims*, 197; Milton, *Paradise Lost* Book 1, lines 3,36, Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 42.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

‘Traces of providentialism and apocalyptic language’, beyond his comments on Vane, he has not explored the influence of millenarian belief.<sup>130</sup>

In his 2013 publication, Feisal Mohamed examined the godly republicanism expressed by Vane and its influence on Milton. In his discussion of Vane, the author paid more attention to the millenarian perspective of his writing. As Mohamed explained, although Vane was more cautious than the Fifth Monarchists in that he refrained from providing a predicted date for the new millennium, he was committed to the belief that the destruction of the antichrist was ‘imminent’. It was this commitment that Mohamed argued reinforced the republican model of government that Vane advocated in both *A Healing Question* (1656, 1660) and *A Needfull Corrective* (1660). Mohamed asserted that Milton’s *The Readie and Easie Way* (1660) reflected the influence of Vane; as Mohamed wrote, the text ‘resembles no republican model more closely than it does Vane’.<sup>131</sup>

Additionally, Mohamed highlighted a shared conviction between Vane and Milton through their condemnation of the proposed principle of rotation put forth by Harrington and their belief in the necessity for a separation between church and state. As the author explained, Vane regarded religious freedom as necessary because he believed the ‘Saints had not yet fully revealed themselves.’<sup>132</sup> For men such as Vane, a republican form of government was vital as it was ‘most likely to practice non-interference in religion’, and this would allow the saints to prepare for the imminent millennium. In Mohamed’s analysis, godly republicanism encompassed a desire for freedom of conscience, coupled with a call for the separation between church and state, the abolition of tithes, and the need for a university-trained ministry.<sup>133</sup> Based on his definition, Mohamed posited that, during the debates of 1659-1660, Milton’s ideology transitioned from classical-inspired republican philosophy to one that embraced Vane’s godly republicanism.

However, Mohamed’s distinction between the two ideologies relied on a narrow interpretation of republican thought. He suggested that other ‘kinds’ of republicanism tended to ‘endorse some measure of religious conformity or see the rule of the virtuous as encompassing determination of acceptable modes of worship’.<sup>134</sup> Such definitions are overly restrictive and fail to reflect the complexity of English republicanism that emerged

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<sup>130</sup> Scott included apocalyptic language used by Vane when he argued for separation of the church from the state. Vane believed the mixing of the two realms was the ‘throne of the Beast’. Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 42, 52.

<sup>131</sup> Mohamed, ‘Milton, Sir Henry Vane’ 86.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 87.

during the 1650s. This multifaceted political language evolved in response to the ever-changing political landscape and cannot be reduced to such a simplified definition.

As this thesis aims to demonstrate, the godly republicanism expressed by the Fifth Monarchists not only advocated for the liberty of conscience through the separation of church and state but also drew influence from concepts associated with ‘classical’ republicanism, such as neo-Roman liberty and virtue. Furthermore, the group was also concerned with secular matters, such as the reform of state institutions. Godly republicanism should not be restricted to religious issues.

Eric Nelson’s work, *The Hebrew Republic* (2011), has highlighted the significant role that religion played in shaping republican discourse in England during the 1650s.<sup>135</sup> His perspective contrasts the assertions of Pocock and Skinner, who traced the origins of republican thought back to ancient Greece and Rome, respectively.<sup>136</sup> Nelson has discerned a third source from ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible. In his analysis, Nelson argued that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries experienced a notable shift toward Hebraic literature as a source of political inspiration.

Two of the themes that Nelson explored within his text are of particular interest to this thesis. First, during the seventeenth-century, the English republican debates became associated with what is now known as ‘republican exclusivism.’ The term ‘republican exclusivism’ denotes the argument that a republic was the only legitimate form of government.<sup>137</sup> The turn toward a more exclusivist attitude was first observed by Fink and while much of his argument has since been challenged, this claim remains.<sup>138</sup> The development of republican exclusivism will be discussed in the first chapter; however, to summarise, its origins are located in the Renaissance period and are connected to the revision of the word ‘*respublica*’.<sup>139</sup> While Renaissance thinkers rarely used ‘*respublica*’ at that time, it was not employed to express anti-monarchical sentiment. The shift occurred following the translation of Aristotle’s *Politics*, where Leonardo Bruni equated the Greek *politiea* with the Latin *respublica*, encompassing governance for the common good and

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<sup>135</sup> Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic* (London: Harvard University Press, 2011).

<sup>136</sup> In his initial book, Nelson presented a Greek tradition within republican thought. Eric Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>138</sup> Rachel Hammersley, ‘Rethinking the political thought of James Harrington: Royalism, republicanism and democracy,’ *History of European Ideas* 39 (3), January 2012, 355.

<sup>139</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 45; James Hankins, ‘Exclusivist Republicanism and the Non-Monarchical Republic,’ *Political Theory* Vol. 38, No.4 (August 2010), 452-482.

popular rule.<sup>140</sup> Machiavelli, it was argued, furthered this evolution by distinguishing between republics and principalities and suggesting the superiority of the former.<sup>141</sup> The influence of Machiavelli disseminated this redefined meaning beyond Italy, contributing to the 1650s English republican debates.

However, Nelson refuted the narrative that republican exclusivism was rooted in ancient Greece or Rome by arguing that an ‘exclusivist turn’ emerged following the reinterpretation of Hebraic scripture. In *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), Nelson argued that Milton was the ‘first European political’ author to argue for an exclusivist regime.<sup>142</sup> Milton engaged with the debates surrounding the interpretation of 1 Samuel 8:7, where the Israelites demanded an earthly king like the nations around them, and in doing so, they had sinned as they had rejected God.

Whilst in agreement with Nelson that the period witnessed exclusivist attitudes towards republican government, it has been noted that in *The Tenure*, Milton also supported the idea of a monarchy as long as the law bound the ruler.<sup>143</sup> He endorsed a commonwealth without a monarch in 1660 in his tract *The Ready and Easy Way*.<sup>144</sup> The thesis will present an alternate scenario endorsing Nelson’s overarching claim that the Hebrew Bible served as a source of inspiration for English Republicanism. This will be substantiated by demonstrating the involvement of several Fifth Monarchists with the Hebrew Bible. Their reading of scripture and interpretation of prophecy gave them the argument to denounce the legitimacy of monarchical government explicitly. Unlike Milton, these arguments were maintained throughout the 1650s.

The second theme discussed by Nelson was the emergence of toleration. He highlighted that the study of Hebraic literature played a significant role in promoting religious tolerance by introducing the concept of civil religion.<sup>145</sup> The idea was influenced by the teachings of Thomas Erastus (1524-1583), who advocated for the church’s subordination to state authority. The Dutch jurist and theologian Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) embraced Erastianism and utilised Hebraic texts to support his call for tolerance.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 47; Hankins, ‘Exclusivist Republicanism,’ 463.

<sup>141</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 47.

<sup>142</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 37.

<sup>143</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 82.

<sup>144</sup> John Milton, *The Ready and Easy way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (London, 1660).

<sup>145</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, see chapter 3.

In England, according to Nelson, in his work *Oceana*, James Harrington also picked up on these ideas during the 1650s.<sup>146</sup> Harrington believed that ancient Israel served as an inspiration, illustrating that the state held power over the church. The Fifth Monarchists also argued for toleration and were inspired by ancient Israel. However, as the thesis will demonstrate, their interpretation of Hebraic texts supported their argument for the separation of church and state, explicitly prohibiting the involvement of a civil magistrate in ecclesiastical affairs.

Through the work of scholars such as Scott, Mohamed and Nelson, significant progress has been made in recognising the role of religion in shaping English republican thought. However, it is essential to note that within the study of republicanism, there is often a focus on a narrow group of well-known figures, such as Milton, Nedham and Harrington, which limits our understanding of the broader landscape of republicanism. To fully comprehend the importance of religion within this context, we must move beyond the confines of the familiar canon and explore alternative perspectives. The Fifth Monarchists are an ideal case study to provide valuable insights. By focusing on a less-explored group, we can shed light on the variations within the development of English republicanism, which was inspired by millenarianism. Indeed, this approach allows us to showcase how republicanism and millenarianism were intertwined during the period and how this amalgamation gave rise to new ideas that shaped the intellectual discourse of the time.

### **Scope and Rationale**

The Fifth Monarchists selected for this study encompass a range of well-known and lesser-known characters. The selection of each individual for this study has been driven by the aim of exploring the diversity within their godly republicanism. Each person was chosen because they provided a different lived experience. John Rogers was a prominent preacher and leader in the movement. Mary Cary brings a gendered perspective to the study, offering valuable insight into the movement's dynamics. William Aspinwall and John Canne spent a period in exile due to the religious measures introduced by William Laud, and they highlight the influence of European and trans-Atlantic factors. John Spittlehouse, with a military background, provides yet another dimension to the study. Each author will offer a nuanced perspective on their vision of godly republicanism. Furthermore, it is worth noting that both Rogers and Aspinwall have been loosely associated with

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 117-122.



republicanism. However, this association warrants further exploration, which the thesis will undertake.

To comprehend the nature of the godly republicanism espoused by the Fifth Monarchists, the study will use comparative analysis by comparing their intellectual thought against other English republicans during the same period. In addition, the thesis will contrast their prophetic interpretation with the prevailing Protestant apocalyptic tradition. This examination will illuminate the extent to which prophecy was adapted to align with a republican framework. The study will build on the foundational work of Eric Nelson, who has notably emphasised the influence of Hebraic texts in shaping republican discourse during the 1650s. However, the thesis will not merely expand upon Nelson's propositions but also challenge some of Nelson's assertions. The aim is to illuminate the millenarian dimension of the study of the Hebrew Bible, shedding light on the emergence of a distinct variant of godly republicanism. This variant was driven by millenarian expectations prevalent in England during the 1650s.

Each chapter in the thesis will centre on an individual author, exploring their contributions and drawing out relevant themes. Where feasible, the chapters are organised chronologically to highlight the evolution of each author's intellectual discourse, particularly emphasising shifts in thought in response to the evolving political landscape. Two recurrent concepts that will thread through each chapter are liberty and virtue.

Chapter 1 focuses on John Rogers and challenges prevailing assessments suggesting that Rogers engaged with republicanism only towards the end of the period, primarily due to Vane's influence. This chapter will comprehensively discuss two vital concepts associated with English republicanism: neo-Roman liberty and republican exclusivism. This discussion will provide the reader with a nuanced understanding of these concepts, including a debate surrounding using the term 'neo-Roman' and its implications. Moreover, the chapter will highlight Rogers' use of prophetic interpretation to reinforce his arguments. The emphasis on prophetic interpretation will underscore the significance of millenarianism as a catalyst for political change, an important theme throughout the thesis. The chapter will also highlight Rogers's engagement with resistance theories to justify Parliament's actions against the king. Furthermore, rather than encouraging individuals to adopt violent measures, he promoted a concept of 'orderly resistance' via preaching or pamphleteering. The implementation of non-violent strategies by other Fifth Monarchists will similarly manifest in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 directs attention to Mary Cary, discussing her unique position as a female prophet. It is essential to highlight that Cary's writings predate those of Rogers, spanning 1648 to 1653. While her texts cover a comparatively short span compared to the other Fifth Monarchists discussed, this period was nonetheless of profound significance in the context of the Commonwealth. The chapter will examine Cary's employment of prophecy as a tool to advocate for the alteration in government. An exploration that will offer insight into the intersection of religious prophecy and political activism during the period. Furthermore, the chapter will engage with republican virtue, as revealed in Cary's writings. The section will also address and challenge some of the prevailing preconceptions surrounding the notion of virtue.

Chapter 3 explores the commonwealth envisioned by William Aspinwall. The chapter will begin by examining the impact of exile and how this influenced Aspinwall's thinking. Within the chapter, we will tackle the issue relating to the term 'theocracy,' a concept that may, at times, appear to be in contrast with republican principles. However, as will be demonstrated, these two concepts are, in fact, compatible. A particular emphasis is placed on the influence of Hebrew scripture on Aspinwall's ideas, particularly his engagement with prophecy as the basis for a republican exclusivist argument along similar lines as Milton.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the examination of John Spittlehouse, in particular highlighting the influence of his military background on his vision of the commonwealth. Furthermore, the chapter will draw attention to Spittlehouse's advocacy for a division between civil and religious authority. This division led to a compelling argument for toleration, challenging the call for a national religion. The chapter will also delve into the sovereignty debate between the 1640s and 1650s. It will demonstrate how discussions about sovereign power are intricately connected to Rogers, Cary, Aspinwall and Spittlehouse's aspirations for a theocratic commonwealth.

The concluding chapter of this thesis will shift its focus to John Canne. Similarly to Aspinwall, the chapter will illuminate the impact of exile on the development of Canne's intellectual thought. The chapter will engage with Canne's creation of a resistance theory, representing another distinctive element in the evolution of English republicanism. One notable departure from the previous chapters is Canne's support for popular sovereignty, highlighting the use of similar arguments that the other Fifth Monarchists employed to condemn it. Additionally, the chapter will document a transformation in Canne's writings, particularly from 1653, which adopted a more pronounced millenarian perspective.

Furthermore, as with the first chapter, this section will challenge the assertions made by Solt and Capp regarding the use of republican rhetoric. It will be revealed that Canne believed that the principles of the Fifth Monarchists and the Commonwealth Men aligned.

Quotations in the thesis are faithfully reproduced, including capitalisation, italicisation and their original spellings. Dates are represented following the Julian calendar used during the period; however, the new year commences on 1 January. This thesis employs the terms ‘commonwealth’ and ‘republic’ interchangeably. Additionally, the titles have been shortened for enhanced readability, with the complete version provided in the footnotes for reference.



# Chapter 1: John Rogers

## 1.1 Introduction

In England during the 1650s, political thinkers such as John Milton, John Streater, Marchamont Nedham, and James Harrington played significant roles in shaping what has come to be known as the English republican tradition. At the same time, the Fifth Monarchist, John Rogers, entered the political fray with his own views of a godly republic. Based on his interpretations of the prophetic texts of Daniel and Revelation, Rogers believed the regicide marked the end of monarchical government and that God delegated power to the saints with the thousand-year reign of Christ fast approaching. This chapter will demonstrate that during the republican debates of the 1650s, Rogers made a case for a ‘Theocratic Commonwealth’ but that his contribution to those debates has been largely overlooked. Scholarly work on republicanism has often emphasised its roots in classical and pagan sources. As noted, historians, such as Scott, highlighted that it has come to be considered as a secular ideology.<sup>1</sup> This secular interpretation stands in contrast to Rogers’s suggestion for a godly commonwealth, which was predominately couched in religious language. This divergence posed a challenge to the prevailing understanding of republican thought.

As set out in the introductory chapter, there are two reasons for a lack of acknowledgement regarding Rogers’ contribution to the evolution of English republicanism. The first originates from the historiography of the Fifth Monarchists. Both Solt and Capp interpreted the use of republican language as a tactical device to gain support for a movement that was in decline. However, Capp acknowledged that near the end of the decade, Rogers was engaging with republican thought. Although Capp also added that by that point, Rogers was no longer an ‘orthodox’ Fifth Monarchist. Furthermore, Rogers’ leaning towards republicanism has largely been credited to Henry Vane’s influence after they had been imprisoned together on the Isle of Wight.<sup>2</sup>

The sense of republicanism as secular contrasts with Rogers’ call for a godly commonwealth. The secularisation of republican thought stemmed from the perception that it was rooted in classical Greek and Roman literature.<sup>3</sup> During the Renaissance, the

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<sup>1</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, xi

<sup>2</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 139.

<sup>3</sup> The chapter enlarges on themes originally set out in my MA dissertation which explored the intellectual thought of John Rogers; Pocock argued that Greek scholars, such as Aristotle influenced the development of the republican tradition. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*; Whereas Skinner illustrated that the republicanism that emerged from the Renaissance had its roots in Roman philosophy, in particular, Cicero and Livy – Quentin

rediscovery of classical political texts, including those by Aristotle, Polybius, Livy and Cicero, influenced the development of republican theories by scholars like Machiavelli and Guiccardini. This body of work became a valuable resource for republican thinkers in England during the 1650s.

However, Nelson's scholarship has highlighted a third influential source. Nelson argued that in the 1650s, a significant shift occurred in English republicanism, marked by the emergence of scriptural arguments rooted in interpretations from the Old Testament. Instead of relying on the literature composed by classical Greek and Roman philosophers, scholars began to interpret the Torah as providing political prudence and offering the details of a political constitution designed by God. This engagement with Jewish scripture by republican authors served as a foundation for their arguments. For instance, Nelson asserts that scripture provided John Milton with a justification for the legitimacy of republican government over monarchy and James Harrington with an argument for toleration based on Erastianism and compatible with a form of civil religion.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter advances a two-fold argument. Firstly, it challenges Capp's analysis of Rogers by establishing that Rogers held a steadfast commitment to the concept of a godly commonwealth from the outset, one founded upon the republican principles of liberty and virtue. While there are similarities between Rogers and Vane, it becomes apparent that Rogers had already developed distinct arguments in favour of a godly commonwealth prior to their meeting. Secondly, the chapter will extend Nelson's scholarship by showing how Rogers drew inspiration from the Hebrew Bible and classical sources to formulate his case for a godly commonwealth. In addition, the chapter will further demonstrate that the Hebrew Commonwealth, combined with an interpretation of prophecy, was a source of inspiration in Rogers's development of an exclusivist republican argument. However, as this chapter will reveal, central to his arguments was defending a republican concept of liberty. According to Rogers's perspective, the people and the nation could only enjoy their freedoms through the creation of a godly commonwealth consisting of saints.

The chapter will begin with a brief biography of Rogers' life before he became a Fifth Monarchist. The main body of the text will focus on his vision of a commonwealth, beginning with an exploration of the notion of virtue and its application within republican

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Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); See also Quentin Skinner, 'The Republican Ideal of Political Liberty' in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, eds. Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 293-309; Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 117-122.

thought. The following section will highlight Rogers' commitment to republican liberty, including a discussion of the term neo-Roman liberty commonly associated with republicanism. To illustrate his dedication to liberty, the section will delve into several key themes, including Rogers' development of his republican exclusivist argument, his interpretation of the role of prophecy, his advocacy for political consent and the rule of law. The subsequent section will trace Rogers' argument for the separation between the Church and State alongside his case for toleration grounded in Hebrew texts. The chapter will conclude by assessing Rogers' contribution to the republican debates that erupted in 1659.

## 1.2 Biography

Rogers was an independent preacher. Born in 1627 to Nehemiah and Margaret Rogers, his family were descendants of John Rogers, the first Protestant martyr from Queen Mary's reign.<sup>5</sup> Rogers appeared to have received a religious calling at an early age, as he recalled experiencing visions as a child.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he attributed his calling to his time spent at school in Essex, explaining that he had heard 'Mr. William. Fenner full of zeal, thundering, and beating the pulpit', asking the congregation, 'what wilt thou doe when thou art roaring in Hell amongst the damned'.<sup>7</sup> This moment sparked Rogers to search the scriptures for answers, writing vigorously, 'what I did at first for fear of hell, I did at last out of love to heaven'.<sup>8</sup> It was visions and appeal to self-learning through the study of scripture that may account for his more radical leanings in later life.

When Charles I raised his royal standard on 22 August 1642, marking the start of the first Civil War in England, Rogers had already been enrolled as an undergraduate at King's College in Cambridge. In 1644, Cambridge was captured by the parliamentary army, resulting in Rogers losing food and lodgings, and he endured a brief period of abject poverty.<sup>9</sup> Rogers was, however, able to secure a tutoring position for a family in Diddington, Huntingdonshire, and remained there until 1645-6. Once Rogers had

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed description of Rogers early life - see Edward Rogers, *Some Account of The Life and Opinions of a Fifth-Monarchy-Man* (London, Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1867).

<sup>6</sup> Rogers documented his visions in *Ohel or Beth-Shemesh. A Tabernacle for the Sun* (London, 1653). Rogers believed it was necessary for all believers to give 'Evidences of the work of GRACE upon his Soul (for the Church to judge of) whereby he (or she) is convinced that he is regenerate, and received of God'. In book two chapter 6 Rogers included his own experiences alongside numerous accounts from his congregation in Dublin.

<sup>7</sup> John Rogers, *Ohel Or Beth-Shemesh A Tabernacle for the Sun, Or, Irenicum Evangelicum (1653)*, 103.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 421.

<sup>9</sup> Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), see chapter six; Richard L. Greaves, 'Rogers, John (b.1627), Fifth Monarchist Writer.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; Accessed 11 Dec. 2022.<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23983>.

graduated, he was ordained as a Presbyterian and became rector of Purleigh, Essex. However, unable to settle in his role, he soon moved to London. While in London, Rogers began to be drawn towards Independency and accepted a lectureship at the parish of St Thomas the Apostle.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the trauma of the Civil War years, Rogers was committed to the Parliamentary cause. In 1653, he explained that he became convinced that providence had shown God to be on the side of Parliament and not with the king. It was through ‘comparing them together,’ meaning the actions of both sides, and ‘bringing them to the word,’ that Rogers ‘saw clearly (by the word) that God would doe what hath to be done, by them and for them, and for the common-wealth.’<sup>11</sup> In October 1653, writing as a Fifth Monarchist, Rogers declared that his purpose was to ‘awaken them all up,’ meaning those in government, ‘to their worke in the Restoration of Gods Lawes, and Government, the Peoples liberties and Privileges, the Commonwealths comfort, and advantages in Christs Kingdome.’<sup>12</sup>

Over the next decade, writing in response to the changing political landscape and during his imprisonment for criticizing the Protectorate, Rogers composed eight texts revealing a political theory shaped by his commitment to millenarianism and also by the republican principles of liberty and virtue.

### 1.3 Virtue & Aristocratic Rule

Recent scholarship on republicanism has drawn attention to two fundamental concepts: virtue and liberty. Ancient philosophers, such as Aristotle and Cicero, considered virtues such as courage, temperance, justice, prudence and fortitude as critical components of good government.<sup>13</sup> With the advent of Christianity, early Christians also reflected on the concept of virtue, and the meaning also developed to include hope, charity and faith. As

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<sup>10</sup> In 1651 at the request of the Council of State Rogers was sent to Ireland but returned in March 1652. His commission followed an order made by Parliament in 1650 that six ministers should be sent to Ireland. They would be allocated £200 per year per person (equivalent of around £20,500.00 today). ‘March 1650: An Act for the better Advancement of the Gospel and Learning in Ireland.,’ in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911), 355-357. *British History Online*, accessed October 4, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp355-357>; Rogers spent several months in Dublin but became embroiled in a dispute revolving the need to rebaptize. The dispute led Rogers to leave Ireland returning the following year. Rogers, *Life and Opinions of a Fifth-Monarchy-Man*, 53.

<sup>11</sup> Rogers, *Ohel or Beth-Shemesh*, 438.

<sup>12</sup> John Rogers, *Sagrir; Or Doomes-day drawing nigh, with Thunder and Lightning to Lawyers* (London, 1653), ‘To the reader of any faculty whatsoever, in the commonwealth of England.’

<sup>13</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 11; Jay W. Wood, ‘Christian Theories of Virtue’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue*, ed. Nancy E. Snow (2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 6 Dec. 2017), 281-300. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199385195.013.44>, accessed 2 Mar. 2023.



those Christians lived predominantly in parts of the world influenced by Greek culture and learning, Jay Wood highlighted that their understanding of virtue embodied ‘Jewish and Greco-Roman sources’.<sup>14</sup> It was believed that through the exercise of Christian virtues, an individual could live a life that followed the examples of Christ and would, in turn, foster a relationship with God. In the Christian context, virtue was often associated with contemplation, signifying a person’s dedication to developing their relationship with God instead of being preoccupied with worldly issues. In contrast, republican virtue demanded active involvement in political affairs. It was hoped republican virtue would lead a citizen to prioritise the welfare of the state or public good over their own interests. While Rogers advocated for virtue in the sense that it would deepen a person’s communion with God, he also believed that virtue was political because it would protect the Commonwealth and the people.

The influence of Aristotle and Cicero was evident in the English republican debates that flourished during the 1650s. The question of prioritising the public good over individual needs has been the subject of much deliberation. Paul Rahe argued that the importance of the rule of reason was also at the core of ancient political thought and influenced English republican thought in the seventeenth century.<sup>15</sup> As Rahe explained, Aristotle and Cicero believed that through applying moral and political reasoning, there could be an ‘understanding of politics and the common good that transcended the simple pursuit of material interest.’<sup>16</sup> However, it was also recognised that not all men possessed the capability for such rationality. Consequently, governance was to be entrusted to an aristocratic elite.

The concept of a government of the few also influenced the English republican thinkers during the Interregnum.<sup>17</sup> For some republicans, a commonwealth could only be maintained through the government of virtuous men. For example, despite arguing that sovereign power originated from the people, Milton thought the government should be constrained to a ‘general council of ablest men.’<sup>18</sup> Vane took this further by asserting that those who governed should also be godly.<sup>19</sup> Both Milton and Vane shared the opinion that men should be virtuous and retain their positions for life. It was also thought that the

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<sup>14</sup> Wood, ‘Christian Theories of Virtue,’ 284.

<sup>15</sup> Paul A. Rahe, *Against Throne and Altar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>18</sup> Milton, *The Ready and Easy way*, 44.

<sup>19</sup> Vane, *A Healing Question* (1656).

people could be educated to become more virtuous through institutions such as education, religion, and the military.<sup>20</sup>

Another school of thought contended that due to the inherent fallibility of human nature, individuals, no matter how virtuous initially, could become corrupted over time. Harrington, for example in *Oceana*, believed it was necessary to employ measures, such as the rule of law, which he contended would either ‘secure the appearance of virtue’ or restrain self-interested behaviour.<sup>21</sup> Harrington also advocated mechanisms within government to ensure those in authority prioritised the public interest. He suggested the concept of rotation instead of maintaining offices for life. The idea underpinning this was that those making the law would have to live under those laws when they were no longer in power, so the law would be made in the interests of the people. Godly Republicans like Milton and Rogers vehemently denounced Harrington’s suggestion.<sup>22</sup> These two streams of thought influenced the English republican debates of the late 1650s, as political thinkers emphasised the importance of virtuous rulers or sound laws to achieve effective republican government.<sup>23</sup>

Rogers advocated the former position as he emphasised the importance of virtuous rulers in a one-page document entitled *To HIS Excellency the Lord General Cromwell A Few Proposals Relating to Civil-Government*.<sup>24</sup> The text was published shortly after the dissolution of the Rump Parliament in 1653. The creation of the Commonwealth in England on 19 May 1649 brought much hope for change. The Rump Parliament was perceived as a vehicle for reform. The Fifth Monarchists, which formed in 1651 following the Battle of Worcester, attempted to influence Parliament through various methods, such as preaching and putting their ideas for reform into print.<sup>25</sup> The conservative nature of the Rump meant that progress, if any, was slow moving, and by early 1653, the Fifth Monarchists began to challenge the Rump openly. The group had become dissatisfied that

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<sup>20</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Rogers, *Diapolitea* (1659), 81; John Milton, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (London, 1660), 49-50.

<sup>23</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 12.

<sup>24</sup> John Rogers, *TO HIS Excellency the Lord General Cromwell. A few Proposals, relating to Civil Government* (London, 1653); The text was reprinted in 1712 by Rich Newcomb located at Wine Office-Court, Fleet Street. There are some slight variations in spelling, but the content of the text is the same as the original. A new title page was added by Newcombe *A SCHEME OF THE GOVERNMENT of the Pretended Saints Humbly Inscribed to their late intended G---l for Life*. The author stated that the text were the words of Rogers and described him as ‘Perverter of the Gospel and Cromwell as a ‘Rebel’ and that they had ‘prescribed Forms of Government for the Subversion of Church and State.’

<sup>25</sup> Capp stated that the Fifth Monarchist movement began after Oliver Cromwell stopped listening to their advice, see *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 58.

Parliament had failed to implement any changes they believed were necessary to ready the nation for Christ's return.<sup>26</sup> In doing so, the Rump had become an obstacle for the Fifth Monarchists' millenarian aspirations.

On April 20, 1653, Oliver Cromwell and a group of soldiers from the New Model Army forcibly dissolved the Rump Parliament. Their actions were driven by frustrations with the lack of progress, allegations of corruption, and the Rump's unwillingness to dissolve itself.<sup>27</sup> However, this brought about another political crisis centred on the issue of how the government should be constituted to ensure stability within the nation.<sup>28</sup> Five days later, Rogers produced the first of a series of letters directly addressing Cromwell.<sup>29</sup> Rogers put forward five practical suggestions for consideration. In his first proposal, Rogers illustrated the need for virtue as he favoured an aristocratic form of government, in which governing would be limited to the godly.

Rogers believed that various institutions, such as the monarchy, law and the Church, had become corrupted over time because of a perceived connection to the antichristian Catholic Church. In alignment with other republican thinkers at the time, such as Milton and, later in the decade, Vane, Rogers proposed a remedy for this corruption. He advocated for Cromwell to ensure that individuals occupying positions of authority should be 'God fearing [...] worthy men.'<sup>30</sup> It was only when individuals who possessed these qualities assumed leadership roles that true reform could take place.

To persuade Cromwell, Rogers included examples of godly men described in the Old Testament who should be emulated by those chosen for governance. The men must be meek like Moses, have courage like Joshua, Samuel's uprightness, the 'activity and ability' of Nehemiah, and the wisdom of Solomon. The final quality that Rogers described was

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<sup>26</sup> Amongst a long list of changes the Fifth Monarchists wanted a separation between church and state, the removal of tithes, end to compulsion and reform of the legal system.

<sup>27</sup> Worden noted that Cromwell expressed disappointment with the Rump Parliament's decision on April 20. Initially, the Rump had agreed to dissolve itself in November and be succeeded by a godly representative body of around 400 members. However, upon discovering the Rump's intention to proceed with new proposals, Cromwell, accompanied by soldiers, entered the House of Commons. Reports indicated that he criticised the members for self-interest. Soldiers were then brought in, the Speaker removed, and the Rump Parliament dissolved. See Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 317-342.

<sup>28</sup> According to Midgley discontent relating to the Rump Parliament meant that plans around reforming parliament had been drawn up by the Army as early as August 1652. One of those demands was that new elections should be centered on those elected were to be 'pious and faithfull to the interest of the Commonwealth.' In addition, Midgley also explained that 'constitutional suggestions may have ranged from the specific to the vague but almost all of them focused on the integrity of the chosen governors'. Following disbanding Rump Parliament Cromwell made it clear that he acted upon advice from others. See Henry. C. Midgley, 'Political thinking and the creation of the Assembly of 1653', *The Seventeenth Century*, 31:1, 40-44.

<sup>29</sup> Rogers, *A few Proposals*, np.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, np.

particularly relevant as he believed they should possess the prophetic abilities of both David, who had written about Christ's first coming, and Daniel, whose visions alluded to the second coming.

In addition, Rogers defined the 'Qualifications' that men should possess, each accompanied by a reinforcing verse from scripture. For example, from Deuteronomy 16:19, governors should be 'lovers of Truth and Justice', able to execute justice with equality, and not susceptible to bribes or covetousness, which Rogers highlighted were the corrupters of justice.<sup>31</sup> They should consult scripture and rule like Jewish wisemen or magistrates. They should also want to help those oppressed; Rogers reminded the reader that the role of 'rulers' was to lift or ease people's burdens. Each of the qualifications Rogers highlighted would strengthen the person's relationship with God and produce effective leadership, protecting the Commonwealth and its citizens through cultivating those virtues for a political end. In a subsequent text, authored a few months later, Rogers once again stressed the necessity of having virtuous and upright individuals in positions of governance. He asserted that this was essential to 'model and conforme the Civil affaires for Christs coming.' Previous governments had become tainted by their association with the fourth monarchy and were incapable of governing the people in a just manner. Furthermore, they were incompatible with the upcoming fifth monarchy, which demanded virtuous rule.<sup>32</sup>

#### **1.4 The Role of a Legislator**

In his proposals, Rogers also designated a specific role for Cromwell, suggesting that Cromwell take on the role of a legislator, taking inspiration from ancient Israel. The rediscovery of classical texts during the Renaissance gave insight into the founding of the great ancient republics like Sparta. According to historical accounts, the establishment of Sparta as a republic occurred around the ninth-century BCE, following the appointment of Lycurgus as regent. Lycurgus was said to have been responsible for creating the laws and institutions that led Sparta to be viewed as a historical success based on its longevity.<sup>33</sup> Whether Lycurgus did exist is the subject of much debate. However, his 'legacy' proved to

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<sup>31</sup> Deut 16:19 (King James Version), 'Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous'; In an attempt to reform the Rump Parliament, Harrison successfully orchestrated the removal of Lord Howard of Escrick & Gregory Clement MP. Lord Howard faced allegations of bribery, while Clement was accused of adultery. David Farr, *Major-General Thomas Harrison Millenarianism, Fifth Monarchism and the English Revolution 1616-1660* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing limited, 2014), 173-174.

<sup>32</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 136.

<sup>33</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 16-17.

have a significant impact on the development of European political thought.<sup>34</sup> Instead of drawing from exemplary Greek and Roman models, Rogers was inspired by the role accredited to Moses in the creation of the Hebrew Republic.

In *A Few Proposals*, Rogers presented Cromwell as a type of Moses figure.<sup>35</sup> In the same way Moses had, under God's power, led the Israelites to freedom, Rogers wrote that Cromwell was also the 'great deliverer of his people (through God's grace) out of the house of Egypt'.<sup>36</sup> Moses's responsibility did not end there, as he was also chosen to give the people the laws after receiving them from God, which is why he was considered a legislator.<sup>37</sup> It was Moses's role, as documented in Exodus 18, that Rogers paid particular attention to, as in the passage, Moses selected those who would govern.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, Rogers wrote Cromwell should select 'the men that must governe this Commonwealth' as this had been the practice of Moses. The men chosen had the power to execute judgement over the people; with Moses adjudicating over any difficult cases.<sup>39</sup>

A legislative figure had an incredible amount of authority in creating a commonwealth, meaning they would have been susceptible to the corrupting influence of power. It had been said that once the Spartan Commonwealth and the laws had been established, Lycurgus left to consult with the oracle on the proviso that its citizens would not change the form of government or the laws until his return. It was purported that Lycurgus was so confident in the laws he created that he committed suicide so that they could not be altered.<sup>40</sup> In this sense, the role of a legislator was considered to be a temporary one.

Rogers also viewed the role of the legislator as a temporary position, as shown by Moses. Once the laws had been laid down, Moses did not rule directly. In the text, Rogers reminded Cromwell that God had honoured him through the successful outcome of the Civil Wars. In return, Rogers requested that Cromwell allow God to do the same in the 'Work which the War hath made way for, viz, in throwing down of Tyranny and

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Rogers, *A Few Proposals*, np; King has noted that the comparison to Moses was not new in itself as medieval kings were also 'envisioned as types of Moses. See John N. King, "The Godly Woman in Elizabethan Iconography." *Renaissance Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1985), 46.

<sup>36</sup> Rogers, *A Few Proposals*, np.

<sup>37</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 130.

<sup>38</sup> Exod 18:17-27 (King James Version), Jethro, Moses' father in-law, advised Moses to delegate authority to others as it would be impossible for him to do alone. The men chosen were to act as judges, dealing with disputes amongst the people. Moses would be expected to deal with more complex matters.

<sup>39</sup> Rogers, *A Few Proposals*, np.

<sup>40</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 17.

Oppression'. The work had started well. However, Rogers had concerns and warned Cromwell he should act '*as our Conqueror upon Christs and the Common-wealths account, and not upon your owne*'. Rogers was apprehensive that, like previous kings, Cromwell would rule in his own interests. Six months later, Rogers' concern was justified.

The forced dissolution of the Rump drew condemnation from Republicans, such as Henry Vane and Edmund Ludlow, as they believed it to be a betrayal of the good old cause.<sup>41</sup> For instance, Vane praised Parliament for adding to its natural right following the king's defeat. However, he wrote of an interruption, meaning the dissolution of the Rump, to the cause which had arisen because of 'private and selfish interest' not acting in the interests of the common good.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, while sharing concerns about power residing with Cromwell, Rogers took a different stance. By positioning Cromwell as a legislator, Rogers not only provided him with the justification for the dissolution of the Rump but also, by employing scripture, validated Cromwell's authority to form the next government.

## 1.5 The Hebrew Commonwealth

Following the dissolution of the Rump Parliament, a discussion emerged over whether the Hebrew Commonwealth could be replicated in England. As noted, Nelson argued that during the seventeenth-century, some considered that the Hebrew Bible documented the first-ever form of republican government. Significantly, this was a republican government designed by God. While Milton agreed that God had designed the Hebrew Commonwealth, he also believed that its distinctive nature meant that it could not be recreated.<sup>43</sup> In a more hostile response, Nedham dismissed the idea that the 'Form of Commonwealth of Israel was ever intended, either in the whole, or in part, as a Pattern for Christians to follow.'<sup>44</sup> Although writing several years later, it is interesting to note, given Harrington's opposition to godly republicans, that he was much more amenable to considering the Hebrew Commonwealth as a political model.<sup>45</sup> Harrington employed examples from scripture to support his argument that distribution of land was based on the agrarian law from the Old Testament.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> John Coffey, *John Goodwin and the Puritan Revolution* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2007), 238.

<sup>42</sup> Vane, *A Healing Question*, 3.

<sup>43</sup> John Milton, *Defence of the People of England* (1651), 18.

<sup>44</sup> Marchamont Nedham, *The Excellencie of a Free-state; OR, The Right Constitution of a Commonwealth* (1656), 147.

<sup>45</sup> Rachel Hammersley, *James Harrington: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 170-171

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 170-176; Blair Worden, 'English Republicanism,' in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 453.

In this sense, Rogers was closer to Harrington than godly republicans such as Milton, as Rogers once again turned to the Hebrew Bible for political inspiration as he sought to replicate the Hebrew Commonwealth. Rogers explained to Cromwell that the ‘commonwealth of Israel (which is our best pattern)’ and God, himself, had laid the plans for a commonwealth.<sup>47</sup> Following the pattern, Rogers stated that parliament should, therefore, consist of ‘either a Synedrin Parliament or Council of Seventy’; as stipulated in Numbers 1:4, the government should consist of one man chosen from each county.<sup>48</sup> In addition to the Sanhedrin, also known as the upper court, which consisted of seventy representatives, Rogers recommended replicating the other two types of court: the lower court, which had twenty-three representatives and three judges in the smaller cities.<sup>49</sup>

After a month of deliberations, in June 1653, an agreement was finally reached. The new assembly was based loosely on the concept of a Sanhedrin. This was attributed to the influence of Major-General Harrison, a Fifth Monarchist close to Cromwell at the time.<sup>50</sup> It was decided that because of the perceived corruption of the Rump, Parliament had to be reformed before the nation could be transformed. The new members should be godly and virtuous. However, instead of elected MPs, Cromwell and the Council of Officers would choose them, hence the Nominated Assembly. Henry Midgley commented that it was believed this was the only way to guarantee ‘the integrity of Parliament’.<sup>51</sup> However, selecting members instead of electing was temporary, as the assembly would be dissolved in 1655 so that elections could be held. As Rogers himself highlighted in 1654, the purpose of creating the Nominated Assembly, in which those who governed would do so with justice and integrity, was hoped that the ‘people might forget MONARCHY, and understanding their true Interest in the Election of successive PARLIAMENTS, may have the Government settled upon a true Bases, without hazard to the Glorious CAUSE’.

Writing in the margin, ‘Against this Monarchy again, and for Parliaments.’<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Rogers, *A Few Proposals*, np.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, np; Num 1:4 (King James Version).

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

<sup>50</sup> The proposal aimed to double the representatives from 70 to 140 members; distributed as 129 for England, 6 for Ireland and 5 for Scotland. It is noteworthy that the representatives for Scotland and Ireland were English soldiers ‘serving in those countries’. Cromwell, Harrison and Lambert and two others were also part of the delegation; Capp has emphasised the ambiguity of the relationship between Harrison and Cromwell. Certain narratives underscored Harrison’s ‘esteem’ for Cromwell, while others reported a ‘great enmity existing between them. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 65.

<sup>51</sup> Midgley, ‘Political thinking and the creation of the Assembly of 1653,’ 48.

<sup>52</sup> John Rogers, *Mene, Tekel, Perez, or A Little Appearance of the Hand-writing Against the Powers and Apostates of the Times* (London, 1654), 5.

The Nominated Assembly gathered on 4 July 1653. Amongst its members were twelve Fifth Monarchists.<sup>53</sup> It was not long, however, before tensions began to rise between the Fifth Monarchists and the more moderate members, including Cromwell. The concern that the Assembly could follow the same fate as its predecessor was expressed by Rogers in a text published on 7 November 1653.<sup>54</sup> To dissuade Cromwell from attempting another dissolution, Rogers reminded him that governance was effectively situated with the members of the Nominated Assembly. He emphasised that those chosen for ‘places of trust, or offices of this Nation, seeing none but the Saints of Christ shall be his Officers here in place and imployment for Christ, and the Common-wealth in the fifth monarchy.’<sup>55</sup>

## 1.6 Liberty

The chapter will now shift its focus to the second concept associated with republican thought: liberty. It will explore how the concept underpinned Rogers’ vision for a godly commonwealth in opposition to monarchical regimes.

Isaiah Berlin made a distinction between positive and negative liberty. Positive liberty is achieved through a person’s capacity to realise their full potential. In contrast, negative liberty is freedom from physical interference.<sup>56</sup> Skinner built on Berlin’s foundations by identifying another form of negative liberty, termed neo-Roman, as it originated through the Roman legal differentiation between free and enslaved individuals.<sup>57</sup> According to Skinner, this form of liberty moved beyond the conception of negative liberty identified by Berlin to understanding liberty as a form of self-government - being free meant not being dependent on anyone else. If you were dependent on the will of another, this was a form of slavery. This concept of liberty extended to the notion of the state. Therefore, in a free state, the people must consent to the laws under which they live.<sup>58</sup> Rogers adopted the neo-Roman understanding of liberty in all of his works from as early as 1653, and it became a fundamental aspect of his political thought.

Before exploring Rogers’ understanding of liberty, it is necessary to address an apparent issue arising from the term neo-Roman. The classical origin of this term appears

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<sup>53</sup> The twelve Fifth Monarchists were: John Harrison; John Carew; Francis Langden; John Bawden; Col. Danvers; Jacob Caley; Arthur Squibb, Col, John James; John Browne, Hugh Courtney; Richard Price; John Williams. See Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 68.

<sup>54</sup> Rogers dated writing the epistle as 20 October 1653. Rogers, *Sagrir*, ‘To the Right Honourable the Lord Gen’.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 136.

<sup>56</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York; Oxford University Press, 1970), 121-134; Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 11.

<sup>57</sup> Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*, 40-41.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 26-27; Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 11.



incompatible with the thought of a Fifth Monarchist who derived their republicanism from scripture and the Hebrew model rather than from classical antiquity. However, Skinner himself has addressed this issue. He explained that he used the term simply because he had recognised the form while studying the Roman legal system. When using ‘neo-Roman’ as shorthand, Skinner explained, ‘I was simply referring to the belief that the antonym of liberty is servitude. I spoke of this as neo-Roman commitment simply because it embodies the classic distinction between a free and unfree person’.<sup>59</sup> Given Skinner’s explanation, there is no reason why Rogers should not be viewed as advocating a neo-Roman understanding of liberty.

In *A Few Proposals*, Rogers engaged with the tradition of reading English events alongside ‘Israelite history,’ which, according to Matthew Neufeld, was ‘common practice’ during the early modern period.<sup>60</sup> Rogers framed the nation’s recent battle with Charles I as the same plight as the Israelites whilst they were under Egyptian bondage. He explained that it was through God’s power that Cromwell had delivered the people from Norman slavery in the same manner as Moses had delivered the Israelites from Egyptian slavery.

One of the prevalent arguments during the Civil Wars was the notion that the nation had been enslaved following the Norman Conquest. This was the result of the introduction of the feudal system, in which land ownership fell into the hands of the few, which in turn was perceived to have infringed on the freedom of the people. Some considered the Norman conquest to have had a negative impact on English liberty. This claim was vociferously employed by the Levellers in 1648 in a petition to Fairfax, as it was claimed ‘the people of this nation, both by nature and as they are Englishmen, are a freeborn generation, but by conquest and captivity under William, the duke of Normandy’s bastard, they were made slaves, the property of their lands removed from the British natives to the Norman invaders’.<sup>61</sup> The Digger, Gerard Winstanley, also echoed similar sentiments. However, while the Levellers advocated for changes in the franchise to make it

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<sup>59</sup> Quentin Skinner, *From HUMANISM to HOBBS studies in Rhetoric and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 142.

<sup>60</sup> Matthew Neufeld, ‘Doing without precedent: applied typology and the execution of Charles I in Milton’s Tenure of kings and magistrates,’ *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 38, No.2 (Summer, 2007), 338.

<sup>61</sup> For some Leveller references to Norman yoke see: Richard Overton, *A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens* (London, 1646). Richard Overton, *An Appeale from the degenerate Representative Body the Commons of England assembled at Westminster* (17 July 1647); *To His Excellency Thomas Lord Fairfax . . . The Humble Representation of the Desires of the Officers*, (London, 1648); John Lilburne, *An Impeachment of High Treason Against Oliver Cromwel, and His Son in Law Henry Ireton Esquires, Late Members of the Late Forcibly Dissolved House of Commons, Presented to Publique View* (London, 1649); Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation, Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 268.

independent of land ownership, Winstanley advocated ‘for a radical discontinuity in the landholding regime of England’.<sup>62</sup>

In November 1653, Rogers published *Sagrir, Or Doomes-day drawing nigh, with Thunder and Lightening to Lawyers*, in which he advocated a similar line of argument on the question of how the nation had lost its liberty. Through the tyranny of kings, dating back to Edward the Confessor, Rogers argued that the English ‘freeborne’ people began to lose their liberties when Edward changed the laws to suit his own interests. The loss of rights and freedoms escalated after the conquest of William the Conqueror when the laws were further ‘barbarously razed up from their foundation, principle, and original’ and the previously ‘free-borne’ people, under the arbitrary will of another, became ‘absolute slaves to Great men’.<sup>63</sup> To substantiate the legitimacy of the Commonwealth, Rogers constructed an exclusivist argument asserting that the execution of Charles I had fulfilled prophecy, signifying a permanent end to monarchical rule in England.

### 1.7 Republican Exclusivism

James Hankins has argued that the English republican debates of the 1650s took an ‘exclusivist’ turn. Republican thinkers, such as Milton, began perceiving monarchical rule as ‘an illicit constitutional form’ and republican government as the only ‘legitimate’ form.<sup>64</sup> The origins of this argument have been located in the Renaissance as republican thinkers, who mostly favoured a mixed constitution, began to lean towards a more exclusive stance.<sup>65</sup>

The gradual change can be attributed to the revision of the meaning of the word ‘respublica’. Although rarely used during the Renaissance, it was taken to mean the best regime. Even though some political thinkers at the time favoured self-government as opposed to monarchical governments and used vitriolic language to condemn opposing attitudes or regimes, they did not explicitly use the term to express anti-monarchical sentiment. Hankins argued that to consider a person as a republican exclusivist, they must

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<sup>62</sup> See John Lilburne, *London's Liberty in Chains* (London, 1646); *An Agreement of the Free People of England* (May 1649); *Foundations of Freedom, Or An Agreement of the People* (15 December, 1648); Also see the Digger, Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652).

<sup>63</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 48; It was claimed by Capp that Rogers only engaged with the language of rights and liberty near the end of the period and when he was no longer ‘orthodox’. As the section demonstrates he was employing the language of natural right from the outset.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Aristotle classified government into good, serving in the governed interests (monarchy, aristocracy, polity) and bad government, which served the interests of the rulers (tyranny, oligarchy, democracy). He argued that each good government type would eventually deteriorate into bad government. Polybius suggested a mixed constitution to slow the decline. See Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 3,6 & 45.

insist on non-monarchical rule and - most importantly - use the term 'republic' to denote it.<sup>66</sup>

The revised meaning is connected to the translation of Aristotle's works, particularly *Politics*, and arose through the difference between the Latin and Greek meanings.<sup>67</sup> In the Roman meaning of the word, *respublica* referred to 'affairs of the state' or 'the public good', whereas, in Greek, the term *politeia* was linked to the rule of the people. In Leonardo Bruni's (1370-1444) translation of *Politics*, he 'translated *politeia* with *respublica*, taken both in the more general sense of government for the common good and in the more specific sense of popular rule'.<sup>68</sup> In his official role within the Florentine government, Bruni also employed the term when he referred to the Florentine republic. Through writing in his official capacity, he 'encouraged' the association of *respublica* with a non-monarchical state. As Hammersley noted, by the time Machiavelli began to write, the word republic had two meanings.<sup>69</sup> In his *Discourses*, Machiavelli illustrated that not all nations were suited to republican rule. As he pointed out, those who had lived under a monarchy may not be able to become accustomed to republics and may lose their freedom. Machiavelli did reveal some indication of republican exclusivism, distinguishing between republics and principalities and suggested that a republic was the superior form of government.<sup>70</sup> As Hankins explained, although *respublica*, in its non-monarchical meaning, was well-known in Italy by the time of Machiavelli, it is through his works that the new definition became part of the 'Renaissance lexicon, especially outside of Italy'.<sup>71</sup> Although in the minority, Hankins highlighted that some did employ the revised meaning of *respublica*, which was necessary for the exclusivist turn witnessed in the 1650s English republican debates.

Up to this point, the discussion surrounding the emergence of republican exclusivism has focused on its Greek and Roman origins. Again, Nelson presented an alternative viewpoint that revealed the influence of the Hebrew Bible to support the turn to exclusivism during the English republican debates. In particular, the rediscovery of Hebraic commentaries written to explain the apparent contradiction between Deuteronomy 17 and I Samuel 8. In the former passage, God appeared to condone monarchical rule, whereas, in I Samuel 8, he expressed anger at the Israelites demanding an earthly king. The

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<sup>66</sup> James Hankins, 'Exclusivist Republicanism,' 452-482.

<sup>67</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 46.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 47; Hankins, 'Exclusivist Republicanism,' 463.

<sup>69</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 47.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>71</sup> Hankins, 'Exclusivist Republicanism,' 470.

contradiction led to arguments favouring monarchical absolutism or republican exclusivism, which will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter.<sup>72</sup>

To summarise those debates, in response to the regicide, the French scholar Claudius Salmasius (1588-1653) engaged in the discussions surrounding the two Hebraic texts to defend the divine right of kings and to condemn the regicide of Charles I.<sup>73</sup> He further argued that the characteristics of a king described by Samuel to the Israelites confirmed the royal prerogative. Salmasius's text prompted a response from Milton. In *Defence of the People of England* Milton produced a biblical argument drawn from the Hebrew texts that suggested monarchical rule was a sin.<sup>74</sup> Notably, although Milton made the connection, he still maintained that if a ruler was constrained by laws and oaths, this was still a viable form of government. It was not until 1660, in *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, that Milton denounced monarchical rule as both 'dangerous' and not conducive to freedom.<sup>75</sup>

In his exclusivist argument, Rogers also drew upon Hebrew scripture. However, his argument evolved not by attempting to reconcile the contradictory passages but rather from his interpretation of prophecy. Furthermore, Rogers bolstered his position by combining prophecy with Norman Yoke theory, all aimed at legitimising commonwealth rule. As this section will show, the fundamental principle underpinning Rogers's argument was his commitment to neo-Roman liberty.

Although England had been declared as a Commonwealth and Free State on 19th May 1649, bringing an end to monarchical rule, this did not bring an end to support for the institution of the monarchy.<sup>76</sup> Charles himself had questioned the court's legitimacy during his trial, and royalists continued to deny the legality of parliament. The threat to the new regime was compounded when Charles II was declared king of Scotland a year later.<sup>77</sup> The subsequent dissolution of the Rump replaced with the non-elected Nominated Assembly brought a fresh wave of criticism.

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<sup>72</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 26.

<sup>73</sup> Claudius Salmasius, *Defensio regia pro Carolo I* (1649).

<sup>74</sup> Milton, *Defence of the People of England* (1651).

<sup>75</sup> Milton, *The Ready and Easy way*, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 256.

<sup>77</sup> Charles wanted support from the Scots to be able to mount an attack on English forces to regain the throne. To offer their support, the Scottish government influenced by the Scottish Kirk insisted that Charles ensure that Presbyterianism would be adopted throughout the land. On the 1 May 1650, Charles agreed to the Oath of Covenant & signed the Treaty of Breda.

## 1.8 Daniel Chapter 7

The Book of Daniel primarily influenced Rogers's anti-monarchical stance as he interpreted contemporary events as the fulfilment of prophecy. During the reign of the Babylonian King Belshazzar, Daniel experienced a 'symbolic dream vision' that alluded to the end of earthly monarchies and the second coming of Christ.<sup>78</sup>

In the dream, Daniel witnessed the rise and fall of four great beasts. These depicted four great monarchies or empires that would expire before Christ returned, bringing about the fifth empire. However, the focus of the vision was the fourth beast, as this was unlike the other three, who each resembled known beasts.<sup>79</sup> The physicality of the fourth was very different and described as more powerful and destructive than the previous three as it 'crushed and devoured its victims'. The fourth empire would come to be known for its tyranny. The beast had ten horns upon its head, and while Daniel contemplated its meaning, he saw the emergence of a smaller horn between the first three, and these three horns were 'plucked up by the roots'.<sup>80</sup> An angel told Daniel that the horns on the head of the beast represented ten kingdoms, and during the fourth empire, a king would rise and subdue three of those kings. The little horn would speak against God, changing the laws to favour himself. Under the rule of the little horn, the saints would suffer extreme persecution. Daniel was told that God would deliver his people, the little horn would be destroyed, and sovereign power would be given to the saints to rule for Christ.

## 1.9 Interpretation of the Little Horn

In his interpretation of Daniel 7, Rogers revealed the identity of the little horn to be William the Conqueror. More significantly, Rogers further asserted that this designation extended to all English monarchs who succeeded William the Conqueror, up to and including Charles I. According to Rogers, the little horn's identity was the subject of much debate. Some had interpreted it as the 'Pope, [and] others of the Turke', whereas, for Calvin, it was Julius Caesar.<sup>81</sup> Other Fifth Monarchists also debated this; as Rogers pointed out, even his 'friend' John Canne differed in opinion and believed the little horn

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<sup>78</sup> John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: an Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. Third edition (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 6.

<sup>79</sup> The vision described the first beast as being like a lion but having the wings of an eagle; the second resembled a bear with three ribs between its teeth; the third was like a leopard and had four bird like wings on its back. Within the Protestant tradition the four monarchies were held to be Babylon, Persia, Greece & Rome.

<sup>80</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 125.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

represented the Antichristian state instead of an individual.<sup>82</sup> According to Rogers, the little horn's identity could be revealed through the history of the English monarchy.

It was William the Conqueror's rise to power that confirmed for Rogers that all subsequent English monarchs were the little horn. In the vision, Daniel witnessed the little horn rise up and take three kingdoms, and as history testified, William had usurped the crown from the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. Rogers emphasised that William, like the little horn, had 'thrust' himself 'in among the rest'.<sup>83</sup> Daniel chapter 11 offered a further description of the little horn in verse 21, which reads, 'In his place shall stand up a vile person.' This was taken by Rogers to mean someone that was 'base borne'. Rogers drew upon the *English Chronicles* to trace William's lineage. These chronicles documented that Robert, the Duke of Normandy, 'begat a son' with a 'Skinners daughter', and it was this 'poor skimmers girls bastard', which she named William. It was William the Conqueror 'who rose up so by usurpation of power', leading to the subsequent succession of 'all the Norman Kings that sat (since) upon the English Throne'.<sup>84</sup> William's forceful taking of the crown also differentiated him from the previous English monarchs. As Rogers wrote, William's rise to power was 'not by choise and election; not naturally with the rest of the horns, by suffrage of the people'.<sup>85</sup> Through the usurpation of power by William, the people lost their 'wholesome lawes and liberties' in both the religious and civil spheres.<sup>86</sup>

The claim that the nation from 1066 had lost its liberties following the Norman conquest was a familiar argument. In *The Tenure*, Milton claimed that the invasion marked a decline in the rights and liberties of the people. Rogers wrote within that tradition, but integrated Norman yoke theory combined with prophecy to call for an end to monarchical rule. Rogers reinterpreted the Norman invasion as an example of the usurpation of power and an act of the antichrist, which enslaved all of God's people in England.

Identifying William as the little horn meant that following his usurpation of power, all subsequent rulers received their authority from the devil, not God.<sup>87</sup> The nation, through the succession of kings, had been connected to the antichristian empire of Rome. By applying the prophecy to England, Rogers was not only undermining the legitimacy of past

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<sup>82</sup> John Canne's identification of the little horn as an antichristian state as opposed to a specific individual will be discussed in the final chapter.

<sup>83</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 125.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 126.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 126.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 'To the Right Honourable the Lord Gen'.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

monarchs since 1066, but he was also, more importantly, putting an end date to monarchical rule as the prophecy dictated that this would end with Charles I.

The connection to Charles was first made through the description of the little horn, as described in Daniel's vision, which was arbitrary and tyrannical. It was written that the little horn would 'speak great words against the most high'; in chapter 11, the nature of his rule was defined as he would '*doe according to his owne will*' and '*magnifie himself above God*'.<sup>88</sup> These were all actions of William, whom Rogers wrote, had grown '*great in pride and Tyranny, and Arbitrary power according to the lust of his heart*' but also the actions of all monarchs since William.<sup>89</sup> Rogers claimed that all English kings and queens had made it their purpose to study 'how to guard their own interest', and this was achieved through the abuse of 'prerogative with tyrannicall laws' enabled to oppress the 'people and the publick'.<sup>90</sup> By the time of Charles I, the pride and tyrannical behaviour of monarchs had increased to 'such a height'. As Rogers highlighted, this was demonstrated by Charles himself at his trial as the late king had steadfastly refused to recognise the legality of the court. Rogers wrote that in doing so Charles had 'not only opposed God but refused to be accountable, pretending no mortals must question him'.<sup>91</sup>

The connection between Charles I and the little horn was further reinforced through Rogers' interpretation of verse 25, which warned that the horn would 'wear out the saints of the most high, and think to change times and laws'.<sup>92</sup> As Rogers claimed, 'William and all his line of Norman Kings to Charls Stuart, [were] ever persecuting and afflicting Gods servants under the notion of Hereticks, Brownists, Puritans, Roundheads, Anabaptists, and the like'. The final point raised by Rogers was that this was until 'the last tyrant ran out into armes openly'.<sup>93</sup> Charles's raising an army to fight against the people was the ultimate act of tyranny. In contrast to the oppressive behaviour of the late king, it was because of these appalling actions that Cromwell and the New Model Army were forced to act 'upon the Peoples account...to free them from *tyranny* and *oppression*'.<sup>94</sup>

The abominable act of war sealed the king's fate and ended the English monarchy as the '*Judgemen-Seate* was set'.<sup>95</sup> As foretold in Daniel chapter 7, it was written that the

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 127; Daniel 7:25 (King James Version).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>92</sup> Daniel, 7:25 (King James Version).

<sup>93</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 128.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 127.

little horn would be ‘cut off as never to be more’, Rogers noting with much sarcasm ‘ah dreadful Tragedy!’.<sup>96</sup> The regicide brought about ‘the fall of the *little Horne*, or the *Norman line* in the *fatall stroke* given to *Charles Stuart*,’ Rogers observed that, ‘all *Kingly Power* in *England*, never more to arise in these *three nations*’.<sup>97</sup> The execution of Charles I represented the realisation of a prophecy that had begun to unfold following the usurpation of sovereignty by William Conqueror. It was interpreted that the regicide signified the moment when power was delegated to the saints, entrusted with the authority to govern on Christ’s behalf. On this basis, Rogers believed they had a divine mandate to create a godly commonwealth in place of the monarchy.

### 1.10 Resistance

Having demonstrated that the regicide was an act of divine inspiration, Rogers endeavoured to demonstrate that it was Parliament that possessed the authority to depose the king from power. Following the regicide, supporters of the newly established commonwealth regime engaged with resistance theories to legitimise the power of parliament. According to Scott, the English republicanism that developed during the 1650s began incorporating resistance theories.<sup>98</sup> For example, Milton argued that as sovereign power originated from the people, they could reclaim that power. He claimed sovereignty could be restored even if the ruler was not a tyrant.<sup>99</sup>

Although Rogers had proven sovereignty had been usurped, certain scriptural verses prohibited any form of resistance. For example, 1 Peter 2:13 dictated that you must ‘submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake’.<sup>100</sup> In response, Rogers explained that whilst we ‘submit ourselves to mens laws for God’, should they ‘run-counter or justle against Gods’, it was God’s laws that we are ‘absolutely obliged’ to obey.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, through the law of nature, we were taught ‘to maintaine and defend our lives and liberties; yea and fellow-members too, against all injuries and wrongs’. He wrote, quoting from Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), that:

a tyrannical interest, having no proper address for the publick welfare, but onely to satisfie a private will [...] cannot in a reasonable or religious construction, be accounted and continued as lawful; and therefore, the rising against such an ungodly selfish interest, and the

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 128-129.

<sup>98</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 109.

<sup>99</sup> John Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (London, 1649), 32.

<sup>100</sup> 1 Peter 2:13 (King James Version).

<sup>101</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 13.



disturbance of it is not unlawful, nor ungodly; neither may men be esteemed rebellious or seditious for doing so.<sup>102</sup>

Through Charles's declaration of war, he acted against God and the nation. As Parliament, a legitimate power, had acted in defence, it had the authority to overthrow him.

To avoid the potential of armed civilian uprisings, Rogers made it abundantly clear that he was not promoting any form of physical resistance by the populace. Rather, he advocated for passive resistance. In his words, people should in an 'orderly [manner] declare against the dangerous practices of their Rulers, and make an orderly resistance for their owne Rights and Liberties'. He further emphasised, 'I mean not by armes, to fight, or wage war against their Governors in a rash disorderly way', as such actions would be deemed as an 'ungodly rebellion'.<sup>103</sup>

The form of 'orderly resistance' that Rogers advocated would take place through men declaring 'their grievances through writing, printing, petitioning'.<sup>104</sup> One could withdraw their obedience by voicing one's opinions or publishing pamphlets. He wrote that 'the people (generally concurring) may decline obedience to those govenours that have or hold them in slavery under laws against the publick good, whether as in relation to liberty of conscience, or liberty of the subject; with reference to Gods laws or the peoples'.<sup>105</sup> Rogers again drew his examples from the Old Testament, explaining that when Jehoram ruled over Judah, he abandoned the laws of God, and therefore, Libna withdrew his obedience, also 'when Antiochus by his tyranicall laws required the Jews to imbrace his Religion, [...] we find Mattathias resolute to resist'.<sup>106</sup>

Rogers's commitment to non-violent acts of resistance was evident in 1657, following the failed uprising organised by fellow Fifth Monarchist Thomas Venner. Rogers stated that he 'would [rather] be hanged before he would goe out with this spirit'.<sup>107</sup>

## 1.11 Consent

The chapter, so far, has demonstrated that Rogers' interpretation of liberty fits with the definition offered by Skinner. The people, as they had depended on the king had lost their liberty. This could only be regained through a self-governing commonwealth. However, this also meant that the people should consent to being governed and the laws introduced.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 86.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 120 -121.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>107</sup> Burrage, 'The fifth monarchy insurrections,' 729.

In Rogers' defence of resistance, he also revealed a commitment to the idea that government was based on consent, as he stated that the people had the right to choose their rulers. In neo-Roman liberty, consent is crucial to a self-governing commonwealth. Rogers emphasised it was Parliament, following the regicide, that had asserted it was the people who possessed the 'right and originall power of chusing their own rulers'.<sup>108</sup> The Bible also demonstrated the importance of consent. When Saul was chosen to be king, this was through the people's consent, and when David was 'chosen to be King in Hebron', this was through the 'generall suffrage of the people'.<sup>109</sup> Even the histories of the Heathens provided examples of the people choosing their rulers. Rogers, citing Cicero, wrote that 'Deioces from a Judge of private controversies, was for his uprightnesse chosen by the whole people of the Medes for their supream governor', and similarly, Livy wrote that the people chose the governors and the senators.<sup>110</sup>

While the people were bound to passive resistance, Rogers also illustrated that if the 'commonality' consented, the nation had 'a defensive force of armes to preserve their rights and liberties' which could be utilised for the good of the Commonwealth. He referred to the story of Deborah, who raised an 'army for the laws and liberties of Israel' in the book of Judges.<sup>111</sup> He explained that these forces should not be seen as 'adversaries to the publick,' but instead as 'faithful friends and servants that seek to defend her rights and liberties' providing that they 'have a clear call upon the publick account, before they appear so'.<sup>112</sup> The idea that the people needed to consent to those in power reaffirms that Rogers was interpreting liberty in the republican sense of the word in that the people participated in the political process by giving their consent to those in power. After having demonstrated that the people had begun to reclaim their liberties following the regicide and change in government, Rogers turned his attention to two specific areas that required immediate reform: the church and the law, with the aim of safeguarding those freedoms.

### 1.12 Law Reform

The primary aim for Rogers in writing his text *Sagrir* in 1653 was to demonstrate the need for law reform.<sup>113</sup> The laws created through reason, which Rogers expressed, were the Commonwealth's very 'nerves and sinewes'.<sup>114</sup> However, the current body of legislation

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<sup>108</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 121.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, 121.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 121.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 122.

<sup>113</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir. Or Doomes-Day Drawing Nigh* (1653).

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

was designed to protect corrupt monarchs and not to protect the people. Rogers claimed the antichristian empire had maintained its grip on the nation by manipulating the law; without reform, this would continue. Rogers called for the members of the Assembly to ‘*wall us with the good and wholesome Lawes and Liberties of the People, as we were before the Norman invasion, or rather as Israel of old*’.<sup>115</sup>

Rogers was certainly not alone in his call for law reform. The Personal Rule of Charles I, lasting for eleven years, caused much dissatisfaction among parliamentarians. Therefore, one year after the establishment of the Long Parliament, its members presented the King with a long list of grievances, including legal matters, such as the removal of the Star Chamber on 5 July 1641.<sup>116</sup> The trial and execution of Charles, followed by the abolition of the office of the king on 17 March 1649, also necessitated further reform of the legal system as the Rump had to deal with the practicalities of a legal system entrenched in the monarchy.<sup>117</sup>

In addition to parliamentary demands for change from 1647 until 1653, calls for reform, according to Barbara Shapiro, were motivated by ‘political and religious radicalism’.<sup>118</sup> Although by the end of 1649, the Leveller movement had lost much of its momentum, it had been the most vocal group proposing a radical reform programme to produce a more equal and just society for all.<sup>119</sup> Amongst those demands were changes to the electoral system, reform of the judicial system, including the simplification of the law, the end of lawyers, and limiting the scope of capital punishment.

The call for law reform motivated by more religiously inspired radicalism peaked in 1653. As Shapiro commented, it was when ‘many feared that the traditional body of English law and courts might be swept away’.<sup>120</sup> Sects, such as the Fifth Monarchists,

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid, ‘To the Right Honourable the Lord Gen’.

<sup>116</sup> The Act for the Abolition of the Court of Star Chamber passed in 1641. See *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, ed. Samuel R. Gardiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 179; Shapiro identified four key areas of legal reform during this period. First, there was the issue of the ‘Court of Wards and Liveries’ and problems related to feudal tenure, which was addressed before Charles’s execution. Second, reforms targeted ecclesiastical courts, particularly with the termination of the High Commission and challenges to episcopal authority. Third, the focus shifted to rectifying ‘unsatisfactory and illegal judicial decisions,’ which intensified during Charles’s reign. This encompassed two aspects: addressing judges who had violated the law and bringing the appointment of judges under parliamentary control, which had previously been at the discretion of the king. Lastly, the fourth concern centered on the abolition of the Star Chamber. See Barbara Shapiro, ‘Law reform in seventeenth century England,’ *The American Journal of Legal History*, vol. 19, issue 4 (1975), 289.

<sup>117</sup> ‘March 1649: An Act for the abolishing the Kingly Office in England and Ireland, and the Dominions thereunto belonging,’ in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911), 18-20. *British History Online*, accessed October 9, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/18-20>.

<sup>118</sup> Shapiro, ‘Law reform,’ 290.

<sup>119</sup> Worden, *The Rump Parliament*, 106.

<sup>120</sup> Shapiro, ‘Law reform,’ 290.

wanted to either replace the existing body of law with the Mosaic code or, at the very least, to align English law more closely with the principles of Scripture.<sup>121</sup> Cromwell himself had been influenced by this stream of religious radicalism, which, as demonstrated by the creation of the Nominated Assembly, he was initially keen to support. In the reforms proposed by Rogers in October 1653, there are some similarities to previous Leveller demands.<sup>122</sup> However, unlike the Levellers, Rogers' argument was underpinned by his commitment to millenarianism and inspired by the Hebrew Bible as he went much further with his demands, calling for the Mosaic code to replace the current law.

As mentioned, the Bible was viewed as a political text during the seventeenth-century. As Rogers explained, the 'Law-booke of God' had been 'slighted, as imperfect', in preference for men's ordinances or that of the 'Gratian's' or 'Justinian's', had 'once again been found'.<sup>123</sup> Implementing Hebraic laws, Rogers claimed, would not only transform the people but also the political sphere. It was also crucial that the laws fit the season, and as the earthly monarchy had ended, the corrupt laws should also expire.<sup>124</sup> It was thought that implementing God's laws would usher in the second coming of Christ.

### 1.13 The Rule of Law

Rogers' millenarianism prompted his call for law reform, but classical antiquity provided him with the rationale for change. Rogers discussed the origins and purpose of laws, which aligned with the republican arguments for the importance of the rule of law that had developed from reading works by ancient philosophers such as Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE).

In *De republica*, Cicero defined *res publica* as indicating that the people were not only the source of power but also the government's primary concern.<sup>125</sup> The sovereignty of the people could be either transferred or usurped. However, if the republic had declined into tyranny, then the people could reclaim their sovereignty.<sup>126</sup> Cicero emphasised the importance of the rule of law to avoid the increase of power by any section of society within a republic. It was through the rule of law that power was curbed as everyone, including those in government, was subject to the law, which was the basis of liberty.<sup>127</sup> As

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 290.

<sup>122</sup> The Levellers and Fifth Monarchist both advocated for the laws to be in English, simplification of the legal system and equality before the law.

<sup>123</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 'To the reader of any faculty' & 139.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 'To the reader whatsoever'.

<sup>125</sup> Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, 25.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 16-35.

Iseult Honohan observed, ‘the rule of law not only provides for the common good of all members of society’ but for Cicero, it ‘guarantees their freedom’.<sup>128</sup> The influence of Cicero on the rule of law was the subject of debate in mid-seventeenth century England by republican thinkers and Rogers.

In the aftermath of the regicide, republicans, such as Milton, also debated law reform. Milton’s *The Tenure* published as a defence of the army’s actions against Charles, argued that as sovereignty originated with the people, they had the right to depose the king. In discussing the origin of kingly rule, Milton explained that to restrain a ruler, ‘the Law was set above the Magistrate’. At times, however, the laws were either incorrectly ‘executed or misapply’d’, to counter this, when a monarch was installed, they were required to submit to an oath pledging that they would rule according to the law that the people had ‘themselves made, or assented to’.<sup>129</sup> As Cicero had centuries earlier, Milton also understood the importance of the rule of law to avoid tyrannical government and ultimately protect the freedom of the people and the Commonwealth. This same argument was pursued by Rogers in 1653.

Like Milton, Rogers began with an explanation of the origin of laws. All ‘human lawes, civill lawes, or the lawes of Nations’, Rogers wrote, originated from the God-given ‘law of Nature, and the principles of Reason’.<sup>130</sup> As Ephesians 5:39 dictated, ‘no man ever hated himself but loves and cherishes himself’; according to Rogers, this precept required that an individual was taught ‘to maintaine and defend our lives, and liberties’.<sup>131</sup> Following this teaching, people came together to protect themselves and the first societies were born. It is in his account that we can see the influence of classical philosophy as even though Rogers had scriptural evidence, he chose to quote directly from book 1, chapter 3 of Cicero’s *De Officiis*, he wrote that ‘who says, That nature (*the common mother of mankind*) commands and ordaines that every man endeavour and procure the good of another whatsoever he be, only because he is a man; other-wise all bonds of society, and mankind needs run to ruin’.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>129</sup> Milton, *The Tenure*, 9.

<sup>130</sup> Rogers, *Sagrir*, 7.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 4. This is an edited quote and does not correspond with book one chapter three. It does appear to relate to the fourth chapter in which Cicero discussed instinct and reason. It could also relate to book three chapter six which discussed the interests of society and the individual and refers to the breakdown of society if people act in their own interests.

The origin of the laws had come from the people to allow them to protect their freedom and that of the state. As Rogers explained, it was the ‘people who being most sensible of their burthens are most capable of making laws for their owne ease and welfare’.<sup>133</sup> In another reference to *De Officiis*, Rogers stated Cicero ‘owns this’ sentiment:

when the rich ones oppressed the poor people, they presently made choise of some that excelled others in worth and wisdom to represent them and when they abstained from some honest, just and good men, redresse of wrongs, they rested satisfied; but that failing they were forced to lawes; and invented laws for their liberty, not for their bondage or slavery.<sup>134</sup>

However, through conquest, the laws had been altered to further the interests of those who ruled. As Rogers highlighted, at his coronation, William the Conqueror promised to adhere to the laws. However, to increase his power, he ‘took away those laws that were the people's Privileges, and at his own pleasure’, and replaced them with laws that were ‘destructive to the peoples good and publick weale’.<sup>135</sup> Through the line of kings that succeeded him, ‘our English civill laws were so barbarously razed up from their foundation, principle and original, that we were made, and have so continued absolute Slaves to Great’.<sup>136</sup>

The rule of law was a fundamental concept of Rogers’ godly republicanism. He was employing the same argument that Cicero had put forward, and then Milton, that the law was to ‘curb and restraine’ the ‘wicked men, in their wicked actions’.<sup>137</sup> Through the implementation of laws, the citizens were protected from the arbitrary will of another. As Rogers wrote, the ‘speciall end’ was to secure the ‘Peoples freedom, to keep the People from slavery’.<sup>138</sup> Like Milton, Rogers argued that ‘the genuine intent of lawes in their originall is to curbe and keep in (principally) the Princes, not the People; the rich not the poor...to bridle Great ones who are most lawless and to keep Governours within their due precincts of just and righteous government’.<sup>139</sup>

Furthermore, the law was the ‘axle-tree of our state upon whose firmnesse and fitnessse we move’.<sup>140</sup> Rogers argued that if corrupt and tyrannical laws were maintained,

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<sup>133</sup> Rogers included a Latin quote from book two of Cicero’s *De Officiis*, 41-42. The Latin quote was edited by Rogers, and he followed this with an English translation included above. Ibid, 45.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 30.

they would ‘render our rulers’ as ‘oppressors and tyrants’.<sup>141</sup> As Calvin had expressed in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, if the ‘law...is a close magistrate, but the magistrate is an open law, so if the law be close tyranny, the governours thereby must needs bee open tyrants’.<sup>142</sup> If the body of existing legislation remained, then this would corrupt parliament, resulting in the downfall of the Commonwealth.

The laws from the Hebrew Bible could not only transform the nation’s morality but also reform the ruling body. Therefore, Rogers suggested that the Mosaic laws replace the current body of law. As he explained, governments were often ‘full of tricks, arts...lies ready at the catch, according to a judge (or great mans) interpretation, or construction’. In contrast, God’s law would curtail this behaviour. The state’s corruption would be torn down by the ‘Gospel-Way [which] is full of plainenesses, truth and simplicity...and is not according to man's interpretation, but the spirits’.<sup>143</sup> For Rogers, the only way that the people could enjoy their civil freedom was through the protection of divinely inspired laws, as, unlike the current laws, they were not dependent on the imagination of men.

This reveals that the Hebraic revival influenced Rogers’s preference for a Commonwealth based on the Hebrew Republic and aided his development of an argument for republican exclusivism and law reform. According to Nelson, the renewed interest in the Old Testament also led to calls for toleration. This section will illustrate how Rogers also employed scripture to argue for a separation between the Church and State, allowing for toleration and, significantly, ensuring religious liberty.

#### **1.14 The Church and State**

Following the dissolution of the monarchy, it was not only the law that was deemed to have been corrupted but also the Church. There was a myriad of proposals from all sides over what changes needed to be implemented.<sup>144</sup> The pursuit for uniformity by the late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, had been vehemently contested by persecuted groups, such as Presbyterians and Independents. For Rogers, the corruption went back much further as he claimed that the Church of England, as it was not fully reformed, had maintained its connection with the Catholic Church. The relationship meant that the

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 30-31.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>144</sup> Anthony Milton, *England’s Second Reformation: The Battle for the Church of England 1625–1662* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 293-294.

Church was a pillar upholding the antichristian empire. It was imperative that the final great antichristian institution in England be torn down.

It was the question of church reform that, according to Scott, caused much division amongst both Republicans and religious groups.<sup>145</sup> Two distinct strands of thought emerged in the debates that proliferated through the 1650s. The first school of thought followed the teachings of Erastus, who had written in favour of church subordination to state power. It was, according to Nelson, through the works of Grotius, that Erastian ideology and Hebraic texts were employed to support a call for toleration.<sup>146</sup> In his comments on the Hebrew Commonwealth, Grotius claimed that the laws God gave related to both secular matters and religious practices; there was no distinction between the two. The chief magistrate was given sole authority over civil and ecclesiastical affairs, which was replicated in later periods by judges, kings and, finally, through the Sanhedrin.<sup>147</sup>

Grotius' interpretation of the role of a chief magistrate as supreme in both realms of power led to his argument for toleration.<sup>148</sup> It was the magistrate's role to secure peace instead of implementing religious uniformity. The question concerning Grotius was how religion impacted society; would religious belief bring peace or discord? He explained that the magistrate should protect what he identified as four 'fundamental principles'.<sup>149</sup> There should be an acknowledgement that there is only one God and that, second, God was not visible. The third point acknowledged God's providence in all human affairs and his impartiality in justice, and the final principle was that 'God is the Creator of all Things'.<sup>150</sup> The four principles Grotius argued were the 'principles necessary for civic life'.<sup>151</sup> Following Grotius's argument, this implied that a magistrate would not be involved in matters concerning unorthodox beliefs. Consequently, this ensured freedom of conscience.<sup>152</sup>

In June 1643, the Westminster Assembly of Divines convened to discuss church reform, and during those debates, the Erastian model was championed by theologians such as John Selden. However, it was in Harrington's *Oceana* in 1656 that the first English republican prescription for a civil religion was proposed.<sup>153</sup> It was ancient Israel that also

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<sup>145</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 52.

<sup>146</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 98.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, 99-100.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, 104.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 105.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 105; Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, vol.2, 1033.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, 106.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 106.

<sup>153</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 53.



inspired Harrington to suggest a national religion. In a republic, citizens would enjoy religious freedom because the civil magistrate, as Grotius had stated, would protect the fundamental aspects of faith. Harrington wrote that ‘men who have the means to assert liberty of conscience have the means to assert civil liberty; and will do it if they are oppressed in their consciences’.<sup>154</sup> It meant that should a civil power intrude upon an individual’s conscience, they would also be infringing upon their civil liberties, denying a person’s freedom.

The second argument for toleration, led by Vane, was based on a separation between Church and State.<sup>155</sup> Following on from previous attempts, in 1647, to prevent the coercive power of both the clergy and civil magistrates, Vane argued for separation in his text published *Zeal Examined: Or, a Discourse for Liberty of Conscience in Matters of Religion* (1651).<sup>156</sup> Vane challenged the capacity of a civil magistrate to punish sin as this would require them to ‘be able to discover the secrets of the Heart, where the Seat of sin is, and to punish it accordingly; but that’s out of his reach’.<sup>157</sup> Vane denounced uniformity and argued that peace would only be achieved through allowing heterodoxy.<sup>158</sup> To persecute a person for their belief, he believed, was a principle of the antichrist.<sup>159</sup> As he wrote, the mixing of the spiritual and temporal authority was the ‘throne of the beast’.<sup>160</sup>

In *Ohel or Beth shamesh*, published on the same day as *Sagrir*, Rogers echoed Vane’s call for a separation between ecclesiastical and civil power as he condemned the Erastian model, explaining that it has ‘the shadow of Religion, though they have none of the substance. This they learned of Machiavel’.<sup>161</sup> To pursue his argument for separation, Rogers sought to demonstrate that scripture supported this. In contrast to Grotius, Rogers argued that the Hebrew Bible actually proved the case for the separation of Church and State.

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<sup>154</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 121; Harrington, *Political Works*, Vol.1, 844.

<sup>155</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 52; Vane, an MP during the Civil Wars, notably abstained from regicide. After Charles I’s execution, he played a prominent role in the Rump Parliament until its dissolution in 1653. Despite prior collaboration with Cromwell, he began to oppose him following the dissolution. David Parnham, ‘The nurturing of righteousness: Sir Henry Vane on Freedom and Discipline,’ *Journal of British Studies* 42, no.1 (2003), 1-2.

<sup>156</sup> Vane sought to end religious conformity and prevent civil authorities from imposing penalties on those subject to ecclesiastical censure. He aimed to abolish requirements regarding the Book of Common Prayer and the obligatory Solemn League and Covenant. Parnham, ‘The nurturing of righteousness,’ 4.

<sup>157</sup> Sir Henry Vane, *Zeal Examined: Or, a Discourse for Liberty of Conscience in Matters of Religion* (London, 1652), 1. See Parnham, ‘The nurturing of righteousness,’ 4.

<sup>158</sup> Vane, *Zeal Examined*, 3.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, ‘Address to Reader’.

<sup>160</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 52.

<sup>161</sup> *Ohel Or Beth-Shemesh* (1653); Rogers, *Sagrir*, 141; Both tracts were printed on 7 November 1653.

Hebraic scripture revealed a clear distinction between Moses and Aaron. Authority over the state was given to Moses, and Church matters to Aaron. ‘They stood at such a distance’, Rogers wrote, ‘that as none of the Priesthood could meddle with State-matters, or take that government upon him; so none of the Royall-stocke, or blood, could meddle with the Priesthood.’<sup>162</sup> This was further confirmed in 2 Chronicles, when King Uzziah, emboldened with pride, took it upon himself to enter the forbidden temple of God. Azariah cast the king ‘out of the holy place’ as the holy temple was not the place for a ‘Prince, but for the high-Priest’.<sup>163</sup> Uzziah’s trespass was interpreted as an attempt to usurp priestly power and led to his punishment by God as he was ‘suddenly smitten with the Leprosie’, and as Rogers emphasised, he was ‘laid out for an example to after ages’. It was the stories of Moses, Aaron and Uzziah, recorded in the Hebrew Bible and interpreted by Rogers that revealed that God had ordained a clear distinction between civil and religious power.

One of the arguments supporting civil authority over the Church claimed that the Old Testament included examples when kings and rulers had ‘used their material sword and civill powers’ to ‘cut off the idolatrous priests’, demonstrating that the sphere of civil power was dominant in church affairs. Rogers challenged this argument by explaining that they were ‘*extraordinary cases...and for extraordinary ends*’.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, rulers such as ‘*Elijah, Samuel, David and Daniel*’ were believed to foreshadow Christ, and at that moment, they embodied the same roles as Christ would come to inhabit as they were king, priest and prophet.

Rogers addressed the criticism that the Hebrew Bible was only relevant to Jews and had no relevance to contemporary political and religious affairs by supplementing his argument with evidence from the New Testament. He explained that Christ in his first coming ‘came not to meddle with, or overthrow the Civill-government,’ and therefore following his example, ‘neither must your Civill Magistrates or Civill Governours meddle with the matters or affaires of Christs Church’.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, in Matthew 22:21, when the Pharisees questioned Christ about paying tribute to Caesar, Jesus replied, ‘render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things which are Gods’.<sup>166</sup> Reflecting the Old Testament scripture, Christ’s teaching again reaffirmed a

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 166.

<sup>163</sup> 2 Chron 26:16 (King James Version); Rogers, *Ohel or Beth-Shemesh*, 127.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 166.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>166</sup> Matt 22:21 (King James Version).

division between the two powers. Rogers declared, ‘let the Civill keepe within his Civill-precinct, and the Spirituall within his compasse and sphere.’<sup>167</sup>

### 1.15 Toleration

To protect the safety of the Commonwealth, state powers could legislate against immoral practices to correct deviant behaviour with the hope that society could be reformed.

Although the two spheres of power should be separate, Rogers did suggest that civil powers could take ‘cognisance of all sins whatsoever; so far, as they be uncivil, and break their Civil Laws’. Civil magistrates could punish people for committing sinful practices, such as drinking and swearing. However, this was on the condition that the civil laws executed did not violate God’s laws.<sup>168</sup> This, however, did not extend to the act of blasphemy or heresy because, as Vane had argued earlier, punishment would infringe upon a person’s conscience and as Rogers wrote, it was ‘God alone’ that ‘is the Lord and Judge of the conscience’.<sup>169</sup>

In the pursuit of uniformity, both the Catholic Church and the Church of England had allowed persecution and this, according to Rogers, symbolised the antichrist.<sup>170</sup> It was the civil magistrate’s duty to ensure there was ‘provision for the Church of Christ’, but notably not ‘to force men’s consciences into a consent and compliance with their own wayes or worships, or to rack them into a Religion: God forbid!’. The argument in favour of compulsion had arisen from the reading of Luke 14:23, ‘the Lord sayes, Compell them to come in, that my house may be filled’.<sup>171</sup> However, as Rogers explained, this reading was incorrect as Christ addressed the disciples, not the civil magistrates. Secondly, the verse meant to ‘shew them a necessity ... Win them with arguments, that as they that want bread see a necessity, or are compelled to go to Market’. It was through the power of the Gospel that people would be changed, not through the power of the sword.<sup>172</sup> People must, therefore, be allowed to enter the Church of their own free will, and to compel them was the work of the antichrist.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Rogers, *Ohel or Beth-Shemesh*, 127.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, 164.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, 164.

<sup>170</sup> For discussions around uniformity – Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Adam D Morton, Nadine Lewycky, *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of Professor W.J. Sheils* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2012).

<sup>171</sup> Rogers, *Ohel or Beth-Shemesh*, 128.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, 129.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, 124.

Furthermore, Rogers argued that it was through the Church of England forcing the people to attend that the Church was kept in an impure state. He explained that the National Church was an ‘Antichristian church’ because of its ‘mixed number of the multitudes of the world’. The Church consisted of both the ‘holy and prophane’. For Rogers, the true Church would consist only of those who openly professed to be saints and would provide a testimony of their conversion. He acknowledged that in the parable of the wheat and the tares, it was interpreted that saints and sinners would grow together. Rogers also concurred that within the context of a congregation, this meant that individuals within the church would ‘kick against Christ’.<sup>174</sup> However, Rogers contended that the parable was a prediction of what the Church would become, as a person’s true nature was only known to God. The Church of England, in its open admission of known sinners and hypocrites into the congregation, inadvertently permitted these divisive individuals to infiltrate and undermine the Church’s integrity. Consequently, Rogers advocated not only for the Church’s autonomy from the state but also for its exclusive composition of ‘Saints visible (so judged of by sufficient evidences given in to be such) are competent Members of a true Church of Christ’.<sup>175</sup>

### **1.16 Loss of Liberty**

The Nominated Assembly sat for six months before the members resigned their powers to Cromwell on 12 December, and he was installed as Lord Protector four days later. The creation of the Protectorate was described by Nedham in *A True State of the case of the Commonwealth* as ‘the beginning of a new government, necessitated to create a little world out of chaos, and bring form out of confusion.’<sup>176</sup> Nedham who had criticised the selection (rather than election) of members in the Nominated Assembly, now stressed that the Instrument placed power back with the people exercised through elected parliaments.<sup>177</sup>

The transfer of both executive and legislative power to Cromwell elicited much criticism. Fellow Fifth Monarchist Christopher Feake condemned his actions. In an intercepted letter, it was reported that four anabaptist ministers had publicly declared

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>176</sup> Peter Gaunt, “‘To Create a Little World out of Chaos’: The Protectoral Ordinances of 1653–1654 Reconsidered,” in *The Cromwellian Protectorate*, ed. Patrick Little (Boydell & Brewer, 2007), 106; Marchamont Nedham, *A True State of the Case of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, and the Dominions Thereunto Belonging; in Reference to the Late Established Government by a Lord Protector and a Parliament* (1654), 46; George Thomason dated his copy 9 February (BL, Thomason E728 (5)).

<sup>177</sup> Gaunt, “‘To Create a Little World out of Chaos,’” 106.

Cromwell to be the ‘man of sin, the old dragon’.<sup>178</sup> The report specifically called out Feake as the ‘chief of them’.<sup>179</sup> However, discontent towards the new regime was not confined to the Fifth Monarchists. Republicans, such as John Streater, attacked the change as an infringement on liberty.<sup>180</sup> The concern revolved around the magnitude of power vested in Cromwell, effectively resulting in a form of government that resembled monarchy in everything but name. The Instrument gave the Protectorate the power to enact ordinances necessary to secure ‘peace and welfare of these nations’.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, as Blair Worden noted, whilst they may have been introduced on the premise that they were ‘emergency measures,’ ‘some of the ordinances went far beyond the immediate claims of ‘necessity’ and aimed to secure lasting changes in the Church, in the law, in the universities.’<sup>182</sup>

On 21 December, Rogers, unlike Feake, took a more measured approach as he hoped to persuade Cromwell to reconsider his actions in a short text entitled: *To His Highnesse Lord General Cromwel, Lord Protector, &c. The humble Cautionary Proposals of John Rogers*.<sup>183</sup> Rogers started his plea by explaining that God, whom he described as ‘Lord Protector of his People’, had woken him every morning until he was filled with the spirit to pen the proposals. Further commenting that since Cromwell had been ‘Proclaimed Lord Protector’ Rogers had had no ‘rest day or night’.<sup>184</sup> The use of the title of Protector here is interesting, as God was given the title. In contrast, the inclusion of ‘proclaimed’ indicated an official response rather than a title lovingly given to Cromwell by the people. Further on in the document, Rogers again employed Cromwell’s title in what could be described as a

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<sup>178</sup> Labelling the Fifth Monarchists as Anabaptists carried negative connotations, associating them with the uprising in Münster.

<sup>179</sup> ‘State Papers, 1653: December (1 of 4),’ in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 1, 1638-1653*, ed. Thomas Birch (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1742), 620-629. *British History Online*, accessed October 31, 2022, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/thurloe-papers/vol1/pp620-629>

<sup>180</sup> John Streater shared his concerns about the government in *A Glympse of that jewel, judicial, just, preserving libertie* published March 1653. According to Joad Raymond Streater’s text was a ‘covert attack on Cromwell’ – Joad Raymond, ‘JOHN STREATER AND THE GRAND POLITICK INFORMER’. *The Historical Journal* 41, no. 2 (June 1998), 568.

<sup>181</sup> Blair Worden, ‘Oliver Cromwell and the Protectorate,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 20 (2010), 63; Gaunt noted that the constitution allowed for a nine-month gap before the first parliament met in September 1654. During this period, the executive branch, comprising the Protector and the Council of State, held additional powers to govern the country in between parliamentary sessions. This provision, related to Article Thirty, aimed to address the challenges of the initial Protectorate phase and the need to establish the regime and resolve constitutional issues, such as peace and the welfare of the country, before parliament convened. Furthermore, Gaunt highlighted that some of the ‘ordinances revived or continued existing acts’. However, this soon went beyond and ‘their temporary legislative power’ gave rise to ‘wide-ranging legislative programme totalling around 180 completed ordinances.’ Gaunt, “‘To Create a Little World out of Chaos,’” 106-107.

<sup>182</sup> Worden, ‘Oliver Cromwell and the Protectorate,’ 63.

<sup>183</sup> John Rogers, *To His Highnesse Lord General Cromwel, Lord Protector, &c. The humble Cautionary Proposals of John Rogers, Minister of the Gospel according to the Dispensation of the Spirit (now) at St Thomas Apostles London* (December; 1653). This is a one-page document.

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

veiled threat, warning the Lord Protector to avoid ‘Protecting the Plantations of *Antichrist*, or the *Towers of Babylon*, which must fall...upon the *Heads* of their Protectors’.

In the proposals, Rogers adopted the familiar argument, dating back to ancient times, of assigning blame to ‘Carnall Councillors’ who had advised Cromwell. It was through their ill-informed recommendations that the regime had moved away from the interests of Christ as he defined the characters of the counsellors as those who ‘seek themselves more than Christ’.<sup>185</sup> Rogers stated that Cromwell had been led astray through flattery. He reminded Cromwell of the cautionary story of the Persian king Darius from Daniel chapter 6. In the chapter, Darius was convinced by his evil counsellors to act against Daniel and convinced the king to sign a decree that set up idolatry. It was therefore paramount that Cromwell only received counsel from those ‘conversant with the *Secrets* of God, and the *Visions* of these days.’ Presumably, to restore the saints to power, he reminded Cromwell that the ‘honourable’ members of the late parliament, the Nominated Assembly, were ‘faithful to Christ’.<sup>186</sup>

Although his text was pragmatic, Rogers’ conclusion included a warning to Cromwell, as he reminded the Lord Protector that God ‘hath used you as a most glorious Instrument in the Three Nations ... to make way for this work’ before adding, ‘if you reject’ God’s plans he ‘will reject you, and be the infallible forerunner of your fall.’<sup>187</sup>

The discontent shared by groups such as the Fifth Monarchists, Quakers and the Commonwealth-men led the Council of State to believe they posed a potential threat to the regime. In response, on 19 January 1654, the Ordinance of Treason was issued. The Act redefined what was considered an act of treason. The Ordinance stipulated that it was an act of treason if anyone were:

to compass or imagine the death of the Lord Protector[...] if any person or persons shall maliciously or advisedly either by writing, printing, openly declaring, preaching, teaching [...] That the Lord Protector and the people in Parliament assembled are not the Supreme Authority of this Commonwealth [...] to endeavour to stir up or raise force against the Protector of the present Government...such offence[s] shall be taken and adjudged to be High Treason.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Rogers left the identity of the advisors unnamed

<sup>186</sup> Rogers, *The humble Cautionary Proposals*.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, np.

<sup>188</sup> ‘January 1654: An Ordinance Declaring that the offences herein mentioned, and no other, shall be adjudged High Treason within the Common-wealth of England, Scotland and Ireland, and the Dominions thereunto belonging,’ in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1911), 831-835. *British History Online*, accessed October 10, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp831-835>.

The aim was to curb the activities of certain disaffected groups and bring stability to the new regime.

Though the language of the Act was generalised, the Fifth Monarchists believed it was aimed directly at them, which was confirmed to some extent by the arrest of Feake and Vavasour Powell on 26 January.<sup>189</sup> Following the testimony of Ellen Aske on 17 February 1654, Rogers' home was searched by government officials. Aske had testified that she had heard of a secret plot by the '5 monarchy peopll' to take up arms against Cromwell, and in her testimony, she specifically named Rogers alongside Feake.<sup>190</sup> In a later text, Rogers described the intrusion as being 'illegally & arbitrarily plundered... by this *Unrighteous* (self-created) *powers*'.<sup>191</sup> In addition to revising the definition of treason, which sounded reminiscent of the previous act that safeguarded monarchs, a second ordinance was passed that caused further hostility from Rogers as it infringed on religious freedom. On 20 March 1654, an order was passed that implemented a system of Triers, who would vet ministers, and the role of Ejectors, who would remove ministers deemed unfit to hold their positions.<sup>192</sup> The actions of the Protectorate only confirmed to Rogers that civil and religious liberties had, once again, been lost.

Rogers' reaction to the Protectorate was recorded in a sermon that was reported back to John Thurloe, Cromwell's spymaster.<sup>193</sup> Rogers was careful, given the Ordinance for Treason; however, it was evident that he considered Cromwell to be a monarchical figure. According to Rogers, as previous rulers had, Cromwell had not only changed the laws for his own purpose but, more importantly, he had broken God's commandments. By aligning Cromwell with past monarchs, Rogers demonstrated that the connection to the antichristian fourth empire had been restored. Under the Protectorate, the people had returned to a state of slavery.

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<sup>189</sup> Rogers, *Fifth-Monarchy-Man*, 112-113.

<sup>190</sup> Ellen Aske was examined by Ro. Nelson. She testified that there was a plot against Cromwell and named Rogers, Feake and Harrison. 'State Papers, 1655: February (2 of 3),' in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, Volume 3, December 1654 - August 1655, ed. Thomas Birch (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1742), 150-165. British History Online, accessed April 13, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/thurloe-papers/vol3/pp150-165>.

<sup>191</sup> John Rogers, *Mene, Tekel, Perez*, 'Word to the Reader.'

<sup>192</sup> 'March 1654: An Ordinance for appointing Commissioners for approbation of Publique Preachers,' in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 855-858. *British History Online*, accessed May 9, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp855-858>.

<sup>193</sup> Bodl. MS. Rawl. A 47, f. 32-35. The meeting was disturbed so Rogers was only able to discuss the breaking of eight commandments.

The Lord Protector and his army, Rogers proclaimed, had boasted that they had delivered the nation from tyranny. However, they were guilty of setting themselves up as gods and, therefore, had broken the first commandment. The second commandment forbade the creation of graven images. Rogers explained that numerous institutions, such as the Triers, had been established, and these were ‘the works of men’s imaginations’.<sup>194</sup> Referring to the establishment of the Protectorate, Rogers claimed that Cromwell was also guilty of taking the Lord’s name in vain, as what ‘God gave them onely in trust, for the advancement of his glory, they have purloined and abused to the advancement of themselves, breaking al oaths, promises, covenants’.

Furthermore, he had failed to maintain the holiness of the Sabbath and in choosing to obey the world before God, Cromwell had dishonoured his father. He and his government were guilty of murder as he explained that whilst they ‘refrain from the outward act’, their hatred towards the saints was tantamount to murder. Through their lusts for ‘pleasures, honors, and profits’, they were guilty of adultery, and finally, they were ‘thieves and robbers’ as the powers they now held had been stolen from the people.<sup>195</sup> It was clear that Rogers was telling the congregation that the nation had escaped one form of tyranny to fall under another, so they remained enslaved.

### **1.17 Argument Against Single-Person Rule**

So far, Rogers has constructed arguments against monarchical rule based on Norman Yoke theories combined with the fulfilment of prophecy. However, the unanticipated creation of the Protectorate necessitated a shift in Rogers’ approach to criticising the new regime. On 10 June 1654, Rogers published *Mene, Tekel, Perez, or A Little Appearance of the Hand-writing Against the Powers and Apostates of the Times*. In the text, Rogers attempted to persuade Cromwell that the Protectorate was a form of monarchical government. To do this, Rogers engaged with the army debates that had erupted in 1647 surrounding the proposed settlement with the king. The arguments that the army had levelled against the late king were revived by Rogers and redirected towards Cromwell.

The purpose of the text was, as Rogers wrote, to compare ‘present transactions with former Ingagements’.<sup>196</sup> He wanted to demonstrate that the Protectorate was a monarchical government because power rested with a single individual. In addition, the timely reminder that this was a government that God had brought down and, therefore, the Protectorate

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<sup>194</sup> Bodl. MS. Rawl. A 47, f. 32-35.

<sup>195</sup> Bodl. MS. Rawl. A 47, f. 32-35.

<sup>196</sup> Rogers, *Mene, Tekel, Perez*, 2.



would suffer the same fate. To make his case, he referred to several declarations the army had made around the end of the First Civil War. The text included numerous direct quotations. To emphasise the points Rogers made, he italicised or capitalised keywords or phrases.

He began by reminding the army of their original intentions in taking up arms against the king, expressed in *A DECLARATION or REPRESENTATION From his Excellency, Sir Thomas Fairfax, And the Army under his Command*, published on 14th June 1647.<sup>197</sup> It was written that they had taken ‘up *Armes in Judgement and Conscience* for the peoples *just Right and Liberties*, and *Resolved* to assert and vindicate them against all *Arbitrary power; violence, and opposition*’. By italicising specific words, Rogers drew attention to the stark contrast between the principles the army defended against those embodied by the king. He was pushing the argument that there can be no freedom or rights in an arbitrary government with violence and opposition. Furthermore, after highlighting the reason for taking up arms against the king, Rogers followed with a section that directly undermined the current regime. Employing capitalisation, Rogers, again quoting from the declaration, wrote that the army declared that they would not design or comply ‘*to have an absolute arbitrary power signed or settled for continyance in any PERSON WHATSOEVER*’. In case Rogers’ position on the Protectorate needed further clarification, he had printed in the margin ‘Against absolute Government in one Person’.<sup>198</sup>

In addition, Rogers took the opportunity to remind Cromwell and the army that they had once shared the same millenarian aspirations as the Fifth Monarchists. When the army had marched into Scotland in 1650, they had vowed to assist parliament because they believed Christ had called them for ‘*the destruction of ANTICRIST, and the deliverance of his CHVRCH and people*’.<sup>199</sup> The reasoning, as Rogers explained, was that they had been ‘perswaded in our consciences that he and his *MONARCHY* was one of the *TEN HORNS* of the *BEAST*’ because only the beast could have shed so much blood of the saints.<sup>200</sup> In the same declaration, Rogers reminded Cromwell that the army had also ‘proclaimed *JESVS CHRIST* the King of Saints, to be our King by profession, but desire to submit to

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<sup>197</sup> *A DECLARATION or REPRESENTATION From his Excellency, Sir Thomas Fairfax, And the Army under his Command, Humbly tendred to the Parliament, Concerning the ist and Fundamental Rights and Liberties of themselves and the Kingdome. WITH Some humble Proposals and Desires* (1647).

<sup>198</sup> This is the same as when Rogers defended selection of members for the Nominated Assembly instead of holding elections. Alongside written in the margin is ‘Against this Monarchy again, and for Parliaments’.  
Rogers, *Mene, Tekel, Perez*, 5.

<sup>199</sup> Antichrist was misspelt in the text.

<sup>200</sup> Rogers, *Mene, Tekel, Perez*, 5.

him upon his own termes, to admit him to the exercise of his ROYALL AVTHORITY'.<sup>201</sup> They had declared they would not submit to the rule of a single person, a promise that had since been revoked.

The nation had been freed from slavery under a monarchical government. This was the fulfilment of prophecy, which proved to Rogers that the rule of earthly monarchy in England had come to a permanent end. The subsequent creation of the Protectorate plunged the people and the nation back into servitude as they returned to single-person rule. The Protectorate was unexpected, which meant that instead of prophecy, Rogers turned to the arguments that had been used against the king to condemn Cromwell. Rogers's criticism of the regime led to his lengthy imprisonment on 27 July 1654, from which he was released on 2 January 1657.<sup>202</sup>

During that time, Rogers continued to write as he protested against his loss of personal liberty and challenged the regime's authority to imprison him without charge.<sup>203</sup> He considered this to demonstrate the arbitrary rule of the Protectorate regime. After his release from prison in 1657, Rogers was re-arrested on February 3, 1658, and was ultimately set free on April 16, 1658. Cromwell's death in September of the same year led to a final opportunity for Rogers to bring his vision of a commonwealth to fruition.

### **1.18 The Republican Debates of 1659**

Cromwell's unexpected death and the failure of his successor, Richard, to maintain the Protectorate led to the restoration of the Rump in May 1659.<sup>204</sup> Its restoration prompted a series of debates among Republicans about how to form the next government. Rogers contributed to the discussion and not only reaffirmed the same commitment to a godly Commonwealth as he had in 1653 but also provided some more detail about the form the Commonwealth should take.

On 20 September 1659, *Diapolitica. A Christian Concertation* was published. Rogers wrote the text to discredit arguments by Richard Baxter, William Prynne and Harrington.<sup>205</sup> Rogers took particular offence to the idea of rotation of office (inspired by the Venetian

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>202</sup> Richard L. Greaves, 'Rogers, John'.

<sup>203</sup> John Rogers, *Jegar-Sahadutha: An Oyled Pillar: Set up for Posterity* (1657).

<sup>204</sup> Cromwell died 3 September 1658 and his son Richard succeeded him. However, Richard struggled to secure army support, leading to his reinstatement of the Rump on 7 May 1659. Patrick J. Corish, 'The Cromwellian Regime, 1650–60', in *A New History of Ireland: Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691* ed. T.W. Moody, F.X Martin, F.J. Byrne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 356.

<sup>205</sup> *Diapolitica* was published 22 September as a direct critique of Harrington in *Mr. Harrington's Parallel Unparallel'd*.

republic) and warned the Rump parliament against it. Rogers stated that the concept of the rotation of MPs, favoured by Harrington, 'would Boul't or fling out the best and ablest in the Commonwealth' and bring 'inevitable ruine to the Commowealth'.<sup>206</sup> In addition, Rogers dismissed Harrington's proposal that royalists should be included in political affairs. As Rogers pointed out, readmission would 'strike mortally at the *Cause*,' meaning the Good Old Cause.<sup>207</sup>

In the text, Rogers also advocated extending electoral participation not only to the saints but also to supporters of the 'Good Old Cause'.<sup>208</sup> Capp suggested that this assertion exemplified Vane's influence over Rogers following their time in prison together.<sup>209</sup> However, prior to his imprisonment, Rogers had already hinted at broadening the scope of eligible voters and candidates beyond the saints in his work *Mene Tekel* published in 1654. In addition to proposing annual or biannual parliaments, Rogers argued that individuals who had fought against Parliament or aligned with its adversaries should be excluded from the right to elect or be elected. Consequently, his statement suggested his inclination to endorse the inclusion of men who had sided with Parliament, and this moved beyond the categorisation of the saints.

The republican debates also provided Rogers with a final opportunity to push for toleration. In *Diapolitea*, Rogers condemned Harrington's criticism of Vane's *Healing Question*. To defend the text, Rogers explained that this was Vane's attempt 'towards the recovery and Healing of this poor Island'.<sup>210</sup> Harrington had criticised the rule of the saints and Vane's proposition for freedom of conscience based on the separation of Church and state. As mentioned, Harrington proposed a civil religion where authority over religious matters rested with the civil magistrates to secure peace. However, Rogers questioned whether there was any reason why 'indulging of a Tender Conscience; tendeth to the Ruine of the Commonwealth?'.<sup>211</sup> The 'National Conscience', as Rogers referred to it, would lead to persecution and reassert the connection with the antichristian Catholic Church. As he had demonstrated, it was through the pursuit of a uniform church that persecution had flourished and religious liberties had been lost. It would only be through a theocratic commonwealth that the people would have both their religious and civil liberties restored.

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 75, 81.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 59-60, 96-97.

<sup>209</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 139.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid, 51.

Rogers took the opportunity to reiterate his advocacy for a theocratic commonwealth once again. Directly referring to the members of the House of Commons, Rogers cited the Italian historian Francesco Guicciardini's (1483-1540) *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*, published in 1527. Rogers wrote:

*And Guiccardin saith, That Free-States must needs be more pleasing to God then any other forme of Government, because of the Common good, and impartial distribution of justice, and emulation in mens mindes to Virtue, and their love to Religion is usually more enlarged then in other Governments.*<sup>212</sup>

Rogers reasserted that he believed only in a theocratic commonwealth could the nation be settled and the people's liberties safeguarded once more.

### 1.19 Conclusions

The chapter has highlighted Rogers's contribution to the evolution of English republican thought. While historians such as Capp have acknowledged Rogers's inclination towards republican principles in the late 1650s, they have often attributed it to the influence of Vane. However, the chapter has revealed that although Rogers echoed Vane's stance on the issue of toleration, Rogers had already articulated his dedication to a Commonwealth government before his acquaintance with Vane. Furthermore, Capp asserted that following their encounter, in his 1659 text, Rogers expanded the scope of the electoral process to encompass supporters of the 'Good Old Cause' rather than solely the saints. Contrary to this claim, the chapter has refuted it by illustrating that as early as 1654, Rogers had already shown that he supported extending elections to individuals beyond the saints. The chapter has challenged the prevailing historiography by demonstrating that, throughout the period, Rogers developed a distinct form of republicanism to establish a godly commonwealth. Significantly, Rogers framed this republicanism predominantly in religious language, undermining the view of republicanism as a secular ideology.

In developing his idea for a godly commonwealth, Rogers engaged with fundamental concepts, such as virtue and liberty, that have long been associated with republican thought. Virtue, in a republican sense, played a pivotal role in Rogers's vision. Advocating for virtuous men in a position of power would curb corruption and ensure that they ruled for the people's interests and not their own. He championed a neo-Roman interpretation of liberty, arguing that the people had lost their civil and religious freedoms as they were dependent on the rule of another. Furthermore, he favoured a government that was based

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<sup>212</sup> The word 'Free-States,' 'forme,' 'Common good,' 'Virtue' and 'Religion' were all printed using blackletter typeface to emphasise the terms. Ibid, 121. Though Rogers purported to be quoting Guicciardini, this quote cannot be found in *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*.

on consent. The chapter also examined the concept of neo-Roman liberty as the term implied this was a secular construct and, therefore, incompatible with a language of liberty primarily grounded in religious discourse. Given Skinner's explanation, the classification of Rogers as advocating for neo-Roman liberty was substantiated, as it encapsulated the dichotomy between individuals possessing liberty and those deprived of it. Consequently, this is not an impediment when considering Rogers as a proponent of a neo-Roman interpretation of liberty.

Additionally, Rogers employed Hebraic literature to develop an argument for republican exclusivism. He argued that the regicide fulfilled prophecy, linking all monarchs since William the Conqueror to the antichristian Roman Empire. Alongside other republicans, such as Milton, Rogers also employed Norman Yoke theory. However, he combined this with prophecy to delegitimise the English Monarchy. The emergence of the Protectorate forced Rogers to adapt his argument to apply to all forms of single-person rule, denouncing the actions of Cromwell and the Officers as returning the people once more to a position of servitude. It is clear from Rogers' response that he perceived the only legitimate form of government as a commonwealth.

While Rogers relied heavily on biblical evidence, he also turned to ancient philosophers like Cicero to argue for the importance of the rule of law as another mechanism to curb power. Rogers contended that laws had been corrupted over time, manipulated by monarchs to increase their authority and oppress the people. Rogers also wanted to reform the Church. Nelson argues that the renewed interest in the Hebrew Bible led to a call for a civil religion in which the civil magistrate held authority over the Church. In contrast, the chapter has shown that the Old Testament supplied Rogers with evidence to support the separation between Church and State, allowing for toleration and bringing peace to the Commonwealth.

The forthcoming four chapters, beginning with Mary Cary, will examine the vision of a commonwealth government advocated by each respective author. While all the authors engage with themes similar to those explored by Rogers, it will become evident that the heterogeneous nature of the Fifth Monarchist movement results in divergent interpretations of the commonwealth. Nevertheless, as the thesis will illustrate, the concepts of republican liberty and virtue and their millenarian perspective emerged as pivotal shared elements across their respective visions.



## Chapter 2: Mary Cary

### 2.1 Introduction

The name ‘the Fifth Monarchy Men’ implies that the sect consisted of only male members. However, although men were undoubtedly the majority, there were also female Fifth Monarchists. These women assumed the role of a prophet, meaning they were held in high regard and provided with a public platform to disseminate their claims, supporting the belief that the thousand-year reign of Christ was imminent. This chapter will focus on one such female prophet, Mary Cary, who provided meticulous interpretations of the prophetic texts in Daniel and Revelation. It is vital to distinguish Cary from her contemporaries, such as Anna Trapnel, who were known for their visions.<sup>1</sup> Cary’s contribution, in contrast, rested upon her skilful exegesis of sacred texts. Cary has received some scholarly attention, but this has been limited. Such interest can be attributed, in part, to the growing field of women’s history and gender studies. Yet there is no recognition of Cary’s contribution to republican debates of the 1650s.

This chapter will offer an in-depth study of Cary’s writings, underscoring her intertwining of prophecy and events from the Civil War. She provides a narrative depicting the people and the nation’s journey towards the reclamation of liberty, shedding the yoke of the influence of the Catholic Church and the despotic rule of a tyrannical monarch. Furthermore, the chapter will illuminate Cary’s commitment to republican virtue, as she drafted a series of principles that the commonwealth should adopt, all centred around its citizens’ collective well-being and the commonwealth’s welfare. Although Cary’s writings only cover a relatively brief period from 1647 to 1653, recognising her contribution to the republican debates enriches our understanding of them.<sup>2</sup>

The chapter will begin with a concise discussion of the existing historiography relating to Cary, focusing on previously identified issues that scholars have highlighted. The section will be followed by a biography of Cary, including details about her publications. Examining Cary’s position as a female prophet will illuminate how she gained respectability in a male-dominated sphere. The main body of the chapter will be

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<sup>1</sup> According to Marcus Nevitt, Cary and Trapnel had thirteen texts published between them. This was a ‘figure virtually unmatched by any writer of the same sex, or from the same non-aristocratic social background in the period.’ Marcus Nevitt, “‘Blessed, Self-Denying, Lambe-like’? The Fifth Monarchist Women.” *Critical Survey* 11, no. 1 (1999): 83–97, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Cary had produced a text in 1645, exclusively centred on religious matters. Mary Cary, *The glorious excellencie of the spirit of adoption* (London: 1645).

dedicated to two over-arching themes. The first will focus on liberty, a principle that permeated Cary's writings. Particular attention will be directed towards revealing how Cary interpreted prophetic texts to support the Commonwealth and advocate for reform. The second section will shift towards another core republican concept, virtue. In the previous chapter, Rogers promoted the notion of having virtuous representatives in government, aligning this concept with the principles of republican virtue. Similarly, we will explore how virtue also became integral to Cary's vision for the future commonwealth. However, the chapter will reveal that Cary's commitment to virtue extended beyond the confines of those who governed. Her ideas and proposals relating to the Commonwealth and its governance will be discussed in-depth, revealing, akin to Rogers, her advocacy for a variant of Fifth Monarchist republicanism.

## 2.2 Historiography

The rise in interest in women's history and gender studies in the late twentieth century has prompted an increase in academic interest in the life and works of Cary.<sup>3</sup> Prior to this she was largely ignored. As Lorraine McNeil has highlighted, Capp's account focused on understanding the ideas of the Fifth Monarchist's male leaders. Consequently, Cary's influence on the development of the group has been downplayed.<sup>4</sup> For example, some of Cary's biblical exegesis, such as her interpretation of Daniel 7, was adopted by other Fifth Monarchists, but this has not been credited to Cary. According to Capp, John Tillinghast was the only Fifth Monarchist to provide a 'systematic study' of the prophecies. Although recognising Tillinghast's contribution to the movement, it is essential to highlight that his initial text was not published until 7 March 1654, several years after Cary's first prophetic interpretation work, printed in 1648.<sup>5</sup> According to Jane Baston, Cary's contribution to the movement was far more significant as the points raised by Cary in her works were

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<sup>3</sup> David Lowenstein, 'Scriptural Exegesis, Female Prophecy, and Radical Politics in Mary Cary,' in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 46, No. 1, The English Renaissance (Winter, 2006), 133-153; Rachel Warburton, 'Future Perfect?: Elect Nationhood and the Grammar of Desire in Mary Cary's Millennial Visions', in *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 18, No.2, (2007) 115-138; Pauline McQuade, *Catechisms and Women's Writing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Erica Longfellow, *Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jane Baston, 'History, prophecy, and interpretation: Mary Cary and Fifth Monarchism,' in *Prose Studies*, 21:3, (1998) 1-18; Lorraine McNeil, 'Mystical Experience and the Fifth Monarchy Women: Anna Trapnel, Sarah Wight, Elizabeth Avery, and Mary Cary,' (PhD diss., Newcastle University, October 2001).

<sup>4</sup> McNeil, 'Mystical Experience,' 8.

<sup>5</sup> Baston has disputed the assertions of P.G. Rogers, in *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (1966), who posited that Cary's discourse on the little horn was 'strictly orthodox, by the Fifth Monarchist canon.' Baston highlighted that at the time of Cary's publication, in 1651, regarding the identity of the little horn, 'there were very few publications at all by the so-called main Fifth Monarchist writers'. See Baston, 'History, prophecy, and interpretation: Mary Cary and Fifth Monarchism,' 1; Notably, Aspinwall also concluded that Charles Stuart was the little horn described in Daniel 7, however, his tract was not published until 1653 – See William Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application of the Seventh Chapter of Daniel*, 4.



‘instrumental in initiating the Fifth Monarchist program.’ This programme was centred on principles of political accountability, the liberty to prophesy, and a deep concern for economic matters.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.3 Biography

Very little is known about Cary besides a few personal references in her writings. In *THE RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES, AND ENGLANDS FALL FROM (THE MYSTICAL BABYLON) ROME* (1648), Cary mentioned that she began studying scripture at age fifteen in 1636. She further emphasised that she had been captivated by the books of Daniel and Revelation.<sup>7</sup> Between 1649 and 1651, Cary’s surname changed to Rande, indicating that she had married.<sup>8</sup> Her writing style and the testimony of other Fifth Monarchists suggest that she was well-educated. In an introductory letter included in Cary’s *THE LITTLE HORNS DOOME & DOWNFALL: OR A Scripture Prophetie OF King James, and King Charles* (1651), Feake described Cary as being a ‘Gentle woman’ and praised her for being able to put her thoughts ‘into form and order by her self.’<sup>9</sup>

From 1645 until 1653, Cary wrote six texts, with five specifically addressing religious and political matters arising from the Civil Wars and subsequent regicide. These tracts were published by several printers based in London. Two printers stand out due to their association with radical groups and republican authors. Giles Calvert was renowned for printing texts by the Levellers and Diggers. At the same time, Livewell Chapman, a supporter of the Fifth Monarchy movement, published numerous works by Harrington, including *Oceana* in 1656.<sup>10</sup> Cary’s final work was published on 14 November 1653, during the concluding weeks of the Nominated Assembly. *The Resurrection of the Witnesses* was a revised edition of a previous text published in 1648.<sup>11</sup> In this edition, Cary added a new address and an extensive postscript to the reader, expressing her profound concern for the nation’s well-being.

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<sup>6</sup> Baston, ‘Mary Cary and Fifth Monarchism,’ 1.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Cary, *THE RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES, AND ENGLANDS FALL FROM (THE MYSTICAL BABYLON) ROME* (1648), To the Reader.

<sup>8</sup> The identity of Cary’s husband is unknown.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Cary, *THE LITTLE HORNS Doom & Downfall OR A Scripture-Prophetie OF King James, and King Charles* (1651), ‘Introductory letter’.

<sup>10</sup> Ian Green, Kate Peters, ‘Religious Publishing in England 1640–1695’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 74.

<sup>11</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648).

## 2.4 A Female Prophet

As a female prophet, Cary described herself as a ‘weake, and unworthy instrument’, attributing her writings not to her abilities but to being an instrument of God.<sup>12</sup> In line with other female prophets like Anna Trapnel and Sarah Wright, Cary positioned herself as a divine vessel. Despite the relaxation of censorship laws during the Civil War, which resulted in increased publications by women in the 1640s and 1650s, women still faced resistance within a predominantly male-dominated sphere.<sup>13</sup> McQuade suggested that by positioning herself as an instrument, Cary was attempting to lend authority to her works to enter the realm of ‘masculine print culture.’<sup>14</sup>

It is essential, however, to highlight that Cary, unlike Trapnel and Wight, was not a visionary prophet. Instead, her interpretations relied on her meticulous study of scripture.<sup>15</sup> Cary’s scholarly engagement with scripture, as commented by McQuade, was an uncommon occurrence in ‘seventeenth-century English women’s writing’.<sup>16</sup> According to the Pauline tradition, women were forbidden from ‘teaching outside the home unless inspired by a direct revelation from God.’<sup>17</sup> If Cary had claimed to have received direct revelation from God, she would be within the bounds of Apostolic teachings.

Debra Parish has highlighted that accusations of witchcraft were levelled against other prophets, like Trapnel.<sup>18</sup> Cary’s emphasis on biblical exegesis might have functioned as a strategy to avoid the witchcraft allegations commonly faced by female prophets. For example, in 1654, following her attendance at a parliamentary inquest for fellow Fifth Monarchist Vavasour Powell, Trapnel fell into a deep trance that lasted twelve days.<sup>19</sup> During this time, she spoke about the second coming and the imminent ‘tearing down of Cromwell and his armies.’<sup>20</sup> Consequently, later that year, Trapnel was arrested and charged with seditious libel and vagrancy as she travelled to Cornwall and was

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<sup>12</sup> Cary, *LITTLE HORNS Doom*, To the Reader.

<sup>13</sup> Hilary Hinds, ‘Prophecy and Religious Polemic’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women’s Writing*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 238.

<sup>14</sup> McQuade, *Catechisms and Women’s Writing*, 162.

<sup>15</sup> Despite not receiving visions, Cary was esteemed as a prophetess among Fifth Monarchist circles. While her work was rooted in biblical exegesis, she maintained a steadfast belief that her understanding was divinely inspired.

<sup>16</sup> McQuade, *Catechisms and Women’s Writing*, 163.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 163.

<sup>18</sup> Debra Parish, ‘Anna Trapnel: Prophet or Witch?’ in *Women on the Edge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Lisa Hopkins and Aidan Norri (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 117-119.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 119.

<sup>20</sup> Parish, ‘Anna Trapnel: Prophet or Witch?’ 119.

subsequently returned to London.<sup>21</sup> At her arrest and throughout the trial, Trapnel was accused of witchcraft.<sup>22</sup>

However, this explanation would seem unlikely. The accusation of witchcraft against Trapnel came several years after Cary had begun to share her prophecies. Moreover, Cary's prophetic works were published, while Oliver Cromwell also shared his millenarian expectations, which would have afforded Cary some protection. Cary ensured to distance herself from 'visionary' prophets as she emphasised that she did not compare herself to 'Prophets or with those women in the Gospel, I say not that I have any immediate revelation... or that I have been told it by an Angel or the like.'<sup>23</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that Cary's exegesis of scripture gave her credibility in a predominantly male sphere.<sup>24</sup>

Cary's confidence in understanding and explaining the prophecies gained her respect from fellow Fifth Monarchists, such as Feake and Henry Jessey and the well-known preacher Hugh Peters. They each penned introductory letters for *THE LITTLE HORNS DOOME*. Jessey commended Cary for her clarity in explaining the prophecies alluding to the 'NEW JERUSALEM,' a subject he had contemplated for many years.

Hugh Peters praised Cary's expertise, writing that she 'hath taught her sexe that there are more ways then one to avoid idleness (the devils cushion) on which so many sit and sleep their last. They that will not use the Distaff, may improve a Pen.' From the testimonies, it was evident that Cary was held in high regard. As McNeil noted, radical sects such as the Fifth Monarchists offered women a public 'role and voice', which they were often denied in society.<sup>25</sup>

This chapter will explore Cary's interpretation of prophecy and her championing of a commonwealth government based on the principle of virtue. It begins with a discussion of how she deployed prophecy to show that the nation had regained its liberty after a lengthy period of subjection to the papacy.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 115-117.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 117. In the same year, Trapnel produced an account of her arrest and trial in *Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea* which included accusations of witchcraft which she denied.

<sup>23</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1653), 'To the Reader'.

<sup>24</sup> McQuade noted the intriguing aspect that Cary's biblical exegesis faced scrutiny from an anonymous author of *The Account Audited*. The critic contested Cary's prophetic calculations, yet despite referring to Cary as a 'female minister,' their criticism appeared to be aimed at her scholarly work rather than her gender. See McQuade, *Catechisms and Women's Writing*, 174.

<sup>25</sup> McNeil, 'Mystical Experience,' 11.

## 2.5 Prophecy

On 23 June 1647, Cary published her first piece, *A Word in Season*, which tackled religious and political issues stemming from the events of the Civil War. The first Civil War had concluded in 1646, and on 30 January 1647, Charles I, who had surrendered to the Scots, was handed over to Parliament by the Scots. Cary intended to counsel Parliament on how to establish a prosperous nation. Asserting the importance of the freedom of religious conscience, Cary began by arguing that one of the ways that a country could come to ruin was through the restrictions placed on preaching and prophesy.<sup>26</sup> In pursuit of religious conformity, in the 1630s William Laud introduced unpopular religious reforms. The strict enforcement of liturgical practices, including the introduction of the Book of Common prayer, coupled with the looming threat of punishment, resulted in the persecution of Puritans, compelling many to flee abroad. For Cary, the liberty to preach and prophesy was imperative during the last days. According to scripture, during the final days, the Spirit would be poured out ‘in abundance,’ on both ‘sons and daughters,’ to understand previously cryptic prophecies.<sup>27</sup>

According to Cary, the tradition of limiting preaching and prophesying to only those ordained as priests was the principle ‘of [the] Babylonian darknes’ of Popery as people were kept away from the truth. Aligning the established Church with Rome was neither new nor limited to millenarianism. As Coffey explained, Charles’s leaning towards Arminianism was considered to ‘represent a crypto-popery within the Church that paralleled the open popery at court.’<sup>28</sup> The revival of previously abolished religious ceremonies led to the growing perception that the Caroline regime ‘was reversing the Reformation and returning England to popery.’<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Paul Christianson also highlighted additional concerns about Arminianism. This concern stemmed from a consensus amongst Arminians to refrain from identifying the ‘papacy with the antichrist.’<sup>30</sup>

In addition to criticising Laudianism, Cary highlighted the restrictive measures imposed by Presbyterians on preaching and prophesying. Cary concluded that these limitations confirmed they were part of the antichristian empire.<sup>31</sup> Notably, during 1642-

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<sup>26</sup> Cary, *A Word in Season*, 4

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>28</sup> John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England* (London: Routledge, 2000), 125.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 129; Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1978), 134; Also see Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, 134.

<sup>31</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 139.

1646, radical Puritans perceived that the antichrist had taken on new manifestations within Protestantism, namely Presbyterianism. The interpretation primarily stemmed from the issue of persecution. Presbyterians, in their pursuit of ecclesiastical uniformity, resorted to persecution. A notable instance occurred within the Eastern Association, under the leadership of the Earl of Manchester, following their triumph at Marston Moor in 1644. While Cromwell and other Independents favoured a tolerant approach, Major-General Lawrence Crawford advocated for the continuation of persecution. Cromwell actively sought Crawford's dismissal, while the Earl of Manchester endeavoured to maintain equilibrium between Presbyterians and Independents within the ranks of 'his army'.<sup>32</sup> In response, Cromwell initiated a series of strategic moves that culminated in an accusation against Manchester, alleging he deliberately avoided securing a decisive victory over the enemy to preserve the option of a peace treaty instead of a complete surrender by the royalists.<sup>33</sup>

This association prompted Richard Overton, a General Baptist, to draw parallels between Presbyterianism and the antichristian Catholic Church. In his work, *The Araignment of Mr PERSECUTION* (1645), Overton depicted Mr Persecution as shifting from one religion to another. He was formerly known as Mr Spanish-Inquisition but adapted to the English Episcopalian practice before transforming from a Covenanter into the pious form of a Presbyterian.<sup>34</sup>

In March 1648, Cary published *The Resurrection of the Witnesses*, a work in which she crafted a narrative depicting the liberation of the nation and the people from the influence of popery and their gradual reclaiming of both spiritual and civil liberty. To substantiate her argument, Cary incorporated events from the First Civil War into the unfolding of prophecies from the book of Revelation, particularly chapter 11. She presented a timeline to persuade readers that England had commenced its path toward freedom in 1645.

The text is particularly significant as Cary prepared the basis for establishing the Commonwealth in May 1649. It demonstrated the necessity for a change in government and reform, highlighting how the influence of the Pope had become deeply entrenched within existing institutions.

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<sup>32</sup> Malcolm Wanklyn, 'Choosing Officers for the New Model Army, February to April 1645,' *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Summer 2014, Vol.92, No.370 (Summer 2014), 110.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 110.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Overton, *Araignment of Mr PERSECUTION* (1645), 1.

An intriguing aspect of Cary's text was her minimal reference to King Charles I. Her primary focus was directed toward the figure of the Pope and the power he symbolised. In a later text, Cary explicitly stated that when *Resurrection of the Witnesses* was printed, she had already interpreted Charles I as the little horn described in Daniel 7.<sup>35</sup> This interpretation was crucial because, as will be discussed shortly, it prophesied that the destruction of the little horn signified the transfer of power to the saints and the onset of the new millennium.

## **2.6 Revelation 11**

Cary presented a systematic exposition of Revelation 11:1-14. As Cary's interpretation of the pope aligned with established apocalyptic tradition, this section will briefly discuss her method of establishing a connection between the pope and the beast described in Revelation 11. The primary emphasis will centre around her construction of a chronological framework that situated England at the forefront of prophecy, with a particular focus on illustrating the loss of liberty. The section will begin with a summary of Revelation 11:1-14.

In the vision, the prophet John saw that the Gentiles would persecute the holy city for a period of forty-two months. Two witnesses, empowered by God, would prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days while possessing remarkable spiritual powers. During their testimony, the witnesses would have immense power of the spirit. They could shut the gates of heaven, prevent the rain from falling, turn water into blood and cause plagues. After their testimony, a beast from the 'bottomless pit' would emerge and kill the witnesses. Their bodies would then lie in the 'street of a great city' for three and a half days, marking a time of celebration for unbelievers.<sup>36</sup> After a period of three and half days, the witnesses would be revived and ascend to Heaven. At the same time, a great earthquake would destroy a tenth of the city, claiming seven thousand men.

## **2.7 Elect Nation**

Cary positioned England at the forefront of the prophecy to substantiate her argument that the nation had recently been liberated from a state of enslavement. The holy city mentioned in the vision was traditionally associated with Jerusalem, primarily as this was where the

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<sup>35</sup> Cary, *THE LITTLE HORNS Doom*, 'To the Reader'.

<sup>36</sup> Rev 11:7-8 (King James Version).

holy temple was built. However, Cary argued that Jerusalem could no longer be deemed 'holy' since God had withdrawn his presence from that 'special' place.<sup>37</sup>

During the Elizabethan era, the English Church, with its godly bishops, was often viewed as a stronghold against the prevailing influence of Catholicism. It gave rise to the perception that England was part of the true church. As the reign of Charles I unfolded, antagonism towards the bishops emerged, leading to a shift in perception. As Christianson highlighted, 'Laudians' began to portray Charles I as the godly prince who was leading his potentially elect nation.<sup>38</sup> However, this was soon replaced with the notion that the saints would serve as the primary instruments against the antichristian empire.<sup>39</sup> In Cary's interpretation, the vision of the holy city symbolically represented the saints, collectively referring to them as 'all citizens of the *holy City*.'<sup>40</sup> Returning to the prophecy in Revelation 11 this meant that it was the saints who would undergo a period of persecution.

To shift the focus to England, specifically the English saints, Cary clarified that while there were a 'vast number of Protestants in other nations,' such as 'France, Germany & Scotland', they were 'luke-warme.' She further elaborated that although they were 'professors' few [were] possessors of Christ,' unlike the saints in England. The quality of the saints in England made them the target of Charles I's actions. Cary explained that during the Civil War, the King aimed to root 'out of such as were called Puritans, and Independents, and Brownists.'<sup>41</sup>

Of the groups, the Puritans, being deemed 'the most precious Saints of Jesus' were the primary focus of the King and his supporters, who had 'expressed their greatest malice.'<sup>42</sup> For Cary, the godliness of the nation's saints had secured England's prominent position in the eventual destruction of the antichristian empire and the creation of a new Jerusalem. In this text, Cary refrained from explicitly determining who she considered to be saints. Notably, in *A Word in Season*, she underscored the concept that the classification of a saint cannot be rigidly confined by any particular title, be it Independent or Anabaptist.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 41.

<sup>38</sup> Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, 135.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 148.

<sup>40</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 42,

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 88; The Brownists were named after the leadership of Robert Brown (d.1633). The group were critical of localised church structure and the practice of ordination, whether carried out by bishops or presbytery. 'Brownists,' *Oxford Reference*, Accessed 17 Oct. 2023.

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095531540>.

<sup>42</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 88.

<sup>43</sup> Cary, *A Word in Season*, 11

## 2.8 The Pope & the Beast

After establishing England as the chosen nation, Cary focused on identifying the pope as the beast mentioned in Revelation 11. In doing so, Cary aligned herself with the conventional Protestant apocalyptic tradition. The link between the Pope and the antichrist was traced back to Pope Gregory I, who proclaimed that a future Pope would embody the antichrist.<sup>44</sup> Joachim of Fiore picked up this notion during the twelfth century. However, a renewed interest in Joachim's works during the sixteenth century bolstered the expectations of 'restoration and reformation' for both Catholics and Protestants. The identification of the pope as the antichrist began to be popularised following the Reformation.<sup>45</sup> The reformers initially denounced the belief in the future millennium, seeking to distance themselves from allegations of inciting rebellion.<sup>46</sup>

This was predominantly because of the events that had occurred in the town of Münster in 1534-1535. A group of Anabaptists, under the leadership of Melchior Hoffmann, besieged the town, establishing a communal society they believed would usher in the new millennium.<sup>47</sup> Despite the controversy, the Reformers departed from the Augustinian interpretation, affirming that the prophecies in both Daniel and Revelation indicated a literal period in history, with the fourth beast symbolising the papacy. This denouncement also provided a rationale for why God had seemingly permitted the Roman Church to 'persecute the truth for a thousand years.'<sup>48</sup> According to the prophecies, the Church had become tainted with false teachings, thereby demonstrating the unfolding of God's providential plan. Capp argued that adopting an apocalyptic tradition also served as a persuasive tool for the reformers, leading to the denunciation of the pope as the antichrist.<sup>49</sup>

According to Cary, the pope was depicted as the beast in the vision, symbolising the source of tyranny and oppression that had plagued the nation.<sup>50</sup> To unveil the pope's true identity, Cary compared the beast referenced in Revelation 11 with the beasts mentioned in three other chapters from the book of Revelation.

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<sup>44</sup> Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition*, 23.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> Millenarianism was condemned by the Reformers in the Augsburg Confession (1530) & the Helvetic Confession (1566)

<sup>47</sup> The primary doctrinal concern for Anabaptists revolved around infant baptism, as they maintained that only adults could profess their dedication to Christ. Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, 31.

<sup>48</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 25.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

<sup>50</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 54-58, 83-84.



Cary's analysis of the symbolic connections in Revelation highlighted the derivation of the beast's power from Satan, evident in the shared attributes between the red dragon and the beast described in Revelation 13.<sup>51</sup> Revelation 12 elaborated further on the role of the 'Dragon,' specifying that it 'gave him [the beast] his power, and seat, and great authority.' Following this event, 'all the world wondered after the Beast, and they worshipped the Dragon which gave power unto the Beast, and they worshipped the Beast.'<sup>52</sup> Subsequently, the beast was given power for forty-two months to 'make war with the Saints, and to overcome them.'<sup>53</sup>

Cary's analysis portrayed the pope as the beast, with authority derived not from God but from the devil, as confirmed in Revelation 17, verses 3-6. The vivid description in the verses presented a woman adorned in luxurious garments and holding a cup brimming with '*abominations and filthiness*.'<sup>54</sup> On her forehead was written 'MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.' This woman, seated on a scarlet-coloured beast with seven heads and ten horns, symbolised 'the *great City which reigneth over the Kings of the Earth*'.<sup>55</sup>

According to Cary, the ten crowns adorning the beast's head signified ten kings who willingly surrendered '*their power and strength unto the beast*' through a voluntary act.<sup>56</sup> The interpretation of the ten horns as ten kings or kingdoms was particularly significant to Cary's argument. She underscored the importance that when the pope acquired power from the devil, it symbolised the subjugation of 'the Emperor of *Rome*' and the ten kingdoms to the devil's authority. To be more specific, Cary contended that England, being one of the horns, 'did...willingly give up the power to him...and were subjected to the Beast.' This pivotal moment marked the amalgamation of the ten horns with the beast, intensifying its power.<sup>57</sup>

Cary forged her initial connection between the antichristian Roman empire and England by emphasising the submission of English monarchs to the pope. The submission not only resulted in their subordination but also entailed the subjugation of the entire nation. Much of Cary's prophetic interpretation has followed conventions of apocalyptic

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<sup>51</sup> The beast in Revelation 11, the red dragon from Revelation 12 and the beast from Revelation 13 shared similarities as they were described as having seven heads adorned with crowns and ten horns.

<sup>52</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 45.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 48; In the Protestant apocalyptic tradition, the seven heads symbolise the seven mountains on which the great city, identified with Rome, was built.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 54.

thought up to this point. Having established that the pope represented the beast from Revelation 11, Cary introduced an innovative interpretation by unveiling a distinctive timeline. This timeline revealed the precise period when the pope received authority from the devil, thereby shedding light on the progressive loss of liberty over time.

In Revelation 11, three periods of time were mentioned: first, that the church would be persecuted for forty-two months; second, the witnesses would prophesy for ‘a thousand two hundred and threescore days’ (1260); and third, that the witnesses would be slain and lie for three and half days. Cary proposed that the first two periods were simultaneous, while the third was intricately linked to the unfolding events of the Civil War.

Cary began by explaining the principle of interpreting prophecy, where a month was equated with thirty days, rendering the forty-two months of persecution as 1260 days. Furthermore, drawing from the teachings of the Prophet Ezekial, she suggested that a day could symbolise a year. Consequently, the prophecy indicated that the papacy would possess the authority to persecute the saints for 1260 years, commencing in 404 AD during the reign of Emperor Phocas.<sup>58</sup> This particular historical starting point marked the foundation of Cary’s argument concerning the papacy’s temporal dominion and its alleged subjugation of the saints.

However, Cary’s analysis revealed a discrepancy between the suggested endpoint, 1664, by adding 1260 years to the initial date of 404 AD. To reconcile the issue, Cary proposed that the future date of 1664 was calculated according to the ‘rule of Astronomers’, which considered one year as having ‘365 daies.’ In contrast, the ‘holy Ghost...in this prophesie, not observing that rule’ equated 360 days to a single year. As a result, the adjustment indicated that the testimony of the witnesses concluded ‘eighteen years, and almost an half, sooner,’ conveniently aligning with Cary’s preferred endpoint at the ‘beginning of the year 1645.’<sup>59</sup> This crucial adaptation facilitated Cary’s contextualisation of the prophecy within the framework of the events of the First Civil War.<sup>60</sup>

Cary’s work faced scrutiny after the anonymous author of *THE ACCOUNT AUDITED, Or the Date of the Resurrection of the Witnesses*, published on 13 April 1649, challenged her claim that the testimony of the witnesses began during the reign of Phocus. The author highlighted that Phocus’s reign started in 604 AD, meaning that the 1260-year

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 81-82.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 82.

period would conclude much later, in 1864. The author labelled this as a significant error, indicating a discrepancy of two centuries.<sup>61</sup> Cary, in response, provided a more comprehensive interpretation which significantly revealed how the pope assumed the role of the beast, emphasising the encroachment on both spiritual and civil liberties.

Cary rectified her error in the revised edition of *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES*, published in 1653. However, realising the seriousness of her mistake, Cary took the opportunity in 1651 to address the issue in the Postscript added to *MORE EXACT MAPPE*.<sup>62</sup> She acknowledged her error and apologised for relying on her memory instead of consulting historical accounts. Cary maintained that the Pope had received his ‘devillish power and seat’ in 404 AD but corrected the timing to coincide with the ‘reign of Arcadius and Honorius.’<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, she explained that this was also when Pope Innocentius was first made Bishop of Rome, becoming the first to assert ‘*the Papal power, and advanced the See of Rome above all others, and would have it to be judged by none.*’<sup>64</sup>

As she had argued in 1647, Cary asserted that it was during the ‘darknesse of Popery’ that ‘the word in the purity[...] [was] not preached, and [people] have not liberty to reade it, they continue also in a dark and miserable condition.’<sup>65</sup> The year 404 AD marked a turning point when the Catholic Church became corrupted, and the saints lost their liberties as they were ‘*troden under foot by the Popish crew.*’<sup>66</sup>

## 2.9 The Two Witnesses

During the 1260-year period of persecution the saints were not entirely powerless as Cary proposed that the two witnesses who were given ‘immense’ power of the spirit represented the broader body of the saints.<sup>67</sup> It was through Cary’s interpretation of the two witnesses that she also developed a connection with contemporary events. The identity of the witnesses was the topic of much debate, and even among the Fifth Monarchists, there was no consensus. For example, William Aspinwall claimed they were Joshua and Zerubbabel, as they represented the ‘chiefe officers of the church and commonwealth.’<sup>68</sup> Cary posited

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<sup>61</sup> The author highlighted that Cary had written ‘say historians’ rather than providing citations of the works she had or, as the anonymous author alluded had not consulted relying on ‘hearsay’ instead. Anon, *THE ACCOUNT AUDITED, Or the Date of the Resurrection of the Witnesses* (1649), 9

<sup>62</sup> Mary Cary, *A new AND MORE EXACT MAPPE OR DESCRIPTON OF New Jerusalems Glory* (1651), ‘Postscript’.

<sup>63</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1653), 46; Arcadius 395-408AD & Honorius 395–423AD.

<sup>64</sup> Cary, *MORE EXACT MAPPE*, ‘Postscript’.

<sup>65</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 22

<sup>66</sup> Cary, *MORE EXACT MAPPE*, ‘Postscript’.

<sup>67</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 57; Revelation 11:5-6 (King James Version). The verses described the power the witnesses would possess.

<sup>68</sup> William Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application*, 41.

that the witnesses symbolised all the saints throughout history rather than specific individuals. She concluded that ‘Every Saint in a sense, may be said to be a prophet.’<sup>69</sup> Cary supported her assertion with Psalm 15:14, ‘*The secret of the Lord is with him that fear him, and he will shew them His Covenant.*’<sup>70</sup> According to Cary, individuals become saints when God reveals his secrets to them, and as they become filled with the word of God, they may be considered prophets.

Additionally, during times of persecution, saints were given the spirit to prophesy because despite being ‘destitute of outward comforts and outward liberties by the enemies persecuting them,’ they possessed inner comforts as ‘the Lord will reveal his secrets to them.’<sup>71</sup> By asserting that the witnesses are all the saints that ever lived, Cary also addressed the question of how the witnesses could plausibly testify over an extended period. Interestingly, in her discussion of the witnesses, Cary also reaffirmed the connection between England and the pope through what she considered the failed Reformation.<sup>72</sup>

In her discussion of the witnesses, Cary explained the power they had was to stop ‘spiritual blessings’ from falling on their enemies.<sup>73</sup> They had the power to turn water into blood; unlike the story of Exodus, this was not the physical transformation of water into blood but meant that the ‘waters will be made useless.’ Cary was referring to the ‘waters which their enemies the Babylonians [Catholic Church] made use of, instead of the waters of the Spirit,’ namely through canons and decrees.<sup>74</sup> Referring to the Reformation, Cary claimed that the saints’ power was to turn ‘all Romish Doctrines, and Popish Canons’ into ‘blood’ which had been ‘rendered useless unto others,’ and shown to be ‘corrupt.’<sup>75</sup>

Moving away from the established apocalyptic tradition, Cary highlighted that, similarly, during the English Reformation, there had been an attempt to separate from the Catholic Church. However, the saints could not sever the connection, and England remained one of the beast’s horns. As Cary explained, during the reign of Elizabeth I, although ‘Popish Canons and Decrees [had been] rejected... and the Doctrine embraced in *England*, was purely refined from the dregs of mens inventions,’ because the established

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<sup>69</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 65.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 68.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 84-87.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 77.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 78.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 79.

Church maintained power over conscience the connection to the beast remained.<sup>76</sup> It was through the power over conscience that the Pope had been able to enslave and ‘and vassalize the Saints’.<sup>77</sup> As Cary commented, in the same way that Babylon had enslaved the Israelites in the Old Testament, this has been a ‘great bondage’ to the saints ever since.<sup>78</sup> Cary’s assessment suggested that England had not undergone any substantial reformation and had continued to be subject to the papacy’s authority. By questioning the extent of the English Reformation, Cary was then able to establish a link between the prophecy and the contemporary events of the Civil War.

In the concluding period in Revelation 11, the vision described the beast’s emergence from the bottomless pit. The beast was said to have slayed the witnesses. Their bodies lay dead for three and a half days before being filled with the spirit and rising to heaven, which was interpreted to signify the end of the persecution of the saints. According to Cary, this moment had been fulfilled through events of the Civil War, which marked the point that the beast’s authority was rejected. It was the beginning of the end of the antichristian fourth empire and releasing the saints and the nation from enslavement.

The recent war in Ireland and England fulfilled the expiration of the witness’s testimony and the rising of the beast from the bottomless pit to wage war on the saints. Cary explained that the beast had risen from the bottomless pit and slayed the two witnesses on 23 October 1641, the start of the Irish Rebellion.<sup>79</sup> Referring to the Civil War as the ‘Beasts warre,’ Cary, unsurprisingly, attributed the cause of the outbreak to the Pope as ‘what is done by any of the ten Kingdomes, that are of his hornes is his act... Whatever is done by his instigation, is done by him.’<sup>80</sup> Although Cary did not refer to Charles in the text she attributed some blame to his wife, Henrietta Maria, accusing the Queen, alongside the Bishops, of acting for the beast.<sup>81</sup>

According to the prophecy, the time of the beast would witness a period of extreme suffering for the saints. In her exposition, Cary reminded the reader that the parliamentary army had been overcome during the first few years of the war. They were,

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 86

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 95.

<sup>79</sup> News of the Irish Uprising was received by Parliament on 1 November 1641. Keith J. Lindley, ‘The Impact of the 1641 Rebellion upon England and Wales, 1641-5,’ *Irish Historical Studies* 18, no. 70 (1972), 145.

<sup>80</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 83.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 87. For discussion of opposition to Henrietta Maria see Frances E. Dolan *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Adam Morton, ‘Sanctity and Suspicion: Catholicism, Conspiracy and the Representation of Henrietta Maria of France and Catherine of Braganza, Queens of Britain’, in *Queens Consort, Cultural Transfer and European Politics, c.1500-1800* ed. Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly & Adam Morton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 172-201.

she wrote, ‘brought to such a low ebbe...as for three years and a half, they seemed to be as dead.’ This was a time of celebration for the beast and his adherents. In Oxford, there were feasts, drinking, bell ringing and all forms of merriment ‘Because the Puritans, Round-heads, and Anabaptists, Brownists, and Tub-preachers...were overcome.’<sup>82</sup> This brief period, however, was brought to a decisive end as the witnesses rose, an event Cary dated to have occurred on 5 April 1645 through the creation of the New Model Army. This was when liberty began to be restored to the people and the nation.<sup>83</sup>

## 2.10 Liberty

As with her previous prophetic calculations, Cary used specific events from the war to reinforce her argument. She linked the rise of the witnesses to the date that the army had been ‘new modelled.’ Notably, given Cary’s previous remarks about calculating prophecy, she departed from the Holy Spirit method, which considered thirty days to a month. Instead, she counted the months according to the calendar while maintaining that this approach was still scripturally sound.<sup>84</sup>

In her calculation, the witnesses were dead for three and a half days, equivalent to a period of forty-two months or 1260 days. Cary explained that assuming there were thirty-days in a month as the Irish conflict began on 23 October 1641 until 5 April 1645, this would only equate to 1152 days. Consequently, she recommended adhering to the calendar months, which conveniently concluded on 5 April 1645.<sup>85</sup> A counterargument was advanced by the author of *Account Audited*, disputing Cary’s assertions by highlighting the absence of any specific ‘march, or motion, on that day.’ Drawing on Joshua Sprigg’s *Englands Recovery* (1647), the author noted Fairfax’s absence from active engagement until 1 May 1645, as he was occupied with organisational tasks related to the formation of a new army.<sup>86</sup> In Cary’s response, included in the 1653 edition, she persisted in affirming 5 April as the commencement date of the New Model Army, substantiating her position with the assertion that Fairfax’s commission was received on 1 April and he had travelled to Windsor on April 3. To strengthen her position, Cary emphasised that, concurrent with the army’s preparations ‘soon after the 5. of April’, Cromwell’s forces initiated their march against the beast.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 95-96.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 98-101.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>86</sup> Anon, *ACCOUNT AUDITED*, 13-14.

<sup>87</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1653), 56.

Before April 5, the Parliamentary army, fighting in defence of the saints, had suffered numerous defeats. Cary contended that the transformation of the army, particularly the inclusion of ‘many precious Saints in it, in both eminent Commanders, inferiour Officers, and common Soldiers’ under the control of Thomas Fairfax, was what ultimately led to the army’s success against both king and the forces of the beast.<sup>88</sup>

There has been extensive debate surrounding the degree of transformation within the New Model Army. Mark Kishlansky argued that its establishment adhered to traditional methods and conservative principles, portraying it as an ‘amalgamation, not a fresh beginning.’<sup>89</sup> However, Ian Gentles contested Kishlansky’s view, demonstrating that the army’s formation was notably more radical than initially estimated.<sup>90</sup> Gentles highlighted the consequential impact of these changes, noting that within five months, the army decisively broke the king’s resistance at Naseby, and within two months, it seized Bristol, signalling the conclusion of the first Civil War. However, the formation of the New Model Army provided Cary with an event that could be neatly incorporated into her prophetic framework, reinforcing her argument that the restoration of liberty had begun.

According to Cary’s interpretation, the New Model Army had been filled with the ‘Spirit of life,’ and acting as instruments of God, they were victorious over their enemies. To further underscore this connection, she employed language reminiscent of Revelation 11, depicting the army as being ‘like men raised from that dead.’<sup>91</sup> Moreover, in the vision, the ascension of the witnesses to heaven was followed by an earthquake in which a tenth of the city fell. Cary pointed out that the ten horns on the beast represented ten kingdoms, and one of those kingdoms, which she identified as England, fell away. From 1645, England was no longer part of mystical Babylon (Rome). Cary reiterated that while they had been under the dominion of the Beast’s empire, with the Pope wielding power over men’s consciences, they had essentially been in bondage. ‘The Army,’ Cary emphasised, ‘stood

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<sup>88</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 99.

<sup>89</sup> Mark Kishlansky, *The Rise of the New Model Army* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 50; Kishlansky also observed that the blueprint for the New Model Army was based on the Earl of Essex’s Army, which drew its recruits for the existing armies. It was funded through the conventional scheme and overseen by Parliament’s administrative committees. Following the upheaval caused by the self-denying ordinance, the army was instituted in line with the ‘conservative tradition of parliamentary decision making.’ Ibid, 28.

<sup>90</sup> Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army in England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1994); Criticism was also directed at Kishlansky for his assertion that neither the Levellers or the Diggers contributed to the development of the army, as well as for his limited examination of Cromwell’s role in the events. See also Rachel Foxley’s, *The Levellers: Radical political thought in the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), chapter 5. For further discussion regarding the formation of the New Model Army’s - see Malcolm Wanklyn, *The Warrior Generals: Winning the British Civil Wars* (Yale University Press, 2010) and Wanklyn ‘Choosing Officers for the New Model Army, 109-125’.

<sup>91</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 99.

upon their feet, in 1645 and cast of that power that men had over their consciences, and over their persons and estates for their consciences sake.’<sup>92</sup>

Up to this point, Cary had primarily concentrated on restoring spiritual liberty, which is unsurprising given that *The Resurrection of the Witnesses* was an attack on the papacy’s influence over the nation. However, while her focus appeared to be spiritual freedom, the broader context of her work suggested a parallel with the revival of civil liberty during the events she was describing. In his analysis of the Leveller movement, Brian Manning recognised a connection between religious liberty and political freedom and that it was debatable whether the group prioritised religious liberty as a means to achieve political freedom or vice versa. Nonetheless, it was clear that the Levellers comprehended the inseparability of these two fundamental liberties.<sup>93</sup>

Cary’s writings also reveal the interdependence of these two realms of liberty. Following her depiction of the nation’s renewed religious freedom, Cary turned her attention to the Rump Parliament, appealing to them to act benevolently towards the saints regardless of their denomination. More significantly, she implored Parliament to ‘deal well with...all the Subjects of the Kingdome, and to undoe the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed goe free, and to break every yoke, and to establish just and righteous laws.’<sup>94</sup> Cary wanted the Rump Parliament to initiate reforms within the country’s institutions that would allow the people to enjoy their previously denied liberties.

Furthermore, in her address to Fairfax and the army, Cary urged them to continue to fight for Christ, emphasising the importance of prioritising the ‘publicke good more then private ends in your eye’ they should bring ‘justice and righteousness to the nation.’<sup>95</sup> Cary also acknowledged that the army was composed of ‘carnall men’ who had collectively stood against the beast through ‘over-ruling providence’.<sup>96</sup> She further recognised the contributions of those who had supported the ‘maintenance of warre’ through donating money, goods, and provisions or offering their servants, children and those individuals that had taken ‘it upon themselves to fight.’<sup>97</sup> Cary asserted that the defeat of the beast would benefit not only the saints but ‘all the Subjects of this Kingdome in generall.’<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>93</sup> Manning 1984: 81-2, See Andrew Bradstock, ‘The Levellers and Diggers,’ in *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy* ed. Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 179.

<sup>94</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), 179.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 180.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 165.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 175



Cary praised members of Parliament, who were ‘Witnesses of Jesus Christ’ for their ‘courage and consistency’ in their fight against the beast. She noted that they had been persistent in prosecuting ‘the same designes’ since 1641.<sup>99</sup> Cary believed that the Parliament’s objectives aligned with Christ’s, as they sought to free the nation from bonds of oppression. She specifically cited the prosecution of individuals like ‘Strafford and Canterbury’, as evidence of this alignment. Significantly, each man represented an infringement of liberty. Laud had been charged with treason in December 1640 and subsequently beheaded in 1645. Laud was accused of assuming ‘tyrannical powers in church and state.’ His attempt to subvert ‘true religion with popish superstition’ had resulted in the war with the Scots.<sup>100</sup> Sir Thomas Wentworth, the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Strafford, was executed for abusing civil liberties on 12 May 1641. Strafford was accused of transgressing the ‘Fundamental Laws, and Established Government of the said Realm of Ireland’ extending his authority over ‘Liberties and Lives of his Majesties Subjects of the said Realm.’<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, Strafford had attempted to bring the people of Ireland ‘under his Tyrannical Power and Will.’ By referencing these individuals, Cary underscored Christ and Parliament’s shared aims in restoring both religious and civil liberties.

In *The Resurrection of the Witnesses*, Cary demonstrated a conviction that the prophecy in Revelation 11 had been fulfilled through the success of the First Civil War. The nation and the people had been freed from enslavement to the antichristian Catholic Church and had their religious liberty restored. In addition, it can be suggested that Cary also alluded to the restoration of civil liberties. In 1651, Cary’s emphasis on restoring civil freedoms in the republican context became even more apparent as she developed a critique of monarchical government supported by her prophetic insights.

## **2.11 Anti-Monarchism**

As the preceding chapter demonstrated, John Rogers developed an argument against kingship, it was suggested that he could be considered as advocating republican exclusivism. Rogers maintained that the only legitimate form of government was a republic, mainly drawing inspiration from the framework of the Hebrew Commonwealth.

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<sup>99</sup> Cary noted that there had been some members that had ‘complied’ with the ‘adverse party’ and here were also those corrupt members that had deserted them but emphasised there were those that stuck to their ‘first principles.’ Ibid, 175.

<sup>100</sup> John Rushworth, ‘Historical Collections: The trial of William Laud,’ in *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 3, 1639-40*, (London: D Browne, 1721), 1365-1381. *British History Online*, accessed October 18, 2022, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rushworth-papers/vol3/pp1365-1381>.

<sup>101</sup> Rushworth, ‘The Speech or Declaration of John Pym,’ in *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 8, 1640-41*, (London: D Browne, 1721), 661-671. *British History Online*, accessed October 18, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rushworth-papers/vol8/pp661-671>.

Unlike Rogers and other Fifth Monarchists discussed in this thesis, Cary cannot be described as a republican exclusivist. While she firmly believed in the ultimate demise of all earthly monarchies, guided by her prophetic interpretation, Cary acknowledged a potential future role, albeit constrained, for foreign monarchs in the battle against the antichrist. As Blair Worden argued, English Republicans should not necessarily be characterised as expressing exclusivist attitudes. During the period, the core issue was not necessarily that republicans claimed that the institution of monarchy was ‘constitutionally invalid.’ Instead, their complaint centred on the belief that the monarchy had become corrupt. It was argued that this corruption originated in the medieval period when the English monarchy gradually transformed from an elective into a hereditary institution.<sup>102</sup>

Cary’s anti-monarchical argument was undoubtedly based upon the perception that the institution of the monarchy had become corrupt. However, Cary specifically attributed this corruption to the reign of Charles I, who had governed according to his own interests rather than the people’s. As she remarked, kings before Charles had sought to implement laws that were ‘for the privileges of the people, in civil and spiritual respects.’<sup>103</sup> In 1647, in *A Word in Season*, Cary’s disdain for monarchical rule was evident as she blamed the king for the sinfulness and corruption throughout the nation. She explained that society mirrored its rulers, underscoring the importance of virtuous ‘Chaire men’ sitting at the ‘stern’ in government, as it is those that sit in the position of authority and ‘act for the whole kingdom’ and ‘what is done by you is done by them.’<sup>104</sup> Significantly, Cary’s text did not contain any suggestion that she believed that the institution of monarchy was coming to an end.

In *Resurrection of the Witnesses* (1648), there was some indication that Cary believed that God had turned away from kings. Quoting Psalm 107:40-42, Cary wrote:

He poureth contempt upon Princes, causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way; yet hee setteth the poor on high from affliction and maketh him families like a flock. The righteous shall see it and rejoyce, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.<sup>105</sup>

The Wilderness mentioned in the passage symbolised a period of trial and tribulation. In the Exodus story, the Israelites travelled through the wilderness to reach the promised land. However, Moses failed to follow God’s instructions and was forbidden from entering the

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<sup>102</sup> Worden, ‘English Republicanism,’ 447.

<sup>103</sup> Cary, *THE LITTLE HORNS Doom*, 11.

<sup>104</sup> Cary, *A Word in Season*, np.

<sup>105</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1648), ‘To the Reader’.

promised land for his punishment. In the psalm the princes had failed to follow God's commands and became corrupt. The pouring of contempt signified that they, as Moses had, would also not reach the land of the covenant. This indicated that earthly monarchy would not exist in the new millennium. In reference to contemporary times, Cary added that God has begun 'to pour contempt upon Babylonish Princes, viz. Bishops and other Babylonian Factours.'<sup>106</sup>

Cary's approach toward the king had been rather pragmatic. This changed with the publication of *THE LITTLE HORNS Doom & Downfall: OR A Scripture-Prophecie OF King James and King Charles, and of this present Parliament unfolded* on 17 April 1651. In this short tract, Cary identified Charles I to be the little horn prophesied in Daniel 7. It was her deductions that Feake, in his introductory letter accompanying Cary's text, described as both 'new and singular.'<sup>107</sup> Charles's tyrannical actions against his people eventually brought God's wrath, leading to the king's subsequent demise. According to her interpretation of the prophecy, the regicide facilitated a transfer of the power to govern to the saints, thereby justifying the creation of a commonwealth. By examining Cary's analysis of Charles's actions, we can see that besides spiritual liberty, she considered the regicide to have restored civil liberties and the commonwealth as a means to protect those freedoms.

Cary's interpretation of Charles was not made public until 1651, a considerable time after the regicide. She explained that she had delayed publication as she believed that people would struggle to accept the prophecy.<sup>108</sup> As the prophecy had now been fulfilled, it would be easier for people to understand and, more importantly, to accept that the regicide was an act of providentialism. Cary also claimed that around seven years before the regicide, 'when the late King was in his height, I declared my confidence, that the Parliament should prevaile over him, and at last destroy him.'<sup>109</sup> It could be argued that her decision to publish the text in 1651 was influenced by the ongoing scrutiny of the Rump's authority. By making her prophetic interpretation public, Cary aimed to bolster the legitimacy of Parliament and defend the establishment of the new Commonwealth. In Cary's view, the Commonwealth was able to safeguard liberty.

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 'To the Reader'.

<sup>107</sup> Cary, *LITTLE HORNS Doom*, 'To the Reader'; Aspinwall echoed Cary's interpretation in *An Explication and Application of the Seventh Chapter of Daniel*, published on 30 November 1653. As chapter one demonstrated Rogers, writing several years after Cary, argued that little horn represented all English monarchs since William the Conqueror up until Charles I.

<sup>108</sup> Cary, *LITTLE HORNS Doom*, 'To the Reader'.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 'To the Reader', 46.

The question of legitimacy was levelled at each regime that existed during the 1650s. The Rump Parliament was criticised following Pride's Purge on 6 December 1648, in which the army had forcibly removed MPs based on guidelines set.<sup>110</sup> By showing that the regicide was an act of God, Cary provided the ultimate justification for the creation of the commonwealth. In addition, there remained continued support for the institution of the monarchy, as Royalists condemned the regicide as an illegal act.<sup>111</sup> In 1650, the late king's son allied himself with the Scottish Covenanters. On 1 January 1651, he was crowned King of the Scots.<sup>112</sup>

In her work *A Resurrection of The Witnesses* (1648), Cary presented the onset of the Civil War as an act of the beast, establishing a connection between the Pope and England, with the nation being identified as one of the horns of the beast. Notably, no direct reference was made to Charles I. However, in *THE LITTLE HORNS Doom*, she explicitly established a connection between Charles I and the beast. Cary placed significant emphasis on the familial connection between the late king and the Pope, asserting that Charles had been a devoted son to his 'holy Father, the Pope.'<sup>113</sup> Given the hereditary nature of monarchy, this affiliation was likely to extend to the late king's son, implying that if the monarchy were restored, the nation would once again become part of the antichristian empire.

## 2.12 Daniel 7

In the debates concerning monarchical governance, the Book of Daniel, especially chapter 7, holds particular significance. As highlighted in the preceding chapter, Rogers, writing several years after Cary, identified the little horn as William the Conqueror and all subsequent monarchs from that point. Conversely, according to Cary's interpretation of the chapter, the little horn symbolised one king, Charles I. These divergent interpretations illustrate the range of perspectives among the Fifth Monarchists regarding prophetic matters.

Cary acknowledged that the four monarchies represented Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. In her previous work, *The Resurrection of the Witnesses*, Cary had already

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<sup>110</sup> Blair Worden, *The English Civil Wars 1640-1660* (London; Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009), 99; The MPs that were excluded had either refused to declare the Scottish invaders as enemies and traitors in August or had voted in favour of the king's latest answer to negotiations.

<sup>111</sup> The legality of the regicide was also questioned by the Presbyterian faction in government.

<sup>112</sup> The future Charles II wanted support from the Scots to be able to mount an attack on English forces to regain the throne. To offer their support, the Scottish government influenced by the Scottish Kirk insisted that Charles Presbyterianism would be adopted throughout the land.

<sup>113</sup> Cary, *LITTLE HORNS Doom*, 41.

illustrated that the Roman empire had been divided into ten kingdoms, and the ten kings were subject to the 'Roman Beast' who was at first 'Emperiall and afterward Papal'.<sup>114</sup> Cary did not list the ten nations, but she specifically identified England as one of the kingdoms, alongside France, Scotland, Spain, Ireland and Denmark.<sup>115</sup> Her intention in the text was to address the lack of coherence surrounding the identity of the little horn.<sup>116</sup>

According to Cary, the passage describing the pulling from the roots of the three kings by another king could only represent Charles, 'the late King that reigned over *England, Scotland, and Ireland.*' Charles, she wrote, had taken dominion over the three fallen monarchies of '*Elizabeth, Hugh Baron of Dungannon and Earle of Tir-Oen and James of Scotland.*'<sup>117</sup> Cary claimed no other king could be said to have risen to power over three separate nations as Charles I had. In Cary's description of Charles's reign, she demonstrated that the nation had begun to regain its liberty following a period of enslavement.

In verse 25, the reign of the little horn was described as a period of extreme persecution. The horn would 'speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the Saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws.' Cary began by highlighting that it was not just the saints that Charles had waged war against. As she wrote, he had threatened the 'ruine and destruction of all Puritans' and 'Roundheads as hee termed the saints of God.'<sup>118</sup> It had been reported that Charles had declared that 'hee would not leave until hee had no more Puritans in England.'<sup>119</sup> Charles's encroachment on spiritual liberty revealed him to be the little horn as, in the same manner as the pope, he exercised 'Lord-ship over the consciences of Saints,' an abusive power he shared with the clergy and Prelates.<sup>120</sup> Those in power, Cary wrote, could 'exercise any unwarrantable power over the consciences' through prescribing the method in which God should be worshipped, which led to the enslavement of the saints.<sup>121</sup> Cary highlighted the changes in

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>116</sup> Michael Winship commented that Roger Williams, a Puritan leader from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, had described Charles I as one of the horns from Revelation. See Michael Winship, *Godly Republicanism Puritans, Pilgrims, and a City on a Hill* (2012), 209; It was recorded that Roger Williams had written a treatise deemed to include offensive comments relating to Charles I. However, the manuscript has not survived. See *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, ed. G.W. LaFantasie, (Hanover: Brown University Press, 1988). Vol. I: 1629–1653, 16; Williams did correspond with John Winthrop about the matter but there was no mention that Williams had said that Charles was one of the horns. See John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. James Savage (1825), Volume 1, 122.

<sup>117</sup> Cary, *LITTLE HORNS Doom*, 6

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 7.

the ‘laws & ordinances of God’ that had been allowed by Charles, specifically mentioning the reintroduction of the *Book of Sports* in 1633.<sup>122</sup> As Cary asserted, the king had actively ‘constrained the people of the Kingdome to a prophane & loose life’ as he had required ‘them to practice prophane and wicked sports upon that day, which was appointed for a holy worshipping of God.’ In addition, Cary also accused Charles of not only dishonouring God but also causing people to perish ‘for want of knowledge’ because they had not ‘attended upon the Ordinances of God’, meaning to worship on a Sunday. Though given her position on compulsion, Cary expressed this as ‘poor soules needed rather to have been encouraged’ than forced to worship.<sup>123</sup>

The challenges faced during this period were not confined to the loss of religious freedom but were also connected to the erosion of civil liberties. During Charles’s reign, many people had been physically persecuted, banished and imprisoned because they had resisted changes in the laws enacted. Unlike previous monarchs, Charles endeavoured to refrain from enacting laws designed for ‘the privileges of the people, in civil and spiritual respects.’ Instead, Charles had ‘imposed lawes destructive to the peoples freedom and liberty,’ and had ‘ruled all by his own will, and made the people slaves thereunto.’<sup>124</sup>

Furthermore, Cary emphasised that it can be said ‘that no King, Prince or Potentate’ had ever waged physical war against the saints as Charles had.<sup>125</sup> As the little horn was prophesied, Charles was allowed to prevail against the saints and ‘many faithfull...lost their lives in that war.’<sup>126</sup> The late king had abused both religious and civil liberties. The fulfilment of the prophecy in Daniel 7 meant that God’s judgement was poured out on the little horn. Through God’s providence, Charles I was brought to justice and as the beast was slain and destroyed, so was the king.<sup>127</sup> The people had been freed from their oppressors’ ‘tyranny, fury, and cruelty’.<sup>128</sup>

Cary provided a prophetic argument to justify the creation of the Commonwealth. Returning to Daniel 7, following God’s judgement, dominion was given to the saints to advance what Cary believed was God’s design. Part of those reforms was the removal of

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<sup>122</sup> James I’s *Book of Sports* allowed for ‘harmless Recreation’ on Sundays after church’, provoking criticism from radical Puritans and moderates alike. Charles I later supported a 1624 bill aiming to reform abuses on the Lord’s Day, yet the ambiguity of the law, as noted by Alistair Dougall, precludes labelling it as Sabbatarian. Alistair Dougall, *The Devil’s Book* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 102-103.

<sup>123</sup> Cary, *LITTLE HORNS Doom*, 9.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 12-13.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

all instruments that had supported monarchical rule, such as the taking away of his courts, army, and estates. However, Cary added that this would ‘not be done by them in a short time’ but by degrees. Monarchical governance had ended in England, and Cary was confident that no earthly king would ever rule over the nation again. In 1653, in the revised edition of *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES*, Cary boldly wrote that the ‘Pope and Popish Kings, Princes and Bishops, and Charles Stuart [was] the last of that race in England’ as the nation had since been ‘delivered.’<sup>129</sup> According to Cary’s perspective, the only viable option to safeguard liberty was a self-governing commonwealth comprised of the saints.

Though Cary was clear about her position on English kings, her opinion on monarchical rule is somewhat complicated by her interpretation of the book of Revelation, which implied that in the creation of Christ’s empire, there was a place for kings and queens, albeit as servants themselves. The *Little Horns Doom* was published alongside *A new AND MORE EXACT MAPPE OR DESCRIPTION OF New Jerusalems Glory* and presented Cary’s vision of the millennium reign of Christ, which she anticipated to commence on or around 1701. Within the text, Cary revisited the topic of the monarchy.

In *More Exact Mappe*, Cary continued the narrative from the point where the preceding text concluded, documenting the king’s execution and the subsequent transfer of power to the saints. Cary reiterated that the king had been brought to justice and power had rightfully been transferred to parliament, resulting in the creation of the Commonwealth. Cary highlighted that this would be replicated across all kingdoms and dominions at some point in time.<sup>130</sup> Reminding the reader that, as in the Old Testament, the Jews were given Canaan. However, this will be ‘a shadow of what shall come to passe in the latter daies’ as the saints will inherit the earth.<sup>131</sup>

Cary claimed that the beginning of the preparation for Christ’s kingdom would cause ‘the fury, and madnesse of the Kings of the earth.’ Those kings, as written in Psalm 2, would ‘set their whole strength, consultations and counsels against’ the creation of Christ’s kingdom.<sup>132</sup> As Cary exclaimed, ‘we see now how the King of Scots,’ meaning Charles II, ‘is making war with the Lamb, and how the Lambe is overcoming him.’<sup>133</sup> The kings will be in part overcome by ‘the Armies of his Saints’ but also through the spirit. In contrast to

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<sup>129</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1653), 134.

<sup>130</sup> Cary, *MORE EXACT MAPPE*, 52.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

Charles I, these monarchs, once converted, may not face destruction, as their transformation and the subsequent conversion of their nations would bolster the strength of the army of the saints. This would lead to Rome's fall and the start of the millennium.<sup>134</sup>

In Cary's explanation, the role of monarchs would be transformed. 'Some of their Kings, and Queens, and the greatest among them,' Cary wrote, 'shall come and see the glory of the Lord, and become his servants and be supports under him to his people: Kings shall be nursing fathers and Queens their nursing mothers.'<sup>135</sup> The rulers that submit to Christ would be transformed from their previously corrupt and self-serving ways, and they would serve and honour God. Conversely, those that refused to submit to Christ's authority and 'cast not their Crownes at his feet' would be broken to 'pieces like a potters vessell.'<sup>136</sup> The rule of corrupt monarchs had already reached its conclusion in England, and Cary estimated that this would extend to encompass the entire world.

Despite the prophecy assigning a role for foreign rulers, Cary's disdain for monarchy was unwavering. In 1653, in a warning to foreign princes against going to war with England, Cary set out what earthly kings had become, and her description underscored her belief that monarchy posed a threat to civil liberties. She wrote that they thought of themselves as, 'born to be obeyed, and served by all' and that they had made:

it their study, and their endeavour to keep multitudes of people in Servitude, and slavery to them, and to keep up their own greatness, and dignity, and they cannot endure having any Lord over them, but do cast off all reigns from off their necks, and for bonds, they will know none, they will be answerable to none from what they do.<sup>137</sup>

It was evident that Cary believed monarchical rule was a corrupt political institution. Rulers were driven by their own desires and enslaved the people as they depended on the monarch. Her firm belief was that only foreign monarchies purged of their corrupt nature through divine intervention would have any form of potential role in the future millennium. In the specific context of England, the tyrannical king had been deposed, restoring liberty to the people and the nation and the freedom to live under a republican form of government which would last until the start of the new millennium.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>137</sup> Cary, *RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES* (1653), 141.



## 2.13 Timeline for the Millennium

In the *Exact Mappe*, Cary provided a detailed exposition to justify her calculation that the thousand-year reign would begin on or around 1701.<sup>138</sup> According to her interpretation, this implied that the period of the English godly commonwealth, established following the downfall of the little horn in 1649, would endure until at least 1701.

Cary's calculation was based on the rather cryptic vision recorded in Daniel 12, alluding to the new millennium's date. In the chapter, Daniel saw two men standing on opposite sides of a riverbank. A third man was dressed in white linen and raised above the river. One of the men asked the man in linen, 'how long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?' The man raised both hands to heaven, saying, 'it will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.'<sup>139</sup> Daniel, not understanding, asked 'what will the outcome of all this be?' He was told that 'from the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.'<sup>140</sup> The first period discussed specifying 'a time, times and a half' Cary claimed referred to the period of persecution discussed in Revelation 11 and had already ended in 1645 with the rise of the New Model Army.

The second period related to the conversion of the Jews began from the time that 'daily sacrifice' was taken away and a period of 1290 days, meaning years, had transpired. According to Cary, the end of sacrifice occurred during the reign of Julian the Apostate. Although Julian had initially professed himself to be a Christian when he became emperor, Cary wrote, 'he most wretchedly turned Pagan.' To vex Christians further, Julian commanded that the Jews were to sacrifice again. However, as the temple had been destroyed, Julian paid for it to be rebuilt. When work began, a massive earthquake destroyed the foundations, and the Jews no longer attempted to sacrifice. Cary dated this to 366 AD, adding 1290 days. As one day represents one year, the Jewish conversion would occur in 1656.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Goodwin believed that the Jewish conversion would occur in 1656, the Pope would be defeated in 1666 and the millennium would occur at some point between 1690-1700. Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861-66), 319-323.

<sup>139</sup> Dan 12:7 (King James Version).

<sup>140</sup> Cary, *MORE EXACT MAPPE*, 199.

<sup>141</sup> In the text Cary stated that the Jews will become their own nation and return to Israel – there is no indication that she was arguing for a readmission of Jews following their expulsion in 1290 under Edward I.

At the time of Cary's publication in 1651, there were significant debates about the readmission of the Jews.<sup>142</sup> Millenarians, such as the Fifth Monarchists, believed that the conversion of the Jews would herald the thousand-year rule of Christ. As Coffey observed, this 'Judeocentric millenarianism' gave rise to a newfound 'openness to the Jews'.<sup>143</sup> This atmosphere of openness prompted Manasseh ben Israel, a rabbi in Amsterdam, to petition Cromwell for readmission in 1655. However, opposition from merchants concerned about trade and conservative church members led Cromwell to decide against it.<sup>144</sup>

Nonetheless, in 1656, Cromwell received a petition from 'London's secret Jewish community,' requesting to establish a Jewish cemetery. Cromwell consented, and this led to what Coffey described as the 'informal readmission of Jews' as they were to settle and worship in private.<sup>145</sup> According to Cary's account, however, even after the conversion of the Jews, there remained an implicit division between the Jews and Gentiles. Cary presumed the Jews would form their own nation and return to Israel. Notably, there was no mention in any of Cary's works of the possibility of Jews returning to England.<sup>146</sup>

The final period, in Daniel 12, determined when the millennium would begin and was detailed in verse 12, which reads, 'Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.' Returning to the date that the practice of sacrifice had ended in 366 AD, Cary added 1335 years and estimated that the millennium would begin on or around 1701. The final part of the chapter will discuss Cary's expectations for the new government that will be in place until the new millennium. As we shall see, Cary's vision for a godly commonwealth was underpinned by virtue and the separation between church and state power.

## 2.14 Separation between the Church and State

The Fifth Monarchists and Cary advocated for a clear distinction between the State and Church. Cary posited that the civil magistrate should limit their jurisdiction solely to civil affairs. As previously discussed, one of the factors that revealed Charles I as the little horn

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<sup>142</sup> For example: Hugh Peter in 1647, in *Word for the Army and Two Words for the Kingdom*, proposed that Jews be allowed to 'trade and live with us', xix. In January 1649, Johanna Cartwright & Ebenezer Cartwright petitioned Fairfax to request readmission of the Jews. However, the petition was overshadowed the regicide that happened shortly after. *The petition of the Jewes for the repealing of the Act of Parliament for their banishment out of England*. See Lucien Wolf, 'Introduction', in Manasseh ben Israel, *Manasseh Ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell: Being a Reprint of the Pamphlets Published by Menessah Ben Israel to Promote the Re-Admission of the Jews to England 1649-1656*, ed. Lucien Wolf (London: Macmillan & Co, 1901), xix, xx; John Coffey *Persecution and Toleration*, 155.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, 156.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 156.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, 156.

<sup>146</sup> Cary, *MORE EXACT MAPPE*, 160-162.

was his intrusion into ecclesiastical affairs. In 1647, Cary criticised the king because only Christ should rule over his people spiritually. No other ruler, she wrote, should ‘encroach not in the least degree upon his prerogatives, who as a King [Christ] must only reign in the consciences of his people, and govern them by his own lawes: and therefore make you no Laws for the consciences of his people, nor suffer any to do it by any authority derived from you’.<sup>147</sup> Even godly magistrates could only offer advice but ‘upon no Terms impose their counsel as a Law upon conscience,’ as stated in Romans 14:3.<sup>148</sup>

Establishing a separation between civic and spiritual realms was deemed necessary due to the inherent corruption associated with wielding power. Just as the king had misused his power, civil magistrates were just as susceptible to abuse their powers. To support her argument, Cary directed her attention to those who favoured a National Church because they believed it would safeguard against ‘erroneous preaching’.<sup>149</sup> Cary responded by reminding the reader that the ‘weapons of our warfare’ the saints possessed were ‘not carnal,’ as in a physical weapon, but ‘might’ as in the power of the Gospel. She raised the question that ‘if it were required that the Civill Magistrate by any power or force, besides that which the Gospel allows of, should go about to suppress’ erroneous preaching ‘then might they suppress truths instead of error.’<sup>150</sup> Highlighting the fallible nature of men, Cary wrote, that ‘Civil Magistrates being but men, may judge a truth to be an error through their imperfection in knowledge, and so commend error instead of truth, and condemn truth instead of error.’<sup>151</sup> Ultimately, it was not the role of a civil magistrate to intervene, as God would ultimately deal with false preachers. In 1653, Cary took the opportunity to suggest further reforms that she believed would not only ensure freedom of conscience but strengthen the commonwealth for the benefit of the populace.

## 2.15 Virtue

Most Fifth Monarchists assumed that the Rump Parliament would implement religious and civil reforms needed to reform the nation. However, over time, the Rump had failed to make any progress, and the Fifth Monarchists became increasingly frustrated. As already shown, the dissolution allowed the Fifth Monarchists, such as Rogers, to offer their thoughts on establishing a commonwealth. On 4 July 1653, the Rump was replaced by the Nominated Assembly. Three days later, Cary's penultimate tract, *TWELVE HUMBLE*

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<sup>147</sup> Cary, *A Word in Season*, 3.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

*PROPOSALS To the Supreme Governours of the three Nations, now assembled at Westminster*, was published.<sup>152</sup> Cary put forth several practical solutions to reform the commonwealth in her text. These proposals reveal a commitment to virtue, in the republican sense of the word, as Cary championed putting the good of the people and the state above one's own private interests.

While the concept of virtue has long been associated with republicanism, determining its meaning has proved problematic.<sup>153</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, virtue in the ancient world had been associated with 'prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice.' Through the spread of Christianity, it came to encompass charity, love, faith and hope.<sup>154</sup> At its most basic, the definition of 'republican virtue is to say that it involved putting the public good, or the interests of the state, above one's own private interests.'<sup>155</sup>

During the English republican debates of the 1650s, two perspectives emerged regarding the most effective means of promoting the public interest. The first, demonstrated by Harrington, highlighted the fallible nature of human beings. He suggested a range of measures, including the implementation of the rule of law and mechanisms such as rotation in government, to either promote public displays of virtue or restrain self-interested behaviour.<sup>156</sup>

The second perspective was to emphasise virtue as a means to 'curb the worst effects of self-interested behaviour' and the corruptive nature of power.<sup>157</sup> This meant that the government should be restricted to those who exhibit virtue. This was championed by republicans such as Milton, who argued for an aristocratic government of virtuous men.<sup>158</sup> As shown in the preceding chapter, this viewpoint was shared by Rogers, who emphasised the need for 'God fearing...worthy men'.<sup>159</sup> Cary also echoed this sentiment in that only virtuous rulers could protect the interests of the people and the commonwealth.

In *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, Cary began by contrasting the Rump Parliament with the newly established Nominated Assembly to show the importance of virtue. Showing her initial support of the Rump, Cary praised God for laying 'aside the late

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<sup>152</sup> Mary Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS To the Supreme Governours of the three Nations, now assembled at Westminster* (London: 1653).

<sup>153</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 11.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, 12

<sup>158</sup> Milton, *The Readie and Easie Way*, 44.

<sup>159</sup> Rogers, *A few Proposals*, np.

Tyrannical King that reigned over them' and for the transfer of government 'into the hand of Parliament,' namely the Rump.<sup>160</sup> The change in government from monarchy to commonwealth had given 'free liberty to the people of God' and made possible the pursuit of what was in the state's best interests. However, Cary emphasised that the government had not introduced 'reformation as was expected.' Cary explained that the Rump Parliament was a 'mixed Parliament', meaning that it consisted of a mix of good and bad men in positions of authority and had become corrupt. Cary was not alone in her opinion of the Rump. Cromwell and other Army Officers believed that the Rump Parliament had become corrupted, seemingly confirmed by the Rump's reluctance to disband.<sup>161</sup>

Cary presented a damning assessment, asserting that the mix had stalled the process of change. Directly addressing the Nominated Assembly, she warned that 'the tedious delays of your predecessors in authority made the Commonwealth sick and weary.' Cary criticised the Rump for their lack of diligence and work ethic, highlighting their failure to address pressing issues that greatly concerned the people, consequently leading to unrest and threatening the peace and security of the Commonwealth. In her text, she pointed out that the members of the Rump spent 'but sixteen hours in a week, for the dispatching of those great and weighty things which God called for at their hands.'<sup>162</sup> To settle the complaint, they should have been sitting for sixteen hours a day instead of four over four days to consider legislation, such as 'for the relief of the poor.' Instead, these matters were set aside for several months or even a year, leading to more problems.

According to Cary's estimation, the Rump had been self-serving and aimed to consolidate its power. It lacked the virtue to act in the best interests of the commonwealth, which led to its forced dissolution. It was through God's providence that the Nominated Assembly was created. The Nominated Assembly, Cary wrote, brought together 'a company of men, of whom it is to be hoped, that every individual member of them have their hearts upright with God.' However, she reemphasised that as 'Supreme Governours', they should remember that their 'Rule over men must be just, Ruling in the fear of God.' Cary reminded the members of the Nominated Assembly that they should not act like kings who had focused on securing 'great estates for [their] posterity, or to gain great estates for yourselves.'<sup>163</sup> Instead, they should 'lay aside all your own interests and outward advantages' and trust in Christ, who would provide for them. Though Cary's thoughts on

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<sup>160</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 1.

<sup>161</sup> Worden, *The Rump Parliament*, 317-342.

<sup>162</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 3.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

the government were expressed in religious language, her desire for the well-being of the Commonwealth is clear.

## 2.16 Religious Reforms

Cary's initial proposal revolved around religious reforms. Despite advocating for a division between church and state, Cary called for the Nominated Assembly to ensure the propagation of the Gospel. As Blair Worden has commented, this emphasis on spreading God's word had 'long been central to the Puritan movement.'<sup>164</sup> In 1650, the Rump Parliament enacted several measures pertaining to Gospel propagation. Notably, in February and March 1650, two specific acts were passed. The first aimed at the 'propagation and preaching of the Gospel in Wales, and for redress of some grievances,' while the second was for the propagation of the Gospel in the Four Northern Counties.<sup>165</sup> However, as time passed, the primary purpose shifted from spreading the word of God to strengthening the established ministry. The initiative for propagating the Gospel in Wales was revoked upon the expiration of its initial term.<sup>166</sup>

In her proposal, Cary explained that she was writing to the members of the House not as magistrates but as fellow Christians. She argued that it was 'the duty of every-such soul as is indeed not onely a Professor, but a Possessor of Christ, to do all that in him lies in his particular place and Station to propagate the Gospel.'<sup>167</sup> To further her point, Cary highlighted that King David had been both 'magistrate and a saint,' and yet he had continued to write about the truth of God.<sup>168</sup> Cary was evoking the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, envisioning a godly magistrate responsible for earthly affairs like upholding order and justice yet simultaneously safeguarding the Christian faith. However, this approach excluded the magistrate's involvement in the spiritual realm of faith and

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<sup>164</sup> Worden, *The Rump Parliament*, 234

<sup>165</sup> 'February 1650: An Act for the better Propagation and Preaching of the Gospel in Wales, and redress of some Grievances.,' in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 342-348. *British History Online*, accessed October 23, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp342-348>; 1 march 1649/50, 'Act, to continue for three years from March 1, 1649/50, for the propagation of the Gospel in the Four Northern Counties'. [C.J., vi., 374.] & 29 March, 1650, Act for the more frequent preaching of the Gospel and better maintenance of Ministers in the City of Bristol. [C.J., vi., 388.]; 11 April 1650, 'Act continuing till 1st April, 1653, the Act for the better propagating of the Gospel in the Four Northern Counties.' [C.J., vi., 396.]. See - 'Table of acts: 1650,' in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), lxxvi-lxxxii. *British History Online*, accessed October 23, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/lxxvi-lxxxii>.

<sup>166</sup> Worden, *The Rump Parliament*, 121; Harrison played a pivotal role in pushing for the propagation of the gospel in 1656.

<sup>167</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 4.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

conscience.<sup>169</sup> The spread of the Gospel was vital to the overcoming of the kings, which would lead to the eventual conversion of the Jews and Gentiles.<sup>170</sup>

In addition to ensuring the propagation of the Gospel, Cary proposed that tithes should be abolished. Most Fifth Monarchists championed the abolition of tithes, but this was not uncommon. As pointed out by Barry Reay, the outbreak of the Civil War brought with it ‘widespread resistance to tithes’ from ordinary people.<sup>171</sup> Groups such as the Diggers and Levellers also called for abolition as tithes were viewed as a form of oppression, a view also voiced by the Fifth Monarchists.<sup>172</sup> However, it is worth noting that tithes were far from abolished; the House ratified them in April 1652.<sup>173</sup> Reay observed that the anti-tithe petitioning peaked in 1653, which would place Cary’s text in the midst of these spirited debates. There was a resurgence of anti-tithe agitation in 1659.<sup>174</sup>

In alignment with this sentiment, Cary denounced tithes as a ‘great oppression not onely to the estates, but to the consciences of many good people.’<sup>175</sup> She argued that tithes perpetuated the presence of preachers who lacked any true ‘acquaintance with Jesus Christ, and know onely how to fleece...the Sheep of Christ.’<sup>176</sup> Moreover, these so-called preachers should be given no ‘encouragement’ from the state and directed to pursue other vocations.

However, Cary recognised that there was cost involved in making sure that the gospel was shared. She, therefore, included practical advice about supplying and maintaining preachers instead of relying on tithes that placed a strain on the people. She recommended that the universities should also be ‘new modelled’ as had happened with the army. She stipulated first that universities supply and support those that wish to ‘preach the Gospel, but have no outward estates’. Any estates that have been donated for ‘supposed pious uses’ are to be entirely used for that purpose. Therefore, those estates would only support preachers or ‘godly scholars as are to be brought up at the universities (and their godly scholars)’, as long as they did not have their own estates.

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<sup>169</sup> James M. Estes, ‘The role of godly magistrates in the church: Melancthon as Luther’s Interpreter and Collaborator,’ *Church History*, Sep., 1998, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Sep., 1998), 467.

<sup>170</sup> As Goodwin had, Cary also estimated the conversion to take place around 1656. Although she was unsure what ‘Glorious’ event would lead to this event. Mary Cary, *MORE EXACT MAPPE*, 204-207.

<sup>171</sup> Barry Reay, ‘Quaker Opposition to Tithes 1652-1660,’ *Past & Present*, no. 86 (1980), 98.

<sup>172</sup> John Rees, *The Leveller Revolution: radical political organisation in England, 1640-1650* (London: Verso, 2016), 165-166.

<sup>173</sup> Worden, *The Rump Parliament*, 121

<sup>174</sup> Reay, ‘Quaker Opposition to Tithes,’ 99.

<sup>175</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 5.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

This did not mean that only people who lacked financial independence could attend university. As Cary explained, those parents ‘that desire to put their children to the universities, to study any of the liberal Sciences, do always do it at their own proper charge.’<sup>177</sup> In addition to the funds from the universities’ estates, Cary also suggested that financial support can be given from ‘publick treasure for the publick benefit of the Nation.’<sup>178</sup> Cary’s practical solution ensured that the oppressive strain of tithes could be removed from the people.

## 2.17 Republican Virtue

Cary also contemplated enhancing the public treasury, considering several possible measures for its improvement. Cary’s workable practices offer further insight into her commitment to the importance of virtue. Significantly, Cary’s proposals reveal the essence of virtue in the republican context, as it is evident that the measures would benefit the populace and the welfare of the Commonwealth.

The first recommendation was to overhaul the postal system. Cary believed that her suggestion would not only create employment for those who were out of work but also produce an increase in profits, which would add to the public treasury.<sup>179</sup> In 1635, Charles I passed a proclamation establishing the public postal system. Letters were distributed from one post to another by men travelling by horse or on foot. In London, an office had been established to coordinate ‘mails on six main post roads and charged 2d. per letter.’<sup>180</sup> In addition, to curb the operation of unofficial carriers, the postal system was declared to be a monopoly.<sup>181</sup> However, despite the threat of punishment, the official carriers continued reducing the potential profits collected by the Treasury.

Competition between ‘Parliamentary and Royalist mail services had intensified during the Civil War period.’<sup>182</sup> On 21 March 1649, it was decided that the Offices of Postmaster should be under parliamentary control.<sup>183</sup> It was recommended that the Council

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<sup>177</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 7.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>179</sup> Charles Stuart, *Stuart royal proclamations* (Vol.2), ed. J. F. Larkin (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Oxford Scholarly Editions Online (2013). doi:10.1093/actrade/9780198224662.book.1

<sup>180</sup> Susan E. Whyman, ‘Sending the Letter: The Post Office and the Politics of the Mail’, in *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers 1660-1800*, ed. Susan Whyman (Oxford University Press, 2009), 48.

<sup>181</sup> Duncan Campbell-Smith, *Masters of the Post: The Authorized History of the Royal Mail* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 28.

<sup>182</sup> Whyman, ‘Sending the Letter’, 48

<sup>183</sup> ‘September 1654: An Ordinance touching the Office of Postage of Letters, Inland and Foreign,’ *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 1007-1013. *British History Online*, accessed October 23, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp1007-1013>.



of State should consider how the postal service should best operate ‘for the Advantage and Safety of the Commonwealth.’<sup>184</sup> The debates took place from 1650 until 1653.<sup>185</sup>

In May 1653, the Council reaffirmed the postal system’s monopoly and decided to auction the control over it.<sup>186</sup> The postal service was a lucrative business, as demonstrated by the monetary value of the bids submitted. In the following month, John Manley successfully bid £8259, which, in today’s currency, would amount to just over £850,000.<sup>187</sup> The substantial figure would be paid annually to the treasury, granting Manley the ‘contractual right to gather in postal revenues as his own.’<sup>188</sup> Manley was made Postmaster General on 30 June and given a two-year contract.<sup>189</sup>

Cary’s recommendation focused on how the service could contribute to the Commonwealth. She proposed implementing a fixed rate of ‘3d a letter,’ for inland post. However, her primary concern revolved around how the service was managed. Instead of the postmaster paying for the right to run the system and siphon off the profits, Cary recommended those in charge would receive a ‘certain stipend.’ They would be expected to keep account of all letters received every week and ‘what is disbursed quarterly.’ In addition, and presumably from the profits, they would be required to pay those that ‘are employed in several places, about the carrying up and down of letters.’<sup>190</sup> The remaining profits would be used to help the commonwealth, such as through poor relief. As Cary pointed out, ‘this being a publick thing, the benefit of it should not go into any private mans purses, and none of those that are employed about it should have more than they deserve for their pains.’<sup>191</sup>

Cary argued that the current system only benefitted a small number of men, leading to corruption and inequality rather than serving the commonwealth as a whole. While

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<sup>184</sup> ‘House of Commons Journal Volume 6: 21 March 1650,’ *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 6, 1648-1651*, (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1802), 385. British History Online, accessed September 1, 2022, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol6/p385>.

<sup>185</sup> ‘House of Commons Journal Volume 6: 21 March 1650,’ *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 6, 1648-1651*, (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1802), 385. British History Online, accessed September 1, 2022, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol6/p385>; Duncan Campbell-Smith, *Masters of the Post*, 31.

<sup>186</sup> ‘Volume 36: May 1653,’ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum, 1652-3*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1878), 302-368. British History Online, accessed July 18, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/interregnum/1652-3/pp302-368>.

<sup>187</sup> ‘Currency Converter,’ National Archives, accessed October 23, 2023, Currency converter: 1270–2017 ([nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk))

<sup>188</sup> Campbell-Smith, *Masters of the Post*, 37.

<sup>189</sup> ‘Volume 37: June 1653,’ *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum, 1652-3*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1878), 369-458. British History Online, accessed July 18, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/interregnum/1652-3/pp369-458>; *Ibid*, 31.

<sup>190</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 8.

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

maintaining that the postal system should retain its monopoly, she evidently believed that its current system was open to abuse. Once again, Cary's commitment to virtuous governance becomes evident as she expressed her belief that if the postal system was placed into the hands of 'faithfull men,' the potential risks would be eliminated.<sup>192</sup>

In addition to the postal system, Cary also criticised Parliament for selling off royalist and church estates that had been 'forfeited to the Common-wealth' from across the three nations. According to Cary, doing so had impacted potential future earnings. During the Interregnum, Parliament confiscated estates not only from the Crown and Church but also from Royalists.<sup>193</sup> Joan Thirsk has commented that it 'brought about a redistribution in ownership of land comparable in scale with that achieved by the sales of dissolved monastic land a century earlier.' There was some initial support from groups such as the Levellers. Although they did not call for land redistribution, they did advocate that people should have the right to own property. They hoped that this would help facilitate copyholds into freeholds.<sup>194</sup>

Nevertheless, Parliament's actions were also met with criticism. In 1648, Clement Walker, employing the pseudonym of Theodorus Verax, levelled serious allegations against Parliament, asserting that its members were neglecting the public interest and instead profiteering through the sequestering of estates and goods. Walker wrote that the 'Grandees provision to save themselves,' and that they had furnished their 'retreat houses...with Sequestered Plate, Linnen, and Stuffe'.<sup>195</sup> In the same year, a publication emerged containing a list of members of the House of Commons members, purportedly disclosing the amounts of 'Money, Offices and Lands' the men had 'given themselves.'<sup>196</sup> The list documented the acquisitions of men such as Sir Arthur Hazelrig, who 'hath the Bishop of Durham's house Parke, and Mannor of Auklands' and even Oliver Cromwell, who received '2500.l. *per an.* given him out of the Marquesse of *Worcesters* Estate'.<sup>197</sup>

In a more measured approach than Walker, Cary recommended the creation of local commissioners to assist in the valuation of lands. Cary explained that commissioners based

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>193</sup> Joan Thirsk, 'The sales of royalist land during the Interregnum,' *The Economic History Review*, 1952, New Series, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1952), 188.

<sup>194</sup> Thirsk highlighted that the Levellers did, however, denounce the monopoly that parliamentarians and their family had in buying up the estates. Ibid 188-189.

<sup>195</sup> Clement Walker, *History of Independency* (1648), 12

<sup>196</sup> M. El, *A LIST OF The names of the MEMBERS of the HOUSE OF COMMONS: Observing which are Officers of the Army, contrary to the selfe-denying Ordinance: Together with such summes of Money, Offices and Lands, as they have given to themselves, for service done, and to be done, against the King and Kingdome* (1648).

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 2, 5-7.

in London relied on surveyors, and they could be ‘bribed’ so that the ‘lands are and have been undervalued, to the great prejudice of the Common-wealth.’ Cary’s apprehension revolved around the loss of potential earnings through giving away forfeited estates. This apprehension concerning the forfeiture of potential income likely prompted her proposal, as it was another measure for ‘the righting of the Commonwealth.’<sup>198</sup> In addition, Cary called for the end of selling lands the state had acquired. She proposed that land should only be sold out of necessity and that the terms of sale should stipulate that after a period of ‘seven to ten years’ had expired, the land would return once again ‘into the publick custody.’ Significantly, Cary highlighted that the land could be used to ‘defray publicke charges, that so taxes, excise, and customes, those significant burdens of the people may be taken off.’<sup>199</sup> Cary’s proposal called for the implementation of state ownership of land specifically as a means to ensure the people’s welfare and the commonwealth’s prosperity.

## 2.18 Legal Reforms

In addition to economic reforms that Cary hoped would help to reform and maintain the Commonwealth, she also called for changes in the legal system to tackle inequality and corruption. She illustrated the inequalities that plagued the existing system, which she claimed favoured the rich, and demanded that ‘the meaner sort of people’ have ‘much or more favour shewn in Courts of Justice.’<sup>200</sup> Cary’s final proposal, which centred on the body of law itself, underscored the significance of virtue in her overarching vision for the Commonwealth.

Cary urged Parliament to ‘wholly abolish and repeal those great and tedious volumes of Law, that are either in a strange tongue or otherwise (which serve no other end, but to enrich the Lawyers, and impoverish others).’ As discussed in the previous chapter, Rogers voiced his support for introducing Hebraic laws, and a viewpoint shared more broadly amongst other Fifth Monarchists.<sup>201</sup> In contrast, Cary simply argued for the laws to be replaced with ‘plain brief generall rules.’ The importance of this for Cary revolved around the individuals entrusted with interpreting and enforcing the law. These individuals needed to be ‘pious, faithful men’ who would ‘do in matters of justice what the Law of God and nature guides them to.’<sup>202</sup> Echoing the words of John Lilburne, Cary concluded the section

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<sup>198</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 10.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>201</sup> Both Aspinwall & John Spittlehouse demanded current legislation to be replaced by Mosaic law.

<sup>202</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 11.

with the timely reminder that ‘men [should] do as they would be done unto.’<sup>203</sup> In Cary’s explanation, she demonstrated that the people’s welfare and the commonwealth’s well-being were not contingent on institutions like the rule of law. Instead, she believed they depended on virtue, employing it in the republican sense of the word. As she wrote, ‘for happiness of the people will never consist of good lawes, but in good magistrates, or administrators of justice.’<sup>204</sup>

## 2.19 Meritocracy

In the *Twelve Humble Proposals*, Cary also addressed the system used for selecting individuals for positions of power, which Cary highlighted was aristocratic. It was through ‘old customes, of making the richest of the places where they live, Aldermen, and Justices of the Peace’ even ‘though they [are]...Dunces,’ and were living profane lives. These individuals were in no position to judge blasphemers and drunks because they were ‘Vice[s] they were guilty of themselves’.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, it was crucial that those in government were chosen for their virtue and skill. In the same vein as Rogers, who advocated for ‘god fearing & worthy men,’ Cary wrote ‘Only men that were godly, free from covetousness’, and known for their ‘wisdom, prudence and understanding’ should be selected. In contrast to Rogers, Cary also recognised that the limited number of saints available could be problematic. Therefore, she added the caveat that ‘if they be not godly men enough to be found for them, they may be disposed to others that are of a most civil and blamelesse conversation.’<sup>206</sup>

To ensure that the men chosen to govern would be diligent, Cary proposed they receive ‘moderate and reasonable stipends.’ The stipend should be moderate because, as Cary pointed out, the men ‘live at home and in ease, and do not hazard their lives, health, or limbs, for the publick welfare.’<sup>207</sup> Those who did risk their lives would be rewarded accordingly. The stipend amount would also depend on the ‘learning and abilities’ and qualifications of the role. For example, she defined roles such as ‘Commissioner of Customs’ or Treasurer as honourable employment and should receive one or two hundred pounds per annum. Men in occupations requiring less skill and ability would receive forty to one hundred pounds per year. The critical point for Cary was that those individuals in

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<sup>203</sup> Andrew Bradstock observed that Lilburne believed the golden rule given by God was to do unto others and this underpinned their ‘doctrine of equity.’ Bradstock, ‘The Levellers and Diggers,’ 180.

<sup>204</sup> Cary, *TWELVE HUMBLE PROPOSALS*, 11.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, 11-12.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

places of power should not be able to enrich themselves by abusing funds from the public treasury which directly impacted the people and the Commonwealth.

Cary justified her moderate stipends by highlighting that two hundred pounds per year would comfortably maintain a modest family. However, pointing out that this would not extend to affording ‘pomp and needless vanities,’ such as clothing them in ‘silks and silver.’ The person’s personal estates should cover these excesses, which she added they can ‘do as they please.’ She denounced the corrupt practices of bestowing from the ‘publick treasure’ ‘a thousand, or five hundred...a year, upon any man that is imployed in easy and peaceable imployments.’<sup>208</sup> Moreover, rather than offering stipends, Cary proposed that ‘Gentlemen of noble and publick spirits,’ who already possessed ‘understanding and prudence,’ and most importantly, owned their own estates should volunteer their services freely ‘for the service of Christ.’ Cary reiterated that their purpose should be ‘improving their Talents for his use,’ and ‘be unwilling that ever it should be said that they were made rich by the Common-wealths Treasure.’<sup>209</sup>

Cary’s proposals were rooted in the overarching aim of serving the public and protecting the Commonwealth. The core principle driving these recommendations was the notion of virtue, as defined within the republican framework. Each proposal was meticulously crafted to prioritise the collective welfare of the Commonwealth rather than favouring private interests that had historically exerted influence, not only during monarchical rule but also during the Rump period. Although Cary hoped that virtuous men in government would help to curb the corrupting nature of power, it would only be in the new millennium, beginning on or around 1701, that this issue would be resolved entirely.

## **2.20 The Millennium**

Of the five Fifth Monarchists surveyed, Cary was the only one to offer her thoughts on the new millennium, and as one would expect, this would be a time of abundance for the saints. Her work *MORE EXACT MAPPE* was published in 1651 amidst sporadic plague outbreaks, crop failures and the aftermath of two devastating Civil Wars.<sup>210</sup> Those catastrophic events are present in Cary’s vision as she sought to reassure the reader that the millennium signified a time of peace, as the devil would be bound. She asserted that during this time, the saints would live until around one hundred years of age and that no one

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>210</sup> Cary, *EXACT MAPPE*; Susan Scott, Christopher J. Duncan, *Biology of Plagues: Evidence from Historical Populations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 205-211.

would suffer the death of a child.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, they will have access to all earthly treasures, such as precious metals, and their livestock and crops will be bountiful. This will enable them to build their own estates. The saints will enjoy freedom as they will labour for themselves ‘they shall be long enjoyed by them and their children: no strangers shall deprive them of them.’<sup>212</sup>

An outpouring of Spirit will fill the saints and gift spiritual blessings, such as knowledge and love. Significantly, through the Spirit, the wants and desires of the saints will be ‘swallowed up in the will of God,’ effectively addressing the issue of corruption.<sup>213</sup> During the millennium, the saints would enjoy worldly privileges because the Spirit would mortify internal corruption that had previously caused a person to become self-serving and have a detrimental effect on society.

## 2.21 Conclusions

Positioning herself as an instrument of God, Mary Cary inserted herself into a primarily male-dominated sphere by publishing prophetic interpretations and a vision of a godly commonwealth. Cary’s prophetic interpretations also led her to be well respected among fellow Fifth Monarchists and influential figures such as Hugh Peters.<sup>214</sup> Although her literary contribution only covered a short period, ranging from the end of the First Civil War to the final weeks of the Nominated Assembly, these were critical years in the evolution of English republicanism. Cary’s writings can be situated alongside those of republican thinkers who wrote to justify the regicide and to defend the newly established commonwealth.

It is evident throughout Cary’s texts that she was committed to liberty and virtue, both fundamental principles in republican thought. Cary’s commitment to freedom was revealed through her prophetic interpretations as she demonstrated that the people, under the dominion of the Pope and Charles I, had forfeited their liberties. In each case, this was because the people depended on the will of another, the Pope over conscience and the King over their person and their estates. As she had highlighted, not all those who had fought against the beast (pope) were saints, and she urged Parliament to remove the burdens that oppressed the people under monarchical government. Through prophecy, she justified the

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<sup>211</sup> Cary, *EXACT MAPPE.*, 288-289.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 310.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, 244.

<sup>214</sup> Peters had written an introductory letter included with her publication of *LITTLE HORNS Doom & EXACT MAPPE.*

creation of a commonwealth and advocated the necessity of progressing with religious and political reforms that would safeguard the liberty of the people and the new commonwealth.

Notably, while adhering to established conventions within the apocalyptic tradition, Cary's prophetic interpretations set themselves apart as she challenged the notion of an English Reformation. By undermining this pivotal event in English history, she demonstrated that the nation had remained in a state of servitude, dependent on the Pope and thus an extension of the antichristian empire. In another unique interpretation, Cary provided a detailed timeline, incorporating key events from the Civil War and the late king's reign to reveal them to be divinely inspired. Although seemingly appearing to manipulate calculations to best suit her argument, her synthesis of prophecy and contemporary events reinforced the notion that a commonwealth form of government aligned with millenarian expectations. The fulfilment of prophecy signalled the demise of monarchical rule in England, making way for a commonwealth governed by the godly.

The concluding section of this chapter has shed light on Cary's unwavering commitment to virtue, a concept which has long been associated with republicanism. As the chapter explained, defining the meaning of virtue has posed a challenge. Initially rooted in the classical era, it encompassed prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice. However, it also came to include charity, love, faith and hope following the advance of Christianity. In its essence republican virtue can be defined as prioritising the common good and the interests of the state over one's personal interests.

During the 1650s, two prevailing ideas emerged regarding the promotion of the public interest, with one becoming dominant among godly republicans. This perspective advocated for those in positions of power to be both virtuous and godly. Cary endorsed this view, but she also went beyond merely focusing on godly rulers. Her vision aimed at combating government corruption by ensuring that those in authority could not enrich themselves through the misuse of the public treasury. Moreover, she also sought to reform government policies concerning land sales and proposed changes to the postal system to curtail corruption. The resources saved or generated through these measures were intended for the public treasury that would benefit the people and stabilise the commonwealth.

While on the surface, these suggestions might appear to resemble a proposal for an early form of a welfare state, it is crucial to emphasise that each suggestion revolved

around the interests of the people. If we assess Cary's work according to the definition of republican virtue, it becomes evident that her endeavours epitomise this ideal.





## Chapter 3. William Aspinwall

### 3.1 Introduction

During the reign of Charles I, Puritans felt themselves to be persecuted following the king's inclination towards Arminianism and efforts to establish a uniform church. Consequently, many individuals sought refuge from the reach of the State and the Church of England, leading to widespread exile. Among those who fled was William Aspinwall, who arrived in the American colonies in 1630. The following two decades not only provided Aspinwall with the opportunity to engage in political affairs but also allowed him to attain positions of influence. This was a significant time in the development of Aspinwall's intellectual thought. These concepts, forged during his exile, were subsequently applied to the English republican debates in the 1650s after his return to England in 1652, where he joined the Fifth Monarchist movement.

Like Rogers, Aspinwall has previously been associated with English republicanism. According to Donoghue, following the dissolution of the Rump, Aspinwall expressed republican ideology influenced by 'practical Christianity'.<sup>1</sup> However, while agreeing with this attribution, Donoghue's assessment has limitations. Specifically, Donoghue has failed to recognise the influence of the Hebrew Commonwealth or Aspinwall's millenarian beliefs on his republicanism. This oversight results in a relatively limited understanding of Aspinwall's godly republican thought. Beyond the scholarship of republicanism and millenarianism, there has been more interest in exploring Aspinwall's time spent in the American colonies, particularly emphasising his connection with John Cotton. Nevertheless, the full extent of how Aspinwall's experiences in America influenced his political beliefs has not yet been fully explored.

Within this chapter, an examination of Aspinwall's intellectual ideas will shed light on his contribution to the evolution of English republicanism. Similar to the previous chapters, it will become evident that Aspinwall's vision of a godly commonwealth was intricately tied to the concepts of neo-Roman liberty and virtue. His profound devotion to Hebraic literature served as a source of inspiration, driving his efforts to shape the new government. Drawing comparisons with other prominent republicans, such as Milton and Nedham, this chapter will illustrate Aspinwall's belief that the loss of people's liberties stemmed from their reliance on the authority of a singular ruler, a consequence stemming

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<sup>1</sup> Donoghue, *Radical Republicanism*, 244.

from the encroachment of rulers on legislative power. Moreover, it will be demonstrated how the Fifth Monarchists' perspective on the division of sovereignty underscored the compatibility of a theocratic structure within a republican form of government. Ultimately, the chapter will delve into Aspinwall's prophetic interpretations, employed to advocate for the Commonwealth and denounce the Protectorate. In this pursuit, he formulated a republican exclusivist argument closely resembling Milton's, asserting that single-person rule was a manifestation of idolatry.

The chapter commences with a biography of Aspinwall, showing the influence of his American experiences on the evolution of his intellectual thought. As the evidence reveals, Aspinwall was politically engaged and held positions of influence before the Civil War. This section will critically examine Aspinwall's role in the establishment of the Rhode Island Colony, emphasising the early proliferation of his godly republican ideals that were cultivated during his endeavours in England during the 1650s.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent section transitions to exploring Aspinwall's time as a Fifth Monarchist, initially scrutinising his defence of the new regime and subsequently centring on his discourse concerning the origins of sovereignty, which were inextricably linked to legislative power and liberty. The next section will follow Aspinwall's shift toward critiquing the Protectorate, underscoring the intricacies of his biblical exegesis.

### **3.2 Biography**

The perceived persecution by Puritans during the reign of Charles I intensified following the instalment of William Laud as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. This religious tension led to a period of exile for numerous Puritans. In 1630, Aspinwall travelled to America and was soon followed by other puritans who wanted to escape the religious persecution at home. Among those was John Cotton (1584-1652), one of New England's leading clergymen during that era. Cotton was also a millenarian and influential figure in Aspinwall's life. Aspinwall referenced Cotton in numerous texts and described him as a 'faithfull servant of Christ'. After Cotton's passing, Aspinwall further honoured Cotton by publishing an edition of his friend's *An abstract of laws and government* (1655).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Donoghue has emphasised the importance of the history of New England during the 1630s and 1640s on men such as Venner, Vane and Aspinwall which was pursued when they returned to England during the 1650s. Ibid, 5.

<sup>3</sup> John Cotton, *An abstract of laws and government wherein as in a mirrour may be seen the wisdom & perfection of the government of christs kingdome accomodable to any state or form of government in the world that is not antichristian or tyrannicall* (London, 1655).

On 3 April 1632, Aspinwall formally undertook the ‘freeman oath.’<sup>4</sup> The Massachusetts Bay Company had introduced this Oath in the previous year to ensure compliance within the colony. By taking this Oath, an individual became a recognised ‘member of the body politic and as such were entitled to exercise the right of suffrage and to hold office.’<sup>5</sup> They were also expected to swear that they would ‘advance the peace and welfare of this body or commonwealth.’<sup>6</sup>

Upon swearing the Freeman Oath, Aspinwall secured several esteemed positions within the colony, such as a ‘recorder of Boston’ and public notary in 1644.<sup>7</sup> However, his tenure in office was marred by disputes with his fellow brethren, and he also became embroiled in the Antinomian Controversy, a heated disagreement that raged from 1636 to 1638.<sup>8</sup>

The Antinomian Controversy broke out in the Massachusetts Bay Colony due to a dispute between the ministers at the Boston Church and the lay prophet Anne Hutchinson over the Doctrine of Assurance.<sup>9</sup> One of the central issues in puritanism was how a believer could be assured of their salvation.<sup>10</sup> Diverging viewpoints on attaining assurance arose due to the absence of doctrinal consistency within the Boston Church.<sup>11</sup> Representing the majority view, Pastor John Wilson taught that assurance could be gained through ‘self-scrutiny.’ However, this was problematic when attempting to distinguish ‘the effects of sanctification from the ‘legal’ righteousness of those still unconsciously expecting to be saved by their own works.’<sup>12</sup>

Hutchinson and her followers rejected Wilson’s teaching, perceiving it as a ‘covenant of works’. Hutchinson was also profoundly influenced by Cotton, who had also argued against self-scrutiny, instead advocating that salvation could be confirmed by the Holy Spirit through ‘intuition’ or ‘revelation.’<sup>13</sup> During her trial, one of the accusations put to Hutchinson and her followers was that they had argued that it was unsafe to claim

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<sup>4</sup> W. H. Whitmore & W. K. Watkins, *Relating to the Early History of Boston containing the Aspinwall Notarial Records from 1644 to 1651* (Boston, 1903), i.

<sup>5</sup> A. H. Franklin., *List of Freemen, Massachusetts Bay Colony from 1630-1691: with the freeman’s oath, the first paper printed in New England* (Exira printing Company, 1906), 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Whitmore, Watkins, *Early History of Boston*, iv.

<sup>8</sup> Michael P. Winship, “‘The Most Glorious Church in the World’: The Unity of the Godly in Boston, Massachusetts, in the 1630,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Anglo-American Puritanism’s (Jan, 2000), 71.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 71-75.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

justification by faith but instead had argued that Christ justified a person.<sup>14</sup> It was because they challenged the teachings of the church that the group were denounced as antinomian, which meant someone who believed that as they were saved, they were no longer subject to any moral laws.

During the controversy, Aspinwall ‘signed a remonstrance’ in favour of John Wheelwright, Anne Hutchinson's brother-in-law.<sup>15</sup> Wheelwright had faced charges of sedition owing to his support of Anne’s proposed principles. When signing the remonstrance, Aspinwall was a ‘deputy of the General Court;’ by virtue of his role, he was summoned to appear before the court. In court, Aspinwall reaffirmed that he still agreed with the remonstrance. Subsequently, the court rendered a verdict, resulting in his expulsion from the position of deputy and his banishment from the colony.<sup>16</sup> Notably, Aspinwall’s sympathy towards Wheelwright revealed that he had already distanced himself from the traditional ideas associated with the Church.

Aspinwall’s banishment from the colony was more illuminating, revealing republican sentiments. During his exile, Aspinwall joined a group founded to establish a new settlement on Rhode Island. In 1638, he was fifth on the list of twenty signatories to a contract to establish a ‘Bodie politick’.<sup>17</sup> The group declared that they would ‘submit’ their ‘persons, lives and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and to all those perfect and most absolute lawes of his given us in his holy word of truth, to be guided and judged thereby’.<sup>18</sup> The group also elected a judge and chose Aspinwall to be the first secretary of the newly established colony. The records reveal that it was later agreed to select elders to assist the judge. Under the terms of the agreement, the men designed the Rhode Island colony to be a political body subject to Christ and his laws, with the executive power falling to a small selection of individuals elected by their peers. These were the same terms that would underpin Aspinwall’s republican thought when he returned to England.

Towards the end of 1638, it was recorded that Aspinwall had defaulted on his debts. Following this, he was ‘suspected’ of sedition, and a stay was put on the building of the

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<sup>14</sup> Anonymous, *Antinomians and Familists condemned by the synod of elders in New-England* (London,1644), 17.

<sup>15</sup> Whitmore, Watkins., *Early History of Boston*, ii-iii.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, ii-iii.

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

<sup>18</sup> J. R. Bartlett., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England*. Vol 1. 1636 to 1663 (Providence, A. Crawford Greene and Brothers,1856), 52.

boat he was working on.<sup>19</sup> While the records do not explicitly detail the nature of the alleged seditious conduct, the colony had been grappling with issues of civil unrest. In the previous month, it was agreed that a constable and a sergeant would be introduced to maintain order.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the disturbances seemingly led to the rewriting of the contract terms that the original settlers had agreed upon. On 30 April 1639, the colonists agreed to an oath that stipulated they were the subjects of Charles I. Furthermore, instead of Christ's laws, they now submitted to Charles's 'lawes according to matters of justice'. This time, however, Aspinwall was not noted as a signatory.<sup>21</sup>

The absence of an explanation for Aspinwall's failure to endorse the new oath is notable. It could be attributed to his involvement in internal colony matters, which brought his character into question. Alternatively, it is plausible that Aspinwall chose not to sign the oath due to its submission of the colonists to the authority of Charles I rather than to Christ. In the 1650s, Aspinwall would reaffirm the significance of living under the laws of Christ in his vision for a godly commonwealth in England.

There is no mention of Aspinwall leaving the Rhode Island colony, but by 1642, he was back in Boston after a short spell spent in Connecticut. Before he could return, he had to formally acknowledge his error in signing the remonstrance.<sup>22</sup> On 13 November 1644, he was again selected as Recorder of Boston and a public notary. He remained in those positions until 1651 when he was discharged following his involvement in another dispute. Aspinwall returned to England in 1652. In a letter issued to the General Court before returning to England, Aspinwall lamented the many 'afflictions' he has 'suffered since' coming to the country.<sup>23</sup> However, a couple of years later, in 1654, Aspinwall commented that he still had a great affection for his brethren. He urged the colonists to take the opportunity to 'set up Jesus Christ as King, not only in their churches but in the commonwealth also' as they were a 'Beacon set on the Hil.'<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that his appeal was composed during the initial year of the Protectorate, potentially indicating uncertainty regarding the establishment of a godly commonwealth in England.

The creation of the English commonwealth in 1649 and the debates that flourished during the following decade gave Aspinwall another opportunity to re-immense himself in

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<sup>19</sup> J. R. Bartlett, *Colony of Rhode Island*, 64-66.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 70.

<sup>22</sup> Whitmore, Watkins, *Early History of Boston*, iv.

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

<sup>24</sup> William Aspinwall, *A Premonition of Sundry Sad Calamaties Yet to Come. Grounded upon an Explication of the twenty fourth Chapter of Isaiah* (London, 1654), 39.

political and religious discourses. During this period, he further refined the concepts he had contemplated while in exile, not least in the seven texts he published between 1653 and 1657, aiming to influence the formation of a godly commonwealth.

### 3.3 Millenarianism and Exile

The impact of exile during periods of persecution significantly influenced the evolution of millenarianism in Britain. Millenarianism had been advanced in England through the works of several theologians such as Brightman, Alsted, and Mede, a fellow at Christ's College, Cambridge. According to Mede, several prophecies should be understood as occurring simultaneously or alongside each other instead of following a chronological order.<sup>25</sup> More significantly, Mede departed from the belief that the millennium reign had already occurred, instead placing it as an anticipated event.<sup>26</sup> Although Mede was convinced that the millennium lay in the future, he also exercised caution and refused to reveal any specific dates.<sup>27</sup>

Theologians showed little caution when they were in exile. For instance, in Holland, the Independent Pastor Thomas Goodwin wrote the tract *An exposition of the Book of Revelation* (1639). Whereas Mede's eschatology worked within the established church, Goodwin's reading of Revelation provided the scriptural evidence to push for church reform. It supported his claim for a network of independent churches.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, he was also the first to state that the millennium would be a glorious time for the saints.<sup>29</sup>

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Goodwin was less restrained than Mede and provided specific dates for the coming millennium. He claimed that there would be a Jewish conversion in 1656 and that following this alliance, the Pope would be defeated by 1666, suggesting that the new millennium would commence in 1700, a date also anticipated by Cary.<sup>30</sup> Goodwin also extended the period that the Antichrist dominated the Church in Rome to include the Laudian regime and declared that Charles and Laud were part of the antichristian fourth monarchy.<sup>31</sup> He argued that the religious reforms brought in

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<sup>25</sup> Mede, *The Key of Revelation* (1643).

<sup>26</sup> Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, 42-43.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 45.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

during Charles' reign were a 'conspiracy in the end to make way for the beast.'<sup>32</sup> This was a view shared by other Fifth Monarchists.

Shortly after Laud's arrest in 1641, Goodwin wrote another tract, a sermon, *A Glimpse of Zion*, preached during the opening of an independent church in Holland in 1641. Although its authorship has been widely debated, it is generally considered Goodwin's work.<sup>33</sup> For Goodwin, the saints in England lacked urgency, and he held were akin to the Laodicean church described in the third chapter of Revelation as lukewarm; therefore, the sermon was very explicit in its attempt to rally the saints to take action.<sup>34</sup> The sermon directly targeted the 'common people' who were to act as God's agents in ending the fourth monarchy.<sup>35</sup> He wrote, 'You that are of the meaner rank, common People, be not discouraged; for God intends to use the common People in the great Worke of proclaiming the Kingdome of his Sonne.'<sup>36</sup> Within the text, the author also emphasised that the people were not to rest until the church had been reformed.<sup>37</sup> The sermon proved extremely popular and was published and distributed extensively during the English Revolution. As Gribben has noted, using 'such radical rhetoric' would have significant repercussions in England.<sup>38</sup> It was important because Goodwin placed the power of bringing in the new millennium firmly in the hands of the people, and for the Fifth Monarchists, this power was in their hands. Laud's arrest ultimately prompted the return of many exiles who were now eager to demonstrate the link between contemporary events and prophecies.

The English Civil War escalated and provided the perfect context for a more radical reinterpretation of the prophecies, emphasising England's central role in the impending apocalypse.<sup>39</sup> The execution of Charles I in 1649 marked a pivotal moment in the context of millennial aspirations. The anticipation of Christ and his saints' imminent millennium had already begun to take hold, and it was in this heady rush of anticipation that the Fifth Monarchist movement emerged.

### **3.4 The Nominated Assembly & Reform**

Aspinwall's first publication as a Fifth Monarchist was written following the gathering of the Nominated Assembly, so-called as its members were not elected but selected by

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 46; Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861-66), iii, 71.

<sup>33</sup> Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, 48.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Goodwin, *A Glimpse of Sions glory* (London, 1641), 5.

<sup>37</sup> Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, 48.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 44.



Cromwell and others based on their godly virtues, on 4 July 1653. Generally, the Fifth Monarchists regarded the Assembly with considerable optimism, mainly since some of their members had been selected to participate in the Assembly and on the Council of State. Cromwell, too, shared this optimism; at the initial meeting, he praised its establishment as ‘the door [...] [which may] usher in the things that God had promised.’<sup>40</sup>

The urgency of the reaction to the Rump’s inability to promote godly reformation becomes apparent in the initial stages of the Nominated Assembly. During the first few days, arrangements were made to tackle pressing matters, including the dissolution of tithes and law reform. Nevertheless, the Fifth Monarchist suggestion to abolish the Church of England sparked significant concerns among its more moderate members, including Cromwell.<sup>41</sup> The pressing necessity to enforce reforms compelled Aspinwall to publish his first piece of Fifth Monarchist literature.

Aspinwall’s *A Brief Description, OF THE Fifth Monarchy, OR KINGDOME, That shortly is to come into the World* was published on 1 August 1653 and can be described as a type of Fifth Monarchist manifesto.<sup>42</sup> As the title explained, Aspinwall set out to demonstrate that the fifth monarchy of Christ was imminent. The text provided insight into themes such as prophecy, sovereignty, and legislative power, which Aspinwall explored in much more detail in his later works. Aspinwall concluded the text with thoughts on when he believed Christ’s kingdom would begin. He argued that the ‘Antichrists dominion’ would endure until 1673, ending the fourth monarchy.

Significantly, Aspinwall asserted that although he believed that the execution of the late king had fulfilled the prophecy in Daniel chapter 7, he wrote that this was not the beginning of the fifth monarchy ‘but it comes near it’, adding that ‘As for the precise year, I dare not determine’.<sup>43</sup> For Aspinwall, the regicide was pivotal for the nation’s governors to implement reforms in preparation for Christ’s government. The text reflected the sense of urgency in Fifth Monarchist literature and explained the exasperation directed towards both the Rump and then later towards the Nominated Assembly.

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<sup>40</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 66.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-69.

<sup>42</sup> William Aspinwall, *A brief description of the fifth monarchy, or kingdome, that shortly is to come into the world. The monarch, subjects, officers and lawes thereof, and the surpassing glory, amplitude, unity, and peace of that kingdome. When the kingdome and dominion, and the greatnesse of the kingdome under the whole heaven shall be given to the people, the saints of the most high, whose kingdome is an everlasting kingdom* (1653).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Aspinwall shared his frustration with the lack of reform in his second tract, *An Explication and Application of the Seventh Chapter of Daniel*, published on March 20, 1654. This was just over three months after the Nominated Assembly had surrendered its powers to Cromwell, who was then installed as Protector. However, the preface to the text, written to ‘his Excellencie the Lord General Cromwel,’ was dated 30 November 1653. No explanation was provided regarding the reason for the delay in its publication. The pamphlet was printed for Livewell Chapman, who had published all of Aspinwall’s texts and was sympathetic to the Fifth Monarchist movement selling many of their texts. The date of the preface coincided closely with the day that the Nominated Assembly resigned its powers, suggesting that Aspinwall might have still been refining the main body of the text or possibly wanting to gauge Cromwell’s actions under the Instrument of Government, which the Council of Officers accepted on 15 December. The criticisms articulated by Aspinwall against the late king revolved around the loss of liberty due to the abuse of power. This language could similarly be employed to critique the Protectorate.

### 3.5 Cromwell

In the preface, Aspinwall commended Cromwell for being ‘Gods chosen instrument’ in the execution of judgement against Charles I. Similarly to Rogers’ texts, it becomes evident that Aspinwall was apprehensive about the authority and power that Cromwell was accumulating. During the autumn, Major General John Lambert had already been working on a draft of the Instrument of Government, which placed executive and legislative powers back into the hands of a single person, namely Cromwell.<sup>44</sup> As such, Aspinwall, writing to Cromwell, expressed that he wanted to present his ‘*Meditations upon this 7. Chapter of Daniel*’ revealed the ‘*true ground of all these great Revolutions that have happened in these Nations, which are founded upon the Eternal Counsel of God*’.<sup>45</sup> This reminded Cromwell that his work furthering Christ’s cause was far from complete.<sup>46</sup> This was followed by Aspinwall’s reminder to Cromwell that he should ‘*prepare for the building of God’s house...he will be sure to build you a house,*’ and the subtle warning that if Cromwell were to ‘*build your own house, it would not long stand*’.

Aspinwall urged the government to remove all elements of monarchical rule. As Aspinwall explained, although the ‘sultan ship’ or sovereign power had been partially

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<sup>44</sup> ‘The Instrument of Government’, XVIII, in S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 411.

<sup>45</sup> Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application*, ‘Epistle Dedicatory’.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, ‘Epistle Dedicatory’.

removed through the king's execution, the 'carcass' of the earthly monarchy remained.<sup>47</sup> Aspinwall referred to the carcass as the 'Spirit of Prerogative'. In the text, Aspinwall explained that Charles was able to 'invert the form of government' and establish himself as an absolute ruler through the abuse of his prerogative.<sup>48</sup> The king had governed arbitrarily through the passing of 'Proclamations, Edicts...according to his owne will'.<sup>49</sup> It was, therefore, imperative that all 'Emblems...Figures, and Representations, of his Kingly Prerogative... That is, all such things as carry the stamp, forme, or figure of Prerogative Royal' be eradicated.<sup>50</sup> Aspinwall urged Cromwell to push forward with the political reforms because once the remnants of Charles's monarchy were 'removed, the work of Christ would proceed apace.'<sup>51</sup>

The main body of Aspinwall's text centred on providing an interpretation of Daniel chapter 7 to show that the execution of Charles I had been the fulfilment of prophecy. By producing his chapter exegesis, Aspinwall demonstrated that the regicide was an act of providence which provided the impetus for a change in the form of government to a commonwealth and legitimised the reign of the saints. The Nominated Assembly had drawn much criticism through the decision to select its members rather than the usual methods of electing. Although Aspinwall's text was published after the Nominated Assembly had disbanded, proving that it was a legitimate form of government was necessary, as Aspinwall would have hoped to persuade Cromwell to restore it.

### **3.6 Daniel and the Vision of the Four Beasts**

In 1651, Mary Cary had interpreted that the little horn was Charles I and his regicide as God's judgment.<sup>52</sup> Aspinwall agreed with Cary, yet his exposition of the text stemmed from his abilities in Hebrew scholarship. His expertise in reading Hebrew enabled him to highlight a discrepancy within the traditional translation of verse 8, thereby distinguishing his perspective from Cary's assertion. He claimed that once correctly translated, it exposed the identity of the little horn to be Charles I.

In its original rendition, verse 8 stated, 'Before whom three of the first Horns were plucked up by the roots.' According to Aspinwall, the translators had inverted the order,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 'Epistle Dedicatory'.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 'Epistle Dedicatory'.

<sup>52</sup> Cary, *LITTLE HORNS Doom*, 6-14.

and it should be read as ‘three of the first Horns were plucked up by the roots’.<sup>53</sup> In reordering the translation, Aspinwall argued that the little horn had gained dominion over three kingdoms, representing the nations of England, Scotland and Ireland. Notably, Aspinwall claimed that roots had been ‘plucked up’ through the abuse of kingly royal prerogative.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, in a somewhat mocking tone, he contended that the small size of the horn further indicated Charles I’s true identity. Interpreting the diminutive stature of the little horn as symbolising the ‘least of the kingdoms,’ Aspinwall claimed that this denoted Scotland and, consequently, the Stuarts.<sup>55</sup> With the unmasking of the little horn’s identity as Charles I and, thus, the regicide proven to be the fulfilment of prophecy, Aspinwall proceeded to provide biblical justification for Parliament’s authority in acting against the king.

### 3.7 Defence of the Regicide

As we have seen in the previous chapters, both Cary and Rogers wrote in defence of the new Commonwealth, which was also true of Aspinwall. Although Charles I’s execution had already taken place several years earlier, the actions of the Rump Parliament continued to be challenged not only by royalist supporters but also by the Presbyterian faction that had been forcibly ejected from the Long Parliament in December 1648. Throughout its term in power, the Rump Parliament was plagued by challenges to its authority to act against the king. These challenges continued to threaten the stability and welfare of the Commonwealth, leading individuals such as Milton and Nedham to defend the actions of Parliament.

Milton and Nedham positioned the regicide as the outcome of a defensive war. In *The Tenure*, published in February 1649, Milton asserted that Charles had lawfully been brought to account because he had been charged with ‘spilling of more innocent blood by farre, then ever *Nero* did’.<sup>56</sup> Milton argued that Charles’ actions had proven him to be a tyrant and, therefore, a ‘destroyer of mankind.’<sup>57</sup> Drawing inspiration from classical antiquity, Milton emphasised that the killing of tyrants had been praised throughout the ancient world. Notably, he pointed to the ancient Greek and Roman societies, where

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<sup>53</sup> Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>56</sup> Milton, *The Tenure*, 4.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

slaying a tyrant was lauded as valour.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, Parliament ought to be commended for acting in defence of the nation rather than being subjected to criticism.

In contrast, in *The Case of the Commonwealth Stated* (1650), Nedham developed an argument rooted in Grotius's ideas. Referring to Grotius's *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (1625), Nedham explained that Grotius had contended that authority in England had been divided between the king and the 'People in Parliament.'<sup>59</sup> Expanding on this point, Nedham stated that the power distribution, as he interpreted it, was between the '*King, Lords & Commons*.'<sup>60</sup> The actions of the late king had encroached upon parliament's authority, and it was their lawful right to defend their position. In his defeat, the king had lost his power through the 'Right of War', and according to the 'Law of Arms', the king's power was transferred solely to parliament.<sup>61</sup>

Aspinwall adopted a similar line of reasoning as Milton, contending that Parliament had acted against a tyrannical ruler, albeit with the distinction that Aspinwall's argument was derived from the exegesis of scripture. Aspinwall needed to demonstrate that the regicide fulfilled biblical prophecy and precipitated the beginning of the end of the fourth monarchy. If he managed to persuade both those in government and its critics that the execution of the king and the creation of a commonwealth were divinely inspired, there would be a better chance that reform would take place. Furthermore, Aspinwall's interpretation had the potential to stabilise the Nominated Assembly, which had faced criticism due to its members not being elected. The prophecy in Daniel 7 vindicated the regicide and sanctioned a power transfer from the king to the saints.

Aspinwall began by highlighting that in Daniel 7:22, the persecution of the saints would cause God to intervene and to provide an open 'door of providence' to proceed in judgement against the little horn.<sup>62</sup> Aspinwall turned to the story of the Israelites under the pharaoh's rule to reveal God's hand in recent events. He claimed that just as God had hardened the pharaoh's heart against Moses, he had also hardened the king's heart against his subjects. The war Charles had declared on his people in 1642 was the 'occasion' given to the saints to 'take up armes for their owne defence.'<sup>63</sup> In addition to scriptural justification, Aspinwall emphasised the law of nature, stating that a son had the right to

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<sup>58</sup> Milton took his argument further by stating that as the people were sovereign, they had the right to depose their ruler whether they were a tyrant or not. *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>59</sup> Nedham, *The Case of the Common-Wealth Stated* (1650), 20.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 30.

<sup>62</sup> Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application*, 32.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 32

‘defend himself against the assault of a furious Father’. Therefore, Parliament had the authority to defend itself and the nation against the tyrannical rule of Charles I.<sup>64</sup>

While the three authors advanced similar arguments that depicted Parliament’s actions as acts of self-defence, a distinction emerged between the rationales presented by Milton and Nedham in contrast to those articulated by Aspinwall. The difference stemmed from where they perceived sovereignty to have originated. Both Milton and Nedham asserted that sovereignty resided within the people. For instance, although Milton had highlighted the tyrannical nature of Charles, he also stated that it was the ‘libertie and right of free born men to be govern’d as seems to them best’, meaning that even if the ruler was not a tyrant they had the right to withdraw their sovereignty and depose their ruler.<sup>65</sup> This was disputed by Aspinwall, who claimed that sovereignty was Christ’s alone, and in the same manner as Rogers had, he advocated for a theocratic commonwealth. His thoughts surrounding sovereignty suggest a correlation between Aspinwall’s interpretation of freedom and the concept of neo-Roman liberty.

### **3.8 Neo-Roman Liberty**

In Milton’s justification of the regicide, he revealed that he understood liberty in its neo-Roman form. This becomes clear in his discussion of the origin of government and the emergence of monarchical rule. According to Milton, following ‘Adams transgression’, the people came together to secure peace and protection and formed a political union.<sup>66</sup> They chose a person who had shown ‘wisdom and integretie’ to rule for the common good.<sup>67</sup> However, as mentioned, authority was provisionally transferred and could be withdrawn at any time. For Milton, the people were free because they could depose their rulers, make laws and change their governments.

Like Milton, Aspinwall also delved into the origins of kingship to uncover the source of sovereignty. However, his perspective was influenced by his millenarian reading of scripture. While the Bible identified Nimrod as the first king, Aspinwall believed that liberty was first lost during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, as depicted in the Book of Daniel.<sup>68</sup> This perspective reflected Aspinwall’s interpretation of biblical events.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Milton, *The Tenure*, 13

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>68</sup> Gen 10:8-12 (King James Version); Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application*, 7.

Aspinwall explained that during the Jews' captivity in Babylon, Christ's sovereignty was usurped by the king.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, rulers began to exploit their imperial authority, employing legislation to fortify their control and suppress the people. The misuse of power has been demonstrated throughout history, reflecting a tendency for rulers to exploit their position for personal gain. Milton also highlighted the abuse of sovereignty, as he noted that laws, oaths and eventually parliaments had been introduced to try and restrain the 'temptation' of rulers to seek to increase their authority.<sup>70</sup> However, recent events have shown that rulers like Charles I could circumvent constraints placed on them.

In his interpretation of Charles as the little horn, Aspinwall underscored the way the little horn ascended to power. The little horn had 'plucked' up the roots of the nation. Aspinwall explained those roots were religion and 'the people's Liberties and Civil Rights'.<sup>71</sup> Charles infringed upon the people's freedom of conscience and civil liberties by abusing his royal prerogative. Aspinwall claimed the subversion of religion and civil liberties was one way that 'a King may be said to humble his Kingdome'.<sup>72</sup> Aspinwall asserted that the late king had committed tyrannical acts against the people. He accused Charles of acting against the 'wayes of God' as he sought to advance popery.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, Charles oppressed the people's liberties by levying taxes such as ship-money. Moreover, he initiated a war against the people to safeguard his royal prerogative, in which many people were 'slain by the sword'.<sup>74</sup>

Aspinwall claimed that Charles intended to enslave the three nations. According to him, it was because of Charles's 'abhorrency of Parliaments' that he had sought to 'introduce a Government by Proclamations, which would have rendred the Nations, and the Government thereof, meerly arbitrary, when his Will alone should stand for a Law.'<sup>75</sup> Aspinwall was alluding to Charles' choice of abstaining from convening Parliament for an extended eleven-year period, which underscored the king's utter disregard for that parliamentary institution. His decision not only revealed his contempt for its role in governance but also aggrieved MPs to the extent that in 1641, they produced the Grand Remonstrance detailing the late monarch's abuse of power.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

<sup>70</sup> Milton, *The Tenure*, 9.

<sup>71</sup> Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application*, 4.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 27-28.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 28-29.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 29.

As already discussed, the Fifth Monarchists, including Aspinwall, were confident that the execution of Charles marked the point at which sovereignty was rightfully returned to Christ. Following the prophecy, executive power was subsequently delegated to the saints to create a godly commonwealth. The nation regained its liberty as it was no longer dependent on the will of a king, and authority now resided in the people's representative. Aspinwall's perspective on sovereignty indicated that he interpreted liberty within the framework of its neo-Roman definition.

Although *An Explication and Application of Daniel* was published during the Protectorate, according to the Epistle, it was written during the Nominated Assembly. The primary focus for Aspinwall was to reveal Charles I as the tyrannical little horn, giving impetus for the new regime to remove or reform any structure that had upheld monarchical rule. However, choosing to publish the text after Cromwell was given both executive and legislative authority through the Instrument of Government could be read as a criticism of the return to single-person rule, according to which Cromwell was considered a 'king in all but name'.<sup>77</sup>

### 3.9 Critiques of the Protectorate

The creation of the Protectorate was met with widespread condemnation by the Fifth Monarchists. Shortly after, it was communicated to Cromwell that in a sermon delivered by Feake and Powell, they had characterised Cromwell as the most 'dissembleingst perjured villaine in the world' and suggested that Cromwell 'should be served worse than that great tirant the last lord protector was, he being all together as bad, if not worse than he'.<sup>78</sup> However, not all Fifth Monarchists were quick to condemn Cromwell. As discussed, Rogers took a pragmatic approach and tried to appeal to Cromwell directly to urge him to advance Christ's cause and not his own.

While Aspinwall did not mention the Protectorate in the text, Cromwell's position of power was undoubtedly interpreted as king-like. In 1656, Nedham also complained about the retaining of king-like powers. Comparing the state of the nation to the expulsion of kings in ancient Rome, Nedham highlighted that the state did not regain its liberty as

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<sup>77</sup> Roy E. Sherwood, *Oliver Cromwell King In All But Name* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), 1-6.

<sup>78</sup> The anonymous letter, destined for Paris, was intercepted by Thurloe on 22 December 1653. 'State Papers, 1653: December (3 of 4),' in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 1, 1638-1653*, ed. Thomas Birch (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1742), 640-649. *British History Online*, accessed November 1, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/thurloe-papers/vol1/pp640-649>.



‘only the name of King was expelled, but not the Thing,’ until that time all the powers of kingship remained with the senate.<sup>79</sup>

However, a series of ordinances were passed in 1654, prompting much outrage. The introduction of the Treason Ordinance in January 1654 followed in March with the introduction of the Commission of Triers and later Ejectors. It was perceived that the Protectorate had begun to encroach upon civil and religious liberties. Furthermore, on September 4, in his speech to the first Protectorate Parliament, Cromwell spoke out against the Fifth Monarchy Men. Despite previously supporting the claims that the Fifth Monarchists had made about the millennial reign of Christ, Cromwell now asserted that he believed that Christ’s kingdom would be spiritual and reign in the hearts of the people instead.<sup>80</sup> Much of the literature produced by the Fifth Monarchists addressed the power that Cromwell now held as Lord Protector.

The Fifth Monarchists were not alone in voicing their concerns. In October 1654, the *Petition of the Three Colonels*, signed by Thomas Saunders, John Okey and Matthew Alured, presented a critique of the Protectorate. Within a one-page document, the authors employed rather emotive language, sought to ‘humbly...minde your Highness of the Tyranny against which we engaged, and of the Fundamental Rights and Freedomes we intended to redeem out of the Tyrants hands, with the price of our blood’ it was asserted that Cromwell possessed a power that was ‘far greater than the king ever had’. The subsequent section demonstrated the extent of Cromwell’s authority as Lord Protector, and the assertion was raised, ‘how little less this is in effect an absolute Negative Voice[...]is not hard to judg.’<sup>81</sup>

In this climate of discontent, Aspinwall published *A PREMONITION Of Sundry Sad Calamities Yet to Come. Grounded upon an Explication of the twenty fourth Chapter of ISAIAH* on November 30, 1654, that seemingly offered a critical assessment of the emerging regime and its leader, Cromwell. Aspinwall’s argument, drawn from his interpretation of the prophecy in the book of Isaiah, distinctly demonstrated his commitment to neo-Roman liberty. The transition into a Protectorate, Aspinwall sought to

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<sup>79</sup> Nedham, *The Excellencie of a Free-State*, 155

<sup>80</sup> Oliver Cromwell, ‘Speech to the First Protectorate Parliament on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1654,’ in *Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches: with elucidations* Thomas Carlyle Volume II (New York: Scribner, Welford, and Company, 1871), 20-30.

<sup>81</sup> Colonel Thomas Saunders, *To His Highness the Lord Protector, &c. and our General. the Humble Petition of several Colonels of the Army* (1654).

demonstrate, posed a dual threat; it threatened people's freedom once more but also risked incurring God's wrath as the nation appeared to be deviating away from Christ.

In *A PREMONITION Of Sundry Sad Calamities*, Aspinwall produced an exegesis of chapter 24 to forewarn the present government that their actions ran counter to divine will, which would consequently lead to punishment. Within the text, Aspinwall insinuated that the nation had regressed towards a form of governance resembling a monarchy.

### 3.10 Isaiah 24

To summarise the chapter, Isaiah presented a prophetic vision of impending judgement that would befall the entire world, resulting in its utter desolation. The vision portrayed the apostasy of those who had 'defiled' the earth and 'broken the everlasting covenant'.<sup>82</sup> The vision depicted the ruin of a city which would lie desolate. Additionally, the prophet warned of treachery and foresaw the looming perils of 'FEAR, and the PIT, and the SNARE' that awaited the people.<sup>83</sup> The earth itself was shown to be broken and shaken, while those who held positions of power would face retribution.<sup>84</sup> The chapter concluded with a glimmer of hope for a future restoration, offering solace to the reader in an apocalyptic landscape.

To render the prophecy more applicable to contemporary political events, Aspinwall, similarly to his interpretation of the prophecies in Daniel, focused on exploring the Hebraic language employed within the text. In Aspinwall's rendition, which stemmed from his translation, the emphasis shifted from the judgement faced by the earth to a particular 'land' within the prophecy. The shift occurred from Aspinwall's identification that the Hebrew term for 'earth' also signified 'land'.<sup>85</sup> By simply substituting 'earth' with 'land,' Aspinwall's interpretation of the prophecy gained contemporary relevance.

Aspinwall clarified that the prophet had not disclosed which land he was referring to but had warned the reader that if they recognised themselves in the sins and covenant breaking, then rest 'assured God hath reserved FEAR, or a PIT, or a SNARE' for them.<sup>86</sup> Aspinwall believed this confirmed it was a specific country instead of the Earth.

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<sup>82</sup> Isa 24:1-23 (King James Version). Aspinwall began the text with a copy of the chapter. William Aspinwall, *A PREMONITION Of Sundry Sad Calamities Yet to Come. Grounded upon an Explication of the twenty fourth Chapter of ISAIAH* (1654), 1-2.

<sup>83</sup> Isa 24:17; Ibid, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Isa 24: 19-22; Ibid, 2.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 4-6.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 'Preface'.

To underscore the comparison, Aspinwall drew attention to the prophet's depiction of the 'land' mentioned in the passage. The 'land' was described as an island surrounded by sea, with its dominion extending to encompass other territories. This imagery is particularly evident in verses 16 to 18, where the prophet outlined that the land would experience the 'dissolution of several formes of Government' through treachery.<sup>87</sup>

It becomes increasingly apparent that Aspinwall was alluding to recent events, namely the nation's transformation from a monarchy to a commonwealth and its current status under a protectorate form of government. This veiled reference to England's political shifts served as a means for Aspinwall to draw parallels between biblical prophecy and contemporary political events. Through those parallels, Aspinwall was able to condemn Cromwell.

Verse 17 was particularly relevant for Aspinwall's critique of the Protectorate. The verse stated, 'Terror and pit and snare await you, people of the earth,' assumed a profound meaning in Aspinwall's interpretation. He related it to three successive changes in government that would transpire before the land was eventually destroyed. To underscore his point, Aspinwall deliberately capitalised each form 'FEAR, and the PIT, and the SNARE'.

According to Aspinwall's exposition, the first form of government, represented by the word 'FEAR', symbolised the state of terror and tyranny that the nation had endured.<sup>88</sup> The second form, embodied by 'PIT', 'was purposely contrived to obviate the Tyranny of the first'. Aspinwall continued to add that 'it is called a PIT, to shew that it is of a lower constitution then the former was' and emphasised that it was a place of refuge from the tyrant.<sup>89</sup>

The land's third and final earthly government was symbolised by 'SNARE'. This term was chosen due to its concealed nature. As Aspinwall wrote, the 'SNARE' would operate in 'secret and hidden' places. It would be 'covered over with such specious and fair pretences, that men shall not discern their Snare, till they be taken in it.'<sup>90</sup> As with snares used to trap birds, escaping from its power would prove challenging for both the people and the nation. Notably, Aspinwall explained that the third government would share similarities with the first regime, as it would also possess a higher constitution because of

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>88</sup> The page numbers are incorrect and should be page 18 but it is shown as 24.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 25.

its 'external pomp and glory of fame'.<sup>91</sup> It could also be implied that the Instrument of Government signified a 'higher constitution'. In Aspinwall's analysis, he has employed biblical verses to critique the evolving political landscape. However, in the next section, Aspinwall provided a more comprehensive analysis that reinforced his perspective on current circumstances and served as an ominous warning to Cromwell.

Aspinwall pointed out that verses 19 to 20 illustrated the eventual demise of each government, remarkably aligning with the recent changes in government. The verses stated, '*the foundations of the land do shake. The land is sore bruised: the land is utterly broken, the land is quite displaced. The land shall reel to and fro like a drunkard and shall be removed like a cottage*'.<sup>92</sup> Aspinwall emphasised the significance of the seven adjectives within the verses, particularly focusing on the terms '*shaking, bruising, breaking, displacing, reeling, removing, falling*.' According to his analysis, these descriptors precisely delineated the fate of each government.<sup>93</sup>

Beginning with the first government, which he characterised as one of fear and an 'ancient form of Government,' Aspinwall posited that this government will come to an end as it experiences profound shaking, akin to the 'shaking of the foundations' which will 'put a period to that Government'.<sup>94</sup> By referencing an 'ancient' institution, Aspinwall referred to monarchical rule. An institution that Aspinwall and the Fifth Monarchists had argued had ended in England.

The destruction of the second form, identified as the 'PIT', is particularly intriguing, and Aspinwall's exposition on the point went into much greater depth. According to Aspinwall, the land would be bruised, broken and displaced.<sup>95</sup> Aspinwall began by explaining the significance of the term 'bruised', which, in Hebrew, he explained, signified the 'collision of two hard things together'.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, he asserted that the bruising would be inflicted by the sword, likening it to a rod of iron, which, as we have seen in previous chapters, was understood to mean civil or military powers. During the period of the second government, Aspinwall contended that 'by the power of the Militia, the Representative of that land shall be sore bruised'. The second descriptor, 'utterly broken' was even more revealing. Aspinwall focused on what the word implied, suggesting it signified to 'evacuate

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 25

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 26

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 27.

or break’, adding that the government would be broken or dissolved ‘upon some semblance or pretence of condition’.<sup>97</sup> The final point was that land would become ‘quite displaced’, which is significant to Aspinwall’s analysis. He argued that ‘after the dissolution of the first Representative, there will be a second’.

Moreover, this displacement was characterised by diverging from customary norms, marking a departure from established traditions.<sup>98</sup> Aspinwall’s critique was undeniably aimed at the dissolution of the Rump Parliament, and while it had surrendered its authority, he believed that the Nominated Assembly had followed a similar trajectory. Both representatives were removed from authority under false pretences.

The third government, referred to as the ‘SNARE’, Aspinwall portrayed as being a drunkard, symbolising its unsettled and tumultuous nature. He drew a parallel by likening this government to the curse of Cain, suggesting that it would exist in a state of woe and fearfulness towards all forms of governance.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, due to the apostasy and betrayal of the governors who had assumed ‘to it self a legislative power’, they had effectively placed themselves outside Christ’s jurisdiction.<sup>100</sup> In Aspinwall’s estimation, this government would fall, and then the nation would submit to Christ. Aspinwall paid particular attention to the ‘High-One’, writing that from the passage, it ‘seems, that this *Most high one* hath the command of the Militia of that land’ and that he would be punished alongside his army.<sup>101</sup> However, he did add the caveat that he was unsure whether they would repent and God would show mercy.<sup>102</sup>

Aspinwall was arguing that the nation had once again reverted to a government like a monarchy and, in turn, back to a position of subjugation under the rule of a single-person. In the text, Aspinwall also revealed a commitment to the notion of consent, which is fundamental to neo-Roman liberty.

### **3.11 Consent**

In Aspinwall’s vision of a godly commonwealth, the power to make laws would reside with Christ. His rationale stemmed from the belief that entrusting legislative power to people resulted in widespread abuse and the erosion of individual freedoms. However, it is

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 30.

noteworthy that Aspinwall maintained that the godly commonwealth would still adhere to principles of consent.

When discussing the context behind the Nominated Assembly surrendering its powers, Aspinwall wrote that through ‘the treachery of the Instruments’, the nation had effectively violated ‘an everlasting covenant.’<sup>103</sup> The regicide allowed the nation to change its government and create a covenant with Christ consenting to live under his governance and according to ‘no laws but his laws,’ as the Israelites had done during the Hebrew Commonwealth.<sup>104</sup> The idea of consent drawn from biblical Israelites consenting to live under God’s laws when presented to them by Moses was also acknowledged by Harrington.<sup>105</sup> In 1656, Aspinwall reasserted that only in a commonwealth when sovereignty was with Christ could the people be free from the ‘oppression from higher powers.’<sup>106</sup>

Aspinwall considered Cromwell, like Charles, to have usurped power and placed the nation not only into a state of slavery but also in a dangerous position. The Protectorate went against Christ and the commonwealth principles that Aspinwall had defended in 1653. The perceived political transgressions committed by Cromwell led Aspinwall to develop a republican exclusivist argument that also applied to all forms of single-person rule.

### **3.12 Republican Exclusivism**

The first chapter explained the transition toward republican exclusivism in 1650s England, traditionally ascribed to the influence of Greek and Roman literature. However, Nelson has proposed an alternative origin for the shift in perspective, proposing a connection to a renewed interest in Hebraic commentaries that became increasingly accessible in the Western world throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>107</sup> As previously alluded to, a republican exclusivist argument, according to Nelson, emerged from the commentaries written to reconcile a conflict between Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Samuel 8:9.

In Deuteronomy 17:14, it was recorded that when the Israelites entered the promised land, they would say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,’ this

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 7-11.

<sup>105</sup> Ronald Beiner, ‘James Harrington on the Hebrew Commonwealth,’ *The Review of Politics*, Spring 2014, Vol. 76, No. 2 (Spring 2014), 176.

<sup>106</sup> William Aspinwall, *The legislative power is Christ’s peculiar prerogative. Proved from the 9<sup>th</sup> Isaiah* (London 1656), 41.

<sup>107</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 26.

was followed by God's command that they should not select a foreign person but someone from amongst them.<sup>108</sup> The passages appear to imply God's acceptance of kingship; however, a conflict arose when the event subsequently took place, as recorded in 1 Samuel 8. The chapter explained that Samuel had grown old and it was time to appoint another leader. Both of Samuel's sons, Joel and Abijah, had proven themselves to be dishonest and had been discarded as potential replacements. In Samuel's discussion with the elders, they demanded that Samuel 'make us a king to judge us like all the nations'. Samuel's frustration with the people was noted, prompting him to pray to God. In response, God clarified that Samuel should not be angry because the people had rejected God's sovereignty over them and not Samuel's. God commands Samuel to do as they asked and reveal to the Israelites the characteristics of an earthly king.<sup>109</sup> Samuel detailed attributes such as the king's willingness to make their sons fight in his wars. He would take from their crops and vineyards and tax the people. A monarch would rule according to their desires, and the people would 'cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.'<sup>110</sup> The passage indicated that God was angry with the request.

During the medieval and Renaissance periods, two distinct lines of thought emerged to resolve the conflicting verses.<sup>111</sup> The first proposal argued that the type of king the Israelites wanted to reign over them was sinful as it contradicted God's instruction. The second argument centred on the idea that the sin lay in the Israelites request 'for a change of government.' This perspective supported the doctrine of the divine right of kings, contending that rejecting the king amounted to rejecting 'God's sovereignty.'<sup>112</sup> This line of reasoning was prevalent among theologians like Calvin, as it reinforced the concept of obedience and condemned any potential rebellion.<sup>113</sup> The wrongdoing was attributed to the Israelites within the debates, thus upholding kingship as a legitimate form of governance. However, in the 1650s, Milton introduced a fresh perspective that would undermine the monarchy's legitimacy.

Early traces of Milton's republican exclusivist argument, as outlined by Nelson, are discernable in his work *Defence of the People of England* (1651). The treatise was written in response to *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I* (1649), authored by Salmasius. The French

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<sup>108</sup> Deut 17: 14-15 (King James Version).

<sup>109</sup> 1 Sam 8:9 (King James Version).

<sup>110</sup> 1 Sam 8:18 (King James Version).

<sup>111</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 28-30

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

scholar produced *Defensio Regio* to uphold the divine right of kings and to condemn the regicide of Charles I. While it has already been noted that it was not until 1660 that Milton argued that monarchical rule was incompatible with liberty, for this chapter, the significance lies in the argument that Milton formulated in *Defence of the People of England*.<sup>114</sup>

In the text, Nelson asserted that Milton developed an alternative interpretation of kingship, drawing inspiration from the rabbinic commentary Devarim Rabbah. In the commentary on Deuteronomy 17:14, the Rabbi wrote that God had initially intended that the Israelites live ‘free from kings’ when they entered the promised land.<sup>115</sup> The Rabbi explained that ‘you did not desire so: “that snuffeth up the wind in her pleasure” (Jer.2:24), and “wind” is nothing but kingship. Whence this? As it is said, And, behold, the four winds of the heaven broke forth upon the great sea (Dan 7:2)’.

Furthermore, the Rabbis argued that they placed their trust in a man when the Israelites requested a king.<sup>116</sup> Milton employed this argument against Salmasius, asserting that ‘the act of bowing down to flesh and blood instead of God...is ...tantamount to idolatry’.<sup>117</sup> Thereby establishing a connection between monarchy and idolatry, a connection explored by Aspinwall several years later. However, Aspinwall’s republican exclusivist argument was constructed through his millenarian interpretation of Hebraic scripture and in response to the ever-changing political landscape.

On 14 April 1655, Aspinwall disseminated his exclusivist argument through the publication of *The Work of the Age: or The sealed Prophecies of Daniel opened and applied*. Several Fifth Monarchists had been imprisoned due to their criticism of the Protectorate at the time.<sup>118</sup> This was a period marked by considerable unrest within the nation. In the month preceding Aspinwall’s publication, royalist conspirators had attempted an uprising, famously known as Penruddock’s Uprising, named after Colonel John Penruddock, leader of the rebels in the southern regions.<sup>119</sup> Although the rebellion was swiftly suppressed, these uprisings underscored the ongoing threat posed by the royalists. Combined with the discontent voiced by those who had supported Cromwell, as evident in

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<sup>114</sup> Milton expressed this in *The Readie and Easie Way* (1660).

<sup>115</sup> Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, 35.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

<sup>118</sup> In 1654 there had been a series of arrests following Fifth Monarchist opposition to the Protectorate and rumours that they were preparing an uprising, while Major-General Harrison had been released but Feake and Rogers remained in prison. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 106-109.

<sup>119</sup> Hammersley, *James Harrington*, 69.



the *Petition of the Three Colonels* and the uprisings, this situation posed a significant threat to the regime's stability.<sup>120</sup>

In the text, Aspinwall revisited the Book of Daniel, with a particular focus on interpreting the prophecies found within the second chapter. He advanced an exclusivist argument in his interpretation by drawing a connection between single-person rule and idolatry. As a result, Aspinwall effectively delegitimised the existing regime and undermined any potential future attempts to restore the monarchy.

### **3.13 Daniel 2**

The second chapter was set in the court of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. The king had been troubled by a dream and demanded its interpretation. When the astrologers, sorcerers and wise men failed to do so, Nebuchadnezzar ordered that all the wise men in the kingdom should be killed. This order included Daniel, as the Israelites were in Babylonian captivity. Daniel prayed to God and was given the interpretation to give to the king. In the dream, the king had seen a great image, 'This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.'<sup>121</sup> The image had a head made of gold, a chest and arms of silver, a stomach and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet partly of iron and clay. Then the king saw a stone not cut by hand strike 'the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them into pieces'. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed together until nothing remained.<sup>122</sup> Daniel explained to the king that the dream predicted the rise and fall of four great monarchies. Each kingdom was represented by metal, and Nebuchadnezzar was gold. He concluded by informing the king that following the fall of the last monarchy, God would create an everlasting kingdom which would crush the others. Despite receiving a warning about the downfall of his kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar fixated on the portrayal of the golden statue. In response, he commissioned the construction of a statue in his likeness and ordered that the people worship the statue.

Within the development of the Protestant apocalyptic tradition, the chapter introduced the idea of the destruction of four kingdoms at the hands of God. Each metal represented a different period. The fall of four kingdoms was reasserted in Daniel chapter 7. Following the Reformation, theologians such as Mede asserted the four kingdoms were

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>121</sup> Dan 2:31 (The Geneva Bible 1599).

<sup>122</sup> Dan 2:45 (The Geneva Bible 1599).

‘Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome’.<sup>123</sup> In the dream, the statue was destroyed by a stone cut ‘without hands’, which was taken to represent the virgin birth of Christ, and Mede considered the dream to allude to the second coming of Christ.<sup>124</sup> The focus for Aspinwall, however, was on the statue itself and what that represented.

According to Aspinwall, the interpretation of the dream presented ‘the true and proper nature of all earthly formes of Government’ during the four monarchies.<sup>125</sup> More significantly, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream revealed God’s view towards monarchical rule. The four monarchies were illustrated by the figure of a man, which Aspinwall asserted showed monarchical rule to be the invention of men. This was also confirmed in Genesis 10, where it was stated that Nimrod, through the power of his sword, ‘erected a kingdom and Government, according to his own mind’. Likewise, following a similar pattern, the ‘four great monarchs threw out their predecessors, by the power of the sword’.<sup>126</sup> However, when Nebuchadnezzar took the Israelites captive, he effectively usurped Christ’s sovereignty and erected what Aspinwall referred to as an image-government. In this form of government, the people had to bow down to an earthly king and were subject to their laws. It was this form of image-government that Aspinwall stated has been replicated by every monarch ever since. This interpretation prompted him to question the legitimacy of kingship. As he wrote:

though I cannot say these images and Formes of Government of mens devising, are those images forbidden in the second commandment (for the word is not the same, nor do civil formes of Government imediately concern the worship of God,) yet this is observable, that in the next chapter, Nebuchadnezzar frames to himself a Golden Image, for divine worship, semblance thereunto, which hath ever since been the wofull concomitant, and bitter fruit or result of such image Government.<sup>127</sup>

While Aspinwall did not mention Milton, his suggestion that monarchy resembled a type of idolatry indicates a parallel with the connection Milton drew in *A Defence of the People*. To further reinforce his argument, Aspinwall included a warning from Romans 12:2, when Paul cautioned ‘not to conform to the world’ as he had noticed that ‘it hath been the constant practice of Gentile Nations, to modle their Divine Worship, and Church administrations, according to the form of Civil Governments.’<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Gerhard Pfandl, ‘Interpretations of the Kingdom of God in Daniel 2:44,’ *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 258.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, 258.

<sup>125</sup> Aspinwall, *The Work of the age*, 7.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

Aspinwall took a cautious approach in framing his argument. However, it is evident that he believed that monarchical rule constituted a form of idolatry and was a sin. It is worth noting that although his text seemed directed at kingship without explicitly mentioning the Protectorate, it was published alongside his earlier text, *A PREMONITION Of Sundry Sad Calamities Yet to Come*, which first appeared several months earlier. The address and main body of the text remained unchanged, but the work was given the new title of *THUNDER FROM HEAVEN Against the BACK-SLIDERS and APOSTATES Of the TIMES*.

As a reminder, Aspinwall had critiqued the Protectorate through his interpretation of Isaiah 24. In the text, he highlighted the similarities between the two regimes. They were both noted for their external pomp and seeking of glory. They each had a higher constitution, and both usurped power from Christ. It would certainly appear that the decision to publish the two texts simultaneously was another way to undermine the regime as it made the connection between monarchy, the protectorate and idolatry.<sup>129</sup>

Aspinwall's exclusivist argument indeed bears some similarities with the arguments presented by Milton. However, what sets Aspinwall apart is his millenarian interpretation of the Old Testament. This perspective enabled him to pursue a distinct line of argument that avoided the complex debates surrounding kingship that had engaged theologians and political thinkers from the sixteenth century onward.

So far, the chapter has revolved around Aspinwall's defence of the regicide, his criticism of the Protectorate and his turn towards republican exclusivism. These discussions reveal an interpretation of freedom that is suggestive of neo-Roman liberty. Moving forward, the chapter will shift its focus towards exploring the specific type of commonwealth that Aspinwall envisaged would safeguard and, simultaneously, progress toward Christ's millennium reign. This was a theocratic commonwealth based on the division of power, virtue and rule of law.

### **3.14 Shifts in Republican Discourse**

By 1656, criticism towards the Protectorate was on the rise, as there was growing resentment towards the regime. Paul Rahe aptly noted that 'popular confidence' in Cromwell waned during this period.<sup>130</sup> Republican figures like Nedham, who had

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<sup>129</sup> It is uncertain whether Aspinwall's or the printer's decision. Both tracts were printed for Livewell Chapman, a sympathiser of the Fifth Monarchy movement, if it was Chapman's decision the impact is still the same as the connection is made between king/protector and idolatry.

<sup>130</sup> Rahe, *Against Throne and Altar*, 226.

previously lauded Cromwell's efforts in restoring order to the nation following the Nominated Assembly's replacement, now criticised Cromwell's retention of powers akin to those of a monarch.<sup>131</sup> Comparing the state of the nation to the expulsion of kings in ancient Rome, Nedham highlighted that the state had not regained its liberty as 'onely the name of King was expelled, but not the Thing,' until that time, all the powers of kingship remained with the senate.

Opposition towards the Protectorate remained consistent amongst the Fifth Monarchists. Cromwell had received intelligence about several meetings between the Commonwealthmen and the Fifth Monarchists and noted they 'were intent on building a broad coalition'.<sup>132</sup> It was reported that during one of the meetings, a manuscript copy of Vane's *Healing Question*, which Vane wrote while he was in prison alongside Rogers, 'was read out loud apparently in the hope that it would provide a foundation for the articulation of a common program of reform'. Subsequently, the text was published in May 1656.<sup>133</sup>

As Hammersley has observed, the advent of the Protectorate marked a notable shift in republican discourse. Writers during the period either penned works to condemn the regime or presented alternative viewpoints.<sup>134</sup> Several publications went into print that have significantly influenced the English republican tradition, such as Nedham's *The Excellencie of a Free-State: or The Right Constitution of a Common-Wealth*, printed in June, and Harrington's *Oceana*, published in September 1656.

During this same period, Aspinwall actively engaged in these debates, contributing his thoughts and perspectives. His work, *The Legislative Power is Christ's peculiar prerogative. Proved from the 9<sup>th</sup> Isaiah*, was printed on 20 August 1656. In the opening pages of the text, Aspinwall remarked that while his model for a commonwealth might not be fully developed, he had been compelled to put his thoughts into print. He explained that despite widespread criticism directed at 'this and that Government,' in the aftermath of the regicide, there had been a noticeable absence of credible suggestions concerning creating a new political body.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth*, 46.

<sup>132</sup> Rahe, *Against Throne and Altar*, 227.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 227.

<sup>134</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 86.

<sup>135</sup> Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power*, 'Preface'.

### 3.15 Christ's Authority in Civil and Religious Matters

However, before Aspinwall could discuss his vision for a godly commonwealth, he chose to engage in a debate that had been raised by Nedham surrounding Christ's authority in religious and secular matters. Nedham's claim threatened to undermine the authority of the saints if left unchallenged.

In *The Excellencie of a Free-State*, Nedham argued that one of the errors in government, and an error that was the foundation of tyranny, was the 'Christian policie' to twist 'the Spiritual power (as they call it) with the Worldly and secular interest of the State.'<sup>136</sup> Nedham underscored that in John 18:36, it was documented that Jesus himself had declared, 'my kingdom is not of this world.'<sup>137</sup> Therefore signifying that Christ's authority did not extend beyond the ecclesiastical realm into the civil sphere. Furthermore, in his tract, *A True State of the case of the Commonwealth*, Nedham attributed the downfall of the Nominated Assembly to 'a Party of men,' primarily made up of Fifth Monarchy Men, 'who assumed to themselves only the name of Saints,' intending to 'to twist the Spiritual and Civil interest both in one.'<sup>138</sup>

Aspinwall constructed his defence by drawing from the book of Isaiah, specifically verses 6 and 7, which state:

For unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given: and the government is upon his shoulder, and he shall call his name, Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The prince of peace. The increase of his government and peace shall have none end: he shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to stablish it with judgement, and with justice, from henceforth, even forever: the seal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.<sup>139</sup>

Aspinwall explained that the word 'government', translated from the Hebrew as *hammisrah*, only appeared in this verse. He elucidated that the term 'government' was a derivative of the word associated with 'princely and prevailing power'.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, the utilisation of the titles 'Councillor' and 'Prince of Peace' was in connection to the 'Throne of David,' a phrase never employed in the Bible to denote ecclesiastical authority, collectively indicated that the government addressed by the Prophet pertained to a secular or civil context.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Nedham, *The Excellencie of a free-state*, 148.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 148.

<sup>138</sup> Rahe, *Against Throne and Altar*, 230; Marchamont Nedham, *A True State of the Case*, 12-21, 25-27.

<sup>139</sup> Isaiah 9 (The Geneva Bible 1599).

<sup>140</sup> Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power*, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 4, 9.

According to Aspinwall's interpretation, the verse alluded to three distinct types of government resting upon Christ's shoulders. First, a universal government possessing authority 'over all the creation and Workmanship of God' was divided into the law of nature and the providential power.<sup>142</sup> The second type of governance was related to the church, emphasising Christ's dominion over the saints. In his analysis, Aspinwall asserted that within the passage, Isaiah explicitly referred to the last category of governance, which pertained to civil government. Aspinwall posited that historically, authority in this sphere had been wielded by 'Rulers and Princes...over their subjects.' In this capacity, Christ 'is conversant about the bodies and Estates of men, and the well ordering of the Commonwealth in Justice and Judgment.'<sup>143</sup>

Furthermore, Aspinwall contended that Christ had already 'exercised Civil power' as proven during the Jewish Commonwealth.<sup>144</sup> During that time, Christ 'hath given Laws, Statutes and Judgements, and granted Commission unto meet Officers to execute the same; and therefore the power of Civil Government doth belong to him of right.' The delegation of power was also demonstrated when the laws were given to Moses following the Israelites' deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Christ continued to hold legislative power, while executive powers were delegated to Moses.

Aspinwall believed that once the image-government had been destroyed, as prophesied in Isaiah 1.26, Christ would 'restore Judges unto his people as at the first, and Counsellors as at the beginning' and then 'his people [will] have no laws nor judgements but his.'<sup>145</sup> This proved to Aspinwall that Christ's dominion will again encompass both the 'church and civil state.' The argument that Aspinwall developed to challenge Nedham reiterated that the commonwealth envisioned by Aspinwall was distinct from the one Christ would establish on earth shortly. While separate from the divine rule expected in Christ's millennial reign, Aspinwall's vision still emphasised that it would be theocratic and based on the Hebrew commonwealth.

### **3.16 A Theocratic Commonwealth**

The influence of the Hebrew Bible on Aspinwall's intellectual thought is evident throughout his works. His analysis of the books of Daniel and Isaiah demonstrated his thorough engagement with the original Hebrew texts. One of the reforms championed by

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 38.

Aspinwall was promoting the learning of Hebrew, as he believed the language would be spoken in the new millennium. Consequently, it is unsurprising that, similarly to Rogers, Aspinwall also considered the Hebrew commonwealth a source of inspiration for a new political model.

In republican thought, the importance of self-government can initially appear at odds with the Fifth Monarchists' preference for a theocratic commonwealth. The term 'theocracy' was coined by Josephus (c. AD37-c.AD100), who sought to comprehend the Israelite system of governance in classical terms during his exile in Rome amidst the Jewish War (66 to 73 BCE). Josephus introduced this term to delineate the Israelite system, which did not align with Aristotle's typology of governments. Aristotle defined government according to two criteria. The first was based on the number of people who held sovereign power, and the second was concerned with whether this was a good or bad government. The answer depended on whether it acted in the people's best interests or the rulers' own interests.<sup>146</sup> The issue Josephus faced when explaining the Israelite government was that God alone was sovereign in Israel, hence his addition of theocracy.

However, as Samuel Hayim Brody has highlighted, proponents of theocracy did not inherently perceive this form of governance as contradictory to the classifications set out by Aristotle. While acknowledging that God was sovereign, it was recognised that to have a functioning government, those in authority would become 'stewards, interpreters, or representatives of God's will'.<sup>147</sup> According to Brody's analysis, any of the governmental structures delineated by Aristotle could potentially be characterised as theocratic. Additionally, Brody underscored that 'throughout Jewish, Christian and Muslim history [...] monarchical regimes have based themselves on theocratic rationales almost without exception'.<sup>148</sup>

According to Aspinwall and the broader Fifth Monarchist movement, the power transfer was predicated upon the fulfilment of prophecy from Daniel chapter 7. In his *Explication of Daniel*, Aspinwall argued that following a 'great turn of providence', the saints would receive the kingdom, marking the culmination 'of the fourth monarchy'.<sup>149</sup> Within this interpretation, slaying the little horn, symbolising Charles I, effectively

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<sup>146</sup> According to Aristotle's typology -good government: rule of one, monarchy; rule of a few, aristocracy and the rule of the many, polity. Bad government: Rule of one, tyranny; rule of a few, oligarchy; rule of the many, democracy. See Rachel Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 3.

<sup>147</sup> Samuel Hayim Brody, 'Theocracy as Monarchy and Anarchy,' in *Is Judaism Democratic?* (ed). Leonard J. Greenspoon (Purdue University Press,2018), 92.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, 92.

<sup>149</sup> Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application*, 11.

reinstated sovereignty to Christ. While legislative power remained vested in Christ, executive authority was delegated to the saints to govern on Christ's behalf. As Brody illustrated, in a theocracy, those in positions of authority were considered as 'interpreters' of God's will. This was certainly evident in Aspinwall's interpretation as he posited that the saints possessed ministerial power that would allow them 'to act and execute the Laws of Righteousness and Judgement given by him. And this power is committed unto States and Rulers, and all sorts of Officers both of higher and lower rank.'<sup>150</sup>

Furthermore, Aspinwall emphasised the interpretive role that the saints would assume. While he acknowledged the 'perfection' and justness of God's law, he also recognised that the laws were 'but few in number'.<sup>151</sup> To counter this, Aspinwall underscored that the laws could be 'extended in the application of them, by way of proportion, unto all cases and actions, that do or can fall out, at Sea or at Land; all circumstances being duly weighed, and rightly applied'.<sup>152</sup> The saints were thereby tasked with the duty of interpreting the law.

The impact of Aspinwall's time spent in America was particularly relevant to his argument for law reform. In the text, Aspinwall referred to his publication of Cotton's *An Abstract OF Lawes* (1655).<sup>153</sup> Contained within the tract were Cotton's interpretation of biblical law and their potential applications, which Aspinwall stated Cotton had presented to 'the Colonie of Massachusetts in New England, and commended to the General Court there'.<sup>154</sup> Cotton's expansive scope encompassed issues ranging from inheritance, commerce, and trespass to witchcraft, treason, and foreign affairs. Aspinwall perceived the *Abstract* as a testimony to the 'sufficiency of the word of God alone, to direct his people in judgement of all causes, both Civill and criminall'.<sup>155</sup> This underscored the role of the saints as instruments of divine governance within a theocratic framework.

As observed in the previous chapters, the corruptive influence of power on individuals in positions of authority was a pressing issue. In conjunction with the separation of legislative and executive powers, Aspinwall further advocated for an additional division within the executive branch of government. This measure aimed to provide an additional safeguard against potential governmental corruption. He proposed

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<sup>150</sup> Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power*, 20.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>153</sup> John Cotton, *An abstract of laws* (London: 1655).

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*, 'Address to the Reader'.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, 'Address to the Reader'.



two categories: deliberative and active, each fulfilling distinct functions within the government structure. The ‘great council or representative of a state or nation would hold the deliberative power.’ The representative body would be entrusted with powers of sovereignty, as Aspinwall indicated the ‘council’ would address:

matters that concern Publick tranquility and Peace of the State; to negotiate with Forraign Princes and States; to conclude of peace and war; To order the Militia; To empower fit Officers for the service of the Commonwealth, and to limit their power, To call all Officers, higher or lower, to an account, and if there be just cause to displace them.<sup>156</sup>

The great counsel or representative was the highest power in ‘respect of the Peoples and Subjects; yet it is a Ministerial and Subordinate Power, in respect of the Messiah, the Law-giver’.

The executive body, or the active part, would execute ‘Judgement and Righteousness.’ Although it wielded ‘a Lordly Ruling Power,’ this branch was deemed ‘subordinate to the former.’<sup>157</sup> Comprising of ‘all judges and justices, and other inferior Officers, both of higher and lower rank,’ this body was tasked with executing their respective duties following ‘the Laws and Rules of the Great Law-giver’. Aspinwall further underscored his point by highlighting Deuteronomy 17:8, which allowed for the referral of complex cases to the great council ‘as they have the power to direct and determine, in hard and difficult cases of judgement’.<sup>158</sup>

By proposing the division of the executive branches of power, Aspinwall sought to establish a system in which distinct functions and responsibilities were clearly defined. The separation of powers was intended to prevent any single entity from acquiring absolute authority, thus mitigating the potential for abuses of power. In addition, another essential mechanism he suggested was the implementation of elections.

### **3.17 Elections**

The influence of the Hebrew Commonwealth was also evident in Aspinwall’s recommendation to implement an electoral process. One of the criticisms Nedham had levelled at those wanting to replicate the Hebrew Commonwealth was an apparent lack of election. Nedham wrote that there were ‘so few visible foot-steps of the people’s Election’ from its creation. It was not until after the period of the Judges that God appeared ‘to

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>157</sup> Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power*, 21.

<sup>158</sup> Deuteronomy 17:8 (New Kings James Version), ‘If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses.’

forbear the use of his Prerogative, and leave them to an exercise of their own natural Rights and Liberties, to choose a new Government and Governour by suffrage and compact.’<sup>159</sup> Aspinwall refuted Nedham’s claim by arguing that elections had been an integral part of the Hebrew Commonwealth since the time of Moses.

The process through which members of the godly commonwealth would be selected was ‘according to Christ’s appointment and by the suffrage of the people.’<sup>160</sup> Referencing the Hebrew Commonwealth, Aspinwall elucidated that ‘this is Christ’s method: the people first chuse the men, then Moses (the Supreme power in that Commonwealth) approveth and impowereth them, and Christ Jesus qualifieth them with suitable Gifts, and spirits them for their places.’<sup>161</sup> Following the election of their representatives, in both the deliberative and active branches, the individuals were to be presented before Christ and the saints. Christ would then equip them with suitable gifts per their designated roles.<sup>162</sup>

### 3.18 Virtue

As we have seen in the first two chapters, while most English republicans during the 1650s agreed on the need for virtuous rulers to limit corruption within the commonwealth, republican thinkers were divided over how best to achieve this. For instance, Harrington believed even the most virtuous person could succumb to corruption over time. He underscored the importance of the rule of law and superstructures, such as rotation, to prevent this. The second group consisted of individuals primarily relying on virtue alone to mitigate corruption. This perspective was expanded upon by godly republicans, such as Vane, who insisted that those in government positions should be virtuous and godly. Both Rogers and Cary agreed with this viewpoint, highlighting the indispensable role of virtue in upholding the commonwealth. Aspinwall similarly echoed this sentiment.

During the debates in 1653 regarding whether members of the Nominated Assembly should be elected or selected, there were discussions over how many men should be chosen. At the time, Harrison proposed mirroring the structure of the Jewish Sanhedrin, citing Exodus 24:1 and Numbers 11:24, which consisted of seventy men.<sup>163</sup> Aspinwall, reflecting on those discussions, rejected the idea of a specific numerical quota, drawing

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<sup>159</sup> Nedham, *The Excellencie of a free-state*, 132.

<sup>160</sup> Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power*, 22-23.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, 22.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 42.

<sup>163</sup> Exodus 24:1 (King James Version), ‘Now He said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar’; Numbers 11:24 ‘So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle.’

from his interpretation of Deuteronomy 1:13, which urged the inclusion of ‘Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, I will make them rulers over you.’<sup>164</sup> Aspinwall’s emphasis lay on the necessity of appointing ‘wise and practical men,’ aligning with the virtues expounded by Vane, Rogers and Cary, such as ‘men of power and courage’ and ‘men of truth’.<sup>165</sup> However, he also highlighted from the passage that the men must be chosen amongst themselves.<sup>166</sup>

Furthermore, Aspinwall also reiterated that the ‘people’ had ‘free choice’. While he did not outline the mechanisms for organising these elections, he emphasised that only individuals ‘in fellowship with the church’ were deemed eligible to participate in the electoral process or stand for election.<sup>167</sup> Notably, during this era, restricting government participation was widespread. Even the Levellers, who have been lauded as precursors of ‘modern democrats’ because they called for ‘universal manhood suffrage’, excluded two categories: servants or wage-labourers and alms-takers.<sup>168</sup> However, as Keith Thomas highlighted, ambiguity existed during the period regarding the definition of those terms, and whether the Levellers would have excluded these groups remains subject to debate. As Mohamed Feisal observed, even Milton, a staunch proponent of popular sovereignty, was somewhat ambiguous when defining who constituted ‘the people’.<sup>169</sup>

Similarly, Nedham advocated for the foundation of government on the principle of free elections, underscoring that this did not encompass a ‘promiscuous Body of the People, nor any part of the people who have forfeited their Right by Delinquency, Neutrality, or Apostacy.’<sup>170</sup> While Aspinwall and Nedham diverged in their approaches to the franchise, they shared a commitment to an electoral process.

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<sup>164</sup> Deu 1:13 (King James Version).

<sup>165</sup> Aspinwall, *The Legislative power*, 24.

<sup>166</sup> Deu 1:13 (New King James Version), ‘Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.’

<sup>167</sup> Aspinwall, *The Legislative Power*, 24.

<sup>168</sup> Keith Thomas aimed to assess Professor C.B Macpherson’s challenge to the prevailing belief that the Levellers advocated for universal manhood suffrage. Macpherson argued that the exclusion of two categories left approximately ‘two-thirds of the adult male population’ without a vote. Macpherson countered the idea that these exclusions were introduced as a compromise during the Putney debates. Instead, he asserted that the Levellers never intended to promote universal male suffrage. While Thomas emphasised the absence of evidence for either argument, he noted the ambiguity of the term ‘servant’ during the period. Furthermore, he provided evidence indicating that, in certain cases, men receiving alms could participate in the electoral process. See Keith Thomas, ‘The Levellers and the Franchise,’ in *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660*, ed. G. E. Aylmer (London: The Macmillan Press, 1974), 57-78.

<sup>169</sup> Feisal Mohamed, *Sovereignty: Seventeenth -Century England and the Making of the Modern Political Imaginary* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2020), 93.

<sup>170</sup> Nedham, *The Excellencie of a free-state*, 71.

The restrictive criteria proposed by Aspinwall over selecting individuals in positions of power were influenced by his millenarian perspective. He posited that the persistent corrupting influence of power would endure until the nation wholly adhered to Christ's law and jurisdiction, an event he anticipated during the millennium. This susceptibility to corruption was attributed to the ongoing presence of the 'old foundations,' signifying the continued existence of existing laws and statutes. Aspinwall acknowledged that even the saints might struggle to 'act vigorously for Christ; as long as these old foundations persisted'.<sup>171</sup>

In addition, Aspinwall emphasised the significance of replacing the current body of laws with those of Christ to ensure the preservation of the Commonwealth. Consequently, the rule of law emerged as a pivotal element within Aspinwall's republican ideology. However, the final section will demonstrate that instead of drawing inspiration from classical Greece and Rome, Aspinwall's principles were once again rooted in Hebraic texts.

### **3.19 Rule of Law**

As we have seen in Rogers' vision of a godly commonwealth, his millenarian belief underpinned his call for law reform. However, he produced an argument that, in part, was reinforced by Cicero's philosophy. In antiquity, Cicero highlighted the significance of the rule of law, emphasising its role in unifying society and as a mechanism to restrain self-interest, thereby mitigating the potential for the abuse of power.<sup>172</sup>

The influence of Ciceronian philosophy was prevalent during the English republican debates of the 1650s, as Milton illustrated when discussing the origin of monarchy. Milton commented that it was not long before rulers abused their positions of power, introducing laws that would 'limit the authority of whom they chose to govern them.'<sup>173</sup> In response to instances where the laws were either 'not executed, or misapply'd,' the implementation of oaths and parliaments was deemed necessary to restrain the abuse of power.<sup>174</sup>

The importance of the rule of law was a crucial aspect of Aspinwall's republicanism. He also recognised the importance of the rule of law to maintain freedom. In agreement with republican authors of the time, the foundation of a true kingdom was its 'righteous

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>172</sup> Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, 16-35.

<sup>173</sup> Milton, *The Tenure*, 9.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 9.

and perfect Laws' and the 'due execution of those laws.'<sup>175</sup> However, whilst Milton's rule of law was founded on citizen participation, as the people had to create the body of laws, Aspinwall believed this enslaved the people. It was Aspinwall's perception that when a government was 'exercised by men,' meaning that they possessed the power to legislate, the people were subsequently dependent on man-made laws, and liberty was lost. If the commonwealth were established upon God's laws, acknowledged for their inherent righteousness and intended for the well-being of the people, genuine freedom would ensue.<sup>176</sup> Aspinwall argued that only in a theocratic commonwealth, wherein legislative authority is vested in Christ and executive power is delegated to the saints, could the populace and the nation collectively enjoy their restored liberties, consequently fostering a prosperous commonwealth.

### **3.20 Conclusions**

The impact of exile significantly affected the development of Aspinwall's republicanism. While in exile, he was afforded opportunities to engage in political matters and the practicalities of government. He actively participated in founding a new colony, its formation fundamentally predicated upon the collective commitment to abide by the statutes of Christ, thus effectively culminating in establishing a theocratic society. Nonetheless, his vision for a theocratic commonwealth did not transpire, and controversies marked his time in America. Viewing the regicide of 1649 as the fulfilment of prophecy, Aspinwall perceived the emergence of the new English Commonwealth as a significant opportunity to explore these ideas in far more depth. During his time in America, Aspinwall began to be influenced by leading theologian John Cotton. It was Cotton's meticulous elucidation of biblical jurisprudence and its potential applicability within the Massachusetts colony that served as the foundation for Aspinwall's propositions for legal reform following his return to England in 1652, signifying the beginning of his endeavours as a fervent agitator for the Fifth Monarchist movement.

Aspinwall was prompted to defend the Commonwealth and proved that the regicide and the alteration in government were divinely ordained. Notably, it was in his defence of the king's execution that the concept of neo-Roman liberty manifested prominently. Diverging from Milton's emphasis on popular sovereignty, which advocated for the people's right to alter their rulers, when necessary, Aspinwall delved into exploring the

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<sup>175</sup> Aspinwall, *An Explication and Application*, 20.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, 29

origins of governance. He underscored the usurpation of legislative authority by King Nebuchadnezzar and highlighted the subsequent abuse of laws by all monarchs, resulting in the gradual erosion of the people's liberty.

Therefore, it was only in a theocratic form of commonwealth, in which legislative power remained with Christ and the saints were given the power to execute the law and govern, that the people could be free. It is essential to highlight that Aspinwall also advocated the new commonwealth would be based on the notion of consent, as the people would be asked to agree to live under Christ's laws, drawing inspiration from the Hebrew Commonwealth. Significantly, the chapter demonstrated that a theocratic framework can be applied to a republican form of government.

Nebuchadnezzar's rule also served as the basis of Aspinwall's condemnation of Cromwell and the concept of single-person rule. From Aspinwall's perspective, Cromwell had returned the people and the nation to a state of slavery. Aspinwall also developed a republican exclusivist argument resembling Milton's earlier work, associating monarchy with idolatry. However, as shown, Aspinwall circumvented the controversy surrounding the commentaries of Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Samuel 8 by turning to the Book of Daniel. He constructed an argument, centring once again on Nebuchadnezzar, that connected monarchical government with idolatry, thereby deeming it an illegitimate form of government as a sin against God. An argument that he maintained throughout the period.

The chapter illustrates Aspinwall's significant contribution to the burgeoning republican discourse starting in 1656. Aspinwall put forth his vision for a theocratic commonwealth alongside authors such as Nedham, Vane and Harrington. Rooted in the ideals of the Hebrew Commonwealth, Aspinwall substantiated his propositions by drawing from Hebraic scripture. As with Rogers and Cary, he underscored the importance of virtuous rulers. Notably, Aspinwall advocated for specific mechanisms aimed at mitigating governmental corruption, advocating for measures such as the division of executive power and the implementation of electoral processes to uphold the integrity of government.



## Chapter 4. John Spittlehouse

### 4.1 Introduction

John Spittlehouse was a prolific Fifth Monarchist pamphleteer with a specific vision for the commonwealth. The chapter explores his works in detail in order to delve further into the interplay of theocratic ideals and concepts of sovereignty, examining their implications for the overarching notions of liberty and virtue.

During the Civil Wars, Spittlehouse actively served the Parliamentary cause alongside Cromwell, later becoming a Fifth Monarchist after he retired. However, our understanding of his life prior to embracing the Fifth Monarchist movement remains limited. Existing knowledge primarily rests on his associations with the New Model Army and his religious affiliations with the Baptist church. Despite composing fourteen texts, Spittlehouse has received minimal scholarly attention. The existing research has centred on his role within the Fifth Monarchy movement without comprehensively analysing his intellectual contribution to the period.<sup>1</sup> This chapter seeks to redress this oversight by meticulously examining Spittlehouse's distinctive form of godly republicanism.

Aligning with the overarching themes explored in previous chapters, the chapter will endeavour to exemplify the centrality of liberty within Spittlehouse's vision of a godly commonwealth. His conceptualisation necessitated a division between religious and civil spheres of power. Spittlehouse argued that replacing the Church of England with independent congregations organised through consent and elections could facilitate religious liberty and tolerance. These were principles that he also applied to the constitutional framework of the Commonwealth to secure civil liberty.

Republican virtue will also emerge as a fundamental element in Spittlehouse's godly republicanism. As with the previous authors discussed, Spittlehouse emphasised the necessity of virtuous rulers. However, his perspective bore a distinctive character, influenced by his role within the New Model Army. Drawing parallels with Rogers and Aspinwall, Spittlehouse ascribed significant agency to Cromwell in establishing the godly commonwealth. In contrast to other authors, Spittlehouse's engagement with criticism

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<sup>1</sup> The existing scholarship on Spittlehouse is limited to Capp's *The Fifth Monarchy Men* and also Capp's entry for the ODNB – see Capp, Bernard. 'Spittlehouse, John (bap. 1612, d. in or after 1657), Fifth Monarchist.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; Accessed 06 Aug. 2022. <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26157>.



directed towards Cromwell, particularly regarding his authority, emphasised the limitations of the legislator's role.

The chapter will outline the mechanisms proposed by Spittlehouse to combat corruption within the government, underscoring parallels with other republican authors. Furthermore, the chapter will extend its exploration of the theme of sovereignty, focusing on Spittlehouse's responses to theories of popular sovereignty, particularly on those who asserted that the Hebrew Commonwealth supported popular sovereignty. In contrast to republicans such as Milton, Spittlehouse argued that when legislative power is concentrated in the hands of men, it becomes the origin of tyrannical authority, resulting in the loss of freedom. As illustrated in the previous chapters, Spittlehouse maintained the conviction that liberty could only be attained within a theocratic commonwealth. The chapter will begin with a brief biography followed by some reflections on the stylistic elements employed by Spittlehouse in his texts.

## **4.2 Biography**

Like Cary, information relating to Spittlehouse's early life is relatively limited. His baptism is recorded on 10 June 1612 at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, but his date of birth is unknown.<sup>2</sup> Capp suggested that he may have been educated at the local grammar school and 'possibly by the future Baptist Hanserd Knollys, who taught there in the late 1620s.'<sup>3</sup> The possible connection with Knollys may account for Spittlehouse's commitment to the Baptist movement in his later life.

Following the outbreak of the First Civil War, Spittlehouse showed his allegiance to the parliamentary cause at the Battle of Gainsborough in July 1643. Despite the Royalists' victory in the battle, the event was significant as it not only revealed a 'sophistication of Parliamentary cavalry tactics' but also demonstrated Cromwell's leadership skills. Despite the lack of information about Spittlehouse's precise role at the Battle of Gainsborough in 1654, it was revealed in his petition to Cromwell that he engaged in armed combat to assist the army, resulting in the forfeiture of his estate following the defeat.<sup>4</sup> He drew inspiration from the leadership within the parliamentary army, a factor that subsequently shaped his conception of a godly commonwealth, as he

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<sup>2</sup> Capp, 'Spittlehouse'.

<sup>3</sup> In 1638, Knollys emigrated to Boston, Massachusetts, coinciding with the time that Aspinwall was there.

<sup>4</sup> 'Volume 68: March 18-31, 1654,' in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum, 1654*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1880), 37-69. British History Online, accessed August 23, 2023

articulated throughout the 1650s.<sup>5</sup> Following the emergence of the New Model Army in 1645, Spittlehouse was appointed as deputy to the Marshal-General in charge of military security.<sup>6</sup> After the defeat of Royalist troops at the Battle of Worcester in 1651, Spittlehouse retired from his position and became a Fifth Monarchist shortly after.<sup>7</sup>

Spittlehouse and his wife Mary were members of the General Baptist Church based in London, under the leadership of fellow Fifth Monarchist Peter Chamberlen.<sup>8</sup> Although the General Baptists had been outlawed during the reign of James I, the ‘tiny’ Church managed to expand and by 1626, the London congregation had increased to around one hundred and fifty members.<sup>9</sup> During the 1630s, the Church suffered persecution under the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1642 and the subsequent execution of Laud in 1645 allowed the Church to expand further.<sup>10</sup>

As a Fifth Monarchist, Spittlehouse authored fourteen tracts over the decade, each to exert influence on government policies. Nonetheless, his political opinions resulted in his repeated incarceration.<sup>11</sup> He was first imprisoned near the end of the Nominated Assembly. On 9 December 1653, Spittlehouse was summoned before the Committee for Examinations, accused of writing a petition relating to tithes and another that criticised John Thurloe. A *Petition with many thousand of Hands* was purportedly submitted to Parliament on 16 July.<sup>12</sup> Spittlehouse was implicated because the petition included a reference to his tract, *The Army Vindicated, in their late Dissolution of the Parliament: With several Cautions and Directions In point of a New REPRESENTATIVE* (1653). The petition referred to page nine of Spittlehouse’s text, which supported the abolition of tithes.

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<sup>5</sup> In February 1643, the Earl of Newcastle’s army occupied Newark, a key communication point between Oxford and the Earl’s northern forces. Despite a parliamentary attack, Newark remained a significant Royalist stronghold throughout the First Civil War. On July 20, 1643, Lord Willoughby secured Gainsborough ‘for Parliament’, disrupting communication between the Earl of Newcastle and Newark. The Battle of Gainsborough on July 28 demonstrated Parliamentarian cavalry tactical sophistication and Cromwell’s leadership, later commended by Spittlehouse in the 1650s. John West, ‘Oliver Cromwell and the Battle of Gainsborough July 1643’, in *Cromwelliana* ed. Peter Gaunt (1993), [https://www.olivercromwell.org/Cromwelliana\\_Archive/1993](https://www.olivercromwell.org/Cromwelliana_Archive/1993)

<sup>6</sup> How Spittlehouse came to be given this position or what the role entailed is unknown.

<sup>7</sup> Capp, ‘Spittlehouse’.

<sup>8</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 244-245.

<sup>9</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 114. The General Baptist Church has established itself in Lincoln, Coventry, Tiverton and Salisbury at the time.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 144. The disestablishment of the persecuting institutions of the Star Chamber and High Commission brought an end to the persecution of the minority sect during the 1640s & 1650s.

<sup>11</sup> Records show that on the 30 January 1653, Spittlehouse was called to appear before the Council regarding a situation relating to the Isle of Axholme, a geographical area in Lincolnshire. According to Capp, Spittlehouse had ‘clashed with authorities over ‘fen drainage’ - see Capp, ‘Spittlehouse’.

<sup>12</sup> For the petition see – J. Lay, *Exceptions many and just against two injurious petitions exhibited to the parliament: the one iuly 16. the other aug. 4. 1653. both of them not only against tithes, but against all forced or constrained maintenance of ministers, examined and found many waies faulty against piety and justice, and as such now discovered, by theophilus philadelphus* (1653).

In this particular excerpt, Spittlehouse voiced criticism of the Presbyterians' efforts to uphold tithes. The petition was also mentioned in *Mercurius Politicus*, recording the response from the Speaker of the House to the petition, which asserted 'they were debating upon it'.<sup>13</sup>

Spittlehouse's response to the Committee is unknown. However, he was subsequently arrested and imprisoned until April 1654.<sup>14</sup> In October of the same year, he was rearrested following his response to Cromwell's criticism of the Fifth Monarchists during his address to the first session of the Protectorate Parliament. His incarceration endured until 1657 when he was released on the condition that he 'live peaceably'.<sup>15</sup> The exact date of Spittlehouse's death is unknown; however, Bernard Capp stated it was likely between 1657 and 1659. This corresponds with his final known tract, written in partnership with William Saller and published in 1657.<sup>16</sup>

### 4.3 Writing Style

There were notable similarities in the written styles of the Fifth Monarchists. The authors employed diverse rhetorical techniques to substantiate their arguments. For instance, at first, Rogers opted to appeal to Cromwell's authority through flattery rather than directly criticise the establishment of the Protectorate. Another technique commonly employed was presenting their arguments as a dialogue. This method was especially prominent in Spittlehouse's tracts as he employed it in eight of fourteen texts. Intriguingly, Spittlehouse felt compelled to justify the use of dialogue in his writing.

On 31 December 1649, Spittlehouse published his most extensive written piece, *ROME RUIN'D BY WHITEHALL OR, The Papall Crown demolisht*. Within the text, Spittlehouse began by elucidating that his persuasive methods were inspired by the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, noting that Christ had employed 'reprooffe and instruction' as his approach.<sup>17</sup> In the text, Spittlehouse did not explicitly mention a particular biblical reference; however, he was alluding to 2 Timothy 3:16, where the

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<sup>13</sup> *Mercurius politicus*, Issue 163, (London, 1653).

<sup>14</sup> 'Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum', 1654, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1880), 433-443. *British History Online*, accessed August 23, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/interregnum/1654/pp433-443>.

<sup>15</sup> 'Volume 124: February 1656,' *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum, 1655-6*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1882), 154-206. *British History Online*, accessed August 23, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/interregnum/1655-6/pp154-206>.

<sup>16</sup> The exact date of death is unknown however Capp suggested it occurred between 1657 and 1659 – Capp, 'Spittlehouse'; John Spittlehouse, William Saller, *An Appeal To the Consciences of the chief Magistrates of this Commonwealth, touching the Sabbath-day* (1657).

<sup>17</sup> John Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN'D by Whitehall or The Papall Crown Demolisht* (London: Thomas Paine, 1649).

apostle affirmed the usefulness of scripture ‘for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.’<sup>18</sup>

The use of dialogue aligned with rhetorical techniques that were popular at the time and employed by other Protestants. However, because they were rooted in humanist education, Spittlehouse opposed the teaching of ‘Rhetorick, Logik, Philosophy,’ condemning them as teachings imbued with a ‘heathen and antichristian’ nature.<sup>19</sup> According to Cathy Shrank, dialogue was ‘one of the commonest literary forms in’ the early modern period. Schoolboys were taught to emulate writers of dialogues, such as Cicero, and in this format, they would include an argument that was both for and against.<sup>20</sup> The inclusion of dialogue could serve varied purposes. It could either underscore the correct response or be deliberately left ambiguous, encouraging readers to contemplate their stance on the posed question. However, in Spittlehouse’s employment of dialogue, any ambiguity was effectively negated, as his opinion was distinctly articulated in the concluding sections of the discussion.

Should any uncertainty persist for the reader, including a summary in the margin offered further clarity. The incorporation of marginalia was a recurrent feature in most of his tracts, offering a concise insight into his thoughts. However, he also employed marginalia to disparage individuals or groups with whom he disagreed. An instance of this can be found in a tract from 1655, when discussing the Quakers, he sarcastically remarked that ‘Jesus Christ was no Quaker’.<sup>21</sup>

*ROME RUIN’D* is an interesting piece as, unlike the other tracts surveyed for the thesis, the text also includes a poem written by the printer Thomas Paine and accompanied by an image (figure 1) entitled AN EMBLEM OF ANTICHRIST.<sup>22</sup> The image portrays a three-headed Pope positioned between two men, one symbolising prelacy and the other representing Presbyterianism. The image featured a fourth man revealed by Paine to be Spittlehouse. Within the image, the Prelate and Presbyterian are shown engaged in a

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Tim 3:16 (King James Version).

<sup>19</sup> John Spittlehouse, *The First ADDRESSES TO His Excellencie the Lord General with the Assembly of ELDERS Elected by Him and His Council for the Management of the Affairs of This COMMONWEALTH* (London: Richard Moone, 1653), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Cathy Shrank., ‘All talk and no action? Early modern political dialogue’, in Andrew Hadfield (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500-1640* (2013), 27,31 & 41.

<sup>21</sup> John Spittlehouse, *The Royall Advocate. Or, an Introduction to the Magnificent and Honourable Laws of Jehovah the Lord Christ, Now Contaminated and Despised by the Present Army-Men of this Nation. Asserting and Controverting the Holinesse, Righteousness, Perfectnesse, and Universallity Thereof, of Divine Right* (London, 1655), 9.

<sup>22</sup> Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN’D*, np.

conversation with the Pope. The Prelate says, ‘We are all lost and broken to peeces,’ and the Presbyterian replies, ‘thei reiect our church & calling from thee’.<sup>23</sup> The illustration portrays Spittlehouse gesturing towards the three men. Unfortunately, the accompanying text is illegible. Despite Spittlehouse not being the creator of the image, it notably encapsulates the text’s central theme. The denunciation of the Pope was undeniably commonplace within Protestantism, yet the text aimed to demonstrate the correlation between Prelacy and Presbyterianism within the antichristian fourth empire. This thematic association persisted across Spittlehouse’s writings, emphasizing his resolute dedication to championing religious reform.



Figure 1. ‘An Emblem of Antichrist,’ Thomas Paine, in *ROME RUIN’D*.

#### 4.4 Church & Liberty

Spittlehouse wrote *ROME RUIN’D* before becoming a Fifth Monarchist, providing an early insight into his ideas surrounding church reform. The text demonstrated that his millenarian outlook influenced Spittlehouse’s reform proposals and his desire that they should lead to the fall of the antichristian fourth empire, the papacy. The section will also demonstrate that Spittlehouse’s concerns revolved around the central issue of liberty. The liberty that had been lost was the driving force for reform and his call for the separation between Church and state.

<sup>23</sup> The text is hard to read but has been discussed by Adam Morton in his thesis ‘Glaring at Anti-Christ: anti-Papal images in Early Modern England, c530-1680’, PhD Thesis York University 2010), 290.

Writing to persuade the Rump Parliament to reform the Church, Spittlehouse underscored that such action would result in its members becoming ‘Christ’s Disciples’.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, in doing so, the uncorrupted ‘Church of Christ would be distinguished from the world, as also made visible, to the world.’<sup>25</sup> Spittlehouse asserted that by establishing the Church of Christ, England would become the ‘new Jerusalem’ and serve as a model for ‘all that desire to profess Christianity in the whole world’.<sup>26</sup> His unwavering belief in England’s significance in Christ’s eventual return underscored his steadfast commitment to promoting Church reform, which later extended to his advocacy for political reform in subsequent texts.

The Church of England had been corrupted through prelacy and Presbyterianism, and the image showed that Spittlehouse considered these to be forms of popery and, therefore, part of the antichristian fourth monarchy. The connection between prelacy and popery was an accusation also asserted by Presbyterians since the late sixteenth century, as they fought against the perceived ‘popish tyranny of the bishops’.<sup>27</sup> This was now an accusation levelled at the Presbyterians by Spittlehouse.<sup>28</sup> Invoking the imagery of the triple crown worn by the Pope, Spittlehouse claimed that each layer represented popery, prelacy and Presbyterianism. Furthermore, they were ‘the three PPPs of pleasure, profit, and preferment’ that have maintained the Dragon and the Beast.<sup>29</sup>

*ROME RUIN’D* is divided into four books, and three revolve around revealing the connections between popery, prelacy and Presbyterianism, including the subsequent doctrinal errors that had corrupted the Church of England. Within his discussion of the Catholic Church, Spittlehouse illustrated a range of concerns, including transubstantiation, the trinity of the Godhead, free will, the doctrine of original sin, and, notably, the practice of idolatry. This specifically encompassed the veneration of the pope. He described prelacy as a mere relic of popery. He was drawing attention to the continued use of ceremonial forms, which Spittlehouse claimed were reminiscent of the practices endorsed by the Catholic Church.

Likewise, Spittlehouse emphasised the doctrinal errors inherent in Presbyterianism, particularly highlighting the issues related to tithes and the ordination ritual. However, he

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<sup>24</sup> Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN’D*, ‘Fellow Christians’.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, ‘Fellow Christians’.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, ‘To the Supreme power of the Nation’.

<sup>27</sup> Michael P. Winship, *Godly Republicanism*, 31.

<sup>28</sup> As shown in the Cary chapter, Presbyterians were accused of being another ‘limb’ of the antichristian empire.

<sup>29</sup> As discussed in previous chapters, the dragon and the beast described in Revelation were considered to represent the antichrist. Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN’D*, 257.

alleged that members of the Presbyterian Church had broken the covenant that dominated his criticism against them. Spittlehouse was referring to the Solemn League and Covenant (1643) which established an alliance between the English Parliament and Scottish Covenanters. On condition that the Church would be reformed to remove ‘Popery, Prelacy’, which depended on hierarchical church government, the Scots would support Parliament against the king.<sup>30</sup> Within the agreement, there was also an indication that the Church of England would be reformed according to Presbyterianism. However, this was open to interpretation and was certainly not part of Spittlehouse’s complaint. He highlighted that it had been agreed to transform church government following scripture, removing all elements of popery, superstition and heresy in the second point.<sup>31</sup> By choosing not to reform the Church, they had failed to remove the remnants of the antichristian fourth monarchy. It was Spittlehouse’s view that Presbyterianism had directly obstructed the advent of Christ, thus revealing their allegiance to the antichrist.

Spittlehouse reinforced his argument for reform by connecting prelacy and Presbyterianism with popery. Like Rogers and Aspinwall, Spittlehouse also employed the story of the Israelites as a warning of the dangers ahead if the Church remained in its existing state. Spittlehouse drew a parallel between the current situation of the Church and the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian enslavement, a narrative documented in the book of Exodus. In his analogy, Spittlehouse likened the Commons to Jacob, who, as the story was told, was reminded to begin preparations and rouse his family or, in this case, to encourage the entire nation to reject falsities within the Church.

Returning to the narrative, Spittlehouse asserted that the Red Sea that had parted, saving the Israelites from the Pharaoh, represented prelacy. Though the Pharaoh had been killed, ‘spiritual Egypt,’ meaning prelates and Presbyterians, continued to walk with the Israelites into the wilderness.<sup>32</sup> By referring to spiritual Egypt, this could be changed to spiritual bondage. The continuation of ‘prelaticall, or Presbyterian Clergy, either in office, or maintenance’ would ‘obstruct the descending of the new Jerusalem.’<sup>33</sup>

The story of deliverance narrated in the book of Exodus has been a common point of reference throughout history. As Michael Walzer has noted, its appeal ‘to generations of

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Solemn League and Covenant’, in *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* ed. S. R. Gardiner, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 267-271.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 268-269.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, *ROME RUIN’D*, ‘To the Supreme power of the Nation’.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, ‘To the Supreme power of the Nation’.

radicals' throughout history is because of its 'linearity, in the idea of a promised end'.<sup>34</sup> This narrative of redemption certainly complemented Spittlehouse's millenarian reading of the period as the saints were freed from antichristian slavery. It was evident that Spittlehouse interpreted the king's defeat as the beginning of the saint's deliverance story. However, to ensure success and genuine religious freedom, reform was deemed necessary.

#### 4.5 Church Reform

Revealing that the Church of England was part of the antichristian empire and had lost its spiritual liberty was the impetus for reform. In the concluding chapter of *ROME RUIN'D*, Spittlehouse presented his insights on the best approach for reinstating the Church to a state of 'Primitive Purity'.<sup>35</sup> To rebuild what he described as the 'walls of spiritual Jerusalem', Spittlehouse again emphasised the importance of removing all 'antichristian fabricks' that he had highlighted in the previous three books.<sup>36</sup> In his discourse, he posited that the National Church was not founded through '*Jure Divino*, or by divine law', but rather grounded in '*Jure humano*', human law.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, Spittlehouse maintained that the Church was established 'according to the will and appointment of the antichrist'.<sup>38</sup> He argued that the true Church had been 'preserved' by God to avert its destruction at the hands of the papacy, prelacy and Presbyterianism. According to Spittlehouse, this preservation was prophesied in Revelation 12:6, wherein the woman symbolising the Church, pursued by the dragon or the devil, sought refuge in the wilderness.

According to Spittlehouse, the Anabaptist Church represented the true Church that God had safeguarded. However, this assertion proved contentious, a point duly acknowledged by Spittlehouse due to the historical criticism of the Anabaptists. Avoiding any reference to the events of Münster in 1534-5, which resulted in the widespread condemnation of Anabaptists across Europe, he emphasised the peaceful nature of the churches in London, meaning the General Baptist congregations. This was evident when the congregations were asked '*by the Levelling Party to disturbe the present Parliament in point of their civill Office, did manifest their utter dislike of such actions, desiring only to live under them, a peaceable life, in all godlinesse and honesty*'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 14.

<sup>35</sup> Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN'D*, 253.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 255.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 'To the Presbyterian Layety'.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 'To the Presbyterian Layety'.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 290.



Spittlehouse maintained that the Anabaptists' stance against infant baptism had proven them to be the true Church, contending that the practice of baptising adults mirrored the actions of the Apostles. He emphasised that the profession of faith should precede baptism, a declaration that infants were incapable of making.<sup>40</sup> In a somewhat mocking tone, it was written in the margin, 'The Kingdom of God consisteth not of young infants'.<sup>41</sup>

It was Spittlehouse's interpretation that the reformed Church would resemble the Gathered Churches. He argued that this resemblance would align with the practices of the Apostolic period before being altered and corrupted by the Catholic Church. To bolster his claim, Spittlehouse underscored that the Church, in contrast to previous assertions focusing on it as a physical structure, was a 'company' of men and women that gathered to worship.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, he argued that each congregation would be self-governing and not subject to governance by any other church unless its members had expressly granted consent. Spittlehouse rejected using synods and assemblies, practices adopted by Presbyterians, asserting that there was no 'preeminence in Scripture'.<sup>43</sup>

The churches would be able to communicate or seek advice from each other in the same way that churches had acted in the New Testament. For example, in Acts 15:2, the Church at Antioch received advice from the Church in Jerusalem, but as Spittlehouse highlighted, they were not dependent upon them.<sup>44</sup> In the governance of the Church, there would be no overarching authority overseeing other churches. Spittlehouse extended the principle of equality within each Church, asserting that no member would be more esteemed than other members, which Spittlehouse again claimed was demonstrated within the Apostolic Church. Significantly, Spittlehouse extended the notion of equality to encompass female members within the newly established Church. It was apparent that the fundamental concepts of liberty and independence formed the core of Spittlehouse's perspective on church governance.

Spittlehouse also emphasised the importance of autonomy and consent when appointing church officers. He said, 'We are not to deprive the poorest or meanest Member of Christ, of the right and privilege, of his Christian Liberty' in selecting these officers. Drawing a parallel to the parliamentary process, Spittlehouse wrote, 'In the same manner

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 263.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 269.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 183.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 294.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 298

that members of parliaments are elected' so shall church officers be.<sup>45</sup> Unlike the parliamentary process, which relied on a restricted franchise, every member of the Church, including its female members, would be given a voice in choosing church officers.

Spittlehouse substantiated the entitlement of women to participate in the ecclesiastical electoral proceedings through the form of dialogue. Within his discussion, Spittlehouse referred to an example from scripture to underscore his contention that the entire congregation possessed a collective voice in these matters. Specifically, he referenced Acts 1:23, wherein Matthias was chosen to succeed Judas. In the passage before his election, it was explicitly noted that Mary was among the congregation.<sup>46</sup> Spittlehouse construed this as indicative of her inclusion in the electoral process.<sup>47</sup> The objection raised within the dialogue was that if Mary and women, more generally, had a voice in the election, they would have contradicted the instructions of the Apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 14:35, Paul instructed women to maintain silence within the Church. In response, Spittlehouse initially raised the point that Matthias did not say that Mary had spoken. Second, he posited a reinterpretation of Paul's instruction, asserting that it had been misconstrued.

According to Spittlehouse, Paul's instruction pertained specifically to women engaging in preaching or prophesying within the Church. Spittlehouse emphasised that female prophesying had not been 'altogether forbidden... if they so be gifted'.<sup>48</sup> He underscored his point by citing various instances from the Bible where female prophets, exemplified by figures like Deborah in the Old Testament and the four daughters of Philip in the New Testament, played prominent roles.<sup>49</sup> It was Spittlehouse's interpretation that Paul had stipulated that women were to cover their heads when prophesying.<sup>50</sup> Having rectified the objection, Spittlehouse concluded the section with 'as for other conference in the Church, I see no cause, women having the same need of Pastors for their soules as men) but that they may have a voyce in the election of their Minister, as any man whatsoever'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 303.

<sup>46</sup> Acts 1:14 (King James Version).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 313-315.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 314.

<sup>49</sup> Spittlehouse also referred to 'Huldah' from the 2 Kings 22 and 'Hanah the daughter of Pannuel' meaning Anna, the prophetess mentioned in Luke 2:36-38.

<sup>50</sup> This instruction was mentioned in 1 Cor 11:15; Ibid, 315.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 315.

Within Spittlehouse's propositions concerning the resolution of contentious issues within individual Churches, there is a recurrent emphasis on the themes of liberty and consent. Initially, he advocated for preventing serious controversies by formulating a 'confession of Faith.'<sup>52</sup> Under this proposal, individuals entering the Church were mandated to declare the confession publicly and pledge obedience. Non-consent to this declaration would result in expulsion from the Church. Likewise, if a member, having previously made the public declaration, were to later decline to submit to the authority of their Church, another congregation would engage in a conversation with them to seek a resolution. Persisting in refusal would lead to expulsion. It was emphasised, however, that such actions would only be taken in instances involving the 'subversion of a fundamental part of Religion'.<sup>53</sup> Spittlehouse's acceptance of doctrinal differences within the Church was pivotal in his advocacy of toleration.

#### **4.6 The Doctrine of Uniformity**

Until the 1640s, the Augustinian Theory of Persecution wielded significant influence over both the Catholic and Protestant religions. In the formative years of the Christian Church, adherents faced severe persecution. The pivotal moment came with Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 312 AD, marking a substantial shift as the previously marginalised sect gained imperial protection. From the fifth century, Christianity transformed from a persecuted faith to assuming a role as a 'persecuting religion'.<sup>54</sup> This transition was ascribed to the doctrinal teachings of St Augustine, who, according to Alexandra Walsham, articulated a 'classic defence of persecution as a humanitarian duty.'<sup>55</sup> Walsham characterised Augustine as the 'patriarch of persecutors'.<sup>56</sup>

Augustine's endorsement of coercion in religious belief arose after a schism within the Catholic Church. The dispute over the selection of the Bishop of Carthage in North Africa in 311 AD led to the emergence of a faction known as the Donatists, who separated from the Catholic Church.<sup>57</sup> Augustine observed that members of this group were later reintegrated into the Catholic Church under Imperial Edicts.<sup>58</sup> He considered mild persecution justifiable to maintain uniformity within the Christian faith. This perspective

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 227.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 301; Spittlehouse offered no explanation regarding what he defined as fundamental aspects of doctrine.

<sup>54</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 22.

<sup>55</sup> Walsham, *Charitable hatred*, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 2

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>58</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 22.

persisted beyond the Reformation as the Magisterial Reformers continued propagating Augustine's ideology of coercion.<sup>59</sup>

Initially, Martin Luther opposed using force in ecclesiastical matters, preferring to re-educate through *Sola Scriptura*. However, as noted by Walsham, he 'soon changed his views'.<sup>60</sup> The emergence of Anabaptists and other radical sects posed a threat to the 'fledgling Protestant Church'.<sup>61</sup> Fearing that the Reformation would fail without support from secular authorities, it was deemed necessary to suppress such groups, adopting persecution as a means to achieve uniformity.

The Magisterial Reformers presented Israel as a model to imitate, using the Old Testament as a biblical basis for coercion. They pointed to instances in the Bible where pagan kings, like Nebuchadnezzar, decreed the worship of God. Citing Isaiah 49:23, they argued that rulers had a role in protecting the Christian faith, interpreting the verse as stating to support that 'kings would be nursing fathers to people of God'.<sup>62</sup> Protestant rulers, such as James I, interpreted this as a mandate to eradicate idolatry and heresy, establishing the 'true religion' of Christ.<sup>63</sup>

In sixteenth-century England, Protestantism was reinstated when Elizabeth I ascended to the throne in 1558. The Act of Uniformity was subsequently passed as part of Elizabeth's Religious Settlement.<sup>64</sup> According to Coffey, from that point until 1689, when the Toleration Act was given royal assent, England was characterised as 'a persecuting state'.<sup>65</sup> Throughout the period, the State actively punished individuals whose religious beliefs diverged from those endorsed by the established Church, aiming to prevent heresy and schism.<sup>66</sup> Walsham has observed that the perceived 'popish innovations of Charles and Laud' and the consequent persecution of those challenging the changes 'served to galvanise the hotter sort of Protestants'.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Martin Luther, Jean Calvin, Philip Melancthon were described as Magisterial Reformers because they were supported by secular authorities, as opposed to radical reformers who advocated a complete break with established institutions. Luther had originally moved away from coercion however, by 1525 he was firmly of the opinion that temporal rulers should remove false religions. Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 24.

<sup>60</sup> Walsham, *Charitable hatred*, 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>62</sup> This was the verse that Cary had also interpreted to mean that monarchs, excluding England, would have a potential role in the fall of the antichristian empire.

<sup>63</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 31.

<sup>64</sup> 'The Act of Uniformity', in *Documents of the English Reformation* ed. Gerald Bray (1994) ,329-334.

<sup>65</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 11.

<sup>66</sup> Coffey has highlighted that through the employment of various laws & statutes fines & imprisonment were commonplace; while execution for heresy or schism was rare - *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>67</sup> Walsham, *Charitable hatred*, 17

The revolutionary period of the 1640s and 1650s challenged the prevailing norm, resulting in a shift away from coercion.<sup>68</sup> Within this context, two distinct lines of thought developed, each advocating for toleration but differing in their approach. One perspective centred on subjecting the existing Church to State authority, while the other supported the separation of Church and State, accompanied by the dissolution of the established Church. It was the latter that Spittlehouse, alongside other Fifth Monarchists and Republicans such as Vane, endorsed.

#### 4.7 Toleration

The alternative argument for toleration was notably more controversial as it hinged on the proposition that toleration could only be achieved through the separation of Church and State. As highlighted by Coffey, this pivotal moment materialised in 1644 with the publication of several influential texts, including John Milton's *Areopagitica* and Roger Williams's *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*.<sup>69</sup> Collectively, these works criticised the use of coercion and championed a concept of toleration.

In advocating for toleration, proponents asserted that the model to follow was the Apostolic Church depicted in the New Testament, diverging from the Hebraic scriptures. Coffey underscores that the 'tolerationists praised the gentleness of the primitive church and celebrated its political powerlessness'.<sup>70</sup> Consequently, specific individuals critiqued the notion that the Hebrew Commonwealth should serve as an exemplar, seeking to highlight the contrast between the Old and New Testaments. For instance, in his work *Bloody Tenent*, Williams focused on demonstrating that ancient Israel 'was not a pattern for all lands: it was a non-such, unparalleled, and unmatchable'.<sup>71</sup> In the subsequent decade, Spittlehouse also constructed an argument for toleration. However, his assertion for a separation between the Church and State was grounded in the structure of the Hebrew Commonwealth and bolstered by examples taken from the New Testament.

In *ROME RUIN'D*, Spittlehouse's advocacy for toleration initially surfaced through his criticism of prelacy and Presbyterians' involvement in civil matters. According to

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<sup>68</sup> Walsham noted the removal of church attendance statutes in 1650 during the English Republic was accompanied by millennial fervour. However, with the rise of groups such as the Quakers the Protectorate attempted to restrict the initially broad liberty of conscience guaranteed by the Instrument of Government. *Ibid*, 18.

<sup>69</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 47. In addition to Milton & Williams publication in 1644, Coffey also cited William Walwyn *The Compassionate Samaritane* & Henry Robinson, *Liberty of Conscience* in providing an important argument for toleration.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 59.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

Spittlehouse, despite their initial support, the recent disruptive actions of the Presbyterian faction within the government became apparent when they challenged the trial's legality and regicide. Spittlehouse also expressed apprehension about the potential inclination of Presbyterians to reinstate monarchical rule. Even if this was not their intention, Spittlehouse maintained their aim to see the nation 'once more decked with a monarchical dress'.<sup>72</sup>

The second, and arguably more important, reason Spittlehouse put forth was the assertion that when the Church involved itself in political matters and exercised any form of temporal power, it assumed 'a grand mark or character of the Beast of Rome, whom we see doth set her Imps in the seat of Civil Judicature'.<sup>73</sup> It was in *ROME RUIN'D* that his commitment to toleration became evident, aligning himself with those advanced by Milton and Williams during the 1640s. Spittlehouse also drew inspiration from the New Testament.

Spittlehouse denounced the Presbyterians' use of compulsion in admitting members to the Church of Christ.<sup>74</sup> He emphasised that whilst a civil magistrate could coerce attendance at church, such compliance constituted merely an external act; a true transformation of an individual's heart could only be accomplished by God. Spittlehouse directed attention to Christ and the Apostles, asserting that obedience to Christ 'is wrought by the power of the Word, not the Sword'.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, he emphasised that Christ, in commanding the spread of the gospel, did not mandate to 'Goe and compel all Nations to beleeve'.<sup>76</sup>

In a similar point to Grotius and later raised by Harrington, albeit resting on the distinction between Church and state, Spittlehouse also positioned the civil magistrate as the defender of the Christian faith. He wrote:

concerned in things of a civil cognisance, his duty in point of religion, is chiefly this, viz) to keep the kingdome of this world in such awe, as that the kingdome of Christ may not receive damage by it; to keep wicked, and debauched people in such obedience, by the power of the sword, as that the power of the word may have its free progresse in their Dominions, so that the Saints or Church of Christ may live under protection.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN'D*, 5.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 212.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 227.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 227.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 227.

In the passage, Spittlehouse asserted that the civil magistrate had a role in ensuring the obedience of the ‘wicked and debauched’ if their actions threatened the nation’s peace, but he emphasised the absence of compulsion. This sentiment was apparent when he wrote:

what mattereth it that the Turkish Alcaron is printed in London and published in the Common-wealth, to such as know it to be ridiculous? And so of any other sect or Heresie; yea I doe verily beelev, that it would advance God’s glory (in the gospel) if such licentiousnesse were set at liberty’.<sup>78</sup>

For Spittlehouse, the greatest threat to the Christian faith did not arise from other religions, heretical beliefs, or schisms but rather from those who held no faith at all or those who were followers of the antichrist. As a Fifth Monarchist, Spittlehouse consistently underscored the urgent need for a power division.

Spittlehouse’s initial contribution to the Fifth Monarchist movement emerged in the wake of the forced dissolution of the Rump Parliament on April 20, 1653. A mere four days later, his tract entitled *The Army Vindicated*, was published. In this text, Spittlehouse sought to justify Cromwell’s actions and emphasise the need to separate the authority of Church and State.

From a Fifth Monarchist perspective, the Rump Parliament had failed to effect any substantial reforms that they believed were necessary for the advent of Christ. As shown in earlier chapters, the dissolution of the Rump presented the Fifth Monarchists with an opportunity to exert their influence on subsequent government reforms. In *The Army Vindicated*, Spittlehouse elaborated on his argument for toleration.

Spittlehouse, like Aspinwall, referred to Moses to substantiate his argument for separating political and religious authority. According to Spittlehouse’s interpretation, Moses was granted authority in civil matters, whereas Aaron was designated the authority to oversee religious affairs. The division between the two realms was seemingly affirmed in Revelation 2:27, which reads, ‘he shall rule them with an iron rod.’ Spittlehouse construed this as a power that should not be vested in the Church, asserting that it demonstrated authority belonged to ‘Moses, his proper right in the *Campe*. As well as the *Marshall sword* in the field’.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, Spittlehouse advanced the argument that members of the army now in government were similarly prohibited from meddling ‘with the affairs of the Church’. According to Spittlehouse, it was imperative for them to have

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 302.

<sup>79</sup> Spittlehouse, *The Army Vindicated*, 11; Interestingly this tract was also translated into Dutch. The translated version records the printer as ‘Ian Moor’ instead of Richard Moone and includes ‘nota’ handwritten beside certain sections one of which highlights the army as being the best way to secure the liberty of the church.

recourse to their proper channels.<sup>80</sup> In Spittlehouse's interpretation of the Old Testament, the realms of political and religious power were distinctly separate.

Although Spittlehouse expressed disdain towards other sects, such as the Quakers, he did not advocate that the civil magistrate should punish them or that they could not practice their beliefs. The Fifth Monarchists' attitudes towards other sects or religions reinforce the argument that they did want toleration. As Coffey has commented, 'toleration has two major components: objection and acceptance. Those who tolerate disapprove of an opinion, act, or lifestyle, yet choose to exercise restraint towards it'.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, during the seventeenth-century, most advocates of toleration had limitations in mind. John Locke, the most famous advocate for tolerance, did not extend his argument to include either Roman Catholics or atheists.<sup>82</sup>

It is crucial to underscore the rationale behind Spittlehouse's limits to toleration. These restrictions were established to differentiate between genuine religious figures and individuals aiming to further the antichrist's agenda. Both prelacy and Presbyterianism, due to their endorsement of coercive practices, found themselves aligned with the antichristian Catholic Church. As noted by Coffey, 'anti-popery' was 'perhaps the most powerful visceral force in English politics' during the early modern period.<sup>83</sup> From Spittlehouse's perspective, this alignment proved detrimental to the nation and revealed a significant loss of religious liberty. In his argument to justify the regicide and the subsequent creation of the commonwealth, Spittlehouse's focus shifts from ecclesiastical to civil liberty.

#### **4.8 The Regicide**

While *ROME RUIN'D* was a text primarily centred on religious concerns, Spittlehouse did briefly articulate his perspective on the regicide. As with the other Fifth Monarchists discussed, Spittlehouse also employed the Exodus narrative. He reiterated the conventional parallel between the late king and the pharaoh, drawing further comparisons between the roles of the Earl of Essex and Cromwell to Moses and Joshua, respectively. While initially assigning Cromwell in a subordinate role in 1649, as will be expounded shortly, Spittlehouse reassessed Cromwell's position, likening him to Moses, similarly to Rogers and Aspinwall. In a subsequent section, Spittlehouse further noted that following the

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 10.

<sup>82</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 4.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 3.



regicide, there was a notable reduction in the death toll from the plague that had afflicted London and the rest of the country. This observation suggested that the regicide was perceived as conducive to God's 'will, and pleasure'.<sup>84</sup>

In a section entitled 'Treateth of the period of Magistracy,' Spittlehouse referred to Daniel chapters 2 and 7 to illustrate that monarchical government had been brought to an end as prophesied. Notably, unlike Rogers, Cary or Aspinwall, Spittlehouse refrained from providing exegesis or engaging in any discussion regarding the identity of the little horn. Including the chapters served the purpose of justifying the transition to a commonwealth.<sup>85</sup> As we have observed in preceding chapters, the Fifth Monarchists consistently interpreted these prophecies as indicating the passing of power to the saints.

#### 4.9 The Dissolution of the Rump

While initially lending support to the Rump, in *ROME RUIN'D*, Spittlehouse did indicate some reservations about Parliament's willingness to submit to the rule of Christ, which he interpreted would bring an end to 'Tyranicall, and Arbitrary powers'. Employing sarcasm, he remarked that 'we may as well expect a Devill to become a Saint, as for them to destroy their owne powers; and so consequently deprive themselves of the honour'.<sup>86</sup>

In 1653, Cromwell's decision to forcibly dissolve the Rump stemmed from its refusal to disband for the establishment of a new parliament. In the *Army Vindicated*, Spittlehouse contended that the Rump's hesitancy to embrace reform was attributable to the presence of a Presbyterian faction among its members. Moreover, he endeavoured to distinguish between the army and the Rump's authority. In his writings, he criticised the deployment of the military to instill fear in some of its members, accusing them of '*domineer[ing] over them as so many Tyrants*'.<sup>87</sup> The army would be central to Spittlehouse's vision of a godly commonwealth.

To justify its dissolution, Spittlehouse directed attention to the origins of the Rump, the members of which had originally been elected under the authority of the late king. Given the removal of Charles's power, a new form of government that would align with the principles of the Commonwealth was needed. Additionally, under the authority of the Rump Parliament, the Oath of Engagement was instituted, a proposal by Henry Ireton in

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<sup>84</sup> Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN'D*, 'To the Presbyterian Layety'.

<sup>85</sup> Spittlehouse, *ROME RUIN'D*, 335-338.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 337.

<sup>87</sup> Spittlehouse, *The Army Vindicated*, 1.

the aftermath of Charles's execution.<sup>88</sup> Originally designed to secure the endorsement by the members of the Council of State in support of the regicide and the subsequent dissolution of monarchical government and the House of Lords. The Oath, however, was met with some opposition, leading it to require that individuals 'declare loyalty' to the newly established commonwealth without obligating them to 'declare their approval of past actions'.<sup>89</sup>

As highlighted by Skinner, the escalation of attacks aimed at undermining the government's authority prompted an expansion of the Oath's scope in October 1649. It began mandating that the Oath should be 'be sworn by virtually every literate member of society'. Subsequently, this requirement was extended in January of the following year to encompass the 'entire adult male population.' Skinner further asserted that taking the Oath moved beyond a mere 'question of political obligation' to assume the status of a 'formal test of citizenship'.<sup>90</sup>

In a manner consistent with Spittlehouse's denunciation of compulsion in religious matters, he criticised the Oath of Engagement because it also represented a form of coercion, now within a political context. According to Spittlehouse, the Engagement Oath was a 'forced engagement' and functioned merely as a 'scarecrow,' seeking to instil obedience among conflicting factional groups within Parliament.<sup>91</sup> Building on his defence of religious freedom in 1649, Spittlehouse, in 1653, shifted his emphasis to underscore the significance of civil liberty.

The chapter will now focus on Spittlehouse's proposals regarding the government's constitution, aiming to safeguard the nation's liberties.

#### **4.10 The Representative**

Following his justification of the dissolution of the Rump in *The Army Vindicated*, Spittlehouse presented his proposals to Cromwell, aspiring to influence commonwealth rule. Notably, Spittlehouse's recommendations mirrored the principles he had previously

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<sup>88</sup> Worden, *Rump Parliament*, 44-45; David Farr, *Henry Ireton and the English Revolution* (Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 76.

<sup>89</sup> Opposition came from royalists but also Presbyterians who had previously taken the Solemn League and Covenant and interpreted that the Engagement Oath was contradictory as they had previously promised to defend the king's life. For discussions surrounding the Engagement controversy see Quentin Skinner, 'Conquest and Consent', *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660* ed. G.E. Aylmer (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1972), 79-98; Margaret Judson, *From Tradition to Political Reality* (Ohio, 1980); Edward Vallance, 'Oaths, Casuistry, and Equivocation: Anglican Responses to the Engagement Controversy', *The Historical Journal*, Mar., Vol. 44, No. 1 (Mar., 2001), 59-77.

<sup>90</sup> Skinner, 'Conquest and Consent', 85.

<sup>91</sup> Spittlehouse, *The Army Vindicated*, 2.

advocated for church government. He emphasised the necessity of a division between civil and religious authority while explaining whom he considered to constitute the godly commonwealth. As Spittlehouse outlined, the Commonwealth would comprise ‘members from the congregated churches and their well-wishers,’ referring to individuals not yet affiliated with the Church. The second group would consist of members from the New Model Army, whom Spittlehouse asserted were Christ’s army of saints.<sup>92</sup> Excluded from the Commonwealth were those who supported a restoration of the monarchy, which was deemed as hindering the second coming of Christ; this included Presbyterians.

Each of the Fifth Monarchists discussed so far in the thesis has championed the notion of an aristocratic form of government, wherein the authority to rule falls on a select group of godly individuals. This proposition was rooted in the conviction that those in authority inherently possessed the virtue necessary for effective governance. Simultaneously, acknowledging the inherent inclination of power towards corruption, the argument extended to assert that an aristocratic form of government was best suited to address the issue of corruption. The rationale behind this viewpoint was that the concentration of power could potentially lead to tyrannical behaviour, ultimately resulting in the loss of civil liberties.

Spittlehouse advocated for more rigorous measures to mitigate such corruption, suggesting that representatives should be exclusively drawn from the ranks of the army.<sup>93</sup> His position on the composition of the representative body may have been influenced by the significant role played by the army in bringing an end to monarchical rule. Additionally, the military officers showcased their political acumen by orchestrating the dissolution of the Rump Parliament.

To explain the rationale behind his perspective on the military rule within the commonwealth, Spittlehouse drew inspiration from Revelation 12:5. This passage prophesied the reign of a ‘man child’ who will govern all ‘nations with a rod of iron.’ Spittlehouse interpreted this verse to signify primarily civil power. This perspective aligned with his earlier approach in *ROME RUIN’D*, where he employed a similar verse to illustrate Moses’ authority in civil matters. However, Spittlehouse’s vision of the commonwealth was limited, encompassing only three sections of society: the army, members of the congregated churches and the ambiguous term the ‘well-wishers.’<sup>94</sup> Given

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>93</sup> Spittlehouse, *The Army Vindicated*, 8-9.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 7.

that well-wishers were individuals not yet affiliated with the church but presumably inclined to join, considering Spittlehouse's distinct division of power between religious and secular authority, this implied that only the army could rightfully exercise authoritative power.<sup>95</sup> Considering this as a form of 'magistratical employment', Spittlehouse deemed it an 'improper' role for the Congregated Church. He emphasised that the involvement of church members in civil authority would align them with the papacy.<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, Spittlehouse contended that the army had already proven itself the 'fittest' to govern the nation.<sup>97</sup> By using the term 'fittest,' he intended to convey that their suitability extended beyond the battlefield and encompassed their political acumen. This attribute, as noted by Spittlehouse, was evident in the wisdom exhibited by the Lord General and the Officers in negotiating treaties with Scotland and Ireland.<sup>98</sup> According to Spittlehouse, the army would safeguard the commonwealth and the saints. In addition, he emphasised that the military, guided by providence, would possess the capability of conquering other nations to allow for the propagation of the Gospel and to advance Christ's cause.

While the entire army would advance Christ's cause, Spittlehouse posited that only commissioned officers should be included as part of the representative body in government. According to Spittlehouse, these officers were men of great honour and sacrifice. They were 'well principle[d]' in matters pertaining to religion and the overall safety and well-being of the commonwealth. Spittlehouse expressed reservations regarding ordinary soldiers, perceiving them to have a 'light and unstable minde on the matters' and expressed concern about their susceptibility to bribery.<sup>99</sup>

In response to the potential threat of corruption, Spittlehouse proposed that those elected to positions of authority in the representative body should receive the same wage as they did when serving as officers. Like Cary, Spittlehouse aimed to prevent civil magistrates from enriching themselves from the public treasury. Spittlehouse explained that this approach would foster humility among the officers and forestall the emergence of 'covetous officers,' ensuring their readiness to relinquish their positions 'when required by

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 7. Although Spittlehouse did not specifically cite Revelation 12:5 in this text he previously cited in *ROME RUIN'D*.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 10.

their electors'.<sup>100</sup> Despite regarding the army as virtuous individuals, Spittlehouse recognised the potential vulnerabilities associated with wielding power. In addition, Spittlehouse recognised the significance of the electoral process as an additional mechanism to mitigate tendencies toward corruption.

#### 4.11 Rotation of Office

Spittlehouse advocated for the mechanism of rotation, wherein a representative body would serve for twelve months. At this point, there could be new elections or a continuation of the existing representative.<sup>101</sup> In a statement reminiscent of Aspinwall, Spittlehouse asserted that through the rotation of officers, over a short period, 'a great part of the Officers in the Army' will be 'made politicians'.<sup>102</sup> Spittlehouse did not explicitly reference Aristotle, but his remark aligned with the Aristotelian principle advocating for the active engagement of citizens in both ruling and being ruled.<sup>103</sup> The concept of the rotation of office was also championed by Harrington in 1656. Interestingly, in 1659, Rogers vehemently critiqued the idea of rotation, directing his criticism toward Harrington and failing to mention Spittlehouse's recommendation proposed several years earlier.<sup>104</sup>

Following his thoughts on rotation, Spittlehouse formulated a detailed plan explaining how the new representative would be elected. Acknowledging the political acumen attributed to officers, voting privileges were exclusively reserved for this cohort. Each officer was mandated to specify whom they had chosen via a letter dispatched to the central headquarters. Subsequently, on a predetermined day chosen by the Lord General, officers stationed at the headquarters would review the correspondence to see who had been elected.<sup>105</sup> Two officers would be selected from each regiment and one from a garrison if not attached to a regiment. The Lord General would issue orders to the newly elected officers and advise them where they would be posted. The Navy would also appoint an onshore officer to represent its interests. The Lord General would retain the authority to appoint three General Officers from each nation to help advance Christ's design.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> This suggestion may have been influenced by the accusations of corruption directed towards the Rump regarding their reluctance to dissolve government. *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>102</sup> Spittlehouse did not clarify the decision-maker for the continuation or replacement of the assembly, nor what proportion of the representative body would be replaced at each election.

<sup>103</sup> Hammersley, *James Harrington*, 79; Aristotle, *The Politics*, 78 (1287a).

<sup>104</sup> Rogers, *Diapoliteia*, 75, 81.

<sup>105</sup> Spittlehouse, *The Army Vindicated*, 12.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

Although Spittlehouse did not specify the number of officers that would make up the representative, an estimate can be derived from the number of regiments within the New Model Army. The army comprised eleven cavalry regiments, ten-foot regiments and one dragoon regiment. Factoring in the three officers appointed by Cromwell and the addition of a naval officer, the approximate figure stands at around forty-nine.<sup>107</sup> This figure excluded officers selected to represent garrisons. Nonetheless, the total was unlikely to have resulted in a representative of over seventy, which both Rogers and Harrison had recommended at the time.

#### 4.12 The Role of the Representative

Another theme discussed by Spittlehouse in *Army Vindicated* was his perception that the representative's role was to secure peace in the nation and to push forward with the reforms in politics and religion. The members elected were to manage the 'affairs of this Commonwealth', by which Spittlehouse meant the nation's day-to-day governing. In the *Army Vindicated*, Spittlehouse noted that the army had shown wisdom in their dealings with other nations, such as Scotland and Ireland, and would, therefore, continue to deal with matters of foreign affairs.<sup>108</sup>

On 5 July 1653, the day after the Nominated Assembly had convened, Spittlehouse published *The First ADDRESSES TO His Excellencie the Lord General with the Assembly of Elders elected by him and his Council for the management of the affairs of the Commonwealth*, in which he wrote that the most crucial role that the newly formed government would do would be 'to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ over the face of the whole earth.' According to Spittlehouse, the Lord had chosen the nation to be 'a Theater to act as a president of what he intends to do in all the Nations under the scope of Heaven'.<sup>109</sup> He added that he hoped that God intended not only to show Cromwell Canaan but also to lead him into the Land of Canaan, which he stated was Holland, France and then on towards Rome to 'pluck up Antichristian Power'.<sup>110</sup> The government would be at the forefront of a world revolution. As with both Rogers and Aspinwall in 1653, Spittlehouse also believed that the man who was central to the unfolding of God's plan was Oliver Cromwell, considering him to have the role of a legislator. In contrast to Rogers and

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<sup>107</sup> The figure totals forty-eight including Cromwell; Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. 'New Model Army,' *Encyclopedia Britannica*, November 22, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/New-Model-Army>.

<sup>108</sup> Spittlehouse, *The Army Vindicated*, 8.

<sup>109</sup> John Spittlehouse, *The First ADDRESSES TO His Excellencie the Lord General with the Assembly of ELDERS elected by him and his Council for the management of the affairs of this COMMONWEALTH* (London: Richard Moone, July 1653), 5.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

Aspinwall, Spittlehouse presented an explanation of Cromwell's role as a legislator, which restricted his power.

#### 4.13 Cromwell the Legislator

In various tracts written by Spittlehouse in 1653, Cromwell emerged as a consequential figure in liberating the people and the nation from the dual tyranny of monarchical rule and the dominion of the antichristian empire. Cromwell's actions had come under scrutiny following his involvement in the dissolution of the Rump. The focal point of concern revolved around the perceived consolidation of power.

Spittlehouse endeavoured to vindicate Cromwell's authoritative position in response to these criticisms. On 19 May 1653, in *A WARNING-PIECE DISCHARGED: OR Certain intelligence COMMUNICATED to His Excellencie the Lord General Cromwell*, Spittlehouse addressed a claim arising from the dissolution of the Rump. It was posited that all 'civil and military power' should have reverted to those, including the Presbyterian faction in government, who had brought the king to trial.<sup>111</sup> Consequently, it was contended that Cromwell had, in essence, usurped supreme power from Parliament and was now governing according to his interests.<sup>112</sup>

To defend Cromwell, Spittlehouse drew a parallel between the Israelites' deliverance from slavery, as detailed in the book of Exodus, and contemporary events. While such comparisons were commonplace, Spittlehouse specifically likened Cromwell to Moses.<sup>113</sup> He asserted that in the same manner that Moses had delivered the Israelites, Cromwell, as an instrument of God's providence, would liberate the three nations from subjection to the Catholic Church, the antichristian fourth empire.<sup>114</sup> Notably, Spittlehouse echoed Rogers' earlier contentious claim that Cromwell was a legislator like Moses, but he had an alternative objective.

In contrast to Rogers, who had compared Cromwell to Moses to underpin Cromwell's responsibility in selecting those who would govern the commonwealth,

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<sup>111</sup> John Spittlehouse, *A Warning-Piece Discharged: Or, Certain Intelligence Communicated to His Excellencie the Lord General Cromvel, with all the Real and Cordial Officers and Souldiers Under His Command. Wherein the Present Tempers of each Society of People in this Commonwealth, Under each Degree Or Notion Whatsoever, are Inserted and Controverted, in Relation to the Election of a New Representative. as also, a Brief and Full Parallel Betwixt the History of Israel and our Late and Present Series of Affairs. in which Simile, our Present General is Compar'd with Moses, as He was their Deliverer, Judge, and General.* by John Spittlehouse, a Late Member of the Army (London, 1653), 6.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 6, 11.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 6-7, 9-10.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 9-10.

Spittlehouse's comparison was employed to counter the allegations surrounding Cromwell's perceived accumulation of power.<sup>115</sup> To refute the claims, Spittlehouse turned to 1 Samuel 8, which chronicled the Israelites' demand to Samuel for an earthly king. The chapter also detailed a list of potential abuses of power that a king could inflict on the Israelites. By highlighting these abuses, Spittlehouse sought to demonstrate that the authority wielded by Moses and subsequently during the Judges' period paled compared to that asserted by monarchs. He contended that the power of Moses or the 'Judges did not exact one tenth of the State or Power which the said Kings claimed as their prerogative Royall'.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, the supreme authority would not reside in the hands of a single ruler; the 'management of the affairs of the COMMONWEALTH' would be entrusted to the Lord General and an assembly of elders.<sup>117</sup>

In his discussion of the role of legislator, Rogers emphasised, drawing from his reading of Exodus 18, that Moses, following counsel from his father-in-law, had selected the men who would hold executive power.<sup>118</sup> In the dialogue, Spittlehouse explained that this interpretation had been questioned following the reading of Deuteronomy 1:9, which implied that the people had a vote in the elections.<sup>119</sup> To counter this argument, Spittlehouse referred to verse 13 from Exodus 18, which stated, 'The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening'.<sup>120</sup> Spittlehouse emphasised that, in the first instance, Moses had judged entirely by himself, stating, 'there being so many various Opinions or Judgements amongst our selves, and in as much as every of these interests, will endeavour to promote themselves'.<sup>121</sup> Spittlehouse asserted that at the time, Moses had perceived 'it most dangerous attempt to desire an Election'.<sup>122</sup> This perception paralleled the contemporary situation with Cromwell and the Council of State, as they deemed the situation too fractious and recognised that it could threaten the safety of the Commonwealth.

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<sup>115</sup> Rogers' *A Few Proposals* was published 27 April 1653 followed by *Warning-Piece* 19 May.

<sup>116</sup> Spittlehouse, *Warning-Piece*, 16.

<sup>117</sup> Spittlehouse, *First ADDRESSES*, 'Title page'.

<sup>118</sup> Rogers, *A Few Proposals*, np.

<sup>119</sup> Deut 1:9 (King James Version), 'And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone'.

<sup>120</sup> Exodus 18:13 (King James Version).

<sup>121</sup> Spittlehouse, *Warning-Piece*, 24.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 24.



The comparison between Cromwell and Moses was reasserted by Spittlehouse in *The First ADDRESSES*. Interestingly, the text began with Spittlehouse apologetically defending his comparison. Without referencing any individual or publication, Spittlehouse insisted that his connection between the two men ‘hath not been out of a fantastick humour, as some’ had concluded.<sup>123</sup> He further clarified that he had highlighted parallels between Cromwell and Moses because he was simply attempting to illustrate Cromwell’s ‘position of authority in the nation’.<sup>124</sup> Power was now devolved to the representative as opposed to a single individual.

From his comparison between Cromwell and Moses, Spittlehouse was also able to justify the selection of the members of the Nominated Assembly. Referring to ancient Israel, Spittlehouse wrote that the Lord had ‘decreed that his people in those latter days should have judges as at the first’, and Moses had selected the judges. As Spittlehouse believed that Cromwell symbolised a Moses-type figure, he argued that Cromwell should be tasked with selecting ‘judges’ to assist in managing the commonwealth.<sup>125</sup> Revisiting the moment in 1 Samuel 8 when the Israelites demanded an earthly king, Spittlehouse interpreted that the nation was redeeming the grave error of the Israelites as they transitioned from kings back to the rule of judges.

In the text, Spittlehouse once more underscored the nations and Cromwell’s role in advancing a global revolution in Christ’s name. The revolution would end monarchical rule as all monarchs would be ‘bound in chains’ and the nobility in irons, reaffirming his position that government leading up to the millennium would be based on virtue instead of titles.<sup>126</sup> He concluded with a pledge to Cromwell and the members of the Nominated Assembly. He assured them that if they persisted in advancing Christ’s design, which rested on the principles of a godly commonwealth, they would be ‘famous for all posterity’ and remembered as ‘conquerors of the world’.<sup>127</sup> Spittlehouse portrayed Cromwell as primarily a legislative figure, yet this depiction highlighted Cromwell’s limited authority, confined solely to executive power only.

#### **4.1 Legislative Power and Liberty**

From the perspectives of Spittlehouse and other republican thinkers, the power to legislate and the concept of liberty were intrinsically linked. As has been consistently demonstrated

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, ‘Preface’.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, ‘Address to Cromwell’.

<sup>125</sup> This was also put forward by John Rogers.

<sup>126</sup> Spittlehouse, *The First Addresses*, 5.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 24.

across each chapter so far, each author's comprehension of liberty aligns with its neo-Roman definition identified by Skinner. For Spittlehouse, the people of England had found themselves subject to the power of a solitary ruler who had governed according to his interests, and the populace had endured a state of subjugation. Through the fulfilment of prophecy, the people could now enjoy liberty afforded by a godly commonwealth. Another fundamental tenet of neo-Roman liberty lay in the concept of self-governance. To demonstrate their autonomy, active involvement in the political process was essential. This required the people to consent to the laws they agreed to live under.

The capacity for law-making and consent was evident in Milton's *The Tenure*, as he highlighted the role of kings as public servants, entrusted by the people to govern them according to the laws 'consented to by all'.<sup>128</sup> This sentiment was reaffirmed in *Ready and Easy Way*, published in 1660. Here, Milton explicitly articulated that safeguarding freedom from arbitrary and tyrannical regimes required the people 'make their own judicial lawes, and execute them by their own elected judicatures without appeal'.<sup>129</sup>

While the conventional body of thought among republicans argued that a self-governing republic vested with the legislative power was the only means to safeguard liberty, as we have seen in previous chapters, the Fifth Monarchists discussed so far posited an alternative perspective. For Spittlehouse and others, freedom was only possible when the power to legislate resided with God. In his account of the origin of sovereignty, Spittlehouse insisted that Nimrod had usurped legislative authority from God, and all rulers had abused this power since that point.<sup>130</sup> This had given rise to tyranny and idolatry, leading to the enslavement of people. The capacity to make laws was never intended to be delegated to men. Drawing from the Hebrew Commonwealth, Spittlehouse asserted that God conferred jurisdiction onto Moses, subsequently devolving it upon the elders and later the Judges.<sup>131</sup> The power that was granted was executive power for the execution of God's laws.

In 1653, Spittlehouse expanded his argument further in the text by addressing criticism raised by the Leveller, John Lilburne. Spittlehouse's interpretation of liberty in its neo-Roman form becomes clearer through his response to Lilburne.

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<sup>128</sup> Milton, *The Tenure*, 9.

<sup>129</sup> Milton, *The Ready and Easy way*, 16.

<sup>130</sup> John Spittlehouse, *The Royall ADVOCATE, or, An Introduction to the Magnificent and Honourable Laws of Jehovah* (London, 1655), 36-39.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, np.

In 1653, in reply to Spittlehouse's assertions in *A Warning-Piece*, Lilburne repudiated the suggestion that the Hebrew Commonwealth was a viable political model in his tract *The Upright Man's Vindication*. Lilburne wrote that neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament was 'any prescript form of Civil or earthly Politick Government left by God, to be binding and observed by all nations'.<sup>132</sup> Lilburne's refutation of Spittlehouse's assertion rested upon his conviction that, in accordance with the premise that all 'men being born rational creatures,' individuals inherently possessed the capacity to choose their preferred governance system and formulate their own body of laws.<sup>133</sup> Central to Lilburne's viewpoint was the belief that, as history had demonstrated, the government of England had declared the nation to have been established under the rule of kings. They were 'to govern the people of England, according to the known and declared fundamental laws (and no otherwise) made by common consent in parliament, or nationals, common or supreme councils'.<sup>134</sup>

In his response, Spittlehouse vehemently refuted Lilburne's proposition that 'rationality' could serve as the basis for law-making by drawing attention to the Israelites. He posited that if the foundation for law-making were predicated on rationality, then the Jews, as God's own 'peculiar people', would surely have been granted the 'liberty of making their own laws'.<sup>135</sup> Drawing another parallel to the case of Nimrod, Spittlehouse highlighted the moment when Nimrod, as monarch, had asserted legislative power, an act viewed as defiance against divine authority. From Spittlehouse's perspective, the laws that emerged following this assumption of power were tainted by corrupt reasoning, self-serving behaviour, and vindictiveness.

Furthermore, Spittlehouse explained that when the Israelites demanded a king, they 'changed the image of an incorruptible God, into the similitude of corruptible men so, did they likewise by his laws, making them also a new in their vain like imaginations, and from hence hath also proceeded the rise of adoration of images of men, (instead of

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<sup>132</sup> John Lilburne, *The Upright Mans Vindication: Or, an Epistle Writ by John Lilburn Gent. Prisoner in Newgate, August 1. 1653. Unto His Friends and Late Neighbors, and Acquaintance at Theobalds in Hartford-Shire, and Thereabouts in the several Towns Adjoyning; Occasioned by Major William Packers Calumniating, and Groundlesly Reproaching the Said Mr John Lilburn* (London, 1653), 11.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>135</sup> Spittlehouse, *A Vindication of the Royal Law of Jehovah, (Lord Paramount of Heaven and Earth) COMMONLY TERMED The Moral Law, Or, Law of Manners, (in relation to our behaviour both towards God and our Neighbour) or otherwise, The DECALOGUE OR ten Commandments; With the Statutes and Judgements appertaining thereunto. In opposition to the present Laws of our Forefathers, so called and magnified by several persons in this Commonwealth, and particularly by Lieut, Col, John Lilburne and Capt. Robert Norwood* (1653), 4. The month of publication is unknown and not listed among the Thomason collection. However, as Lilburne's *Upright Man* was dated to the 1 August it is the latter part of the year.

God).<sup>136</sup> This decision was a pivotal moment, and the Jews became heathens and consequently fell under the jurisdiction of the laws of nations. The Israelites, Spittlehouse argued, transformed from self-government to enslavement as they were ‘subjects’ and dependent on the laws of nations.<sup>137</sup>

In contrast to Milton’s assertion that liberty was derived from the capacity to legislate, Spittlehouse argued that this paradigm had enslaved all the nations. He contended that, whereas God’s laws were perfect and created for the good of the people, the laws of nations, forged from the ‘corrupt reason of the Nations, or Heathens’, had led to the erosion of liberty.<sup>138</sup> Spittlehouse held that liberty could only be realised within a commonwealth founded upon divine laws. Moreover, as the laws were already defined in scripture, there was no need for the commonwealth members to hold legislative powers. In his view, the people, comprised of members or the army, congregated churches and well-wishers, would voluntarily consent to live under God’s laws; there would be no further need to reaffirm their commitment.<sup>139</sup>

In the concluding months of 1653, the unfolding changes in government resulted in the establishment of the Protectorate. With the implementation of the Instrument of Government, both executive and legislative power came under the sway of Cromwell. This development prompted Spittlehouse to construct an argument against single-person rule.

#### **4.15 Opposition to Single-Person Rule**

Throughout the chapter, the theme of liberty has been apparent. Spittlehouse believed the regicide allowed the people to regain their civil and religious liberties. As this chapter has demonstrated, Spittlehouse believed this could be achieved by establishing a godly commonwealth wherein authority resided with a group of elected individuals drawn from the military based on the division of power between ecclesiastical and civil spheres. The creation of the Protectorate, which placed power back into the hands of a single person, on 16 December, posed a formidable challenge to Spittlehouse’s conceptualisation of the Commonwealth, as Cromwell was considered to have usurped power, thereby threatening the peoples’ liberties once more.

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<sup>136</sup> In his speech from the scaffold, Charles is reported to have said ‘I go from a corruptible, to an incorruptible Crown, where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world.’ *King Charls His Speech made upon the Scaffold at WHITEHALL-Gate, Immediately before His Execution, on Tuesday 30 of Jan. 1648.* London:1649), 7; Spittlehouse, *A Vindication of the Royal Law*, 11

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

When Cromwell was installed as Lord Protector, Spittlehouse had already been arrested several days earlier for his involvement in the publication of several anonymous petitions. Spittlehouse was subsequently released from prison on 6 April 1654.<sup>140</sup> After his release, he waited for the optimal time to produce a text that condemned the actions of Cromwell and the army – the publication date coincided with the First Protectorate Parliament that assembled two days later, on 3 September 1654. Notably, Spittlehouse explained that the arrest of Feake and Rogers had prompted the reasoning behind the publication. He wrote that he had been ‘stirred up’ to demonstrate the ‘persecutions and apostacies’ perpetrated by those now in government and the army and to reveal what they should expect to happen if they fail to repent.<sup>141</sup>

Feake, initially apprehended in December 1653 and briefly released, faced subsequent arrest on 25 January 1654, following a meeting at Christchurch, where, alongside Vavasour Powell, he had accused Cromwell of surpassing Charles in tyranny.<sup>142</sup> Rogers was arrested on 27 July 1654; similarly to Feake, the details of a sermon he gave were relayed back to Thurloe.<sup>143</sup> Rogers insinuated that Cromwell had broken God’s commandments and the single rule of Cromwell had returned the nation to slavery. In June 1654, Rogers also asserted that the Protectorate bore a significant resemblance to monarchical government. As part of Rogers’ criticism, he referenced discussions within the army dating back to 1647 that criticised monarchical rule.<sup>144</sup>

Interestingly, Spittlehouse, writing three months later, also revisited the same debates that Rogers had emphasised in his work. However, in his text, *Certain Queries*, Spittlehouse also sought to undermine the Instrument of Government. He asserted that the Instrument of Government, a written constitution that vested Cromwell with legislative and executive authority, constituted an act of betrayal against Christ.<sup>145</sup> The nation had once more returned to the rule of a single person, akin to kingship. Moreover, Spittlehouse levelled accusations of treason against Major General John Lambert, the author of the

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<sup>140</sup> ‘Warrants of the Protector and Council,’ in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum*, 1654, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1880), 433–443. *British History Online*, accessed September 23, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/interregnum/1654/pp433-443>.

<sup>141</sup> Spittlehouse, *Certain Queries Propounded To the most serious Consideration of those Persons Now in Power* (Sept, 1654), Title Page.

<sup>142</sup> ‘Volume 42: December 1653,’ in *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum, 1653–4*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1879), 279–328. *British History Online*, accessed September 30, 2022, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/interregnum/1653-4/pp279-328>.

<sup>143</sup> ‘State Papers, 1655: May (5 of 5),’ in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 3, December 1654 - August 1655*, ed. Thomas Birch (London: Fletcher Gyles, 1742), 480–498. *British History Online*, accessed December 13, 2023, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/thurloe-papers/vol3/pp480-498>.

<sup>144</sup> Rogers, *Mene, Tekel*.

<sup>145</sup> Spittlehouse, *Certain Queries*, 4–6, 8.

Instrument of Government. He posited that Lambert's actions amounted to treason against the commonwealth, as they reinstated the nation's subjugation to 'the government of one single person'. Spittlehouse particularly highlighted the 'boldness' of the author as revealed in Article 33 of the Instrument, where Lambert not only nominated but also chose to 'institute and invest Oliver Cromwell to the exercise of the said Rule and Government'.<sup>146</sup>

Drawing attention to Article 22 of the Instrument, which Spittlehouse quoted verbatim, adding capitalisation, as Rogers had previously, to reinforce his point, Spittlehouse underscored that 'the SUPREAM LEGISLATIVE POWER TO BE AND RESIDE IN THE LORD PROTECTOR'. To further demonstrate Lambert's alleged act of treason, Spittlehouse referenced the Act of Abolishing the Office of King, which, as he noted, remained unrepealed.<sup>147</sup> The Act stipulated that any endeavour to reinstate Charles Stuart or to establish 'ANY OTHER PERSON chief magistrate' within the three nations constituted an act of high treason, punishable by death.<sup>148</sup> Spittlehouse was framing his argument against the Protectorate within a legal context to reinforce his accusation against Lambert.

After establishing a conflict between the Instrument and an existing Act of Parliament, Spittlehouse shifted his focus to Cromwell and the New Model Army. Notably, in his earlier writings, Spittlehouse expressed a deferential tone towards Cromwell, addressing him as 'His Excellencie' and describing parliament as the 'supreme power' in the land. However, there was a noticeable shift in attitude as the tract was simply addressed to those 'now in power'.<sup>149</sup>

Spittlehouse reminded the army that they explicitly contradicted the 'Armies Declaration, [of] June 14 in supporting the Protectorate regime. 1647'. The document articulated that 'they are so far from DESIGNING, or COMPLYING to have an ABSOLUTE or ARBITRARY power SIGNED or SETLDE for CONTINUANCE in any person WHATSOEVER'.<sup>150</sup> Another point raised by Spittlehouse was that the Instrument

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 4; 'The Act of Abolishing the Office of King', in S. R. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* 384-387.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>149</sup> Spittlehouse, *A Warning-Piece*, title page; Spittlehouse, *Certain Queries*, title page.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 5; *A Declaration, Or Representation from His Excellency, Sir Thomas Fairfax, and the Army Under His Command Humbly Tendred to the Parliament, Concerning the Iust and Fundamentall Rights and Liberties of Themselves and the Kingdome. with some Humble Proposals and Desires. by the Appointment of His Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax, with the Officers and Souldiers of His Army. Signed John Rushworth, Secretary* (London, 1647), 9.

stipulated that any legislative bills must gain Cromwell's consent. To show the apostasy of the army, Spittlehouse drew attention to the Remonstrance in St Albans (1648), which asserted that 'whole interest of the people of England, the Representatives thereof, have and shall have the supream power and trust making Lawes, Constitutions, and Offices for the ordering, preservation and government of the whole...WITHOUT ANY FURTHER APPEALE TO ANY CREATED STANDING POWER'.<sup>151</sup>

The soldiers of the New Model Army, according to Spittlehouse, were to be 'SERVANTS' of the Commonwealth.<sup>152</sup> Spittlehouse highlighted that in the Declaration to Scotland, they professed that they were instruments against all that opposed Christ, declaring Him their only king. They had vowed that 'they would submit unto him UPON HIS OWN TEARMS, and admit ONLY to the exercise of his Royal Authority'.<sup>153</sup> Through their continued support of the Protectorate, they veered away from their original principles, displaying not only hypocrisy but also an act of treason against Christ.

According to Spittlehouse, the establishment of the Protectorate witnessed Cromwell seize the authority to govern, and the army's support made it complicit in this act of treason. Spittlehouse contended that the army could only redeem itself through 'submission' to Christ's laws, judgements, and ordinances, who it had already proclaimed to be 'King of this Commonwealth'.<sup>154</sup> By opposing monarchical rule and governance by a single person, it was evident that Spittlehouse viewed a commonwealth, where authority lay with its representatives, as the sole viable governmental structure. The core of Spittlehouse's critique against Cromwell centred on exercising sovereign powers. In formulating his own stance concerning sovereignty, which was inextricably linked to legislative power and its origins, Spittlehouse actively participated in the discussions surrounding sovereignty that emerged during the 1650s.

#### 4.16 Sovereignty

Feisal Mohamed observed that interest in the nature of sovereignty was sparked following the Reformation.<sup>155</sup> The term 'sovereign,' within the anglophone world, can be traced back to the medieval Latin word for superior. Despite its long etymological history, its definition

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<sup>151</sup> Spittlehouse, *Certain Queries*, 5.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>155</sup> Mohamed, *Sovereignty*, 3.

has proved somewhat problematic due to its inconsistent usage by ancient philosophers.<sup>156</sup> French jurist Jean Bodin (c.1530-1596) formulated his definition in the sixteenth century to resolve the term's ambiguity. In Bodin's interpretation, 'Soveraigntie is the most high, absolute, and perpetuall power over the citizens and subjects in a Commonweale ... that is to say, The greatest power to command'.<sup>157</sup> Bodin intended to rectify what he perceived to be the errors of ancient philosophers, such as Aristotle and Polybius, by insisting that the fundamental attribute of sovereign power was its indivisibility.<sup>158</sup> Bodin instead argued that there was a distinction between sovereignty and government, the latter representing the institutions through which the sovereign exercises their rule. The indivisibility of sovereign power was undoubtedly the case for Spittlehouse as he interpreted the Officers' role as one of governance.

The outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642 triggered debates on sovereignty, with parliamentarians employing various theories to justify their actions against the king. Charles I and his supporters asserted the monarch's authority as divinely appointed, with sovereign power residing in the King. In contrast, Henry Parker argued that power 'flows from the people to the prince, not the other way round'.<sup>159</sup> Parker's theory of parliamentary sovereignty was rooted in the 'rule in nature', which posited that the people, as the greater element, created monarchical governance.<sup>160</sup> According to Parker, the monarch's authority was contingent upon the people and 'His powers were merely "fiduciarie."' <sup>161</sup> Despite appearing to develop a theory of popular sovereignty, Parker's explanation was ambiguous, as he also claimed that the people created parliaments, with parliament being the embodiment of the people and, consequently, the true sovereign in Parker's theory.<sup>162</sup>

In the 1650s, the debates surrounding sovereignty resurfaced following the trial and regicide of Charles I. The Rump's authority to prosecute the king faced scrutiny from royalists and Presbyterian MPs. It was argued that no 'legal authority' in the land could either bring the king to trial or subsequently 'alter the government'.<sup>163</sup> Pride's Purge enabled Parliament to proceed with the king's trial. However, as this was a military coup,

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<sup>156</sup> Richard Bourke, 'Introduction', *Popular Sovereignty in Historical Perspective* ed. Richard Bourke and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 2.

<sup>157</sup> Mohamed, *Sovereignty*, 4.

<sup>158</sup> Bourke, 'Introduction', 4.

<sup>159</sup> Daniel Lee, *Popular Sovereignty in Early Modern Constitutional Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 293.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid*, 293.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, 293

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, 293-294; Lee noted that the ambiguity was likely to be deliberate.

<sup>163</sup> Glenn Burgess, *British Political Thought 1500 -1660* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 241.



the challenge to authority remained a persistent issue for each regime throughout the 1650s.

As highlighted in earlier chapters, Milton, in *The Tenure*, presented a theory of popular sovereignty to address accusations and substantiate the authority of the Rump. Milton provided an account of the origins of governments and kings to show that power originated with the people. In response to theories of popular sovereignty, Spittlehouse also offered his views on the origins of sovereignty, sharing similarities with Milton as he, too, focused on exploring the beginnings of government. However, aligning with Aspinwall and Rogers, Spittlehouse endeavoured to illustrate that sovereign power originated from God rather than the people, emphasising the indivisibility of sovereignty.

Spittlehouse had first engaged with the idea of sovereignty in 1653, in *A Warning-Piece*. The text coincided with the deliberations between Cromwell and the Council of State regarding the structure of the new representative body. Within the text, Spittlehouse aimed to scrutinise certain assertions that had been made to advance the theory of popular sovereignty. In particular, the argument of the Leveller, John Wildman. In a somewhat cryptic fashion, Spittlehouse wrote, ‘you think you have played the *man*, albeit a *wilde* one, by saying most Rationall men acknowledge it, that the power is primarily, and originally in the people’.<sup>164</sup> Spittlehouse focused on Wildman’s omission to specify whom he believed was meant by the term ‘people’.<sup>165</sup>

Within the sovereignty debates, the Hebrew Commonwealth was considered to illustrate the concept of popular sovereignty. It was claimed that Moses had received his authority from the people, a concept later expanded upon by Harrington in *Oceana*.<sup>166</sup> This argument drew upon the interpretation of Exodus 18, recounting Moses receiving advice from his father-in-law Jethro.

In response to this assertion, Spittlehouse refuted the claim that Moses had received his ‘Commission from the Commonwealth of Israel, in any respects.’ According to Spittlehouse, Moses’ authority to govern was immediately given by God, not the people.<sup>167</sup> In addition, he argued against the notion that the power to make laws was ever intended to be given to men. Drawing again from the example of the Hebrew Commonwealth,

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<sup>164</sup> Spittlehouse, *Warning-Piece*, 21.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>166</sup> James Harrington, ‘The Commonwealth of Oceana’ (1656), *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, edited by J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 27.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

Spittlehouse contended that the power was given directly from God to Moses, the elders and later the Judges.<sup>168</sup> The sovereign power granted was for the execution of God's laws. Nowhere in scripture was the power to legislate given to the people.

In 1655, Spittlehouse formulated a comprehensive argument in his text entitled *The Royall ADVOCATE, or, An Introduction to the Magnificent and Honourable Laws of Jehovah*, aiming to reject the concept of popular sovereignty.<sup>169</sup> Similar to Milton, Spittlehouse presented his perspective on the origin of governance. In his narrative, he asserted that sovereign authority had been usurped from God by a succession of monarchs and, more recently, by Cromwell. The Old Testament documented the rise of Nimrod, identified as the first monarch, in the aftermath of the flood. Nimrod was portrayed as a formidable huntsman, a metaphor, as Spittlehouse explained, that pertained to Nimrod's hunting of men in the same way that 'beasts are chased'.<sup>170</sup> Spittlehouse emphasised that during Nimrod's reign, an 'idolatrous and tyrannicall' system of government emerged, and these earthly forms had subjugated humanity ever since. He asserted that all single-person rule 'had their rise and being from Nimrod'.<sup>171</sup> It was Spittlehouse's belief that every king throughout history was a tyrant. Unlike the Hebrew Commonwealth, monarchical rule was not a government designed by God; instead, it was the creation of men's imaginations.

To support his argument, Spittlehouse asserted that the first inaugural city, or 'metropolis', was established within Babel, expanding his interpretation of the creation of earthly governance. This metropolis was fortified to become a 'city of refuge,' affording sanctuary to individuals seeking to shield themselves as 'they were not in favour with either God or good men'.<sup>172</sup> It was within the city that, according to Spittlehouse, practices in defiance of God were initiated. Monarchs elevated themselves to positions of worship and reverence. They were praised for their victories instead of 'ascribing them in the least to providence.'<sup>173</sup>

Nonetheless, according to Spittlehouse, the greatest act of defiance against God occurred through Nimrod's assumption of legislative power. He argued that this transgression remained a prevailing characteristic in all 'heathen' governments. In

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<sup>168</sup> Lilburne, *The Upright Mans Vindication*, 11.

<sup>169</sup> John Spittlehouse, *The Royall Advocate. Or, an Introduction to the Magnificent and Honourable Laws of Jehovah the Lord Christ, Now Contaminated and Despised by the Present Army-Men of this Nation. Asserting and Controverting the Holinesse, Righteousness, Perfectnesse, and Universallity Thereof, of Divine Right* (London, 1655).

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 35; Gen 10:9 (King James Version); 1 Chron 1:10 (King James Version).

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 35.

Spittlehouse's perspective, when earthly potentates held the power to legislate, it inevitably led to tyranny and the loss of liberty. There was an initial hope that creating a commonwealth, where executive power rested with the representatives, would restore liberty. However, this hope was dashed as Cromwell assumed sovereign power for himself, resulting in the people being returned to a state of slavery.

#### **4.17 Conclusions**

John Spittlehouse's writings offer yet another variation of the Fifth Monarchist godly republicanism during the 1650s. Although Spittlehouse did not engage with prophetic exegesis to the extent that Rogers, Cary, and Aspinwall had, he still employed scripture, particularly from the Old Testament, to support his arguments. As observed in each preceding chapter, liberty was a foundational pillar of their godly republicanism. Liberty was also a key part of Spittlehouse's vision of the Church. Much like Cary, Spittlehouse advocated for the necessity of religious reforms because of the perceived connection between prelacy and presbyterianism, which were viewed as extensions of the antichristian empire. Both highlighted the use of persecutory methods to enforce uniformity, methods also employed by the antichristian Catholic Church.

Consequently, Spittlehouse called for replacing the Church of England with independent, autonomous congregations. He proposed that each congregation engage in selecting their officers, underlining the importance of consent in governance. Notably, Spittlehouse also allowed for the participation of women in these elections, a stance supported by his interpretation of New Testament scripture.

In connection with a church reform, Spittlehouse advocated for a division between realms of civil and religious power, resulting in an argument for toleration. This perspective was championed during the 1650s by figures like Harrington, influenced by Erastianism, which asserted the State's authority over the Church and gave rise to the concept of a civil religion. However, as the chapter has shown, the Hebrew texts afforded Spittlehouse an alternative argument. He pointed out that the Old Testament revealed a distinction between civil and religious power, as shown with Moses and Aaron. Spittlehouse was committed to the notion that toleration could only be achieved through separation between the Church and state.

Spittlehouse's concern for liberty extended beyond religious matters. In his defence of the dissolution of the Rump Parliament, he criticised the Oath of Engagement. Spittlehouse viewed the Oath as another form of compulsion, but this time in political

terms. He believed it deprived individuals of the liberty they regained following the regicide. Subsequently, after establishing the Protectorate, Spittlehouse turned his attention to highlighting the oppressive nature of the Instrument of Government. He saw it as another mechanism that infringed on civil liberty, as it reinstated single-person rule.

To further criticise the Protectorate and champion liberty, Spittlehouse engaged in debates around sovereignty. Some argued that the Old Testament supported the idea of popular sovereignty, citing Moses's power as being derived from the people. Like Aspinwall, Spittlehouse also explored the origins of government. However, he contended that Nimrod, the first recorded king in the Bible, had usurped legislative power, emphasising that all kings since were tyrants. Since he perceived the Instrument of Government as granting those powers to Cromwell, Spittlehouse believed that the people were once again returned to slavery.

Notably, there was also a variation with Spittlehouse's conception of virtuous rule. He envisioned a commonwealth where the government rested with the army, particularly the officers he viewed as the most qualified to rule. He drew attention to Moses and the sword, along with Revelation 12:5, which spoke of a man-child ruling with an iron rod, to support his argument. The chapter also revealed a more restricted view of the role of a legislator. Interestingly, Spittlehouse also advocated for several mechanisms to help curb the corruptive tendencies of those holding power, such as equal pay and a system of rotation with each officer standing for twelve months.

## Chapter 5. John Canne

### 5.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis will examine the intellectual contributions of John Canne, a printer, preacher and polemicist, to the English republican debates. As seen in the previous chapters, the interconnection between theocracy and sovereignty emerged as a theme intertwined with the notion of liberty. This association similarly manifested in Canne's contributions. However, in contrast, Canne's conception of liberty found its foundation in the principle of popular sovereignty.

Much like Aspinwall, Canne sought refuge in the Netherlands to escape religious persecution and, more importantly, to enjoy the freedom to disseminate his thoughts through printed work. Notably, Canne assumed control over the running of the Richt Right printing press, where, as a Separatist, he was able to publish his criticism of the Church of England. His exile and involvement in the printing industry inevitably exposed him to diverse ideas and authors, which would have influenced his thinking. This influence is evident in his writings as a Fifth Monarchist, as he adopted a humanistic approach to addressing the challenges facing England during the 1650s. Canne's process involved drawing insights not only from scripture but also from ancient philosophy.

Beyond his role as a Fifth Monarchist, Canne has attracted some scholarly attention as a printer, particularly his involvement in publishing seditious literature by John Lilburne. Much discussion has also centred on Canne's religious affiliation and whether he was a Baptist.<sup>1</sup> However, Canne's contribution to the English republican debates has largely gone unnoticed. This chapter argues that Canne was deeply committed to establishing a republican form of government, a commitment that, as we have observed throughout the thesis, centred on the republican ideals of liberty and virtue.

Following the regicide, Canne defended Parliament's authority against claims grounded in the divine right of kings. He deployed resistance theories, drew upon classical

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<sup>1</sup> It was asserted that Canne was instrumental in the emergence of the Baptist movement in Bristol. Following his visit to Bristol in 1642 he established the first Baptist Church. This viewpoint has been refuted by Wilson. Wilson rejected that Canne was a Baptist positing that he 'moved directly from Separatism into Millenarian agitation'. Notably, Wilson's article concentrates on defining Canne's religious stance with no acknowledgment of the evolution in Canne's intellectual thought during the period. See John F. Wilson, 'Another Look at John Canne', *Church History* 33, no. 1 (1964): 34–48.

literature, and referenced scripture to substantiate Parliament's right in meting justice against the king and its capacity to alter the form of government. However, as will be shown, a significant distinction emerges between Canne and the other four Fifth Monarchists discussed in this thesis.

In his defence of the regicide, Canne formulated an argument that advocated for popular sovereignty, a perspective sharply contrasting with the position of the Fifth Monarchists discussed thus far. Notably, in direct opposition to Spittlehouse, Canne's conception of popular sovereignty was firmly rooted in his interpretation of Moses's role within the Hebrew Commonwealth. Moreover, we will explore Canne's subsequent development of republican exclusivism, a perspective that materialised after the regicide. In his discourse, diverging from the approach set out in previous chapters, Canne focused on the socio-economic advantages inherent in a commonwealth to challenge the legitimacy of monarchical rule.

The chapter will also highlight a notable shift in Canne's writings in 1653, as he began producing millenarian texts. Drawing from Daniel's prophecies, reminiscent of Cary's approach, Canne incorporated contemporary events into prophetic narratives to reinforce his argument, condemning the Protectorate as part of the antichristian state, which had subjected the people to a renewed servitude. Ultimately, this chapter will reveal Canne's vision of a commonwealth based on voluntary government, consent, and virtuous rule.

The chapter will begin with Canne's biography. It will then analyse his writing from 1649 to 1659, concluding with Canne's response to the restoration of the Rump Parliament in 1659. During this episode, Canne took the opportunity to advocate for a union between the Fifth Monarchists and the Commonwealth Men. Canne emphasised that they shared the same objective: restoring the peoples' liberties and rights.

## **5.2 Biography**

The details of Canne's early life are relatively unknown. Indications suggest that in 1602, he enrolled at Christ's College, Cambridge and throughout the 1620s, he assumed the role of teacher at Deadman's Place Independent Church, London.<sup>2</sup> However, the dominance of Arminianism and pursuit of religious uniformity during Charles I's reign led to a period of

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<sup>2</sup> Roger Hayden, 'Canne, John (d. 1667?)', *Independent Minister and Printer*, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed 4 August 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/4552>.

persecution. The push for uniformity led to significant numbers of exiles during the 1630s.<sup>3</sup> As we discussed previously, during this period, Aspinwall fled to America, and Canne, too, was compelled to seek sanctuary abroad in the Netherlands.

In 1632, having relocated to Amsterdam, Canne successfully established himself as a printer and a prominent figure advocating separatism. According to John F. Wilson, Canne reunited the ‘warring factions’ of Henry Ainsworth’s (1569–1622) church, the Ancient Separatist Church of Amsterdam.<sup>4</sup> The church ‘consisted almost entirely of English exiles’ who shared ‘principles of separating from outward sin, shunning non-biblical corruptions in worship, and watching over each other’s spiritual welfare.’<sup>5</sup> The Church had suffered periods of discontent amongst its congregation, but in 1610, Ainsworth led a ‘dissident faction’ and split from the Church.<sup>6</sup> After Ainsworth died in 1622, the Church remained fractured. It is also said that Canne became a prominent leader of the English Brownists.<sup>7</sup>

In 1634, now in exile and liberated from the threat of prosecution, Canne quickly published *A Necessitie of Separation from the Church of England, Proved by the Nonconformists Principles*.<sup>8</sup> The title page of his work described Canne as ‘Pastor of the ancient English church’. The term ‘Ancient’ stemmed from Canne’s conviction that ‘our Way is of the Apostolique primitive institution’.<sup>9</sup> Within the text, Canne advocated for the separation from the National Church, grounded in his belief that it had become corrupted under the hierarchical institution of Prelacy.<sup>10</sup> Canne vehemently rejected the accusations directed towards his separatist congregations, countering claims that they were ‘*Schismaticks*’ and their comparison with the ‘most notorious Hereticks, and

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<sup>3</sup> Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 126.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, ‘John Canne’, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Michael E. Moody, ‘Ainsworth, Henry (1569-1622), separatist minister and religious controversialist’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; Accessed 4 Sep.2023.

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-240>.

<sup>6</sup> In 1597, the church was divided due to conflict between pastor Francis Johnson and his brother George. By 1601, revelations of Ainsworth’s previous submission to the Church of England, considered apostacy by separatists, led to schism. Ainsworth was able to maintain his position and those that refused to acknowledge Ainsworth as their teacher were ‘excommunicated’. The church was further criticised by John Smith due to their reliance on English translations of scripture and advocated for the congregation’s authority over the eldership. Pastor Johnson countered, asserted exclusive authority of the eldership. This doctrinal clash prompted Ainsworth to lead a dissident faction. Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Hayden, ‘Canne, John’; Brownists were Protestant dissenters who believed in self-governing churches.

<sup>8</sup> John Canne, *A Necessitie of Separation from the Church of England, Prooved by the Nonconformists Principles Specially Opposed Vnto Dr. Ames, His Fresh Suit Against Humane Ceremonies, in the Point of Separation Only. also Dr. Laiton, Mr. Dayrel, and Mr. Bradshaw, are here Answered, Wherein they have Written Against Us. with a Table in the Later End, of the Principal Occurrents in this Treatise* (Amsterdam,1634).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, ‘To the Reader’.

blasphemers'.<sup>11</sup> Canne raised the point, 'how can any one doe less then *separate*, if his heart be tender against every sinne, seeing they confidently affirme, that their *ministry*, *worship*, and *discipline*, is from Antichrist'.<sup>12</sup>

Canne's position as a printer was no less eventful. In 1637, Canne was fined three-hundred pounds by an Amsterdam tribunal when he was deemed to have published works detrimental to Charles I.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, an agent of Archbishop William Laud alleged that Canne's printing press, the Richt Right Press, was involved with the publication of seditious literature, specifically criticising Charles I's regime.<sup>14</sup>

According to Wilson, as a printer, Canne's press primarily concentrated on disseminating literature aimed at the 'overthrow of the Bishops.'<sup>15</sup> This focus aligned with Canne's separatist principles and corresponded with the overall theme of his writings before the late 1640s. Canne also played a pivotal role in printing the works of fellow exiles, including figures like Thomas Goodwin, who was in exile in Arnheim. Goodwin's tract *Agravation of Sin and Sinning Against Knowledge and Mercy* had already been published in England. However, in 1639, Canne saw fit to have it 'Printed for the benefit of the English Churches in the Netherlands'.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, Canne ventured into publishing controversial works authored by Lilburne, who would later rise to prominence as a leader in the Leveller movement.<sup>17</sup> Lilburne also challenged the hierarchical nature of the Church of England. Interestingly, Christianson has asserted that the first three of Lilburne's pamphlets were given their titles by either Canne or someone else from Richt Right Press.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 'To the Reader'.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 'To the Reader'.

<sup>13</sup> Wilson, 'John Canne' 38.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 38; Public Records Office 'The Information of M. S....,' pp. 387-79f., 147f

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>17</sup> John Lilburne, *The poore mans cry Wherein is shewed the present miserable estate of mee Iohn Lilburne, close prisoner in the fleete. Also an humble petition to his Maiesties honorable privy councill, for meaintenance that I famish not* (1639); *A light for the ignorant or A treatise shewing, that in the new Testament, is set forth three kingly states or governments, that is, the civill state, the true ecclesiasticall state, and the false ecclesiasticall state* (Amsterdam: Richt Right Press, 1638); [*Come Out of Her My People*] *Or an Answer to the Questions of a Gentlewoman (a Professour in the Antichristian Church of England) about Hearing the Publicke Ministers Vvhere it is Largely Discussed and Proved to be Sinfull and Unlawfull. also a Iust Apologie for the Way of Total Separation (Commonly but Falsely Called Brownisme) that it is the Truth of God, Though Lightly Esteemed in the Eyes of the Blinde World. with a Challenge to Dispute with them Publickly before King & Counsell: To Prove Whatsoever I Said at the Pillery Against them. Viz. that the Calling of them all is Jure Diabolo: Even from the Divell Himselfe* (Amsterdam: Richt Right Press, 1639).

<sup>18</sup> According to Christianson, while Lilburne knew his three texts had been printed 'he gave them wrong titles; *A cry*, p.22. *Christian mans*, *A worke*, and *The poore...* it seems safe to assume that the publisher entitled all of these tracts'. See Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, (University of Toronto Press, 1978), 174.



According to Wilson, the Richt Right press discontinued publishing controversial material in 1641. This shift can be attributed to the relaxation of restrictions on unlicensed printing trade in England. Notably, coinciding with the abolition of the Star Chamber in 1641, an institution employed to silence critics of the monarchy.<sup>19</sup>

In the wake of the outbreak of the Civil War, Canne initially remained in Amsterdam. However, by 1647, he had returned to London, undertaking the role of chaplain for Colonel Robert Lilburne, brother of John.<sup>20</sup> Given Canne's earlier involvement in publishing Lilburne's writings, it is noteworthy that in 1649, Canne was reported to have contributed to a two-part tract in which he depicted the Levellers as atheists and portrayed them as a threat to the newly established commonwealth and liberty.<sup>21</sup> A more comprehensive exploration of this intriguing change in attitude will follow later in the chapter.

In 1650, Canne took over the role of chaplain for Colonel Robert Overton's regiment in Hull.<sup>22</sup> However, he soon became embroiled in a dispute with the preacher John Shaw, and Canne was ejected from Hull in 1657.<sup>23</sup> His expulsion occurred after he had shifted his opinion against Cromwell and the Protectorate because he considered a return to single-person rule a loss of liberty and an act against Christ. Canne's criticism of the regime caused him to be subject to government scrutiny. According to Canne, the sustained aggravation by authorities led to the deaths of his daughter Deliverance in December 1656 and his wife Agnees in January the following year.

The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 was a blow to the Fifth Monarchists' millenarian aspirations. However, it did not surprise Canne as in *A Seasonable Word*,

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<sup>19</sup> 'The Act for The Abolition of the Court of Star Chamber', in *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution*, 179-186.

<sup>20</sup> Hayden, 'Canne, John.'

<sup>21</sup> John Canne, *[The Discoverer: [V]herein is Set Forth (to Undeceive the Nation) the Reall Plots and Stratagems of Lievt. Col. John Lilburn, Mr. William Walwyn, Mr. Thomas Prince, Mr. Richard Overton, and that Partie ... / Composed and Digested by some Private Persons, Well-Wishers to the just and Honourable Proceedings of the Parliament and Councell of State* (London, 1649).

<sup>22</sup> Canne served as chaplain for Overton's regiment until April 1653. Overton was predominantly stationed in Scotland during this period. Overton had also approved of the dissolution of the Rump. Notably, like certain Fifth Monarchist's, he viewed Cromwell as a type of Moses figure. See - Barbara Taft, "'They That Pursue Perfection on Earth...': the Political Progress of Robert Overton," in *Soldiers, Writers and Statesmen of the English Revolution* ed. Ian Gentles, John Morrill, and Blair Worden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 290.

<sup>23</sup> The dispute occurred because of Canne's popularity with the army which allowed him to 'wall up the arches between the chancel and the main part of the church,' sparking a dispute with the preacher John Shaw. Hayden, 'Canne, John.'

printed a mere three days after the Rump Parliament was restored, he warned about the dangers of placing power into the hands of one person again. He reminded the reader of the rallying cry ‘No King but Jesus.’<sup>24</sup> By 1664, Canne had returned to Amsterdam, recommencing his work on producing a revised version of his annotated Bible. His edition published in 1662, including marginal references, was ‘reprinted for well over a century.’ According to Wilson, ‘it made Canne’s name something of a by-word in pious circles.’<sup>25</sup> The exact date of Canne’s death is unknown but generally accepted as 1667.<sup>26</sup>

### 5.3 Publications

As mentioned, before 1649, Canne authored several texts centred on critiquing Prelacy and advocating separatism. Within these texts, Canne expressed views aligned with the Protestant apocalyptic tradition. For instance, in *The Necessity of Separation*, Canne illustrated that the current structure of church governance mirrored the antichristian Catholic Church. Furthermore, there was a subtle hint of millenarianism in *A stay against straying* (1639), where Canne, in the preface, alluded to the ‘the revealing of the Man of sinne’ and his destruction through the ‘brightnes of Christs comming’.<sup>27</sup>

However, during his period as a Fifth Monarchist, Canne's millenarian outlook was fully expressed as he engaged with prophetic interpretation. Particular attention was directed towards the eleven texts Canne produced between 1649 and 1660, including work during his brief time as editor of *Mercurius Politicus* and the *Public Intellegencer* in 1659. Like the other authors examined, Canne responded to pivotal moments of social transformation. Canne’s response to moments, such as the regicide, the formation of the Nominated Assembly in 1653 and the era of the Protectorate, is integral to understanding the development of Fifth Monarchist godly republicanism.

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<sup>24</sup> John Canne, *A seasonable word to the Parliament-men, to take with them when they go into the House: wherein is shewed, the first part of their present work, and what is expected from them, to satisfie their true and real friends. Likewise a vvaichword, how they prefer not again such persons to places of trust who have lately betrayed the priviledges of Parliaments, and the just rights of the people, into the hands of a single person* (London, 1659), 5.

<sup>25</sup> Wilson, ‘John Canne’, 35.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 34; W. Stevens reported this tradition, *History of the Scottish Church in Rotterdam* (Edinburgh, 1833), 270 f.

<sup>27</sup> John Canne, *A stay against straying. or an answer to a treatise intituled: The lavyfulnes of hearing the ministers of the church of england. by john robinson. wherein is proved the contrarie, viz: The unlawfulness of hearing the ministers of all false churches* (1639).

## 5.4 The Regicide

The execution of Charles I, celebrated by the Fifth Monarchists as the fulfilment of prophecy, engendered dissatisfaction among royalists, Presbyterians and radical groups such as the Levellers. Following Pride's Purge in 1648, while the streamlined Parliament swiftly achieved its aim, it was met with allegations of illegitimacy. The Rump Parliament came into power through a military coup d'état, which led to perceptions that it lacked the legal mandate requisite for exercising authority.<sup>28</sup> After the regicide, Canne sought to justify the new regime and to provide recommendations for reform encompassing both ecclesiastical and political matters.

Canne's response to the regicide was swift, as *The Golden Rule, Or, Justice Advanced* was published on 16 February 1649.<sup>29</sup> There was a sense of urgency in Canne's writing as he explained, in his epistle to the House of Commons and Lord General Fairfax, that he 'made the more hast to publish this First Part'.<sup>30</sup> He had anticipated that the Royalists and Cavalier factions, along with other 'better minded' people, would level accusations of 'high injustice' against Parliament in their dealings with the king. Canne elaborated on these claims of injustice, explaining that they were rooted in the perception that Charles's execution had been brought about through 'power,' in which they were referring to the power of the army rather than being guided by principles of law, reason or conscience.<sup>31</sup>

The accusations directed at the Rump Parliament were the focal point of Canne's text. As he articulated, in the epistle, following the regicide, 'we may no longer talk of Subjects liberty, and right things, but know them and enjoy them, we and our posterity, and this being accomplished, he that desires the Publick good'.<sup>32</sup> The pursuit of liberty remained a persistent preoccupation for Canne throughout the period.

In his endeavour to defend the Rump Parliament, Canne drew inspiration from sixteenth and seventeenth-century resistance theories, such as Théodore de Bèze *Du Droit*

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<sup>28</sup> Worden, *The English Civil Wars*, 103.

<sup>29</sup> John Canne, *The Golden Rule, Or, Justice Advanced. Wherein is Shewed, that the Representative Kingdom, Or Commons Assembled in Parliament, have a Lawfull Power to Arraign, and Adjudge to Death the King, for Tyranny, Treason, Murder, and Other High Misdemeanors: And Whatsoever is Objected to the Contrary from Scripture, Law, Reason, Or Inconveniences, is Satisfactorily Answered and Refuted. being, a Cleer and Full Satisfaction to the Whole Nation, in Justification of the Legal Proceeding of the High Court of Justice, Against Charls Steward, Late King of England* (1649).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 'Dedicatory Epistle'.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 'Dedicatory Epistle'.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 'Dedicatory Epistle'.

*Des Magistrats and Vindiciae Contra Tyrannous*, authored under the pseudonym Stephanus Junius Brutus. However, it was the arguments put forward by the Scottish theologian Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) in *LEX, REX: The Law and the Prince*, published in 1644, that wielded significant influence over Canne's perspective.<sup>33</sup> Rutherford's treatise was pivotal as an intellectual source, influencing Canne's perspectives on resistance and its application in defending Parliament's actions. As Scott observed, English republicanism distinguished itself by actively engaging with the language of resistance.<sup>34</sup> Canne's formulation for resistance was intricately shaped by his interpretation of scripture and reinforced by insights from classical literature and resistance theory.

### 5.5 Canne's Critique of the Theory of Divine Right

One of the central arguments posed by not only royalists but Charles I himself was that as he as divinely anointed, he was accountable to God alone. According to Glenn Burgess, the theory of the divine right of kings can be traced back to the medieval period, and it was 'given new lease of life by the Reformation'.<sup>35</sup> Following the English Reformation, divine right was crucial in 'combating theories of papal jurisdiction over secular rulers'.<sup>36</sup>

Canne began by engaging with numerous biblical arguments which attempted to refute the argument for resistance. The first was based on the story of an unlawful rebellion recorded in the book of Numbers. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had attempted to incite an uprising against Moses and Aaron. God punished them when the earth swallowed them up and everything that belonged to them. This was a popular story for those advocating obedience, as it appeared to reveal God's condemnation of rebellion. Notably, Canne did not challenge the punishment that was meted out to the men. He also echoed the sentiments of the passage, asserting that if any person should attempt to raise a mutiny against the supreme power in the land and 'invade mens Lives, Liberties, and Estates, oppose Justice,

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<sup>33</sup> Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex: The Law and the Prince. A Dispute for the just Prerogative of King and People. Containing the Reasons and Causes of the most Necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scotland, and of their Expedition for the Ayd and Help of their Dear Brethren of England. in which their Innocency is Asserted, and a Full Answer is Given to a Seditious Pamphlet, Intituled, Sacro-Sancta Regum Majestas, Or the Sacred and Royall Prerogative of Christian Kings; Under the Name of J. A. but Penned by Jo: Maxwell the Excommunicate P. Prelat. with a Scripturall Confutation of the Ruinous Grounds of W. Barclay, H. Grotius, H. Arnisæus, Ant. De Domi. P. Bishop of Spalata, and of Other Late Anti-Magistratical Royalists; as, the Author of Ossorianum, D. Fern, E. Symmons, the Doctors of Aberdeen, &c. in XLIV* (1644).

<sup>34</sup> Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, 109.

<sup>35</sup> Glenn Burgess, 'The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered,' in *The English Historical Review* 107, no. 425 (1992): 841.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 843.

and seek to bring a whole Nation to utter desolation' they should rightfully be punished by death.<sup>37</sup>

Instead, Canne's objection pivoted on the nature of Moses's and Aaron's authority. He argued that obedience to Moses and Aaron was warranted because they had ruled by God's laws. Drawing a parallel, Canne contended that if kings governed according to the law, as 'publick Ministers of State', they too should be obeyed. The destruction of the men in the story stemmed from their defiance of a 'lawful Magistrate,' emphasising that 'a faithfull officer in the due execution of his office, may not be opposed, resisted, punished'.<sup>38</sup> Canne asserted that those rebelling in such a manner should be 'suppressed,' or, as illustrated in the example, 'put to death'.<sup>39</sup> The crux of Canne's argument was that Moses and Aaron had ruled according to God's laws.

Similarly, the Royalist factions, though not explicitly identified by Canne, had drawn inspiration from Ecclesiastes 8:2-4, '*I counsell thee to keep the King's commandments, and that in regard of the oath of God[...]Where the word of a King is, there is power, and who may say to him, What does thou?*'.<sup>40</sup> Subsequently, the Royalists raised the question, '*if the word of a King must stand, and his power not to be resisted, how can his Subjects lawfully touch his Person?*'. In response, Canne asserted that the instruction 'To keep the King's commandments must be understood of things just and lawful'. He underscored the Apostle's guidance, stating, 'We must obey God rather than man'.<sup>41</sup> Canne reinforced his argument with a Latin citation from Philo of Alexandria's work, 'de vita Mosis,' a commentary on the life of Moses.<sup>42</sup> Canne provided his translation, affirming, 'The office of a King is to command those things which ought to be don, and to forbid those things which ought to be avoyded'.<sup>43</sup>

Returning to scripture, specifically the Oath mentioned in the verse, Canne clarified that it implied the obligation to obey the king's commands. Since God had witnessed this commitment, Canne argued that the Oath must be obeyed. However, as Canne asserted,

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<sup>37</sup> Canne, *Golden Rule*, 2.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 2

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Canne was referring to Acts 5:29.

<sup>42</sup> '*Regis officum est jubere que oportet fieri, & vetare a quibus abstinere debet: c&terum jussio faciendorum, & interdiction cavendoru m proprie ad legem pertinet. Atque ita consequitur, ut Rex animata, Lex vero fit Rex justissimus*', *Ibid*, 3-4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

‘Subjects are by their Allegiance and Covenant no further obliged to observe the Laws of earthly Princes, then are agreeable to God’s commandments’.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the Bible provided numerous examples of rulers being reprov’d or ‘censured’ for commanding against God, such as Elias and Ahab or John the Baptist and Herod.<sup>45</sup> These instances underscored the principle that earthly authorities should not be followed when their commands contravened the laws of God.

Returning his discourse to contemporary events, Canne asserted that Charles was not a ‘just’ king because he acted against God and his subjects. The reasoning behind Canne’s allegation that Charles was an unjust ruler first becomes evident in a parallel drawn between Charles and the Old Testament King Saul. In 1 Samuel 24, Saul learned that David was destined to become king and was in pursuit of David, intending to kill him. However, as the story unfolded, David had the opportunity to kill Saul but refused because he would not harm the Lord’s anointed. Instead of harming Saul, David chose to show his loyalty by cutting a portion of the king’s robe. He used this to prove that he had decided to spare the king’s life. In response, Saul agreed to leave David and his descendants alone. The event was interpreted to demonstrate that a sovereign, regarded as God’s anointed on earth, should be safeguarded from harm. If a ruler were harmed, it would contravene God’s command.

In countering the claim, Canne shifted the focus by highlighting the distinctions between the two kings, Saul and Charles. He contended that Saul had not aimed to establish an ‘Arbitrary government.’<sup>46</sup> Canne drew a parallel by referencing Charles’s reluctance to convene Parliament during his eleven-year Personal Rule. Revisiting the theme of liberty, Canne emphasised that, while Saul’s actions were questionable, Saul had not sought ‘to make Israel a conquered people, nor yet to cut off all the godly, under the pretence of hereticks and sectaries; neither to destroy laws, liberties, and Parliaments’. Furthermore, Canne asserted that Saul had not gone ‘against these Princes, Elders, and People who made him King.’<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

In another comparison, this time centring on the sins committed by David, which royalists contended had been forgiven, Canne presented additional details regarding the crimes of the late king. Canne asserted that:

*Charles Steuart* in a hostile and publick way hath murdered many thousands of his best subjects, by giving Warrants and Commissions under his own hand to Atheists, and Papists, personally appeared in many battles to destroy the people, caused sundry villages, towns, and cities to be ruined by fire, plunder, rapine [...] to rob and kill his own subjects.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, under the ‘*Ormond* commission’, Charles had sanctioned the killing of approximately ‘two thousand’ Protestants in Ireland.<sup>49</sup> This additional evidence underscored Charles as a tyrannical king who had subjected the people of the three nations to servitude. Consequently, Canne argued that resisting such a tyrant was lawful.

Canne further underscored the significance of resisting an unjust magistrate by invoking the teachings of prominent theologians St Augustine and Ambrose (c.339-397). Canne referenced their perspectives on Herod and Pilate’s condemning Christ to death.<sup>50</sup> According to both viewpoints, although the people had lamented and mourned Christ’s crucifixion, they were guilty of not intervening as they should have ‘taken him out of the hands of unjust and wicked Magistrates, and so preserv’d his life’. By not acting, the people became engulfed in the same ‘guilt of blood and became murderers of him’.<sup>51</sup> According to Canne, this was relevant to the circumstances involving Charles. If the king had not been held accountable for his actions, the nation would bear an equal share of the guilt and face punishment.

## **5.6 The King, Law and Liberty**

Central to the theory of divine right was that the king was accountable to God alone. As discussed in previous chapters, following an interpretation of 1 Samuel 8, it was posited that the attributes of a king described to the Israelites by Samuel were deemed to establish the royal prerogatives inherent in monarchical governance.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 16-17.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 5.

Canne sought to undermine the assertions of those who had made this argument. He observed that individuals such as ‘*Hugo Grotius, Barclay, Arnisaeus, Dr. Fern,*’ among others, had ‘alleged to prove the absolute power of a King and the unlawfulness of resistance’.<sup>52</sup> Canne summarised their argument as ‘that by this place, *The people oppressed with the injuries of a tyrannous King, have nothing left them but prayers and tears to God*’. Furthermore, he affirmed their position that verses 9 to 11 could not be construed as merely ‘*the custome and manner of the King, but must be the law of absolute Majesty*’.<sup>53</sup>

Canne attributed blame to those who advocated the concept of kings possessing ‘absolute prerogative’. He contended that the abuse of so-called ‘royal prerogatives’ enabled kings to perpetrate acts such as cutting ‘their Subjects throats, fire[ing] their houses...subvert[ing] their Liberties, and (as *Bellermin* puts the case of the Popes absolute irresistible authority) send[ing] millions of souls to hell’.<sup>54</sup> Despite these actions, royalists and courtiers asserted that questioning the king was impermissible. Crucially, Canne emphasized that the belief that the king was exempt from the nation’s laws had enslaved the people. Since they had been rendered incapable of challenging the king’s authority and entirely subject to his will, it was fundamental to Canne that he challenged this assertion.<sup>55</sup>

To undermine this interpretation, Canne presented various objections; nevertheless, it was clear that Canne’s primary focus was on the figure of Samuel. As he wrote:

The scope and drift of this place is thus: *Samuel* being displeased with the people because they would reject Gods government, who was then their King, having his own regal rights, and did substitute under him Judges, who he extraordinarily called, qualified, and inspired them with his spirit.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, in verses 9 to 11, Samuel had shown the people the manner of a king ‘not what they should be, and ought to do in right, but what they used to be and...how they commonly demean themselves in Government contrary to Gods Law, *Deut.17.15.* and the Lawes of the Kingdom’. More notably, Canne asserted that the prophet was not speaking of the ‘power of a lawfull King’ but was describing ‘*Saul’s tyrannicall usurpation*’.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 9



Canne supported his argument by referencing Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274), Andreas Osiander (1498-1552) and Andrew Willet (1562-162), who concurred that Samuel's narrative 'setteth not down the office of a King what he ought to be, but what manner of Kings they should have'.<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, Canne also posited that these kings had 'decline[d] to tyranny', transitioning from kings to tyrants they 'rule[d] by will, not by Law'.<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, Canne's exposition of the chapter mirrored the theory propounded by Polybius, recognised as the cycle of government. The theory speculated that each of the good forms of government, as defined by Aristotle, would degenerate overtime into its corrupt counterpart. As prophesied in Daniel chapters 2 and 7, the rise and fall of the four empires had already suggested the nature of declining kingdoms. In this context, Canne applied the concept of anacyclosis to his analysis of 1 Samuel 8 to illuminate the inevitability of a decline from monarchy into tyranny.

Moving his discussion to the characteristics mentioned in the passage, Canne emphasised that these were tyrannical acts. For example, acts such as making 'slaves of their sons' and putting 'the people of God to bondage' were manifestations of tyranny.<sup>60</sup> It was evident, as Canne pointed out, that 'God by his Prophet' had sought to 'disswade them from their purpose of seeking a King, by foretelling the evil of punishment, that they should suffer under a tyrant'.<sup>61</sup> According to Canne, Samuel was:

so far from affirming that the power of a King is absolute, and uncontrollable, as on the contrary he closely admonisheth the people, that they should look to him, as to restrain and bridle his licentious liberty, and keep him within the due limits of law and reason, and seeing he is apt to degenerate into a tyranny, and cruelly to oppress the subjects.<sup>62</sup>

The law served as a mechanism if not entirely, to prevent decline, but at least to slow the degeneration. Canne's perspective resonates with the sentiments expressed by Milton in his discussion of the origin of government, wherein he explained that laws, oaths and eventually parliaments had been introduced to 'bridle' the monarch.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Canne did not refer to any specific texts. Ibid, 9-10.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>63</sup> Milton, *The Tenure*, 10.

In the following section, to illustrate that the law and oaths had been implemented to form a contractual agreement, Canne engaged with the arguments presented by Rutherford.

### 5.7 Subject to the Law

In 1644, Samuel Rutherford (1660-1661) published *LEX, REX* written in response to Bishop John Maxwell's *Sancro-Sancta Regum Majestas* published in the same year. Maxwell composed his text to offer a defence of Charles's sovereignty in both civil and ecclesiastical affairs. Charles attempted to reform the Scottish Kirk and bring it in line with the principles of the English Church. In opposition, the National Covenant was signed, declaring Kirk's opposition to those reforms. As Karie Schultz commented, in refuting Maxwell's contentions, the Covenanters were compelled to illustrate civil government's voluntary and contractual nature. As she articulated, 'if government was based on a contract, subjects could impose limitations on the king's power over the church.'<sup>64</sup> In *LEX, REX*, Rutherford demonstrated 'his case for the voluntary origins of government'.<sup>65</sup> Canne utilised specific arguments put forth by Rutherford to justify the execution of Charles I. In *Golden Rule*, Canne addressed assertions made by Maxwell, who argued that kings were above the law. Drawing on his interpretation of Psalm 51, especially verse 4, recounting King David's confession of sins to God with the words, 'against thee, thee only have I sinned, and don this evil in thy sight,' Maxwell contended that this proved the king's exemption from earthly laws and accountability solely to God.<sup>66</sup>

In his response, Canne pointed out that this was, firstly, a private matter, given that it referred to David's personal confession to God. This was not a matter between David and the civil magistrate at that time.<sup>67</sup> When David cried out that he had only sinned against God, he meant that he could hide his sin from men but not God. Furthermore, Canne contested the argument that the '*Sanedrim* did not punish *David*' because 'it was not lawful for them' or that it was unlawful for any 'state to punish a King for any act of injustice, is logick which we may resist'. However, Canne commented that 'had the adultery, and murder been publickly known, and complained of to the *Great Council of the Kingdom*,' they would have indeed proceeded to punish the king.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Karie Schultz, 'The Scottish Covenanters and Catholic Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas Blog*, Nov 20, 2019. Accessed 12/4/22. <https://www.jhiblog.org/2019/11/20/the-scottish-covenanters-and-catholic-political-thought/>

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Canne, *Golden Rule*, 14.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 15.

To further reinforce his argument that a king was subject to the law, Canne drew inspiration from *LEX, REX*. Within the text, Rutherford presented forty-four questions and the corresponding answers, delving into the notion of sovereign power. Canne was notably drawn to the twenty-sixth question, ‘whether a King be above the Law or No,’ which he incorporated into the *Golden Rule*.<sup>69</sup>

In his response to the question, Rutherford discussed three specific scriptural passages that clarified the position of the king according to the law. Canne extensively quoted from this section. From his reading of Deuteronomy 1:17 and 2 Chronicles 19:6-7, Rutherford argued that all individuals were equal under the law, and the execution of the law must be carried out by and executed by judges in accordance with God. Furthermore, Rutherford emphasised that one cannot ‘distinguish where the law distinguishes not’.<sup>70</sup> The third passage from scripture discussed by Rutherford was Leviticus 19:15, which stated, ‘Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty.’ However, Rutherford extended the verse to include ‘or of the prince.’<sup>71</sup> In *Golden Rule*, Canne employed capitalization, emphasising the word ‘PRINCE’ to underscore his argument that a king was subject to the law.<sup>72</sup>

## 5.8 The King and the Office of the King

In the event that Canne’s argument failed to persuade, he resorted to an argument often advanced by resistance theorists. This approach involved differentiating between the office of the king and the person. Once the king was demonstrated to be a tyrant, Canne argued that he should no longer be regarded as a king but simply as a private person.<sup>73</sup> This, in turn, negated the contention that the king was above the law. Canne remarked that the belief that the king and office were the same had led to much controversy. Drawing a parallel to the controversy between Protestants and the Catholic Church regarding Peter and the rock – a matter, as he noted, ‘at which many have stumbled.’<sup>74</sup> Canne highlighted

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 16. Rutherford, *LEX, REX*, 230-251.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 190.; Deut 1:17 (King James Version), ‘Ye shall have no respect of person in judgment, but shall hear the small as well as the great: ye shall not fear the face of man: for the judgment is God’s: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring unto me, and I will hear it’; 2 Chron 19: 6-7 (King James Version), ‘And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye execute not the judgments of man, but of the Lord, and *he will be* with you in the cause *and* judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you: take heed, and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, neither respect of persons, nor receiving of reward.’

<sup>71</sup> Rutherford, *LEX, REX*, 241.

<sup>72</sup> Canne, *The Golden Rule*, 16.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 5.

that ‘We distinguish them, taking the person of Peter to be one thing, his faith, or Christ another,’ emphasising there was no distinction in Catholicism.<sup>75</sup>

In his text, Canne drew attention to the fourth chapter of Grotius’s *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, who had also made this distinction.<sup>76</sup> Grotius laid out seven reasons why those resisting a ruler were not disobeying the law. In the second reason, Grotius stated that if a king renounced or abandoned their authority, then it was possible to proceed to act against them as they would be a private person.<sup>77</sup> However, Grotius added that if the ruler is simply neglectful, this would not be lawful. However, it is noteworthy that in bolstering his argument, Canne revised Grotius’s argument to enhance it, asserting that ‘He may (saith he) [Grotius] be punished as a private man’.<sup>78</sup> Following this rationale, Parliament’s actions against the king were lawful.

## 5.9 Popular Sovereignty

In Canne’s justification of the regicide, he also claimed that supreme authority lay with parliament. Canne expressed that many ‘approved authors’, such as Junius Brutius, Francois Hotman and George Buchanan, had supported the claim that the ‘Sovereign and Supream power of Estates’ was above the power of Kings.<sup>79</sup> In instances where a monarch was proven to be a traitor, a murderer and a tyrant, Canne asked the reader if they are not to be held ‘accountable by those who are above them, and have a lawfull Power in their hands to punish’.<sup>80</sup> Canne further clarified his perspective on parliamentary authority by challenging the notion that the Commons were merely the king’s subjects. In an intriguing sentence, Canne articulated, ‘He being a minister, a steward, or servant of the people, and they representing the whole body of the people, doe call him to an account, not as Subjects to him, but indeed as his lord and master, and so have a Sovereign power to judge him to death, if his crimes deserve the same.’<sup>81</sup> A salient aspect of Canne’s discourse is his conviction that the sovereign power vested in Parliament was derived from the people. Unlike the other Fifth Monarchists discussed in the thesis, who contended that monarchical

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Hugo Grotius: Law of War and Peace (1625) - De Jure Belli Ac Pacis (Unabridged)’, *LONANG Institute*, accessed 8 July 2021, <https://lonang.com/library/reference/grotius-law-war-and-peace/>. Book 1 chapt 4

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Canne, *The Golden Rule*, 11.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 32

governance had degenerated due to human appropriation of legislative power, Canne posited that this authority originated from the people themselves.

In a discussion concerning objections to resistance, an assertion was made regarding the command for the Jews to obey King Nebuchadnezzar, another tyrannical ruler, suggesting that they were prohibited from freeing themselves. Likewise, it was noted that the Israelites, while under Egyptian bondage, achieved liberation only when Moses assumed a princely role, and they were delivered by the hand of God, not by the people. Canne's response carried significance, as he highlighted that the Jews in those instances were subjects, and their circumstances markedly different from the situation of England. As he wrote:

The *Kings of England* (as *Kings*) have stood to *England* in a four-fold contrary relation: they have had their crown by the voluntary and free choice of the People, and no otherwise but conditionally; that is, covenanting and taking their oaths to do so and so, for the publick good. The *English* are natives, not ever held the same as *gratis* from them: The Supreme and Sovereign Power of the Kingdom is in their hand; the which *Israel* in *Egypt* never had, nor could lawfully challenge.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, in drawing a comparison between Charles and the Pharaoh, Canne illustrated the distinction by emphasising that the Pharaoh had not received his 'crown from Israel,' in contrast to Charles. Moreover, the pharaoh had neither declared to 'defend *Israel*, nor became their King upon condition and oath to maintain their Laws, Liberties, and Rights'.<sup>83</sup> Canne underscored that the 'Israelites were not his native subjects, but strangers'.

In addition to the Old Testament, the New Testament provided Canne with additional evidence to substantiate his claim. In *Sacro-sancta*, Maxwell posited that obedience to rulers was shown through the exemplar of Christ.<sup>84</sup> One of the instances cited by Maxwell was drawn from Mark 12:17, where Christ and the Apostles deliberated on the tribute owed to Caesar. In this passage, Christ instructed the Apostles to give Caesar what was rightfully his, affirming his status as their king.<sup>85</sup> Maxwell argued that this incident attested to the principle of obedience. Additionally, Christ's compliance with civil authority became

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>84</sup> John Maxwell, *Sacro-Sancta Regum Majestas, or, The Sacred and Royal Prerogative of Christian Kings. Wherein Sovereignty Is by Holy Scriptures, Reverend Antiquity, and Sound Reason Asserted, by Discussing of Five Questions. And the Puritanical, Jesuitical, Antimonarchical Grounds Are Disproved, and the Untruth and Weakness of Their New-Devised-State-Principles Are Discovered* (Oxford, 1644).

<sup>85</sup> Mark 12:17 (King James Version).

evident during his arrest. The advocacy for obedience was further supported by 2 Peter 2:18, which instructed that ‘Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and courteous but also to the froward’.<sup>86</sup>

In response, Canne referred to John 18:36, wherein Jesus explicitly stated that ‘his kingdom is not of the world.’<sup>87</sup> Christ’s reluctance to assume a magisterial role illuminated Canne’s assertion that ‘civil politie’ was entrusted to the ‘people, to practice according to the humane Law and reason and as it might best serve for every nations safety, peace, and welfare.’<sup>88</sup>

In the concluding section of *The Golden Rule*, Canne introduced more secular-based arguments that further illuminated his commitment to popular sovereignty. He wrote, ‘The peoples power (whose *Representatives* the *Ordines Regni*, the States of the Kingdom are) is above the King.’<sup>89</sup> To substantiate this point, Canne drew attention to historical examples, noting that ancient history supported this notion, ‘Such were the *Ephori* amongst the *Lacedemonians*, the Senate amongst the *Romans*...the *Parliaments* in *England, Scotland, France and Spain*.’<sup>90</sup>

While it was generally agreed that the introduction of emperors in Rome marked the end of the Roman Republic, Bodin contested this notion. He argued that, as the right of appeal remained with the people, it indicated their sovereignty.<sup>91</sup> Paraphrasing Bodin’s argument, Canne wrote, ‘*That the Romane Emperors were but princes of the Commonwealth, and that the Sovereignty remained still in the Senate and people.*’<sup>92</sup> The Senate’s response to Nero’s despotic behaviour further underscored the concept of popular sovereignty and the endurance of the Roman republic. As Canne emphasised, the Senate, in a judicial capacity, ‘condemned’ Nero ‘as a publick enemy to the State’ and sentenced him to death.<sup>93</sup> This exemplified the Senate’s exercise of its authority on behalf of the Republic, demonstrating the principle of popular sovereignty.

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<sup>86</sup> 2 Peter 2:18 (Geneva Bible 1599).

<sup>87</sup> Canne, *Golden Rule*, 19.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 11

<sup>90</sup> In the margin next to ‘Ephori’ Canne referenced Polybius’s *Histories*, book 1 chapter 6. *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>91</sup> Benjamin Straumann, *Jean Bodin and the Fall of the Roman Republic. Crisis and Constitutionalism*. (New York: Oxford University Press), 280–82.

<sup>92</sup> Canne, *Golden Rule*, 23; Bodin Book two chapter 5 ‘Whether it be lawful to lay violent hand upon a tyrant; and after his death to disnull all his acts, decrees, and lawes’

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

Returning to the arguments presented in *LEX, REX*, Canne asserted that kings are ‘in dignity and power above the people, their person [is] sacred, not criminal or obnoxious to any tribunal but that of God’.<sup>94</sup> Rutherford had examined this claim, and Canne once again quoted Rutherford to argue that the people were superior to the king in dignity and power. Employing the same analogy as Rutherford, Canne explained that the king was less dignified because the king had been ‘ordained for the people’.<sup>95</sup> Much like a ‘pilot,’ he was ‘lesse then the whole passengers,’ or as a ‘General’ would be ‘lesse then the whole army’.<sup>96</sup> Canne also underscored, again drawing from Rutherford, the mortality of kings compared to the immortality of the people as a collective, stating that as a species, the people ‘cannot dye’.<sup>97</sup> Without the king, the people remain the people; however, a king without the people is not a king.<sup>98</sup> The people bestowed authority upon the king by entrusting him with their sovereignty. This power, however, could be reclaimed if the people deemed it necessary.

### 5.10 Inalienable Rights

Canne rejected the notion that, upon delegating their ‘*right, and whole power to the king,*’ the people forfeited the right to ‘*retract or take back*’ that power.<sup>99</sup> To elect a king and ‘his heirs forever....to give him an entire, full, and incontroulable Supremacy over them, and to voluntarily give away their rights was’, Canne claimed, such ‘a stupidity and madnesse’.<sup>100</sup> Returning to the language of liberty, Canne explained that to give a king ‘incontroulable Supremacy’ would make the ‘derivative greater then the primitive...and so free-men to make themselves slaves,’ a concept contrary to both the law of God and nature.<sup>101</sup> As Canne wrote:

He who constituteth himself a slave is supposed to be compelled to that unnatural fact of alienation of that liberty which he received of God, from the womb, by violence, constrain, or extreme necessity, and so is inferior to all free-men: but the people do not make themselves slaves, when they constitute a King over them.<sup>102</sup>

The power that the king possessed, ‘he hath it from the people, and all the power they gave him, is a legal and lawful power, to guide themselves in peace and godlinesse’.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 24

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>96</sup> Question 19 in *LEX, REX*, 140; Canne, *Golden Rule*, 25.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 25-26

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 30.

According to Canne, the power delegated to the king did not exempt him from punishment. He underscored that this was a power they never had the right to grant to him, as such a power would entail the potential for their own destruction. Moreover, Canne pointed out the importance of the ‘conditions tacite or expresse, upon which the Prince receiveth the crown’. In the mutual acceptance of a ‘conditional covenant’ which imparts law and power ‘over one to another,’ Canne questioned why, when a subject breaks the Covenant through treason, they are lawfully punished, yet when a king, through their tyrannical acts, breaches the Covenant it was asserted that they should not be subject to punishment.<sup>104</sup>

In defence of the regicide, Canne portrayed the nation as trapped within the grasp of a tyrant. The late king, driven by self-interest, had infringed upon the people’s rights and liberties, demonstrating that the nation had succumbed to the dominion of a tyrannical ruler. Canne argued that this tyrannical behaviour warranted lawful punishment, a position he substantiated through scriptural references, historical accounts and resistance theories.

Furthermore, in his defence, Canne revealed the assertion that Parliament, vested with its authority derived from the people, had become the supreme power in the land, serving as the people’s representative. Parliament had restored liberty to the people and the commonwealth, employing measures such as tyrannicide. It is worth noting that within Canne’s discourse, his condemnation was primarily targeted at the individual of the monarch rather than the institution of monarchy itself. Although Canne staunchly believed that monarchs often descended into tyranny, he still regarded them as legitimate, albeit corrupt, forms of government. Canne’s perspective transformed at the end of 1649, owing to the activities of the Levellers. Canne asserted that the group were a potential menace to the recently secured liberties.

### **5.11 Liberty Under Threat**

In addition to Royalist and Presbyterian criticisms questioning the legitimacy of the Rump Parliament, the opposition also emanated from the Levellers. As highlighted by Martin Dzelzainis, they positioned ‘themselves as its most intransigent opponents’ to the new regime.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>105</sup> Martin Dzelzainis, ‘History and Ideology: Milton, the Levellers, and the Council of State in 1649’, in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol.68, No. 1-2 (March 2005), 270



On 26 February, the House of Commons received the first of two tracts penned by Lilburne, *Englands New Chains Discovered*. Subsequently, on 24 March 1649, *The Second Part of Englands New-Chaines Discovered* was introduced. Three days later, the House of Commons officially denounced the second treatise as ‘highly seditious, and destructive to the present Government’.<sup>106</sup> The accusation was directed at the author, suggesting an attempt to cause ‘Division and Mutiny in the Army, and the Raising of a new War in the Commonwealth’. Furthermore, those implicated in its creation were deemed ‘Traitors to the Commonwealth’ and were to be addressed ‘accordingly’ by the Council of State.<sup>107</sup> The following day witnessed the issuance of a warrant for the arrest of several Leveller leaders, namely Lilburne, Overton, William Walwyn, and Thomas Prince.<sup>108</sup>

In the second part of his work, Lilburne criticised the legitimacy of the Rump Parliament, arguing that its rise to power was rooted in the army’s authority. According to Lilburne, the Rump Parliament had ousted ‘the King by such an extra-judicial Proceedings and Court of Justice, as had no place in the English Government,’<sup>109</sup> As noted by Dzelzainis, the content effectively encouraged both ‘soldiers and civilians alike to overthrow their masters,’ thereby inducing a state of panic within the new regime.<sup>110</sup>

Two anonymous tracts were published in response to Lilburne’s texts, attributed to Canne.<sup>111</sup> The first, entitled *The Discoverer; Wherein is set forth (to undeceive the Nation) the real plots and Stratagems* was published on 2 June 1649. The title page noted that the text had been written by ‘well-wishers’ and referred to ‘authors’ plural in the epistle, implying this was a collaborative effort. The central argument revolved around demonstrating that the nation’s newfound liberty was now threatened by the Levellers, whom the authors described as the greatest threat since the king’s demise. The epistle summarised that the Levellers intended to deceive the people and turn them against the ‘present Government, and to make Commotions and hurliburlies in the Land.’<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 273.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 273.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 273.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 277; Haller and Davies, *Leveller Tracts*, 183.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 277.

<sup>111</sup> For discussion of authorship of the first text see Dzelzainis, ‘Milton, the Levellers,’ 274. The second text is believed to be written by Canne alone.

<sup>112</sup> Canne, *The Discoverer*, ‘The Authors to all the well-affected People of this Nation’

Furthermore, it was asserted that the Levellers had employed the dissemination of seditious literature to present themselves as ‘taking up the Politick pretence of *Native birth right, common freedome and safety.*’ However, the authors contended that this was ‘a weapon[...] whereby ambitious, discontented, and self-conceited men, use to make Comotions, and Mutinies, and to disturbe (if not destroy) the present Government’.<sup>113</sup>

The authors underscored the pattern of sowing discord under the pretence of fighting for the people, which could be observed throughout history. For example, the Pazzi conspiracy is chronicled in Machiavelli’s *The History of Florence And The Affairs of Italy*, (1521-1525).<sup>114</sup> In this episode, ‘The Pazzians’, in their endeavour ‘to draw the people to their Conspiracy, Cryed out in the Market-place, Libertie, Libertie, although indeed it was to bring them from freedome to very slavery’.<sup>115</sup> Initially, the people joined the rebellion against the state, but upon the revelation of the Pazzi family’s true intentions, they turned against them, and the people killed the family.

More recently, during the infamous events in Münster in the sixteenth century, a similar principle was asserted, emphasizing ‘Free Commoners, an equall and just Government, and every man like in respect of libertie’, prompting popular rebellion.<sup>116</sup> Similarly, the Levellers proclaimed their intent to alleviate the people’s burdens. Nevertheless, as observed in the text, their actions would achieve the opposite effect. Their objective was not the liberation promised but rather to overturn the existing government, ushering a return to servitude under either a reinstated monarchy or potentially an anarchical state.<sup>117</sup>

It is worth noting that Canne and the Levellers shared a commitment to the idea of popular sovereignty. In the second tract, published on 13 July and attributed solely to Canne, we can better understand why Canne was so vehemently opposed to the Levellers despite superficial accord.<sup>118</sup> Once again, Canne reiterated the themes outlined in the earlier text. Including what he believed to be the intentions of the Levellers, asserting

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>118</sup> John Canne, *The Discoverer. Being an Answer to a Book entituled, ENGLANDS NEW CHAIN, The Second Part, Discovered* (1649).

principles that aimed to abolish various aspects of civil society. According to Canne, the Levellers' vision entailed:

*no Termes or Lawes, no Judge or Justice of Peace, no Mayors, Bayliffs, Aldermen, Common-Councell men, no Corporations, Patents, Charters, Records, no buying nor selling, nor any civill trading at all; no man to call any thing his, nor any man to be put to death for murder, or any unrighteous crime whatsoever.*<sup>119</sup>

In essence, Canne discerned that the Levellers were advocating for a fundamental departure from the prevailing societal structure, advocating for a levelling of society. However, it is essential to note that Canne had misinterpreted their aims.

While Canne vehemently criticised the Levellers and their ideas, he refrained from advocating for their imprisonment or any physical punishment. Nevertheless, he did support the government's decision to restrict the publication of Leveller tracts. In a somewhat mocking tone, he remarked, 'Such Idiots and Silly-bodies they would have the State to be, stand still, and suffer them, with their seditious and scandalous Libels to strike them as often as they please'.<sup>120</sup> Canne pointed to a historical precedent to rationalise the government's measures against the Levellers. Drawing on the wisdom of thinkers such as Plato and Plutarch, he underscored that 'the wisest of the Gentiles, in their Models and Platformes of Civill Government, have evermore given order, that infamous Writings' inciting rebellion should be forbidden.<sup>121</sup>

Additionally, Canne emphasised that during the reign of Charles I, it was illegal to accuse the king of usurping power or engaging in tyrannical rule. 'False and seditious' works of this nature could lead to the cutting of an arm or life imprisonment.<sup>122</sup> It is crucial to note that in alignment with the other Fifth Monarchists previously examined, Canne was not advocating for any form of civilian rebellion. Consistent with Calvin's position on resistance, Canne also maintained that the authority to resist was confined to the realm of the civil magistrates.

## **5.12 Religious Liberty**

Amid the turbulence instigated by the Levellers, Canne also challenged the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant (1643) through his publication in May, *The Snare is Broken*.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>120</sup> Canne, *The Discoverer*, 30.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 31.

Certain Presbyterians wielded the Covenant to criticise the regicide, and Canne perceived the Covenant to infringe upon religious liberty.

Canne initiated his criticism of the Covenant by highlighting the inherent contradictions within the oath. The third article unequivocally affirmed preserving the king's person and authority. Nonetheless, this assertion was promptly followed by the subsequent article, which declared that the Covenanters would 'endeavour' to identify and subject to trial all deemed '*Incendiaries, Malignants, or evil Instruments*'. Moreover, individuals who sought to obstruct religious reformation or cause division in the nation would be 'brought to publick Tryal' and punished.<sup>123</sup>

As demonstrated by Canne, the article omitted any provision for the exemption of a monarch. Consequently, a king, having proven himself to be 'Incendiary to the publick peace and safetie of the two Kingdoms,' could be lawfully brought to trial in accordance with the terms of the Oath. Canne further reinforced his argument by invoking Aristotle's well-known rule, '*impossible est duo contradictiora vere reddi de eodem*,' signifying that two contradictory statements cannot genuinely proceed from the same object.<sup>124</sup>

While Canne's disdain towards the Presbyterians was evident, his argument centred around the religious implications of the Covenant. Drawing from Leviticus 19:14, Canne claimed that the Covenant constituted a 'stumbling block to the blinde,' one capable of leading 'the righteous to go astray in an evill way'.<sup>125</sup> Canne initiated his argument by challenging the legality of the Covenant, affirming that at the time of its agreement, the people still deemed the 'Government of Archbishops and Bishops' as lawful. Nevertheless, in consenting to the Covenant, they were 'required, yea forced to swear' to abolish Prelacy. Canne astutely questioned what authority the people's representatives held at that time to compel an Oath that essentially altered the structure of church governance without informing the people of its lawfulness.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *A Solemn League and Covenant for Reformation and Defence of Religion, the Honour and Happinesse of the King and the Peace and Safety of the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: 1643), 1-2.

<sup>124</sup> John Canne, *The snare is broken wherein is proved by Scripture, law and reason, that the Nationall covenant and oath was unlawfully given and taken ... : here also is vindicated the Parliaments later proceedings, shewing the grounds and principles of the London ministers to be weak and unsound ... : moreover something is said against violence in religion, and the duty of the civill magistrate about worship and church-government* (Aldergate Street: M. Simmons, 1649), 2; Canne quoted Aristotle *De Interpretatione* 1.2.c.2.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

Canne explained that the Covenant had ensnared the English people, as they had sworn to preserve the doctrines and practices of the Scottish Kirk without comprehending that these were ‘contrary’ to the established practices of the Church of England.<sup>127</sup> Notably, as a separatist and later as an Independent, Canne was not advocating for the defence of the Church of England. Similar to his argument against submission to the will of a monarch, he also maintained that the people should not be subjected to the religious principles of another nation, as this would infringe upon their liberty of conscience. Interestingly, Canne also emphasised the importance of consent, which resonated with his discourse on civil liberty.

In a subsequent tract published the following year, Canne asserted that his condemnation of the Covenant appeared to have been justified, given the victory of the New Model Army over the Scottish forces at Dunbar. In his sixth tract, entitled *EMANUEL OR GOD WITH US*, Canne interpreted the victory as indicating that God favoured the English cause and liberty, emphasizing that the New Model Army had fought for the ‘Lord of Hosts’.<sup>128</sup> According to Canne, the Covenant served merely as a tool to undermine ‘true religion,’ contending that it was in the name of religion that the Scots had devised plans for the ‘extirpation of our Religion, Laws, and Liberty’.<sup>129</sup>

Throughout his writings, Canne demonstrated his advocacy for civil and religious liberty, presenting them as mutually reinforcing principles. He underscored the significance of religion when it came to political matters, asserting that history had proven its importance. According to Canne, religion had historically been addressed before politics in all forms of government. He contended that it was only the present generation that did not give religion ‘preheminance and first place’.<sup>130</sup>

In his text, *The Snare is Broken*, Canne also asserted the principle of the separation between the Church and the state. Canne argued that a civil magistrate should possess no power in religious matters. Canne’s critique focused primarily on the Covenant. The

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>128</sup> John Canne, *Emanuel, or, God with us. Wherein is set forth Englands late great victory over the Scots armie, in a battle at Dunbar, Septemb. 3. 1650. And by many particulars of Gods acting and appearing then for us, it is certaine (and so much is clearly proved) that our armies marching into Scotland, and the wars undertaken and prosecuted against that nation, to be upon grounds of justice and necessity, as the Parliament of England hath declared. Also here is shewed, how grosly the Covenant is abus'd, and what an idoll it is now made. With the fraud and falshood of the Scots, and their kings hypocrisie and dissimulation. Moreover such objections are answered, as seeme to have any thing in them, against the point here asserted* (Simmons: London, 1650), 20

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>130</sup> Canne, *Discoverer*, part one, 10.

Covenant stipulated that the Covenanters should ‘endeavour the extirpation of Popery and prelacy [...] heresy and schism’.<sup>131</sup> Notably, Canne contended that the Covenant was another snare, as it failed to distinguish what constituted a heresy or schism.

Canne explained that according to the tenets of the Covenant, ‘our Brethren of Scotland with a cathedral infallibilitie in defining causes of faith’ would classify Independents, Brownists, Anabaptists, and others as adherents of heretical beliefs.<sup>132</sup> Additionally, Canne highlighted the implication of ‘extirpation,’ explaining that signified civil punishments such as ‘fining, silencing, imprisoning, banishing and murdering the Saints’.<sup>133</sup>

Consequently, he asserted that the Covenant would inevitably result in the persecution of the godly at the hands of the civil magistrate.<sup>134</sup>

Canne advocated a different approach. Instead of resorting to civil punishments for heretical beliefs or schism, he suggested that such convictions should be confronted through scripture, following Christ’s example. Canne questioned where in the teachings of Christ or the Apostles it was mandated to ‘pluck up these tares, and not suffer them to grow’.<sup>135</sup> Drawing from Calvin, Canne emphasised that while Calvin had written on the punishment of heresy, he had also acknowledged that the Church Fathers had not exercised the power to inflict civil punishments. Therefore, it logically followed that a ‘Civill Magistrate’ should not assert his ‘authority in a civill way’ in religious matters.<sup>136</sup> In Canne’s perspective, faith should never be coerced but rather nurtured through persuasion, aligning with Augustine’s proclamation that faith should be taught, not commanded, admonished or enforced through the threat of punishment.<sup>137</sup>

### 5.13 Toleration

In his argument against compulsion, Canne’s commitment to toleration becomes evident as he discussed two examples from the Bible and classical antiquity. In the first instance, he explained that when King David exercised ‘dominion over other nations,’ he did not impose a requirement for those subjects to conform to the ‘extirpation of any false worship’ or that those nations should ‘embrace the doctrine, worship and discipline of the

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<sup>131</sup> *A Solemn League and Covenant*, 4-5.

<sup>132</sup> Canne, *Snare*, 4.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

Jewish church'.<sup>138</sup> Canne further asserted that 'if a magistrate has under his power Infidels and Christians,' he could 'see no reason why he should more trouble the Christians conscience, then the other in matters of religion'.<sup>139</sup>

In his classical example, Canne drew attention to Rome and the example of toleration during the rule of Emperor Valentinian (364-375). Canne commended Valentinian for permitting religious diversity, emphasising that the Emperor had 'troubled no man, nor commanded either this or that should be worshipped, nor by threatening Edicts forced his Subjects to bow their necks to do what himself did'.<sup>140</sup> The act of compelling individuals through the fear of violence to act against their conscience, according to Canne, was both 'unnaturall, absurd, unreasonable' and was even disapproved of by the 'heathen' Seneca, whom Canne quoted, 'A man going astray through ignorance of his way, it is better to advise to lead him into his way, then to drive him thither by force'.<sup>141</sup> Neither the threat nor use of punishment could compel a person to truly believe.

As previously noted, Canne believed that civil and religious liberty possessed a reciprocal relationship. Consequently, he posited that establishing religion within the commonwealth would secure peace and stability. This conviction led Canne to incorporate two caveats into his notion of toleration. The initial caveat concerned what he perceived as atheism, a force he deemed as a threat to the Commonwealth. This perception stemmed from the agitation sparked by the Levellers in the aftermath of Lilburne's two tracts, which Canne believed exposed atheistic tendencies. Notably, the primary texts alluded to that illustrated atheism were authored by Digger Gerrard Winstanley.<sup>142</sup> Ann Hughes observed that 'contemporaries and later historians have explained the Diggers as a radicalised extension of the Levellers.' Moreover, the Diggers had identified themselves as the 'True Levellers'.<sup>143</sup> Nevertheless, it is imperative to discern that these were distinct groups with different aims and objectives. Despite this distinction, Canne perceived the Levellers and Diggers as interchangeable.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>142</sup> The primary text was Gerrard Winstanley, *New Laws of Righteousness* (1649); Canne, *The Discoverer*, 8-9.

<sup>143</sup> Ann Hughes, 'Diggers, True Levellers and the Crisis of the English Revolution', in *The Agreements of the People, the Levellers and the Constitutional Crisis of the English Revolution*, ed. Philip Baker and Elliot Vernon (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012), 218. In the 'first' pamphlet written by William Everard & Winstanley *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, they explained the digging of George Hill.

Referring to the text, *New Law of Righteousness*, it was asserted that the True Levellers held beliefs markedly divergent from conventional religious views, posing a threat to the stability of the Commonwealth. According to Canne, the author of the text expressed a denial of the soul's immortality and derided those who adhered to such a belief.<sup>144</sup> Additionally, it had been declared that there was no historical figure of Christ in the flesh, no account of his life, crucifixion or resurrection.<sup>145</sup> The pamphlet's author also asserted the rejection of the existence of heaven or hell, viewing them as non-existent. Notably, he went to the extent of characterising the Bible as a mere idol, encompassing false narratives. He contended that '*publick Preachers have cheated the whole world, by telling us of a single man, called Adam, that killed us by eating a single fruit*'.<sup>146</sup>

In the *Discoverer*, the authors also included some Leveller literature in their argument. They observed that the Levellers *Agreement of the People* lacked any religious principles. Specifically, within the thirty articles, it was emphasised that there was '*not one thing proposed, for the holding forth and furtherance of Gods publick worship and service*'.<sup>147</sup> This observation resonates with Canne's perspective, asserting that having no faith posed a greater danger than holding heretical views. However, it remains unclear which version of the Agreement the authors referred to, as there were provisions for religious liberty in certain iterations.<sup>148</sup>

The second caveat to Canne's doctrine of toleration was articulated *A Voice from the Temple* (1653) and emanated his belief in the imminent arrival of the end times. Canne argued that people with diverse religious opinions should indeed be afforded tolerance; however, he stipulated that the limit of this toleration cannot extend beyond 'where the vengeance of the Lord, and the vengeance of his Temple, is expressly cal'd for, and to be executed thus'.<sup>149</sup> Canne identified the antichristian state, embodied by the Catholic

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<sup>144</sup> Canne, *The Discoverer*, 9.

<sup>145</sup> Written in the margin are the page numbers '98,99'. Ibid, 9

<sup>146</sup> Referring to page 78 of *New Laws of Righteousness*. Ibid, 9.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 10

<sup>148</sup> *An Agreement of the People for a Firme and Present Peace* (1647); *An Agreement Prepared for the People of England* (January 1649); *An Agreement of the Free People of England* (May 1649).

<sup>149</sup> John Canne, *A Voice from the Temple to the higher powers. Wherein is shewed, that it is the work and duty of saints, to search the propheties and visions of holy Scripture, which concern the later times: and that Jesus Christ will reveal the understanding of them, neer the end of their accomplishment. And so much, is here clearly proved, and the objections to the contrary answered. Also severall propheties are here opened, concerning the time of the end; as what is the present work of the Lord in the world: and wherein the saints (whether the higher powers or others) are now to move and follow him. Likewise [sic] what will be the work of the Lord forward, and all along from year to year, till the mysterie of God be finished, both among the Christian gentiles, and Jewes* (London, simmons: 1653), 37.



Church, as an institution designed to act against Christ by corrupting his teachings and worship. Furthermore, he asserted that this institution operated under the ‘pretence of [combatting] blasphemy, heresie, schism’, all the while seeking to destroy the saints.<sup>150</sup> This antichristian state had also exerted its influence on the practices of both Prelacy and Presbyterianism. He expressly referred to their persecutory measures, which, he argued, had been marked by the shedding of much ‘innocent blood’ and would have persisted had the civil authorities not intervened.<sup>151</sup> In the face of this perceived corruption, Canne argued that tolerance should have limits, particularly where the beliefs were deemed to be influenced or manipulated by the antichrist.

Thus far, a significant portion of Canne’s writing has been retrospective, as he aimed to uphold the Commonwealth and safeguard the civil and religious liberties that the people and the nation had reclaimed. The following section will focus on a shift in Canne’s perspective on monarchical government that emerged after the political turbulence of the period. Unlike other Fifth Monarchists, Canne does not fully elucidate his vision of a commonwealth; however, in his discussion surrounding monarchy, we can gain some insight into his perspective.

#### **5.14 Republican Exclusivism**

In February 1649, Canne expressed his views on the regicide, which he justified by demonstrating that Charles was a tyrant and had enslaved the people through his arbitrary rule. Although Canne often referred to monarchical governance negatively, there was no suggestion that he believed it was not a legitimate form of government. This changed with Canne’s publication of *In the Improvement of Mercy* on 2 August 1649.<sup>152</sup>

However, before discussing Canne’s change in position, it is essential to highlight that some of the arguments that Canne made have been drawn from an earlier text. Markku Peltonen observed that in the text, ‘Canne re-used many of the anti-monarchical arguments from *The armies vindication*’, published in January 1649, under the name Eleutherius

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>151</sup> Canne, *A Voice from the Temple*, 37.

<sup>152</sup> John Canne, *The Improvement of Mercy, or, A Short Treatise, Shewing How, and in What Manner, Our Rulers and All Well-Affected to the Present Government Should Make a Right and Profitable Use of the Late Great Victory in Ireland, August 2, 1649 Also Here Are Severall Things Propounded to All Such as Are Dis-Affected and Enemies to the State, Whether Presbyterian, Royalist, or Papist, &c., Beeing [Sic] Both Usefull and Reasonable upon This Occasion of so Wonderfull and Glorious a Victorie* (1653).

Philodemius.<sup>153</sup> Peltonen has suggested that Canne may have written the tract because he used the same arguments. Determining the authorship of *The armies vindication* falls outside the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that if Canne were the author, it would appear odd that in the following month, he did not mention the benefits of a free state. Instead, he suggested that kings who ruled according to the law constituted a viable form of government.

The premise of Canne's text was to commemorate the recent victory of the New Model Army against royalist forces at the battle of Rathmines.<sup>154</sup> Canne suggested that this event be memorialised by building a statue or a day of thanksgiving. In his championing of the victory, Canne also asserted an opinion of monarchical rule that aligned with the principles of republican exclusivism. As Canne wrote:

This victory gives me occasion to put you in minde, how your principles and grounds are false, concerning formes of civill Government. The Israelites living poorely in Egypt, thought no kinds of food better then Garlick and Onions: so you, having liv'd long under kingly Government, and not acquainted with a free State or Common-wealth, conceive Monarchie to be the best kinde of Government, which undoubtedly is the worst.<sup>155</sup>

Using the terms 'commonwealth' and 'free state' interchangeably, Canne emphasised a preference for a 'free State' by underscoring that a commonwealth exists between the two 'extremes' of monarchy and anarchy.<sup>156</sup> Canne further elaborated that advocating for a monarchy, where power is concentrated in a single individual, contradicts the 'common Maxime; *plus vident oeuli quum oculus*; two eyes see more then one'. Moreover, Canne critiqued the notion that desiring a state where either 'none should governe, or all, is absurd and senselesse'.<sup>157</sup> Peltonen has observed that from the publication of *The armies vindication* in January 1649 until 1652, there was a notable increase in those advocating for a free state.<sup>158</sup> Despite Canne replicating some of the arguments espoused in *The armies vindication*, he stood among the political thinkers championing the concept of a free state.

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<sup>153</sup> Markku Peltonen, *The Political Thought of the English Free State, 1643-1653* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 44; Philodemius, Eleutherius. *The armies vindication ... in Reply to Mr. William Sedgwick / Published for the Kingdomes Satisfaction by Eleutherius Philodemius*

<sup>154</sup> H. O. Brunskill, 'The Battle of Rathmines: 2nd August, 1649,' in *Dublin Historical Record* 2, no. 1 (1939): 18–29.

<sup>155</sup> Peltonen specifically states that Canne cited *The armies vindication* in *The Golden Rule* however, this has not been located in the text. Peltonen, *Free State*, 44.

<sup>156</sup> Peltonen contests the idea of the English being 'reluctant republican's' and challenges the notion that a republic was established by default. See Peltonen, *Free State*, 7-8 & chapter 3.

<sup>157</sup> Canne, *Improvement of mercy*, 17.

<sup>158</sup> Peltonen, *Free State*, 7.

Aspinwall and Spittlehouse employed biblical arguments to assert that monarchy was the invention of men. In contrast, Canne presented arguments like those in *The armies vindication*, relying on socio-economic and political factors rather than scriptural interpretation. By emphasising the socio-economic advantages of the commonwealth, Canne's perspective resonated more closely with Cary's subsequent proposals. Cary's later suggestions were centred on what served the people's interests and the well-being of the commonwealth.

To persuade the reader of the merits of a free state or commonwealth, Canne began his argument by outlining the economic advantages of a commonwealth. He explained that the revenues wasted on maintaining monarchs could be redirected for the public good. For instance, the many courts, palaces, castles and extensive land could serve the people and 'will be for the great profit and generall good of the whole Nation, poore and rich'.<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, Canne demonstrated that by ceasing to allocate funds for the upkeep of the king's children, the money saved could be spent on the orphans and the poor children of the nation. In a commonwealth, there would be no more unnecessary wars in which the blood of many men would be spilt; there would be no need to impose 'intolerable taxes' to fund those wars.<sup>160</sup> Presumably, Canne was alluding to Charles's military campaign, which was considered unwarranted and was accompanied by the imposition of taxation to sustain his endeavours.

In the subsequent section, Canne highlighted the prevalent corruption in monarchical rule. It was in his juxtaposition between commonwealth rule and monarchical government that his own preference for commonwealth becomes apparent. He asserted that when 'corruption and abuses break forth, they are easier and sooner suppress in a free State,' emphasising that the origins of those abuses primarily emanate from the court.<sup>161</sup> The king typically selected officers and ministers frequently characterised by corruption and selfish motives, prioritizing personal interests over public good.

In his earlier tract, *The Golden Rule*, Canne had already disclosed his commitment to the tenets of popular sovereignty and voluntary government. In *The Improvement of Mercy*, Canne reaffirmed these foundational principles, forming the basis of establishing a commonwealth. As articulated by Canne, within a commonwealth, citizens would initially be at liberty to choose who would govern over them. With this objective in mind, they

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<sup>159</sup> Canne, *Improvement of mercy*, 17.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 16.

should be ‘carefull to choose such as shall doe just and right things for them’.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, within the framework of a commonwealth, the people retained the prerogative to expel any individual from the government if it came to light that they were corrupt. This mechanism not only aimed to safeguard liberty but also to uphold the integrity of government.

### **5.15 Virtuous Magistrates**

Canne further explained the attributes that men under consideration for governmental roles should possess. Like the other Fifth Monarchists discussed in this thesis, Canne championed virtue as an additional mechanism to curb the encroachment of power. In a commonwealth, those selected could not rely on ‘titles or birth-right, but abilities and good parts make them capable of preferment’.<sup>163</sup> Crucially, within the commonwealth, positions of power and authority would not be gained through ‘bribery, flattery, friendship’ as was so often observed in monarchical courts. Individuals would gain their roles solely because they were ‘fitted and gifted’ for their role in leading the nation.<sup>164</sup>

Once more, Canne emphasised the importance of religious and civil liberties within a commonwealth. He critiqued monarchical government, contending that it obstructed the ‘way of Christ’ and was ‘most withstood and opposed under Kings’.<sup>165</sup> Canne remarked that one of the reasons why the Scots ‘cry out so much for a King’ was that they recognised that a monarchy would ‘best serve their turne,’ as it would facilitate the suppression of truth and the persecution of the saints and sects.<sup>166</sup> In a godly commonwealth, the propagation of the teachings of Christ, as well as religious belief in general, would flourish.

Notably, Canne directed attention to the Protestant and Catholic communities coexisting within a free state in the Low Countries, drawing on his experiences from his exile. Even the Papists, ‘will not have the King of Spain, to reigne againe over them, but desire rather to be under the present Government: yea though they are Papists (I say) and have not liberties granted them for the free exercise of their Religion, yet by no meanes will heare of a King any more’.<sup>167</sup> Despite their inability to practice their religion freely, they exhibited a clear preference for republican government over monarchy.

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 17-18.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 18.

In his concluding remarks, Canne reiterated the advantages of a commonwealth in contrast to a monarchy, underscoring that within a commonwealth, the people would finally experience the freedom denied to them under the previous system. Canne asserted that in a commonwealth, ‘every man enjoying his own without molestation, and have justice speedily don them, they will no more desire a King to Rule over them’.<sup>168</sup> Canne believed the only way to achieve liberty and safeguard the welfare of the people and the nation was through a commonwealth based on virtue.

The final part of the chapter will explore another shift in Canne’s writing, which transpired in 1653 in response to further changes in government that he deemed contradictory to the commonwealth principles he had articulated in 1649, as he engaged with prophetic interpretation.

### **5.16 Prophecy**

Between September 1650 and June 1653, Canne refrained from publishing. It could be suggested that his silence during this period was a response to the diminished support for the Leveller movement by 1650, rendering it no longer a substantial threat to the government. However, the dissolution of the Rump Parliament and the creation of the Nominated Assembly in 1653 prompted Canne to resume his literary activities. Notably, Canne’s writings now took on an explicitly millenarian character during this period as he sought to explain contemporary events through the lens of his interpretation of prophetic scripture. While he did not provide any rationale for this shift in tone, it becomes apparent that corruption within the Rump Parliament and the slowness in progressing with godly reforms compelled him to be more explicit in his belief that the advent of the new millennium was imminent.

The issue of corruption was not confined to the monarchy. On 13 June 1653, in *A Voice from the temple to the higher powers*, Canne denounced the corruption of the Rump Parliament as he urged Cromwell to ensure he selected the right men for the Nominated Assembly.<sup>169</sup> Those in positions of power should be there for the public good and not to

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>169</sup> John Canne, *A Voice from the Temple to the Higher Povvers. Wherein is Shewed, that it is the Work and Duty of Saints, to Search the Propheties and Visions of Holy Scripture, which Concern the Later Times: And that Jesus Christ Will Reveal the Understanding of them, Neer the End of their Accomplishment. and so Much, is*

enrich themselves. Canne claimed that some parliament members were ‘not worth two or three hundred pounds a year, have now made it up, some to a thousand, some to fifteen hundred,’ pounds per annum.<sup>170</sup> There also needed to be careful consideration over appointing Justices and magistrates as some have exercised ‘arbitrary power’ simply because someone in the House of Commons protected them.<sup>171</sup>

In conjunction with addressing the issue of corruption, Canne provided a rationale for the dissolution of the Rump Parliament on account of its members’ purported lack of ‘understanding of the Times’.<sup>172</sup> Canne clarified that his intention to publish his work on the Book of Daniel only materialised upon the encouragement of his congregation in Hull. Nonetheless, the ‘Revolutions in our Nation’, specifically the establishment of the Nominated Assembly, ultimately influenced his decision.<sup>173</sup> This was imperative for him to substantiate that these changes conformed with prophecy.

Canne initiated his interpretation with Daniel 12:5-11, the same passage Cary had utilised as the foundation for her exegesis in 1651. Nevertheless, Canne and Cary’s calculations varied. Canne began by focusing on the first period allocated to the gentile. Adhering to the established convention, Canne construed ‘time, times and an half’ as signifying 1260 days, equating them to years.<sup>174</sup> Moreover, Canne reiterated the prevailing interpretation that the horns on the fourth beast referenced in Daniel 7 symbolised the antichristian empire, which was divided into ten parts. Canne asserted that approximately in 388 AD, these horns emerged, marking a pivotal moment in the decline of the Roman Empire. During this period, the horns (representing rulers) derived their authority from the beast. Canne emphasised that ‘they had not at first [had] Sovereignty, Majesty, Power, Privileges, which afterwards they possess and were confirmed in’.<sup>175</sup>

Having established the beginning of the specified period, Canne shifted his attention to Daniel 7:9, a passage deemed to signify the conclusion of the antichristian empire. The

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*here Clearly Proved, and the Objections to the Contrary Answered. also Severall Prophecies are here Opened, Concerning the Time of the End; as what is the Present Work of the Lord in the World* (1653), ‘Epistle’.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>171</sup> In the text Canne referred to Shaw as a ‘a notable Turn-coate, and Time-server as lives, hath committed such scandalous actions...yet no justice could passe against him’. They were engaged in a dispute that continued throughout the decade. Ibid, ‘Postscript’.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, ‘Epistle’.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, ‘Epistle’.

<sup>174</sup> Canne referred to the example of the Israelites told to wander the desert for 40 days but this was in fact 40 years. Ibid, 12.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 13.

verse articulated that the ‘thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat’. This event was considered the juncture at which God would call kings and their kingdoms to account, intending ‘to cast down the mighty from their seats, to cut off the spirit of Princes, and to be terrible unto the Kings of the earth’.<sup>176</sup> This divine intervention was anticipated to continue until the fourth kingdom was destroyed.<sup>177</sup>

By combining the 1260-year timeframe from Daniel 12 and the emergence of the ten horns, Canne deduced that the establishment of the throne of the Ancient of Days occurred in 1648. In his assertion, this symbolic throne was set up in England, as it was the first horn to receive power from the beast. As further evidence, Canne noted that this coincided with the creation of the High Court of Justice in the same year, tasked with the trial of Charles I. The subsequent trial and execution of the king, along with the change in government, was seen by Canne as the realisation of this prophetic vision.<sup>178</sup>

### **5.17 The Little Horn**

As previously noted, the identity of the little horn, described in Daniel 7, was the subject of much debate amongst scholars and theologians and within the Fifth Monarchist movement. Cary and Aspinwall asserted that the little horn represented Charles I, whereas John Rogers believed it symbolised all kings since William the Conqueror. In contrast, Canne’s interpretation diverged from focusing on individuals as he claimed that the little horn symbolised the antichristian state or kingdom.<sup>13</sup> In Canne’s perspective, the little horn represented a collective entity rather than a person.

Some had proposed that the Pope could physically embody the little horn. However, Canne asserted that while the Pope was certainly ‘a member of that body, but he is not the body’.<sup>179</sup> Canne expanded on this notion by explaining that the ‘body’ encompassed not only the Catholic Church, its ministry and the government of Rome but also extended to ‘false Churches, Ministries, Formes, Ordinances, Institutions [all] brought in by men’ that are contrary to God or the Gospel of Christ’. ‘Whether in England, or Scotland or Rome,’ all such deviations constitute the antichristian empire.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 19.

Following the Protestant apocalyptic tradition, Canne asserted that the rise of the little horn coincided with the Catholic Church's claim to supremacy, which he dated to be approximately 400 AD. It was during this period that the '*Church of Rome*' had assumed 'the title of the *Firmament of all Bishops, and top of all Churches, and [...]the Censures of Bishops in all causes of moment, was to be referred to the audience of the Bishop of Rome*'.<sup>181</sup> This was additionally confirmed through Canne's interpretation of Revelation 10:2.<sup>182</sup> The verse documented John's vision of an angel placing a right foot upon the sea and their left foot on the earth. According to Canne, this symbolised two persecuting powers in the world, the 'spiritual and temporall'.<sup>183</sup> In an annotation in the margin, Canne stated, 'Note how they call it the Sea of Rome, the Bishops Sea'. The precedence given to placing the right foot first also signified the impending destruction of spiritual authority before the civil.<sup>184</sup>

During the same period, the antichristian state began to exert its influence in secular affairs, elevating itself above civil authorities. Canne contended that the antichristian kingdom would inevitably fall upon the complete destruction of all monarchies. He asserted that 'nothing then will stand of the Antichristian Kingdome, which came in which it, and hath ever since been upheld and supported by it.'<sup>185</sup> Canne further emphasised that the Rump Parliament's hesitancy to eradicate the 'remnants of Monarchy or Antichristisme' had also played a pivotal role in the Parliament's eventual dissolution.<sup>186</sup>

This emphasis underscored Canne's belief that, in the end times, only a commonwealth form of government was viable. Canne exhibited reluctance to engage with his thoughts on what would happen next, yet he was adamant that it was the government's role to fulfil the prophecies. He articulated that the saints had been bestowed with a double-edged sword, a tool to be wielded against the heathens and to 'bind kings and nobles' who had persecuted the saints. Furthermore, this was a 'Supream Power,' destined to endure for 'four or five years without interruption' until the end of the fourth monarchy. Following his calculation of adding 1260 years to 400 AD, Canne confidently predicted this would occur in 1660.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>182</sup> Rev 10:2 (King James Version), 'He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land'.

<sup>183</sup> Canne, *Voice in the Temple*, 20.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 20.



Canne was writing in the weeks running up to the creation of the Nominated Assembly. He aimed to provide Cromwell with the rationale to proceed with the formation of this new assembly, aspiring for Cromwell to champion much-needed reforms. Within his text, Canne viewed Cromwell, as one of the saints, as possessing a crucial role in advancing Christ's cause. He praised Cromwell for demonstrating good intentions for the nation and recognised him as an instrument of God in the dissolution of the Rump Parliament.

In his tract, Canne encouraged Cromwell to search the scriptures to discern necessary actions. However, Canne also subtly cautioned Cromwell by drawing a historical parallel. Canne compared himself to the individual who had delivered a letter to Caesar just before his entrance into the Senate.<sup>188</sup> The letter contained a warning about a conspiracy and had Caesar taken the opportunity to read it, he may have been spared. Canne implied the significance of Cromwell heeding these warnings and adhering to Christ's design rather than pursuing his personal agenda.

### **5.18 The Protectorate & Prophecy**

As previously noted, the establishment of the Protectorate faced significant opposition from the Fifth Monarchists and other republican thinkers. Republicans critiqued Cromwell because they saw the Protectorate, which reinstated single-person rule, as a departure from their earlier republican principles.<sup>189</sup> This was also the case with Canne while marking a shift in his millenarian perspective.

While Canne had previously responded promptly to political change, it was not until 1656 that he expressed his perspectives on the new regime in *Truth with Time: OR, CERTAIN REASONS PROVING That none of the seven last plagues, or vials are yet poured*.<sup>190</sup> In the text, Canne introduced a controversial interpretation of the prophecies found in Revelation 16, specifically focusing on the passage where John heard seven angels instructed to pour out seven vials of God's wrath upon the earth.

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>189</sup> Hammersley, *Republicanism*, 86.

<sup>190</sup> John Canne, *Truth with Time, Or, Certain Reasons Proving that None of the Seven Last Plagues Or Vials are Yet Poured Out neither Will the Time of their Pouring Out Begin Till After the Rising of the Two Witnesses and the Fourty Months of the Beast's Reign be Expired : Likewise an Answer to the Said Reasons with a Reply further the Author Hath here Set Down (in a Brief Exposition) His Opinion of the First Vial* (1656).

Traditionally, it was widely accepted that during that period, the first vial, causing ‘ugly, festering sores’ on those that bore the mark of the beast, symbolised the time of Wycliffe, Luther and Calvin when opposition to the corruptions of the Catholic Church emerged. The second vial, turning the seas into ‘blood’ and causing all living things’ deaths, was believed to correspond to the Thirty Years War. The third vial, turning rivers and springs to blood, was associated with the English Civil Wars. It was commonly held that the fourth and fifth vials, as proposed by Canne, would mark the end of the beast’s dominion.

In 1653, Canne asserted that the fifth vial had been poured out, albeit requiring Cromwell’s actions to complete it. Canne’s rationale was based on the idea that the angel’s vial brought darkness to the kingdom of the beast, ushering in a period of confusion and turmoil as people grappled with unfolding events. Charles I’s execution occurred under the fifth vial, casting figurative darkness over the nation, and it seemed like the people struggled to comprehend its significance. This ‘darkness’ was expected to persist until ‘Thrones, States, Powers are broken to pieces’.<sup>191</sup>

In 1656, notwithstanding his belief they were living in the end times, Canne revised his position and stated that none of the vials had been emptied. In a new interpretation, he challenged the prevailing narrative by questioning the substantial duration between the pouring of the vials. He drew a comparison to the plagues inflicted on Egypt during the Israelite enslavement by Pharaoh, which transpired within a relatively brief span of thirty days. In prophetic terms, this would be the equivalent of thirty years, yet as Canne pointed out, hundreds of years had passed since the presumed pouring of the first vial.<sup>192</sup> Significantly, Canne argued that emptying the vials should result in removing tyrannical rulers in the locations where they had been opened.

For instance, despite the belief that the first vial had been poured on the false doctrines of the Catholic Church, these doctrines had endured. If, as traditionally believed, the fifth vial had been emptied in England, the nation should not be in a worse condition than before, particularly as it once again found itself under the rule of a single person. Canne’s innovative interpretation challenged the conventional understanding of the vials’ timeline and their anticipated effects on oppressive regimes. Allowing the traditional narrative to persist could be exploited to bolster support for the Protectorate.

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<sup>191</sup> Canne, *A Voice from the Temple*, 16.

<sup>192</sup> Canne, *Truth with Time*, 5.

In the following year, Canne produced *The time of the end shewing first* in which he further sought to not only challenge the Protectorate but also provide a rationale behind the change in government. Due to the enforcement of the Treason Act and the ongoing incarceration of several fellow Fifth Monarchists, Canne exercised caution, refraining from explicitly naming Cromwell. Instead, he provided a general assessment of the state of the Commonwealth. He asserted that the nation found itself in a significantly worse condition than before, enduring under ‘worse Magistrates, Ministers, Army, Navy, Councils.’<sup>193</sup> Canne further criticised the regime’s implementation of the system of Triers and Ejectors in the preceding year under the guise of a godly reformation. According to Canne, the Church had become more corrupt than during the era of the bishops.

In stark contrast to the favourable attributes ascribed to a commonwealth by Canne in 1649, he now asserted that the present government ‘have rob’d the people of their Power, Parliaments, Laws, Liberties, &c. have miserably wasted the Commonwealth in Men, Money, Shipping, Trade’.<sup>194</sup> Canne underscored that the people had entrusted their power to their representatives, but in return, the government had ‘Turned that same Power against the people’. Their misuse of power had led to the destruction of ‘Laws, Liberties, Representatives, &c. yea, more, the Interest and Cause of Christ’.<sup>195</sup> By drawing a parallel between the accusations against the late king for his abuse of excessive power and the actions of the Protectorate, Canne highlighted that the Protectorate was ‘exercising an *unlimited and arbitrary power*’.<sup>196</sup>

As noted in previous chapters, the emergence of the Protectorate was an unexpected event for the Fifth Monarchists that elicited diverse arguments aimed at scrutinising Cromwell. To undermine the new regime, Canne established a connection between the little horn in Daniel 7 and the beast in Revelation 11, with the little horn emblematic of a political state and the beast representative of the Protectorate.

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<sup>193</sup> John Canne, *The time of the end shewing first, until the three years and an half are come (which are the last of the 1260 dayes) the prophecies of the Scripture will not be understood, concerning the duration and period of the fourth monarchy and kingdom of the beast : then secondly, when that time shall come ... the knowledge of the end ... will be revealed, by the rise of a little horn, the last apostacy, and the beast slaying the witnesses* (1656), 57; The text included an Epistle written by Feake in which he accused Cromwell of apostacy, and asserted that Cromwell and some members of the Army ‘preferred Barabbas before Christ’

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 77.

Following the established tradition, Canne underscored that the emergence of the beast from the bottomless pit in Revelation 11 and the subsequent slaying of witnesses would inaugurate a period of heightened persecution spanning three and a half years. Within those years, a significant apostasy was predicted, which Canne connected to the Protectorate. Canne explained that this apostasy would be unlike the first, characterised not by doctrinal deviation but by a shift in ‘manners and conversation.’ According to Canne, this apostasy would manifest in men becoming ‘*lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud*’.<sup>197</sup> Moreover, Canne anticipated that those apostatising would outwardly project godliness while denying the power of God.<sup>198</sup> This insight further reinforced his perspective that the little horn symbolised a state or a political entity.

Canne described the formation of this state, asserting that ‘A company *of men in the last days, having left their former principles of justice, Law, and Conscience, shall assume unto themselves, a state or body politick, appointing one as Head, and framing an instrument*’.<sup>199</sup> It becomes evident, especially with the mention of the term ‘instrument,’ that Canne was alluding to the Cromwellian regime.<sup>200</sup> In contrast to earlier Fifth Monarchist applications of the description of the little horn to individuals, Canne was reasserting that this figure applied it to ‘body politick’.

According to Canne’s interpretation, the little horn would alter time and laws, signifying recent changes in ‘Forms of Government’ to which the people ‘had submitted and engaged to maintain’. Through these changes, the people’s right to ‘chuse their *Representative, and the Priviledges of Parliaments*’ were rescinded, consolidating all power in the hands of one person, namely Cromwell. Canne highlighted that this tyranny surpassed the oppression experienced under Charles I.<sup>201</sup> Under the authority of the ‘*INSTRUMENT,*’ the laws safeguarding the people were no longer held, and those opposing Cromwell faced imprisonment or exile.<sup>202</sup>

Through the Protectorate’s perceived usurpation of power, Canne contended that the people had once again forfeited their freedoms, relying on ‘onely his will, and nothing else

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 131.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 176.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 173.

shall be a Law for men to walk by, and trust to, neither will they have any other defence (whiles this Horn reigns) to preserve themselves and families from ruine.<sup>203</sup>

By aligning the little horn with the beast, symbolising the Protectorate, Canne illustrated that the nation had reverted to a state of servitude. However, each prophecy had a determined end point, a facet Canne utilised to advocate for the unity of the Fifth Monarchists and the Commonwealth men.

### **5.19 The Commonwealth Men**

In the text, Canne asserted that the little horn, symbolising the Protectorate, faced not one but two adversaries: the Fifth Monarchists and the ‘Commonwealth Men.’<sup>204</sup> According to Canne, these individuals were characterised as ‘visible Saints’, acknowledging differences in spiritual strength but recognising they were godly. Canne clarified that these saints, or Commonwealth Men, may possess a lesser degree of spiritual enlightenment as their primary focus had been on the ‘Reformation in Civil things.’<sup>205</sup> Despite these differences, he contended that the ‘Common-wealth principles, will joyn with their brethren, the fifth Kingdome men’ to act against the little horn or the Protectorate. While the principles of the Commonwealth Men did not perfectly align with those of the Fifth Monarchy Men, as their interests were centred on earthly matters, Canne argued that they ‘are clearly convinc’d, that the Power and Government of this Beast are unlawfull, and that they suffer unjustly under him.’<sup>206</sup> He encouraged the two groups to unite to ‘recover their Ancient Liberties and Rights.’<sup>207</sup>

In the previous year, John Thurloe had speculated about the potential for an alliance between the two groups following the publication of Vane’s *A Healing Question*, which was perceived to be Vane’s effort to bring the two sides together.<sup>208</sup> Capp dismissed the likelihood of such a union, arguing that it was more probable that the Fifth Monarchists viewed it as an opportunity to bolster their declining numbers.<sup>209</sup> However, Canne’s text demonstrated that the two groups shared common principles, specifically a desire to regain

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 166.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 195.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 240.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 195.

<sup>208</sup> Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men*, 103.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 103; Capp acknowledged that John Rogers engaged in languages of ‘fundamental rights’ but at the end of the Interregnum, and also asserted that by that point Rogers’ was no longer an ‘orthodox’ Fifth Monarchist.

lost liberties during the Protectorate. In the *Time of Finding*, published in 1658, Canne's epistle was directed to the Fifth Monarchists and the Commonwealth Men, urging them to champion the 'Good Old Cause,' which Canne identified as the cause of Christ.

The unexpected death of Cromwell precipitated a brief interval wherein his son, Richard, assumed the role of Protector before ultimately relinquishing his powers. This, in turn, resulted in the restoration of the Rump Parliament on 7 May 1659, rekindling hope for the Fifth Monarchists such as Rogers as he engaged in the republican debates of that year. During this period, Canne also published his final text in May 1659, *A SEASONABLE WORD To the Parliament-Men*.<sup>210</sup> While the tone of the tract conveyed a sense that the 'Good Old Cause' had been lost and that the restoration of the king was now a distinct possibility, Canne committed to the Commonwealth as he issued a final warning to the members of the recently restored Rump Parliament.

In his admonition, Canne reminded them that Christ was not only the king of saints but also of all nations and kingdoms, being the 'ONELY POTENTATE'. He invoked the rallying cry of the New Model Army before its corruption, '*NO KING BUT JESUS; his Kingdome, Laws, People.*' This, he urged, should once again be the nation's desire. However, the return of Charles II in 1660 ultimately dashed Canne's hopes for the nation. By 1664, he had returned to Amsterdam and resumed his work, producing an annotated version of the Bible.

## 5.20 Conclusions

This chapter illuminates the consistency of Canne's republican ideals, notably neo-Roman liberty and virtue, throughout the period of the English Commonwealth. Similar to fellow Republicans like Milton and Nedham, Canne found himself compelled to defend Parliament's actions following the regicide and, more specifically, to counter arguments from proponents of the divine right of kings. Diverging from Aspinwall, who steered clear

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<sup>210</sup> John Canne, *A Seasonable Word to the Parliament-Men, to Take with them when they Go into the House: Wherein is Shewed, the First Part of their Present Work, and what is Expected from them, to Satisfie their True and Real Friends. Likewise a Vvatchword, how they Prefer Not again such Persons to Places of Trust Who have Lately Betrayed the Priviledges of Parliaments, and the just Rights of the People, into the Hands of a Single Person* (1659); Between May to August 1659, Canne was appointed editor of *The Publick Intelligencer*, he reaffirmed his belief that the restoration of the Rump signified the end of the period of apostasy.

of the controversy surrounding the interpretation of 1 Samuel 8, Canne actively engaged with it.

Canne's interpretation of Samuel's caution in 1 Samuel 8 differed significantly from endorsing kingly prerogatives; instead, he asserted that the passage underscored the imperative to bind the king through law. Interestingly, Canne went further by claiming that Samuel was describing Saul's reign, which had descended into tyranny, applying Polybius's cycle of government to biblical analysis. Additionally, he incorporated arguments from resistance theories, drawing from *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannus* and notably from Rutherford's *LEX, REX*. These arguments served to substantiate Parliament as the supreme body further, justifying their actions in defence of the people and nation as lawful.

In exploring Parliamentary authority, Canne's advocacy for popular sovereignty emerged. In contrast to perspectives in the previous four chapters that contended sovereignty had been usurped by rulers and the abuse of legislative powers had led to the subjugation of the people, Canne asserted that sovereignty emanated from the people. While previous accounts drew parallels between the plight of the Israelites in captivity and the condition of the English people under the monarchy, Canne, in this instance, underscored the distinctions between the two. He highlighted that, unlike the English, the Israelites were not a free people, thereby reinforcing his perspective on sovereignty. Moreover, Canne delved into the writings of contemporary authors such as Bodin, who argued that the Roman citizens still maintained sovereignty following the end of the Roman Republic. Building on this, Canne posited that, as sovereign entities, the people held the lawful authority to revoke sovereignty from the king.

The significance of liberty became evident in a contentious pamphlet exchange involving the Levellers. Despite shared advocacy for popular sovereignty and civil and religious reforms between Canne and the Levellers, Canne perceived them as posing a threat to the Commonwealth. His concern stemmed from the fear that they intended to restore the monarchy or the establishment of an anarchical state, both scenarios endangering the loss of liberties for the people. Emphasising the relationship between religious and civil freedoms, Canne argued for the separation of church and state power to foster toleration, firmly asserting that this separation would contribute to stability within the Commonwealth. However, as previously highlighted, tolerance often came with caveats, and this was true of Canne as he excluded atheists and those whom he deemed as following the doctrines of the antichrist.

Canne's commitment to preserving liberty prompted him to formulate a republican exclusivist argument. In contrast to the approaches taken by Rogers, Aspinwall, and, to a certain extent, Spittlehouse, who relied on prophetic arguments in their opposition to single-person rule, Canne illustrated the advantages of a commonwealth in contrast to monarchical rule. Furthermore, according to Canne, preserving liberty was contingent upon establishing a commonwealth grounded in the principles of voluntary government and virtuous rule.

A significant theme in the chapter revolves around Canne's transition in his writing, marked by an embrace of a more millenarian outlook. In this regard, he exhibited parallels with Cary's work, wherein both authors integrated prophecy with recent history to substantiate their assertions. Diverging from Rogers, Cary and Aspinwall, Canne identified the little horn from Daniel 7 as symbolic of the antichristian state. Interestingly, Canne revised his initial biblical interpretation during the Protectorate to specify that the antichristian state was a political body encompassing the Protectorate. Furthermore, Canne produced another exegesis that contended that none of the vials of wrath had been poured out. This assertion held significance, particularly as Cromwell had been associated with the pouring of the fifth vial. In making this claim, Canne effectively sought to discredit Cromwell and the regime, adding a nuanced dimension to his millenarian perspective.

In this concluding chapter, it becomes evident that the assumption that the Fifth Monarchists utilised republican language to garner support for their movement is unfounded. While Canne acknowledged the theological differences between the Fifth Monarchists and the Commonwealth Men, he steadfastly believed in their shared objective of restoring the rights and liberties of the people.





## Conclusion

The primary objective of this thesis is to rectify the historical oversights regarding the Fifth Monarchists' influence on the development of English republicanism during the 1650s. The prevailing emphasis on their millenarianism led to a misconception that the Fifth Monarchists operated on the periphery of republican thought. This view, rooted in the perception of republicanism as a secular ideology, has been dispelled through carefully examining their engagement with republican discourse, wherein they crafted a distinctive variant shaped by the influence of Hebraic texts and their millenarian perspective.

In the Fifth Monarchist writings, as in established republican literature of the period, liberty (in its neo-Roman form) and virtue emerge as the foundational elements of the Fifth Monarchists' vision for a godly commonwealth. Each author contributed to this ideological framework, showcasing a nuanced understanding of republican principles intertwined with their religious convictions. While existing scholarship into English republicanism often attributes the evolution of these principles to ancient Rome and Greece, a closer examination of Fifth Monarchist literature reveals a distinct reliance on Hebraic texts and prophetic narratives for their interpretation of neo-Roman liberty, virtue and the intricate interplay between sovereignty, legislative power, and freedom achievable through a theocratic form of republic.

The impact of the Hebrew Commonwealth extends beyond mere emulation; it serves as a pivotal example and furnishes arguments supporting republican exclusivism, ecclesiastical reform and toleration within the Fifth Monarchist discourse. While acknowledging the Bible's significance as a political source for the Fifth Monarchists, it is crucial to note their engagement with classical texts. These texts were employed to champion the concept of resistance, showcasing that the Fifth Monarchists broadened their perspectives by incorporating influences from both the Bible and classical traditions.

### Liberty

As the political thought of the Fifth Monarchists was primarily articulated through biblical discourse, this prompted the question of whether their conceptualisation of liberty could be characterised as neo-Roman. However, as discussed, Skinner has acknowledged the inherent complexities associated with this term, cautioning against interpreting this form of liberty as necessarily having Roman origins. The authors discussed in this thesis have individually substantiated their interpretation, aligning them with the principles of neo-Roman liberty, particularly in their correlation of slavery with the subordination to the will

of another. Moreover, in applying the concept to the realm of the state, the Fifth Monarchists demonstrated a commitment to the principle of consent.

One illustration frequently invoked in this discourse was framing the Civil Wars as the nation's deliverance story. Rogers, for instance, drew parallels between these conflicts and the Israelites' captivity in Egypt, employing this analogy to underscore the nation's liberation from subjugation. Concurrently, Cary applied her skills of prophetic exegesis to construct a chronological framework, delineating the nation's progression towards freedom through the actions of the New Model Army. She illustrated not only the liberation from the King but also from the dominion of the Pope. Aspinwall explored the origins of governance, aiming to demonstrate the loss of liberty – an approach also adopted by Milton. However, Milton's account emphasises that sovereignty is ultimately vested in the people. Aspinwall's account posited that freedom was lost following the usurpation of legislative power from Christ by King Nebuchadnezzar.

Similarly, Spittlehouse also contended that liberty had been lost with the establishment of a monarchy. However, he credited this decline specifically to Nimrod. They each agreed, however, that the continuous retention of legislative authority by monarchs was the prevailing condition, and as long as they wielded this power, freedom was lost.

Each of the authors discussed sought to illustrate that the people had lost their freedoms when legislative power was usurped from Christ. It was through the unchecked abuse of power that the populace found themselves in the condition of enslavement. Despite certain divergences in interpretation, a unanimous consensus emerged that Daniel 7, which foretold the demise of the little horn, the end of monarchical rule, and the beginning of the destruction of the antichristian empire, found fulfilment in the events following the Civil Wars. The regicide, perceived as a prophetic act, was pivotal in the people's liberation. While there are subtleties in interpretation, Daniel 7 was a unifying benchmark in the five authors' understanding of the transformation set in motion by the regicide.

The envisioned commonwealth government would also be instituted on the foundation of consent. The affiliation between the Fifth Monarchists and the Nominated Assembly, arising from their involvement in its creation and the selection of several members for the assembly, has given rise to the perception that the Fifth Monarchists deviated from the principle of consent. This perception stems from the fact that Cromwell

and members of the Council of State bypassed the conventional electoral process by handpicking members for the Nominated Assembly. It is crucial to understand that Fifth Monarchists such as Rogers and Aspinwall explicitly stated that the change from customary practice was considered a temporary solution necessitated by the fractured state of the nation at that time.

Moreover, as emphasised by Rogers, the political landscape had long been characterised by a monarchical form of government. The group held the conviction that the Nominated Assembly could enact the requisite political and religious reforms essential for establishing a godly commonwealth. The anticipation was that, by the time the customary processes were reinstated, the populace would come to recognise the inherent advantages of a commonwealth.

Despite their commitment to introducing God's laws, the establishment of the government was intended to be embraced by the nation rather than imposed upon it. Aspinwall, in particular, underscored that the populace would be invited to willingly endorse living under Christ's laws. Drawing parallels with examples from the Old Testament, he emphasised that such voluntary agreement was a precedent within the historical context of the Hebrew Commonwealth. He interpreted the regicide as a pivotal moment to forge a covenant with Christ, signifying an acceptance to live under God's laws. This reasoning mirrors the acceptance of God's laws by Moses and the Israelites.

## **Virtue**

Integral to the Fifth Monarchists' vision of a commonwealth was the significant role assigned to virtue. The meaning of virtue is complex, having evolved, encompassing both pagan and Christian characteristics. Republican virtue can be defined as the necessity for political participation, with the hope that citizens would prioritise the state's welfare over their own interests. Sharing similarities with fellow republicans such as Milton, each Fifth Monarchist discussed in this study emphasised the necessity for governance to reside in the hands of virtuous rulers. In alignment with Vane, these authors argued for further constraints on the government, restricting it to godly men believed to possess heightened virtue.

While predominantly drawing examples of virtuous leadership from the Old Testament, the emphasis was on the Christian and political senses of the term. Men should possess the virtue to engage in political matters. For instance, Rogers described the 'Qualifications' by specifying that individuals should have wisdom reminiscent of

Solomon and the capacity to execute justice. However, the crucial emphasis lay in their utilisation of their positions in power for the betterment of the people and the Commonwealth. The authors shared the belief that godly individuals occupying positions of power were less susceptible to corruption that could undermine governance.

There were some divergences, as demonstrated by Spittlehouse's advocacy for more stringent restrictions on those in positions of power because their position could corrupt them. Influenced by his military role in the Civil Wars, Spittlehouse proposed limiting governmental roles exclusively to Officers from the New Model Army instead of confining government solely to the saints. While he considered the Officers saints, his rationale rested on the argument that they had already demonstrated their capabilities in political affairs during the Civil Wars and their commitment to the public good.

Interestingly, Cary was the only author among the five who acknowledged the practical challenges of restricting government to the saints. Recognising the limited number of saints in England, she introduced the caveat: if no saints were available, then individuals should be 'civil and blameless' in their character to fulfil the roles.

The emphasis on virtuous leadership prompted Rogers, Aspinwall, and Spittlehouse to designate a specific role for Cromwell – that of a legislator. This parallel drew inspiration from historical figures like Lycurgus. However, for the three men, the precedent was set by Moses in the Hebrew Commonwealth. While assigning such a role to one individual might appear counterintuitive, it is crucial to recognise that this was framed as an executive role and considered a temporary measure, aligning with historical examples.

The significance attributed to virtue extended beyond the focus on rulers, as illustrated by Cary. Her efforts to introduce socio-economic and political reforms were centred on the people's and the state's welfare. Her plans aimed to limit corruption by preventing those in power from self-enrichment. Practical measures, such as overhauling the postal system, were suggested to boost the treasury and avoid revenue loss from corrupt land sales. These initiatives were intended to benefit the public and stabilise the Commonwealth, aligning with the definition of republican virtue.

### **Anti-Monarchism**

The concepts of liberty and virtue were also present in the anti-monarchical sentiment that emerged as another prominent theme throughout the author's writings. For some, this sentiment developed further into formulating republican exclusivist arguments. These

arguments were intricately linked to prophecy as a means to subvert monarchical rule and any form of single-person rule. Rogers, Aspinwall and Canne each drew connections between the late King and the little horn prophecy in Daniel 7 to fortify their arguments against the legitimacy of monarchy.

Notably, Cary was the first Fifth Monarchist to identify Charles I as the little horn. Her analysis drew parallels between the Little Horn's destruction and Charles I's regicide. She compared the tyrannical deeds of the late King with the actions of the little horn described in the chapter, underscoring that the little horn invoked God's judgement and destruction – a correlation she identified in the case of Charles.

Despite laying the groundwork for subsequent Fifth Monarchist republican exclusivist arguments, Cary herself refrained from adopting this position. In a steadfast conviction that monarchical rule had concluded in England, Cary, remarkably, diverged in her perspective following her interpretation of Isaiah. She envisioned a potential role for monarchs in destroying the antichristian empire. It is essential to highlight that Cary believed those monarchs would be transformed following their submission to Christ. They would no longer rule in their own interests but for Christ and the people.

In formulating his exclusivist argument, Aspinwall incorporated Cary's interpretation; however, to establish a distinction, he underscored that his own interpretation was founded on reading the Old Testament in Hebrew. Significantly, he highlighted discrepancies in previous translations to emphasise the uniqueness of his perspective. For instance, to assert his interpretation, Aspinwall underscored the Scottish provenance of the late King by utilising the term 'little' to signify Scotland, construing it as the smallest among the three nations.

Similarly, Rogers drew a connection between Charles and the little horn. Yet, his interpretation diverged from Cary and Aspinwall's by positing that the little horn represented all monarchs, extending back to William the Conqueror. Rogers compared the origins of William the Conqueror with the rise of the little horn, accentuating William's forceful acquisition of the crown and subsequent loss of liberty linked to the abuse of legislative power. This abuse of power was taken to its extreme by Charles. Interestingly, in contrast to the other Fifth Monarchists discussed, Rogers's nuanced interpretation allowed for integrating the Norman Yoke theory into his discourse. Rogers reasserted a position already made by others, including the Levellers and Milton. He contended that this moment signalled a decline in the rights and liberties of the populace.

Canne's initial approach starkly contrasts that of Rogers and Aspinwall, as he relied on arguments to illustrate the socio-economic advantages inherent in a commonwealth set against the backdrop of monarchical governance. Notably, Canne was the first among the five Fifth Monarchists to explicitly defend the regicide. He asserted that Charles was an unjust king who instigated arbitrary rule. Like Cary, Canne initially only expressed anti-monarchical sentiments; however, seven months after the regicide, Canne articulated his republican exclusivist position. At that point, Canne explicitly denounced monarchical rule, emphasising the benefits of a Commonwealth and highlighting that resources could now be directed towards the welfare of the people rather than the monarch.

As the Protectorate unfolded, the Fifth Monarchists grappled with the emergence of what they perceived as a new form of monarchical governance. The inception of the Protectorate, coupled with the extensive powers conferred by the Instrument of Government, prompted diverse arguments aimed at censuring Cromwell and restoring the Commonwealth.

Drawing once again upon his expertise in Hebraic studies, Aspinwall constructed an exclusivist argument that echoed the sentiments expressed by Milton. In alignment with Milton's discourse, Aspinwall contended that monarchy constituted a form of idolatry and, consequently, was a sinful manifestation of governance. Notably, in contrast to Milton's earlier position, which allowed monarchs to be bound by laws, Aspinwall maintained his stance throughout the period that single-person rule, in any form, constituted an illegitimate form of government.

In response to the Protectorate, Canne adopted a more millenarian argument. Previously, Canne had construed the symbolism of the little horn to signify the antichristian state rather than individual figures. This interpretation afforded him a broader perspective, encompassing individuals like the Pope and figures such as Charles I, who were integral to the antichristian state.

To address Cromwell's new position and explain the unfolding events, Canne posited that Cromwell represented the beast emerging from the pit as outlined in Revelation 11. Furthermore, Canne engaged in additional exegesis, contending that none of the vials of divine wrath had been emptied. He had previously agreed with the prevailing view that the fifth vial poured out was connected to Cromwell's triumph over the King. Canne's revised interpretation diverged by asserting that no vial had been discharged. This stance

underscored Canne's assertion that Cromwell's actions had distanced the nation from God's intended divine plan.

In their critique of the Protectorate, both Rogers and Spittlehouse followed a similar approach by utilising the declarations made by the New Model Army and Cromwell against single-person rule. They emphasised the Army's professed commitment solely to Christ as their King, underscoring the perceived hypocrisy of the Protectorate. Spittlehouse was mainly focused on highlighting the terms outlined in the Instrument of Government, contending that it constituted a mechanism responsible for the enslavement of the populace, subjecting them to the authority of a single individual.

While employing distinct approaches, each author collectively advanced arguments opposing monarchical governance, emphasising the erosion of freedoms within tyrannical regimes. This shared viewpoint underscored the promotion of republican exclusivism, wherein the pursuit of liberty and virtue serves as fundamental motivation. Having raised doubts regarding the legitimacy of the single-person rule, the authors advocated for establishing a theocratic commonwealth, drawing inspiration from the exemplar of the Hebrew Commonwealth.

### **Theocratic Commonwealth**

The Fifth Monarchists' advocacy for a theocratic commonwealth found its intellectual roots in the influence of the Hebrew Commonwealth, intricately intertwined with the principles of liberty and virtue. Despite an apparent incompatibility between a theocracy and the pursuit of self-government inherent in republicanism, the Fifth Monarchists positioned themselves as divine representatives of God, asserting their executive power. A pivotal aspect of their argument posits that neither rulers nor governments should wield legislative authority, citing historical subjugation that had resulted from the misuse of such powers. This perspective becomes particularly contentious in light of Cromwell's consolidation of both executive and legislative powers during the Protectorate.

For the Fifth Monarchists, genuine freedom could only be realised in a theocratic commonwealth where the legislative power remained vested in Christ. They envisioned the saints entrusted with interpreting God's laws, justifying this seemingly arbitrary undertaking through a professed reliance on guidance from the Holy Spirit. The emphasis on the godly qualifications of those in authority further reinforced their vision of a theocratic commonwealth.



Aspinwall's period in exile afforded him a distinctive opportunity to institute a form of theocracy in establishing the Rhode Island colony. A noteworthy aspect of this initiative was the formulation of an oath, explicitly committing the inhabitants to abide by God's laws, with executive authority entrusted to a select few chosen by their peers.

During his exile, Aspinwall engaged with the theological ideas of John Cotton, who had expounded on the interpretation of God's laws. This influence assumed significance, especially in light of the contention that God's laws were deemed to be sparse in number. Upon returning to England in the 1650s, Aspinwall seized the opportunity to advocate for a similar theocratic model.

Central to Aspinwall's perception was the notion that when men conducted governance and possessed the power to legislate, as the people were dependent on man-made laws, their liberty was lost. In contrast, it was argued that true freedom could only be realised within a theocratic commonwealth, where legislative power remained with Christ, and executive powers were delegated to the saints. The contention held that if the Commonwealth were founded upon God's laws, acknowledged for their inherent righteousness and intended for the well-being of the people, liberty would inevitably follow.

Spittlehouse echoed a similar sentiment by asserting that the authority to legislate was never intended to be delegated to men. He substantiated this claim by citing the example of the Hebrew Commonwealth, contending that the power bestowed upon Moses, and subsequently the elders and judges, was exclusively executive power. This assertion drew criticism from Lilburne, who challenged the political interpretation of the Bible and instead emphasised the capacity of individuals to formulate their own governments and laws rationally.

In response to Lilburne, Spittlehouse underscored that if governance was grounded in rationality, then, by logical extension, the Jews, as God's chosen people, would possess the capacity for law-making. Furthermore, Spittlehouse emphasised the historical precedent that when the Israelites, having demanded an earthly king, became subject to human laws, they subsequently found themselves enslaved.

In their deliberations on the encroachment upon legislative power, certain Fifth Monarchists engaged in discussions concerning sovereignty. Their responses were directed at countering arguments, such as those put forth by figures like Milton, who advocated for popular sovereignty - a concept invoked to legitimise the authority of the Rump Parliament. Expanding upon his previous considerations regarding rationality, Spittlehouse confronted the proposition that the Hebrew Commonwealth exemplified popular sovereignty. This assertion, rooted in Exodus 18, suggested that Moses received his commission from the people. Disputing this perspective, Spittlehouse relied on the precedent of the Hebrew Commonwealth, asserting that authority was directly conferred from God to Moses. The sovereign power granted was explicitly for the implementation of God's laws.

Nevertheless, a notable divergence emerged with Canne in his response to the regicide. He sought to illustrate that Parliament held supreme authority in the land and possessed the right to hold the King accountable. In stark contrast, he asserted that sovereignty originated from the people. Furthermore, whereas the previous authors drew parallels between the nation's circumstances and those of the Israelites, Canne contended that their situations were distinctly different. In contrast to the Pharaoh, he highlighted that Charles ascended to the throne with the obligation to defend the people and safeguard their liberties. Canne further demonstrated, drawing examples from the New Testament, notably John 18, that civil government was established by the people to operate according to humane laws and reason, serving the nation's safety, peace, and welfare.

In addition, Canne also engaged with the ancient example of Rome. While Rogers had referenced Roman philosophers like Cicero, Canne distinctly drew parallels to the Roman Republic. Notably, he employed Bodin's interpretation, asserting that sovereignty persisted with the people even after the introduction of the emperors, which bolsters his argument for popular sovereignty. Additionally, Canne included arguments from *LEX*, *REX*, presenting secular-based contentions, positing that the people, as the superior entity, conferred authority upon the King.

Furthermore, Canne's engagement with *LEX*, *REX* extended to formulating a resistance theory – a significant aspect noted by Scott in the evolution of English republicanism. Contrary to Rogers, Cary, Aspinwall, and, to some extent, Spittlehouse, who justified resistance based on prophetic fulfilment, Canne, while still utilising scripture

to validate Parliament's actions against the King, posited a stance aligning with his views on popular sovereignty. Like Milton, Canne argued that the people retained the right to withdraw sovereignty as the authority bestowed on the monarch was conditional.

Given the historical emphasis on Fifth Monarchists as proponents of violence, it is noteworthy that Canne and his fellow Fifth Monarchists placed the locus of resistance within Parliament. Specifically, Canne underscored that Parliament, as the people's representative, held the authority to enact regicide. Additionally, Rogers advocated for a perspective wherein the saints could engage in what he termed as 'orderly resistance,' manifested through individuals expressing grievances through preaching, printing and petitioning. This approach was indeed embraced by the group, serving as their means to advocate for reform and respond to shifts in the government.

### **Thoughts on the Commonwealth**

While the Fifth Monarchists regarded the Hebrew Commonwealth as the exemplary model, there was debate over how the Commonwealth should be constituted. Rogers, for instance, explicitly advocated for a structure rooted in the Old Testament, proposing a Sanhedrin. His proposal included the establishment of an upper court with a representative from each county, while the lower court would comprise twenty-three representatives and three judges in smaller cities.

In contrast, Aspinwall suggested a different approach, proposing a bicameral government. The Great Council or representative would possess deliberative power, entrusted with sovereignty, while the second body, designated as the executive, held a subordinate role to the representative. Their responsibility was to execute their duties in alignment with God's laws.

Spittlehouse concentrated primarily on the qualities of the representative. However, he did offer a comprehensive plan for the electoral process, stipulating a twelve-month tenure for the representative body. In a departure from Rogers, both Spittlehouse and Aspinwall embraced the concept of rotation, emphasising the active engagement of citizens in both the exercise of governance and being governed. It is noteworthy, though, that the definition of who constituted the citizenry was at times ambiguous.

### **Ecclesiastical Reform**

The writings of the Fifth Monarchists demonstrate their perception of the interconnectedness of religious and civil liberty, positing that such interdependence serves

the collective well-being of the people and the Commonwealth. The notion of liberty catalysed their pursuit of ecclesiastical reform. Each author asserted that the Church of England, through the imposition of compulsion practised by Prelacy and the Presbyterians, had demonstrated its affiliation with the Catholic Church. In her chronological presentation illustrating the nation's reclamation of freedom through the actions of the New Model Army, Cary explicitly contested the concept of an English Reformation. According to her, the purported disconnection from the Catholic Church had not been realised. Furthermore, the connection with the Catholic Church had been reinforced by the religious changes implemented by Charles I and the tenure of Archbishop Laud.

From the perspectives of Rogers, Aspinwall, Canne and Spittlehouse, the ideal ecclesiastical structure was independent congregations. Aligned with republican ideals of self-governance, Spittlehouse, in particular, underscored the necessity of autonomy for each congregation, asserting that the church's governance should be founded on consent. Remarkably, he proposed that women should be granted the right to participate in ecclesiastical elections.

The five authors condemned the use of compulsion, deeming it the hallmark of the antichrist. In direct opposition to Erastian contentions advocating for the church's subordination to the state, each author posited a firm division between religious and civil authority. The Hebraic texts were once again employed to illustrate the differentiation of power. This was demonstrated when Moses wielded civil authority while Aaron was entrusted with dominion over religious matters. The symbolism of the sword conferred upon Moses underscored his possession of civil power.

Furthermore, their writings underscore the conviction that religious and civil liberty were mutually beneficial. Canne, in particular, asserted that freedom of conscience serves as a means of ensuring security for the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that despite advocating for tolerance, this inclusivity did not extend to those deemed part of the antichristian empire, specifically Catholics, the Prelacy and Presbyterians. Canne further expanded this restriction to atheists, whom he perceived as a threat to the stability of the Commonwealth.

## **Republican Debates in 1659**

Much like the reactions spurred by the Protectorate, the restoration of the Rump in 1659 prompted both Rogers and Canne to engage in the renewed republican debates. Both authors endeavoured to reconcile the Fifth Monarchists and supporters of the ‘Good Old Cause,’ united by a shared commitment to commonwealth rule. Rogers, referencing Guicciardini, contended that God favoured a commonwealth. Similarly, Canne advocated for an alliance between the two groups. Despite acknowledging theological differences between Fifth Monarchists and the Commonwealth Men, Canne maintained his confidence in the common pursuit of restoring the people’s rights and liberties, a goal he asserted could only be realised within a commonwealth.

Each chapter within this study has played a pivotal role in constructing the argument that the Fifth Monarchists actively participated in the English republican debates of the 1650s. This involvement led to the development of a distinctive form of godly republicanism. Their writings, particularly in their interpretation of prophecy, presented a compelling case that the English nation had undergone a profound transformation, no longer adhering to a monarchical state. From their perspective, the republican regime that emerged after the regicide was the sole alternative to monarchical rule capable of ushering in the envisioned millennium. Notably, only Cary engaged with what the millennium would look like.

The Fifth Monarchists, as discussed, fused their religious convictions with the republican ideals of liberty and virtue to advocate for a godly commonwealth. It is important to note that their engagement with republicanism also influenced the group’s millenarian perspectives. As illustrated throughout this thesis, the Fifth Monarchists adapted prophetic interpretations to comprehend the period’s unexpected political shifts, contributing to the intellectual landscape of early modern England.

This thesis substantially contributes to the burgeoning scholarship on godly republicanism and millenarianism. It emphasises the imperative of conducting a more thorough assessment of the Fifth Monarchy movement and other radicals often overlooked in political analysis due to their religious character. Broadening the scope of this research to encompass a diverse array of actors would provide a more nuanced understanding of the political contributions made by these groups during such a pivotal and transformative historical period.



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